



**National
League
of
Cities**

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July 2, 1997

Ms. Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
White House, West Wing, 2nd Floor
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

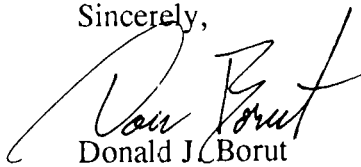
Dear Ms. Klein:

Enclosed are several documents from the National League of Cities that you may find useful in your work - especially in relationship to the planning for the White House Conference on Child Care.

If you would like further information about our interests in child care (and in the White House Conference) and our overall work on issues affecting children and families in cities, please contact John E. Kyle. He is NLC's Program Director for Children and Families in Cities and can be reached by phone at 202/626-3030, by fax at 202/626-3043, or by e-mail at kyle@nlc.org.

We hope you find our materials helpful, and we look forward to learning more about the White House Conference on Child Care.

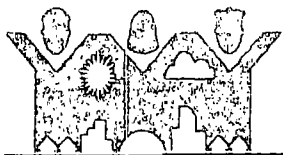
Sincerely,



Donald J. Borut
Executive Director

enclosures: *New Directions* brief on child care systems
New Directions brief on financing
Critical Needs, Critical Choices

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NEW DIRECTIONS

For Cities, Families, and Children



One of a series of brief reports to address the critical needs, critical choices facing local officials and community leaders. Each report includes research notes, resources and program ideas. Two other topics addressed in the series are "child care systems" and "city hall collaboration with public schools."

Financing Municipal Policies and Programs for Children and Youth

How can cities finance services for children and families? Answers to this question are urgently being sought by municipal officials in a time of increased mandates, cuts in federal entitlement programs that may lead to increased demand for city services, and strong anti-tax sentiment. Most municipalities have experience with only a limited number of financing approaches. This document outlines a range of options, provides specific examples of strategies used by cities throughout the United States, and offers some of the lessons learned from the experience of these and other communities.

Based on the results of two recent NLC surveys we know that financial pressures are increasing.¹

- **Cities are spending more on services for children and families.** In 1995, more than half of the nation's cities reported spending somewhat or much more on services for children and families compared to 5 years ago. Only 7 percent reported spending somewhat or much less. Thirty-six percent reported spending about the same.
- **City officials expect funds for services for children and families to decrease while the demand for services increases as the result of changes in federal policy.** Sixty-one percent of cities anticipated that the availability of state program funds will decrease as the result of changes in federal block grants for services to children and families. This was even more striking in the largest cities, where 93 percent of cities with populations over 300,000 anticipated such a decrease. The 1996 City Fiscal Conditions Survey found that more than half the respondents (57 percent) expected that, given significant decreases in federal cash assistance through Aid to Families for Dependent Children and Supplemental Security Income over the next few years, the demand for social/human services would increase. Thus, many cities are likely to feel a financial crunch as they try to address local needs.
- **The perception of declining municipal revenues was cited more frequently than any other factor as being a major or moderate barrier to city government's involvement in children and family issues.** This was true for two thirds of the cities responding to the 1995 Children and Families in Cities Survey. (In point of fact, cities' general fund revenues have not decreased — rather the rate of growth has slowed — but many of those attending to the needs of children and families clearly don't experience it that way.) Citizen resistance to new spending was the next most often cited barrier.

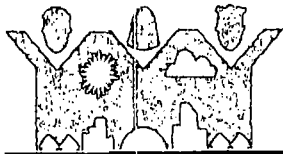


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NEW DIRECTIONS

For Cities, Families, and Children



One of a series of brief reports to address the critical needs, critical choices facing local officials and community leaders. Each report includes research notes, resources and program ideas. Two other topics addressed in the series are "city finances" and "city hall collaboration with public schools."

Child Care Systems: Essential for Healthy Child Development, Family Self-Sufficiency, and Economic Vitality

Child care is one of the most pressing needs of children and families in cities across America. In this issue of *New Directions*, we examine the role of municipal government in the domain of child care. Why is it important? What are cities doing about it? How can cities get involved?

The NLC 1996 report of the survey of municipal officials, *Critical Needs, Critical Choices*, tells us that:

- Child care was seen as the number one concern for children and families. It was ranked as one of the three most pressing needs of children and families by 30 percent of all survey respondents, more often than any other item from a list of 34. Child care was the number one concern from the smallest to the largest of cities and in all regions of the United States, and was perceived as one of three most pressing needs for children from birth through age 5 by 74 percent of all respondents.
- Before- and after-school care, listed separately but clearly a form of child care for children 6 and older, was listed as one of the most pressing needs by an additional 21 percent of city officials. For children from 6 through 9, child care and before- and after-school programs together were perceived as one of the most pressing needs by 92 percent of all respondents. Forty-four percent of respondents thought this to be true for children from 10 through 14 as well.
- Despite the clear importance of child care to children and families, 45 percent of all cities are not involved with activities related to child care, and 30 percent are not involved in before- and after-school care. One in four cities had no involvement in either activity. The smallest cities, those under 50,000, were the least likely to be involved in either child care or before- and after-school care.



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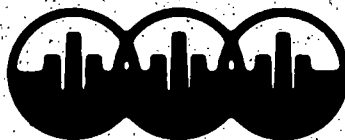
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Research Report on America's Cities

CRITICAL NEEDS, CRITICAL CHOICES

*A Survey on Children and
Families in America's Cities*

*One of a series of Research Reports
on major empirical studies of conditions
and policies in America's municipalities.*



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

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