

And we're going to turn to the next part of our program and in a way start addressing this very issue, because Part Two is how we are doing in meeting the challenge and what we need to be doing.

We're going to turn to four additional experts who will address how we're working to assure that families have access to safe, affordable child care, and also give us some insight into what is working well and what we might do to try to replicate that.

Secretary Shalala will provide an overview of what is happening in child care around the nation. Governor Hunt will address the issue from a state perspective and particularly share with us his experience over his years as governor in reshaping the child care system in the State of North Carolina. And Valora Washington will tell us about what communities are doing. And Patty Siegel will bring us messages from the front lines where the rubber meets the road and people are actually taking care of children and parents are making these difficult decisions.

So Secretary Shalala, would you please start by giving us an assessment and overview of how we're

doing as a nation?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Thank you very much, Mrs. Clinton. Mr. President. Before I start, I do want to acknowledge three other Cabinet Secretaries that are here. The Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman, the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, the Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, and the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the head of the GSA are also here. We're all partners in this administration in developing the President's initiatives related to children, early childhood, and it's a very good partnership.

When I'm talking to parents who are struggling to make ends meet and when I'm talking to single mothers, there are always two words that come out, "Child Care." Parents actually usually talk in whispers. Most would rather tell their bosses that they had a flat tire than they had a child care problem. Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton, there are more child care problems in America than flat tires.

(Laughter.)

And I want to thank you for bringing the issue of child care into the spotlight and turning those very

private conversations into a national discussion that we really all have to have.

In the middle of our briefing before we came in here, one of the President's assistants was beeped by her child care provider. That happens every day in every office in America. But this is not the first time in American history that we've faced this problem. Rosie the Riveter had a problem with child care. And President Roosevelt and the Congress acted to provide child care for her and for her children.

(Applause.)

My colleague, Secretary Rubin, just pointed out that millions of daughters and granddaughters of the World War II generation are in the work force now. Not to win a war, but to win financial security for their families and independence. So once again, American families need child care. And once again, this government has to be a partner with the states and the communities and labor and business and religious leaders and community organizations and families to meet this country's growing child care needs.

But why? Because as Secretary Rubin said:

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Investing in child care and in after-school programs is one of the best investments we can make for this country's economic future.

Mr. President, I have to admit it -- I'm a Clevelander and an Indians fan and I've been watching the World Series. And when I think about where we stand in understanding and addressing the child care issues that are facing this country, I see us in a "seventh inning stretch."

We know that we're doing better, but not as well as we should. We know that the picture of child care is very uneven in this country. That's what's been reported to us already. Some communities are doing very well and others are not stepping up to the plate and knowing that the most important part of the game is yet to come.

Because of your leadership, Mr. President, and the First Lady, the early innings have brought us some genuine progress. As you've pointed out, we're spending more. This year we've invested \$3 billion in the Child Care Development Block Grant, an increase of almost 70 percent since 1993. Combined with state

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funds, we're helping to care for 1 million children from welfare families and from the working poor.

And since you took office, our investment in Head Start has almost doubled, to \$4 billion. The Head Start program, an extraordinary program, now serves 800,000 children each year. Our dependent care tax credit, valued at \$2.5 billion, will help 5 million families pay for child care this year.

We're also learning more. There was a reference to Deborah VanDell's work. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has found a direct link from their research between high quality child care and a child's subsequent cognitive and language development. We're reaching out more. We started a National Child Care Information Center to share information with states and communities.

We're fostering public/private partnerships. We're providing states with technical assistance and models that work to help them address quality and other important issues. And taking models, and role models like Governor Jim Hunt, to other states. We're linking child care and health care agencies to improve safety

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and to give children the health care services that they need.

But as the President and the First Lady made very clear this morning, we have to do more and we have to do better.

Today only 1 million children receive federal child care assistance even though 10 million are eligible. And because the "seventh inning stretch" is a time not only to stand up but also to look out and to engage in a real national dialogue about where we are and what each of us must do, let me give you a snapshot of where we think the gaps are on three issues: availability, affordability, and quality. For parents, they think about child care as, "Can I get it? Can I afford it? And can I trust it?"

First, can I get child care. We don't have a big centralized child care system in this country. We have a very diverse, very decentralized system that includes everything from company sponsored day care centers to family day care to informal arrangements with friends and relatives. And yet, too many parents don't have access to even one of these options.

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As the GAO made clear this year, parents are running up against major shortages of care, particularly if they have infants, if they have a child with a disability, if they have a school-age child, and for families working nontraditional hours. It's a particular problem, as Michelle said, if you have a teenager. Over half of our schools do not offer after-school services to children. And these same children, particularly in low income communities, often cannot find after-school care in their neighborhoods, either. I loved the discussion about after-school care and the kind of skill it takes, particularly for teenagers, to find good care.

Mr. President, I can assure you, I have not been able to sit still after 3 o'clock since I started kindergarten --

(Laughter.)

-- and most American children cannot be expected to sit still after 3 o'clock.

But even when child care is available it's often inaccessible, because there's no transportation from home to work or to the place of care. But assume

the parents can find and get child care, it still has to be affordable or it doesn't do them much good. Which brings me to the second point.

Can I afford it. As Mrs. Clinton has pointed out, families earning less than \$1200 a month pay about a quarter of their income for child care. The federal government is trying to ease this burden. We've done a pretty good job of helping people move from welfare to work by expanding child care. Most federal assistance goes to families at or near the poverty line. For a family of four that's an income of just over \$16,000.

But this problem extends far beyond poor families. It's a challenge that faces every working family. It's great that many states are trying to make child care more affordable by linking eligibility to income instead of welfare status. But we need to be careful. Because even as many states increase eligibility, they're also thinking about increasing the amount that they expect parents to pay.

And even when parents can get and afford child care, they still have to ask the question, "Can I trust it?" And that's the third and the last piece of the

child care problem. Quality and safety. No matter where you live or what kind of care you choose, parents should always have the confidence that their children are getting the best.

We have many extraordinary child care settings that we should be very proud of. They are in the military. They are in business. They are in schools. They are in homes. They are in churches. They are in synagogues. And they are all over our communities. Yet many child care arrangements have very serious shortcomings.

Part of the problem is the low reimbursement rates for many states. And another part is inadequate licensing.

(Applause.)

All states have some form of child care licensing but many children, even infants, are in care that is exempted from the child care licensing in the states. To make matters worse, when our department went out we found numerous instances where child care facilities did not comply with the state's health and safety standards. And unlike the military, where child

care centers are regularly inspected without announcements many times each year, in the civilian sector too many children in child care programs don't receive even a single inspection every year.

Perhaps the biggest threat to quality is poor training and low wages for child care workers. Most child care staff in this country earn around \$12,000 a year with few, if any, benefits. Even when they have excellent training and a BA they still have low wages.

(Applause.)

Because of these low wages, a third of child care workers leave their jobs every year, which can be damaging to young children. We heard them on the video. Young children need stable care.

In addition, last year more than half the states required little or no training for child care staff before they started work. We're going to close that gap. Under the new Child Care Development Fund, all states using federal funds are now required to provide basic health and safety training. To prevent SIDS deaths in child care settings, working with Mrs. Gore, our department is educating child care workers

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about the importance of putting infants to sleep on their backs and the importance of telling parents to do the same.

We believe that all child care centers that are receiving federal funds should have to make sure that children are immunized. And as I said, we consider this conference to be our "seventh inning stretch," but reaching the end of the game will be very tough.

It means making sure that all parents have the information and the personal assistance they need to make one of the toughest decisions of their lives. It means that making sure that states don't have to make impossible trade-offs when choosing which children are eligible, how much parents must pay, and how much child care providers are reimbursed. And it means making sure that parents don't ever have to make impossible trade-offs, either trade-offs between keeping their jobs and keeping their children safe.

As the other panelists have made clear, it's only going to happen if all of us continue to share information and invest resources. And that's only

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going to happen if we judge ourselves, not on what we say today, but what all of us do tomorrow.

Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, we can do it.

(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: I was glad to hear what you said about not being able to sit still after 3 o'clock. I'm glad to know you've been sitting still before 3 p.m.

(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I have never seen you still for two minutes in all of our acquaintance. This is amazing.

(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think you can answer this now, but I think it's quite important that we be explicit about a dilemma that we will face as we move toward next year -- the State of the Union -- what our position ought to be. We all know that there will be, in the context of the budget agreement we just adopted, fierce competition for limited money.

We're going to have some more money to put into this; we'll do the very best we can. It will be a

priority, but still, it seems to me that there will be competition for what the best way the federal government can spend more money in child care is.

We could increase the tax credit to either make it more generous to people who get it now or move it up in the income limits. We could expand Head Start, particularly the Zero to Three program, where we've only got just a few thousand kids now -- 25,000 or something. And I think the early results are pretty promising. It's a terribly important initiative. Or we could devise some way to help get these salaries up, which is abysmal.

When you were talking about the salaries, Hillary gave me a chart which showed that child care workers on the whole are better educated than the American work force and lower paid. So we keep saying we want all these people to come in and get more education and more training, and yet -- and there are some cases where people don't have any education or training -- but there are a lot of them that are quite well-educated that are working for ridiculously limited wages.

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(Applause.)

So what's your sense about how we ought to go about making that decision? And I'll just give a blanket invitation to the audience, too, that if you were in my position and you knew you couldn't do a hundred percent of all these things, would you do a little bit of all of them, would you focus on one, would you focus on the other? And I invite you to make your views known to us, either today during the conference, or in writing -- because this will be a difficult thing.

If Congressman Lampson is still here, he's going to have to make a decision about how to vote on this stuff. And we will have to decide.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Mr. President, I think that all of us would say to you we have to invest resources in quality. Start with the basics -- health, safety, and encouraging a good learning environment, focus on the care-giver, start with the care of our youngest children and also our school-age children. But it has to be a quality agenda. That's where the weakness is in the system. And focusing on those care-

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givers is going to be very important in the future.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, Donna.

Well, someone who has been doing just that is Governor Hunt, who has an initiative that he will describe to us called Smart Start which, for those of us who have followed this work on behalf of children around the country, we see as one of the best models of best practices that we could hold up to the rest of the country.

And so, Governor Hunt, would you share that experience with us, please?

GOVERNOR HUNT: Thank you, Mrs. Clinton. First of all, Mr. President, I want to say that the American people care a whole lot more about this than they do most of the stuff the press asks you about in this city, and I want you to remember that.

(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: I'm glad we've got you on film today.

(Laughter.)

GOVERNOR HUNT: As the President and Mrs.

Clinton know, because we served in governorships together -- I served as governor of our state from the mid-'70s to the mid-'80s -- I worked hard on education, education reform, and jobs, and protecting the public in a lot of things. I was in the private sector for eight years and I thought a lot about why things aren't working better. Why aren't schools more successful? Why isn't our work force more productive and innovative and doing higher value work, and things like that.

Let me tell you where I came out. The major problem is the first five years of life. Now, there are no panaceas; this comes closer to being one if you get those years right than anything else. I know it's the case for schools.

You give children the kinds of opportunities and love and care -- all we've heard about here today -- in those first five years and our schools will just zoom. There's no question about it.

I literally ran for governor in 1992 after being in the private sector where I frankly would like perhaps to have stayed; there are a lot of good things about it. But I ran for governor because I wanted to

see us change things. I wanted to see us make things work, and I had decided that that's the most important thing to do.

So I ran for office on this issue. I gave an inaugural address in 1993 on it. Working with Dan Blue, our state legislative leader here, speaker of the house, we put the Smart Start program through our legislature. And my wife, Carolyn, and I are spending these eight years working on it.

Now, let me tell you what I think are the essential components of making it work. First of all, you really have to focus on it. You're doing that today. And you've done it as long as I've known both of you. And I know all of you here today are doing it, too.

But we have to focus on it, folks, like a laser. We have got to get people thinking about this. There are so many other things out there that preoccupy us. There are all those special groups that want you to focus on their issues. We've got to focus on this one. Leaders have to focus on this one and we have to get other people to do it. Let me tell you, I never

give a speech when I don't talk about it. Some people are getting fed up with hearing me talk about it. Well, they're going to keep hearing me talk about it. And furthermore, we're getting a lot of things done. And we've got to stay with it, and stay with it, and stay with it.

Now, how do we approach it? I've heard wonderful things today about what we need. Let me say to you, we need a systematic approach. I love a lot of these great pilot projects. I want to see a systematic approach that works for every kid across my state and across yours. Don't just give me a pilot project that works.

(Applause.)

I think there are two things that are essential to that: First of all, we really, as states, -- and certainly as a nation, but we do these things primarily as states as we do our schools -- we need to have an approach, I don't want to say a system, that sounds like it's government. Because I think a public/private partnership is the real key to this. But we need to have a systematic approach so all of our

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kids are going to get it and all of our kids are going to get quality.

Second, we need to root it in the local community.

(Applause.)

Now, that's where the good things are. That's where the churches are, and the synagogues, and the businesses, and the schools, and everything else. They are out there; the local communities. Lots of people who care and who are good at it. We've got to knit them together. We've got to have an approach to this thing and we've got to keep those local people able to do it. Invite them to do it. It's got to be easy for them to do it. We've got to cut out that "turfism." We've got to cut out those kids who are falling through the gaps. The local people can do that.

So what we did was, we established a public/private partnership. We established what we call the North Carolina Partnership for Children, that's the official name. We call it Smart Start. It is a 501(c)3. We have the state board, headed generally by top business leaders. We have all the

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right folks on there; we've got the parents on there and the business leaders and the church leaders and the social service leaders and the educators and the health folks and so on. They are all at the table.

Then we replicate that within each of our 100 counties. They are all at the table. We've cut out the turfism. These people never talked to each other before and now they're working together and they're sharing together.

What do they do? Three things: First of all, the first thing they do -- they have to do this before they get the money -- they've got to do a survey. What are the needs for our children? Second, what are the resources we have to meet those needs? Third, what do we need to do now? What should our approach be in our county? All of these people now are planning and working on this together.

So that's sort of the approach that we -- by the way, as they have made their own individual plans, Mrs. Clinton, they have varied. In one county, Stanley County near Charlotte, they decided that if a parent wanted to stay home the first year, they'd give them a

modest amount of money for diapers and formula and so forth, a thousand or \$1500. That isn't much money. A lot of parents decided to stay home that first year. I think it's a great idea. Some of the others criticized it. Hey, they want to do it and it's working for them. We ought to give people the flexibility to come up with better ideas like that.

The third thing I want to say to you is that business is just crucial to this. Business folks can get a lot of things done that we, in government, can't get done. So we need their leadership, we need to get chambers of commerce to endorse this if they will, and we need to get business folks to cochair or chair these boards.

The fourth thing I want to say to you is something about the goals. Every kid who needs something better needs to get it and it's got to have real quality. The danger is that we have them somewhere but they aren't getting what they need, for their brains, for their hearts -- for all of this that you all have talked about and that you know so well.

Now, let me tell you how I think you think

about this. We wouldn't think about school starting in the fall and 10 or 20 percent of our kids couldn't get a good public education, would we? And yet that's exactly what's happening with kids zero to five. And that is morally wrong. And we've got to change it. So we've got to have a systematic approach that enables us to do that. That quality care, of course, requires all kinds of dollars and it means we've got to focus on the teachers.

We have an effort in our state, a scholarship program called TEACH -- that means Teacher Education and Compensation Helps -- we've had 5,000 people go through it and get this training. And their employer has to agree that when you come back -- I mean when you finish it -- they probably continue to work and they get this as they do it -- you get at least a 10 percent increase in your wages, and for most of them it's a lot more than that.

And of course, we had that great turnover. We had people low paid and they still are in a large measure. But we're really changing it and that's the kind of thing -- and I'm thrilled to hear your

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announcement today about that, Mr. President.

Now, let me say to you that a lot of states are doing great things. The NGA has made this a major focus. Rob Reiner has spoken to the last two National Governors Conferences. That tells you how focused they are. Governor Voinovich has an NGA children's task force. And we've got efforts in places like Indiana, New Jersey, and Colorado focusing on coordinated efforts, and quality enhancement in Vermont and Illinois. Business leaderships in Florida and other places. So governors are really beginning to do this and it is the big new thing that's coming along that they are focusing on.

I want to say one final thing. Mr. President, we need you to use that "bully pulpit" that you use better than any person who has ever served here, on this issue every time you can.

(Applause.)

Second, we need a lot more dollars, and I'll take them anywhere I can get them.

(Applause.)

And third, Mrs. Clinton, we need you to visit

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America more. We want you to come to sites. We want you to look at systems. We want you to interact with all these folks, including business folks. We want you to be out at state conferences. We need to have a lot more of those in states around the country. And we need you to talk about the community that it takes to raise a child. You have more credibility on it than any person in this country. You're right, and the American people know it.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. I agree with the last thing you said, for sure.

(Laughter.)

Let me say, the reason I wanted Governor Hunt to come here today, apart from our 20 years of friendship and my immense admiration for him, is that - - if I could go back to the question I asked Secretary Rubin -- the great trick we have with all great social questions in America is that we know that government can't solve alone, either because we don't have the resources or the capacity -- is how to have grass-roots, community-based partnerships that still, when

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the day is over, add up to a system that serves everybody instead of just makes nice, touching stories we can all tell each other at seminars till kingdom come.

And that is what they have done in North Carolina. They have kept the entrepreneurial spirit, they have the partnership. They've cobbled money together, first one place, then another, and he's put a lot of new money in it. And because he has taken this initiative and set up a framework within which creativity and partnership can flourish, they have a system. And I still believe -- I'll say it again -- I think that is the great sort of challenge that America faces that goes across so many of our problems and plainly relates to this.

The only question I wanted to ask you about it, that I would like you to specifically address is, do you have enough money to deal with the dilemma that raising quality standards must increase your cost to some extent, and does that price anybody out of it? And if not, why not?

GOVERNOR HUNT: Well, Mr. President, we don't

have enough money. We've put about an additional \$100 million of state funds into this in the last two or three years, and we've been bringing the counties in as they prepared for it. Three years from now -- they have all gotten some planning money. They really have to really show that they're doing this right. Three years from now, our plan is to have 300 million state dollars in this, in addition to what we had before, federal money and so on.

(Applause.)

We think that will get us pretty close to quality for kids. But it may not be enough, and costs go up. It is terribly hard to get the resources. That's why we've got to understand how important this is. You can't do this on the cheap. You really can't.

(Applause.)

That's why we need businesses' help. We need everybody's help. We need the in-kind -- you know, churches providing the places, and we need all the federal money we can get, Mr. President.

(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: You know, just one other thing

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I'd like to say that I think we ought to consider -- this is a little thing, but you talked about the bully pulpit -- I think a lot of people are just plain, old-fashioned ignorant about what's involved in being an effective, successful child care worker and would be surprised at the average educational level of child care workers in America and the average pay. And I think that we ought -- one of the things that we ought to do with this bully pulpit idea of yours is start trying to find ways that every community and every state can honor outstanding child care workers the same ways we honor teachers today or scientists or others.

(Applause.)

Because, I think that's terribly important. I just don't think society -- I don't think they mean to devalue people in this work, I just think they don't know -- most people.

GOVERNOR HUNT: Mr. President, if I may, last year, Mrs. Hunt and I had a statewide gala banquet, 1,200 people or so in the state capitol to present the awards to the top child care-givers like top teachers. And they came from all over the state. And we had the

winners in every county. We really need to really start doing that, showing our appreciation, holding these people up, telling how important this is. We've done it some for schools, not nearly enough. You're going to honor teachers tomorrow right here. But we need to do it for child care-givers, the most important teachers in the world.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I don't think you can overestimate how important it is for people to say to other people that they matter. And if it matters in your personal life, it's got to matter in all these other areas, too. I think it's a big issue.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I just want to thank Governor Hunt for his example, because one of our hopes is through this conference to highlight what states are doing. He mentioned some of the other states that have very good practices and are expanding the supply of affordable quality child care. I know that the President fought very hard to put into the Welfare Reform Act that there be a provision that would set aside a portion of federal child care dollars to improve quality in the states. And that's a very

important aspect of what we hope states are going to be able to do.

I'd like now to turn to someone who is very knowledgeable about what communities are doing to address child care needs around the country and that is Dr. Washington, who is with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, that has a long-standing interest in this issue and has worked very hard on many fronts in trying to improve conditions in the child care systems.

Dr. Washington?

DR. WASHINGTON: Thank you. Like everybody else here today, I really want to commend this effort to focus national attention on child care. What we've just heard from Governor Hunt is a stellar example, I believe, of the state's strong capacity for innovative experiment, and what's really special about the way North Carolina is doing it is the way that it extends down to the local level. In this way, North Carolina and many other states are well-equipped to promote that goal of quality child care that we've heard so much about today. States really can take the lead in designing a child care infrastructure that reflects the

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distinctive strengths that are unique to that state.

To a large extent child care in the United States has largely been the province of the state and the federal government. The federal role that we're still asking for more today is helping to promote the issue of affordability. According to the GAO, there were more than 90 federal funding programs for child care administered by 11 agencies in 1994, and these include direct subsidy programs such as Head Start as well as tax-based subsidies that help working parents to recoup some of their costs and also encourage employers to help their employees with child care expenses.

But even as many people continue to debate this issue, I think that we need to acknowledge today that the fact is that we, as a nation, have already decided to support child care with public funds. Even though we keep seeing the editorials about this, we've already made that decision to support child care with public funds.

We also have already decided that child care support should help everybody. We're already doing

that through tax subsidies as well as direct subsidies. But even though these decisions have already been made, we've made them with some ambivalence. And that's why I'm particularly grateful to the President and Mrs. Clinton for helping us to think creatively and more incrementally about how we're going to have this next generation of support for child care.

What is missing is not the decision to support child care, not the decision to have child care for everybody, but what's missing as we come to this landmark dialogue today is the commitment to increase the federal, state, local and community support for child care to the levels that we need to produce the benefits that are promised by research, to produce the benefits that we need for a productive society, and to produce the benefits that are hoped for by parents. That's what's missing.

(Applause.)

You've heard it today but I'd have to emphasize: It's going to take every sector of society -- administration, Congress, business community, religious leaders, state and local

officials, as well as parents and providers -- to respond effectively to the child care challenge.

Other speakers have illustrated the federal and state action. I'd like to talk about the important role of community and local governments, who have generally played a smaller role in the past. I'm encouraged though because a number of experiments funded by the Kellogg Foundation and many others show that there is an increasing number of communities who are coming together to jump start this kind of change.

Innovations and investments in child care have the best chance of succeeding when they're supported by a consensus within the broader community that children and families are a top priority. Only then will community members, in the public and the private sectors alike, devote the time, energy, and resources required to create that truly caring community for children.

Cities and states already know how important child care is, according to a survey of the National League of Cities. Child care is at the center of state plans for welfare reform, for example. But are very

much aware of the need to engage community dialogue, in 1994 a coalition of Michigan grant makers joined forces to jump start dialogue by bringing together national and child care experts with diverse teams representing a wide variety of local communities. We've done this not just in Michigan but in many communities around the United States.

Over the years what we found is by bringing people together in local communities, we broaden the state and local leadership networks and encourage communities in the processes that they need to build their capacity to provide child care. These efforts also create a synergy which improves the climate for stimulating child care locally and in the state.

I'd like to share briefly four critical lessons that we've learned from community strategies and what communities are doing to address the child care issue.

The first thing that successful community strategies do is they get everybody involved. Child care professionals, parents, and providers cannot do it alone. If we could, we would have done it already. We

need everybody in the community to get involved in this conversation and to understand how important child care is. And successful community strategies do that.

Second of all, successful community strategies encourage each sector to bring their own value and strength to the table. Again, we need more than child care knowledge in order to build an effective child care system at the local and state levels.

We also find, third, that successful communities have to be willing to take a look at themselves. That is harder than it seems, because you've already heard the data that there is a lot of mediocre and some bad child care out there.

I mentioned earlier that the federal government is helping us to address this goal of affordability. We see states like North Carolina helping to address this issue of quality. What communities and local governments are best equipped to address, I think, are the needs of availability. Obviously, there's a lot of synergy that goes on between affordability, quality, and availability. But communities are uniquely situated to address the child

care needs of their own residents, and these needs vary from town to town.

Communities conduct needs assessment, they launch planning initiatives, they ensure that parents know where to get the information they need, and they help to encourage increased supply of child care because they know what's needed in their community. Successful communities have to be willing to take a look at themselves.

And fourth, we find that successful communities develop concrete action plans. You have to know what you want to achieve. You have to focus on goals and identify critical issues, build on your community assets. You've got to work for specific indicators of success.

For those of you who think that what I just said is a boilerplate and everybody knows that, believe me, that is not always happening. We've got to work for specific results. So successful communities get everybody involved, they value the diversity that people bring to the table, they assess themselves, and they make specific plans that work for concrete

results.

There's a few challenges that we've noticed that communities run into when they're trying to reform and improve their child care situation. The first is the difficulty but the necessity of preserving child care diversity. We have got to maintain choice in our local communities. We cannot use the "coming together as a community" as an opportunity to make a cookie-cutter approach that we then ask parents to join or to choose.

The second challenge that comes up is the whole issue of costs. We can no longer sidestep this issue. Cost is very critical, and we have to close the gap between quality and what parents can afford to pay.

A third major challenge is engaging the majority. The majority are the people who don't have children themselves at home. We have to let them know in the community at a local level what child care means to them.

A next challenge is the need to more clearly articulate the outcomes and results that the community can expect to achieve and get in return for its

investment so they'll buy into this continuum of care.

And the biggest challenge that I see that communities face is the whole application of knowledge. You know that we know so much more than we do. We already know about how important group size is. We already know about the training of providers. We know that child care providers need to be better paid. We know that crime goes up in the after-school hours. We know, but we do not do. This application of knowledge is the big challenge facing the local communities.

We're going to have to ask ourselves in everything we do: Are we looking through the eyes of the child and putting their needs and interests first? Are we doing what we know works, focusing on solutions that are available right now? Are we bringing more accountability into the system? Are we looking at concrete results and outcomes for children?

These are the kinds of questions that local communities are struggling with and grappling with. And I really want to thank you again for bringing this to the attention of the American people.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Dr. Washington, that was an excellent analysis of what we are confronting. And what would be your advice about how the President, governors, all of us who are concerned about this issue could do more to engage communities in this discussion where either the community themselves, or the leadership of the community, don't think they have any particular stake in trying to pursue the sort of process that you outlined and that Governor Hunt has put into practice in North Carolina?

DR. WASHINGTON: Well, as we've all heard today, we all benefit from quality child care. We've got the word out that child care is a collective good. That's why the federal role and the state role and the local role is so important. Child care is a collective good that doesn't just benefit the people who receive the service, the children and the families themselves, but it gives benefits that accrue to the whole society. That's what we've heard the Secretary speak to. We've got to get this message out in our communities, child care is a collective good; we all benefit from child

care.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much.

Now we're going to go to our final speaker of the morning, who will talk about what is probably the most valuable and important perspective, that of parents. Patty Siegel is the Executive Director of the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and she has been involved in the grass roots work that is done in trying to answer the questions that parents ask themselves about child care.

She was involved in creating Trust Line, a system in California for checking the backgrounds of child care providers. She has a lot of experience in helping parents evaluate what is good child care.

And Patty, we would appreciate your talking about how parents feel about this and what parents can do to help themselves and what others can do to help empower parents.

MS. SIEGEL: Thank you very much, Mrs. Clinton, and thank you, President Clinton.

This is an exciting morning and I'm pleased to say that the view from the front lines of child care,

which are actually more than 600 local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across the country who talk just in the morning in each agency probably to more than 30 or 40 parents from all income levels looking for child care, I'm happy to say that what we hear on the phone lines are exactly the themes that you and the President and every speaker this morning has referred to. So perhaps my remarks might really be a sum-up of what everyone else has said. And the good news is that you are on track -- that each of you this morning understands the enormous complexity and challenge and anxiety of America's parents as they search for child care. And Kathy really summed it up very well in the very beginning.

In Child Care Resource and Referral -- and this is work that really started for me as a much younger parent with my own three children under three - - two of them are twins -- and I had a really hard time finding child care. Like Michelle Seligson, I was in a co-op, with parents on a waiting list in my little play group who found it was really hard to find child care and especially hard for those of us that had very young

children under two.

And so the heart of the work that I've been involved in these past 25 years -- and my twins are exactly 25 years old -- the heart of our work is really helping families find and choose the child care that best meets their individual and particular needs.

And Mrs. Clinton, you asked earlier this morning, what can we do to help parents, and one of the things we can do is make sure that this basic child care information is available to every parent that needs it. Not just in the 600 communities where it now exists but everywhere, and in a way that is very accessible. We need to be in churches. We need not just to be on those phone lines, we need to be out in the community with our lap-tops helping people to understand all the available resources.

Now, in order to make those connections, we have to keep track of the supply of child care. We have to be in an intimate relationship with the child care providers in our community, all of them, from all sectors. And what we know from this work over years and years is what everyone has said this morning:

There's not enough, it's often inadequate, it's not available to many parents close to where they work or close to where they live.

And so we've developed the resource side of our service to really work on filling those gaps -- to looking at the supply, to adding up our numbers and sharing them back with the community, but also using it as a sort of pointer to ourselves to say, where do we need to really focus our attentions, to develop a supply of infant-toddler care? Where are the gaps in service and how can we best meet those and how can we engage people like the public and private sectors? And I'm proud to say that in California for the last 12 years, we've had a very successful public/private partnership where we've brought together the State of California and many, many corporations and foundations to help us build a supply of quality licensed family child care.

And because these stories are so incredible and because we really have the privilege of hearing from parents every day what's going on and hearing from providers of the struggles and the fragility of their

situation -- I look in the audience and I see Doug Beard from Associated Day care in Boston, I see Deborah Eaton, a fantastic family child care provider from California, Peggy Hack from Wisconsin -- all of them run great programs, but they will tell you what they tell us, they're fragile. They could fall apart on a moment's notice. And they call us saying "we need a substitute." "We can't find a director," et cetera, et cetera.

I think that you've heard the challenges from everyone -- affordability, availability. We hear it most from parents with tiny babies. And I have to tell you that when I started 25 years ago, it wasn't such a commonplace. The parents called us when a baby was three or four weeks old. But now that is the way it is for most working families; they have to get back to work in a hurry. And I do hope you'll be able to expand the family and medical leave so that parents have a little longer, because they want longer. It is hard to get back to work right away. But they can't afford it. You've heard that.

For babies, in my own state, over two-thirds

of all our licensed child care is in child care centers. And yet, of that two-thirds, only 4 percent of those spaces are available to babies, so that means that any parent with a tiny baby has to look out to the family child care providers, to the license-exempt providers. It means that there simply isn't a supply for the tiniest babies in this country, and that is an incredible problem.

If you ever wanted to create an instant community, just bring together a sample of parents like the ones I've spoken to in the last 24 hours while I traveled from California to Washington. The flight attendants, I have to say I spent 10 minutes last night on the plane talking to flight attendants about the incredible dilemmas of their work schedules -- how they change. The waitress who brought me my dinner last night in the hotel who works two jobs so that she can be home with her baby. The engineer who I sat next to on the plane whose two-year-old son has cerebral palsy, and simply cannot find a provider who is willing to take care of him.

This is just a small sample. But if you look

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at these individuals and then add on to the frustrations they already face, finding quality child care -- if you add on affordability, which everyone has talked about but I have to tell you again that if people cannot afford child care, there is no child care choice. Let's not kid ourselves this morning. Affordability is key to moving forward in any quality system. And right now in California, a working mother -- a low income working mother making minimum wage -- if she has a child under two, she would be paying, not the 25 percent that everyone has quoted, in California she would pay 68 percent of her minimum wage income to find child care for that baby.

So you can understand, all of you, why we desperately need an infusion of public support. Because those low income women --

(Applause.)

-- can't make ends meet and they will not be successful in their economic independence without additional resources. And sadly, as so many people have repeated this morning -- the wonderful people who we should honor and I think anyone in this room who is a child

care provider should stand up -- we should honor you, but we honor you by paying you.

(Applause.)

And we need this kind of partnership. We need the dedicated people who love their jobs, who want to do the right thing. But if the training that they need is available 100 miles away, if it costs more than they can afford, and most of all if they cannot earn a living wage -- if they cannot make more than \$7 an hour, why would they want to stay in this profession? And I have to say that for many of us with young adult children who are thinking about careers in early childhood education, one wonders if they'll ever be able to leave home if they choose this profession to work in.

I'd like to close this morning with an image, and it's an image that's very American. Over the past 50 years child care in America has become a patchwork quilt that's been stitched together hurriedly and without too much intentional design, without a border to keep the squares in place.

My hope, and the hope of all the parents on

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the other end of our phone lines and all the providers that we connect to, is that we will create a child care quilt and system in this country that has a deliberate design, is planned and carried out with attention to detail -- like the quilts we treasure and pass on from generation to generation, warm enough and strong enough and beautiful enough to keep our children safe and healthy and ready to learn, and made in the best and greatest American quilting bee tradition of working together to create the best possible product.

Thank you so much for helping us start that effort.

(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is, I think, an extraordinary way to wrap up our morning session. I can't think of anything that could be added to what you said. But if you think about what all of our last speakers said, it amounts to a plea to us to do what we can to both increase the coherence and completeness of community-based action within a framework that creates a system that involves all our children.

And again, let me say to all of you involved

in this work, I am profoundly grateful to you. I thank you for being here today. This has been an immensely enlightening day to me. I have been struggling to understand this issue, especially since one day several years ago -- we all have our little epiphanies in life about these matters -- but Hillary had been talking to me about child care for years, and one day -- and I was running for governor, more than well over a decade ago -- I used to make a habit in every election season of going to the earliest plant gate in my state, because the workers came to work between 4:30 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. And even the vote-hungriest politicians wouldn't get up that early.

(Laughter.)

So I always had them all to myself.

And I never will forget, one day I came home and I told Hillary, I said, "You won't believe what happened to me at a quarter to 5 a.m. this morning," There was a Campbell soup plant in North Arkansas, and this pickup truck rolled up. And as often happened, the husbands and wives, and one was taking the other to work and they would come up in the dark and kiss each

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other good-bye. And so this pickup truck came up and this lady leaned over and kissed her husband good-bye and opened the door. And the light came on, and inside were three children under the age of five.

And so I went over and talked to the young man when his wife went in to work at a quarter to 5 a.m. I said, "What are you doing with these kids, and how do you do this?" He said, "Well, I have to. We've got to get them up every morning at a quarter to 4 a.m. And we dress them up." And he said, "I keep them as long as I can, but I have to be at work at 7 a.m. So I had to find somebody who would take care of them at 6:30 a.m." Three kids under five. But, he said, "We've got three kids under five. We both have to work."

Now, there are millions of stories like that. And they are no less gripping for the parents than those who don't have quite such strange circumstances. But it is inconceivable to me that we have had all of you wonderful people working at this and we've put all this money in it, and we still never develop a systematic approach or, in the words of Patty, "a quilt that everybody can be a part of." And that, I think,

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we should all leave as our mission. Thank you very much, Patty.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: We're going to take a lunch break now and for all of those who are watching this on satellite, we will reconvene here this afternoon, but I also want to thank the members of the Cabinet, who will be hosting the afternoon session, of several departments. Secretary Glickman at Agriculture, Secretary Herman at Labor, Secretary Shalala, and Secretary Rubin. And I know that there will be similar meetings around the country. And then we will, those of us here in the White House, reconvene again for our afternoon panels after lunch.

Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

A F T E R N O O N S E S S I O N

MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, from FirstBank of Colorado, Mr. Doug Price. From AFL-CIO, Mr. John Sweeney. From the United States Army, Maj. Gen. John G. Meyer, Jr. From Calvary Bi-Lingual Multicultural Learning Center, Ms. Beatriz Otero. Vicar of Human Services, Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan. From American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Susan Aronson. From the Delaware State Legislature, Representative Jane Maroney. And Secretary of Education Richard Riley.

(Applause.)

Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice President of the United States and the First Lady.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, and welcome back. We are delighted to have all of you join us again in the East Room of the White House and throughout Washington at various federal agencies and throughout the country.

I am delighted that this afternoon our child care panel discussions will have the benefit of the

leadership and insight of someone who has long been committed to the well-being of our children and their families -- who, with his wife, has led a family conference every year that has explored issues such as this and brought about not only positive public consideration, but very effective policy recommendations and changes, and that, of course, is the Vice President. And so it is with great personal pleasure that I introduce to you the Vice President of the United States, Al Gore.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you very much. I feel like I'm sure all of you do, it's just a real privilege to be able to participate in this historic conference.

This morning's sessions, I understand, went not only extremely well, but really did break new ground and, of course, the most important part of leadership is changing the way we think about whatever problem we're focusing on or whatever opportunity we're trying to seize in behalf of our children. And by that measure and others I don't know of anyone who has ever provided this nation the kind of leadership on child

care that the First Lady has provided, and we're very grateful to you, Mrs. Clinton, for what you are doing. Nobody has a greater understanding of the challenges that we need to face. And really working over there in the west wing earlier, I could just sort of feel the ground shaking a little bit with all of the work you guys have been doing over here this morning.

I want to also acknowledge at the outset of my comments, my friend and colleague on the President's Cabinet, the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, and I'm going to actually introduce him in just a moment after I make my comments and then he will join the First Lady and me in moderating this panel.

And it is a distinguished panel indeed, including Maj. Gen. John Gill Meyer; Representative Jane Maroney from Delaware; John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO; Dr. Susan Aronson, of the National Board of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Bishop Joseph Sullivan, Vicar of Human Services for the Diocese of Brooklyn; Beatriz Otero, Executive Director of Calvary Bi-Lingual Multicultural Learning Center; and Doug Price, President of FirstBank of Colorado.

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Now, there are in the audience as active participants a number of members of Congress, and I would like to acknowledge the ones that have been provided to me here and since I don't have my glasses on -- even if I'm looking straight at you it doesn't mean that I recognize your face -- and I apologize in advance if I leave somebody out.

Senator John Kerry and Senator Carol Mosely-Braun. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman Earl Pomeroy, Congressman Carlos Romero-Barcello, Congressman Tom Allen, Congressman Jim McGovern, Congresswoman Donna Christian-Green, and we're very fortunate to have with us one of the leading governors in the country, Governor Roy Romer, who has worked on this issue for so long and the First Lady of Puerto Rico, Erma Margareto Rossello.

And I know that there are a lot of state legislators here. For example, the speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, Dan Blue, is here, and there are others. There are city and county leaders who are present. I know that the supervisor from Los Angeles County, Yvonne Braithwaite-Burke, is

here and to her and all of the others, thank you so much.

I might just say that the elected officials from the Congress and the states and local governments are making all the difference in helping to change the way of thinking about child care that the First Lady and the President are getting at with this conference. So we particularly thank you for what you're doing with your participation here today.

And of course, I want to remind you again, as others stated this morning, we are a group not confined to this historic room here in the White House. There are 110 satellite link-ups in 44 of our 50 states, and we welcome all of you participating. I assume it is that camera with the red light there that we are connected to you through. And thank you very much for the overwhelming response with your participation here.

Let me also say, because Tipper asked me to say this on her behalf, she is making speeches in California today and yesterday, including at a charity event that she accepted before the date for this was established, and she very much wanted to be here. She

has worked on this issue for many, many years and has an absolute firm commitment to child care. She made me promise to give her a full and detailed report on today's conference. So I hope everyone will speak distinctly. I'm going to be taking careful notes for her.

The overwhelming response that we have seen and felt to the First Lady's idea for this conference has come because of one simple reason: More children are being raised by working parents than ever before. And so child care is an issue that touches all of our lives. And I think it is emblematic of something even bigger.

With the leadership of our President and First Lady, we are trying to fully realize how important it is in America to have more of a focus on the American family, not just rhetorically but to focus on a basic understanding that the family is the single most important entity in our society. People live their lives first and foremost in the venue of the family. And if we pretend or fool ourselves into thinking that policies or programs, public or private, can be aimed

at solving problems by focusing just on individuals without paying due regard to the effect on the families within which those individuals live their lives, we are making a terrible mistake.

Thankfully, in recent years, there has been a growing understanding that everything we do has to be analyzed with respect to what its impact on the family is. Does it strengthen the family's ability to be a healing force in the lives of the individuals who are a part of that family? Does it hurt the family, does it help the family? That's the first question that ought to be asked.

The family is where we first turn for help and with all of today's pressures, families, and especially parents in families, need help. They need more of the tools and resources that can help them balance the competing needs of home and work.

It is no accident that the family leave law was the very first law President Clinton signed when he came into office in 1993. It is no accident that we just expanded health care to half of the uninsured children in America, the greatest single expansion of

children's health care since Medicaid.

But in spite of the steps forward that have been taken, you can talk to any working parent and almost the first words out of their lips are "child care." When they go to work in the morning, no parent should have to worry about whether their children are safe. No parent should have to worry about whether they can afford child care in the first place, or whether their child care center is providing a positive environment with the best-trained and most responsible staff. That is why we are committed to ensuring throughout this nation safe and affordable child care.

Doing so will require parents, schools, child care centers, community and religious groups, business, labor and government, all at every level, working together in a real partnership. And the working group on child care that will report to Secretary Rubin will help make that partnership a reality.

But it is not just the quantity of child care that matters, as many of you have pointed out forcefully. It is the quality. And today, about half of all non-regulated child care providers offer care

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that has been rated inadequate. When we allow our children to spend their formative years in substandard child care, we are robbing them of a chance at a brighter future.

And incidentally, remember the genesis of this conference; the First Lady brought this into being and it came out of the earlier White House conference that she brought into being about child development, in which we focused on the really exciting and revolutionary new findings about how the brain develops and the relationship between nurture and nature, the relationship between the care given and the way brain cells grow and connect, one with the other. So the kind of child rearing and child care that is provided has a profound impact at every level. I know you all know this, but the history of how this national conversation came about, I think, is very important.

That is why the proposals the President announced this morning, including scholarships for child care workers and a registry to facilitate criminal background checks on child care providers, are so important. Unfortunately, the challenge of finding

safe, affordable quality child care certainly does not get any easier as our children get older. Every week nearly 5 million school children spend time as so-called "latchkey kids," without any adult supervision.

And the pressures of trying to balance work and family often pop out in a decision by parents that when the children get to a certain age, "Well, you know, they can take care of themselves a lot better now." And so they will make that assumption under duress, so to speak, and then what happens in all too many families is tragic. Because these kids walk home alone, return to empty houses and at worst, they end up on the streets getting into trouble.

Children from 12 to 17 have the greatest risk of being involved with violent crime, either as victims or perpetrators, between the hours of 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. That is the great wasteland of time in most communities when school is out, but so are parents, still at work.

We need more quality after-school programs to give children something to say yes to. The most common time when unmarried girls get pregnant is in those hours. The most common time when drug abuse takes

place is during those hours. The most common time when children start smoking cigarettes for the first time is during those hours. The most common time they get into trouble of all kinds is during those hours.

Already over 2,700 school districts around the nation are using funds from the Safe and Drug Free School Act to support after-school programs that keep kids away from drugs. Many of the companies and nonprofit groups that made commitments at the President's Service Summit have become involved in mentoring in after-school programs.

And as the President announced this morning, the National Service Corporation has made a commitment to work to strengthen after-school programs around the nation. The President's Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Act calls for 1,000 new after-school initiatives around the country and we urge Congress to pass it into law. And these Senators and Congresspeople that I mentioned here have been among the leaders in helping to move these legislative initiatives forward.

But as I said, it is a partnership, and we all have a role to play. And this afternoon's session is

about listening to the ideas that all of you bring to that partnership and to examine what it is that makes your model successful. Your innovative approaches to after-school activities are bringing real results.

Now, I had an unusual upbringing, partly in a rural, small town environment and partly here in Washington, D.C. But in Tennessee I was a member of the 4-H Club, and, at that time, 4-H was geared primarily toward kids in agricultural areas like Carthage, Tennessee. I was involved in the beef cattle project. But you know, now the 4-H after-school activity program enrolls over 1200 young people in the city of Los Angeles, creating a safe haven for inner city children. I'm sure they don't have a beef cattle project there, but they have new kinds of projects and they are doing a great job.

(Laughter.)

And over 85 percent of the parents involved claim that program has kept their children out of gangs. That's a successful model. And these parents see more responsible attitudes in their children and they also see a real improvement in their performance at school.

The First Lady was kind enough to mention the annual family conference that Tipper and I host every summer in Nashville, Tennessee. She was the keynote speaker a couple of years ago and has attended several of these. Last June we focused on work and family, and one of the speakers gave us a powerful example this past June.

Susan Gindrich-Cameron (phonetic), the Principal at Carson Lane Academy in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, told us about her school, which is open five days a week, year round, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eighty percent of the students participate in activities ranging from an optional full day of learning to one that also includes arts and sports.

Now, it was our First Lady who reminded us that on so many of the challenges facing children and families, it truly does take a village. Because together we can lift up our children and help parents succeed in balancing work and home and we can reach the day when quality, affordable child care is a fact of life, not a subject of debate. That is why your presence here -- all of you -- today is so critical and

it is just the beginning.

So again, I would like to thank the First Lady for her leadership, thank the President for the announcements and the leadership he is providing, and I would like to now kick it off by turning to the person who sits at the President's Cabinet table and champions the needs of America's children in education, my good friend, a man of great and strong character and a great leader -- a good friend -- Secretary of Education Dick Riley.

(Applause.)

SECRETARY RILEY: Thank you so much, Mr. Vice President, and I thank you, Hillary and the President, for really highlighting this important issue of today.

I am one member of the Cabinet that has this as kind of a special interest. As many of you know, I am very proud of my eight grandchildren, and I have another one on the way. I don't know if you all knew that or not.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: When is that one due, Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY RILEY: Well, like in March, I

think. I'll let you know specifically, but I have a picture of my two youngest.

(Laughter.)

And if you all can see them, they are just beautiful. Roy, can you see that all right? Pass that down.

(Laughter.)

Make sure I get it back. But I am so proud of our administration. We have put education, I think, where it belongs, squarely in the center of the public's agenda. Americans know that education offers the way up. And we know that, too, and we really have centered in on education. And I thank these members of Congress, the Senators, the governors, and all of you really realize the very serious importance of education to the children and to the people of this country.

Today's conference indicates, however, that you all and our leadership understand that what happens during the school day is only part of the solution. What goes on in a child's life before and after school and how he or she interacts are crucial ingredients in helping our young people develop as good citizens.

We have already heard a lot of very significant discussion this morning. We have a number of things on the floor of the Congress. Those of us who are interested have been running in and out. But I heard so many interesting things this morning and I thank all of the panel members for that and about early child care and some after-school care also. But it is essential that we make sure that our youngest children receive the kind of focused attention and the kind of quality care that will nurture them and prepare them for a lifetime of learning.

I had the good opportunity of being the chair of the Carnegie Corporation's task force on children zero to three, and I see some of the people here involved in that. David Hamburg and, of course, Hillary was there when you brought your report out, and it really was a very good catalyst for bringing this issue to the people's attention. I had to give that up when I took this job; just like everything else, it was important to me. I had to surrender.

MRS. CLINTON: But not your grandchildren.

SECRETARY RILEY: No, I still have them.

(Laughter.)

But we know that a child who arrives at school ready to learn is a child who will do that much better in achieving personal and academic success. But let me, this afternoon, spend a moment talking about the importance of quality child care for older children that needs to occur before and after school and in the summertime.

I am referring to the creation of positive and supervised environments that are filled with enriching, learning activities, including access to computers, the arts, and even including tutoring in basic subjects, of course, like reading and math, that we are all very much into.

Our young people need and deserve more than an afternoon spent alone in a house, sitting alone in front of a television, and for all too many, T.V. does look like a very good alternative. But we need to focus on creating positive alternatives, specifically community-based after-school safe havens for children that offer, not just a place where school kids do time, but a place where they want to spend time -- a positive

place where they can go before and after school, where they can do community service, have the opportunity to learn in creative and enjoyable ways, and where older students can be engaged in work study and internships. I have seen these kind of successful school/community learning centers in trips all across this country -- many, many examples.

I was with the President and the First Lady in Brazil recently. We went to the Manguera School in Rio, one of the poorest sections in Brazil. A very poor area. And this school combines sports and samba lessons and all kind of internships right along with academics for these very poor children and attracted them in, reducing crime, raising achievement levels; it was very, very impressive.

I might say when we walked out on the stage at this school, it was very hot, and here were these thousands of students and we went in and had a seat. The President and the First Lady came out and all these children were screaming and hollering, and I said, "You know, isn't that great. Here is the President, they all must recognize him and Hillary, and these little

young children screaming and hollering," and then I realized, Hillary, that Pele was standing there with me -- the famous soccer player -- that was kind of a little bit of a let-down.

I have seen, though, what these kind of community centers can do to move young people from a world of violence and drugs and unsupervised, unproductive behavior to a world of creativity and discipline and enriched activity in learning.

If these kinds of programs sound good when I am mentioning them, then know that they also sound good to many others. A survey that our Department of Education conducted earlier this year revealed four times as many elementary and middle school parents want these programs than have access to them. And a majority of these parents would be willing to pay something for a program if it was offered despite their very limited financial means.

I was very interested in this poll. It was elementary and middle school parents. It is very rare that you get good data from middle school parents, but they said the same thing as elementary school parents

did, substantially.

Unfortunately, while these kinds of enriching, extended learning experiences do work, they are still few and far between. Fully 70 percent of all public elementary and middle schools did not offer any before- or after-school programs. This, in turn, contributed to the fact that just 3.4 percent of all public elementary and middle school students were enrolled in such a program.

And I will tell you that is, in my judgment, a travesty; here we are living in this golden era, a time when we have to make the right kind of decisions for our people and for our future, and we can do it and we have not yet, but we are here talking and working forward. And we already know a lot of answers. We know what works, now we just have to get about doing it.

Hillary and I presented this booklet the other day at a meeting in a school, "Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers." It is very good help to tell community leaders and school people and parents how then to get involved in financing and staffing and

so forth these community centers. There are also some very, very good examples of what works all around the country. And you can get these, of course, by calling us at 1-800-USA-LEARN.

So this is available, and we urge you all to take advantage of it.

We have worked hard to make federal programs more flexible, like Title I, I think is a grand example that you can now use those funds a lot easier in before- and after-school programs. Also, the President and the Vice President have made community learning centers in our America Read Challenge as cornerstones of our educational agenda, and that is why I hope the Congress will support both of these measures. They are really out there right now to expand learning opportunities through quality after-school programs.

The well-being of our children is too important an issue to play politics with, and I hope people will think and vote educationally and I am certainly confident that that will happen.

So I look forward to hearing from the other panelists, and I appreciate being with you.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: I want to thank both the Vice President and the Secretary of Education for their remarks. Now we turn to the members of the panel to discuss what we can learn from what works. Each of them has a unique perspective and experience that can be helpful to us in our efforts to try to encourage other people around the country to learn from and replicate best practices and good models.

Our first panelist is Gen. Meyer. He has been deeply involved in the military's child care program and I have been impressed in the visits I have made to our bases here and abroad in the last four-and-a-half years to not only see excellent child care being delivered to the children of the members of our Armed Forces, but to see the high level of satisfaction that both parents and child care providers express.

So I would like to ask Maj. Gen. Meyer to tell us how the military has succeeded in making its child care program, the largest in our country, so successful and so strong. So please, join me in welcoming the general.

(Applause.)

GEN. MEYER: Mrs. Clinton, Vice President Gore, on behalf of Secretary of Defense Cohen and the entire Department of Defense, it is my honor to participate on this panel and discuss the military's child development program.

As a point of departure, before I became the Army Chief of Public Affairs, I was a commander of the Army Commuting and Family Support Center, and that is a center that is responsible for most of the quality of life and the morale, welfare, and recreation of the Army service members. A very significant portion of my time was spent on family programs, most particularly child development.

As I was finishing my remarks last night at home, my daughter, who is out of college but still residing at home because she is an aspiring, poor film producer, said to me, "Dad, don't worry about it. Just remember the three 'Bs.'" I said, "What would that be?" She said, "Be brief, be clear, be gone." So I want to try and be concise.

(Laughter.)

I would like to start by reviewing some of the demographics on the size and the magnitude of the Department of Defense's challenge. The Department of Defense has the largest corporate-sponsored child care program in the country. We have over 1.4 million active duty members. We have over 1.3 million children under the age of 18. And more than 345,000 children under the age of three. Sixty percent of our active duty force is married. To put that in perspective, in the '50s it was only 35 percent. Each year over 109,000 children are born to active duty members. Active duty service members move on an average of every three years. Service members are young and tend to become parents at a younger age. Forty-three percent of our service members are 25 years and younger. Fourteen percent are 20 years and younger. The average age is 28 1/2 years old. Sixty-five percent of our military spouses are employed outside the home. Our service members are at the lower end of the pay scale. Military parents are frequently geographically separated from their extended families.

One can see the challenges we face. However,

one fact is very clear: Availability and affordability of child care is a quality of life issue for service members. Child care is critical to the Department of Defense's bottom line. We consider child care a work force issue. It impacts the effectiveness of the force. It impacts the readiness of the force.

Various leaders in the Department of Defense have said, and I quote, "Child care is a readiness issue for Army personnel," or "People are our most important resource. We are focusing on key areas such as child care. We can do more," says the Air Force. Or, "When individual and family needs are met, our sailors and Marines can devote their total energy to military duties without unnecessarily distracting themselves over the care for their families." I think this quote by Secretary of Defense Cohen says it best: "Supporting the care and development of children is a responsibility that the Department of Defense willingly assumes in return for the dedication and sacrifice our military members make in the defense of the nation."

You can see we are very fortunate because we have a total commitment by the military and the

civilian leadership in the Department of Defense. Child care enhances our ability to attract and retain a high caliber work force. We have a saying in the military, "You enlist the service member, you reenlist the family." It is vitally imperative that our quality of life programs, particularly child care, be of the highest quality we can provide.

Our child development program is very large and growing. We serve over 200,000 children a day at over 800 centers in school-age facilities. We have over 9,700 family child care homes, and nearly 40 percent of our care is for infants and toddlers.

Now, our child development program was not always good. In 1982, the GAO pointed out to us some significant findings: Facilities did not meet the fire, health, and safety codes. There were no uniform standards and no oversight for our family child care homes. In the mid-'80s, also, like the rest of the country, we experienced a series of highly-publicized child abuse allegations. These led to congressional hearings in 1988 and in 1989, the Congress passed the Military Child Care Act. The Act was the driving force

behind the changes that occurred.

We had to re-look at how we did business. We instituted construction standards. We published a Department of Defense Child Development Program Policy. We initiated background clearances on all our personnel. We began an aggressive cleanup through inspections and oversight.

Now, having traversed through all those challenging times, we are pleased to share our lessons from what happened in the past. Five key factors changed our program from one once referred to as, and I quote, "The ghetto of American child care" to what we consider a model for the nation.

First factor: We developed the systemic approach, and you heard Governor Hunt this morning very articulately discuss how important this concept is. Each component of our system is an equal partner, from the center to the home to the school-age care. Each has equivalent requirements for inspections, training, background clearances. There is a single point of entry in our child care system; our information and referral zeros in on the parent and the parent's need