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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 26, 1998

TO: Early Childhood Colleagues

FROM: Michael Levine

SUBJECT: Karl Zinsmeister's Analysis of Child Care Research and Policy Options

The attached articles from the most recent *American Enterprise* journal presents a very important conservative analysis of the contemporary child care debate. I strongly encourage you to read it and consider an appropriate response.

MHL/ta
Attachments

See/Neera -
This just in from
our friend Michael
Levine.

Nicole

the problem with day care

Meryl Frank is an expert on child care. For five years she ran a Yale University program that studied parental leave.... Frank went back to work part time when her son, Isaac, was 5 months old, and in the two years since then she has changed childcare arrangements nine times.

Her travails began with a well-regarded day care center near her suburban New Jersey home. On the surface, it was great. One staff member for every three babies, a sensitive administrator, clean facilities. "But when I went in," Frank recalls, "I saw this line of cribs and all these babies with their arms out crying, wanting to be picked up. I felt like crying myself." She walked out without signing Isaac up and went through a succession of other unsatisfactory situations—a babysitter who couldn't speak English, a woman who cared for 10 children in her home at once—before settling on a neighborhood woman who took Isaac into her home. "She was fabulous," Frank recalls wistfully. Three weeks after that babysitter started, she got sick and had to quit. Frank advertised for help in the newspaper and got 30 inquiries but no qualified babysitter. (When Frank asked one prospective nanny about her philosophy of discipline, the woman replied: "If he touched the stove, I'd punch him.") A few weeks later she finally hired her tenth babysitter. "She's a very nice young woman," Frank says. "Unfortunately, she has to leave in May. And I just found out I'm pregnant again and due in June."

That's what happens when a *pro* tries to get help.

So begins a story in a special issue of *Newsweek* on family trends. While this many day care problems in two years is probably not average, it is by no means unusual. Mismatches, repeated disappointments, and occasional horror stories are the rule, not the exception, when it comes to hiring parental substitutes today—as you'll quickly discover once you start interviewing a cross-section of day care users about their actual experiences.

In a perfect world, there would be an abundance of intelligent, well-balanced, devoted individuals willing to attend lavishly and patiently to the demands of strangers' children—enough so that every family who wanted could have their own full-time loving surrogate. These dream workers would all be willing to provide their services so cheaply that

BY KARL ZINSMEISTER

there would be little or no strain on family finances. And they would remain with the same family year after year, meshing perfectly with child, parents, and surroundings.

But there are no dream caretakers. There is very little that even comes close. In real life, purchased care is rarely more than a stopgap. That's not my verdict. It's the verdict of parents themselves. Take Joanie Colquitt, mother and holder of a master's degree in social psychology. In a long letter she wrote me a few years ago, Ms. Colquitt details a quite typical set of experiences:

I can remember when I considered sending my own first child to day care. I had spent so long on my education and we did truly need the money. So I visited what was, at that time, the number-one day care chain in the country. What I saw there broke my heart. Babies were lined up, six in a row, crying, waiting for their meals. Toddlers were still in their cribs, some with tear-stained cheeks simply sitting there with no toys, no companionship, with looks of having given up any hope for personal attention a long time ago.... There was a bucket on the floor next to the high chairs where several rags floated in dirty looking water. The helper pulled one out to wipe a baby's face. There were 15-month-old children who could not even walk, I believe because they had not been allowed out of their cribs enough to develop properly.

I have visited other day care centers that were cleaner, and had academic programs and activities galore. However, the atmosphere, to me, was still negative. The children were not loved the way they needed to be and you could tell. They looked tired and kind of washed out.

Author Linda Burton is another person who has described in detail what she came across while scouring her hometown (the Washington, D.C. area) for day care:

In one instance, I found the "absolutely marvelous" family day care



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provider, recommended by trusted friends, sleeping on her sofa while 11 children (she had informed me that she only cared for five) wandered aimlessly around in front of the blaring TV. Another time, on an unannounced visit, I found that the "highly recommended" licensed day care provider confined seven preschoolers to her tiny dining room. I found them huddled together, leaning over a barricade to watch a TV program showing in the adjacent room.

These are not isolated anecdotes. Anyone investigating the world of full-time day care quickly amasses files of such testimony. A few years ago the Metropolitan Toronto Social Planning Council investigated a sample of 281 day care homes. They reported that a small number were genuinely stimulating, and another small number were out-and-out abusive. The large majority, however, provided care that was merely indifferent. Only a few of the caregivers studied were able to make themselves genuinely interested in each of their individual enrollees. In a significant minority of cases, youngsters were simply ignored most of the time.

How do parents react to the disappointing standards of most hired care? Very often, by lowering their expectations. I was struck by a conversation my wife and I once had with three of our Washington, D.C. neighbors who used significant amounts of substitute

care for their children. We asked them how they liked their current sitters. "This one's good with children," replied the first. "She's always proselytizing for the Jehovah's Witnesses, though, and sometimes that annoys me." Another volunteered about her sitter: "She's great. Except that she's really incredibly lazy." "_____ is nice, and we're happy with her," answered the third, "but she smokes all the time, and never has the TV off."

Day care-using parents make minor compromises like these by the millions. And some end up facing much larger worries. Like the dual-career Washington, D.C. couple (the mother actually worked as a child care researcher at one of the local universities) who discovered that the Spanish-speaking woman they were dropping their nine-month-old off with was taking in several other babies without their knowledge, and regularly leaving them with her 12-year-old daughter while she went out to clean houses. (They discovered this only when one of the infants swallowed 30 aspirin tablets and ended up in a hospital.)

A telling example of how difficult it can be to accurately judge a hired caregiver involves professor Sandra Scarr. Scarr is one of the most zealous academic defenders of day care in the country. She argues regularly and vociferously in her writing and in media interviews that "day care can actually be good for children." Yet when Scarr employed babysitters for her own children, her day care expertise and enthusiasm were not enough to avoid problems. One day she returned from work to find her 18-month-old weeping. "Kathy hit me! Kathy hit me!," the toddler cried simply. Scarr found large, red welts on her daughter's body—"the sitter had beaten her badly." She expressed great frustration when told by police that there could be no prosecution without witnesses. Apparently without any sense of irony, Scarr complained bitterly that "no one was there to prevent the abuse or to testify about it."

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But physical dangers and out-and-out abuse are not the major problems associated with substitute parenting. Despite the screaming headlines, these are fairly unusual occurrences, thank goodness. The commoner, deeper drawback is simply that it is an emotionally unsatisfying substitute for the natural attentions of mother and father. From a youngster's perspective, the typical day care arrangement is a puzzling, often chilly, slightly sad arrangement. Unfortunately, very few discussions of day care look at things from that angle. "We could do with another Charles Dickens," suggests family historian John Sommerville, "to give us a child's-eye view" of the world of day care.



DAY CARE AS IT REALLY IS

There's no need for anyone to write a book on what children encounter in a typical day care setting—because a writer named Deborah Fallows has already done that. Fallows (a Radcliffe graduate, linguist, and former assistant dean at Georgetown University who is married to *U.S. News* editor James Fallows) is not Charles Dickens. But in *A Mother's Work* she describes one-and-a-half years' worth of close observation in dozens of diverse day care centers scattered across Maryland, Washington, D.C., Texas, and Massachusetts.



While Fallows discovered no abuse, relatively little dirt, and adequate physical conditions in most centers, she nonetheless found the average child's experience frighteningly empty. This was a fairly typical visit:

I settled into an inconspicuous corner of the room and began to watch the children.... Often, one child would attach himself to me—maybe going off for a few minutes but always coming back to say a few words...point to a shoe that need tying...or show me his tummy.

The teacher watching the children tried her hardest, ad-libbing her way from one activity to the next. She put on a record and started to dance. One little blond boy started dancing along with her. A few others joined the group. Five or six gathered by some swinging cabinet doors that formed the partition between the play area and the rest of the room. One little girl sat by herself, crying softly in the corner. The rest wandered around....

Then a fight erupted between two little boys, and the teacher had to stop dancing to break it up. Without her example, the dancing died off. She tried again a few minutes later but was interrupted this time by a small couple who tripped over each other....

She gave up records then and tried reading a story. The same few eager dancers moved right in to listen, while the rest kept on swinging on the cabinet doors or aimlessly wandering. The little girl was still crying in her corner. After a short story, the teacher opened the large cabinet and pulled out some puppets. This immediately attracted the largest crowd of the morning. All but a few rushed right over to watch the show. But the brilliance of the idea dimmed after several moments. As her impromptu story line weakened, the toddlers drifted back to their swinging doors and wandering, shuffling their feet, chasing back and forth....

Here as at other centers I visited, you could almost feel the morning

driving itself toward the grand finale—lunch.

Fallows gives wrenching descriptions of children referred to by their teachers as "little boy" or "hey little girl," of activities that cater to the group average but leave quiet toddlers behind, of desperate notes pinned to youngsters' coats in which parents plead for extra attention or special comforts. She tells of caretakers who can't remember babies by name and description just a few months after they've graduated to an older group ("I'm not sure which one it was. They all do that after a while..."). There is much tedium, much bewilderment, many unconsolated tears. Children clamoring to go "to mommy's house," are quieted with small fibs ("yeah, mommy will be here soon"). In a situation that human biology guarantees no natural parent would ever have to face (four to ten same-aged youngsters per adult), tired teachers do what they can to get by.

Fallows' testimony is cool, relentlessly detailed, and very convincing. For individuals who have never visited average day care centers or thought much about what group care of infants and toddlers comprises—and how many adults, even prospective parents, have?—her observations will come as an upsetting revelation.

Another disturbingly realistic portrait of full-day hired childcare is provided by William and Wendy Dreskin in their book *The Day Care Decision*. For five years, the Dreskins co-directed their own non-profit nursery school and then day care center in the San Francisco area. Theirs was a very high quality program: teachers had a B.A. plus one year of graduate training, child to adult ratios were low, there was lots of educational equipment, and an intelligent curriculum. I know the Dreskins myself and can testify that they are extremely warm, wise, gentle individuals who have raised two great kids of their own—the kind of people who are naturals with children.

They started out with a half-day preschool, which was very successful. But with more and more dual-career parents demanding day-long care they

found that a facility in use only three hours a day was becoming uneconomic. So they decided to expand into a full-day operation. "We were going to offer a quality program. We did not have the slightest suspicion that there might be a serious problem with even the best day care programs," they write.

Then they began to notice changes in their children. "Some of the same boys and girls we had known as nursery schoolers became different children when they were subjected to the stress of full-time day care." The Dreskins cite numerous specific cases to illustrate the alterations in personality they observed. Three year-olds who had been happy in a morning program began to withdraw, lash out, or cry for hours at a time. In the individual journals that were a standard part of the Dreskin's program, they began to dictate poignant pleas for more time with their parents. Some children



lost previously acquired skills. Others began to refuse to take their toys home at night. ("What's the use? I'm here more than at home.")

The parents changed too. As they subconsciously transferred more and more of the responsibility for their child to the center, they gradually stopped coming to school meetings. They didn't check books out of the lending library. They asked fewer questions and dropped in on classes less. They showed up after work badly overstressed. "We typically saw scenes like this," the Dreskins write:

Carl's mother arrives at 6:00 P.M., tired and frazzled. Carl tries to show her a picture he has painted. 'Show me later. Get your lunch box. Come on.'

She is already halfway out the door. Carl trails after her, crying at the rebuff and at the effort of trying to balance his painting, his lunch box, his fire engine, and the cup of fruit salad he made in a cooking project that afternoon. We can tell from his mother's mood what sort of evening Carl will have. So much for the precious two hours he will get to spend with his mother between leaving day care and going to bed.

"For two years we watched day care children respond to the stresses of eight to ten hours a day of separation from their parents with tears, anger, withdrawal, or profound sadness," the Dreskins write, "and we found, to our dismay, that nothing in our own affection and caring for these children would erase this sense of loss and abandonment." They found themselves in a

The Importance of Early Childhood Attachment

Numerous studies conducted in varied settings show clearly that the only way to build strong independence in children is to indulge their strong needs for *dependence* when they are very young. As Margaret Mead put it, "we do not know—man has never known—how else to give a human being a sense of selfhood and identity, a sense of the worth of the world." The path to the sturdy self lies directly across the lap of mother and father. There is no other route.

Parents who push their children out into the world before they are ready do them no favors. In my years of working in parent-cooperative play groups and nursery schools I myself have seen a number of strikingly disturbed and protestful children in this situation. I remember one two-year-old in Washington, D.C., for instance, who would shake and whimper, frantically clutch her stuffed animal, and finally curl herself on the floor in a tight crouch, refusing to be comforted, on many mornings when she was dropped off. Usually it was her babysitter who delivered her, only occasionally her mother, never her father.

"Human attachment" research has demonstrated that the early relation-

ship between infants and preschoolers and their parents is the "foundation stone" of all subsequent personality development. It has also shown that even very marginal parental care is better for a young child than institutional care. As John Bowlby, the only psychiatrist who has twice received the American Psychiatric Association's highest award, warned, "a home must be very bad before it is bettered by a good institution."

A classic investigation by psychiatrist René Spitz, for instance, compared the development of infants raised by nurses in children's homes with infants raised by mothers confined to prison. He found that the infants in institutional child care exhibited evidence of depression and were stunted in their development, while the mother-raised children developed normally, despite the inhospitable setting and the fact that every one of the mothers was either mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed.

In groundbreaking mid-1950s research, Yale professors Sally Provence and Rose Lipton examined infants who spent a considerable part of their first year in superior institutions. They

found that these youngsters suffered incapacities in all areas of physical and mental development compared to home-reared children, and their deficits did not disappear when they were moved into home settings by age one. Follow-up work showed that these parent-deprived children never fully overcame their physical, cognitive, and emotional impairments. When it became clear how much these youngsters had withered, most of the group homes were shut down.

Another telling result came from the work of child analysts Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham. After arriving in London with her father Sigmund in 1938, Anna Freud helped set up the Hampstead Nurseries. During the war, the Nurseries provided care for infants and children who could not be looked after at home because their parents were working in the war effort, or because a parent had been lost, or because their homes were thought unsafe due to the German bombing blitz. Both Freud and Burlingham were already world-renowned child analysts at the time, and strong believers in the importance of good early relationships. They chose their staff carefully

dilemma: "The problem was not with our facility.... It was obvious that there was a problem inherent in day care itself, a problem that hung like a dark storm over 'good' and 'bad' day care centers alike. The children were too young to be spending so much time away from their parents. They were like young birds being forced out of the nest and abandoned by their parents before they could fly, their wings undeveloped, unready to carry them out into the world." "We were so distressed by our observations," the Dreskins conclude, "that we closed the center."

The Dreskins may be more sensitive and braver than most day care practitioners, but their experiences are not unusual. A vast body of skeptical testimony on hired child care is available from individuals right inside the profession. Several years ago, after I'd written a number of scholarly articles



about day care, *Reader's Digest* reprinted a review of day care research I'd put together. That brought me an outpouring of more than 100 personal letters. The thing that stunned me most in this correspondence was the number of responses critical of day care that I received from current or former day care workers.

A single mother from Spokane, Washington wrote: "I know that the abdication of parents' responsibility to raise their children begins at a very young age in this country. I know that parents abdicate this right even in the first few weeks after birth, during the critical bonding stage for infants. I know this because I am a nanny recruiter. I send nannies to the East Coast states and to Florida. I like my job,

mostly because I deal with the really fine people we send, who are truly nurturing people, but I am alarmed by what I see happening at the end of my job placements, in the family itself. I am seriously thinking about altering my profession."

A woman named Cherie Johnson sent a note saying, "I am the Assistant Director of Rainbow Corners Child Care Center in Papillion, Nebraska. This one job I would cheerfully give up if all these kids could stay at home with Mom or Dad. We really try to give them warm personal care but with so many I know most of our full-timers do not get the attention they really need."

Judy Hodges, a college-educated mother of two from Columbus, Ohio, wrote to report that after working in a day care center and keeping children in her home while her own daughters were young, she felt very uncomfortable with the idea of extended separations of young children from their parents. A woman who had worked at the Siemens Corporation day care center in Oslo wrote me from Norway to describe a "survival of the fittest environment" characterized by "fresh talk, aggressive behavior, a feed 'em and get 'em out to play" attitude.

Along these same lines, a different article I wrote on day care for the *Washington Post* produced a response from an intelligent 33-year-old mother of two living in Falls Church, Virginia. "I am a home day care provider," she began.

I care for a 19-month-old girl, the daughter of close friends of mine, who I've cared for since she was four months old. I normally have her four days a week, 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.... For many months this child cried and held her arms out to me every time her mother came to pick her up. I know her parents very well and feel certain that nothing resembling abuse or neglect was going on. After ruling that out it seemed that the child had made a conscious choice and preferred me to her mother. This has been difficult for both me and my friend.... This baby, unlike a child at home full time with his mother, was

and set up child care practices based on the very latest knowledge of child psychology. Conditions, all in all, were about as good as modern science and social concern could create.

What, then, were the results for their young charges? The truly crippling effects produced by average institutions were mostly eliminated. But in several vital areas children reared under these prime group conditions fared less well than children tended by average families. In speech, for example, the typical Hampstead two-year-old was six-months retarded compared with typical children looked after in their own homes. The Hampstead children were more aggressive and had less control of their impulses. They were late in achieving their toilet training. They were less cooperative. Many became listless.

In an attempt to soften these effects the nursery eventually grouped children into artificial "families," small groups of infants and toddlers with one or two adults serving as the exclusive "parents." "The result of this arrangement was astonishing in its force and immediacy. The need for individual attachment...which had been

lying dormant, came out of a rush," wrote Freud and Burlingham. "The violent attachment to the mother substitutes...was anything but peaceful." Eventually, however, there was a positive effect on speech development and on toilet training. Overall, results were better but still far from optimal.

So here we had a model institution, directed by two international experts in child development as their contribution to the nation in a time of emergency. And the outcomes were literally less successful than those produced by a statistically average family with an average baby. This, incidentally, did not come as a surprise to Freud or Burlingham. They had long recognized that professional wisdom, for all its usefulness, could never supplant intimate family ties as the spur to human development. Results like those from the Hampstead Nurseries stand not as criticisms of the techniques of the child development profession but rather as, in psychoanalyst Selma Fraiberg's words, "an appreciation of the family as the point of departure for all sound psychological thinking."

given another option and chose not to bond with her mother, to instead bond with me. I think this is an awful situation to put an infant in. To deprive a baby of the close, intense relationship with one caring, loving person, which I believe is critical in infancy, both for the child and the adult, negates the very basis from which emotional security derives.

One of the most compelling letters I've received on this subject came from a former day care worker from Wisconsin named Donna Briesemeister. She wrote as follows:

I am a public school music teacher, and the mother of two nearly grown sons.... In 1983, when I was between teaching positions, I took a job as a day care worker in Deerfield, Illinois. Baxter Laboratories made us nationally famous, and made history for themselves, by becoming the first corporation in the country to subsidize their employees's use of child care at an approved facility. We were housed in an unused public school building, and had in our care approximately 280 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years. I was assigned to a room for infants, and for nine hours a day I, and three wonderful young women, tried to give "mother's care" to 12 precious souls.

This experience was one of the most poignant of my life, because it was impossible for us even to approach the level of care we believed a child needed.... I watched children being traumatized as workers came and went. I observed the disenchantment they suffered, and the hostility they developed. [Noted psychologist] Burton White even came to visit us, and to speak to us of his belief that children, if they are to grow up healthy and happy, need to be under the care of their own mothers, at least until they are three years of age. I couldn't agree more....

I could go on and on, because I have been haunted these past several years by the images I carry from this "best of all possible" institutional day care centers.... I can tell you that be-



Fully half of all day care arrangements turn over in the course of a year.

fore my year in day care work was over, my co-workers and I were able to convince five of the 12 mothers whose children we cared for that they would be happier, and that their parent-child relationships would be healthier, if they would quit their jobs and would stay at home with their children. Our "babies" are five years old now, and we still stay in touch with their parents. That early bonding—unfortunately between us and the babies, instead of between the babies and their parents—is such a powerful human emotion that it never goes away, no matter how many years pass or how circumstances change. No parent or child should miss out on that experience.

Though it is obviously very difficult for workers to speak frankly on this charged subject, a great deal of uneasiness of this sort exists on day care's front lines today. There is a strong tendency in the popular press to censor such testimony for fear of "offending" some listeners. Nonetheless, warnings have worked their way into some established media outlets. In a feature article in the politically left magazine *The Progressive*, Dorothy Conniff, head of city day care programs in Madison, Wisconsin, describes day care as "mostly crowd control," and "a troubling social experiment." The *Washington Post* has quoted Jeree Pawl, director of the infant-parent program at the University of California-San Francisco, saying, "in most day cares, it's a pecking order; it's like a bunch of wild chickens in a hen yard." The loudest, most obnoxious behavior is what gets

rewarded with attention from overloaded adult caretakers and intimidated peers both, stated Pawl.

The *Wall Street Journal* ran an interview in which the head of an Illinois day care center serving 300 children—250 from families where both parents work, 50 from single-parent families—worried aloud about her mission. An excerpt:

Demand is so great that Elaine Lombardo, the center's founder and executive director, could sign up many more parents for care ranging up to \$120 a week if she wanted to.

She doesn't want to. Mrs. Lombardo has ambivalent feelings about her job. She knows she is providing a valuable and necessary service, but she worries about the family life and future of her charges. Many children are dropped off at 6:15 A.M. and don't see their parents again until 6 at night—even later, sometimes. One parent, a model, left her four-year-old until 8 P.M. It's not unheard of, either, for parents to drop off children who are obviously ill.

Under the circumstances, it's not surprising that the children come to look upon their teachers and Mrs. Lombardo as mother figures. "The kids kiss me good night," she says. "I'm torn. I want them to feel safe and secure, but this is not their home. Parents think we can substitute for family, but we can't."

In one of her books, bestselling child care author Penelope Leach also reports hearing such reservations among day care workers.

At a recent talk I gave to a group of nursery worker trainees, one girl recounted her worries about the lack of individual attention received by children in her unit. She finished with these words: "I suppose it's true that they are better off with us. We are taught and we do know what we are doing. But when I have children of my own I will use everything I know to look after them myself. I'd die rather than put a child of mine in the place where I work."

Coming as they do from talented and well-intentioned individuals right within the substitute-care industry itself, statements like these reflect much more than occasional dissatisfactions. They grow out of fundamental problems that exist at the very core of the childrearing-by-proxy experiment. In the sections that follow we'll look at some of those inherent problems.



acquisitions specialist at Paine Webber" who went through six nannies in the first six months of her child's life. Nanny Number One was arrogant, while Number Two was overfanatic about house-keeping, and Number Three didn't stimulate the child. Nanny Number Four was great but left abruptly without notice. Number Five was an *au pair* whose inability to speak English led to nutritional problems for the infant, and nanny Number Six was a Haitian who turned out to be paranoid and a baby disliker. Number Seven was doing fine. As of the story's writing, anyway.

In the interview grapevine and the statistical studies alike, caretaker turnover turns out to be a very serious problem for hired day care. A pair of investigations by UCLA psychologist Carollee Howes of 18- to 24-month-olds in good quality home-based day care found that most of the children had already experienced two or three changes in caregivers, and some had had as many as six.

By its very nature, day care produces instability and discontinuities in a baby's life. A child in purchased care, Penelope Leach points out, must regularly rely on "somebody who, even if she was there yesterday because it wasn't her day off, doesn't know what happened to that child in the 12 hours previous." This can have negative effects:

When a child is growing and changing and developing and working very hard at particular areas of his development, even 12 hours can put you totally out of step. Caring for a baby non-continuously is a constant process of experiment.... It may not hurt the baby for one afternoon, but it's awful bad for babies if all of their infant lives they are having to communicate with people to whom their language is foreign.

Yet this is what day care children are required to do all the time, as Leach notes:

Split shifts to cover the long nursery day double the number of people with

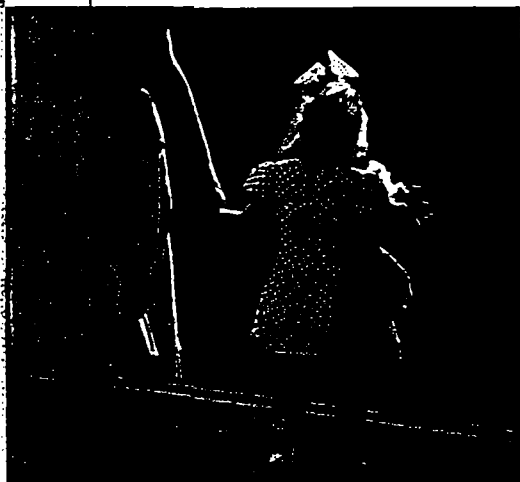
whom babies must interact. Lunch breaks, sick leave, vacations and in-service training courses produce such constant staff movement that case studies suggest an average of seven different people a day and 15 a week (some of them strangers "filling in") handle each child.

This is the *built-in* churning, Leach notes. On top of that you must add all the turnover that occurs whenever there is a change of center or arrangements.

There is widespread agreement among child development experts that instability in caretaking can seriously interfere with a young child's development. Howes' studies showed that the more changes a youngster had experienced, the more trouble he had adjusting to first grade. Other research shows that caregiver departures can cause breakdowns in toilet training and speech skills. Repeated disappointments will cause some youngsters to withdraw from adult contact. Other children will act out their resentment and disappointment by disrupting the classroom.

"The child is thrust into the care of some strange person, disrupting the bonds established with the mother. And just when he sends out some tender, new shoots of affection, he gets a new sitter," explains child psychiatrist Jack Raskin. "The child can't shout, 'My heavens, every attempt I'm making to get the closeness I need is sabotaged. What the hell is being done here?' But you'll see the results, perhaps five years later when he's disruptive in school, or ten years later when he's on drugs."

A baby who "is cared for by many well-meaning strangers in turn, or one who is cared for sketchily and without concentration, sharing his caretaker with other needful small people, is like an adult who moves from country to country, knowing the language of none," writes psychologist Leach. Some youngsters learn not to attach themselves to any caregiver. They lose the ability to feel or express warmth, and develop a shallow and indiscriminate emotional life. Certain such children end up without any sense of personal connectedness, and



MUSICAL CAREGIVERS

Remember Meryl Frank? She of the ten babysitters in two years, whose story started this article? Well, Meryl Frank has lots of company.

The *Washington Post Magazine* ran an admiring profile of a fine day care teacher working in a Maryland Kinder-Care center. In the body of the article, as part of a short description of the teacher's first weeks adjusting to her job, the reporter described how one mother angrily approached the new teacher with the news that "she was the ninth woman to work in her son's room in eight months." The mother demanded to know, "How long are you gonna be here?"

An article from *New York* magazine provides a snapshot of this same, central problem hitting a different part of the socio-economic spectrum. It chronicles the experiences of a "mergers-and-

thus lack concern for winning any other person's approval. This leaves them unaccountable, and sometimes socially dangerous.

To understand why shifting parent-surrogates can be so disruptive to a youngster, consider that a child's feelings "acquire the strength and variety of adult love" by the age of two, according to experts. Take this fully-developed capacity to feel the thrills and pangs of love and then overlay it with a child's fundamental uncertainty



about the larger world and you can see where the potential for hurt and insecurity comes from. As one mother I know asked when facing her own daughter's separation from her day care provider:

How do I explain to Susannah that very soon she will leave the woman she has known and loved for three-fourths

of her life? That she will be taken away from what has become her second family? That the children who are closer to her than her cousins, whose names were among the first words she learned, will be gone from her world?

Fear of abandonment is a primal human worry. There are fairy tales and ballads and novels aplenty to attest to that. The oldest theme in literature is that people can't simply be interchanged one for another in affairs

Longstanding Warnings from Experts

"It's very hard to become a sensitively responsive mother if you're away from your child ten hours a day," says distinguished child developmentalist Mary Ainsworth. "It really is." Margaret Mead, the scholar and champion of progressive causes, emphasized the same point. "A little baby needs continuity of care; all our studies suggest that too frequent changes of the mothering person are hard on children. If a woman works full time, it is very difficult for her to provide this continuity." Toward the end of her life, Mead argued explicitly that thoughtful women shouldn't be having children with the idea of placing them in someone else's care all day.

From her experience of recent years, Princeton, N.J. child therapist Isabel Paret concludes that "there's no question that infants don't do well in daycare, no matter how much modern families would like to think they do." Eleanor Galenson, a prominent New York child psychiatrist, states unequivocally that "putting infants into full-time daycare is a dangerous practice. Psychiatrists have been afraid to come out and tell the public this, but many of us certainly believe it to be true." Stanford psychologist Bryna Siegel concurs, noting that "clinician colleagues are reporting an increase in the number of children with unstable, extensive daycare histories in their practices." An article in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* reports that among "patients with an early history of surrogate mothering," "estrangement from biological mothers, and intolerance of

intimate relationships" is a significant problem. Many teachers, physicians, and youth workers likewise report seeing more and more disturbance traceable to early non-parental care.

Lillian Katz, the 1994 president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, describes this decade's findings on daycare effects as "very frightening." "Children under three don't belong in institutions," she states straightforwardly. Samuel Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, likewise urges that "each child deserves at least three good years at home with a full-time parent."

Penelope Leach, the British psychologist and author of today's most influential childraising manuals, is an opponent of the trans-Atlantic trend toward viewing childraising as a sideline practiced by parents busy at jobs. She insists that newborns need the concentrated attention of their parents for at least their first couple years, and she speaks with passion against group care for children under two. Someone caring for a child out of love will do a far better job than someone doing it for pay, she argues, and it should be a major aim of modern society to make full-time parenting easier.

Another child advocate who refuses to pull his punches on the daycare issue is the prominent pediatrician William Sears. He insists that "when mother and baby are separated, both of them miss out on the full benefits of a continuous mother-infant attachment." A baby in substitute care, he says, is "re-

quired to bounce his cues and affections back and forth between various caregivers. His needs may not be consistently met, and his developing sense of trust may be compromised."

The granddaddy of parent counselors, of course, is the recently deceased Benjamin Spock. Dr. Spock had for years opposed infant daycare, arguing that "a day nursery...is no good for an infant. There's nowhere near enough attention or affection to go around." Spock has argued that children need responsive, full-time parental love in their first years, and that it makes no sense for parents to "pay other people to do a poorer job of bringing up their children."

Despite a good deal of backtracking in successive editions of his book to placate feminist criticisms, Spock still pointed out in recent years that "even at six months babies will become seriously depressed, losing their smile, their appetite, their interest in things and people, if the parent who has cared for them disappears.... Small children...may lose some of their capacity to love or trust deeply, as if it's too painful to be disappointed again and again." He adds that "it is stressful to children to have to cope with groups, with strangers, with people outside the family. That has emotional effects, and, if the deprivation of security is at all marked, it will have intellectual effects, too."

For the first three years of his life, Spock argued, a child needs individualized care from the same person. Only in the small number of cases where a childcare arrangement fits

of the heart. So is it really so hard to understand why children might suffer from being disconnected from the people they love most? And as wrenching as lost loyalty and love are for grown-ups, they are even harder for children—because children are forming their very first attachments and have no other bonds or sense of worth to fall back on.

Though most parents are aware that harm can come from day care instability, it is not at all uncommon for chil-



dren to be regularly moved to new settings. Census Bureau figures show that about one child out of every five in day care has changed programs within the last four months. Other studies show that fully half of all day care arrangements change over the course of a year.

There are dozens of reasons for rapid day care turnover. The child or parent may have had a bad experience.

There may have been a sickness. The child may have gotten too old for a particular group. The location may have turned out to be inconvenient. The cost may have been too high. Someone may have come to dislike someone else. Perhaps the family moved, or changed jobs.

And even when the parent and child stay put, providers very often move out from underneath them. The National Child Care Staffing Study, which examined a sample of 227

that description can it substitute "pretty well" for parental care. He registered his urgent hope that "there will always be men and women who feel that the care of children...is at least as important and soul satisfying as any other activity." And he insisted that no parent should ever "feel the need to apologize for deciding to make that their main career."

Burton White, former director of the Harvard Preschool Project and one of the world's leading authorities on the first three years of life, has also written explicitly on the subject of nonparental care. "After more than 30 years of research on how children develop well, I would not think of putting an infant or toddler of my own into any substitute care program on a full-time basis," he reports, "especially a center-based program." White suggests that except for occasional baby-sitting, parents ought not use substitute care at all during the first six months of a child's life. A newborn "has to be responded to intensely in this period." From six months to three years of age, he says, the parent can use some part-time child-care, but the youngster should spend most of his waking time with a parent or grandparent. White concludes, "Unless you have a very good reason, I urge you not to delegate the primary child-rearing task to anyone else during your child's first three years of life.... Babies form their first human attachment only once. Babies begin to learn language only once.... The outcomes of these processes play a major role in shaping the future of each new child."

After studying hired child care in depth, in both its non-profit and for-profit forms, White pronounces it "a total disaster area," with "no feasible way of turning it into a model industry." Most families will find only "pretty poor substitutes" for parental care when they look outside the home, he warns. Therefore, "government should resist the cries for free full-time substitute baby care for all who want it."

If you are surprised to learn of this consensus against early full-time daycare, there is a good reason: Political fashions have made criticisms of daycare so off-limits that unfavorable evidence has been muted, downplayed, or ignored, in academic circles and mass media both. Michael Meyerhoff, director of the Center for Parent Education, explains that "over 90 percent of the professionals we deal with would agree with our basic position—that full-time substitute care for children under age three is not ordinarily in the best interests of the child. But many of these professionals are involved in situations where it's economically or politically unrealistic to maintain that position. Because of the strong attacks they'd be likely to get, many people are not saying anything."

Penelope Leach warns parents "there is a cover-up going on." The deep need of young children for individual care is seldom stated publicly and unequivocally for "fear of upsetting the parents who don't provide it." This, says Leach, is a serious error on the part of responsible authorities.

I am sorry for mothers who cannot look after their babies themselves, but I do not believe that it is helpful to conceal from them the fact that group care is a bad alternative. They are entitled to the facts as we understand them.... I am sympathetic, too, with mothers who could provide full-time care themselves but do not wish to. But they too are entitled to a true picture of the conflict between what they want and what their children need.

Rather than dispense information which could ruffle feathers, many pediatricians, psychologists, and other public advice-givers have fallen scandalously silent on this touchy subject. The result is that knowledgeable criticism of daycare is fading from popular view. And fewer and fewer parents are even aware that there exists a large body of research and clinical experience associating serious problems with early daycare.

But if public warnings on this subject have been muffled, the reservations of experts nonetheless remain strong. A 1990 poll of U.S. pediatricians conducted by the Thomas Jefferson School of Medicine in Philadelphia, for example, showed that 77 percent believe infants six months or younger ought to be cared for only at home. A different survey of 1,100 baby doctors carried out that same year by the American Academy of Pediatricians reported that a substantial majority of physicians consider full-time daycare harmful for children under age 4.

—KZ

childcare centers in five regions of the country, reported that fully 41 percent of all caregivers quit their position each year. (Other studies show comparable results.) "To give you an idea of how bad it is," stated the director of the project, "during our study, we had tiny children coming up to our researchers and asking them, 'Are you my teacher?'"

And that's just in centers. Among *home* day care workers, the average turnover is even higher. Nationwide, 62 percent of all in-home workers flip over in the course of a year.

What's more, the situation is getting worse. Surveys show that as the demand for day care and the size of the industry have risen, staff turnover has accelerated sharply over the last decade.

Anyone who does any research on day care today hears repeated stories of nomadism. "While Mrs. Freebing says she's had good luck with the two nannies she's hired, one from Utah and one from Montana, she's in the process of hiring her third nanny in 18 months. The first two are going back to school," reads a typical history. Parents finally find an acceptable childcare provider after a long ordeal, only to lose her. Left for a better position. Got married. Going to school to learn computers. Deported by the immigration service. These are experiences I've come across over and over.

Hardly any family relying on day care is safe from this sudden turmoil, not even those who pay for the costliest forms of care. An interview printed by Fredelle Maynard in her book on day care tells a representative story. Maynard quotes a Canadian mother describing an in-home day care arrangement she is satisfied with:

They have a routine, the two of them. Victoria comes in the mornings and does toast and eggs for the baby; we leave while she's eating. Then they both watch "Polka Dot Door." Peggy recognizes the music, skips to the living room. After that the baby plays in her room, with the gate hooked, while Victoria cleans.



**For children,
the daily
experience is
"like enduring
a nine-hour
cocktail party."**

Nap is from 11 to 1, lunch at one. Afternoons they go for a walk, shop, visit friends, watch some more TV (There's probably too much TV, but that's something I have to accept). Sometimes Peggy has a second nap while Victoria makes supper; they eat together, not with us (Victoria's choice). Peggy cries when she leaves.

Everything considered, it's an ideal arrangement. I'm free to concentrate on my job, my child has a mother-substitute who's absolutely conscientious and devoted. Let me tell you I wake every morning and pray she won't leave us. Not that I really worry. The young nannies from Jamaica or the British Isles often don't take their jobs seriously; they meet a man, or get a better job, often, and they're off. For Victoria, stability is a central value. She regards this as her home.

One week after this interview, Victoria left without giving Riva, the mother, any notice. Her immigrant papers had come through. And "in the three months since," Maynard reveals, "Riva (pregnant again) has had one nanny who lasted two weeks and a series of makeshift arrangements. Now she and her husband are sponsoring a nanny from Hong Kong."



LOST IN A GROUP

For all of the problems associated with nannydom, it is still probably the least harmful form of hired caretaking in most cases, because it at least allows lots of one-on-one attention. Relatively few children, however, have their own nanny. And few ever will—because the average parent with average earning potential simply can't afford to hire someone to stand in for them full time.

Professionalized childcare, as Penelope Leach points out, "depends for its viability on economies of scale, because if one professional cares for only one baby then she is a direct swap for the mother." There is no great supply of willing and qualified workers making themselves available for such a swap, and even if there were, this wouldn't "free up" any adults overall. Parents would be released, as Leach puts it, "only by leaving babies with less-skilled, or at least less well paid, adults—an uncomfortably colonialist thought."

In order to be affordable, mainstream day care will always require several children to share a single caretaker. Which brings us to the next inherent flaw that plagues paid childrearing—the problem of lack of individual attention. Fredelle Maynard reminds us that "a mother of twins is hard pressed to give *two* babies all the cuddling they want. What can be

expected of a caretaker who's in charge of four infants—or six? With the best will in the world, that caretaker will be obliged to give some infants a propped-up bottle, to let others cry while she performs essential tasks.”

Consider that the birth of triplets is literally considered an emergency situation which automatically qualifies two parents for caretaking assistance and special social aid. Yet in hired day care, the very *best* institutional situations involve three or four infants assigned to a single caretaker. This is what gets called “high quality care.”



In average cases, things are worse yet. The government's National Child Care Survey showed that among centers caring for one-year-olds, the average group size is currently ten, and the child/staff ratio is nearly 7:1. Even this is probably an underestimate, since the survey was based on voluntary responses from day care centers and the worst institutions usually don't cooperate.

For many readers, those dry numbers may seem unexceptional. They give

no hint of what it's really like to be responsible for several infants or toddlers at once. I suggest anyone who thinks 7:1, or even 4:1, sounds like a reasonable ratio ought to try it someday with real babies. I can promise that you'll experience chaos and practice neglect. You will be lucky just to keep up with diaper changing. Very little real fostering will take place under such conditions.

Dorothy Conniff, the Wisconsin day care chief, did some calculations back in 1988 of how much time it took to provide an infant with just the barest maintenance. She then translated that into the very best day care settings:

Day Care and Big Brother

“**B**y virtue of its privacy, the family is the primary shelter of human variety. In the very process of preparing its newborn for the world the family can...see to it that the world's standards do not impinge too closely upon the defenseless young and so do not mold them too precisely to the world's imperious demands.... In this lies the human potentiality for freedom.” So writes author Walter Karp, one of many observers (from various parts of the political spectrum) troubled by the standardizing effects of mass day care.

The contrast between a family upbringing and “collective professionalized care of the young” is stark, Karp notes. “Instead of protecting the young from the world, such administrative child care would fasten the world's ways on the newborn with a strangler's grip.” And “in a society where cash is too often the link between people,” daycare makes “the child's primary experience of life the experience of being someone's job.”

When the infant-mother-father relationship is changed, the very institution that forms human personality is altered. Eventually, society itself may be reoriented. Some years ago, a Smithsonian Institution project attempted to determine the early childhood sources of human creativity and leadership, and eventually concluded that a consistently close parental connection was the most critical factor. Two other important influences were minimizing the time a

child spent with peers and providing opportunities for free exploration of the world under parental encouragement. None of these conditions, chief investigator Harold McCurdy pointed out, are advanced by group socialization.

Sociologist David Popenoe asserts that “childrearing is one of those aspects of human society that is not subject to improvement through modern techniques of efficiency and rationalization.” It is, he says, a “cottage industry.” What is required—an abundance of time, patience, and love on the part of caring parents—“has no substitute in the technological realm.”

Despite claiming to serve and speak on behalf of the family, the hired child care industry “actually weakens its authority at every point,” suggests left-wing critic Christopher Lasch. Author George Gilder sees the professionalization of childrearing as a tragic extension of earlier errors in American public policy. “The same people who paved the road to hell in America's inner cities,” he says, now “want to take care of your small children.”

New York State teacher of the year John Taylor Gatto warns that any standardized process which has children as its product will eventually yield bitter results. “Lives can be controlled by machine education, but they will always fight back with weapons of social pathology—drugs, violence, self-destruction, indifference.” These, he says, are already “symptoms I see in the children I teach.”

—KZ

Consider the amount of physical care and attention a baby needs—20 minutes for feeding every three hours or so, and ten minutes for diapering every two hours or so, and time for the caregiver to wash her hands thoroughly and sanitize the area after changing each baby. In an 8½ hour day, then, a caregiver working under the most stringent regulation—the 4:1 ratio—will have 16 diapers to change and 12 feedings to give.

Four diaper-changes and three feedings apiece is not an inordinate amount of care over a long day from the baby's point of view.

But think about the caregiver's day: Four hours to feed the babies, two hours and 40 minutes to change them. If you allow an extra two-and-a-half minutes at each changing to put them down, clean up the area, and thoroughly wash your hands...that makes seven hours and 20 minutes of the day spent just on physical care—if you're lucky and the infants stay conveniently on schedule.

Since feeding and diaper-changing are necessarily one-on-one activities, each infant is bound to be largely unattended during the five-plus hours that the other three babies are being attended to. So if there's to be any stimulation at all for the child, the caregiver had better chat and play up a storm while she's feeding and changing.

While older preschoolers in day care require somewhat less maintenance, they

also get crowded into larger groups—typically from eight to 15 youngsters per adult. This also results in inadequate care. The average toddler makes 10 overtures an hour to his primary caretaker, according to studies. A day care worker responsible for 10 toddlers would thus be faced with an overture every 35 seconds. Obviously most will be ignored or bluntly cut off. The assistance, praise, rule-teaching, discipline, and reinforcement that one- to three-years-olds need will often be unavailable.

The problem is not that day care workers are thoughtless, but rather that they work within a structure where fine-tuning and sensitivity are simply not possible. I have helped mind eight preschoolers many times in morning cooperative playschools, and I know that all you can usually aim for is to keep basic order, to avoid accidents, to survive. The life's lessons come few and far between in such settings. If children are gathered in such groups a couple times a week for two or three hours of play, this is not a serious problem. But when such a group becomes the child's primary residence all day long, not even the most conscientious caretaker can rescue the situation. The plain result is neglect.

Many observers say all that's needed is some new laws requiring higher adult-to-child ratios. But they overlook day care's basic nature. Getting the ratios up to a humane level would amount to recreating families artificially, and the reason day care exists to begin with is because there aren't enough adults currently willing to spend their days in families. Even if you *could* provide enough adult bodies in every day care setting, you would, as Penelope Leach points out, "have lost your economies of scale." Only a comparatively small number of rich families can afford to hire one parent surrogate for every child or two. In any mass form of day care, basic financial considerations and the limited number of substitute parents available make the kind of personal attention children crave impossible.

Childrearing of adequate quality is inherently resistant to streamlining. "Raising several children is a project that exacts a constant alertness and attention,"



comments writer George Gilder, something social engineers "don't remotely understand when they urge that 'society' do it." Pediatrician Herbert Ratner worries that "nature goes out of its way to give each baby a private tutor. We go out of our way to develop a litter situation." Substitution of group care for parent care is both unnatural and impractical, he argues, and it will eventually be regretted.



CHILDREN OF INSTITUTIONS

In recent years there has been a big shift toward institutional child care. If the Clintons have their way, even more of the future growth will be at institutions. Making institutionalization a common part of early childhood will have effects on American personality. As Deborah Fallows points out,

Life for a child in a day care center, good or bad, is different in certain ways from other kinds of life. There is more rigidity to it. The sheer number of children that day care centers handle necessarily means organization, schedul-

ing, and rules.... Life in day care centers is also more homogeneous than life elsewhere. The day's format is always the same. Most of the time is spent in the same building or room, on the same playground.... The need to manage large numbers of young children...accounts for the centers' emphasis on standardization and routine.

"Anyone who has spent time in a day care center knows that it is not a place where children can 'do their own thing,'" add Bill and Wendy Dreskin.

Every aspect of the day is regulated. They must lie on the mats, whether tired or not, for the prescribed number of minutes. If they are tired, they must still wake up at the end of rest time.... They must eat by the clock, even if they are hungry earlier, and there is no allowance for individual taste.... In some infant centers, babies are "color coded." The "green" baby has the green pacifier, the green bottle, the green crib, and so on. The uniqueness of each little human person is lost....

While "better" quality centers avoid horrors like walking toddlers in groups on leashes and putting infants in stacking kennel-like cribs, day care centers, like hospitals, asylums, and the military, are...a total institution.... Children quickly get the message that they must go along with the group and not make waves.

The Dreskins evoke hospitals and barracks. I suggest an even closer analogy for the typical day care atmosphere might be a nursing home. There is often the same well-intended but ultimately depressing air. As one mother described full-day centers, "you go in there, and all these children are clutching their little possessions, and they're looking around. They don't have any concept of time, so when a door opens, they all look up, and when they see you're not their mother, they look back."

Day care centers even tend to have a uniform emotional environment. This is Fallows' characterization:

The children live in an "on" atmosphere that differs from the tone of life at home. Even when caregivers are most gentle and children most mild-mannered, the pressure of numbers generates considerable noise, confusion, interruptions. Children have to respond, to react, to engage the social side of their personalities almost all day long. Time alone, to be quiet, to muse, to just be there, is minimal.

Almost all day care observers eventually comment on the constant hubbub. "I couldn't stand the noise. From sun-up to sun-down, voices talking, talking," writes Anne Husted Burleigh. "People," she argues, "were not made for babble." "For ten hours a day, these kids have to interact with about 20 or 30 kids," says day care worker Katie Humes. "Imagine if we adults had to constantly be trying to get along with that many people." For lots of children, suggested author Vance Packard after making a series of day care visits, the daily experience "must be like enduring a nine-hour cocktail party."

Perhaps the most undesirable aspect of the day care center is that, as child psychologist Arnold Samuels puts it, "the child must comply with the environment; the program doesn't always respond to the child." Dorothy Conniff characterizes this as "the most consistent drawback of day care centers."

Staff resort to forcing children into the same boring activity all at the same time to maintain control. Whatever children can learn from pasting a picture of a pumpkin on a pumpkin outline is not enhanced the next day by pasting a paper feather on a turkey. This kind of solution to the problem of what to do with young children is a terrible waste....[a] kind of repressive control.

Given the impossibility of true personal attention, the need to mark time, and the necessity of keeping control, even the most mundane activities on the day care schedule take on large significance. Fallows describes the discomfort she observed



Regimentation pops up wherever custodial care of children is substituted for family care.

during hand-washing periods as lines of children had to wait for those in front of them to one at a time walk to the sink, wet their hands, grasp the soap, wash, replace the soap, rinse, pull out a towel, dry, throw the towel away, and then return to their seat—all with the deliberate, painful slowness of a toddler. In the course of a nine-hour day, mass coat-donning, bathroom-using, grace-saying, line-forming and so forth can become trials in depersonalization for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

For her book *The Erosion of Childhood*, Valerie Suransky observed several widely different day care settings and came away struck by the way each stressed time scheduling and the routinization of tasks. Suransky also noted the importance of *containment* in day care, and the role of locked doors, marching in line, and other measures used toward this end.

Regimentation pops up wherever custodial care of children is substituted for family care—even when the children involved are much older and more competent than infants and toddlers. When *Time* profiled some typical days of American children a few years ago, a third grader named Katie, the only child of a Seattle doctor and nurse practitioner, was included. "Katie is a day care child," began the profile. "To her generation of children, day care is as familiar a destination as Disneyland, if not nearly as magical." Katie still goes to day care before and after every school day. Until her teenaged half-sister recently

moved into the house, Katie also "used to go to day care all summer. I didn't look forward to summer then."

Behold a picture of upper-income early childhood at the end of the twentieth century:

Katie spends ten hours away from home each day. After rising at 7 a.m. and downing a breakfast of Lucky Charms, she buckles herself into the front seat of her mother's Volkswagen Jetta for the two-minute ride [to] Montlake Elementary School. She stays for an hour in a kindergarten classroom where the Community Day School sets up shop each day before and after school. At 9 a.m. she joins her third-grade classmates at Montlake. When the school day finishes, Katie circles back to day care, where she stays until 6 p.m.

Katie clearly does not like day care. "A lot of times it gets really boring just going there," she says. "It's the same setting and usually the same things to do." ...She cannot invite friends over to her house, nor can she go to theirs. Worst of all, she cannot disappear by herself into her bedroom and play with her toys or work on her next book. "I would love if I could just stay in the attic," she says. "There's a little room in my mom and dad's closet. There's this little door to get in. It is really fun in there. They have all these old literature books and poetry books and drawing books. It is like a big library, and I could just sit there and read all day."

Sometimes when she's feeling unhappy at day care, Katie starts to imagine that the other children do not like her. She suffers from attacks of what she calls "aloneness," a feeling she rarely has when she is at home alone....

No matter how creative the entertainment, the children find it hard to keep going, going, going as they head into the final stretch late each afternoon.... Toward the end of the day, the slightest twist on the doorknob is enough to get a sea of tired eyes to look up. As parents arrive to pick up their kids, Katie quickly looks up to see if it is her mom or dad. Most kids have a pretty good feeling for what time their

parents normally appear, so when a parent is late, a child becomes anxious.

Institutionalization of this sort means several things for children, comments family researcher David Cayley. "It means separation from the day-to-day world of home and neighborhood, it means the loss of the opportunity to do what you want when you want to do it, including sometimes just doing nothing at all. And it means the loss of privacy and solitude."

This is not an exclusively American problem. All industrial societies are pushing their children in the same direction. The *Christian Science Monitor* carried an interview with an educated Parisian couple who discussed family practices and childcare policies in France (which Mrs. Clinton and other liberals in the U.S. often laud). "I've never wanted to put children into these public systems," confessed Alexandra Doualle. "You can say what you want, but day care centers are collective institutions. The children are raised as a collective entity. The child will develop his collective self but will not necessarily develop his individual self." What happens, she asks, to a particularly sensitive child? To one who is easily influenced? To one who can be dominated? They suffer. "A little day care, a few hours a day, that's fine," suggests Mrs. Doualle. But spending more time than that in a group can damage a child's personality.

One of the great cultural ironies of our era, Bill and Wendy Dreskin have argued, is that this trend toward institutionalization in childhood is being driven primarily by social liberals—the great professed opponents of dehumanizing standardization.

Progressives are dedicated to increasing the number of children who must lead these regimented lives. They are lobbying for the public schools to include day care programs for preschool children or even infants and toddlers, and in some states they are working toward lowering the age for compulsory entrance into the school system.... Progressives push for year-



Infants under one in group care have eight times as many colds and other infections.

round schools which would shift the responsibility of summer care from parents to the government.

The institutions produced by all this social activism have been characterized as "part-time orphanages" by worried skeptics. And like the full-time versions, they can wrench their charges poignantly. Writer Harry Stein illustrates this through the experiences of a friend. While wrestling with the decision of whether to have children, the friend—a successful broadcasting executive—decided to visit the best day care center in her neighborhood and draw some conclusions for herself. She came back with serious reservations. "I was quite taken aback when I saw them consoling a six-month-old with a *photograph* of his parents," the woman reported. "I don't know," she observed after a pause, "those people are betting a helluva lot on this experiment panning out."

This snippet from one of Deborah Fallows' center visits provides another glimpse of the impersonality that prevails in so much hired childcare.

The story line of the book was getting more complicated when the phone rang next door in the director's office. The teacher got up to answer it because the director was out. When she came back, Jason started complaining that he didn't feel well. She let the comment pass and went back to reading when the phone rang a second time. She went again to answer it. When she returned, [Jason] stumbled out of his seat and toward the bath-

room, spitting up on me and a few children as he passed.... The teacher went off to clean up Jason, laid him down in the director's office, and tried unsuccessfully to call his mother. She pulled out coloring books and crayons to keep the children busy in her absence.... All but two of the children located their coloring books by their names on the covers. Andrew, the two-and-a-half-year-old, and Michele, a recently arrived five-year-old, didn't have books. They found some left over from children who were no longer at the center and started using them. Suddenly Andrea discovered that she in fact had the wrong book and little Andrew was scribbling in hers. She attempted a quick switch, which set Andrew off howling. When the teacher returned, Michele was pouting and complaining about not having her own book. The teacher, impatient by then, picked up the book Michele was using, scratched out the name "Carolyn" and wrote "Michele" over it. "Carolyn withdrew from school," she explained to me. But Michele did not look convinced.

One leading edge in day care today is special centers that only accept sick children. All around the country, institutions with cutesy names like Sneezles and Chicken Soup and Teddy Bearacks have sprung up, solely as places to park youngsters too ill to attend their regular centers. But there is nothing cute, or healthy, about this practice. When a youngster who is already feeling bad goes to an ill child center he is faced with a totally unfamiliar environment, where all the adults and all the other children are strangers. Instead of bringing extra security and comfort, his illness thus brings him extra strangeness and uncertainty. Penelope Leach puts it bluntly: "To put a sick baby into a stranger's hands is cruelty."

In many cases, it is employers who set up these centers. They then parade them as proof that the company is "family friendly." One cover story in *Fortune* chortled that "for sheer cost-

effectiveness, nothing beats a facility for children too sick to go to school or day care centers. About 80 employers, up 50 percent from a year ago, have made some provision so that the mommies and daddies of sufferers can still report for work."

Susan Wolfe, director of one Minneapolis ill-child center, does the math for *Fortune*. When a middle manager at First Bank, one of her supporting employers, misses a day of work to minister to a miserable child, it costs the company \$154, Wolfe reports. If, on the other hand, the employee checks the child into her center at company expense, it costs the bank only about \$20. Voila! An institution that "saves the company 87 percent, or almost \$135 a day."

The growing regimentation of childhood involves more than just day care institutions. It includes things like more and more young children having to brave rush hour each day. I have before me an Associated Press piece entitled "The Littlest Commuter" that is typical of several I've seen. It profiles a mother and toddler who spend four hours a day traveling from suburban New Jersey to work and day care, respectively, in lower Manhattan.

This is Ashley's day: She gets up very early and is driven by her mother from Oakland, N.J. to the train station in Ramsey. They park. They board the 6:22 A.M. local to Hoboken. In Hoboken they jump a Trans-Hudson subway. From the top of the subway stairs they stroller several blocks to Ashley's day care center. She stays there all day, then reverses her commute. All told, Ashley's "workday" is 12 hours long.

Welcome to the baby rat race, Ashley.



HEALTH RISKS

Doctors warn that day care centers have become troublesome sources of health problems. The American Pediatric Association reckons that infants under one in group care have eight times as many colds and other infections as babies cared for by their families. A baby's immune system is not well developed until about his third month of life, and it does not reach adult-level disease-fighting capability until around age two. Take this fact, plus the research finding that an average toddler puts a hand or object in his mouth every three minutes, and you can see why concentrating together groups of these drooling, toy-sucking, low-immune children creates an ideal environment for disease transmission.

Add to this the reality of diapers and you have a recipe for recurring sickness. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control warn that "diaper changing is the highest risk procedure" associated with day care. Even in the highest-quality center with a 1:4 adult-to-child ratio, a worker taking care of babies will have to clean an average of 16 bottoms every day, supposedly sanitizing the changing area thoroughly each time. Dorothy

Conniff comments that if you "think about thoroughly washing your hands 16 times a day, you may begin to understand why epidemics of diarrhea and related diseases regularly sweep through infant-care centers."

A Memphis State University study of 800 children under age three found that compared to youngsters at home, children in day care centers suffered half-again as many infections and four-and-a-half-times as many hospitalizations. The *American Journal of Public Health* has reported that children in day care centers incur overall medical expenses that are two to three times as high as those of children cared for at home. This research showed them to be nearly three times as likely to require hospitalization. A RAND Corporation study which analyzed data on 3,841 children age six months to five years showed that attending a day care center "increases bed days for young children by 30 percent," while youngsters attending home-based day care have 19 percent more bed days (both compared to parent-reared children).

In the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, physician Stanley Schuman reports that day care transmission is responsible for recent "outbreaks of enteric illness—diarrhea, dysentery, giardiasis, and epidemic jaundice—reminiscent of the pre-sanitation days of the seventeenth century." Other serious day care hazards include cytomegalovirus, shigellosis, hepatitis, HiB, and ear infections. When we checked my son into Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., to have a minor hernia repaired when he was young, I was struck to note that half of the children in the surgical ward were in for inner ear surgery, most to have mechanical drains installed to try to prevent eardrum ruptures. Increased day care transmission of disease is the major reason this has become a big problem among children today.

Committees of the the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended in the 1980s that to avoid chronic infections and childhood epidemics, children under two should be cared for only in the company of their siblings if at all possible. When that is impossible, the doctors urge that a small group of no more than six

children, from no more than three families be used. Large groupings and groups with turnover among the children ought to be avoided when children are young, they suggest. This, obviously, would exclude most day care centers.

And there are public health issues associated with day care beyond just those of disease transmission. Phyllis Weikart, a University of Michigan professor of physical education, has implicated increased day care use in the sharp decline over the last generation in the physical motor skills of children. Today's children have fewer opportunities for unrestricted outdoor movement and play, she explained. And youngsters are considerably less likely to learn physical skills and games from older siblings, playmates, and role models than they once were. Day care creates single-age ghettos where there is less transmission of skills and information of all sorts across age boundaries.



CAN GOVERNMENT MAKE DAY CARE GOOD?

Now a brief word about day-care "quality." In the national research (including the latest NICHD study that activists misrepresent as exonerating day care), two facts are clear. The first is that when you get right down to actual effects on individual children, the differences between "good" programs and "poor" programs are not large.

The second reality is that in even the very best full-time day care situations, large numbers of children (often a majority, depending on what is being measured) end up showing some sign

of maladjustment. Problems occur not just where the care is of low quality but also among children in the most careful and expensive forms of hired care—one-on-one nannies, and university lab schools, for instance. This is quite clear in the research, and the best way to summarize it may be to say that excellent day care gets less disappointing results than crummy daycare.

Certainly not all children who go into day care will end up with weak parental bonds, aggressive tendencies, academic problems, personal insecurities, difficulties in peer relations, or other evidence of emotional or cognitive damage. Lots will bounce through with few obvious effects. Individual circumstances like a youngster's temperament, sex, and the status of his home influence how he fares. Older children are better equipped to adapt than infants and toddlers. Part-time care is much less risky than full-time.

A Final Test of Surrogate Parenting

If you think the lucky few families able to afford gold-standard day care—a private nanny in one's own home—can thereby avoid day care's problems, think again.

From the later-1800s until the 1930s, placing one's children in the hands of a hired nanny was one of the hallmarks of upper-class existence in Britain and a few other European countries. This was gold-standard care if it ever existed. The nannies were with their children nearly round the clock, typically living right in the children's rooms, and giving their whole life to their charges.

Nonetheless, these arrangements caused much human unhappiness. Among other problems, Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy notes in his book *The Unnatural History of the Nanny*, "the annals of nanny literature are filled with desperate descriptions of incomprehensible and brutal partings" when caretakers left their host families. And even where the connections between nanny and child were never severed, nanny life often brought suffering. Many writers suggest this peculiar institution left deep, raw marks on the entire British upper class.

One famous graduate of a nanny

upbringing was Winston Churchill. "If it worked for Churchill, it can't be so bad for others," intone defenders of nannying. And in truth, Churchill's early rearing did have a lot to do with making him the great public man he was. But that rearing also left him privately tormented, and desperately unhappy at the end of his life. Churchill's case is interesting because it illustrates the remarkable closeness of the very best nanny-child relationships while simultaneously demonstrating that, even under optimal conditions, parental surrogacy is ultimately inadequate.

Churchill's father, Lord Randolph, was an ambitious and preoccupied politician, and his mother, Jennie Jerome, was a beautiful young woman caught up in the whirl of fashionable society. Winston's childhood letters show him pleading with his parents for attention.

Rescuing Churchill from this sore neglect was his nanny Mrs. Everest. For the first eight years of his life, Churchill was virtually never separated from Nanny Everest. He slept in her room, had every need attended to by her, and soaked up her calm, loving warmth. From birth until his twentieth year, when she died,

Mrs. Everest was "the principal confidante of his joys, his troubles, and his hopes," according to Churchill's son.

She in turn adored Churchill. The depth of their mutual love shines forth in their correspondence. Some samples from her letters found among Churchill's papers when he died (having then been saved by him for more than 70 years):

Winnie dear, do try to keep the new suit expressly for visiting, the brown one will do for everyday wear, please do this to please me.

Thank you so much dearest for getting me a present.... It is very kind of you but you know my Lamb I would rather you did not spend your money on me.

My darling Precious Boy: I hope you will take care of yourself, my darling. I hear of your exploits at steeple-chasing. I do so dread to hear of it. Remember Count Kinsky broke his nose once at that....

Churchill was at Everest's deathbed when she succumbed to peritonitis at her sister's house in North London. He describes the day in *My Early Life*.

It's a mistake, though, to assume that a child with nice concerned parents and a nice middle-class daycare arrangement will be immune from harm. What we've learned over the last decade or so is that all youngsters are vulnerable. Lasting effects will show up among some considerable portion of the youngsters who experience extensive out-of-home care in their first three years. Exactly how large a portion we can't say; long-term results aren't in, and in any case many of these effects will never be fully measurable.

But the ominous findings that have piled up so far give us clear reason to hesitate in our headlong plunge toward more and more childraising by hire.

Day care advocates often claim that the kinds of problems I've been discussing in this chapter can be eliminated via more licensing and regulation. The trouble is, there are already lots of fully regulated—and fully disappointing—day care homes and centers



out there. That's because most of the things that really matter to young children, if we're honest about it, simply can't be covered by regulations.

Linda Burton admits she "never found an accurate way to evaluate the merit of a day care situation. Despite my most painstaking investigations, many environments that appeared loving and constructive on initial (and sometimes repeated) examination, turned out later to be something quite different." Anyone who would have the state "guarantee good childcare" must explain how regulators can make these judgments that even cautious parents find so elusive.

Since the things that are really wanted in a childcare provider are almost impossible to stipulate through rules, state regulations generally dwell uselessly, or obsessively on the material

inputs that are easiest to measure. What good is the government regulation that reads (literally): "Infants and toddlers should be offered water at intervals"? What about "Infants shall not remain in cribs, baby beds or playpens all day"? It may or may not be useful to insist that every room in which day care is conducted have an 8-foot ceiling, and that there are covers on all the diaper pails. But none of those things have much to do with producing humane childhoods.

A 1991 RAND study of child care quality published in the *Journal of Social Issues* concludes that "the structural elements that are currently the focus of [child care] licensing are, in fact, largely irrelevant in terms of what parents demand." The same conclusion is spelled out in more popular language in the 1990 report *Mothers Speak Out on Child Care*. "Mothers do not believe that loving care can be created by legislative mandate, or bought with generous salaries and top-of-the-line

The Nanny

She knew she was in danger, but her only anxiety was for me. There had been a heavy shower of rain. My jacket was wet. When she felt it with her hands she was greatly alarmed for fear I should catch cold. The jacket had to be taken off and thoroughly dried before she was calm again. Her only desire was to see my brother Jack, and this unhappily could not be arranged. I set out for London to get a good specialist.... I returned to her bedside. She still knew me, but she gradually became unconscious. Death came very easily to her. She had lived such an innocent and loving life...she had no fears at all.... She had been my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole of the 20 years I had lived.

Churchill enjoyed, as the writer put it, "the total love and undiluted attention of this good woman concentrated entirely on his well-being." He was cared for with intense devotion—far more than most substitute-parented children will ever know—and this gave him an unshakeable base of self-assurance.

Yet Churchill was haunted, in spite of everything he got from Mrs. Everest, by the absence of his mother and his fa-

ther. His parents were in no way hostile—"My mother shone for me like the Evening Star," Winston wrote in later life—his problem was simply that they were not around much.

The anxiety this ingrained into Churchill wasn't always debilitating. Indeed, Oxford University psychiatrist Anthony Storr argues that the parental indifference of his youth may actually have helped prepare Churchill for his inspired wartime leadership of Britain. The boy's early emotional pain crystallized as an extraordinary pugnacity, and in the midst of a national life-and-death struggle, this rage found a complete and legitimate outlet. The prime minister's famous cry that "We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight...in the air, we shall...fight on the beaches" exemplifies the survivor's spirit that stood him and his nation so well in the heat of battle. The fact that Churchill had been repeatedly forced to master his own despair left him perfectly suited to rouse the nation when all the odds seemed against it, Storr suggests.

But the boy's upbringing eventually came back to bite him. A child who is rejected will lack "belief that the world is

predominantly a happy place, and that he has a favored place in it," says Storr.

Although such a child may experience periods of both success and happiness, these will neither convince him that he is lovable, nor finally prove to him that life is worthwhile.... No amount of external success can ultimately compensate him for this.

That, alas, is precisely the circumstance Winston Churchill found himself in. All through his life he was plagued with moods of deep depression—he referred to them famously as his "Black Dog." These he combatted with activity, and during the periods he was holding political office he mostly kept them in control. But in the end, the "Black Dog" conquered the great man. In his last years, Churchill would sit glumly for days and weeks, convinced of his failure and the uselessness of his life. Despite his magnificent achievements, he ultimately died unhappy.

Separation from mother and father was something not even the generous love of Nanny Everest could save him from.

—KZ

play equipment," it reads. "When they demand 'quality care' they are not referring to adequate fire exits and teacher-to-child ratio."

And there is another problem with proposed regulatory fixes for day care: More rules lead to higher expenses and fewer providers. William Gormley observes in a 1990 Brookings Institution study that because regulation will "decrease the supply and raise the costs" of care, it can "ironically, result in fewer regulated facilities." And what good is "better" care if it's unaffordable or unavailable?

I've known several cases where warm-hearted people stopped providing care for neighbors because the paperwork became such a burden, because the windows in their playroom weren't as large as the specifications dictated, or for similar reasons. In a strictly regulated environment, the advantage goes to cookie-cutter chains and other mass providers.

A few years ago, Maryland working mother Judy Kaplan Warner wrote me to describe how day care regulations can have perverse effects in this way. She included an article she had written for the *Washington Post* after her daughter's "grandmotherly" home day care provider was raided by a county inspector because she wasn't licensed. In it, Warner complained that "in the name of protecting children, the state law has thrown me back into the pool of anguished parents searching for good day care, while a superbly competent day care provider is forbidden to care for children."

Warner argues that she and thousands of other parents who freely choose informal unlicensed care arrangements "believe we know better than anyone else—the state, the county, the federal government—what our children need to thrive." And surely she is right. Only parents can judge what qualities are essential for their sons and daughters. The effect of most government norms dictated in the name of "quality control" will simply be to drive informal caregivers out of business.

Day care proponents have an almost blind faith in the ability of government to solve child care problems. One fa-

vorite tactic of American liberals is to point to Europe—where they claim that excellent day care systems flourish because public will and public money have been applied. The truth, however, as I discovered when I did research in several European countries in the mid-1980s, is rather different.

To begin, most of the European systems are not really day care structures but rather parts of a much larger apparatus of family allowances and tax breaks set up to encourage births and population growth in countries rapidly growing gray. The United States doesn't have a problem with too few births, and thus is not about to copy these programs. Particularly since these European "Family Policies" are incredibly costly—setting up a U.S. equivalent to the French system, for instance, would cost around \$300 billion.

More to the point, European child care systems don't do what American promoters claim they do. In Europe, most day care is not excellent, it is mediocre—just as day care is everywhere when practiced on a mass scale. More national effort and funding has been expended in France than anywhere else, and the average center for three-year-olds has one teacher and one half-time aide for every 22 children. Even if every teacher was unusually gifted, this would amount to mere custodialism. Three-year-olds are simply not built for herding in flocks.

Belgium has a free government-run nursery school system for children aged three and over that is very similar to France's. It also has a network, like other European countries, for providing referrals and public subsidies to day care centers that cater to younger children. A typical Belgian center will be staffed by aides with the equivalent of a vocational high school diploma, and the average worker earns about \$900 a month. The major source of day care workers is unemployed persons on the government dole, who are assigned to centers by state welfare agencies. On a normal day, a third of the teachers may be absent. "You understand the difference between theory and practice," explains the director of one Brussels child care center, ac-

knowledging that morale among the country's hired caretakers is low.

The really striking thing about European young-child care is not the quantity or quality of publicly-funded centers, but rather *the clear preference of parents to take care of their own infants and toddlers at home*. In the European Union as a whole, fewer than half of all mothers with children under 10 are currently employed. In the United States, half-again as many mothers of children in that age range are absent from the home. Fully seven out of ten infants and toddlers are raised in their own home in France. Even in Sweden, where tax rules and heavy social pressures make it extremely difficult for families to survive without two incomes, four out of every ten children age six or younger are cared for by a parent at home, and another two out of ten are looked after by a relative or neighbor. And if the Swedish public had its druthers there might be even less day care. A 1988 poll showed that 83 percent of all Swedes feel children should stay at home until age three.

Even when European children do end up in non-parental care, public institutions are a distinct second choice. Of the Swedish children in subsidized day care, for instance, fully 40 percent are taken care of in family homes rather than centers. Even more popular among European parents are related caretakers. According to European Union figures, European children with employed mothers are more than twice as likely to be looked after by their grandmothers, for example, than are American children.

The common claim that Europe is carpeted with day care institutions that are consistently wonderful and highly popular is simply not true. Europeans strongly prefer parental and family care to the alternatives. Most still provide such care to their own children. And the institutional care funded by the European governments tends to be mediocre and impersonal just like institutional care everywhere else.

There is no easy way, public or private, to buy for individual children the kind of loving concern that has never been for sale.

dx

discovering motherhood

I represent the generation of women who came of age ignited by Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. These angry and articulate matriarchs taught us that our power and identity should come from the world, and not solely from our husbands or our children or our homes. When I was a college student at Stanford in the 1970s, the sight of my own stay-at-home mother wearing her red-checked dish towel slung over one shoulder used to rile me as a symbol of the oppression of wives stuck in their kitchens.

Determined to create a life far beyond the shackles of housewifery, I became a journalist who interviewed celebrities for United Press International, people like Yoko Ono, Billy Graham, Senator Ted Kennedy, and Queen Noor of Jordan.

Then came marriage, the birth of four sons in rapid succession, and a departure from daily journalism to raise children and become a free-lance writer at home. Ironically, when I now wear a red-checked dish towel over my shoulder as my mother did, I don't feel oppressed; I feel happy and free. After years of racewalking past the moment to reach somewhere higher and better in my career, I am relieved to have slowed down and be in a kitchen with kids. This me called Mommy feels like who I was meant to be all along.



The author with one of her sons.

Photo: Mary Noble Ours

BY IRIS KRASNOW

In November of 1993, I gave birth to twins and became the mother of four sons under the age of three. That cataclysmic event, which shook up my career and my concept of self, eventually led me to great clarity on what really matters. It comes down to this: family is, quite simply, everything. And the building of a solid family takes a lot of time.

Being a good journalist requires intense energy and devotion; being a good mother takes at least the same commitment, if not more. To succeed, I knew that I would have to work harder than I'd ever worked on anything in my life. And that meant whittling down my herculean To Do list—childrearing is not something you can do in between deadlines and meetings.

Ultimately, our greatest power as human beings is how we spend our time. And I know now that I never again want to spend more time in an office with strangers than I do in my home with my family, the people I love the most. I know that I never want to turn into that friend of mine who drove her 18-year-old off to college and sobbed the whole way home because she realized that during all those weeks and months and years while she had been tied up at the office, early in the morning and late at night, her baby had been turning into a young woman who was now gone. "Where did all the time go?" she lamented. "And now I can't get it back." No, we can't get it back. This day comes but once.

That's why I savor moments like the magical afternoon my toddler son Jack found a Lillian Vernon catalogue and began flipping excitedly through the pages, pointing to item after item. "What's this, Mommy? What's this, Mommy?" he asked over and over, pointing to pottery, windsocks, candles, building blocks. I thought about how Jack will only be tiny enough to tuck into his mother's lap for a short spell longer. I was reminded of his innocence, and that soon, too soon, I would

Iris Krasnoff's book Surrendering To Motherhood: Losing Your Mind, Finding Your Soul is just out in paperback.



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have to let this boy free into a world that could harm him, make him cynical, perhaps even make him bad. I let my magazine drop to my feet and buried my face in Jack's hot, chubby neck.

I can't stop little boys with silky cheeks who cling to their mother like monkeys from changing into reticent adolescents with stubble and body pierces. I can't stop four brothers who now loop limbs on the floor as if they were one creature from venturing off some day in four different directions. In an eye blink, our sons won't need me to wrap them in their tattered yellow blankets and sing them to sleep. So right here and right now I thank God for this moment of this day.

When I became the mother of a puppy pack of boys I discovered that all those long debates among ambitious women about ways to balance our lives are fruitless. The task is insurmountable—with small children there can be no balance; they get the most of you, time and time again. When I surrendered to that fact, then real balance came—having my soul and heart and mind in sync.

This doesn't mean I think mothers should be home all the time. I am not home all the time. Our youngest children are now in preschool; so with more time on my hands, I teach a journalism seminar at American University.

I love staying involved in the field I've been in since graduating from college two decades ago. But teaching journalism rather than hacking out stories every day means I have a career that revolves around my family, rather than a family life slapped together around an all-consuming job. When I was the woman trying to Have It All, Having It All felt exactly like having nothing.

I was struck hard by an interview that ran in *Life* with former Republican National Committee chairman Lee Atwater. As he lay dying of brain cancer, his body flooded with radiation, Atwater had this to say:

I acquired more wealth, power, and prestige than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty. What power wouldn't I trade for a little more time with my family? What price wouldn't I pay for an evening with friends. It took a deadly illness to put me eye to eye with that truth, a truth that the country, caught up in its ruthless ambitions, can learn on my dime.

Choosing to be a mother who spends most of her time with her sons is actually a convergence of the feminist ideals my era of women embraced—power, freedom, self-expression, and independence. Nothing ever felt so powerful, so free, so spiritually right, as becoming a militant mother who organizes a home and fights for her children on every front.

I think of the blurred weeks and years that whipped by when I was a supersonic journalist, intoxicated by the chase. The days often now break down into subtleties-in-the-second that leave me breathless from all there is to do during one minute and one hour in the Here and Now. Tangled in my children's wonder, I am constantly made aware of the extraordinary in the ordinary.

This feeling of freedom and rightness shows up in all parts of my life. Feminist pioneer Simone de Beauvoir (who was herself childless) once wrote that becoming a mother means the death of your erotic development. I have found exactly the opposite to be

true. A woman's sexuality plays out to its peak in a period of your life when you are nursing and nuzzling and rocking babies, and sleeping with the committed father of your children.

I was a person who blossomed into womanhood at Stanford University in the middle 1970s. I drank deeply from the movements emanating from the Bay Area playground, looking for spiritual fulfillment and the meaning of life. My journey took me through Buddhism, est, Transcendental Meditation, macrobiotics, weightlifting, the Grateful Dead.

Today, I am no longer desperate to have a head-on with divine self-realization; that ended when I had a head-on with four sticky little boys. They have filled my soul with the serene knowing that God has come through for me. Having young children is like the last day of summer vacation, the sun on your face, the sand at your feet.

I'm aware that I am lucky to be a writer, a vocation that easily transfers to the home. But although I've had more choices than many women, I believe women in most fields have more choices than they think they have. A friend of mine in Annapolis, Maryland, has switched her baking shift at a catering company to 4 A.M. through 11 A.M. so she can add to her husband's middle-class wages and still have days free for her kids. Another friend left her post as a buyer for a department store and now runs a flourishing business selling children's clothing from her living room, using her young daughters as models. I know lots of lawyers who have gone off partner-track and cut work weeks in half so they can be there to pick up their children at 3:15 P.M. If you want it badly enough and push hard enough, it is possible to forge work-family solutions that favor your children.

Spending a quantity of quality time with our children not only bolsters them; kids keep us connected to our finest selves. In our home in Maryland, I often sit in my kitchen and watch the amber of sunset on the river while my husband Chuck is upstairs scrubbing four boys in one bathtub.



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And I go over my day—wiping banana off the TV screen, scraping mud off sneakers with a Swiss army knife, reading *Pocahontas* to four boys who are looking at their mother with reverence. And I am reminded that This Is As Good As It Gets.

On those days when I yearn to be dispatched on some exotic journalism assignment, I think of my interview some years ago with Zelda Fichandler, the then-65-year-old founder of Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage, one of the finest regional theaters in the country. As she spoke about her extremely successful career, I asked if she had any regrets in a remarkable life. She stared at me, her eyes black and piercing, then answered: "If I had a perfect life to live over again, I would spend the first five years of my children's lives at home. At the time, I never felt guilty about leaving the kids. I kept feeling 'this is worth it.' Now I give advice to young women to be very careful whether it's worth it. I'm not absolutely positive now that it's been worth it. Because of life not lived, books not read, art not seen, vacations not taken, conversations not held, flowers not smelled." Fichandler paused, then added: "I never had enough of my kids. I do feel that I was always there when they needed me. But I don't think I was always there when I needed them."

Other powerful women have voiced similar regrets about letting work overshadow their family lives. In a wonderful interview conducted by Oriana Fallaci, former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir reflected on trying to run a country and run a family at the same time:

Such a struggle breaks out in you. Your heart goes to pieces. It's all running around, trying to be in two places at once, getting upset. All this can't help but be reflected in the structure of the family.

I know that my children, when they were little, suffered a lot on my account. I left them alone so often. I was never with them when I should have been and would have liked to be.

Oh, I remember how happy they were, my children, every time I didn't go to work because of a headache. They jumped and laughed and said, "Mamma's staying home! Mamma has a headache!"

If you only knew how many times I say to myself, "To hell with everything, to hell with everybody, I've done my share, now let the others do theirs, enough, enough, enough."

I like to be with nothing to do, even just sitting in an armchair, or wasting time with little things I enjoy. I should be the master of the clock, not the clock the master of me.

When we choose to become mothers, we make the most elemental commitment you can make as a human being, an irrevocable promise to take care of our offspring. We are not forced to reproduce. We become mothers because we want to, often because it's what we want more than anything else in the world. I respect my friends who choose not to have children because they admit to being too selfish. But I am saddened when the act of willing procreation doesn't cause selfishness to wane.

One Wednesday I went to visit an advertising executive who had given birth the Sunday before. She was propped up in bed talking on the telephone. With one hand she was holding

her child to her breast, in the other hand she was clutching a newly arrived fax. The phone call about a client dispute was riling her, and she started swatting the air with the hand that had been securing her newborn. The baby dropped into the sea of papers that covered her bed. As my friend ranted on, there her daughter lay, with black ink smudged on her cheek. This mother was planning to return to work the following week.

I have heard other new mothers one-up each other with stories of how quickly they took their first business trip, how quickly they lost the 40 pounds of pregnancy weight, how quickly they were back chairing a committee, how quickly they returned to the jogging track. As someone who has



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been out that door too fast before, I now tell friends that their old bodies and old jobs and old social selves can wait. I tell them that their babies will be in first grade tomorrow, and that they

shouldn't miss out on this glorious fingersnap of time. And when I am accused of being a hardliner who has abandoned her feminist ideals, I tell them there is nothing we can do as women that's more powerful than refusing to abandon motherhood.

I think of my artist friend who recently had a request from the Maryland governor's office to be considered to paint a portrait of the First Lady of the state. My friend didn't even pursue this lead, nor does she follow up on the stream of offers to show her work that she receives from prestigious galleries. She regularly turns down requests to teach college courses. At this stage, she doesn't want a bigger career, she wants to be with her children, ages seven and five. Although more money would

What Do Parents Want?

By Charmaine Yoest

When the President and First Lady recently announced their plan to increase federal spending for day care by \$22 billion over the next five years, they said such action is necessary to address a "silent child care crisis" that is afflicting the nation. Is there a child care crisis in America? What is it that parents want that they are not getting?

To help answer these questions, Wirthlin Worldwide recently conducted a national poll for the Family Research Council. A representative sample of parents were asked which kinds of child care they believed to be most desirable. The overwhelming first choice in child care: Care by a child's own mother. The next favorite choice was care by a child's own grandmother, aunt, or other family member, followed by care from a child's own mother and father working in a tag team. Then came care by a church-run center, care by a trusted neighbor or family friend, care by a home day care provider, and care by a nanny or *au pair*. Ranking eighth in popularity was care by a commercial day care center, followed by care in a government-run day care center in last place.

This decided preference for mother care showed up among all families, re-

income. Trailing family care in popularity were community arrangements involving churches and neighbors. Parents who must entrust their children to others clearly prefer someone with whom they have a relationship. The least-preferred options were those that extended outside the community, involving nannies or *au pairs*, commercial child care centers, or government centers.

A growing body of other polling data uncovers this same desire for parental care of children. In May 1997, the Pew Research Center found that 25 percent of women with children under 18 who were employed full time would have preferred to be at home with their children. Another 44 percent wished they could work part time instead of full time. Asked whether they thought their work and child care arrangements were good for their children, only 41 percent of working women said yes.

In 1996, the Independent Women's Forum commissioned a poll which included the question: If you had enough money to live as comfortably as you'd like, would you prefer to work full time, work part time, do volunteer work, or work at home caring for your family? Thirty-one percent of the women replied that they would like to be at home with their children; another 33

percent replied that part-time work would be ideal; 20 percent expressed a preference for volunteer work; only 15 percent replied that they wanted to work full time.

These same preferences for mother care of children and flexibility in work arrangements showed up in a very large reader's survey done by *Parents* magazine in May 1996. Among 18,000 women who responded, only 4 percent said they would choose full-time employment if they could do "whatever they wished." Similarly, a 1995 Harris poll found that only 15 percent of a scientific sample of women would work full time if they "had enough money to live as comfortably as they would like."

This polling data about what parents want is remarkably consistent with what Census Bureau figures tell us American parents actually choose. Contrary to the media-driven perception that most children today are in day care, the vast majority of American children are actually cared for by their own families. (See graph on page 47.)

Of the 20 million children under the age of five in America today, nearly half (48 percent) have mothers who are at home full time. And of the remaining children whose mothers work either part time or full time, most are cared for during those hours either by their

make her life significantly easier—her husband is a horticulturalist—she opts to work only a dozen or so hours a week in her studio doing portraits for local clients while her kids are in school. For this decision, her family is “practically poor.” Yet she wouldn’t trade her life for anybody’s.

“I never sit down and say, ‘Oh, we’ve got to get out there and make more money,’” she says. “I feel rich. I’m here all the time for these kids, and they are turning out well. They are not plunked in front of a TV by a baby sitter. They are baking and they are taking hikes and they are playing with me. You know, there’s nothing wrong with the way we were raised in the ‘50s and ‘60s.”

Disillusioned by old heroes like Simone de Beauvoir who never married or



had children and instructed me to avoid housewife duty, my primary inspiration today comes from like-minded mothers who are trying to be at home more than at an office. Women like Charlene Quinn, a former White House fellow who is the mother of seven- and two-year-old children. I spent a spring afternoon on the Chesapeake Bay with her, eating huge strawberries from her garden, drinking orange Hi-C, and watching our children hurl driftwood.

With the sun beating down on us, Charlene told me she had just turned down an offer to become a free-lance health advisor to Newt Gingrich. “I’m too busy,” she explained, giggling over

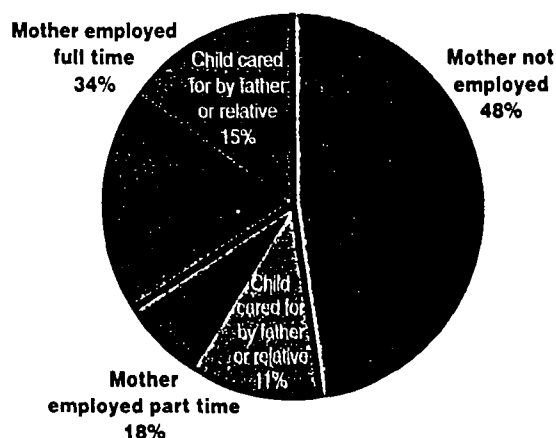
what she was so busy doing—sewing costumes for her son’s first-grade play. She said she loved to sew but hadn’t done it for years because she had been too engrossed in her job.

I thought about this word *busy*, defined by the dictionary as “engaged in action” or “occupied.” In my life as a globe-trotting journalist perhaps I kept busy because I was running away from myself. Being busy with children means something entirely different: Engaged in their action, occupied by their limbs and needs. I feel joyful to de-accelerate and be where I am, and who I am. These wriggly little boys have me imprisoned in the fleeting moment that is now.

✕

Most Families Take Care of Their Own Preschoolers

Care of children under five



Source: Editor's calculations from 1994 U.S. Bureau of the Census data.

father (an additional 10 percent of all children), by a grandparent (another 9 percent), by another relative (5 percent), or by their mother while she works (3 percent).

In all, only 26 percent of all preschoolers are in hired day care (a big chunk of them in home day care). Though you would never know it from press reports, *three-quarters* of all very young children in the U.S. are still reared by their own family. For babies, all of these numbers are even higher.

Mrs. Clinton has referred to a “silent child care crisis.” But if there is any element in today’s day care debate that is silent it is the silent majority of parents who are making themselves available to their children without much recognition or support from society. The media repeat over and over that the dual-career family is today’s norm, leaving child-raising parents to feel they are alone. They are not.

But what about couples who can’t afford to have one parent stay at home? The common per-

ception is that the decision to have one parent at home is a luxury practiced only by the well-off. Actually, quite the opposite is true: the median income of families with at-home mothers is \$38,835. The median income of *dual-earner* families, on the other hand, is \$57,637.

If helping poor families is the goal, Clinton-style day care subsidies are a very poor instrument. There are only 1.1 million preschoolers in this country who are poor and have working mothers, and most of these youngsters—52

percent—are being cared for by family members. They aren’t in day care.

Since most low-income families don’t purchase child care, the federal subsidies in the Clinton plan offer them nothing. Benefits targeted to day care as the President has proposed (instead of to mothers and fathers as others have suggested) not only discriminate against low- and middle-income American families who are struggling to keep one parent at home, but also reach only the tiniest fraction of families with children in poverty.

Federal intervention in child care should be guided by what parents want and what children need. At the very least, the government should be neutral and avoid social engineering that skews the child care market toward the commercial, institutional, and bureaucratized solutions that most parents avoid.

Mothers and fathers all across this country have spoken through their personal choices. If there are going to be government efforts to aid families, these should center on helping parents care for their own children.

Charmaine Yoest, a Bradley Fellow at the University of Virginia and a mother of three children is the author of a larger paper on this subject just released by the Family Research Council.

is going home possible?

LOTS OF FAMILIES SAY YES

BY EVAN GAHR

Anne Haley Brown sounds like the quintessential career woman. She boasts an Ivy League education, an elite law school degree, and a stint at Los Angeles' best known law firm.

But snagging a law firm partnership is the least of Brown's thoughts these days. This mother of two young girls, who hasn't worked since her second was born, has a more compelling task than fighting for a corner office: "I've got to get my daughters ready to stand on their little feet."

After that, Brown may return to work. But at the moment she isn't exactly pounding the pavement. The Stanford University law school grad may have been trained to bring witnesses to tears on cross-examination, but the only crying Brown sees regularly now are the misty eyes of her two youngsters. And that suits her just fine: Ever since her daughters were born "work just doesn't have the same importance to me."

Amidst the nation's ideologically charged child care debate, home-by-

choice mothers like Brown barely register on the radar screen. Although day care is deemed a necessity to which the government must devote huge sums, these women—who run the gamut from secretaries to physicians—have discovered another option, a calling really.

It's one which feminists scorn, the mainstream media generally overlooks, and the Clinton administration ignores. Betty Friedan set the tone by deriding women who stay at home as inmates of comfortable concentration camps. More recently, Hillary Clinton let slip with the sneer that she wasn't the kind of mother to stay at home and bake cookies.

But many women with credentials to match Clinton's do stay home. Last year, Pepsi-Cola North America CEO Brenda Barnes, one of the highest ranking women in U.S. business, and on a fast track to an even higher spot, resigned to stay home with her kids. Her decision sparked intense, albeit fleeting media interest. But it was hardly an isolated event.

A recent survey of 900 female graduates of Harvard's medical, law, and business schools found that 85 percent thought decreasing their work hours af-

ter they became mothers might be detrimental to their careers—yet 70 percent did it anyway. And 25 percent of MBA graduates left the workforce entirely after a birth. Among mothers generally, far more concentrate on their children when they are young. (*See the data on page 47.*) This in spite of many contemporary expectations that motherhood will be a two-week detour—pop the kid, get back to work, climb the corporate ladder.

But a funny thing happens on the way to the office. Many women find that work just doesn't have the same glimmer when there is something warm and breathing to compare it to. Who wants to exchange pleasantries at the office water cooler when you can be at home making goo-goo eyes at your baby? Many women told they should "have it all" seem to be coming to the realization that all they really want is right at home during those years.

Psychologist Brenda Hunter, author of *The Power of Mother Love*, says that "Women are unprepared for the transforming event that motherhood is. Many fall in love with their children and do not return to the workplace."

Laura Collins, who quit her job as an art director for a Los Angeles real estate

firm, echoes those sentiments. "You have this little baby. Suddenly all these feelings come out that never happened before that make you want to stare at the baby for hours and nurture and hug her."

Like many women, Collins drifted into her role as an at-home mom. At first, she continued to work after her daughter Emma was born in 1994. During her lunch hour, Collins would drive home to play with her baby. Along the way one day, she listened to talk radio host Laura Schlessinger warn against leaving a child's upbringing to a nanny. Do you think if kids could make the choice they would really choose a nanny? asked Schlessinger. The words hit home with Collins, who thought of herself as the quintessential career woman. Eventually she told her husband, "I can't do it anymore."

"I haven't regretted it for a second. I felt I was cheating my children." The little secret here is that kids benefit tremendously when their mothers stay home. It's a secret for a number of reasons. For one thing, advertising that fact forces mothers who leave their kids with day care workers to face uncomfortable questions about their decision. Plus, lots of interest groups attack all arguments that might undercut the rationale for increased government involvement in child care.

"No one wants to report the truth because we might make someone feel guilty," says Heidi Brennan, public policy director for the support group Mothers-at-Home. Many individual mothers, however, find their own way to the conclusion that they are not replaceable.

Some try the caretaker route, only to find it woefully inadequate. Cathy Ross, for example, tried to balance her kids' needs with her job responsibilities at a California advertising agency. Eventually she quit. Referring to her 11-year-old son and her twin six-year-old daughters, she says "the mom they get after school at three o'clock is a lot more receptive than the one who barreled through the door at six and had to cram homework, baths, and dinner into a two-hour time frame."

Ross, who lives in San Clemente, says that her kids seem more secure



now. And she has time to listen to their concerns. That's particularly important because children tend to "store up" things, and aren't likely to vent in a neat two hours.

Of course, what's best for kids often takes a back seat to politics. In an era when activists can't invoke "our children" often enough in their quests to justify various government programs, how do advocates treat women who actually bend their own lives for their children? The *Washington Post* recently editorialized that the "child care problem in this country isn't helping moms stay home." Brenda Hunter notes that last year's White House Child Care Conference "made the professional caregiver the national heroine," while at-home mothers were ignored. "Women who make the decision that their children are the most important part of their life" command no respect among liberal elites, she warns.

For many at-home mothers, the decision to be there for their children carries considerable financial and personal sacrifice. Heidi Brennan says it's a common misperception that staying home with your kids is a luxury for the rich. Actually, Census Bureau figures show that couples with one parent at home have much more modest incomes than others. Households where both parents work make about 50 percent more. (See the graph on page 54.)

Most families, however, contend that that's ultimately a small price to pay. Leslie Spencer and her husband cut their budget to the bone so that Mrs. Spencer could stay home after her daughter was born in 1995. The Spencers refinanced their car loan, dispensed with cable TV, stopped going out to eat, and even ditched call waiting. Yet these measures didn't quite offset the lost income from Mrs. Spencer's public relations job. To make up the difference, Spencer started a small home-business. She even founded a support group, Home-based Working Moms, for women who do the same.

"The real liberation is to be free to raise your children," says Laura Collins.

"That's more emancipating than being a slave to your employer and missing out on those great years of seeing your kids grow up."

Evan Gahr is a New Yorker who writes frequently for TAE on education and culture.

AMERICA'S NEWEST CORPORATE ADDRESS IS HOME SWEET HOME

BY RICHARD MINITER

Brent Winters runs Innovative Solutions & Technologies, an international software company, from the upstairs bedroom of his Joplin, Missouri home. His wife Robin fields his calls as another employee, a hard-working salesman, toils away in the den.

Sales grew by 92 percent last year and are expected to top \$800,000 this year. Brent knows he has to hire more staff, but he refuses to move his booming business from his three-bedroom house. Why would he? "I can take a peek at my son and be back in my office in 30 seconds," he says. Another bonus: "I have lunch with my wife every day."

Brent Winters is a lot more than a quirky software company owner. He's one of more than 12 million Americans who run a full-time business from their home. The vast majority are keeping their business based at home specifically so they can spend more time with their family. Instead of returning from a distant job filled with stress and fatigue, home-based entrepreneurs can greet their children as they file off the school bus.

Working at home isn't just good for families, it is often good for checking accounts. At-home entrepreneurs save money by not commuting and not paying office rent. And many earn good incomes. Nearly 3 million home-based entrepreneurs earned more than \$100,000 last year, according to a recent

study by the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater's Home-based Business Project. Professor David Buchen, who conducted the research, expects the number of high-earning home enterprises to grow.

There are more Americans working at least part of the time from home than most people realize. As many as 40 million Americans conduct some work from home, says the National Association of the Self-Employed. These are a mixed bunch which include telecommuters, part-time business owners, and independent contractors.

By any measure, the number of at-home workers is rising. Certainly the membership lists of the organizations that have sprung up to serve at-home businesspeople are surging. Just two years after it was formed, the non-profit Home Business Institute has more than 50,000 members.

Other organizations like Small Office Home Office and the American Association of Home-based Businesses are also helping make it more acceptable to run a business from home. "I used to buy those novelty tapes that have office noises so that people wouldn't realize I was working at home," says Connie Colten, president of Colten Creations, a Santee, California home business. "Now it is hip to be home."

Many famous entrepreneurial ventures were incubated in domestic settings—Apple Computer was born in Steven Wozniak's garage, Lillian Vernon cooked up her famous catalogue company on the kitchen table of her New York apartment, and Mo Siegel started tea-maker Celestial Seasonings in his rented A-frame outside of Boulder, Colorado, using a screen door to dry herbs. What sets many of today's home-based business owners apart is that they don't intend—ever—to leave home. And the desire to spend more time with their family is the number-one reason for this, according to Link Resources, a New York-based research group.

Experts cite these factors for the explosion of home-based businesses:

Family life. Many college-educated women start home businesses when they become mothers. Catherine Kara-



betsos and Karin Hall formed Quality Customer Service and Sales, a Wheeling, Illinois-based cosmetics telemarketing firm, in Hall's den in 1991. Karabetsos's four children and Hall's two children play nearby as the business partners send faxes and take calls. The \$230,000-per-year enterprise now has five employees, all of whom are mothers working at home. "We wanted to be full-time moms and full-time marketers," says Karabetsos.

New Technology. Powerful new personal computers allow entrepreneurs to run complex enterprises without mail rooms, receptionists, or accountants. E-mail automatically arrives in the right place. Word processing and voice recognition software make secretaries obsolete. Computers can send and receive faxes, and even answer the phone. Tasks which once kept bookkeepers employed—calculating payroll, processing invoices, updating ledgers, paying taxes, and cutting checks—can now be done with the click of a mouse. Much of that software, fittingly, was first designed by Intuit founder Scott Cook in his California home. While many of these technological tools have been available for almost two decades, only in the past five years have they become cheap, easy to use, and widespread.

Changing capital flows. As competition from non-bank lenders increases, traditional banks are having to work harder to find new business customers. As a result they are starting to take home-based companies seriously. Venture capitalists, who saw a number of successful software start-ups begin in the founder's living room, now see starting a business at home as a plus—it saves precious capital and boosts productivity. GE Capital, an aggressive non-bank lender, is also targeting home-based entrepreneurs. As a result, unprecedented amounts of capital are pouring into home enterprises.

Easing government regulation. Many local governments now realize that small businesses create large numbers of jobs. They are beginning to loosen

zoning and other restrictions that once barred entrepreneurs from running their business from home. Gaithersburg, Maryland, went from cracking down on home businesses by counting cars in residential driveways and issuing tickets in 1987 to writing special exemptions to allow firms to operate in residential neighborhoods in 1994. As a result, Gaithersburg is now one of the fastest growing home business markets in the country. Even big cities like San Francisco are revising their zoning rules. One beneficiary is Amy Holmen, producer of a national daily radio series with CBS's Charles Osgood. She works out of her greenhouse-like living room from her Russian Hill neighborhood.

The benefits of downsizing. The *Fortune* 500 have trimmed their payrolls by more than 4 million since 1985. That released an army of well-trained business managers to their homes. Many decided to stay there, creating their own firms and bringing a new level of expertise to home-based business.

Many home entrepreneurs fit the Paul Sessel model. He runs Creative Displays, which decorates commercial structures with lights, out of his four-bedroom house in Overland Park, Kansas. Sales have climbed more than 115 percent since he bought the firm three years ago—to more than \$584,000 in 1996. Though he hires as many as 30 part-time employees during the peak winter months, Sessel has no plans to move operations from his home. "The best benefit to running my business at home is that I can work at any hour day or night," says Sessel. He values the increased time with his family. Sessel recently hired a new employee who will work from his own home.

There's lots of lobbying going on in Washington these days in the name of improving the lives of children and families. Imagine the social benefits if social conservatives did a little lobbying for measures that removed regulatory roadblocks and let parents work nearer to their children—say in the next room?

Richard Minitier writes often for The American Enterprise.



what we should & shouldn't do to help parents

THE YEAR OF THE HOMEMAKER

BY MAGGIE GALLAGHER

1998 is shaping up to be the Year of the Homemaker and, boy, is it making a lot of people mad.

Activists can't believe that mere amateurs are wrestling the debate over "child care" away from the professionals. "We will not have a serious debate about how to allocate scarce resources," Faith Wohl, president of the Child Care Action Campaign, huffed to the *Boston Globe*, "as long as the issue is parental equity rather than the child care infrastructure."



President Clinton's \$22 billion plan includes an expanded tax credit for parents who use commercial child care, as well as tax breaks for corporations that set up day care centers, and money for after-school care providers. But to the Democrats' surprise, Senate Republicans have coalesced around a proposal by Senators Chafee and Hatch that would extend the child care tax credit for the first time to stay-at-home moms (as well as to the large group of working moms who do not use commercial child care). Less commendably, the Chafee-Hatch proposal would, like the President's, expand other direct subsidies for commercial child care, such as new tax breaks for corporate day care, and an increase in the Child Care Block Grant. These child care benefits exclude homemakers and working moms whose kids are cared for without pay by family members (including fathers).

Still, all signs point to the historic inclusion for the first time of mothers-at-home in the government's definition of providers of safe, affordable, and high quality child care. The House recently voted unanimously for a resolution that "applauds" the efforts of at-home parents. At a recent hearing on child care sponsored by Senator Dan Coats, even the

very liberal Democratic Senator Paul Wellstone agreed that helping hard-pressed homemaking families was a good idea. Following the GOP's lead, Senate Democrats have added to their child care bill a (much smaller) child care tax credit for parents at home.

It's just not hip to be against homemakers anymore in Washington. Politicians have wised up to the fact that traditional families are by no means the extinct species that the cooked statistics of advocates have long suggested. Data show that three-quarters of all children under the age of five in this country are still cared for primarily by family members—overwhelmingly by parents themselves.

Child care advocates are in part the victims of their own rhetorical cleverness: They redubbed day care “child care” because the latter sounds so much cozier. But if good child care is your goal, why create a rigid benefit structure that rewards only parents who use paid services? Particularly given that married families with one income are much less affluent than dual-earner couples who pay for substitute care? [See graph below.]

Some critics take refuge in the idea that so-called “incentives” for at-home parenting are doomed to failure. Paul Harrington of Northeastern University argues that today's woman is so committed to the labor force it would take “a minor miracle” for the child care tax credit to change behavior.

Even Charles Murray, one of the most insightful social policy analysts in America, argued recently that “subsidizing” stay-at-home moms was futile. Imagine, he says, a mother making \$20,000 who is offered a \$2,000 child care tax credit: “The mother who quits her job to stay home with her child, forgoing a \$20,000 income, is out of



How can I put together a package of time and money that will allow me and my family to get by?

pocket \$18,000—a 10 percent reduction in her sacrifice and a very weak financial incentive to stay home.”

Such arguments miss the point: bribing mothers to stay home is not the goal of extending tax credits, giving families choices is. Mothers are not primarily wealth-maximizers, as Murray should know from his own research on welfare. It was Murray who pointed out that welfare moms don't do anything so crude as have babies in order to get money. Instead welfare payments merely enable these women to do what they already want to do: have a baby without worrying about who will pay the rent.

The truths Murray so articulately defended on welfare point to larger truths about how government affects family life: Government policies, including taxation patterns, affect not only economic decision-making but family behavior as well, and not always in the ways planned.

Research suggests that government-mandated parental leave, for example, while it sounds family-friendly, actually speeds up women's return to the work force. And the decision to have a child at all, private and personal though it may seem, turns out to be surprisingly sensitive to the amount of earnings the tax code allows families to protect. Historian Allan Carlson notes that research suggests a one percent increase in the value of the child exemption boosts birth probability by just about one percent.

From a strictly economic point of view, families' sensitivity to tax provi-

sions like these makes little sense. Tax benefits never allow parents to recoup more than a fraction of the \$8,000 or so in direct annual expenses that a child costs an average middle class family.

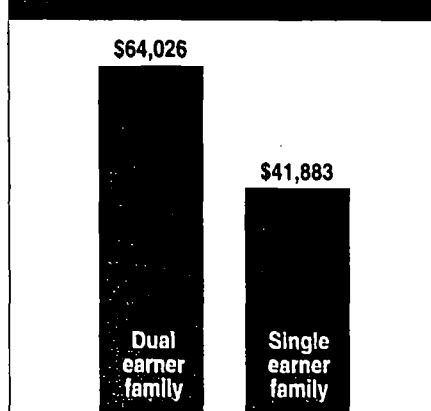
But when married mothers think about having another baby, or postponing the return to work, the question they ask is not: What strategy will increase my net worth the most? The answer to that is obvious—work continuously and have no children at all. Instead, what women with new babies ask is: How can I put together a package of time and money that will allow me and my family to get by?

There isn't a mom in America who is going to stay at home with her children in order to get extra money through the tax code. But being allowed to keep an extra hundred or two a month of family income will help a mother who already wants to find ways to spend more time caring for her own kids. And it will ensure that moms who pick Daddy care over day care for their kids while they work aren't punished for that choice, either.

Staying home with a child even for a few years never makes any economic sense. A woman who does so not only loses her current wages, she almost certainly reduces her long-term earning power. That so many women long to put their first, best efforts into their kids and let corporations make do with what's left over is a testament to something else. Economists take note: there are forces at work in the universe even more powerful than money.

Maggie Gallagher is an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values and a nationally syndicated columnist.

Which Childraisers Need Tax Relief More?



Note: Median incomes of married-couple families where parents work full time

ENCOURAGE, DON'T PENALIZE PARENTING

BY SUZY RYAN

Today, my first grader, Keegan, had a day off school, so he joined his two younger siblings and me for the weekly grocery shopping. After fin-

ishing our errands, we ate a quick peanut butter and jelly sandwich and then donned our Rollerblades so we could skate in the cul-de-sac before the latest El Niño deluge hit San Diego.

I smiled as we raced up and down the street, thinking about the blessing of staying at home with my children. Seven years ago, after Keegan was born, I desperately wanted to quit work. Finances prohibited it, so my husband and I developed a plan to achieve this goal. We refinanced our home. We decided to continue driving our 1984 Celica. And I started taking care of other children to make our budget work. Relinquishing my CNN habit to trim the cable bill, recycling our cans, and ironing Ken's work shirts seemed like small sacrifices in exchange for the possibility of full-time parenting. I traded power lunches for PB&J, but in the process I got abundant availability to my family.

This reminds me of the childhood of another woman, who wrote, "When I was a young child, I went everywhere with my parents." Who is this person? Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund.

Strangely, she is now one of the architects of President Clinton's \$22 billion dollar day care initiative. Her stated regret that today we "do not have this kind of support system" rings hollow, because she refuses to offer families the kinds of assistance that would make it possible for more of them to be nurturers in their own homes. The parents of our great country overwhelmingly favor the kind of childhood care Ms. Edelman got, not the kind she is pushing now in

Washington, which would provide money for 50,000 new day care workers.

For those families who have only one parent, or very low earned income, I am happy to share my husband's salary for tax-cuts to help with child care. I know money going directly to parents will benefit the



family involved, and not go down the black hole of some federal program. Actually, the huge expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit in recent years already offer some of this kind of help to workers of modest incomes.

If more money is needed by families, why not increase the child exemption back to where it was before inflation set in? A \$7,000 per child exemption would help parents a *lot* without forcing them to drop their cherubs into government orchestrated day care.

When my heart beckoned me to leave my own job, I wasn't expecting accolades from the government. But at the very least I don't want the government to penalize me. The recent words of Sen. Christopher Dodd, Connecticut Democrat, contending that many stay-at-home mothers have chosen the "luxury" of motherhood over employment because they "want to play golf or go to the club and play cards" struck me as unbelievable!

Do Sen. Dodd's words epitomize the liberal mindset behind Clinton's child care initiative? I thought the women's movement promised females, even mothers, the "choice" to pursue their dreams. Well, I left behind top dollars in the career arena to greet my children after school and play ball in the park with them. How dare Washingtonians betray women like me by invalidating our contribution to society!

After running inside, away from the downpour, the kids and I built a fire and played a game of *Go Fish*. (Sen. Dodd, the club where I play cards is my family room floor.) Exciting? No. Satisfying? Absolutely. Observing my offspring flourish makes it easy to accept the monetary reductions we've had to assume. What communist was it who said, "Give me a child for five years and he is mine for life?" I think I'll go surf the net with the kids and find out—right after I finish another PB&J.

Suzy Ryan is a San Diego writer who last wrote for TAE in November/December 1997.

WHY THE MARKET CAN'T RAISE OUR CHILDREN FOR US

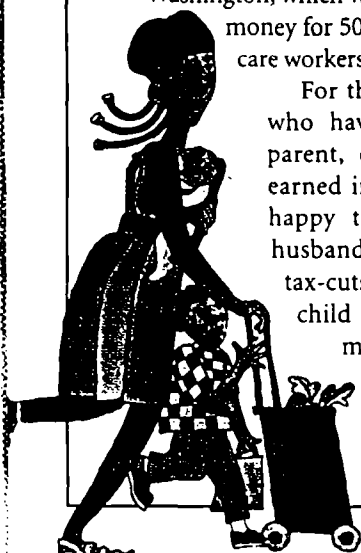
BY JENNIFER ROBACK MORSE

The typical free market argument in the child care debate runs approximately as follows: Markets give people what they want, at lower cost and with greater sensitivity to true needs than any governmental service can. Therefore, the market should provide child care. Just keep the government out of it. End of argument.

I believe it is a mistake for advocates of the free market (of which I am one) to build their case in this way. For while it's true that market-provided child care will usually be far superior to governmental versions, it's not true that market-provided child care will necessarily be adequate. Let me explain how I arrived at this seemingly paradoxical conclusion.

I am an economist by training, currently living in Silicon Valley. Before I became a mother, I was sympathetic with the argument that the market would provide good enough child care to allow me to continue my career. I was predisposed to become a stereotypical working mother. Put the kids in day care. Hire a nanny. Don't allow children to deter you from pursuing your career. In my case, it was not radical feminism that influenced my thinking. It was conservative economics, with its emphasis on income-maximizing and career-building. I had no idea how much my working would affect my children, and no way of anticipating how much motherhood would alter my own attitudes.

In a nutshell, the problem with the "markets will provide" argument is that it concedes too many dubious premises to the feminist world view. For example: "The work of parents, and particularly mothers, is not especially challenging, difficult, or important. Therefore, providing substitutes for mothers' care of children poses no



problem." In other words, any idiot can provide perfectly adequate child care. Or: "The work women do in the market is more socially valuable than the work they do in the home, at least for highly educated, highly skilled women. So a corporate lawyer is perfectly rational to hire an illegal alien to care for her children while she goes off each day to earn big bucks." In other words, some women are too important to take care of their own children.

These are things I might have said in the days before I became a mother, when I could analyze child care as nothing but an economic issue. But when I consider my own particular children, rather than hypothetical children, I cannot be convinced for a minute of the truth of these claims. There is no good substitute for my care. I can hire help once in a while, but hired help cannot create a home or raise a child. I can no longer accept the claim that the size of my paycheck measures the value of my contributions to society. My monetary income has shrunk since I became a mother, but my societal contributions as a mother exceed the number of dollars typed on my W-2 form at the end of the year.

The most insidious hidden premise behind the push for day care is that all women want to work. My observation is that most mothers of small children do not want "high quality day care." Many prefer not to work at all, or to have other family members care for their children.

In no case should we assume that women's wants are completely given. Many women, of various ideologies and all income levels, have been seduced by the siren calls of feminist theorizing. Some of us have come to believe that our self-esteem depends upon our jobs, or that we appear weak if we admit that taking care of children is enjoyable. Some women assume that child care is mind-numbing, spirit-killing drudgery, and that only work outside the home is fulfilling. These are not necessarily statements that women would come up with spontaneously, in the absence of feminist tutoring.



**My social
contributions as a
mother far exceed the
number of dollars
typed on my W-2 form
at the end of the year.**

For many feminists, the overwhelming argument in favor of women working is that women with paychecks are more powerful than women without any income of their own. Those of us who admire the free market agree that dollar power is real power. But dollar power is not the only kind of power. Losing control over what happens to one's children is for many women a devastating loss of power. Surrendering day-to-day contact with one's children, giving up the ability to influence their development, surely these count as losses of power for any mother or father.

Finally, we know that "the market will provide" doesn't mean every family will find a perfect "Mary Poppins" as a live-in nanny. The market will provide much less costly care for the vast majority of families. Paid child care can only be an economical choice for lower income women if the cost is lower than their own wages. This lower cost child care will in practice mean using economies of scale by caring for children in groups, either in someone's home or in day care centers. Group care will necessarily be the market-provided solution for the vast majority of women.

Unfortunately, research shows extensive group care isn't healthy for infants. Brand-new babies don't need to interact with each other. Other infants compete for adult attentiveness. If infants need any contact with other children at all, they need the doting attention of older siblings. Older brothers and sisters provide role models for

talking, crawling up stairs, walking, eating with a spoon, and lots of other things. An infant in a day care center is unlikely to receive the rich attentiveness that is possible inside a family.

Here is a modern irony: One of the arguments against large families is that children in small families receive more attention from their parents. On the other hand, modern families are willing to leave their children in group care, with child/adult ratios of four to one considered "high-quality care" for children from six weeks old up to age two.

I have many Catholic friends who home school their children. Some of these families have as many as ten children. I cannot think of a single such family with four children under the age of two, or ten preschool children, or 20 second-graders. (As we say in Silicon Valley, do the math.) Children of large families at least have each other. Does anybody really think that children are better off with no siblings, and their days spent in small herds with paid caretakers?

Social science research suggests that too much child care at too young an age places a child at risk for being insecurely attached to his parents. Insecure attachments, in turn, have been correlated with difficulties in later childhood, including low tolerance for frustration, less willingness to take risks, less ability to empathize with others, and a greater tendency to have temper tantrums. Secure attachments, on the other hand, seem to be the foundation for self-confidence and trust. Surely advocates of the free market can't be indifferent about which kinds of traits children develop. A *laissez faire* world, after all, requires adults who can restrain themselves, who have regard for others, and who can trust and be trustworthy.

There are inherent limits to how much responsibility parents can delegate to people caring for their children. To explain, let me summarize my own activities as a stay-at-home-mom on any given day.

One of my children has such a tender conscience that she bursts into tears at the realization of having done

something wrong. The other requires a small 2x4 to get that same message. One child plays every injury for maximum drama, demanding a band-aid for microscopic boo-boos. The other child is so impervious to pain if you hear a whimper out of him it's best to just dial 911.

Then there is the job of providing encouragement—skating the fine line between asking too much too soon and making necessary demands for improvement. How much writing should I expect of the child for whom holding a pencil is a major effort? (Meanwhile, the younger child can write little stories without breaking a sweat.) I know what these children are capable of doing. One thing they are fully capable of doing is bamboozling a stranger into thinking they can't do much. On the other hand, there is no point in asking them to do something so far out of their capacity that I might as well be asking them to solve a differential equation.

In their social interactions with each other and neighborhood children, my son and daughter need more than generalized instructions to share and be nice. Sometimes they'd like to persuade another child to play, but have no idea what to offer. They might be able to formulate the thought, "I want that other kid's toy. I know my mom does not want me to punch him to get it," but then get stuck. They need coaching, not only of their actions but also of their words and even thoughts. Knowing when a particular child is ready to go to a new level, knowing what level of abstraction he can grasp, knowing how much frustration he can tolerate—this is the daily work of motherhood.

Now I ask you: who am I going to pay to do all this? How am I going to give instructions in sufficient detail to a babysitter? There is of course nothing wrong with hiring some help. But it is not possible to delegate to either the government or the market the innumerable tasks that go into raising any particular child.

Those of us who once accepted the arguments in favor of paid child care didn't realize how much individual at-



tention we actually received when we were very young, and how difficult it would be to pay someone else to give our own kids what we took for granted. Little did we know how much our mother's help with homework blunted the impact of impersonal schools. Those talks around the kitchen table gave us more than we realized, guidance that can't easily be imparted by a nanny or a day care worker. Nor did we have any idea how much we benefited from our relationships with our siblings—connections impossible to replicate in classrooms.

As for claims that freeing women from the demands of child raising is a kind of liberation—is most work in the market really so glamorous and fulfilling? Instead of finding intelligent women molding members of America's next generation, we now often find them stacked in law offices writing wills and doing house closings. Instead of introducing their own children to great literature and world history, bright women are sequestered in university offices, grading piles of illegible midterms written by other people's children. How did we forget that guiding our offspring requires knowledge far more subtle, and pays bounties far richer, than most jobs?

Lots of women are now realizing what many men have known all along: Working is not always fun or satisfying. Most of the tasks men do in the labor force contain large amounts of drudgery. The millions of fathers who get up in the morning to go to work, day after long day, don't usually do it because their jobs are intrinsically fulfilling. Most of them, much of the time, work out of love of their families.

It is attachment to their wives and children that keeps men reporting as truck mechanics and cab drivers. It is a sense of loving duty that keeps men standing on subway platforms that lead to fluorescent-lit offices. The drudgery of caring for small children is nothing compared to the drudgery

of factory work or a data entry job. For many workers, the tedium of a humdrum job is relieved more than anything else by coming home to a noisy household.

Some Americans conceive of personal liberty as the right to do anything they want, so long as it is peaceful and non-coercive. In this conception, individuals have a responsibility only to refrain from using force, and from defrauding others.

This is an insufficient vision of the individual's responsibility within a self-governing society. Delegating most of the care of a child to hired help is not force or fraud. It is, however, an extremely negligent act. A free society cannot long survive if large numbers of people choose to discharge their parental duties in this perfunctory way.

The basic problem with the market as a child care provider is that we end up relying on it too much—because it is so convenient. The market is a wonderful institution because it gives us what we want. When our wants are skewed, the market satisfies them just the same. In this way markets reveal parts of us that we might prefer not to see.

But when we observe the truth about ourselves, we can change. It took me an embarrassingly long time to realize that my two children needed me at home more than they needed anything my income would buy for them. It took even longer for me to realize that placing my intellect at the service of my family was a greater challenge than my ordinary life as a university professor. I had accepted far more feminist premises than I had realized. It is my hope that these thoughts will help other mothers who are wavering to take the plunge and do what they really want to do: stay home.

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What Child Care System for America?
by Suzanne W. Helburn and Barbara R. Bergmann
(To be published by St. Martin's Press; expected publication date 1999)

Summary of Policy Proposals

If we are to guarantee good quality child care to all children who need it, the federal government must play a central role in helping parents to finance it, and in assuring an adequate level of quality standards. We will be advocating that the nation consider phasing in over the next decade a large-scale expansion of government help to families with child care expenditures, considerably more extensive than any program yet proposed. A program of this magnitude would cost on the order of \$60 billion a year, far more than is now being spent in the United States by all levels of government. It would include features to upgrade the quality of the nation's supply of child care:

- All American children would get access to good quality child care, including after-school care for elementary school children, through a program of federally-financed subsidies. Families' freedom of choice would be expanded. Families close to the poverty line would get a subsidy equal to the total cost of care. Families with higher incomes would pay a share of the cost, depending on income, with no family required to pay more than 30 percent of its income above the poverty level. Families would get a subsidy of value at least equal to any tax credit for which they are currently eligible.
- The subsidies would be usable only at licensed facilities, whose personnel met newly-established training requirements and had passed background checks. These could include for-profit facilities, church-related providers, other non-profits, full-time Head Start programs, government-provided pre-kindergartens and pre-schools, and licenced family day care. All of these kinds of providers would have help from this program.
- We would cease using the tax system as a finance mechanism. Parents need to be empowered to buy quality care when they need it, rather than given rebates months later at tax-filing time. Current use of the tax system denies support to those with low income who owe little or no tax.
- Increased financial help to mothers at home, and to more affluent families generally, should only come after adequate help is provided to families all of whose adult members need to work.
- National minimum standards for state licensing would require some training for all persons, other than parents, who are caring for children. Background checks would be required for all non-related caregivers receiving subsidies. The required ratios of caregivers to children would be one-to-four for infants, one-to-six for toddlers, one-to-ten for three-to-five-year-olds.
- Expansion of good quality child care will require an increase in the number of trained workers, improved monitoring of quality by state agencies, and more user-friendly ways for families to be better consumers and to know all their options. Investments are needed to create the infrastructure to bring these activities about. These kinds of investments have to be made and decided on at the local level, but the federal government needs to insure adequate funding.

(PRELIMINARY)

What It Would Take to Make Child Care "Affordable" in the United States ?

Excerpt from the final chapter in the book

What Child Care System for America?

by Suzanne W. Helburn and Barbara R. Bergmann

(St. Martin's Press, Fall 1999)

A realistic approach to the problem of child care in America requires recognition of the need for a reliable flow of funds that would finance on a continuing basis, year after year, the provision of high-quality services to millions of children, while at the same time allowing hard-pressed parents to reduce what they currently pay for care out of their own pockets. As we shall see, the new funds that would be needed are in the tens of billions of dollars per year. The United States already has a national program on child care in effect—one that costs the federal and state governments \$15 billion a year.¹ What is needed is a new national plan that would build on and go beyond our present system.

Making that money available would do three things. First, the subsidies, together with the copayments that would be made by the parents, would give to providers the flow of financial resources that would enable them to offer an adequate supply of high-quality services. Second, subsidies would relieve parents of the pressure to put their children into hole-in-corner care of dubious quality and safety. Third, by reducing the amounts lower-income parents would have to take out of their own pockets to get care for their children, it would raise parents' and children's living standards to a significant degree. "Affordable child care" is, after all, care at a price to parents that does not cripple a family's budget, and leave it with insufficient resources to buy food and shelter.

Child care proponents have been quite reticent about pushing such an overall financial plan, although few could entertain the hope that state, local, and voluntary efforts, together with those of employers, could in time fill the need. The reluctance to put forth a well-worked-out national plan is probably due to fear that the magnitude of the funds needed to implement it would be so large as to make it an easy target for the scorn of its enemies--anti-government ideologues, fiscal conservatives and proponents of having mothers stay home.² Pushing for a large national program with a low chance of enactment might make them look foolish or unrealistic, and might get in the way of obtaining the more modest advances in child care funding they have some hope of attaining.

Despite these hopes and fears, there are three good reasons for formulating such

plans, estimating their cost, and trying to get them discussed. First, most discussions on "affordable care" are lacking in concreteness. Specifying the characteristics of a plan and costing it out forces us to define what is meant by "affordable care", what is meant by its "lack", and to come to an understanding of what would constitute an acceptable and prudent solution. Second, it is worthwhile to get an estimate of the financial magnitude of the task, because the strategy that is adopted for dealing with the problem depends crucially on that magnitude. The kinds of voluntary efforts to increase the supply of affordable child care that are frequently called for might suffice if the financial magnitude of the effort needed were found to be relatively modest. Considerably larger magnitudes would require a sizeable program financed by the federal government in order for serious progress to be made on a uniform basis throughout the country. Third, the discussion of a significant new national program in child care is necessary if such a program is to have any chance of eventual enactment. Even if that discussion takes place in a period where public opinion (and politicians' opinion of what the public might be brought to favor) is unsupportive of its enactment, the discussion itself may help to nudge opinion in its favor.

Would increased funding guarantee that an adequate quantity of care would be provided, and that the services would be of high quality? On the matter of quantity, we can, based on past performance, put our confidence in the responsiveness of the American economy. If sufficient funding were available, the child care industry, like any other industry, could be expected to respond with a supply of its product that would meet the demand. While anxiety over quantity of care supplied would not be justified, anxiety would certainly be warranted concerning the quality of the child care that would result from an enlarged subsidy program. Quality provided would depend on the level of subsidies, the standards set, and the extent and efficacy of enforcement of those standards. If effective regulation of the providers were absent, a considerable portion of public subsidies would be likely to flow to care that is mediocre and to some that is outright poor, just as some parent fees do now. A subsidy level that did not cover the costs of high-quality care would not produce it, regardless of the nature of the regulations, or the effort put into enforcing them. Generous subsidies without effective regulation would not produce it either.

Two Alternative Comprehensive Federal Plans and their Cost

Rather than formulate a single plan, we show two basic plans, so that their virtues, defects, coverage and costs can be compared. The two plans differ considerably in terms of how many families get help, the extent of the help they would get, in the quality of the care that each plan would offer, and, of course, in what they would cost.

The first plan we present is based on the type of rules that currently govern the

state plans, financed by federal block grant and state money. We use Iowa as a model, because its plan is typical of what the states have adopted, and, moreover derives from a state that is conservative. We can plausibly say, then, that the Iowa plan is based on a conservative view of the appropriate amount of government help to parents to make child care "affordable" to them.

The national program we present based on the Iowa plan provides enough funds so that all eligibles (in the whole country) could participate in the program. The second plan we present—which we call the "Sufficient Plan"—also covers all eligibles nationwide. It differs from the Iowa plan in giving benefits to a wider range of families, and in offering reimbursement rates to providers that would pay the cost of providing all children with care of acceptable quality.

1. A National Plan Using State of Iowa Rules

The subsidies available in Iowa for child care to a family consisting of a single working mother, an infant, and a pre-school child (with both of the latter needing full-time care) are shown in Table 1. The state maximum reimbursement to providers for the care of both children would be \$10,920. Families with income below \$12,672 (a few dollars above the official U.S. poverty level for this family in 1997), would owe no copayments. Families with income above this would make copayments as indicated in the column headed "family's payment for child care". For a family of size 3, Iowa copayments amount to about a third of income over the poverty level. We can view this as a value judgement on what an "affordable" fee might reasonably amount to for a family of that size. Parents whose income exceed the program limits, however, would have to pay as much as 82 percent of the income over the poverty line for this kind of child care.

The Iowa reimbursement rates for infants lie considerably below the costs of centers that the Costs, Quality and Outcomes Study rated "good " (a score of 5). The Iowa rates also lie below those the CQO study found as meeting a somewhat lower standard, those rated more than minimally adequate, but lacking in developmental activities (a score of 4).³

We simulate a national program based on the reimbursement rates and copayment rules contained in the Iowa plan using data in the Current Population Survey (CPS). This information was used to assign a child care subsidy (or to not assign one) to each family with children under 13 in the sample. If all of the adults of a family were in the labor force (at a job or looking for work), the family was assigned a subsidy if they met the income requirements of the Iowa plan. Another group assigned a subsidy were families of mothers who, on account of welfare reform, might be expected to make the transition from welfare to work.⁴ As to families with at least one adult at home out of the labor force, who had not been welfare recipients, an initial simulation was made on the

assumption that their children would continue be cared for at home at no cost to the government.⁵ Children currently being cared for at no charge, as well as those cared for at a charge in centers, in licensed family day care, or in "informal care", were assumed in the simulation to continue in those arrangements.⁶ The information on mothers' hours of work was used to assign some children to part-day care. Five-year olds with mothers in full-time work were assumed to get part of their care through kindergarten classes.⁷ Children in grades 1-6 were assumed to need after-school care for 10 months and full-time care for two months.

Providing Iowa-level benefits to all income-eligible families nationally who currently have their children in paid care, and allotting child care subsidies as well to all families currently receiving welfare, is estimated to cost \$24 billion a year. Reimbursements to providers would total \$28 billion, of which \$4 billion or 16 percent would be covered by parents' copayments.(See Table 2.). About half of the spending would provide after-school and summer care for children in grades K-6.

This program would give benefits to an estimated 11 million children, roughly 10 times the number now estimated to be getting benefits under the federal block grants and associated state funds. Of the \$24 billion, an estimated \$5 billion would be needed to take care of children whose mothers were shifting from welfare to work.⁸ The remainder would be devoted to the children of families all of whose adult members were already participants in the labor force.

If there is a substantial expansion in subsidies for child care, some parents who currently do not hold jobs will decide to enter the paid labor force. Furthermore, some children whose parents are already working but who are now in unpaid care will be switched to paid-for care. The potential costs of these increases in the demand for paid-for care need to be considered. We have calculated the cost of the program on the assumption that one-quarter of the children cared for on an unpaid basis would move into paid-for care. As shown in the right-hand side of Table 2, we estimate the cost of the program in that case to be \$29 billion per year. If half of the non-welfare children not now in paid care moved into paid care, the program of Iowa-level benefits would cost \$34 billion.⁹

The calculations described so far have not taken account of the current federal tax credit for dependent care. Much of the money spent under the Iowa-level subsidy program would go to families not earning enough to owe federal income tax, and thus not able to take advantage of the tax credit. In the case of some families, the subsidies envisioned by an Iowa-level program would be larger than the amounts they would receive under the federal tax credit and would presumably replace the latter.

It would be sensible to integrate the benefit from the tax credit with the benefit from the Iowa-type program financed by the federal child care grants to the states and to

guarantee that families would receive no less than they are now entitled to as a federal tax credit. To do this would add about \$2.5 billion a year to the cost of the program. However, none of this would be new spending.

The program that actually operates in Iowa has three major weaknesses: it covers only a fraction of the eligible population, help is cut off abruptly as a family's income rises, at too low an income to provide "affordable" care to many families, and the reimbursement rate to providers is below that required for care of acceptable quality. The national program we present based on the Iowa plan cures only the first of these weaknesses – it provides enough funds so that all eligibles (in this case, in the whole country) could participate in the program.

2. A "Sufficient Program" of National Child Care Subsidies

In this section, we describe and present estimates of the cost of a national program that would overcome the major faults of the program based on Iowa rules described in the previous section. We will call it the "Sufficient Program". It is far from the most generous program that might be proposed, since it not "universal" and free to all parents. However, it would provide sufficiency in three important respects. Like the plan based on Iowa rules, it would provide services to all families who meet its income-eligibility test. Unlike the Iowa rules, it would provide reimbursement to child care providers that would give them sufficient resources to supply good quality care. And finally, it would avoid the abrupt cutoff of aid to families in the mid-ranges of income that the Iowa rules mandate (following current federal guidelines), and so provide enough subsidies so that all families could choose to send their children to quality care without having to gut their budgets. That is, they would not have to live at a standard close to that provided by the official poverty line income.

In trying to outline the structure of our "sufficient" program and estimate its cost, what reimbursement rates should be selected? The most obvious and inviting possibility would be to set rates that would allow parents to choose a provider who offered "good" care (quality score=5). If we did that, however, we would be choosing to pay for a standard of quality that only a distinct minority of the nation's child care providers currently meet. Only 24 percent of the care provided to preschoolers by centers observed by the CQO study came up to that standard. Centers providing care of that quality for infants and toddlers were even rarer: only 8 percent of the care they received in centers observed was rated "good" or better.¹⁰ The care in family day care homes and that given by friends and relatives is likely to be poorer still on average. We have put money into the program to allow extra payments (\$585 annually) to providers whose quality reaches the "good" level.

In setting copayment schedules, we again set zero copayment for families below the poverty line, and for those above we set a copayment equal to thirty percent of any

income over the poverty line. The subsidies and copayments for a family consisting of a mother, an infant and a pre-school child at various income levels are shown in Table 3, which is set up analogously to Table 1, which displayed these magnitudes for Iowa rules. The "sufficient plan" does not cut off subsidies abruptly, as the Iowa plan does. There is no sudden rise in out-of-pocket expenditure for care as families pass a particular point in the income scale. Subsidies drop off gradually and go to zero at an income of \$70,200. It is only beyond that income that the percentage of income above the poverty line the family spends for child care drops below 30 percent.

Finally, Table 4 shows estimated annual costs for the "sufficient" program. To serve children currently needing care, plus those children of mothers expected to transit from welfare to work would cost \$59 billion. This program would give benefits to roughly twice the number of children getting benefits under the plan based on Iowa rules, and cost almost two and a half times as much. If a quarter of the children not currently in paid care had to be taken care of in addition, the cost would rise to \$66 billion per year. The cost of the quality bonus turns out to be less than 2 percent of the cost of this program.

Where Would the Money Come From?

The national plans outlined above would not need to be financed entirely by new money. We are already spending \$2.8 billion of federal funds and the \$2.0 of state funds for child care vouchers and contracted care spaces. The amount of new money required for either type of national program would depend to some degree on the future direction of the Head Start and kindergarten programs. If all Head Start providers were enabled to become full-day providers as part of the program, then the \$4 billion now being expended on Head Start could be used for the program, and less new money would be needed. If, on the other hand, Head Start continued to provide mainly part-day services and to concentrate on the children of non-jobholding parents, then its current appropriation could not help to defray the costs of the child care subsidy program.

Cities and states have for some time financed with their own funds an expansion of the number of children accommodated without charge in full-day kindergartens, and some are starting to provide kindergarten services to younger children. To the extent that this occurs it would reduce the need for additional federal funds. However, we may conjecture that a new large scale federal child care program would reduce the ardor of states and localities for expanding kindergartens with their own tax money.

As the foregoing discussion should have made clear, for any plausible definition of "affordable care" we might adopt, the expenditure that would be necessary to achieve it throughout the United States turns out to be far too large to be raised from non-

governmental sources. Business and charitable groups currently contribute about 1 percent of the costs of child care.¹¹ Even if they tripled or quadrupled their contributions, they would not make even a small dent in the need for funds.

While states and localities could in principle fund child care as they currently fund public education, it is unlikely that they will do so. (It has been remarked that if the United States had failed to establish universal free public education until the present time, it would be difficult--perhaps impossible--to establish it now.) The competition that forces states to keep taxes in line with those of other states makes it difficult even for those favorably inclined to undertake big new initiatives.

The federal government is surely the only promising source of funds. While the current political situation makes a big federal program unlikely in the near future, a change in strategy on the part of activists, and efforts on their part to collaborate in lobbying with the for-profit providers, and the business community, who would benefit from government-supported child care, might be able to change the odds. The energy and resources of activists for child care is limited; concentrating that energy on the federal level might have a better pay-off than attempting to run 50 state-level campaigns.

Table 1. Subsidies payable under Iowa child care rules for a family consisting of a mother, an infant, and a preschool child, 1998. All dollar amounts are at annual rates. Source: computed by the authors on the basis of state documents.

maximum income for receiving state subsidy at right	state subsidy from block grant	federal and state child care tax credits ¹	family's payment for child care	cost of care to family as a pct. of income above poverty line
\$12,672	\$10,920		\$ 0	-
13,344	10,660		260	37
14,088	10,400		520	36
14,880	10,140		780	35
15,708	9,880		1,040	34
16,596	9,620		1,300	33
17,520	9,360		1,560	32
18,504	9,100		1,820	31
19,536	8,840		2,080	30
20,640	8,580		2,340	29
21,792	8,320		2,600	28
23,016	8,060		2,860	28
24,300	7,800		3,120	27
24,301		1,392	9,528	82
30,000		1,680	9,240	53
40,000		1,536	9,384	34

¹ A small amount of state income tax credits may be available also on parents' copayments under the state subsidy system, which are given in the column to the right, for families with income of \$24,300 and below .

Table 2. Estimates of Cost and Coverage of National Plan for Subsidizing Child Care Based on 1998 Iowa Rules. (Annual public cost in billions of dollars; number of children served in millions)

No adult at home -- but does not include those getting free care.

age at last birthday	program serving children currently needing care		program enlarged by quarter of children not currently in care	
	cost	children served	cost	children served
TOTAL	\$23.8	10.7	\$29.0	12.8
0-1	6.9	1.8	8.4	2.1
2-4	9.7	2.6	11.9	3.1
5	1.8	0.8	2.2	1.0
6-12	9.8	5.5	11.7	6.6
parent co-payments	(4.4)		(5.1)	

Currently spending \$5 B for subsidies

Table 3. Subsidies payable under the “sufficient” plan for a family consisting of a mother, an infant, and a preschool child, 1998. All dollar amounts are at annual rates. Source: computed by the authors.

income at which subsidy at right is received	subsidy	copayment	cost of care to family as a pct. of income above poverty level
\$12,641	\$17,269	\$ 0	–
12,672	17,260	9	30
13,344	17,058	211	30
14,088	16,835	434	30
14,880	16,597	672	30
15,708	16,349	920	30
16,596	16,083	1,187	30
17,520	15,805	1,464	30
18,504	15,510	1,759	30
19,536	15,201	2,069	30
20,640	14,869	2,400	30
21,792	14,524	2,745	30
23,016	14,157	3,113	30
24,300	13,771	3,498	30
24,301	13,771	3,498	30
30,000	12,061	5,208	30
40,000	9,061	8,208	30
50,000	6,061	11,208	30
60,000	3,061	14,208	30
70,000	61	17,208	30
80,000	0	17,269 ¹	26
90,000	0	17,269	22
100,000	0	17,269	20
110,000	0	17,269	18
120,000	0	17,269	16

¹. At and above this income, no subsidy is paid, so parents’ payment is for the the care itself.

Table 4. Estimates of Cost and Coverage of "Preferred" National Plan for Subsidizing Child Care (Annual public cost in billions of dollars; number of children served in millions)

age at last birthday	program serving children currently needing care		program enlarged by quarter of children not currently in care	
	cost	children served	cost	children served
TOTAL	\$58.9	20.0	\$65.9	22.3
0-1	26.4	3.7	29.6	4.1
2-4	25.3	5.3	28.5	5.9
5	3.6	1.5	4.1	1.7
6-12	24.4	9.5	27.3	10.6
parent co-payments	(20.7)		(23.5)	

NOTES

1. Of this total the \$12 billion federal share \$4 billion is devoted to Head Start, which has not been organized to help working parents with their child care needs, and \$3 billion to the dependent care tax credit, which does not help low-income parents with incomes.
2. The Packard Foundation group called for \$100 billion in new federal money per year. See Gombey, et.al., p 16.
3. See Suzanne Helburn, et al. *Cost, Quality, and Outcomes in Child Care Centers*. (University of Colorado at Denver, 1995).
4. Such a family was defined as one in which the mother was not in the labor force and the family had received welfare payments in the previous year. In order to calculate the size of the copayment this family would owe, a wage was calculated for the mother. It was based on wage data for that part of the sample which consisted of mothers who had been on welfare, but were currently employed, using number of children, education and age as explanatory variables. This estimation process probably gives a result which is biased upward, as the mothers in the labor force are likely to have better earning power than the mothers who have refrained.
5. Many families which contain adults who are not in the labor force do send their children at least part time to out-of-home caregivers, particularly preschools. Current rules prevent a married couple from receiving tax credits on account of such expenses if both are not in the labor force. Subsidizing the child care expenditures of such families would add to the cost of the program, but might well result in an improvement in cognitive functioning for many children..
6. The source is documentation for P70-62, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Who's Minding Our Preschoolers? Fall 1994, Table 1, issued November 1997, downloaded from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/child/childcare98.html>.
7. About half of five-year-olds attend full-time kindergarten, and their needs for care were treated similarly to those in the elementary grades. Those attending kindergarten part time were assumed to need other care half time for 10 months, equivalent on average to 7/12 time throughout the year.
8. Mothers who were out of the labor force in March 1997, and whose family got welfare payments in the *previous* year were deemed to require paid-for child care. No information is available in the CPS about March 1997 welfare reciprocity.
9. the wage that a family member (assumed to be the mother) entering the work force would earn was estimated based on the earnings of mothers who had not received welfare payments.
10. CQO Public Report, pp. 26-27.
11. Mitchell, Stoney and Dichter, *Financing Child Care in the United States*, p.3.



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

November 19

The First Lady

Here is a summary
of our child care research.
While the amount of money
is not listed it is probably
50 times more than all the
private foundations put together.

Donna

cc: Jen
Nicole
Heera

INVENTORY OF CHILD CARE RESEARCH

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

October 26, 1998

DRAFT

INVENTORY OF CHILD CARE RESEARCH
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

DRAFT

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Study of Infant Child Care Under Welfare Reform	The purpose of this project is to learn about the challenges for parents and the states in meeting the child care needs of infants in welfare families. The study will consider the factors affecting parents moving from welfare to work as well as those attending school/training programs; will examine how states are meeting these challenges with the assistance of businesses, schools, and community organizations; and will explore the supply of and demand for such care, and the infant care arrangements parents choose.	9/30/98 to 11/24/99	ACF	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR)	Christine Ross MPR 600 Maryland Ave., SW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20024-2512 (202) 484-4235 fax:(202) 863-1763 cross@mathematica-mpr.com	Richard Jakopic ACF/OPRE 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, 7 th floor, Washington, DC 20447 202/205-5930 fax 202/205-3598 rjakopic@acf.dhhs.gov
Improving States' Capability to Evaluate Child Care Policy Options in Welfare-to-Work Programs	This project will contribute to the development of an expanded simulation model -- MATH STEWARD -- that will enable states as they design Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child care subsidy programs to promote employment among welfare recipients.	7/1/97 to 7/31/98	ACF	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR)	Christine Ross MPR 600 Maryland Ave., SW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20024-2512 (202) 484-4235 fax:(202) 863-1763 cross@mathematica-mpr.com	Richard Jakopic ACF/OPRE 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, 7 th floor, Washington, DC 20447 202/205-5930 fax 202/205-3598 rjakopic@acf.dhhs.gov
National Study of Child Care for Low Income Families	This project will study the emerging state and local policies and practices on child care, parental child care choices, and the relationship between low-income employment and child care in 25 communities within 17 states. There will be a sub-study to examine the family child care market in 5 neighborhoods within the same communities.	9/30/97 to 9/29/02	ACF	Abt Associates / Columbia University	Fred Glantz Abt Associates, Inc. 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge MA 02138-1168 USA (617) 349-2810 fax: (617) 349-2665	Richard Jakopic ACF/OPRE 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, 7 th floor, Washington, DC 20447 202/205-5930 fax 202/205-3598 rjakopic@acf.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Child Care Needs and Outcomes for Low-Income Families Under Welfare Reform <i>A project of the Child Care Bureau's Policy Research Consortium</i>	This project takes a dual focus on family self sufficiency and quality of care received by low income families. A multi-variate approach examines a wide range of variables from existing federal, state and local data bases to estimate the effect of subsidies and other policies on child care quality, availability, price, and parent employment.	9/30/97 to 9/30/01	ACF	Wellesley College	Ann Dryden Witte Professor of Economics Wellesley College 106 Central Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181 (305) 365-0834 fax (305) 365-0896 wittea@fiu.edu	Patricia L. Divine ACF/ACYF/CCB 330 C Street SW, Room 2319 Washington, DC 20447 (202) 690-6705 fax (202)690-5600 pdivine@acf.dhhs.gov
How is Welfare Reform Influencing Child Care Supply and Parental Choices? <i>A project of the Child Care Bureau's Policy Research Consortium</i>	This project involves two substudies to track the unfolding of welfare reform and related changes in child care markets as well as how these changes may be affecting children's early development. First, how is the availability and quality of preschool and child care facilities changing? Second, how are welfare families in Connecticut selecting different types of care, how are these decisions related to children's early learning and development, and how do the contextual dynamics of community child care supply affect family decisions?	9/30/97 to 9/30/01	ACF	California Child Care Resource and Referral Network	Patricia Siegel Executive Director California Child Care Resource and Referral Network 111 New Montgomery Street, 7th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105 (415) 882-0234 fax: (415) 882-6233 patti@rnnetwork.org	Patricia L. Divine ACF/ACYF/CCB 330 C Street SW, Room 2319 Washington, DC 20447 (202) 690-6705 fax (202)690-5600 pdivine@acf.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Neighborhoods, Parent Involvement and Child Outcomes for Low-Income Families: A Comparison of Head Start with Other Programs <i>A project of the Child Care Bureau's Policy Research Consortium</i>	This partnership brings together three distinctive data bases on low-income families and children. These data bases are being merged to study factors related to the supply of different types of early child care services including Head Start, preschool, and different forms of center or family-based care and their use by low-income families. A particular interest in comparing these three data bases is to determine how parental involvement in the child's out-of-home care or early education program relates to sustainability of positive developmental outcomes as children enter kindergarten and elementary school.	9/30/97 to 9/30/01	ACF	Harvard School of Public Health	Felton (Tony) Earls Harvard University School of Public Health Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02115 (617) 432-1227 fax (617) 432-3448 tearls@sph.harvard.edu	Patricia L. Divine ACF/ACYF/CCB 330 C Street SW, Room 2319 Washington, DC 20447 (202) 690-6705 fax (202)690-5600 pddivine@acf.dhhs.gov
Oregon Child Care Policy Research Project <i>A project of the Child Care Bureau's Policy Research Consortium</i>	Through Residency Roundtables, research and policy experts are being brought together to address critical issues such as quality from a parent perspective, data standardization, and benchmarking. This project focuses on three areas: consumer behavior, community and state needs assessment, and welfare reform.	9/30/97 to 9/29/01	ACF	Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon	Bobbie Weber, Chair, Family Resources Linn Benton Community College 6500 Pacific Boulevard, Albany, Oregon 97321 (541) 917-4903 fax: (541) 917-4445 weberb@gw.lbcc.or.us	Patricia L. Divine ACF/ACYF/CCB 330 C Street SW, Room 2319 Washington, DC 20447 (202) 690-6705 fax (202)690-5600 pddivine@acf.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
NCCP Child Care Research Partnership <i>A project of the Child Care Bureau's Policy Research Consortium</i>	NCCP is the leader of a child care research partnership consisting of 11 partners, including the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), Rutgers University, state-level partners in Illinois, Maryland and New Jersey, and city-level partners from New York City. The partnership is examining issues in four general areas: (1) the nature of low-income child care markets; (2) the effects of welfare and child care policies on child care and children's development; (3) the dynamics and qualities of license-exempt child care; and (4) the child care issues for special populations.	9/30/97 to 9/29/01	ACF	The National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health (NCCP)	J. Lawrence Aber NCCP, Columbia University School of Public Health 154 Haven Avenue, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10032 (212) 304-7101 fax: (212) 544-4200 jla12@columbia.edu	Patricia L. Divine ACF/ACYF/CCB 330 C Street SW, Room 2319 Washington, DC 20447 (202) 690-6705 fax (202)690-5600 pdivine@acf.dhhs.gov
A Study of Child Care Subsidy Duration	This project is a six-state study of relationships between state subsidy policies, the duration of individual subsidy use, patterns of child care and duration of individual child care arrangements. Participating states include Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Oregon. Child care policies related to the Child Care and Development Fund, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and state-funded subsidy programs will be examined.	9/30/98 to 1/31/2000	ACF	Oregon State University	Marcia K. Meyers Columbia University School of Social Work 622 W. 113th Street New York, NY 10025 (212) 854-3358	Patricia L. Divine ACF/ACYF/CCB 330 C Street SW, Room 2319 Washington, DC 20447 (202) 690-6705 fax (202)690-5600 pdivine@acf.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Role of Child Care in Low-Income Families' Labor Market Participation	This project will develop optional research designs to identify and address child care services needed by parents to succeed at work, keeping in mind the role quality care plays in childrens' lives. The major work under this contract shall consist of a series of stand-alone working papers that critically evaluate relevant research related to child care and labor force attachment, and that develop the rationale for the factors included in the research designs.	9/15/97 to 12/18/98	ACF	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) / Urban Institute	Christine Ross MPR 600 Maryland Ave., SW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20024-2512 (202) 484-4235 fax: (202) 863-1763 cross@mathematica-mpr.com	Richard Jakopic ACF/OPRE 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, 7 th floor, Washington, DC 20447 202/205-5930 fax 202/205-3598 rjakopic@acf.dhhs.gov
Child Care Performance Measurement	This project will convene two workshops to provide a critical assessment of current and emerging efforts to establish performance measures for early childhood programs, to learn lessons from performance measurement initiatives in other policy areas such as public health, and, based on this background information, to discuss criteria for developing performance measures in child care, the range of context areas that such measures might encompass, and the current status of data sources necessary to the development of child care performance measures.		ACF	National Research Council / National Academy of Sciences Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education Division on Social and Economic Studies	Michelle Kipke NAS/NRC	Helen Howerton ACF/OPRE 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, room 7 West, Washington, DC 20447 (202) 205-3604 fax (202) 205-3598 hhowerton@acf.dhhs.gov
Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)	FACES is a national representative longitudinal study of 3200 children and families in 40 Head Start programs, including parent and staff interviews, direct child assessments, observations of classroom quality. Includes child care history and current use. Data collection at program entry, exit, and kindergarten follow up.	Contracts awarded July 1996; data collection through Spring 2000.	ACYF	Team of researchers, including: Nicholas Zill and Gary Resnick, Westat, Inc.; David Connell, Abt Associates; Ruth Hubbell McKey, Ellsworth Associates; Robert O'Brien, The CDM Group	Team of researchers.	Louisa B. Tarullo ACYF/OC Switzer Building, Rm. 2130 330 C Street SW Washington, DC 20201 (202) 205-8324 fax: (202) 205-9721 lbtarullo@acf.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
National Longitudinal Study of Children and Families in the Child Welfare System	This study will assess service needs and service provision for families who come into contact with the child welfare system, including the need for and access to child care, and the association between service provision and child and family outcomes.	September 1997 through September 2003.	ACYF	Research Triangle Institute; subcontracts with the University of California at Berkeley, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Caliber Associates	Michael Weeks, Director Survey Research Division, Research Triangle Institute P.O. Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 (919) 541-6026 fax: (919) 541-1261 mfw@rti.org	Mary Bruce Webb ACF / ACYF Switzer Building Room 2132 330 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20047 (202) 205-8628 fax: (202) 205-9552 mbwebb@acf.dhhs.gov
Early Head Start (EHS) Research and Evaluation Project	Cross-site study of 17 EHS programs in diverse communities throughout the country. It is a longitudinal study of 3000 infants and toddlers and their families randomly selected into EHS program and comparison groups and includes parent and staff interviews, direct child assessments, observations of parent child relationships and child care settings. Data collection in conducted when children are 14, 24, and 36 months of age and 6, 15, and 26 months after random assignment. The study includes program implementation and impacts, and embedded studies of child care, welfare reform, fathers, and others.	Contract awarded September 1995; data collection through Spring, 20001.	ACYF	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; subcontracts with Columbia University Center for Youth Children and Families, and 15 local research universities	John Love MPR PO Box 2393 Princeton, NJ (609) 275-2245 fax: (609) 799-0005 jlove@mathematica-mpr.com	Louisa B. Tarullo ACYF/OC Switzer Building, Rm. 2130 330 C Street SW Washington, DC 20201 (202) 205-8324 fax: (202) 205-9721 lbtarullo@acf.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
NICHD Study of Early Child Care: Head Start Substudy	The Head Start Substudy focuses on special analyses of child, family, and child care variables for low income children, both those eligible for Head Start and those slightly above poverty, including a study of child care use simultaneous to Head Start.	Interagency agreement signed September 1995; ongoing analyses in SECC Phase II	ACYF / NICHD	NICHD Early Childhood Network with Research Triangle Institute	NICHD Early Childhood Network with Research Triangle Institute	Louisa B. Tarullo ACYF/OC Switzer Building, Rm. 2130 330 C Street SW Washington, DC 20201 (202) 205-8324 fax: (202) 205-9721 lbtarullo@acf.dhhs.gov Sarah Friedman NICHD 6100 Executive Blvd. 4BOSC Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 496-6591 fax (301) 402-2085 sf39e@nih.gov
Child Health and Development Programs in the Context of Welfare Reform	This project will identify and present profiles of promising federal, state, and community-based programs, including child care programs, believed to be enhancing the health and development of children in the context of welfare reform.	7/1/97 to 1/31/99	ASPE	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) / National Center for Children and Policy (NCCP)	Ellen Kisker MPR P.O. Box 2393, Princeton, NJ 08543-2393 (609) 799-3535 fax (609) 799-0005 ekisker@mathematica-mpr.com	Jennifer A. Gootman ASPE/HSP Humphrey Building, Room 450G, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20201 (202) 401-6127 fax (202) 690-5514 jgootman@osaspe.dhhs.gov
An Economic Rationale for Government Intervention in the Child Care Market	The purpose of this project is to describe the child care market for low-income families, examine the failures of that market, and to discuss the effectiveness of different types of government interventions in the child care market. It will also examine the long-term economic costs to society of failing to provide child care that meets basic health and safety of children.	9/30/98 to 12/31/98	ASPE	The Urban Institute	Stefanie Schmidt The Urban Institute 2100 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037 (202) 261-5795 fax (202) 728-0231 sschmidt@ui.urban.org	Jennifer A. Gootman ASPE/HSP Humphrey Building, Room 450G, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20201 (202) 401-6127 fax (202) 690-5514 jgootman@osaspe.dhhs.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Grants to States – Welfare Leavers	As part of larger studies monitoring outcomes for families that leave the TANF program, several states and counties will use administrative records or survey questions to study child care among TANF leavers.	September 1998; project periods vary from 12-24 months.	ASPE	Thirteen TANF agencies in the following states or communities: Arizona; Cuyahoga County, OH; District of Columbia; Florida; Georgia; Illinois; Los Angeles County, CA; Massachusetts; Missouri; New York; San Mateo County, CA; Wisconsin; Washington	Various – contact HHS Contact for information on specific grantee	Chris Snow ASPE / HSP Humphrey Building, Room 404E, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20201 (202) 690-6888 fax: (202) 690-6562 csnow@osaspe.dhhs.gov
Child Care Task Under The Trim Micro-analytic Modeling Contract	The Urban Institute will add a new child care “module” to the TRIM3 micro-simulation model, in order to simulate child use and expenditures, as well as eligibility for and utilization of subsidies.	Start date October 1998; end date October 1999.	ASPE	The Urban Institute	Linda Gianerelli Urban Institute 2100 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20037 (202) 261-5553 fax: (202) 833-4388 lgiannar@ui.urban.org	Julie Isaacs ASPE Humphrey Building, Rm 404-E, 200 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20201 (202) 690-7882 fax: (202) 690-6562 jisaacs@osaspe.dhhs.gov
Demand for and Supply of Quality in Care	The goals of this project are to study the effects of family and child characteristics and the attributes of child care arrangements on the well-being of children and those that affect convenience, reliability, and other features not directly associated with child well-being. These estimates will provide the information needed to assess the demand for quality in child care, and how the demand for quality in child care would be affected by changes in government child care policies.	1993 to present	NICHD	David M. Blau	David M. Blau University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Dept. of Economics 206 Gardner Hall, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3305 (919) 966-3962 fax: (919) 966-4986 david_blau@unc.edu	Jeff Evans NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1176 fax: (303) 496-0962 cbl12e@nih.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
The NICHD Study of Early Child Care	The goal of Phase II of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care is to extend a collaborative (10-site) prospective longitudinal study of a cohort of 1247 children and their families, first enrolled at one month of age and studied intensively through age 3 (Phase I). The investigators propose to follow these subjects through first grade in order to investigate: (a) the effects of early alternate care (defined in terms of quality, quantity, type, onset age, and stability) on children's development during the preschool years and the transition to school; (b) the ways in which the effects of early alternate care are moderated by child characteristics and by experiences in the family and in school; and (c) the mediating processes linking early alternate care experiences with later outcomes.	1991 to present	NICHD	Early Child Care Network	Early Child Care Network; various investigators. Contact the Public Information and Communication Branch at NICHD [Building 31, 2A32, 31 Center Drive, MSC 2425, Bethesda, MD 20892-2425] for information on individuals involved..	Sarah Friedman Sarah Friedman NICHD 6100 Executive Blvd. 4BOSC Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 496-6591 fax (301) 402-2085 sf39e@nih.gov
Family and Child Well-being Research Network	The aim of this proposal is to elucidate the familial and extra-familial factors that influence the well-being of children (and their parents) during two developmental periods -- the early childhood years and the early elementary school years. Of particular interest is understanding how familial and extra-familial factors interact with poverty and household structure (single parent, father present, other adult present), and maternal employment to produce child and parent outcomes.	1993 to 1998	NICHD		Jeanne Brooks-Gunn Teachers College Columbia University 525 W. 120 th St. New York, NY 10027	Jeff Evans NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1176 fax: (303)496-0962 cb112e@nih.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Welfare Reform and the Well-being of Children	This project will study the effects of welfare reform on children in three important Northeastern and Midwestern cities, Baltimore, Boston, and Chicago, over a five-year period. The conceptual framework is the economic household production model, supplemented with perspectives on child development drawn from the developmental psychology literature and informed by insights from ethnographic research.	1997 to 1998	NICHD		Andrew J. Cherlin John Hopkins University 105 Ames Hall 3400 N. Charles St. Baltimore, MD 21218-2686	Chris Bachrach NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1174 fax: (303)496-0962 cb112e@nih.gov
Demographic Aspects of Child Care and Long Term Effects	This project will examine the measurement, parental choices, and developmental consequences of child care arrangements. The research uses a variety of large, extant, national data sources to assess the comparability of alternative child care measurement strategies, and to explore the characteristics of families and children who use different types of child care arrangements.	1996 to 1999	NICHD		Kathleen M. Harris University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 440 W. Franklin St. CB 1350 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-1350	Jeff Evans NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1176 fax: (303)496-0962 cb112e@nih.gov
Family Structure, Work Conditions, and Sick Child Care	The goal of this project is to use a social ecological theoretical framework to examine how family structure and parental work affect the care of sick children.	1998 to present	NICHD		Sally J. Heymann Harvard University 1550 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02139	Chris Bachrach NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1174 fax: (303)496-0962 cb112e@nih.gov

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Impacts of Child Care Regulations	This goal of this project is to determine whether child care regulations provide the improvement in child outcomes that is the foundation of the justification for regulations. First, it will estimate preschool care mode choice simultaneously with care price, hours of care and mother's labor force participation. Second, it will estimate child outcome production functions controlling for the selectivity of families choosing particular care modes using results from the first stage with data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Child Data (NLSY-C).	1998 to present	NICHD		M. R. Kilburn RAND Corporation	Jeff Evans NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1176 fax: (303)496-0962 cb112e@nih.gov
Effects of Home and Out-of-home Care in Child Development	This project involves two longitudinal studies, one being conducted in Sweden and the other in Berlin. The Sweden study was designed to elucidate the effects of center day care, family day care, and home care on the development of children at an average of 16 months of age. In the Berlin study, researchers are assessing the psychophysiological and behavioral tendencies of infants at home in order to assess the effects of prior individual differences in emotional reactivity and infant-mother attachment on the adaptation to out-of-home center care.	1982 to present	NICHD		M E. Lamb Chief NICHD 9190 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20814 (301) 496-0420	M.E. Lamb

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
Social Ecology of After-school Care	This study investigates: (1) the after-school arrangements of White, African-American, and Puerto-Rican 6-12 year old boys and girls, who vary in socioeconomic status (SES); and (2) the impact of these arrangements on the development of these children, through a prospective longitudinal study of a stratified random sample of 240 children.	1993 to 1998	NICHD		Nancy L. Marshall Wellesley College Center for Research on Women 106 Central St. Wellesley, MA 02181-8259	Reid Lyon NIH / NICHD 6100 Executive Blvd., Room Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 496-5097 rl60a@nih.gov
Child Support, Child Care and Child Well-being	The first part of this study explores the relationships between child support awards, the non-custodial parent's (NCP) willingness to pay child support, state enforcement efforts, and compliance with the awards. The second part investigates the effect of the Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC) in the U.S. income tax system on the labor supply decisions of mothers with young children and on the choice of child care.	1993 to 1998	NICHD		H E. Peters Cornell University Consumer Economics and Housing 133 MUR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853	Jeff Evans NIH/NICHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B13, Bethesda, MD 20892 (301) 496-1176 fax: (303)496-0962 cb112e@nih.gov
Predictors and Adjustment Outcomes of After-school Care	This study will investigate the developmental histories and behavioral consequences of after school care of 570, 9 to 11 year old European-American and African- American children since kindergarten. The data analysis will focus on the concurrent and cumulative effects of after school care on children's behavioral and psychological adjustment and the degree to which these effects are moderated by geographic location, community risk, parent child relationships, child characteristics, and family demographic characteristics.	1993 to present	NICHD		Gregory S. Pettit Auburn University Department of Family and Child Development 203 Spidle Hall Auburn, AL 36849-5604	Reid Lyon NIH / NICHD 6100 Executive Blvd., Room Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 496-5097

Name of Study	Summary	Period of Funding	Funder	Researcher / Evaluator	Principal Investigator	HHS Contact
After-school Care and Child Development	This is a longitudinal five year study of 150 children from first through the fifth grades enrolled in formal after-school programs. Child outcomes to be studied in relation to these after-school experiences include academic and conduct grades, achievement test scores, work habits, self esteem, depression, behavior problems, peer relationships, and loneliness.	1993 to 1998	NICHD		Deborah L. Vandell Wisconsin University Educational Research 1025 W. Johnson St. Madison, WI 53706	Reid Lyon NIH / NICHD 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 4 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 496-5097 rl60a@nih.gov
Children's After-school Arrangements	This project will examine the after school arrangements parents choose for their school age children, the effects of different care arrangements on children's development, and the aspects of after school care which are important for children's development.	1993 to 1998	NICHD		Edward F. Zigler Yale University Department of Psychology 11A Yale Station New Haven, CT 06520	Reid Lyon NIH / NICHD 6100 Executive Blvd., Room 4 Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 496-5097 rl60a@nih.gov
Head Start, Child Care and TANF Needs Assessments	This inspection will describe the needs assessments, referral processes, and subsequent provision of support services in Head Start, TANF and CCDF child care programs in six local communities.	Start date: September, 1998; report expected Spring 1999.	OIG	Office of Inspector General, Office of Evaluation and Inspections, Region V	Emily Melnick, / Joe Penkrot Office of Inspector General, Office of Evaluation and Inspections 105 W. Adams, 23 rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60640 Emily Melnick (312) 353-9868 Joe Penkrot (312) 353-0597 fax: (312) 353-1421 emelnick@os.dhhs.gov jpenkrot@os.dhhs.gov	Emily Melnick, / Joe Penkrot Office of Inspector General
OIG Draft Report: Tribal Child Care	The CCDF Tribal Mandatory Fund doubles tribal child care funds to \$60 million a year. This study reviewed the administration of these funds, tribal use of the funds, dual state/tribal eligibility issues, coordination with states, and other challenges to tribes.	Final report expected to be completed 12/28/98	OIG	John Traczyk, Team Leader; Nora Leibowitz, Project Leader; Emily Melnick, Program Analyst; Ann O'Connor, Program Specialist; and Linda Hall, Program Specialist	Nora Leibowitz Office of the Inspector General Office of Evaluations and Inspections 105 W. Adams St., 23 rd floor Chicago, IL 60640 (312) 353-2597 (312) 353-1421 nleibowi@os.dhhs.gov	Nora Leibowitz Office of the Inspector General