

Childspace Innovations in Child Care

Childspace Management Group, Inc. (CMG) is a worker-owned cooperative which contracts with a non-profit organization to operate two child care centers serving approximately 170 middle and low income children in racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Philadelphia. CMG was started in 1988, when three Philadelphia women - Cindy Coker, Teresa Mansell, and Karen Guyton - decided to develop a new model for child care. They viewed this as an experiment to try to create the kind of work culture which would address the issues of quality of job for the workers as well as quality of care for the children. Because they were concerned that this model work for low income families, a basic part of the model is a commitment to policy and advocacy work around issues affecting the field of child care.

"Our mission was to improve the quality of the child care job, which has basically been held by low income women," said Coker. "We felt that by offering a better work package we could reduce the high employee turnover rate in this field and generally improve the care children receive. All of us were mothers and concerned with child care, but we also wanted to set up a democratic workplace which we felt gave us the best chance of solving the problems and conflicting interests we saw in the field. We had also seen the growth of for-profit centers and felt there needed to be another model which tried to provide the safe guards of a non-profit center with the strategic planning of a more entrepreneurial approach".

To achieve these goals they chose a worker cooperative organizational model. In 1990, the worker cooperative decided to expand, opening a second center in a low income community for which they purchased and renovated a property. The centers employ about three dozen people, many of whom were women from low-income communities or unemployed at the time they were hired. The Childspace model enables workers to become owners of the business. After a year on the job, all employees are given the option of joining the cooperative and becoming member-owners of Childspace. Though not every employee opts for membership in the cooperative, most do, because the program is both straightforward and affordable. Employees simply purchase a share of stock for \$5 and then contribute \$245 over the next year through payroll deductions. Everyone who becomes a cooperative member receives one vote on the CMG board of directors. This is true, no matter what the member/owner's staff position is in the center.

Cooperative members make broad policy decisions affecting Childspace. Moreover, one of the management team's goals is to foster broad participation of all the staff, regardless of ownership status, in problem solving and decision-making about the day-to-day operations of the center. For instance, all members of classroom teaching teams participate in curriculum planning and programming. Providing time for staff to meet regularly is an expense most centers are not willing to pay but Childspace sees it as an important part of learning on the job and making sure the best program for children is developed.

Other workplace goals include respect for individuals and support for personal and professional development. In recruiting staff, Childspace founders realized they would have to assess prospective employees as much on potential as on educational or

professional credentials. Entry level workers receive extensive on the job training from more experienced staffers, and every employee is expected to attend workshops each year in early childhood education. As employees grow in knowledge and experience, they also grow in self-confidence, which carries over into the classrooms. This growth, along with Childspace's respect for the importance of employees' roles outside of work - as parents, students, community members - contributes to the low staff turnover rate of 15 percent in a field where the average is over 40 percent.

The average salary at Childspace is \$7.00 per hour, 25% above the \$5.60 average in the field. The benefit package offered is decidedly above the norm. Full time employees receive full family health coverage and child care for one child, both with a nominal co-pay. Part-time workers receive single health coverage. In addition, staff members are entitled to twelve paid sick days, two weeks paid vacation, two personal days, and ten paid holidays per year.

When seeking child care for their children, parents are often faced with a bewildering, sometimes overwhelming number of choices. Many who could afford any program for their children choose Childspace, in part because they know their children will likely be around the same staff each year. Parents are also drawn to Childspace because of its educational philosophy: young children learn best through play, in a stimulating, environment which nurtures children's development in all areas (social, emotional, physical, and cognitive). Low staff-child ratios enable teachers to attend to the individual needs of children as they move through the program.

Childspace Cooperative Development

The Childspace founders always hoped that their organization could serve as a model for improving child care. However, they knew that replication of the model was necessary to meet the broader goal of impacting the larger child care field. Federal and state policies and regulations often undermine centers trying to offer quality jobs and quality care. This is often the case for those centers serving low income or mixed income communities. Early on discussions were started with foundations which Childspace felt had similar concerns. As the success of the centers in Philadelphia (on creation of better quality jobs, quality of care and work in advocacy) became more known, Childspace Cooperative Development was organized.

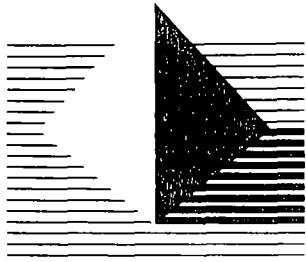
With funding support from a number of sources, including the Ms. Foundation, Campaign for Human Development, John Merck Fund, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Childspace established a separate organization for the replication work. Childspace Cooperative Development (CCD) was formed in the spring of 1996 and is working to replicate the Childspace model in various sites across the country. A strength of this replication effort is that the model is interactive rather than static. This flexible model allows the worker cooperative to contract with a wide range of groups to operate centers. These can range from a community group concerned about the creation of jobs and quality care in their neighborhoods to a consortium of businesses who want to provide their employees with high quality care. While adherence to basic cooperative principles, providing quality care and the broader goal of improving

the child care field are expected, CCD works with each center to adapt materials and resources to meet specific needs.

CCD provides some equity funds for "start-up" of new centers; or transformation of existing centers. In addition, replication sites receive on-site training and are part of on-going mentoring relationships with CCD staff. CCD has also attempted to develop a unique training program using personal stories, developed and told by Childspace employees, to illuminate their work culture and illustrate the difference between standard practice and Childspace practice.

In 1996, CCD helped to organize a new worker cooperative, Magic Years Cooperative Inc., and helped this new worker cooperative garner a contract with a consortium of businesses to operate a center in Richmond, CA. CCD is currently involved in discussions with other groups to establish centers in Denver and New York.

As sites develop, CCD will serve as a network for the centers, providing on-going training and consulting support. This also provides the opportunity for child care workers and parents to advocate for themselves and child care services on a local, state, and national level. Childspace has worked collaboratively with other organizations in Philadelphia and California to positively shape state child care initiatives that are underway due to welfare reform legislation. CCD is committed to supporting collaborative efforts to shape public policy in a way that establishes our society's collective responsibility to support all of America's families in nurturing and educating our children.



NACCRRA

National Association of Child Care
Resource and Referral Agencies

Ter/Nicole/Cynthia -

It doesn't do
anything for me.

Am I wrong?

June 17, 1997

Elena

Mr. Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

Enclosed is a proposal for an event to enhance the upcoming White House conference on child care and to underscore the President and Mrs. Clinton's commitment to American children and families.

We are proposing that the President and Mrs. Clinton take the lead in launching a national day of recognition for child care professionals, which would take place in the spring but which could be announced on the day of the White House child care conference this November. We suggest that Child Care Professional's Day be established by an executive order, and that Child Care Aware and its corporate sponsors provide a "launch event" that enhances the conference.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Child Care Aware, a partnership of leading nonprofit organizations related to child care, are working hard to build a stable, high-quality child care system throughout both urban and rural America and to make sure that parents know how to find good child care. As you know, the need for quality child care extends to millions of American families, and their numbers are increasing as more parents exit the welfare rolls and enter the workforce. As the need for child care in our country grows, the key to success will be adequate numbers of well-trained, highly motivated providers.

Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, has been quite enthusiastic about our idea of a conference-day event to showcase the work that the President and Mrs. Clinton have done to make life better for American families, and to launch this important day. We hope you will agree that such an event provides a valuable opportunity for the Clinton Administration, and that an annual day of recognition for child care providers will add a permanent insignia to the President and Mrs. Clinton's legacy of commitment to children and families.

We would appreciate your reviewing our proposal at your earliest convenience, as plans for the White House conference are already underway. Child Care Aware and its corporate sponsors, including General Mills (Cheerios), stand ready to support the President and Mrs. Clinton in their objectives for the conference on child care, and to provide a positively memorable event. Please reply by July 1 to Yasmina at 202-393-5501.

Thank you for your consideration.

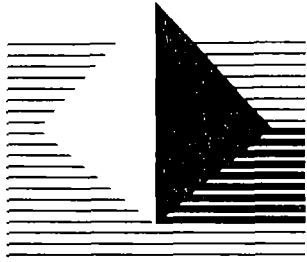
Sincerely,

Yasmina Vinci

Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Tutti Sherlock

Tutti Sherlock
Board Chair
Child Care Aware



NACCRRA

National Association of Child Care
Resource and Referral Agencies

June 17, 1997

The President and Mrs. Clinton
The White House
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton:

On behalf of NACCRRA and Child Care Aware, a partnership of leading nonprofit organizations, we applaud your efforts to bring national attention to child care through a White House conference. Child care and early education are a part of daily life for millions of American families with children. Obtaining stable, high-quality child care will be critical to the success of parents leaving the welfare rolls to enter the workforce, and it will be a key factor in the health and well-being of their children. Clearly, child care issues also affect companies and even government agencies whose employees cannot be productive without the help of child care they can rely on.

We would like to suggest a cooperative effort between your administration and Child Care Aware to initiate a national Child Care Professional's Day, to be announced in conjunction with your upcoming White House conference on child care. When we presented the idea to Joan Lombardi, associate commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, she encouraged us to write to you immediately. We urge you and your administration to take the lead in launching this special day. Working with Child Care Aware to launch a day in honor of professional child care providers will be an opportunity for you to continue building your legacy of commitment to America's children.

Why create an annual Child Care Professional's Day?

- The role of child care professionals in our children's early development cannot be underestimated. As Americans learned from the April 17 White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning, early care has decisive and long-lasting effects on how children develop socially and academically, and how they cope with stress.
- A solid partnership between parents and child care professionals is essential to the quality of child care. Child Care Professional's Day will help parents understand and appreciate the role of child care professionals, thereby strengthening this important partnership.
- Professionalism—that is, training in early child development and education—is linked to the quality of care that our children receive. Studies in the field show conclusively that children do better in programs run by trained, licensed and accredited child care professionals.
- Without loving, trained child care professionals, millions of parents would not be able to work and be productive, or complete their education. The availability of trained professionals to care for our children cannot be separated from the state of our nation's economy or from the success of welfare reform.

- Child Care Professional's Day provides opportunities to showcase skilled, nurturing providers and quality child care settings so that parents will know what to look for when choosing child care.
- Recognizing caregivers motivates them to stay in a field where demand vastly exceeds the supply and where pay can be less than rewarding. Child Care Professional's Day, therefore, will help ensure continuity of care, which is important to proper development in a child's early years.
- Child Care Professional's Day will energize more nurturing, capable people to become child care professionals as welfare reform increases the need throughout the country.

Mr. President, we sincerely believe that you, Mrs. Clinton and your entire administration can build on a legacy of commitment to families by leading the launch of a Child Care Professional's Day. The partners of Child Care Aware in this venture include the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Child Care Action Campaign, Families and Work Institute, the National Association for Family Child Care, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Most importantly, Child Care Aware has identified a number of corporate and media partners who share our vision of quality child care for all American families. To date, we have partnership commitments from General Mills, maker of Cheerios and other nutritious food brands, the General Mills Foundation, and Scholastic, the world's largest educational publisher. We anticipate that other partners will join this effort, as well.

While Child Care Professional's Day is still in the conceptual stage, we envision a launch that might include the following activities, and we would welcome your input:

- The day would be established by Executive Order during the White House conference on child care.
- The day would occur annually on the last Friday in April, when most children are settled into their child care programs and when no other holiday occurs.
- To help generate publicity for the Executive Order, General Mills will sponsor a Cheerios breakfast on the South Lawn for local area child care providers, children and parents on the morning of the White House conference.
- Child Care Aware will present you and Mrs. Clinton with an award in recognition of your ongoing commitment to the future of America's children.
- We would invite you to make an address focusing on the value of child care professionals who are trained in early childhood development. (Please note: Child Care Aware is a nonprofit initiative funded by corporate contributions and foundation grants. We do not sell or administer child care training programs and have no financial interest in any program.)

Following the White House conference, we will promote Child Care Professional's Day through the media, as well as on Cheerios boxes and in child care programs and schools. We also are planning a series of local community events throughout the country to prepare for the day.

Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton, we believe that you and your administration will see value in developing a national Child Care Professional's Day to recognize exceptional child care providers. Along with programs to support children and their parents, Child Care Professional's Day completes your well-conceived effort to make sure that every child in America starts out right, with the quality care they need to grow into happy, healthy and productive citizens.

As you read this letter, the Child Care Bureau is gathering support for your plans for the White House conference on child care. Child Care Aware is offering to bring our corporate and media partners together to launch Child Care Professional's Day in conjunction with the conference. Can we count on you and Mrs. Clinton to lead the launch of this important day?

We appreciate your considering this suggestion. Again, we applaud your efforts to ensure the best possible care for each and every one of America's children.

Sincerely,



Yasmina Vinci
Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies



Tutti Sherlock
Board Chair
Child Care Aware

cc: Ms. Donna Shalala, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Ms. Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner, Child Care Bureau

Background Note:

As the consumer education arm of America's network of over 550 child care resource and referral programs, Child Care Aware worked with the Child Care Bureau to design a consumer education leadership forum earlier this year. We also recently completed a manuscript for publication by the Department of Health and Human Services detailing the successes of grass roots consumer education programs initiated and funded by Child Care Aware.

Child Care AwareSM

Informed parents making better child care choices.

Our Mission

To ensure that every parent has access to good information about finding quality child care and resources in their community, through national consumer marketing and by raising visibility for local child care resource and referral agencies.

Our Strategies

Child Care Aware will accomplish its mission by:

1. Building consumer awareness and access to information on the national level, in partnership with retailers and other corporate sponsors, and by
2. Building consumer awareness of the information and services available from local community child care resource and referral agencies

Our Successes

Founded in 1988 with a grant from the Dayton Hudson Foundation and the Dayton Hudson Corporation, including its three operating divisions (Target, Mervyn's and The Department Store Division), Child Care Aware has successfully accomplished many of the objectives of its original mission, which included pioneering and supporting the professional development and training of family child care providers as well as educating parents to recognize and choose good child care:

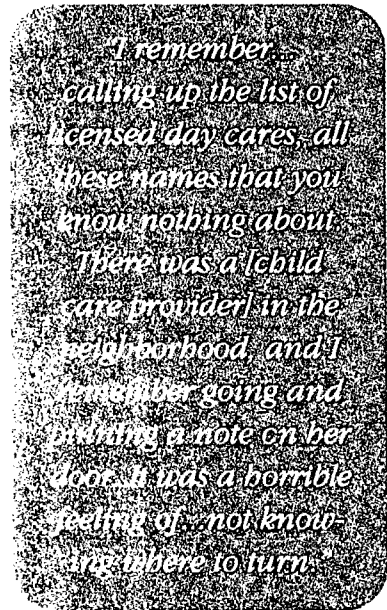
-  Initiated development of training courses of 15 hours or more for 17,000 family child care providers in 40 local communities, improving the quality of care for over 85,000 children.
-  Prompted the *1995 Family Child Care Training Study* conducted by the Families and Work Institute, which found that following training, children were more secure with their providers and more engaged in activities, and overall quality in family child care improved.
-  Supported more than 700 family child care providers in achieving accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the highest standard for family child care quality in the country. The providers supported by Child Care Aware account for half of all accredited family child care providers in the United States.
-  Conducted parent focus groups in nine cities to better understand parents' values, attitudes and concerns about child care. Results were used to craft messages and identify communication strategies during Child Care Aware's national consumer awareness campaign launched in 1992.
-  Established a national, toll-free parent information hotline linking parents nationwide with their local child care resource and referral agencies, and disseminating information about how to recognize and choose quality child care.
-  Distributed 7.25 million information-packed brochures directly to parents through the toll-free hotline; through Dayton Hudson Corporation retail stores, child care resource and referral agencies, community organizations, hospitals, churches and schools; and at public events.
-  Awarded Consumer Education Grants totaling over \$360,000 for 36 pilot programs in 21 states, designed for replication by community-based and statewide child care advocacy organizations.
-  Contributed to articles on choosing good child care in *USA Today*, *Parents* magazine, *Family Circle*, *Working Mother*, *Business Week*, *Fortune* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and to segments on ABC, CBS and NBC network news programs.

Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision

Every day, **10 million to 12 million children below the age of 5** require full-time or part-time child care, for which parents are spending **\$27 billion a year**. That's just for care of children under age 5! The numbers swell when combined with quality care for the **24 million school-age children** too young to stay home alone before and after school while parents work, look for work, or get job training.

According to the New York-based Families and Work Institute, only about one percent of employers in the U.S. offer child care options such as flex-time, on-site child care and subsidized care. That leaves the majority of parents on their own to find quality, affordable child care that will give them peace of mind.

Even when parents do have sufficient information to recognize and choose good child care, they sometimes cannot find it. The solemn fact is that only 9 to 12 percent of child care in America is truly growth-enhancing for children, and that 60 percent is merely custodial—that is, not harmful to children but not particularly nurturing either. The remaining 28 to 31 percent of child care is inadequate care. However, with well-informed consumers comes demand for more and better services—for quality child care as for well-maintained aircraft or low-fat foods.



Parents Speak About Child Care,
Kathy Modighani, Wheelock College

Why do we believe that a **consumer marketing approach** can help solve America's child care dilemma?

- ☒ Because in order to reach parents everywhere with the messages and frequency required to change attitudes and behavior, we need to meet them on their own ground: the consumer marketplace. The Child Care Aware toll-free information number must be accessible through popular media and wherever parents go for shopping, personal services, health care, recreation, transportation and worship.
- ☒ Because in focus groups, parents say they feel isolated when looking for child care. When local child care resource and referral agencies become as familiar as the yellow pages, parents will know where to turn for help and will no longer feel alone in their search.
- ☒ Because the quality of child care needs to improve, and economic studies have shown that quality improvement happens only when consumers demand it. We can increase demand by educating parents so that they know what good child care looks like and how to ask for it.
- ☒ Because child care is perceived as a family affair, even though child care issues affect the workplace and community, too. National studies provide overwhelming evidence that good child care contributes to the high self-esteem that helps keep kids away from drugs, early pregnancy and crime. And good child care means a better outlook for our future workforce.
- ☒ Because TV reports about bad or abusive child care do not offer practical advice for avoiding bad care and recognizing quality care. Parents need this information and they need to know about the local resources available to help them.

Child Care Aware is a **privately funded** initiative uniting national nonprofit child care concerns, local child care resource and referral agencies, and corporate sponsors in the effort to create a marketplace of informed parents making better child care choices and driving demand for quality child care. The results, we believe, will benefit not only parents, but also employers and every community.



SAMPLING OF MEDIA MENTIONS

CHILD CARE AWARE

SPECIAL EDITION

YOUR CHILD Nowweek®

Spring/Summer 1997 \$3.50



From Birth to Three

What You Need
To Know

How Speech
Begins

A Baby's Brain

Genes &
Emotions

What's Normal,
What's Not

Where You Can Turn

BY CARLA KOEHL

AVID "TELE-PARENTS" WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE'S nothing like a phone jack and 16 megabytes of RAM for navigating the mysteries, hurdles and hassles of life with an infant or toddler. If only you had Netscape and a 28.8 modem—or at least speed-dial—they'll say, you'd be surfing and dialing your way to parental bliss with all the child-rearing info that's available by PC and phone. Are they batty? No. Just a little excited.

There are now more places than ever to phone for help when mothers and fathers feel parentally challenged. And the explosion of parenting Web sites and newsgroups that's taken place on the Internet over the last five years is connecting families from household to household the way the telephone did for the first time in 1876. Only this time the advance in communications isn't just overcoming distance and isolation. It's conquering stigmas.

Kate Ripley was nursing her newborn in her cabin half an hour outside Fairbanks,



Online support: Rory and Kate

Alaska, when she found an online breast-feeding newsgroup. "I was really lonely," she says. "It was a huge relief." Now that Rory's 9 months, the baby books are hinting that he's eating too often. Ripley's group (misc.kids.breastfeeding) says otherwise. "You don't just want to have someone validate everything you think," she says. "But it's such a variety of voices, you can cull." Even in Los Angeles, where there's no such thing as a remote location, actor Brian Markinson logs on whenever he and his wife are stumped about their 9-month-old. "It's another resource," he says, "rather than call a doctor and feel like you're being a pain."

Technological alarmists, of course, take delight in warning that millions of modem-happy moms and dads will do nothing but produce millions of antisocial, monitor-gazing kids. A reliance on dial-tone parenting, they insist, keeps families, friends and neighbors from trading advice the old-fashioned way: in person. But a glance at all the live, wired interaction out there suggests that, so far, the alarmists are wrong.

On the Net

Usenet

alt.parenting and misc.kids
Great places to start on the Usenet—the Internet's collection of newsgroups—for discussions on hundreds of topics from teething and breast-feeding to pets and snoring. Also, rec.arts.books.children is a 24-hour-a-day book group on children's literature.

Childbirth.Org

http://www.childbirth.org
Top discussion forums here, and a home page that gets right to the point on tough issues, including "Pregnancy & HIV," "Having Your First Baby Over 35" and "Complications."

Family.com

http://www.family.com
Disney's new site has been criticized for being more upscale than helpful. But their bulletin boards and chat rooms are filled with the voices of intelligent, caring parents. They must be doing something right.

ParentTalk Newsletter

http://www.tnpe.com/parenttalk/index.html
Clearly written articles by physicians and psychologists. What this site lacks in graphic creativity, it makes up for in sheer mass of information.

ParenthoodWeb

http://parenthoodweb.com
Pediatricians and psychiatrists respond (in due time) to your e-mail. Meanwhile, they've posted their stock answers to anything-but-stock questions, including "Did we make a mistake by having a child?"

Parenting Q&A

http://www.parenting-qa.com/
This site calls itself the only one on the Web "solely devoted to providing parents with answers to their most pressing questions." It does answer questions faster than most other sites we tried. But it also offers essays on touchy subjects like spirituality, and suggests reading lists for kids, games for rainy days.

ParentSoup

http://www.parentsoup.com/
Excellent discussion forums address everything from step-parenting and disciplining closely spaced siblings to premature babies and children with attention deficit disorder.

Zero to Three

http://www.zerotothree.org
The Washington, D.C.-based child-advocacy group has just launched its Web site. On it: a wealth of research and information on physical, cognitive and social development of infants and toddlers.

On the Phone

Child Care Aware

800-424-2246

Operators refer parents anywhere in the country to licensed and accredited child-care centers in their area.

They'll also send, at no charge, an information packet on how to choose quality child care.

Coordinated by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Weekdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. CST.

ChildHelp National Hotline

800-4-A-CHILD

Twenty-four-hour advice and referrals for children and adults with questions or in crisis. Staffers with graduate degrees in counseling field calls on issues ranging from child-abuse prevention to whether it's normal for a 3-year-old girl to try urinating while standing up. (Yes, says a hotline counselor, it is.)

Gerber Information Line

800-443-7237

Tipper Gore's recorded welcome message jolts you from thoughts of strained peas on this 24-hour consumer-info line (she reminds callers that doctors recommend having babies sleep on their backs). Moms, dads, grandparents—not nurses—work the phones, advising

callers on nonmedical essentials like diapering, sleeping and "lots and lots of questions about food," says one operator.

National Parent Information Network

800-583-4135

NPIN boasts the largest parenting database in the country. Researchers hunt down referrals, abstracts and answers—and send them free of charge—to hundreds of callers every month. Trouble with toilet training, the merits of co-op playgroups vs. private preschools, baby bowel movements: absolutely nothing is out of bounds here. Weekdays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. CST.

Parents Anonymous

909-621-6184 (not toll-free)

The national office in Claremont, Calif., refers parents to 45 state and regional affiliates, which offer support groups, counseling, referrals. Weekdays, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. PST.

Single Parents Association

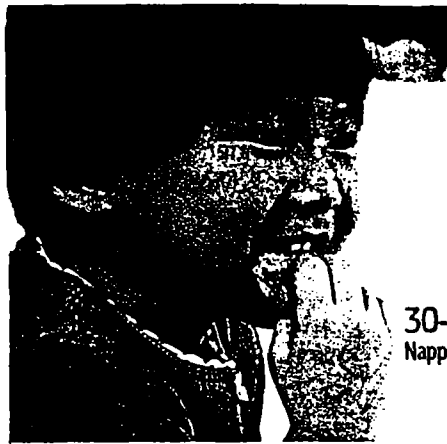
800-704-2102

This line, which has just gone national, helps parents find support groups and resources in their communities, fields questions on parenting skills and reminds single parents that they're not alone. Weekdays, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. CST.

With T. TRENT GEGAX

Working Life

child care



What kids like about child care

When Child Care Aware, a public-service campaign based in Rochester, Minnesota, surveyed nearly 800 4- to 10-year-old children in day-care centers and family child-care settings in 16 states, these were the activities kids said they enjoyed most.

30-40%
Napping

40-50%
Singing

60-70%

Getting hugs from teachers
Storytelling
Playing make-believe
Playing musical instruments
Playing in the sandbox
Reading and writing

70-80%
Watching television and videotapes
Taking care of animals
Playing with games, toys, and blocks
Painting and drawing

80-90%
Having a snack
Playing with others
Going to the playground
Going for walks and outings
Making friends

Paying caregivers their due

May 1 is Worthy Wage Day, an annual event held to call attention to the low wages paid to child-care providers. According to the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, which sponsors the campaign, the average wage for child-care workers in centers is \$6.70 per hour, and family child-care providers make even less. **In fact, salaries fall below the poverty level for 70 percent of the child-care workforce.**

Caregivers are not the only ones who suffer in this situation: More than 35 percent of child-care workers leave the field every year, and when teachers come and go, children can't form the stable, secure relationships they need.

The long-term goal of Worthy Wage Day is to allow workers to be paid what they deserve without increasing the burden on parents. The additional funds would come from government allocations and from corporate subsidies for employees.

You can champion the cause by attending pro-child-care rallies, wearing a button, or participating in teacher-appreciation activities. To find out what's happening in your area, call 800-UR-WORTHY.



If you can't manage an occasional romantic rendezvous with your husband because of the cost of sitters, joining a baby-sitting cooperative—a group of parents who take turns minding each other's children—may be the solu-

tion. There are more than just financial benefits: Your kids (and you) may form some lasting friendships, and you'll have the comfort of knowing that mature adults are watching your children when you're not there.

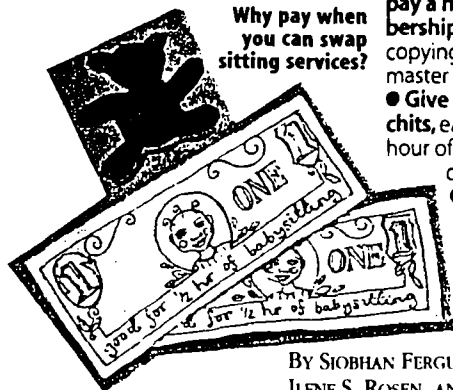
To find a baby-sitting co-op, ask your PTA if they know of any groups in your area and check bulletin boards at your grocery store, health club, house of worship, and pediatrician's office. Or follow these guidelines to set up your own.

- **Advertise for members** by tacking flyers to bulletin boards in places parents frequent.
- **Start with one or two other families** and build from there. A membership of no more than 24 families works best, so that administration doesn't get out of hand.
- **Make a master list.** Include children's names and ages, the typical times that the family is available (for example, weekend evenings only), and any necessary emergency and medical information.
- **Ask each family to pay a nominal membership fee** to cover the copying costs for the master list and for chits.
- **Give every family 20 chits**, each worth a half hour of baby-sitting for one child.
- **Official rules and monthly meetings** help things run more smoothly.

Free sitters

tion. There are more than just financial benefits: Your kids (and you) may form some lasting friendships, and you'll have the comfort of knowing that mature adults are watching your children when you're not there.

Why pay when you can swap sitting services?



By SIOBHAN FERGUS TOSCANO, ILENE S. ROSEN, AND LYNN GOSNELL

Working 5 to 9

Finding affordable, high-quality child care is hard enough for parents who work 9 to 5, but for those on weekend, overnight, or rotating shifts, the challenge is even greater. Currently, 7.2 million mothers with more than 11 million children need "off-hours" care. Many of these women work in the medical, hotel, and manu-

facturing fields. Though most day-care centers are geared to the rhythm of daytimers, businesses and communities around the country are coming up with innovative solutions.

After learning that workers at a local food-processing plant were leaving their children in their cars to sleep during overnight shifts, the non-profit group Western Idaho Community Action Program persuaded several day-care providers to stay

open longer hours.

In Phoenix, a consortium of employers formed Close To Home, which recruits and trains family child-care workers to watch children at all hours.

Four hotels united to form Atlanta's Inn for Children, a 24-hour-a-day center that serves many shift workers in the city's booming tourism industry.

For help finding care, call Child Care Aware at 800-424-2246 for the number of local resource and referral agencies.

INSIDE

Beginning Your Search *Choosing between in-home care, family daycare, and center care*

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Is Daycare Bad for Babies? *The latest research*

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Touching Base *Daily debriefings*

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So Long, Baby *Saying good-bye*

The Daycare Decision

Days with your newborn pass in a blur, and before you know it—probably before you're ready—your maternity leave will be over. Even if you're looking forward to returning to work, it's heart-wrenching to think that someone else will be caring for your little one in your stead, feeding her, playing with her, perhaps even witnessing her first steps or first words.

That's exactly why the search for childcare can't be taken lightly. It's essential not only for your peace of mind but also for your baby's health and development to find just the right person to care for and nurture her, make her feel safe and valued, and, of course, to play with her. Though the task seems daunting, with some homework and some legwork, you can find the best care for the newest member of your family. ➤



Beginning Your Search If you're considering family daycare or center care, you need to know what to look for. If you plan to hire an in-home caregiver, begin looking for her. Ask your friends and neighbors and check out local bulletin boards, community centers, and church bulletins. If you're considering family daycare or center care, you need to know what to look for. If you plan to hire an in-home caregiver, begin looking for her. Ask your friends and neighbors and check out local bulletin boards, community centers, and church bulletins.

It's All Relative

What could be better than having your mother or another relative take care of your baby? Not much. You know and trust her, and she already loves your little one. So if a relative offers to care for your baby, count your blessings—and then think carefully before you accept. Does she really understand what's involved? Is she willing to make a

long-term commitment? Is she fit and healthy? Finally, did your heart leap at the idea—or did it sink? Be sure to heed your instincts. If

you accept her offer, you'll need to establish the same good communication and clear ground rules you would with any caregiver.



Option #1: In-Home Care



Cost: \$900 to \$2,600 a month
Nannies aren't just for the rich. If you share care with another family or provide room and board in lieu of some cash, even in-home care can fit in your budget.

The Basics Call a potential caregiver to find out about her fee, experience, skills, training, last job, available hours, and mode of transportation. If she's a recent immigrant, ask about green-card status and vaccinations, and make sure there isn't a language barrier.

Next Steps If the phone interview goes well, invite her over for a lengthier chat (see "The Interview," opposite page). Before you hire someone, be sure to call her references and consider contacting your state police office, DMV, and county courthouse to check into a possible criminal background or poor driving record. Happy with everything so far? Ask her to spend a few days with you and your baby (pay her for her time, of course). If all goes well, offer her the job and draw up a contract that spells out her responsibilities, schedule, pay, and holidays, vacations, and sick days (many families offer paid days off).

Advantages

- Highly individualized care
- Scheduling flexibility
- Babies stay in familiar surroundings
- Less germ exposure than other settings
- No drop-offs and pickups
- Caregiver may do household chores
- She may stay with family long-term

Disadvantages

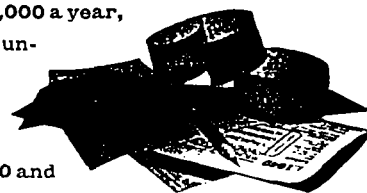
- Little or no regular interaction with other children
- No one there to monitor caregiver
- No backup if caregiver becomes ill or quits without notice
- High burnout rate
- You must pay employment taxes

Keep It Legal

You don't have to be a politician to heed the Nanny Tax. If you're caught paying someone off the books, you'll pay steep back taxes, interest, and penalties. In addition, paying your caregiver legally provides her with Social Se-

curity and unemployment benefits and allows you to use a flexible spending account and claim an Earned Income Credit. If you pay a private caregiver more than \$50 in three months, you're responsible for Social Security and

Medicare taxes. If you pay more than \$1,000 a year, you must pay unemployment tax. For details, call 800/829-1040 and ask for IRS booklet #926.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: YAN NASCIBENE, KEN SHUNG, DAEMRICH/III IMAGE WORKS, JOHN KUCZALA

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: STEVEN EDSON, YAN NASCIBENE, ELIZABETH CREWS/III IMAGE WORKS

re or center care, you may need to sign up even before your child
 six weeks before you return to work. Where to start? Ask
 parents' resource groups, newspapers, and nanny agencies.

DAYCARE INFO: WHO TO CALL



Option #2: Family Daycare

Cost: \$300 to \$800 a month

For many parents, the next best thing to home is the cozy environment and loose structure of family daycare.

The Basics Call and ask: Is there an opening? How many children in the home (there shouldn't be more than six)? How many infants (no more than two)? What are the hours? Fees? Is she licensed? How long has she been in business?

How does she balance babies' needs with older kids' needs? How does she feel about nursing visits or handling pumped milk? Can you drop in anytime? Who covers for her? What's her sick-child and late-pickup policy?

Next Steps If you like her answers, arrange a visit. Look for a caregiver who's responsive and affectionate; an environment that is appealing, clean, and safe; stimulating, fun activities; happy children; toys and books in good condition; a napping place; healthy lunches and snacks; an outdoor play space or regular outings to a park or playground. If you're satisfied with what you see, schedule an interview during the children's naptime or after hours.

Advantages

- Warm, homey atmosphere
- Relatively small group
- Mixed ages
- Some scheduling flexibility
- Stimulating play and learning opportunities

Disadvantages

- Little one-on-one attention
- Caregiver may have no formal training
- No backup if caregiver gets sick or takes a vacation
- Home may close during summer
- Caregiver may pursue other jobs



Kids of different ages can get acquainted in family daycare.

What Does "Licensed" Really Mean?

Family daycare licensing covers only health and safety issues, not quality, and no license is required in many states. That's why you'll need to make sure a program meets your own stringent standards.

Daycare centers in every state must meet health and safety requirements. But a better benchmark of quality is accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In-home caregivers do not generally need to be licensed, but some states require licensing for those tending more than two unrelated children.

The Interview

A face-to-face meeting with a caregiver is like a blind date: You're trying to learn enough about each other to decide if you want to pursue a relationship. Since actions speak louder than words, observe how a candidate responds to your



baby as well as how she answers your questions. Then go with your gut feelings. It's vital that you like her and can communicate with her. Standard questions include:

- Why do you work with children? What do you like most, and least, about it?
- What training do you have?
- How long were you at your last job? Why did you leave?
- How long do you plan to stay in the childcare field?
- Are you CPR-certified or willing to learn?
- How do you feel about parents dropping in?
- How do you discipline?
- What do you think babies need most?

Option #3: Daycare Centers

Cost: \$400 to \$2,200 a month

There's no getting around it: Institutional daycare isn't always ideal—or particularly easy to find—for babies. But if you must consider it, look for a program geared toward infant development that's staffed by dynamic, warm, and committed caregivers. After all, any daycare setting is only as good as the people who work there.

Is Daycare Bad for Babies?

There's no easy answer to that question. While experts agree that it's best for an infant to stay with a caring parent, that isn't always an option. How will daycare affect a baby's development? A recent study found that ten hours of quality daycare a week doesn't necessarily threaten the mother-baby bond. But most working families need daycare for far longer than that, and other research isn't too cheerful, either: One study shows that babies who have a succession of caregivers may later have difficulty with friendships and social situations. Another found that up to 40 percent of programs were potentially harmful to a baby's health and development. What's a parent to do? Quality and consistency of care are paramount, so seek out someone trained in early childhood education or use a center with NAEYC accreditation. But above all, make sure the person you hire is responsive, loving, playful—and committed to staying with your baby. A child can and should bond with her caregiver, so foster a warm, affectionate relationship between them.



The Basics Call the center and find out: Is there an opening? What are the hours and fees? Are there late-pickup charges? Does the center have NAEYC accreditation? How is the staff trained? What's the turnover rate? How many babies per caregiver and per group? (There should not be more than four and eight, respectively.) Does a baby have the same caregiver at all times? Where do infants nap? What's the attitude toward breastfeeding visits and handling pumped milk? Can parents drop in?

Next Steps If you're satisfied with the answers, arrange a visit. Look for a loving, responsive staff who cuddle and play with their charges and who wash their hands frequently; happy children; a baby area that's clean, safe, and quiet; a nurturing environment with room to roll, crawl, play, and explore; and infants who are fed and diapered according to their needs, not a schedule. Finally, ask yourself, would I want to spend all week here? If the answer is yes, schedule an interview with the director.

Advantages

- Must meet state licensing regulations
- May have NAEYC accreditation
- Staff is typically well-trained
- Chance to interact with other babies
- Offers stimulating play and learning opportunities
- May offer extended hours
- No need for backup if caregiver is sick

Disadvantages

- Little one-on-one attention
- Environment can be noisy and chaotic
- High turnover means inconsistent care and lack of continuity
- Exposure to germs can cause illness
- Strict schedules



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: ELIZABETH CREWS/THE IMAGE WORKS, YAN NASCIMBENE, JOHN KUCZALA

Once You've Made a Decision You've finally found the right person to care for your baby, but your work isn't done. To ensure that they have everything they need, you'll need to consider a few more things:

Backup Care

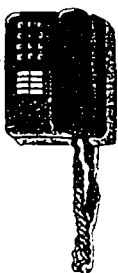
Sometimes, even the best-laid childcare plans fall apart—your caregiver gets sick or quits, or your baby runs a fever and can't go to daycare. Since you may not be able to take time off work when this happens, make

an emergency backup plan long before you need it. Can you call a nearby relative or stay-at-home friend? Does your employer offer emergency childcare? Is there a local sick-child center or agency that provides short-term, in-home sitters? Such care isn't cheap, but it may be the only option.

In an Emergency

Leave behind clear, written instructions along with a signed, dated letter giving the caregiver permission to obtain medical care for your child. Daycare centers and homes keep this information on file. For in-home care, post the following near the phone:

- Your home address and phone number
- Your full name, work address, and phone number, as well as your spouse's
- Your pediatrician's name and phone number
- Your baby's full name, birth date, and medical conditions or allergies
- The names and phone numbers of alternative contacts if neither parent can be reached



Touching Base

At the end of the day, employed moms need to know: Was baby happy? How much did she eat? When did she nap? And most important, is this setup working out? That's why daily debriefing sessions are so important.

Having a meaningful conversation, however, is easier said than done with a group-care provider, whose attention is understandably diverted during hectic pickup times. If you want more than a thumbnail sketch of baby's day, you'll probably have to schedule a dis-



A few words at day's end can make a big difference.

cussion or ask her to keep a daily log of baby's meals, diaper changes, naps, and overall mood. For in-home care, use the last 15 minutes of the nanny's shift to check in with her about your infant's day. Other keys to keeping the lines of communication open: Give your caregiver a chance to ask you questions; tell her what you expect; and let her know she's appreciated.

So Long, Baby

Leaving your new baby may be harder for you than it is for him. It can be terribly disorienting to return to work: Everything is essentially the same, but you've changed dramatically. And even as you settle back into the office, your mind will be on your baby. This is perfectly normal, and a good caregiver will expect your frequent calls during those first few weeks.

But even before then, ease yourself and your infant into the arrangement. If you're bringing him to a group setting, spend a few days together there. He'll gain confidence in his new surroundings and you'll feel more comfortable with the program. If you hire a nanny, have her start a week early so she has a chance to acquaint herself with your baby, your home, and your routines.

As you and your baby become accustomed to the new setup, both of you will thrive. And when you see him blossom, you'll know you've chosen his care wisely and well.

BY ANNE FIELD

inding child-care programs to call was easy: You asked other parents, checked bulletin boards and local newspapers, asked your pediatrician for a recommendation, and even called the Child Care Aware Information Line (1-800-424-2246) for a resource and referral agency in your area. After phoning them all, you've narrowed down your options to just a few.

Now comes the hard part. To truly evaluate the quality of a program—be it family day care or a day-care center—experts say that an in-



Good caregivers sit down on the floor with the kids.

respectful and nurturing they are," says Janet Kahn Scolaro, a child and family therapist with South Nassau Communities Hospital, in Baldwin, New York. Providers should sit on the floor with the children rather than talking to the tops of their heads, or at least bend

er than insisting that a stove is used only for cooking.

Experts say you should leave your child at home for the first observational visit, so that you won't be distracted by taking care of her needs.

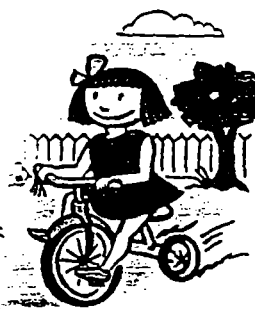
While you're watching the prospective provider in action, here are some other factors to note.

Environment. When a room is organized with distinct sections for different activities, it helps provide a sense

located away from the general play area.

For hot days, some kind of water relief is essential. "It doesn't have to be high-tech," says Scolaro. "Even a hose will do."

Staff changes. Ideally, you should observe every caregiver your child will be interacting with, so you may need to go back several times if there are staff



Separate play areas keep children safe.

How to be a day-care

Experts give pointers for spotting signs of trouble.

terview with an administrator or even a caregiver isn't enough. "You've got to spend a half hour in the room," says Jerlean Daniel, Ph.D., president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in Washington, D.C. "If a caregiver isn't warm and attentive to the children, she can't fake it for that long." Hearing a lot of "No, don't do that," rather than more skillful attempts at distraction, is a tip-off that you should find another arrangement.

"In well-run centers, caregivers take a child's-eye view. It tells you a lot about how

down when they give directions. "Caregivers should also look like they're having fun and be willing to go with the flow of a child's imagination," says Scolaro. If a child wants to pretend that the toy stove is a space shuttle, the caregiver ought to encourage the game, rather

of structure for children and a framework in which they can take advantage of stimulating activities. They will be more likely to play cooperatively if there is one area for blocks, one with a play kitchen, another for dolls, a table for art projects, and a quiet area where older children can read, rest, or just be alone. Age-appropriate toys and games should be accessible to kids, not stored where they can neither see nor reach them. Similarly, wall decorations and children's artwork ought to be positioned at a kid's eye level.

Children also need an outdoor space where they can run, jump, and let off steam. There should be a separate area for riding tricycles and other vehicles, and swings should be

ing of the guard as many as five times in one day.) In order for an infant to receive optimal care, there should be no more than one primary caregiver assigned to him. "A baby needs to know there is someone he can count on," says Barbara Reisman, executive director of the Child Care Action Campaign, in New York City. If a shift change is unavoidable, make sure the same person relieves the primary caregiver each day. If your child is a toddler or preschooler, you should select a center with no more than two or three shifts per day. Regardless of the number of caregivers, if they seem exhausted or burned out, continue your search: If you sense their dissatisfaction, so will your child.

Safety essentials. Make sure the caregiver or center has taken the same types of precautions that you would



Kids need a place where they can escape the commotion.

WORK & FAMILY

By Sue Shellenbarger

Costly Camps Put Many Parents in Bind For Summer Day Care

MANY WORKING parents in Patty Miller's area of the Midwest this summer are arranging a rich mix of activities for their kids: art, science and computer camps and theater and environmental-studies programs.

But for Ms. Miller's 12-year-old daughter, summer offers little more than a demand that she grow up too soon. She'll be staying home, caring for her 10- and 11-year-old siblings, because Ms. Miller, an administrative staffer at a nonprofit concern, can't afford the summer programs in her town. "I feel like I'm letting my kids down," says Ms. Miller, a single mother who makes \$12,000 a year.

She hates leaving them alone and knows it's risky and hard on them, "but I don't know what else to do. There's nothing out there I can afford." The \$150-a-week tab for sending her children to camp would eat up most of her pay.

Amid the summer rush by working parents to plan activities for school-age kids, a nagging problem is getting quietly but inexorably worse: The gap between haves and have-nots, worrisome enough during the school year, widens into a chasm when schools close in June.

High-end summer camps in special-interest areas ranging from space travel to Shakespeare are booming, says a 16-state survey by Child Care Aware, a nonprofit Rochester, Minn., child-care improvement and referral concern. But lower-cost programs that suit less-affluent parents' budgets and work hours are scarce.

One result: Staffers I interviewed at six nonprofit child-care resource-and-referral agencies across the country see signs that the number of children left home alone is rising. The agencies are getting more calls from parents asking when they can legally leave kids alone. (State laws vary; while some specify an age, usually 10 to 12, others set no limit.)

CHILD-CARE affordability problems "are particularly acute in the summer," says Barbara Reisman of the nonprofit Child Care Action Campaign, New York. Day-care-weary children ages nine and up often resist going to day-care centers or having a sitter; the recreational programs they like average \$100 a week and range from \$50 to \$700, Child Care Aware says.

"I went to an Ivy League college, and I'm paying for four weeks of camp what my parents paid for a year of college" in the early '70s, says a New Jersey mother, whose son is spending a month on a Vermont lake for \$2,200.

Some inexpensive programs are being cut. Palm Beach County, Fla., officials eliminated summer school this year for 11,000 children through eighth grade. And government child-care subsidies, for parents like Ms. Miller, often don't apply to summer programs not licensed by the state.

Good, affordable, full-day programs are packed. In Charlotte, N.C., parents bearing sleeping bags

start lining up at 3 p.m. the day before signups begin to get a slot in Mecklenburg County's \$74-a-month camp. "We could easily double the enrollment" but lack funds and facilities, a spokeswoman says.

There isn't any data over time on kids in self-care during the summer: the latest national sampling, in 1990 by the Urban Institute, found 19% of children ages six through 12 are left alone at least part of the time in summer, usually for short periods; self-care was the primary arrange-



Carol Lay

ment for 2%. But the population of kids six through 13 has increased 8.4% since then, and a growing percentage come from single-parent or dual-earner families.

Self-care can be risky: in Detroit, officials report a 25% summer rise in residential fires caused by children left alone. Beyond that, it seldom yields the idyllic, Tom Sawyer-like experience of fishing and hanging out enjoyed by kids in the past; today, many parents forbid kids left home alone to even leave the house.

THE CHILD CARE Resource Center in Tulsa, Okla., has been getting urgent calls from parents each June for help finding child care. "They say, 'We were going to do self-care and it's just not working,'" says the center's Sharon Bentley. She says parents spend a lot of time on the telephone with kids who are frightened or bored and want to leave the house.

It's a wasted opportunity, too. Summer learning directly affects school performance, says Joan Bergstrom, a professor at Wheelock College, Boston, and author on educational issues. The 11- to 13-year-old age range is crucial for developing qualities, such as self-reliance and resourcefulness, that foster success in adulthood, she says.

"It's really important to feel good about yourself and get competent in something around 11, 12 or 13."

Once again, a few employers are proving a source of creative solutions. The American Business Collaboration, a 156-employer group, is helping finance more than 100 community summer camps, including 81 programs on an Olympics theme.

In New York City, a partnership of 10 employers organized by Child Care Inc., a resource-and-referral group, is planning to expand community programs for kids.

In Livingston County, Mich., where 10,000 more summer child-care slots are needed, Citizens Insurance Co. of America helps fund community recreation programs.

"We know we're not going to get more funding from the government for these programs," says Linda Herbert of the county's Community Coordinated Child Care Council. "We're really looking to employers," collaborating with community agencies, for help

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Enterprise: Exporters set the pace among fast-growing small firms

Page B2.

Advertising: D'Arcy Masius reserves N.W. Ayer with acquisition

Page B2.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MARKETPLACE

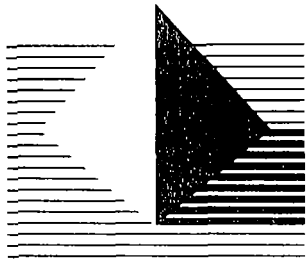
Technology: IBM studies unbundling Notes for possible Internet use

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Technology: SystemSoft to unveil self-help software for PC users

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1996, B



NACCRRA

National Association of Child Care
Resource and Referral Agencies

Ter/Nicole/Cynthia -

It doesn't do
anything for me.

Am I wrong?

June 17, 1997

Elena

Mr. Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

Enclosed is a proposal for an event to enhance the upcoming White House conference on child care and to underscore the President and Mrs. Clinton's commitment to American children and families.

We are proposing that the President and Mrs. Clinton take the lead in launching a national day of recognition for child care professionals, which would take place in the spring but which could be announced on the day of the White House child care conference this November. We suggest that Child Care Professional's Day be established by an executive order, and that Child Care Aware and its corporate sponsors provide a "launch event" that enhances the conference.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Child Care Aware, a partnership of leading nonprofit organizations related to child care, are working hard to build a stable, high-quality child care system throughout both urban and rural America and to make sure that parents know how to find good child care. As you know, the need for quality child care extends to millions of American families, and their numbers are increasing as more parents exit the welfare rolls and enter the workforce. As the need for child care in our country grows, the key to success will be adequate numbers of well-trained, highly motivated providers.

Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, has been quite enthusiastic about our idea of a conference-day event to showcase the work that the President and Mrs. Clinton have done to make life better for American families, and to launch this important day. We hope you will agree that such an event provides a valuable opportunity for the Clinton Administration, and that an annual day of recognition for child care providers will add a permanent insignia to the President and Mrs. Clinton's legacy of commitment to children and families.

We would appreciate your reviewing our proposal at your earliest convenience, as plans for the White House conference are already underway. Child Care Aware and its corporate sponsors, including General Mills (Cheerios), stand ready to support the President and Mrs. Clinton in their objectives for the conference on child care, and to provide a positively memorable event. Please reply by July 1 to Yasmina at 202-393-5501.

Thank you for your consideration.

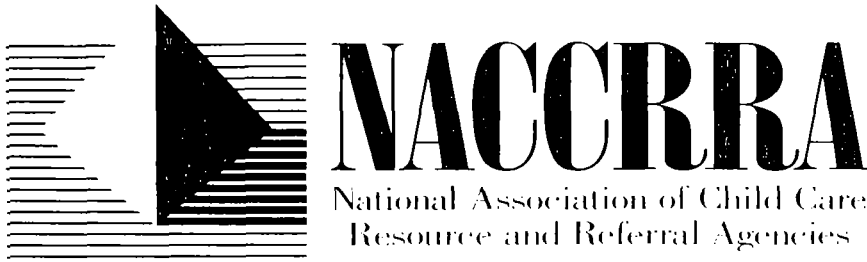
Sincerely,

Yasmina Vinci

Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Tutti Sherlock

Tutti Sherlock
Board Chair
Child Care Aware



June 17, 1997

The President and Mrs. Clinton
The White House
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton:

On behalf of NACCRRRA and Child Care Aware, a partnership of leading nonprofit organizations, we applaud your efforts to bring national attention to child care through a White House conference. Child care and early education are a part of daily life for millions of American families with children. Obtaining stable, high-quality child care will be critical to the success of parents leaving the welfare rolls to enter the workforce, and it will be a key factor in the health and well-being of their children. Clearly, child care issues also affect companies and even government agencies whose employees cannot be productive without the help of child care they can rely on.

We would like to suggest a cooperative effort between your administration and Child Care Aware to initiate a national Child Care Professional's Day, to be announced in conjunction with your upcoming White House conference on child care. When we presented the idea to Joan Lombardi, associate commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, she encouraged us to write to you immediately. We urge you and your administration to take the lead in launching this special day. Working with Child Care Aware to launch a day in honor of professional child care providers will be an opportunity for you to continue building your legacy of commitment to America's children.

Why create an annual Child Care Professional's Day?

- The role of child care professionals in our children's early development cannot be underestimated. As Americans learned from the April 17 White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning, early care has decisive and long-lasting effects on how children develop socially and academically, and how they cope with stress.
- A solid partnership between parents and child care professionals is essential to the quality of child care. Child Care Professional's Day will help parents understand and appreciate the role of child care professionals, thereby strengthening this important partnership.
- Professionalism—that is, training in early child development and education—is linked to the quality of care that our children receive. Studies in the field show conclusively that children do better in programs run by trained, licensed and accredited child care professionals.
- Without loving, trained child care professionals, millions of parents would not be able to work and be productive, or complete their education. The availability of trained professionals to care for our children cannot be separated from the state of our nation's economy or from the success of welfare reform.

- Child Care Professional's Day provides opportunities to showcase skilled, nurturing providers and quality child care settings so that parents will know what to look for when choosing child care.
- Recognizing caregivers motivates them to stay in a field where demand vastly exceeds the supply and where pay can be less than rewarding. Child Care Professional's Day, therefore, will help ensure continuity of care, which is important to proper development in a child's early years.
- Child Care Professional's Day will energize more nurturing, capable people to become child care professionals as welfare reform increases the need throughout the country.

Mr. President, we sincerely believe that you, Mrs. Clinton and your entire administration can build on a legacy of commitment to families by leading the launch of a Child Care Professional's Day. The partners of Child Care Aware in this venture include the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Child Care Action Campaign, Families and Work Institute, the National Association for Family Child Care, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Most importantly, Child Care Aware has identified a number of corporate and media partners who share our vision of quality child care for all American families. To date, we have partnership commitments from General Mills, maker of Cheerios and other nutritious food brands, the General Mills Foundation, and Scholastic, the world's largest educational publisher. We anticipate that other partners will join this effort, as well.

While Child Care Professional's Day is still in the conceptual stage, we envision a launch that might include the following activities, and we would welcome your input:

- The day would be established by Executive Order during the White House conference on child care.
- The day would occur annually on the last Friday in April, when most children are settled into their child care programs and when no other holiday occurs.
- To help generate publicity for the Executive Order, General Mills will sponsor a Cheerios breakfast on the South Lawn for local area child care providers, children and parents on the morning of the White House conference.
- Child Care Aware will present you and Mrs. Clinton with an award in recognition of your ongoing commitment to the future of America's children.
- We would invite you to make an address focusing on the value of child care professionals who are trained in early childhood development. (Please note: Child Care Aware is a nonprofit initiative funded by corporate contributions and foundation grants. We do not sell or administer child care training programs and have no financial interest in any program.)

Following the White House conference, we will promote Child Care Professional's Day through the media, as well as on Cheerios boxes and in child care programs and schools. We also are planning a series of local community events throughout the country to prepare for the day.

Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton, we believe that you and your administration will see value in developing a national Child Care Professional's Day to recognize exceptional child care providers. Along with programs to support children and their parents, Child Care Professional's Day completes your well-conceived effort to make sure that every child in America starts out right, with the quality care they need to grow into happy, healthy and productive citizens.

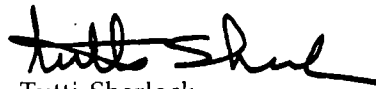
As you read this letter, the Child Care Bureau is gathering support for your plans for the White House conference on child care. Child Care Aware is offering to bring our corporate and media partners together to launch Child Care Professional's Day in conjunction with the conference. Can we count on you and Mrs. Clinton to lead the launch of this important day?

We appreciate your considering this suggestion. Again, we applaud your efforts to ensure the best possible care for each and every one of America's children.

Sincerely,



Yasmina Vinci
Director, National Association of
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies



Tutti Sherlock
Board Chair
Child Care Aware

cc: Ms. Donna Shalala, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Ms. Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner, Child Care Bureau

Background Note:

As the consumer education arm of America's network of over 550 child care resource and referral programs, Child Care Aware worked with the Child Care Bureau to design a consumer education leadership forum earlier this year. We also recently completed a manuscript for publication by the Department of Health and Human Services detailing the successes of grass roots consumer education programs initiated and funded by Child Care Aware.

Child Care AwareSM

Informed parents making better child care choices.

Our Mission

To ensure that every parent has access to good information about finding quality child care and resources in their community, through national consumer marketing and by raising visibility for local child care resource and referral agencies.

Our Strategies

Child Care Aware will accomplish its mission by:

1. Building consumer awareness and access to information on the national level, in partnership with retailers and other corporate sponsors, and by
2. Building consumer awareness of the information and services available from local community child care resource and referral agencies.

Our Successes

Founded in 1988 with a grant from the Dayton Hudson Foundation and the Dayton Hudson Corporation, including its three operating divisions (Target, Mervyn's and The Department Store Division), Child Care Aware has successfully accomplished many of the objectives of its original mission, which included pioneering and supporting the professional development and training of family child care providers as well as educating parents to recognize and choose good child care:

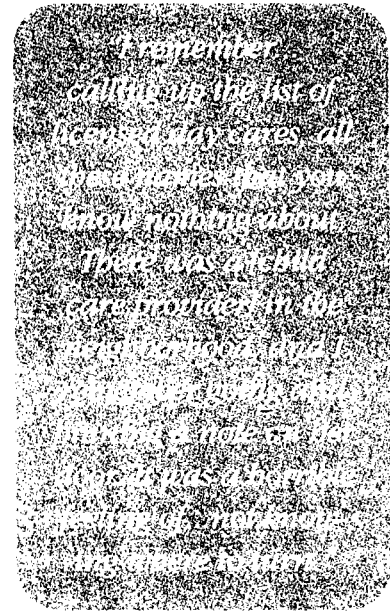
-  Initiated development of training courses of 15 hours or more for 17,000 family child care providers in 40 local communities, improving the quality of care for over 85,000 children.
-  Prompted the *1995 Family Child Care Training Study* conducted by the Families and Work Institute, which found that following training, children were more secure with their providers and more engaged in activities, and overall quality in family child care improved.
-  Supported more than 700 family child care providers in achieving accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the highest standard for family child care quality in the country. The providers supported by Child Care Aware account for half of all accredited family child care providers in the United States.
-  Conducted parent focus groups in nine cities to better understand parents' values, attitudes and concerns about child care. Results were used to craft messages and identify communication strategies during Child Care Aware's national consumer awareness campaign launched in 1992.
-  Established a national, toll-free parent information hotline linking parents nationwide with their local child care resource and referral agencies, and disseminating information about how to recognize and choose quality child care.
-  Distributed 7.25 million information-packed brochures directly to parents through the toll-free hotline; through Dayton Hudson Corporation retail stores, child care resource and referral agencies, community organizations, hospitals, churches and schools; and at public events.
-  Awarded Consumer Education Grants totaling over \$360,000 for 36 pilot programs in 21 states, designed for replication by community-based and statewide child care advocacy organizations.
-  Contributed to articles on choosing good child care in *USA Today*, *Parents* magazine, *Family Circle*, *Working Mother*, *Business Week*, *Fortune* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and to segments on ABC, CBS and NBC network news programs.

Child Care: A Parent's Most Important Consumer Decision

Every day, **10 million to 12 million children below the age of 5** require full-time or part-time child care, for which parents are spending **\$27 billion a year**. That's just for care of children under age 5! The numbers swell when combined with quality care for the **24 million school-age children** too young to stay home alone before and after school while parents work, look for work, or get job training.

According to the New York-based Families and Work Institute, only about one percent of employers in the U.S. offer child care options such as flex-time, on-site child care and subsidized care. That leaves the majority of parents on their own to find quality, affordable child care that will give them peace of mind.

Even when parents do have sufficient information to recognize and choose good child care, they sometimes cannot find it. The solemn fact is that only 9 to 12 percent of child care in America is truly growth-enhancing for children, and that 60 percent is merely custodial—that is, not harmful to children but not particularly nurturing either. The remaining 28 to 31 percent of child care is inadequate care. However, with well-informed consumers comes demand for more and better services—for quality child care as for well-maintained aircraft or low-fat foods.



Parents Speak About Child Care.
Kathy Modigliani, Wheelock College

Why do we believe that a **consumer marketing approach** can help solve America's child care dilemma?

- ☒ Because in order to reach parents everywhere with the messages and frequency required to change attitudes and behavior, we need to meet them on their own ground: the consumer marketplace. The Child Care Aware toll-free information number must be accessible through popular media and wherever parents go for shopping, personal services, health care, recreation, transportation and worship.
- ☒ Because in focus groups, parents say they feel isolated when looking for child care. When local child care resource and referral agencies become as familiar as the yellow pages, parents will know where to turn for help and will no longer feel alone in their search.
- ☒ Because the quality of child care needs to improve, and economic studies have shown that quality improvement happens only when consumers demand it. We can increase demand by educating parents so that they know what good child care looks like and how to ask for it.
- ☒ Because child care is perceived as a family affair, even though child care issues affect the workplace and community, too. National studies provide overwhelming evidence that good child care contributes to the high self-esteem that helps keep kids away from drugs, early pregnancy and crime. And good child care means a better outlook for our future workforce.
- ☒ Because TV reports about bad or abusive child care do not offer practical advice for avoiding bad care and recognizing quality care. Parents need this information and they need to know about the local resources available to help them.

Child Care Aware is a **privately funded** initiative uniting national nonprofit child care concerns, local child care resource and referral agencies, and corporate sponsors in the effort to create a marketplace of informed parents making better child care choices and driving demand for quality child care. The results, we believe, will benefit not only parents, but also employers and every community.



SAMPLING OF MEDIA MENTIONS

CHILD CARE AWARE

SPECIAL EDITION

YOUR CHILD Newweek®

Spring/Summer 1997 \$3.50

From Birth to Three

What You Need
To Know

How Speech
Begins

A Baby's Brain

Genes &
Emotions

What's Normal,
What's Not



Where You Can Turn

BY CARLA KOEHL

AVID "TELE-PARENTS" WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE'S nothing like a phone jack and 16 megabytes of RAM for navigating the mysteries, hurdles and hassles of life with an infant or toddler. If only you had Netscape and a 28.8 modem—or at least speed-dial—they'll say, you'd be surfing and dialing your way to parental bliss with all the child-rearing info that's available by PC and phone. Are they batty? No. Just a little excited.

There are now more places than ever to phone for help when mothers and fathers feel parentally challenged. And the explosion of parenting Web sites and newsgroups that's taken place on the Internet over the last five years is connecting families from household to household the way the telephone did for the first time in 1876. Only this time the advance in communications isn't just overcoming distance and isolation. It's conquering stigmas.

Kate Ripley was nursing her newborn in her cabin half an hour outside Fairbanks,



Online support: Rory and Kate

Alaska, when she found an online breast-feeding newsgroup. "I was really lonely," she says. "It was a huge relief." Now that Rory's 9 months, the baby books are hinting that he's eating too often. Ripley's group (misc.kids.breastfeeding) says otherwise. "You don't just want to have someone validate everything you think," she says. "But it's such a variety of voices, you can cull." Even in Los Angeles, where there's no such thing as a remote location, actor Brian Markinson logs on whenever he and his wife are stumped about their 9-month-old. "It's another resource," he says, "rather than call a doctor and feel like you're being a pain."

Technological alarmists, of course, take delight in warning that millions of modem-happy moms and dads will do nothing but produce millions of antisocial, monitor-gazing kids. A reliance on dial-tone parenting, they insist, keeps families, friends and neighbors from trading advice the old-fashioned way: in person. But a glance at all the live, wired interaction out there suggests that, so far, the alarmists are wrong.

On the Net

alt.parenting and misc.kids
Great places to start on the Usenet—the Internet's collection of newsgroups—for discussions on hundreds of topics from teething and breast-feeding to pets and snoring. Also, rec.arts.books.children is a 24-hour-a-day book group on children's literature.

Childbirth.org

<http://www.childbirth.org>
Top discussion forums here, and a home page that gets right to the point on tough issues, including "Pregnancy & HIV," "Having Your First Baby Over 35" and "Complications."

Family.com

<http://www.family.com>
Disney's new site has been criticized for being more upscale than helpful. But their bulletin boards and chat rooms are filled with the voices of intelligent, caring parents. They must be doing something right.

ParentTalk Newsletter

<http://www.tnpe.com/parenttalk/index.html>
Clearly written articles by physicians and psychologists. What this site lacks in graphic creativity, it makes up for in sheer mass of information.

ParenthoodWeb

<http://parenthoodweb.com>
Pediatricians and psychiatrists respond (in due time) to your e-mail. Meanwhile, they've posted their stock answers to anything-but-stock questions, including "Did we make a mistake by having a child?"

Parenting Q&A

<http://www.parenting-qa.com/>
This site calls itself the only one on the Web "solely devoted to providing parents with answers to their most pressing questions." It does answer questions faster than most other sites we tried. But it also offers essays on touchy subjects like spirituality, and suggests reading lists for kids, games for rainy days.

ParentSoup

<http://www.parentsoup.com/>
Excellent discussion forums address everything from step-parenting and disciplining closely spaced siblings to premature babies and children with attention deficit disorder.

Zero to Three

<http://www.zerotothree.org>
The Washington, D.C.-based child-advocacy group has just launched its Web site. On it: a wealth of research and information on physical, cognitive and social development of infants and toddlers.

On the Phone

Child Care Aware

800-424-2246

Operators refer parents anywhere in the country to licensed and accredited child-care centers in their area. They'll also send, at no charge, an information packet on how to choose quality child care. Coordinated by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Weekdays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

ChildHelp National Hotline

800-4-A-CHILD

Twenty-four-hour advice and referrals for children and adults with questions or in crisis. Staffers with graduate degrees in counseling field calls on issues ranging from child-abuse prevention to whether it's normal for a 3-year-old girl to try urinating while standing up. (Yes, says a hotline counselor, it is.)

Gerber Information Line

800-443-7237

Tipper Gore's recorded welcome message jolts you from thoughts of strained peas on this 24-hour consumer-info line (she reminds callers that doctors recommend having babies sleep on their backs). Moms, dads, grandparents—not nurses—work the phones, advising

callers on nonmedical essentials like diapering, sleeping and "lots and lots of questions about food," says one operator.

National Parent Information Network

800-583-4135

NPIN boasts the largest parenting database in the country. Researchers hunt down referrals, abstracts and answers—and send them free of charge—to hundreds of callers every month. Trouble with toilet training, the merits of co-op playgroups vs. private preschools, baby bowel movements: absolutely nothing is out of bounds here. Weekdays, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

Parents Anonymous

909-621-6184 (not toll-free)

The national office in Claremont, Calif., refers parents to 45 state and regional affiliates, which offer support groups, counseling, referrals. Weekdays, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. PST.

Single Parents Association

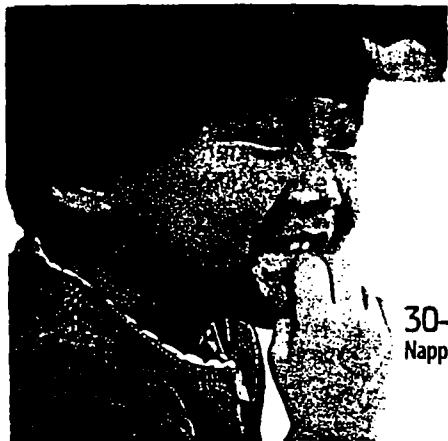
800-704-2102

This line, which has just gone national, helps parents find support groups and resources in their communities, fields questions on parenting skills and reminds single parents that they're not alone. Weekdays, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. CST.

With T. TRENT GEGAX

Working Life

child care



What kids like about child care

When Child Care Aware, a public-service campaign based in Rochester, Minnesota, surveyed nearly 800 4- to 10-year-old children in day-care centers and family child-care settings in 16 states, these were the activities kids said they enjoyed most.

30-40%
Napping

40-50%
Singing

60-70%
Getting hugs from teachers
Storytelling
Playing make-believe
Playing musical instruments
Playing in the sandbox
Reading and writing

70-80%
Watching television and videotapes
Taking care of animals
Playing with games, toys, and blocks
Painting and drawing

80-90%
Having a snack
Playing with others
Going to the playground
Going for walks and outings
Making friends

Paying caregivers their due

May 1 is Worthy Wage Day, an annual event held to call attention to the low wages paid to child-care providers. According to the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, which sponsors the campaign, the average wage for child-care workers in centers is \$6.70 per hour, and family child-care providers make even less. **In fact, salaries fall below the poverty level for 70 percent of the child-care workforce.**

Caregivers are not the only ones who suffer in this situation: **More than 35 percent of child-care workers leave the field every year,** and when teachers come and go, children can't form the stable, secure relationships they need.

The long-term goal of Worthy Wage Day is to allow workers to be paid what they deserve without increasing the burden on parents. The additional funds would come from government allocations and from corporate subsidies for employees.

You can champion the cause by attending pro-child-care rallies, wearing a button, or participating in teacher-appreciation activities. **To find out what's happening in your area, call 800-UR-WORTHY.**



If you can't manage an occasional romantic rendezvous with your husband because of the cost of sitters, **joining a baby-sitting cooperative**—a group of parents who take turns minding each other's children—may be the solu-

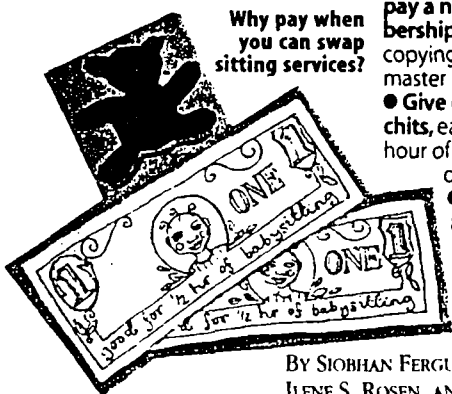
tion. There are more than just financial benefits: Your kids (and you) may form some lasting friendships, and you'll have the comfort of knowing that mature adults are watching your children when you're not there.

Free sitters

To find a baby-sitting co-op, ask your PTA if they know of any groups in your area and check bulletin boards at your grocery store, health club, house of worship, and pediatrician's office. Or follow these guidelines to set up your own.

- **Advertise for members** by tacking flyers to bulletin boards in places parents frequent.
- **Start with one or two other families** and build from there. **A membership of no more than 24 families** works best, so that administration doesn't get out of hand.
- **Make a master list.** Include children's names and ages, the typical times that the family is available (for example, weekend evenings only), and any necessary emergency and medical information.
- **Ask each family to pay a nominal membership fee** to cover the copying costs for the master list and for chits.
- **Give every family 20 chits,** each worth a half hour of baby-sitting for one child.
- **Official rules and monthly meetings** help things run more smoothly.

Why pay when you can swap sitting services?



BY SIOBHAN FERGUS TOSCANO, ILENE S. ROSEN, AND LYNN GOSNELL

Working 5 to 9

Finding affordable, high-quality child care is hard enough for parents who work 9 to 5, but for those on weekend, overnight, or rotating shifts, the challenge is even greater. Currently, 7.2 million mothers with more than 11 million children need "off-hours" care. Many of these women work in the medical, hotel, and manu-

facturing fields.

Though most day-care centers are geared to the rhythm of daytimers, businesses and communities around the country are coming up with innovative solutions.

After learning that workers at a local food-processing plant were leaving their children in their cars to sleep during overnight shifts, the nonprofit group Western Idaho Community Action Program persuaded several day-care providers to stay

open longer hours.

In Phoenix, a consortium of employers formed Close To Home, which recruits and trains family child-care workers to watch children at all hours.

Four hotels united to form Atlanta's Inn for Children, a 24-hour-a-day center that serves many shift workers in the city's booming tourism industry.

For help finding care, call Child Care Aware at 800-424-2246 for the number of local resource and referral agencies.

PHOTO: JAMES J. LOYD; ILLUSTRATION: CLAUDIA PEARSON FOR ART DEPARTMENT ILLUSTRATION



INSIDE

Beginning Your Search *Choosing between in-home care, family daycare, and center care*

It's All Relative *Granny as nanny*

Keep It Legal *Avoiding your own personal Nannygate*

Licensing *What does it really mean?*

The Interview *Quizzing a potential caregiver*

Is Daycare Bad for Babies? *The latest research*

Backup Care *If your infant or sitter gets sick*

Touching Base *Daily debriefings*

In an Emergency *Information to leave*

So Long, Baby *Saying good-bye*

The Daycare Decision

Days with your newborn pass in a blur, and before you know it—probably before you're ready—your maternity leave will be over. Even if you're looking forward to returning to work, it's heart-wrenching to think that someone else will be caring for your little one in your stead, feeding her, playing with her, perhaps even witnessing her first steps or first words.

That's exactly why the search for childcare can't be taken lightly. It's essential not only for your peace of mind but also for your baby's health and development to find just the right person to care for and nurture her, make her feel safe and valued, and, of course, to play with her. Though the task seems daunting, with some homework and some legwork, you *can* find the best care for the newest member of your family. ➤



Beginning Your Search If you're considering family daycare or center care, you need to know when your child is born. If you plan to hire an in-home caregiver, begin looking for her soon. Ask your friends and neighbors and check out local bulletin boards, or contact your local health department for more information.

It's All Relative

What could be better than having your mother or another relative take care of your baby? Not much. You know and trust her, and she already loves your little one. So if a relative offers to care for your baby, count your blessings—and then think carefully before you accept. Does she really understand what's involved? Is she willing to make a long-term commitment? Is she fit and healthy? Finally, did your heart leap at the idea—or did it sink? Be sure to heed your instincts. If you accept her offer, you'll need to establish the same good communication and clear ground rules you would with any caregiver.



Option #1: In-Home Care



Cost: \$900 to \$2,600 a month. Nannies aren't just for the rich. If you share care with another family or provide room and board in lieu of some cash, even in-home care can fit in your budget.

The Basics Call a potential caregiver to find out about her fee, experience, skills, training, last job, available hours, and mode of transportation. If she's a recent immigrant, ask about green-card status and vaccinations, and make sure there isn't a language barrier.

Next Steps If the phone interview goes well, invite her over for a lengthier chat (see "The Interview," opposite page). Before you hire someone, be sure to call her references and consider contacting your state police office, DMV, and county courthouse to check into a possible criminal background or poor driving record. Happy with everything so far? Ask her to spend a few days with you and your baby (pay her for her time, of course). If all goes well, offer her the job and draw up a contract that spells out her responsibilities, schedule, pay, and holidays, vacations, and sick days (many families offer paid days off).

Advantages

- Highly individualized care
- Scheduling flexibility
- Babies stay in familiar surroundings
- Less germ exposure than other settings
- No drop-offs and pickups
- Caregiver may do household chores
- She may stay with family long-term

Disadvantages

- Little or no regular interaction with other children
- No one there to monitor caregiver
- No backup if caregiver becomes ill or quits without notice
- High burnout rate
- You must pay employment taxes

Keep It Legal

You don't have to be a politician to heed the Nanny Tax. If you're caught paying someone off the books, you'll pay steep back taxes, interest, and penalties. In addition, paying your caregiver legally provides her with Social Se-

curity and unemployment benefits and allows you to use a flexible spending account and claim an Earned Income Credit. If you pay a private caregiver more than \$50 in three months, you're responsible for Social Security and

Medicare taxes. If you pay more than \$1,000 a year, you must pay unemployment tax. For details, call 800/829-1040 and ask for IRS booklet #926.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: YAN NASCIMBENE, KEN SHUNG, DAENNRICH/III IMAGE WORKS, JOHN KUCZALA

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: STEVEN EDSON, YAN NASCIMBENE, ELIZABETH CREWS/III IMAGE WORKS

re or center care, you may need to sign up even before your child
 six weeks before you return to work. Where to start? Ask
 parents' resource groups, newspapers, and nanny agencies.

DAYCARE INFO: WHO TO CALL

U.S. Information Agency, 202/401-9810
 ChildCare
 Aware Hotline, 800/424-7245

Option #2: Family Daycare

Cost: \$300 to \$800 a month

For many parents, the next best thing to home is the cozy environment and loose structure of family daycare.

The Basics Call and ask: Is there an opening? How many children in the home (there shouldn't be more than six)? How many infants (no more than two)? What are the hours? Fees? Is she licensed? How long has she been in business?

How does she balance babies' needs with older kids' needs? How does she feel about nursing visits or handling pumped milk? Can you drop in anytime? Who covers for her? What's her sick-child and late-pickup policy?

Next Steps If you like her answers, arrange a visit. Look for a caregiver who's responsive and affectionate; an environment that is appealing, clean, and safe; stimulating, fun activities; happy children; toys and books in good condition; a napping place; healthy lunches and snacks; an outdoor play space or regular outings to a park or playground. If you're satisfied with what you see, schedule an interview during the children's naptime or after hours.

Advantages

- Warm, homey atmosphere
- Relatively small group
- Mixed ages
- Some scheduling flexibility
- Stimulating play and learning opportunities

Disadvantages

- Little one-on-one attention
- Caregiver may have no formal training
- No backup if caregiver gets sick or takes a vacation
- Home may close during summer
- Caregiver may pursue other jobs



Kids of different ages can get acquainted in family daycare.

What Does "Licensed" Really Mean?

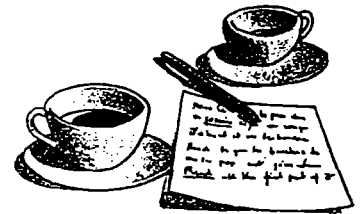
Family daycare licensing covers only health and safety issues, not quality, and no license is required in many states. That's why you'll need to make sure a program meets your own stringent standards.

Daycare centers in every state must meet health and safety requirements. But a better benchmark of quality is accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In-home caregivers do not generally need to be licensed, but some states require licensing for those tending more than two unrelated children.

The Interview

A face-to-face meeting with a caregiver is like a blind date: You're trying to learn enough about each other to decide if you want to pursue a relationship. Since actions speak louder than words, observe how a candidate responds to your



baby as well as how she answers your questions. Then go with your gut feelings. It's vital that you like her and can communicate with her. Standard questions include:

- Why do you work with children? What do you like most, and least, about it?
- What training do you have?
- How long were you at your last job? Why did you leave?
- How long do you plan to stay in the childcare field?
- Are you CPR-certified or willing to learn?
- How do you feel about parents dropping in?
- How do you discipline?
- What do you think babies need most?

Option #3: Daycare Centers

Cost: \$400 to \$2,200 a month

There's no getting around it: Institutional daycare isn't always ideal—or particularly easy to find—for babies. But if you must consider it, look for a program geared toward infant development that's staffed by dynamic, warm, and committed caregivers. After all, any daycare setting is only as good as the people who work there.

Is Daycare Bad for Babies?

There's no easy answer to that question. While experts agree that it's best for an infant to stay with a caring parent, that isn't always an option. How will daycare affect a baby's development? A recent study found that ten hours of quality daycare a week doesn't necessarily threaten the mother-baby bond. But most working families need daycare for far longer than that, and other research isn't too cheerful, either: One study shows that babies who have a succession of caregivers may later have difficulty with friendships and social situations. Another found that up to 40 percent of programs were potentially harmful to a baby's health and development. What's a parent to do?

Quality and consistency of care are paramount, so seek out someone trained in early childhood education or use a center with NAEYC accreditation. But above all, make sure the person you hire is responsive, loving, playful—and committed to staying with your baby. A child can and should bond with her caregiver, so foster a warm, affectionate relationship between them.



The Basics Call the center and find out: Is there an opening? What are the hours and fees? Are there late-pickup charges? Does the center have NAEYC accreditation? How is the staff trained? What's the turnover rate? How many babies per caregiver and per group? (There should not be more than four and eight, respectively.) Does a baby have the same caregiver at all times? Where do infants nap? What's the attitude toward breastfeeding visits and handling pumped milk? Can parents drop in?

Next Steps If you're satisfied with the answers, arrange a visit. Look for a loving, responsive staff who cuddle and play with their charges and who wash their hands frequently; happy children; a baby area that's clean, safe, and quiet; a nurturing environment with room to roll, crawl, play, and explore; and infants who are fed and diapered according to their needs, not a schedule. Finally, ask yourself, would I want to spend all week here? If the answer is yes, schedule an interview with the director.

Advantages

- Must meet state licensing regulations
- May have NAEYC accreditation
- Staff is typically well-trained
- Chance to interact with other babies
- Offers stimulating play and learning opportunities
- May offer extended hours
- No need for backup if caregiver's sick

Disadvantages

- Little one-on-one attention
- Environment can be noisy and chaotic
- High turnover means inconsistent care and lack of continuity
- Exposure to germs can cause illness
- Strict schedules



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: ELIZABETH CREW/THE IMAGE WORKS, YAN NASCIMBENE, JOHN KUCZALA

Once You've Made a Decision You've finally found the right person to care for your baby, but your work isn't done. To ensure that they have everything they need, you'll need to consider a few more things:

Backup Care

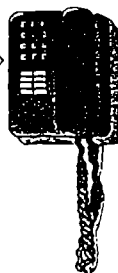
Sometimes, even the best-laid childcare plans fall apart—your caregiver gets sick or quits, or your baby runs a fever and can't go to daycare. Since you may not be able to take time off work when this happens, make

an emergency backup plan long before you need it. Can you call a nearby relative or stay-at-home friend? Does your employer offer emergency childcare? Is there a local sick-child center or agency that provides short-term, in-home sitters? Such care isn't cheap, but it may be the only option.

In an Emergency

Leave behind clear, written instructions along with a signed, dated letter giving the caregiver permission to obtain medical care for your child. Daycare centers and homes keep this information on file. For in-home care, post the following near the phone:

- Your home address and phone number
- Your full name, work address, and phone number, as well as your spouse's
- Your pediatrician's name and phone number
- Your baby's full name, birth date, and medical conditions or allergies
- The names and phone numbers of alternative contacts if neither parent can be reached



Touching Base

At the end of the day, employed moms need to know: Was baby happy? How much did she eat? When did she nap? And most important, is this setup working out? That's why daily debriefing sessions are so important.

Having a meaningful conversation, however, is easier said than done with a group-care provider, whose attention is understandably diverted during hectic pickup times. If you want more than a thumbnail sketch of baby's day, you'll probably have to schedule a dis-



A few words at day's end can make a big difference.

cussion or ask her to keep a daily log of baby's meals, diaper changes, naps, and overall mood. For in-home care, use the last 15 minutes of the nanny's shift to check in with her about your infant's day. Other keys to keeping the lines of communication open: Give your caregiver a chance to ask you questions; tell her what you expect; and let her know she's appreciated.

So Long, Baby

Leaving your new baby may be harder for you than it is for him. It can be terribly disorienting to return to work: Everything is essentially the same, but you've changed dramatically. And even as you settle back into the office, your mind will be on your baby. This is perfectly normal, and a good caregiver will expect your frequent calls during those first few weeks.

But even before then, ease yourself and your infant into the arrangement. If you're bringing him to a group setting, spend a few days together there. He'll gain confidence in his new surroundings and you'll feel more comfortable with the program. If you hire a nanny, have her start a week early so she has a chance to acquaint herself with your baby, your home, and your routines.

As you and your baby become accustomed to the new setup, both of you will thrive. And when you see him blossom, you'll know you've chosen his care wisely and well.

BY ANNE FIELD

inding child-care programs to call was easy: You asked other parents, checked bulletin boards and local newspapers, asked your pediatrician for a recommendation, and even called the Child Care Aware Information Line (1-800-424-2246) for a resource and referral agency in your area. After phoning them all, you've narrowed down your options to just a few.

Now comes the hard part. To truly evaluate the quality of a program—be it family day care or a day-care center—experts say that an in-



Good caregivers sit down on the floor with the kids.

respectful and nurturing they are," says Janet Kahn Scolaro, a child and family therapist with South Nassau Communities Hospital, in Baldwin, New York. Providers should sit on the floor with the children rather than talking to the tops of their heads, or at least bend

er than insisting that a stove is used only for cooking.

Experts say you should leave your child at home for the first observational visit, so that you won't be distracted by taking care of her needs.

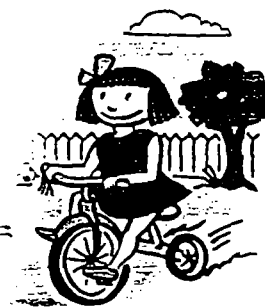
While you're watching the prospective provider in action, here are some other factors to note.

Environment. When a room is organized with distinct sections for different activities, it helps provide a sense

located away from the general play area.

For hot days, some kind of water relief is essential. "It doesn't have to be high-tech," says Scolaro. "Even a hose will do."

Staff changes. Ideally, you should observe every caregiver your child will be interacting with, so you may need to go back several times if there are staff



Separate play areas keep children safe.

How to be a day-care

Experts give pointers for spotting signs of trouble.

terview with an administrator or even a caregiver isn't enough. "You've got to spend a half hour in the room," says Jerlean Daniel, Ph.D., president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in Washington, D.C. "If a caregiver isn't warm and attentive to the children, she can't fake it for that long." Hearing a lot of "No, don't do that," rather than more skillful attempts at distraction, is a tip-off that you should find another arrangement.

"In well-run centers, caregivers take a child's-eye view. It tells you a lot about how

down when they give directions. "Caregivers should also look like they're having fun and be willing to go with the flow of a child's imagination," says Scolaro. If a child wants to pretend that the toy stove is a space shuttle, the caregiver ought to encourage the game, rather

of structure for children and a framework in which they can take advantage of stimulating activities. They will be more likely to play cooperatively if there is one area for blocks, one with a play kitchen, another for dolls, a table for art projects, and a quiet area where older children can read, rest, or just be alone. Age-appropriate toys and games should be accessible to kids, not stored where they can neither see nor reach them. Similarly, wall decorations and children's artwork ought to be positioned at a kid's eye level.

Children also need an outdoor space where they can run, jump, and let off steam. There should be a separate area for riding tricycles and other vehicles, and swings should be

ing of the guard as many as five times in one day.) In order for an infant to receive optimal care, there should be no more than one primary caregiver assigned to him. "A baby needs to know there is someone he can count on," says Barbara Reisman, executive director of the Child Care Action Campaign, in New York City. If a shift change is unavoidable, make sure the same person relieves the primary caregiver each day. If your child is a toddler or preschooler, you should select a center with no more than two or three shifts per day. Regardless of the number of caregivers, if they seem exhausted or burned out, continue your search: If you sense their dissatisfaction, so will your child.

Safety essentials. Make sure the caregiver or center has taken the same types of precautions that you would



Kids need a place where they can escape the commotion.

WORK & FAMILY

By Sue Shellenbarger

Costly Camps Put Many Parents in Bind For Summer Day Care

MANY WORKING parents in Patty Miller's area of the Midwest this summer are arranging a rich mix of activities for their kids: art, science and computer camps and theater and environmental-studies programs.

But for Ms. Miller's 12-year-old daughter, summer offers little more than a demand that she grow up too soon. She'll be staying home, caring for her 10- and 11-year-old siblings, because Ms. Miller, an administrative staffer at a nonprofit concern, can't afford the summer programs in her town. "I feel like I'm letting my kids down," says Ms. Miller, a single mother who makes \$12,000 a year.

She hates leaving them alone and knows it's risky and hard on them, "but I don't know what else to do. There's nothing out there I can afford." The \$150-a-week tab for sending her children to camp would eat up most of her pay.

Amid the summer rush by working parents to plan activities for school-age kids, a nagging problem is getting quietly but inexorably worse: The gap between haves and have-nots, worrisome enough during the school year, widens into a chasm when schools close in June.

High-end summer camps in special-interest areas ranging from space travel to Shakespeare are booming, says a 16-state survey by Child Care Aware, a nonprofit Rochester, Minn., child-care improvement and referral concern. But lower-cost programs that suit less-affluent parents' budgets and work hours are scarce.

One result: Staffers I interviewed at six nonprofit child-care resource-and-referral agencies across the country see signs that the number of children left home alone is rising. The agencies are getting more calls from parents asking when they can legally leave kids alone. (State laws vary: while some specify an age, usually 10 to 12, others set no limit.)

CHILD-CARE affordability problems "are particularly acute in the summer," says Barbara Reisman of the nonprofit Child Care Action Campaign, New York. Day-care-weary children ages nine and up often resist going to day-care centers or having a sitter; the recreational programs they like average \$100 a week and range from \$50 to \$700, Child Care Aware says.

"I went to an Ivy League college, and I'm paying for four weeks of camp what my parents paid for a year of college" in the early '70s, says a New Jersey mother, whose son is spending a month on a Vermont lake for \$2,200.

Some inexpensive programs are being cut. Palm Beach County, Fla., officials eliminated summer school this year for 11,000 children through eighth grade. And government child-care subsidies, for parents like Ms. Miller, often don't apply to summer programs not licensed by the state.

Good, affordable, full-day programs are packed. In Charlotte, N.C., parents bearing sleeping bags

start lining up at 3 p.m. the day before signups begin to get a slot in Mecklenburg County's \$74-a-month camp. "We could easily double the enrollment" but lack funds and facilities, a spokeswoman says.

There isn't any data over time on kids in self-care during the summer; the latest national sampling, in 1990 by the Urban Institute, found 19% of children ages six through 12 are left alone at least part of the time in summer, usually for short periods; self-care was the primary arrange-



Carol Lay

ment for 2%. But the population of kids six through 13 has increased 8.4% since then, and a growing percentage come from single-parent or dual-earner families.

Self-care can be risky: in Detroit, officials report a 25% summer rise in residential fires caused by children left alone. Beyond that, it seldom yields the idyllic, Tom Sawyer-like experience of fishing and hanging out enjoyed by kids in the past; today, many parents forbid kids left home alone to even leave the house.

THE CHILD CARE Resource Center in Tulsa, Okla., has been getting urgent calls from parents each June for help finding child care. "They say, 'We were going to do self-care and it's just not working,'" says the center's Sharon Bentley. She says parents spend a lot of time on the telephone with kids who are frightened or bored and want to leave the house.

It's a wasted opportunity, too. Summer learning directly affects school performance, says Joan Bergstrom, a professor at Wheelock College, Boston, and author on educational issues. The 11- to 13-year-old age range is crucial for developing qualities, such as self-reliance and resourcefulness, that foster success in adulthood, she says.

"It's really important to feel good about yourself and get competent in something around 11, 12 or 13."

Once again, a few employers are proving a source of creative solutions. The American Business Collaboration, a 156-employer group, is helping finance more than 100 community summer camps, including 81 programs on an Olympics theme.

In New York City, a partnership of 10 employers organized by Child Care Inc., a resource-and-referral group, is planning to expand community programs for kids.

In Livingston County, Mich., where 10,000 more summer child-care slots are needed, Citizens Insurance Co. of America helps fund community recreation programs.

"We know we're not going to get more funding from the government for these programs," says Linda Herbert of the county's Community Coordinated Child Care Council. "We're really looking to employers," collaborating with community agencies, for help.

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Enterprise: Exporters set the pace among fast-growing small firms

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Advertising: D'Arcy Masius reserves N.W. Ayer with acquisition

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MARKETPLACE

Technology: IBM studies unbundling Notes for possible Internet use

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Technology: SystemSoft to unveil self-help software for PC users

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1996 B



Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

Vision: All parents will be their child's best first teachers

Ted K.

July 22, 1997

Bruce Reed
President's Domestic Policy Advisor
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

Knowing that the President's second term priorities include understanding the impact of brain research on early childhood learning and development, I wanted to inform you of two initiatives at the Parents as Teachers National Center that should be of interest to you as the President's Domestic Policy Advisor.

We are presently leading a three-year collaborative project, funded by the Charles A. Dana Foundation of New York, with a team of neuroscientists from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, to translate the latest findings in neuroscience on early learning into concrete "when", "what", "how" and "why" advice that supports parents in giving their children the best possible start in life. To our knowledge, Parents as Teachers is the only national early childhood program that is taking this frontier of science directly from the laboratory to the living room. (See enclosure.)

I had the pleasure of attending the "White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning" on April 17. As a sequel to that conference, the Parents as Teachers National Center, in collaboration with Washington University, is hosting a two-day National Forum on the implications of research on early learning for educational practice and public policy. The goal of the Forum, which will be held November 7-8, 1997, in St. Louis, is to encourage and facilitate a dialogue between scientists (neuroscientists, cognitive psychologists, and education researchers) whose research focuses on brain development and learning, and public policy makers and leaders in the early childhood education field who make decisions about education and child care issues that impact millions of families of young children. Missouri Governor Carnahan is involved in planning this event. Attendance at the National Forum is by invitation only, and will be limited to 100 participants. An invitation is enclosed.

I hope you will be able to attend the Forum. In addition, we would be delighted to send you more information about our neuroscience project. I look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

Sincerely,

Mildred M. Winter
Executive Director

Robert E. Bartman
Missouri Commissioner
of Education

Roseann Bentley
Missouri State Senator

Christopher S. Bond
United States Senator

T. Berry Brazelton
Harvard Medical School

Mel Carnahan
Missouri Governor

F. Sessions Cole
Washington University
Department of Pediatrics

Harvey R. Colten
Northwestern University
School of Medicine

Gail Daniels
Corporate Consultant

Marian Wright Edelman
Children's Defense Fund

Gerald D. Fischbach
Harvard Medical School

June Fowler
Mallinckrodt Group, Inc.

SuEllen Fried
National Committee for
Prevention of Child Abuse

Marcia Fudge
Cuyahoga County, Ohio,
Prosecutor's Office

Richard A. Gephardt
United States Congressman

Jo Ann Harmon
Emerson Electric Co.

Dianne Juhnke
Oklahoma Parents as
Teachers

Carolyn Losos
Focus St. Louis

Theresa E. Loveless
Girl Scout Council of
Greater St. Louis

Arthur L. Mallory
Education Consultant

Marylen Mann
The OASIS Institute

Jane R. Mitchell
Husch & Eppenberger

David L. Morley
Monsanto Corporation

Ann P. Murphy
"Parents" Magazine

Jane Nelson
CPI Corp.

Jane K. Paine
Nat'l. Bd., Child Welfare
League of America

Margaret Pence
Hall Family Foundations

Douglas A. Ries
Cardinal Glennon
Children's Hospital

Terry J. Singleton
CPI Corp.

William M. Van Cleve
Bryan Cave LLP

Jeannette Watson
Early Childhood Consultant

Heather Weiss
Harvard Family
Research Project

Edward F. Zigler
Yale University

Good Beginnings For All Children: From Research to Action A Dialogue Among Educators, Policy Makers and Scientists

A Two-Day Forum Sponsored by
The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education,
U.S. Department of Education
and
The Danforth Foundation

To: Bruce Reed

From: Host Organizations - Washington University and the Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

Date: July 22, 1997

There has been a recent explosion in the media about brain development and what the latest neuroscience research tells us about children and how they develop and learn during the first three years of life. It is important for parents to understand the implications of research on the brain for their child's development and for their parenting practices. It is equally important that people who make decisions that affect children and families across the nation — policy makers and education leaders—understand this body of research and how to incorporate it into their policy-making and agenda-setting.

To this end, Washington University and the Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc. are hosting a two-day National Forum, **Good Beginnings for All Children: From Research to Action**. The goal of the Forum is to generate an exchange of information and ideas among scientists, education leaders, and public policy makers regarding the implications of research on early learning for educational practice and public policy. Particular emphasis will be placed on language learning. Why? First, language acquisition in its broadest context is fundamental to early learning and development and to later school success. Second, this is an area of great interest to educators and education policy-makers alike (President Clinton's current emphasis on literacy, which is inextricably connected to language acquisition, is one example). Finally, perhaps more so than any other area of development, research on language learning by neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists has quite direct implications for parents and educators of young children, as well as for those setting the education agendas for these young children.

The Forum, which will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, will convene at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, November 7 and adjourn at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 8, 1997. Confirmed speakers to date include Marcus E. Raichle, M.D., professor of Radiology and Neurology at Washington University School of Medicine, and Carla Shatz, professor of Neurobiology at the University of California-Berkeley--each a recipient of the Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievements in Health. Also confirmed are Patricia K. Kuhl, chair of the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington, Catherine Snow, professor of Education at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, and Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States. In addition to speakers, there will be two or three case studies of collaborative efforts to ensure good beginnings for all children, and roundtable discussions centered around issues and questions that need resolution.

The Forum will be attended by scientists, policy makers from across the country, education leaders, and representatives from children's advocacy groups. Attendance is by invitation only, and will be limited to 100 participants. You were nominated by a member of the Forum National planning committee. The purpose of this letter is to determine your interest in attending the Forum.

Please complete the form below and mail it **by Friday, August 15** to the attention of Kate McGilly, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., 10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230, St. Louis, MO 63143, or faxed to Kate McGilly at (314) 432-8963. Your response can also be e-mailed to kmcgi@patnc.org.

There is no fee to attend the Forum, however, participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodations. Meals will be provided on Friday night and Saturday. A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn, Clayton and at the Ritz Carlton for Forum participants. Room rates are \$79 per night (plus tax) at the Holiday Inn, and \$149 per night (plus tax) at the Ritz Carlton. More detailed information about the Forum and about accommodations will be forwarded upon receipt of the completed form below notifying us that you plan to attend.

We hope you will be able to participate in this timely and important meeting. If you need additional information, please call Kate McGilly at (314) 432-4330.

=====

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

_____ I would like to attend the National Forum on November 7-8, 1997.
Please send me additional information.

_____ I cannot attend the National Forum, but would like to be represented by:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please mail this form by Friday, August 1 to the attention of Kate McGilly, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., 10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230, St. Louis, MO 63143, or fax it to Kate McGilly at (314) 432-8963. The information can also be e-mailed to kmcgi@patnc.org.

Parents as Teachers National Center: Linking Brain Research and Parenting of Young Children

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) National Center is leading a 3-year project to translate the latest neuroscience findings on early learning into concrete "when", "what", "how" and "why" advice that supports parents in giving their children the best possible start in life. Parents as Teachers is an internationally-recognized early childhood family education and support program that serves nearly 500,000 families with children from birth to age five. The program is based on two simple truths--that babies are born learning and that parents are their first and most influential teachers. Created in Missouri in 1981, Parents as Teachers has been implemented in more than 1,974 program sites in 48 states and six other countries.

Most parents are intrigued but intimidated by brain research. They are unsure how to incorporate neuroscience findings into their everyday parenting in ways that can have a profound and lasting impact on their child's development. Through its neuroscience project, Parents as Teachers is developing audio visual and print materials to assist parent educators in demystifying the neuroscience research for parents and other caregivers, and translating it into practical terms and parenting suggestions.

The Parents as Teachers National Center has teamed with a group of distinguished neuroscientists from Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, to work actively with PAT parent educators and families. Washington University's Neuroscience Program is a leader in the field, while the medical school consistently ranks in the top five in the country. The neuroscience team represents expertise in neurobiology, neurological surgery, pediatrics, pediatric psychiatry, pediatric neurology and more.

Parents as Teachers believes it is the only national early childhood program that is taking this frontier of science directly from the laboratory to the living room. The Parents as Teachers Neuroscience Project is being conducted in the child's home through regularly-scheduled home visits, beginning at birth. With teen parents, the visits begin prenatally. And *all* children, regardless of family background or circumstances, stand to benefit from the links this project is building between brain research on early learning and parenting of young children.

The Parents as Teachers Neuroscience Project was initiated under a 3-year grant of \$478,300 by the Charles A. Dana Foundation.

(over)



Phase I: July, 1996 - June 1997 (Completed)

The first major task was the identification of 10 or fewer important developments in neuroscience that lent themselves well to sharing with parents. These neuroscience principles are linked to infant experiences that impact development. Next steps included:

1. Transmission of information by means of lecture and discussion on the neuroscience principles by the neuroscience team to PAT parent educators selected for the project from the greater St. Louis area.
2. Beginning development of script and educational materials, translating the neuroscience principles into concrete "when", "what", "how", and "why" advice for parents.

Phase II: July - December, 1997

1. Completion of neuroscience-enhanced curriculum.
2. Production of short videotapes for use with parents that include neuroscientists explaining the principles in common language and suggesting ways parents can facilitate brain development.
3. Development of measures, including checks for content validity and reliability, to assess intervention effectiveness--
 - a. Knowledge and attitude questionnaires (3 to 6 items per principle) for pre- and post-use.
 - b. A behavior checklist for documentation of behaviors consistent with the principles.
4. Training of all parent educators in use of the parent questionnaires and behavior checklist.
5. Selection of the study sample of families, with infants under six months of age, who meet one or more of the following criteria: single parent, teen parent, low income or low literacy.

Phase III: January, 1998 - June, 1999

The concluding phase of the project calls for the following activities:

1. Random assignment of the sample into treatment and control groups. The St. Louis area control groups will receive the standard Parents as Teachers program. The treatment groups will receive the specialized presentations during home visits and group meetings that are designed to enhance understanding of the practical implications of neuroscience research.
2. Administration of the knowledge and attitude questionnaires to all groups three times between January '98 and May '99.
3. Periodic administration of the behavior checklist throughout the intervention period. The reliability of behavior ratings by parent educators will be checked periodically by trained observers accompanying parent educators on home visits.
4. Data compilation and analysis resulting in the final report. Interim progress reports will be submitted during Phases I and II.



**Parents as Teachers
National Center, Inc.**
10176 Corporate Square
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Saint Louis, MO 63132
314.432.4330
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e-mail: patnc@patnc.org



JEANNE BROOKS-GUNN, Ph.D.
VIRGINIA & LEONARD MARX PROFESSOR
CHILD DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

August 15, 1997

Elena Kagan
Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20502

Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
2nd Floor West Wing
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20502

Re: White House Conference on Child Care

Dear Elena and Jennifer,

It was an honor to attend one of the planning sessions this summer for the upcoming White House Conference on Child Care. The mix of attendees was terrific, as was the leadership of your staff and Joan Lombardi. As requested, some thoughts about the direction and impact of the Conference on Child Care are summarized in this letter. If you would like more detail on any of the following points, please do not hesitate to contact me. This letter is brief, as I am sure that you are coordinating lots of responses and opinions.

The Conference needs to address the child care needs of all American families. While all of us are particularly concerned about child care for poor families, especially those in which parents are in the low wage job market, child care cuts across social class and ethnic groups. It is a universal problem. No group is immune from the hassles of finding and keeping affordable child care. And, with respect to quality, low quality child care exists for middle income as well as poor families.

The Conference planners need to consider how to handle the issue of age of child, since the needs of families and types of child care available change over time. As a researcher, I think about four age groups or childhood transitions--infancy, toddlerhood, preschool, early elementary school. Of course, after school care is also a concern for late elementary school and for middle school students and their parents. However, I see the issues as quite different (usually framing them in terms of after school athletic, artistic, and academic programs and community connections/civic responsibility). At the least, though, I would not omit the difficult child care issues for kindergartners (almost half of whom are in half-time kindergarten programs). Also, the Conference could make the point that child care needs to not end at the school door (i.e., what do we need to do vis-a-vis wrap around care and after school programs for our 5 to 8 year olds?).

When considering the preschool child, the Conference might stress that the majority of 4 year olds (as well as 5 year olds) are in some type of preschool, prekindergarten, or junior kindergarten. This is true of children whose mothers are working and those whose mothers are not. The question of early education and child care begin to blur at about age 4. Another point to stress when thinking about the universal needs of children and parents in our country today.

The Conference planners need to find a common meeting ground among the groups advocating for different solutions (good luck!). For example, one important strand is to focus on educating parents about quality care and helping parents advocate for better and accessible child care in their communities. At the same time, we do not want parents to feel that the burden is theirs, alone. I might have an education campaign for parents on child care (would love to work on this).

Clearly, public and private sectors have a role to play--business in strengthening links/providing benefits/providing time off for parents with children (i.e., cafeteria benefit plans, family leave, and so on).

The public sector needs to be a major focus, especially early education. Many other countries have essentially extended elementary school downwards--kindergarten becomes full day, 4 year old programs are housed in public schools. Federal and state programs also can move the field of early education. For example, Head Start (and programs like it) could be extended to families above the poverty threshold, using sliding scales for fees. We have done this for Medicaid (even before the 1997 Budget Bill) and certainly could do it for preschool education/Head Start. Or, subsidies can be extended (see the neat program in Illinois as an exemplar. I think that parents earning up to \$22,000 dollars, or a bit more, will be eligible for child care subsidies).

One of the big issues is whether we attack the problem of accessibility and quality by focusing on the most vulnerable children across the first 5 years, or whether we focus on extending universal preschool education down to age 3 or 2 1/2. The latter has the benefit of being more universal and having more public support. The former, of course, has the benefit of helping our most needy. Perhaps a compromise might be to focus on universal (or closer to universal) 3- and 4-year-old programs and full day kindergartens, with more attention to vulnerable children's child care needs in the first three years of life.

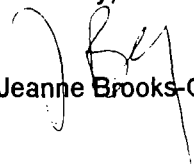
In terms of preschools for majority of children (a possible goal) of a certain age, the White House could involve the governors. Preschool education for the children and child care for the parents, as one goal, might be very appealing to some governors.

The issues with infants and toddlers are different. Center-based care for the little ones is really expensive. It is unlikely that even a significant minority of our one-year-olds are going to be in center-based care in the foreseeable future. So I would try to separate the age groups and, for young children, stress multiple arrangements. Family-care homes have a big role to play with the youngest set. Training, credentialing, and increasing supply are the issues in family-care for young children. Stability is the other big issue for the little ones. One reason to separate some of the child care issues by age of child is that the President's and First Lady's recommendations/programs might be quite different for the younger than older children. How about some sort of training program for child care providers of young children? We have thought of some sort of Americorps or EZcorps (being in New York City) focusing on child care provision/home visiting/literacy.

A final question is how to raise awareness of public so that preschool education and infant child care becomes a community goal, a partnership between parents and community institutions.

I will be away from the office until after the Labor Day Holiday. However, if you need to reach me before then, please contact my assistant Veronica Holly at 212-678-3338. Again, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Sincerely,


Jeanne Brooks-Gunn

Family-child care

Carey Fleming
Director of Corporate Alliances
539 Fernwood Road
Murrells Inlet, South Carolina 29576
tel: (803) 651-1744
fax: (803) 651-1766

Work|Life
Benefits

July 15, 1997

Ms. Elena Kagan
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
THE WHITE HOUSE
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Ten -
seems interesting;
is she right?
Elena

Dear Ms. Kagan:

In a recent conversation with my colleague, Madeline Fried, she indicated that she had attended a meeting on June 27th at The White House, regarding the **Conference on Child Care** planned for October 1997. At the end of that meeting, the attendees were asked to submit concrete ideas for initiatives which could be introduced by President Clinton to impact the availability and affordability of quality child care. As we talked, it occurred to Ms. Fried and myself that Work/Life Benefits (WLB) is in a unique position to make suggestions regarding changes that could significantly affect the funding for high quality child care for working parents.

In order to understand the perspective from which these suggestions are submitted, it is helpful to understand our business. WLB offers employers work/life benefit programs which help employees balance their work and personal life issues. In addition, WLB assists employers by providing administrative services for many benefit plans which link the funding mechanism to the work/life balance program; in many cases by providing customized voucher applications. One of the main administrative functions which we handle is for the IRS Code Section 129 Plan, or the Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP). This plan allows employees to put aside up to \$5,000 per year, TAX FREE, to pay for work-related dependent care. The DCAP offers a tremendous financial vehicle for working parents to make quality care more affordable. Unfortunately, they are structured in such a way that many parents, especially lower income parents, are not electing to participate in them.

As part of our service, we provide employees with a toll-free information line regarding the DCAP. We have heard from thousands of frustrated, confused and disappointed parents who did not understand the plan or who were afraid to commit to the program. It is our goal to help these employees understand the complex regulations governing the plan. We also want to help them understand that the plan may help them afford higher quality care. The following suggestions for changes to this program come from listening to these employees. For ten years, we have administered the DCAP for over 700 employers with over 2 million employees nationwide.

Ms. Elena Kagan

July 21, 1997

Page two

SUGGESTED CHANGES TO IRS CODE SECTION 129:

- **INCREASE THE \$5,000 CAP.** Despite the fact that the DCAP has been available for over 10 years, the \$5,000 limit has not changed. We suggest the limit be increased as the cost of quality care has increased significantly in relation to household income. The limit should be tied to the number of children requiring care as well. Currently, the same dollar limit applies to all parents regardless of the number of children in care.
- **CHANGE "USE IT OR LOSE IT" PROVISION.** Participation in the DCAP requires an employee to commit a dollar amount to the plan prior to the beginning of the year. If the parent does not use that amount, they lose it. This provision intimidates most employees, especially those just making it from paycheck to paycheck. It is very difficult for employees to predict exactly what their child care expenses will be so far ahead of time.
- **CHANGE THE "NON-DISCRIMINATION TEST" TO ALLOW FOR SELF-EMPLOYED AND SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION IN THE PLAN.** Currently, self-employed individuals can not participate in the plan due to testing requirements. In addition, there is no incentive for a small business to establish plans for employees because the highly-compensated group and the owner/employee cannot participate. This should be changed to encourage small business owners to implement the plan.
- **ALLOW GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PLAN.** Currently, government employees do not have access to a DCAP.
- **INCREASE THE AGE OF THE CHILDREN WHO QUALIFY FOR THIS CARE.** Several years ago the age of the child qualified for care under the plan was lowered from 15 to 13 years-of-age. Parents feel that the age should be changed back to 15, and that summer over-night programs should qualify. It is many of these children, ages 13 to 15, for whom parents are most concerned, especially during summer months. These children need direction and quality programs to attend. These programs have a price tag attached.
- **CHANGE LANGUAGE TO ALLOW FOR PAYMENT FOR SERVICE PRIOR TO SERVICE RENDERED.** Currently, the plan only allows for payment for child care services after the service has been rendered. In order for employees to purchase quality child care services, they must commit to payment for services prior to the service being rendered. In many cases, the payment is due on the first of the month or the first day of the week. If the parent can not be reimbursed for that payment until the service is rendered, it causes a cash flow problem which prohibits the use of the plan for many lower paid employees.

Ms. Elena Kagan
July 21, 1997
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- **ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE TAX-FREE SUBSIDIES FOR CHILD CARE TO LOW INCOME EMPLOYEES.** There are many employers attempting to provide financial assistance to low-income employees. These employers are restricted in the design of the subsidy programs by IRS Code Section 129 regulations. A special provision should be established to encourage employers to subsidize child care which does not impose Section 129 restrictions on the program. These subsidies could be instrumental in the success of the "Welfare to Work" Program.

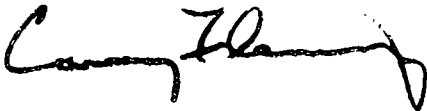
By changing the restrictions currently in effect for the DCAP, President Clinton could greatly increase the funding for quality child care for hundreds of thousands of American workers. Bringing more attention to the DCAP would also raise the awareness level of employees who may not be familiar with or comfortable with complex tax-related benefit programs. Similar to the 401(k) Plans, there will be an increase in the utilization of these programs as employees become more educated about them. The increased funding of the DCAP would, in effect, increase the future development of quality child care as the demand would rise.

In addition, President Clinton can send a strong message to employers by endorsing proposed legislation, S.2088, The Child Care Infrastructure Act, introduced by Senator Kohl of Wisconsin. The Act calls for incentives to employers who are willing to put programs in place which will increase quality and quantity of child care.

All of us at Work/Life Benefits are dedicated to helping employers and employees with dependent care issues. We are delighted that President Clinton has put so much emphasis on increasing quality child care. The White House Conference on Child Care would be the perfect opportunity to address how to make this care more affordable to the average worker. If there is any way we can be of assistance in future planning for the conference, please feel free to contact me directly at (803) 651-1744. We would be proud to be a part of this important initiative.

Very truly yours,

WORK/LIFE BENEFITS



Carey Fleming
Director of Corporate Alliances

CF:hr

cc: Ms. Melanne Verveer, Assistant to the President, Chief of Staff to the First Lady



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Geneva, IL 60134
Phone: (630) 262-4000

Refrigerated Foods Companies

June 30, 1997

Joan Lombardi
Associate Commissioner
HHS, Administration for Children and Families
330 "C" St., SW
Washington D.C. 20201

Dear Joan,

Thank you very much for inviting me to your focus group for the Fall conference. Because I have met you before, I feel I can write you and express both my appreciation and my concerns. I am writing this letter because I am not sure I was able to articulate my views adequately. I believe it is commendable for the White House to solicit varied points of view. However, I was a bit confused at the conclusion of the meeting.

I thought the issue before us was child care in America. The discussion bounced from child care to early childhood development, to the Brain Conference, to the need for earlier education. All are worthwhile issues, and all are interrelated. However, a one day conference in the Fall is not going to be effective if we try to include a variety of worthwhile but diverse issues.

I know there will be a follow up letter to us and I am looking forward to responding. But please allow me to make the following points:

- If child care in America is our charter, let's stay with it. Instead of having the Conference try to accomplish 150 things, let's identify two or three goals and stick with them.
- Logistics- pick the date, and get it out early so people can get it on their calendars.
- Committees should be established immediately .
These committees should be chaired by a staff member and made up of other staffers and perhaps selected members of your focus groups. These committees could be:
 - "Agenda": Goal is to keep the conference focused upon the specific goals of the administration. Goals should be clear, precise and attainable.
 - "Attendance": This committee should focus on who is invited. Don't round up the usual suspects! If all you invite are child care advocates and "Working Women" corporations, we will just be preaching to the converted. States, other than Colorado and North Carolina, for example, should be invited. Ambivalent and indifferent corporations should also be invited.
 - "Logistics": This committee should ensure the environment for the conference. Don't stick 150 people in an uncomfortable room for eight hours and talk at them. Get interactive. For example, have a general session of all attendees in the morning. The First Lady could give the keynote address. This could be followed by someone from a

state, Bea Romer from Colorado, for example. You would run your satellite feed at this part of the conference. If the President is in town, he could perhaps speak at the luncheon gathering. In the afternoon, the attendees could break into various workshops designed around the goals of the conference. These workshops could include titles such as "The Business Case for Child Care," "State Initiatives," "Public/Private Collaborations," etc. No more than 20 people in a workshop to encourage participation. Run the workshops concurrently so attendees can choose topics of interest.

- "Situs": Joan, let's face it, the Old Executive Office Building is a lovely setting, but it is a museum. It limits your ability to be flexible in your conference planning and it's not participant friendly. Have you thought of having the conference at a local hotel? Pardon my naiveté in this area, but can you ask corporations to help? I can't speak for Marriott, but what if you asked Donna Klein if Marriott could host? My company could supply the food (a veritable feast, I assure you). Now we have a conference hotel, more comfortable and convenient for out of town attendees, and a setting more conducive to the general session/workshop configuration. Other companies could also be asked to host.
- Finally, the conference goal or final product. This should be pragmatic and achievable. "How do we make quality child care more affordable and more available for the working parents of America?" Stay focused on that for the conference. Don't digress.

Joan, I want to thank you once again for asking me to participate. ConAgra stands ready to assist in whatever way we can.

Sincerely,



Charles R. Romeo
Director, Employee Benefits

CRF/lmf

cc: Nicole Robner, Office of the First Lady

P.S. Joan, can you circulate the list of attendees at our focus group meeting? I didn't have the chance to meet all of them.