

**Remarks by the First Lady
at the Redbook Magazine
"Mothers & Shakers of 1998" Awards Ceremony
June 2, 1998
The White House
Washington, DC**

We've come together today to salute eight extraordinary women who have made a very real difference in the lives of families in their own communities and across the nation. At our table during lunch, I learned a lot more about what some of these women have accomplished, and I am just delighted that the country will learn more about what they have achieved because if we could take all of their achievements and put them together we would have a much better system of child care nationwide. Somebody who believes that and has worked with me to that end is my friend, Tipper Gore, who is also with us, and I'd like to acknowledge Tipper and ask her to please stand.

Tipper and I have spent a lot of time in the last years talking about our own children and also talking about children throughout our country and indeed the world. So for us to be able to acknowledge the accomplishments of all of you gives us a great deal of satisfaction, whether it was establishing child care centers or setting up hotlines for parents or partnering with businesses or lobbying elected officials. You have been working in your own communities to promote child care and to move it to the forefront of the national agenda by giving working parents more choices and more opportunities to succeed at home and at work. It is important to pause once in a while to take measure of how far we've come and to honor those who've helped us get there. So I want to commend Redbook Magazine for creating these Mothers and Shakers Awards and for running the article on child care in its June issue, because I think that we still have some work to do in both raising public awareness and dispelling stereotypes about the difficult choices families face in finding the child care they need.

You've performed an important public service because you've helped to shine the spotlight on women who've worked diligently, and often in the shadows, to improve the lives of children and working families and help raise public awareness by providing parents with critical information about how to find safe affordable child care. Today, as we anticipate the extraordinary possibilities of the next century, it's a little hard to imagine what life was like for women living in America just a century ago.

Certainly our life span was much shorter and many of us would not be around at

the age that we are. Those of us who have had children would have lost many of the babies we birthed; we would have seen some succumb to infectious diseases for which there were no cures or antibiotics or vaccinations. Redbook was first published nearly a century ago in 1903. It has helped to chart the lives and the changes in the lives of American women back then.

Certainly our nation has undergone profound changes as more and more women have not only lived longer and survived childbirth--two major accomplishments of this century--but have themselves joined the workforce outside the home, transforming their lives and the life of this nation forever. We saw a great move into the workforce as a result of World War II, and we saw the government, when it needed women to be part of the war effort, step in to provide child care so that those women could get to work.

We've made a lot of progress, but, of course, we have a lot left to do. This country has a great economy right now; we are blessed with prosperity and much of that is because women are working. Women who are using their skills, their education, their talents in our workforce and creating not only better opportunities for themselves and their families but for the rest of us as well. We know that women make up almost half of the workforce and as a result we know that many children have to spend some or all of their day away from their parents in child care. We also know that many single women are raising their children themselves and are their sole support and have no choice but to work.

Over the years I, like many of you, have spent many, many hours talking to working mothers. First when I, myself, was a working mom--and sitting around kitchen tables, or in the bleachers at sporting events, or at playgrounds, or in my office--I found that the uppermost issue on most working mothers' minds was child care and the dilemma that we have all lived with that is raised by the conflict between family and work and the need for all of us to do a better job in balancing those competing demands. What we tried to do was to take that dialogue, that conversation, that every one of us has had on our own and take it out of the kitchens and out from around the water coolers and out from the supermarket aisles where I often had it, and put it into the national arena.

That's why the President and I hosted the first ever White House Conference on Child Care last year, as well as, the Conference on Early Childhood Development. We knew from the work the scientists were doing how critical the first three years are to a child's intellectual and emotional growth. We also knew how difficult it is for many parents to feel that they were doing right both by their jobs which put food on the table and by their children who are the most important people in their lives. Now, thanks to you, we have made child care a national priority and we have presented legislation to the Congress.

As you know, the President has proposed a historic investment in child care; over 20 billion dollars over the next five years that will make child care more affordable to America's working parents. It will also expand opportunities to promote early learning and child development; ensure greater safety and quality; and enhance efforts for background checks to help parents and schools establish after school programs in their communities. But one of the things that I have found is that often times when a President announces something as he did in the State of the Union and then follows it up with legislation, many Americans think the work is over. I was recently with Congresswoman Tauscher in her district in California and we had a panel discussion in a wonderful facility, a school that had an added-on building where they were running a very good after-school program and the Congresswoman and I were sitting with experts from the community, and people who had supported this program and the questions and the comments were all assuming that the President's plan was going to get through the Congress. We heard from the Superintendent, who said, "You know, we'll sure be able to use that money because we're still not reaching all of our students." We heard from a teacher who said, "You know, I'm so excited that the federal government is finally going to help us because we don't have the facilities we need in the poor areas of this county for after-school care." And you know, the Congresswoman and I were somewhat surprised because, of course, we know how difficult it is to get legislation like this through in the current Congress, and so we have to re-instill a sense of urgency in America's working families, and teachers and advocates and business leaders, who have applauded this commitment as being not only good for children and families but good for America. So you are helping us to get that word out by coming together to honor people who have been on the front lines doing the work that needs to be done.

But I have to ask you all of you who are here at this lunch to do what you can to make sure that this critical issue stays on America's agenda. That we don't heave a sigh of relief throughout the country because people somehow think that since the President proposed this legislation it's going to necessarily be passed and implemented. The President is committed to continuing to fight for his proposal to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. There are good child care bills on both sides of the aisle. Child care should not be a partisan issue --we are not talking about taking care of Democratic or Republican or Independent children --we are talking about taking care of American children, and we have to continue to push for significant legislation this year on behalf of our children.

We have a related issue that is connected to this one and that is the tobacco legislation that is currently in the Congress. We have an opportunity to reach agreement on historic legislation to save our children from the dangers of smoking. There are obviously difficult issues left unresolved but this is also a challenge to what kind of nation were going to be and how much care, concern, and protection we are going to extend our youngest citizens. Congress should act quickly to pass

tobacco legislation and I hope that every citizen will make their voices heard on this important issue as well. Because we have an opportunity when it comes to the President's education reform agenda; when it comes to his child care legislation; when it comes to his proposal to try and do what we can to end teenage smoking. We have an opportunity to continue to move forward on the agenda for America's children, but I am under no illusions that this will be an easy effort, there are many forces arrayed against these pieces of the President's agenda for reasons that I think have very little to do with the well being and future prospects of our children. So I hope that we will take the energy that is in this room and take the example that we will hear more about that is set by each of our honorees and redouble our own efforts on behalf of doing what we can to bring about significant child care legislation in this session of Congress.

DAVID SHIPLEY

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To: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP, Nicole R. Rabner/WHO/EOP, June Shih/WHO/EOP, Katharine Button/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: final draft

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILD CARE
THE WHITE HOUSE
OCTOBER 23, 1997**

Acknowledgments: From advance.

Welcome to the White House Conference on Child Care.

Welcome to those who are with us in the East Room today, to the hundreds of people gathered at the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Health and Human Services here in Washington, and to the thousands who are joining us via satellite from universities, hospitals, and schools around the country.

I'd like us all to take a moment to think about what's happening in America this morning -- about what happens just about every morning. Parents are putting their children in the care of others. And then most, even before they are out the door, are worrying. Some are worrying about the safety of the day care center -- maybe it's the cleanliness; maybe it's a new caregiver they just met for the first

time. Others are wondering if they would get better quality care for their child if they paid more; others, whether they'll be able to afford next month's payment -- and if not, how they'll care for their child and hold down that job they need.

How many parents have trouble focusing at work because they are wondering how their son or daughter is being treated?

And before we finish today, how many more will keep looking anxiously at the clock, wondering if their child is safe and well-occupied after school?

These are the questions America's parents ask themselves all the time. They are the questions we gather to address today.

Let me tell you a story. Earlier this month, I went to the University of Maryland to visit the school's Center for Young Children. I walked in the door and knew immediately that it was the kind of place just about any of us would be comfortable sending our kids. Frankly, I was tempted to sign up myself.

The walls were painted bright colors. There was lots of natural light. The workers were creative, energetic, and focused. Inside, there were toys and crafts materials. Outside, there was a playground. It was a wonderful place -- and one

that makes an effort to be affordable to parents of all incomes.

After I saw the center, I gave a speech. And after the speech, I took questions from the audience. There was one I can't get out of my mind -- from a divorced mother who works as a secretary at the university.

To send her four-year-old son to the center I had visited, she told me, would cost \$6,000 a year -- a quarter of her income. She just couldn't do it. Fortunately, she was able to send her son to another, less expensive day care center -- but only because of a scholarship and because she had moved back in with her parents. Otherwise, she told me, "I would probably have to quit my job and go on welfare. Who would watch my child during the day?" She and so many women like her are the reason we are here today. Her name is Paula Broglio [Bro-lee-oh]. And I am very pleased that she is with us this morning.

Though 13 million American children spend all or some of their day being cared for by someone other than their parent, a recent study found that child care at most centers in the United States is "poor to mediocre, with almost half of the infants and toddlers in rooms having less than minimal quality." The study also concluded that "fully 40 percent of the rooms serving infants in centers provided

care that was of such poor quality as to jeopardize children's health, safety, or development." A recent University of Colorado at Denver survey of child care in four states found only one in seven child-care centers to be of good quality.

And quality care, when it is available, is often financially out of reach for parents, particularly low-income parents. According to the 1995 Census, families earning under \$1,200 a month pay an average of 25 percent of their income for child care. Middle class families are hit hard as well: Families earning up to \$36,000 a year pay out 12 percent of their income for child care.

The urgency of improving child care in America is further heightened by new information about the emotional and intellectual development of children. As we learned at the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development in April, what happens to a child in the earliest years can make all the difference in how well he or she can learn for a lifetime. With 45 percent of children under age one in day care regularly, the issue of quality has tremendous bearing not just on individual lives, but on the future of our nation.

What's more, we now know from recent studies that good care -- whether given at home or at a day care center -- is good care. Done right, day care can be beneficial for children. It is worth our investment.

There is another reason that compels us to act: Demand. Demand for quality child care is growing, hastened on by our new economy. In the last 40 years, the American workforce has changed dramatically, and that's meant dramatic changes in family life. For example, half of all mothers with children under one year of age are working outside the home. And not only are more parents working, they are working longer hours. In many instances, child care is an absolute necessity.

And so, too, is the conversation we begin today.

I would like to make a few points about this conference.

First, this conference is a starting point. This is day one of a renewed effort to lift up child care in America.

Second, we must come together around the belief that any solutions to the problem of child care in America must involve the entire national community. The federal government has a role to play, but so do state governments, the private and non-profit sectors, school systems, organized labor, and individual citizens.

Third, we can begin with a sense of hope. There are models of excellent child care around the country -- from the military's day-care system to Smart Start in North Carolina. These initiatives can provide energy and inspiration for what we need to do now. I look forward to hearing more about them today.

Fourth, at the heart of this effort is choice. One-size-fits-all child care will never fit in America. Not only must we expand the child care options available to parents, we must also empower them with information. We have to do a better job of helping parents become good consumers when it comes to child care.

We must do something else: we must find ways to make it easier for parents who want to stay home with their children to be able to afford to do so.

Fifth, and finally, we must approach this conversation with a certain fearlessness. This conference will succeed only if we are willing to ask the hard questions about child care -- and then listen to the answers.

Here are just some of the questions I hope we will address:

How can we ensure the safety of children in child care? How can we keep good caregivers in and keep bad ones out? How do we do a better job of training caregivers? How can we encourage employers to provide child care benefits to their employees? How can we make successful after-school programs more widely available? How do we meet the needs of children with disabilities? How do we better engage all sectors of society in partnership? And how can we support parents who choose, often at significant cost, to stay at home with their children? How do we ensure that quality and affordability do not come at the expense of one another? How do we help model child care programs take root in other parts of the country? Finally, can we leave ideology at the door and honestly address the real needs of America's families?

I would like to close with one thought. We are privileged to live in a time of tremendous bounty. America is at peace. Our economy is booming. Social problems that have held us back for years are receding. Times such as these present a special opportunity. Free from crisis, we can do the work that might not be possible in stormier moments. Let us use this break in the weather to make a difference. Let us turn to and repair American child care. And let today be the beginning.

[Now introduce a video produced by New Screen Concepts in association with the Families and Work Institute: “Why Should We Care About Child Care.”]

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Draft #2

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
"TALKING IT OVER"/CREATORS SYNDICATE
COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION JANUARY 8, 1998**

Many of you are rushing to read this as you drink one more cup of coffee before setting off for work. If you're lucky, you won't worry about the safety of your children while you're gone. If you're lucky, you trust that they're in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment -- one that they're excited about going to each day -- if you're lucky.

Unfortunately, most working parents aren't so lucky. With the help of relatives, in-home providers, professional day care centers, and before- and after- school programs, most working parents manage to cobble together affordable care for their children. Some of this care is excellent. Tragically, though, recent national studies find that most is "poor to mediocre."

This week, my husband took a major step toward improving child care for America's working families. In the largest investment in child care in the nation's history, he proposed increasing child care tax credits for three million working families; doubling the number of children receiving child care subsidies; providing after-school care for 200,000 children; funding 50,000 scholarships to promote the training of child care providers; and providing home visits, parent education, and consumer education about child care.

I have worked on children's issues for over twenty-five years. I have seen firsthand the results of our failures to invest in our children at the most critical stages in their lives. I have learned why good child care is so critical to our children, our families

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and our future. Although studies show that children are not adversely affected by having parents work outside the home, there is evidence that poor care has damaging consequences, especially in the first three years of life. In addition, we must provide care, supervision, and stimulating activities for school-age children after the school day, for it is between 2 and 8 p.m. that adolescents are most likely to find themselves in trouble with the police.

In October, the President and I hosted a White House Conference on Child Care. That conference was meant to start a conversation – to renew our efforts to improve child care in America. This week, the President took action.

At the White House Conference, lots of questions were raised: How to ensure the safety of every child in child care? How to do a better job of training and paying caregivers? How to encourage more employers to provide child care benefits to employees? How to make successful after-school programs more widely available? How to learn from the good models that we have in every community? The President's proposal offers answers to these questions.

Each of you who has frantically scrambled to find alternative arrangements for a sick child, who has murmured instructions into the phone after school, who has sent a child off to school with "just a little cold" – each of you understands the urgency of the situation.

But, new scientific information makes the case even more compelling. We now know that what happens to a child in the earliest years of life affects how well that child will learn for a lifetime. With 45 percent of our children under age one in day care

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regularly, the issue of quality child care has tremendous bearing, not just on individual lives, but on the future of our nation.

Another reason we must act is demand. Demand for quality child care is growing with the dramatic changes in the American work force and way of life over the past 40 years.

During World War II, the federal government stepped in to provide federally funded day care for the mothers who went to work to support the war effort. But, today, it is the ordinary, not the extraordinary that drives our efforts. Today more than 80 percent of married mothers with a child under age six work outside the home and 13 million children, under the age of six, are in child care.

Sadly, though, as a society, we have never sufficiently valued the work of caring for our children – either the mothers who stay at home or the outsiders we rely on. On average, child care teachers earn just over \$12,000 per year, in-home providers about \$9,500 and unregulated providers just \$5,000. It's a sad state of affairs when we pay the garage attendant who parks our car more than the person who cares for our children.

The President's initiative this week is a major step toward turning the situation around. The President's proposal will help working families pay for child care, improve the safety and quality of care, promote early learning, and build the supply of good after-school programs.

The President's program can't stop you from worrying about your children. After all, that's what parents do. What it offers is a helping hand to parents, educators, community, state, and federal authorities working together to provide safe, nurturing and stimulating care for our children in the most important learning years of their lives.

(815 words)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 22, 1997

REMARKS OF THE FIRST LADY IN CHILD CARE BRIEFING

The Map Room

9:50 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Welcome, everybody. We're delighted that you could be here for this briefing. Some of you have been in these briefings before, and others of you, it is the first time and I'm delighted to see such a great turnout.

What we're going to try to do today is to cover a lot of

ground by talking about the child care issue and to a lesser extent, the conference, because the conference will speak to itself, but with this background, I think everybody will get a better idea of why this conference is so important.

For the President, I think those of you who have heard him speak, this is one more issue that is critical to putting together the framework that will support working families in the new economy. And I think he's even referred to it as one of the frontier issues that still needs to be addressed. And so, tomorrow, we will begin to try to raise the visibility of this issue by holding the conference in the White House, bringing together experts, some of whom you will hear today who have been working in this area for many, many years and have a very good idea about why we are in the situation we're in and some of the models and programs and actions that can move us to a better system of child care that could be accessible and affordable for the vast majority of working families and to focus on the safety and quality issues that we now know from a lot of very extensive research is not what it needs to be for too many of our children.

I have three people with me this morning who truly have been involved in this issue in one way or another for quite some time. Donna Shalala is an old friend of mine. As many of you know, she and I worked on a lot of these issues long before my husband ran for President, was elected and she became the Secretary of HHS, and she's been the point person for a lot of what the administration has tried to do. Early Head Start, expanding the availability of child care funds under welfare reform -- many, many issues.

In particular, she's focused HHS's attention for a number of years on the health and safety of child care programs. This is not a new agenda item for the Clinton administration; in fact, HHS launched the Healthy Child Care America campaign to promote partnerships between child care organizations and health organizations to try to improve the quality of health and safety in our child care programs.

In October of 1996, last year, the department awarded 2.5 million in grants to support and encourage the development of state-wide strategies and planning for healthy, safe child care programs.

After Donna speaks, we're going to hear from two people who are among the most knowledgeable about child care and children in

our country. Ellen Galinsky, who I'm sure many of you have interviewed or certainly seen speaking out is President and Cofounder of the Families and Work Institute, a nonprofit, national center for policy research on issues of the changing work force and changing family lives.

I've known Ellen for a number of years, and I have seen how the quality of her work has made such a difference in corporate boardrooms and in legislative forums. And she has personally directed a number of studies, ranging from the quality of child care in America to an examination of work, family and personal lives of U.S. workers.

Debra Phillips is the Director of the Board on Children, Youth and Families of the National Research Council's Commission on Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Institute of Medicine. That's a mouthful, but we can give you that in writing. (Laughter.) In shorthand, though, if you want to know what the research really means about what's gone on in child care, if you want to understand all these conflicting claims that fill our airwaves and our newspaper pages about whether or not child care is or is not good for children and under what conditions, Debra knows the answers based on the best information that we have available today.

The good thing about doing this conference now and focusing on this issue now is we finally do have some credible, valid information. We are not just operating from gut or anecdote. So it's critical that Debra, who has a PhD in developmental psychology from Yale, she was Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia before joining the National Research Council, that her voice and the voice of other unbiased experts be heard in this debate, because families deserve to get good information, not be subjected to either propaganda or scare tactics. And that's a very important part of what we are trying to achieve at this conference, is to break through all of the static on the radar screen so that parents can become better consumers of child care.

There is a lot of evidence that if parents knew more about what to look for and were better informed consumers and created more demand for affordable, quality, safe child care, we would get a better supply. Now, that would not answer all the issues, as we will be talking about this morning, it certainly would be a big step in the right direction.

So with those preliminary remarks, I'm going to turn it over to my friend, the Secretary of HHS, Donna Shalala.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Thank you, Mrs. Clinton. I was on an airplane going from Washington to California a few months ago, and after the movie there were more people lined up to talk to me than there were for the bathrooms. (Laughter.) And half the people that were lined up, half the people wanted to ask me about Medicare and HMOs, the other half wanted to ask me about child care, which gives you -- and the stewardess was so enchanted, she took a picture of this long line on the plane.

But it was young parents, struggling with child care questions, quality questions, and what it reminds us is this is a very central issue. Between 1970 and the mid-1990s, the number of working women with children under six more than doubled. And, of

course, we're increasing with welfare reform the number of women going into the work force, so that we're talking about large numbers of families with young children, sometimes older children, because I think one of the points that we want to make here is, we're not only talking about little kids, but we're talking about after-school care and we're talking about older children at the same time, because they need a different kind of care.

The President and the First Lady have made real progress since we started in 1993. And this conference, as Mrs. Clinton indicated, is important because it's about a dialogue with the American people about a central issue to support working families. We're going to talk about affordability, about quality and about availability and what that really means in English is, can I get it, can I afford it, and can I trust it, because those are the questions that parents are asking as they're searching for child care. That's the first point.

The second point I would make is that when we think about child care, don't think just about a center. For the vast majority of parents, it's not a formal center; it's family child care where they're leaving the child with someone they know or someone they don't know; someone in their neighborhood, perhaps. And the quality of family child care is as important to us as what happens in these centers. I can take you out to the HCFA building, Health Care Financing Building in Baltimore which has one of the most extraordinary child care centers, including a center for babies and for infants.

But that's not what most of those employees do for child care. They find something in their neighborhood. The quality of that child care, the affordability, the availability, is as important to us as the centers that we often talk about.

Let me tell you a little about what the federal government has already done. We have -- the federal government spends \$3 billion a year in the children care development fund, which covers one million kids. Those are the grants to the states. That's the money that's out there for child care and direct grants. The Head Start program is \$4 billion a year, and of course, we've made remarkable progress. The President has promised to fully fund Head Start, and we're close to having done that -- \$4 billion a year, that covers 800,000 kids.

The dependent care tax -- the dependent care tax credit, which mostly includes kids, though some people use it for elderly relatives, is \$2.5 billion a year. That covers 5 million families. Remember, in that Head Start number is the new Zero to Three program, which is a special targeted program to expand Head Start, so it starts with younger babies. And the Head Start program is also moving to a full-day, full-year program, dramatically changing. That is the highest quality child care program that we

have in the United States in terms of quality -- pretty uniform across the country -- something that we've been working on.

The important thing is this country already spends a substantial amount of money in child care. The federal government's activities, as Mr. Clinton indicated, have been focused on raising the quality, creating as seamless system, and linking child care programs to health programs of some kind or another.

One of the ways that we expanded immunizations in this country for kids up to 2 is by using child care and Head Start and making those connections with the health care system. Most of our commitments in programs like Head Start is also involving parents. We see these programs as not simply a warehouse for taking care of kids, but enriching their lives and making certain that they're learning things that will help prepare them for the future.

Now, some of them aren't. I told the story at the Head Start conference about the kid -- I asked him what the best part of Head Start was, and he said, the snacks. Then I asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up, and he said he wanted to be President, and I figured he'd get there. (Laughter.)

But the important thing is that we see the education and the health care part of our programs as integrated parts, as a way to expand quality. So the discussion with the America people is about people who desperately need child care and can't get it -- nine million -- we think that there are probably 9 million kids eligible for one or another of these programs, that there simply isn't money to finance them. Those families are very much like the families we're covering with children's health insurance -- with the new children's health insurance initiative. They're working families. They don't make enough money, and they need some kind of subsidy, but they get up every morning, go to work, and they're having a terrible time trying to get quality child care for their families.

Why don't I end there. And let me introduce the person who knows far more than I do -- my coach, Joan Lombardi (phonetic), who's the head of the child care bureau over there. She may pop up at some point. She's one of the world's leading experts on these things and

MRS. CLINTON: Often referred to as Saint Joan in child care circles. (Laughter.) I think Debra's going to start, and then --

Q I think it's really important to remember that this conference is coming out of the April White House Conference on Early Childhood Development, because it signals the importance of putting the child at the centerpiece of this debate. That conference really taught us -- really alerted us because of the new breakthroughs in neuroscience of the tremendously high stakes that are involved in providing infants and young children and school-age children with safe and nurturing environments, at home and in child care. What I

want to do is quickly summarize six of some of the most compelling and important new findings from the research literature. A lot of you already have seen this and have cited it. And I'd be happy to answer any questions you have about it.

First of all, when we're talking about the child care, we're talking about very early, high-dosage exposure to child care environments. Babies are in child care by four months of age on average for 30 hours a week, and so they're there early, and they're going to be there through their school years -- early school years. So it's a critical environment. And yet, as millions of American children are moving into child care, we cannot find a study that doesn't find that somewhere between 20 and 25 percent of these settings are so poor in quality that they actually are troubling. And they probably are compromising children's development.

Many are also very wonderful. And the quality of care really doesn't vary by type of care. I think that's a very important point -- that you can find wonderful and horrible child care in any type of child care.

Now, thirdly, neuroscience tells us that these sub-optimal child care environments should affect early development. And the child care research literature tells us that they do. The quality of the child care environment -- I know you've heard this again and again -- any child development outcome you pick, whether it's school-readiness or attention span or peer relationships or language development -- the higher the quality of the child care environment, regardless of the setting, improves the development of the child. We've known this for a long time with respect to pre-schoolers. We've learned it recently with respect to school-age children. And now we've learned it most recently with the NICHD study with respect to babies.

Babies, no matter how early they enter, no matter how long they're in care, can thrive in high-quality child care environments. It's a very reassuring message, which is really my fourth point, which is that child care providers and mothers are not in competition with each other. And too much of the literature still tries to place them in competition with each other in a zero sum mentality -- that, in fact, the home environment remains the most important environment in the child's life. Again, no matter how early or how long they're in child care, the home environment is what matters. The child care environment does not affect the child's attachment relationship to their mother, which is what we feared for so long. The NICHD study has really assuaged those concerns.

And, in fact -- so, instead of supplanting the mother, a child care provider really is a source of support to that mother. And under the best of circumstances, the mother and the provider develop very close ties, mutual support and trust and inter-dependence that can last a lifetime, even, for the case of many, many families.

Fifth, the key to quality lies with the care-giver. And I think you know this, too. And we're learning more and more what elements of the care-giver really matter. But children must be cared for by care-givers who engage them in frequent and affectionate and responsive interactions, who can get down on the child's level, who can read the child's cues, can back off when the child is absorbed and get engaged when the child wants stimulation.

It's not an easy task when it's not your own child. It's challenging enough when it is, to do it well and consistently over time. And we're learning that this is true, also, again, regardless of the type of child care. It's true when the father is the child care provider. It's true when the grandmother is. It's true when you have a paid child care provider in a center.

And that brings me to my final point, that the way to get those kinds of child care providers in the field is to pay them decent wages. And I was delighted to see that this was highlighted in The Washington Post article this morning. The wages we pay child care providers are the strongest predictor of quality and stability. When you line everything up, the wages always come to the surface. And there's a simple reason for this, because no matter what you put into training and everything else, if you don't keep the child care providers in the program and pay them the wages they need to stay there, that investment in training is lost within six months, within a year.

We really have an unofficial funding policy for our child care programs in this country, which consists of the poverty level wages we pay our providers. That's our funding policy. And children pay for it. We call it turnover. But they experience it as loss.

Let me just conclude by saying that I am thrilled -- just thrilled -- and I thank the First Lady and the Secretary that this issue is getting the attention it really warrants. Parents are ready for it to get this level of attention, even though they're worried. And it's a little scary. And I think we now know really what's at stake if we don't begin to address it -- if everybody begins to address it very seriously.

Thank you.

MS. GALINSKY: I'd like to build on what Debra says and talk about the issue of child care from the perspective of parents. I think that for as long as I have been in this field, there has been a debate that whenever child care is mentioned, you get the "shouldn't mothers then just stay home" argument, and I want to talk about that from two perspectives.

First, the perspective of what the research says about the impact of parental employment on children. What studies say about the impact of parental employment on children is that you can't tell anything about how a child turns out simply by the fact that his

or her mother works. There are other things that are very important. The first is whether or not the mother believes that she's doing the right thing -- and I don't mean garden variety guilt, I mean the deep-seated belief that you're doing the right or the wrong thing -- and whether the other members of the family support that decision.

The second thing that's important is money. Money tends to be good for families, although so often the rhetoric is that people are selfish for working. But money tends to provide more resources for families and be good for children, particularly from lower-income households. The third factor that is often not discussed -- but we've done a lot of research at the Families and Work Institute on this -- is parents' jobs -- when parents have jobs that eat them up, when they're in situations that are demanding and hectic and they have very little control over how to solve the problems at work, and they have difficult relationships with co-workers or other bosses, that that tends to spill over into family life. In fact, there's a wonderful new study that shows what kind of -- that looks at child care pick-up time and looks at what kind of day the parents have had. And the fourth factor -- and when they're in environments in which they feel more or less good about working most of the time -- of course, we all have bad days -- that's good for kids.

And then, finally, the quality of child care. So that's one perspective -- the impact of employment.

The second is that women have enlarged their roles. We did a study a few years ago that asked women about their lives today, and men about their lives today, and it was interesting to us that more than half of women -- 55 percent brought in more -- half or more of family income. And that women are seeing their nurturing roles these days -- because most of them didn't want to change their lives -- of course, they'd like it to be a little less hectic and chaotic -- but they did not see their lives in terms of just nurturing emotionally. They saw their lives in terms of providing economically for their families. That's part of the role of the new provider that women take.

So why do we have the uneven quality that Debra is talking about? And I think that there are a number of reasons why we do. First, we asked parents in a representative study what the most important issue about child care was, and 63 percent in their own words -- and this is a nationally-representative study of the U.S. work force -- 63 percent said it wasn't just finding child care, it was finding child care that was good for their children.

What do parents want when they look for child care? They want the same things that researchers have found. They want their kids to be safe, they want -- and we've done a number of studies that have looked at that -- they want their kids to be safe, they want their kids to have attention -- that's the responsive care -- they want someone who cares about their child and they want a provider who talks to them about what's going on during the day when

they're not with their child.

So what parents want and what providers want is the same thing, but parents can't find it. We find in a series of studies that we've done that between half and three-quarters of parents between 58 and 75 percent of parents say that they have zero choices when they look for child care, zero other choices than the arrangement that they're in.

The process of looking for child care is an emotional one for families. Debra has mentioned one reason why child care quality suffers, and that is because of the low wages that we pay child care providers. But I think there are some emotional hurdles, too. I've spent the summer in 15 different states talking to parents about being a working parent and talking to kids about how they see their working parents. And I find that parents, when they're looking for child care, first see it as -- it's so emotional, the feeling that you have to leave your child with someone else almost prevents parents from looking at this the way they would look for any other thing that they purchased. It's just wanting to get the pain over.

When they talk about child care, they talk about it in very painful terms when they first start to look. And, then, once they found that provider that Debra was mentioning, or that arrangement that feels like home, that feels like a part of their family, then they feel much differently about it. So there's the emotional issue that parents face. Also I found in talking to kids, that kids will often not tell their parents when they're not happy with their child care arrangement. They know that it will upset their parents. They weigh the issues.

One of the secrets that kids have -- kids would tell me these secrets very often. One child told me about a provider who left him alone with babies when she ran to the store, and he was so scared of what would happen that he put all the babies in playpens and slapped them a little bit so they didn't mess up anything. And he knew that that wasn't the right thing to do, but he didn't know what else to do. And he didn't tell his mother because his mother was so proud of having found a child care arrangement for him. So kids will often -- they also worry that these secrets, in a sense, that they'll be with someone else and it could be worse.

So one of the things that mitigates better care is that kids often don't talk about it when it's good, and that for parents they know it's going to be a separation and it's very emotional. So there are economic reasons and societal reasons.

Finally, I want to say that we've been looking a lot at what happens when there are efforts to improve the quality of child care. And although we have a very uneven quality in this country, we've found in study after study that it doesn't take very much to improve the quality. You can do it. The kind of investments that the government has made through the child care -- I'm not saying it right -- child care and development block grant -- has been

investments in states. And child care is essentially a state system, the money goes to the states and states choose how to spend it. And they've made investments that we've seen have improved the quality.

For example, we did one study where they increased the number of adults that would take care of each child and they raised the educational requirements. It did not cause havoc in the marketplace and the quality went up in an extraordinary manner. We saw a 75 percent decrease in discipline problems. Because when the providers knew how to handle those toddlers who say, "no" and "I'll do it my own way," it was much better. We've looked at business efforts to improve quality. In one study we found that 18 to 36 hours of training really made the child care so much better, that it improved those relationships that are so important to children's development.

So I want to end by saying we know what makes good quality child care and we know how to improve it. The issue is the public will, the investment. And we can do it if we choose to do it as a country.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, Ellen.

I want to mention that just yesterday Parents Magazine released a national survey. And we have the Editor in Chief with us, Anne Murphy, and I want to give you a chance just to, perhaps, briefly describe the findings you found.

MS. MURPHY: Well, Ellen and Debra both touched on a lot of really important topics, as you did, in terms of one of the issues that I think is misunderstood is that consumers know what to look for. Parents do know, more than we think -- they know, according to our survey, when we ask them, what do you look for, what's important in child care, they named the right things. They want it to be a safe environment, they want it to be a nurturing environment. And our study -- in fact, all that you're saying, they can't find it and they can't afford it, and that they are burdening about 75 percent, or shouldering 75 percent of the financial burden, which particularly we found for households where the household income was under \$30,000, this is just prohibitive in many cases.

The one thing we haven't mentioned is how this impacts productivity in the work force. And one of the incredible things we found was that because they are so unsure about the reliability of their child care, and because there is so much anxiety associated with this that, just among our respondents, in the past three months that they had missed -- and this is mostly women, 50 percent more women than dads are having to rush home -- they're missing -- 600 full days in just a three-month period were missed because of child care emergencies. You know, that's over the course of a year. That's going to be a big toll on businesses.

So I think that one of the reasons there has been a very positive response from not enough businesses, but certainly from a

growing number, is that this makes good sense; that if you invest in child care, if you -- not just to make your workers happy, but because it really has an impact on the day to day and the workforce and schools and all facets of society. So when Debra says you're putting the child at the center, that's absolutely right. But the ripple effect is just enormous and it's probably one of the best examples of where investing in it now is going to really pay off big time down the road.

We found that over 50 percent said that they worry every week about whether their child is getting enough attention in child care. Over 40 percent had had such a bad experience that they had stopped using that particular form of child care. So there's definitely a lot of negativity. Also, the positive is there. I mean, there is no question that for a lot of them -- not enough -- they felt that they had the best child care they could get. But there's just a staggering number who feel that they have to not only worry about it, they have to worry about it for a good reason, because it's just not up to par.

So I also thank you for having this conference, I think it's incredibly important.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, thank you. Now I'd like to open it up to any of your questions or comments about this whole issue. In my book I write in a chapter about child care that there's nothing that opens the floodgates of guilt more, and everyone is a prisoner of his or her own experience, both as a child and as a parent, when talking about this issue. But I think that if we at least can start this conversation so that people can deal with the emotional element of it that Ellen referred to, we can get beyond the guilt and the emotion to looking at what works.

And there are lots of models that work, and we'll talk about some of those at the conference tomorrow. We can talk about some of those today. Because it doesn't take much to improve quality. And it doesn't require inventing any new system. It requires us to look at what works and then to do what we can to make those models more widely available. And they're in the state and local government level, they're in the business sector, they're in the not for profit sector. So there's a lot about what is out there already that is not well known that we need to publicize more broadly.

So who would like to start with a question?

Q -- fit into your plan? I mean, one of the things that people continually bring up is training, and there are really good models out there, but without some kind of training or certification of workers, is there really any way to improve quality and make sure that they're getting the training that they need?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Well, in fact, those issues have been left to the states for the most part, and making sure that the

states take responsibility and have a model program for both the licensing and different training for different folks. If you go to my hometown of Madison, Wisconsin, the model for family day care there, where there actually is an organization that does the training for family day care providers, that upgrades people's skills and provides regular updating and training -- that states really can do this.

We did make a decision to leave the states the responsibility for maintaining the quality. As a result, as one would expect, it's somewhat uneven. Tomorrow you'll hear what happens when a state really does take the leadership in this area.

Q Training is an interesting issue because often there is the assumption that if people are trained, there are not going to be those warm and caring providers that families want. It's true, though. I mean, we've done studies of parents and their views and we asked them to rate what's most important, and they will say the relationship is most important -- a warm, caring, safe, communicative relationship. But then if you use the word "training," they say, well, they'll be bureaucratic and it raises all of those issues -- where, in fact, our studies find exactly the opposite is true, which is when people learn more about how to take care of children and how to do it in constructive ways, in fact, they tend to be warmer and more responsive.

So the word, "training" often will set off all kinds of red flags for people, both in the sense of now government is taking over this, or the notion of these people won't be the kind of warm and caring providers. So training is critically important and it does exactly what is needed to make providers better.

I think that one of the things that I've been struck with lately is that we've just done a study in a state that has made more of an investment in this issue than other states -- Florida. And by and large, the quality of the care in Florida is better than many other places. It certainly compares better to the national studies that have been done. And they improved their licensing, which is an issue that you asked about, Pat. And we've looked four years later -- we started in '92, we collected -- this study has not yet been released -- we went back in '94, we went back in '96, and we found that only 2 percent of the teachers were in the same centers four years later.

So you can do all of these things, but if the turnover rate ends up with only -- and if in the span of time that it takes a child to go through the system there are only 2 percent of the staff left, you've got a problem. So I think that we need to deal with this issue holistically. You can improve standards and you can -- and it didn't bankrupt the system. I think that's important to say. Parents didn't have any fewer choices when Florida instituted this change. And yet, if you don't deal with all of the issues, like teachers salaries, it won't be that good for kids.

Q The thing that --you're right, it is up to the states right now, but I think the big question is, should the federal government be doing more to encourage or to give some kind of incentive to states to require licensing. I mean, this has been an issue that's been around for a long time, but simply leaving it up to the states -- we've seen what's happened in the last 10 years by just leaving it up to the states. We haven't seen any real improvement.

Q No, on the contrary.

Q That's not true, that's not true.

Q We've seen some improvement, but we haven't seen the kind of improvement that we really need to see.

MRS. CLINTON: We haven't seen uniform improvement, by any means.

Q We're still seeing things like this University of Colorado study that says 91 percent of centers are not up to basic levels and 40 percent are dangerous. That doesn't seem to be the kind of improvement we need.

Q I think the answer is, yes. And we've used a variety of different strategies to help work with the states, including these incentive grants, the linking -- Head Start has very high quality, and linking Head Start in these new programs -- maybe Joan Lombardi would like to say a little bit more about that. But we've used federal resources to try to get the states to upgrade and to try some new models for doing training and for other kinds of programs. But we have not taken over full responsibility of what is essentially a state role.

Q Joan, do you want to add anything?

MS. LOMBARDI: Well, I just think it's not just the standards; it's once you pass standards, it's the ongoing visits that programs receive. That's also critical.

SECRETARY SHALALA: In the military centers that Mrs. Clinton has visited, their oversight is three or four visits, I think.

MRS. CLINTON: Unannounced.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Unannounced. A year -- as opposed to many states that don't visit a program more than once a year. And part of this conference, I think, it's not just to stimulate parents in the conversation, it's also to get the states and the governors and their state legislatures to look again at their child care programs.

MRS. CLINTON: But that's one of the goals that we have with respect to licensing and standards, and that is to educate parents more about how to translate their desires into practical application. Because what does it mean to say you want a warm, affectionate, responsive care-giver who communicates with me? Does that mean that when you show up, the care-giver rushes out and gushes all over you, or does that mean during the eight hours your child is there, when you're not there, the care-giver is focused on your child?

And part of our difficulty is that a lot of parents, for emotional reasons, financial reasons, educational reasons, don't know how to translate these generally-held beliefs about what they want into the kind of demands that would change either the marketplace or governmental action.

So part of what we're trying to do is to create some grassroots, bottom-up concern about what goes on all day long in these various child care settings, so that state and local decision-makers will be responsive, because parents will say, how they're aren't visits, how come you don't enforce the health rules.

So I think that it's a difficult dilemma, because as both Debra and Ellen said, so many parents are just so relieved when they think their child will be treated safely during the day, and they don't have the time and they don't feel that they have the expertise to go much beyond that in terms of monitoring and policing the setting themselves, so we have to create more of a consumer base for high-quality, affordable child care.

Because one of the most frustrating aspects of this entire system, as Debra points out, is you can find high-quality child care at the low end of the financial spectrum and high-quality child care on the top end. And you can find really bad child care on both ends of the financial spectrum. And more of it is concentrated on the lower end of the financial spectrum, but there are a lot of very affluent parents who are leaving their kids in places, that if they knew more about what to ask, they would not feel as good as they feel.

So it's not just a question of financial resources, although that has to be one of the keys, particularly when it comes to the compensation and benefits of workers, but it has to be creating this broader understanding on the part of parents and consumers and other people who no longer face the issue themselves, so that we get the kind of response that you need on licensing and training and standards.

Q There are efforts around the country. There is, for example, Parents United for Child Care in Boston, which is a coalition of parents who have really changed the face of child care

in that city when they got together. So there are burgeoning efforts around the country to really involve families in trying to improve the system of care and education for their children.

Q I was wondering, will you be taking a lead, perhaps, with the federal government programs? Because one of the things I was told yesterday, for instance the White House -- federal day care center. And one of the women I was talking to in D.C. said that some of the lower-level federal workers -- lower-income federal workers can't afford the day care at those facilities. Will the federal government take the lead in perhaps encouraging businesses by helping subsidize those lower-level workers so that they could afford day care in the federal centers?

MRS. CLINTON: We're looking at all kinds of options. We have tried to have a sliding scale for the federal child care programs, and I would very much to know the salary of the people who say they can't get in, because I thought we had taken care of that during the last four years. So that's news to me. Because we've looked very hard at how to create a system that would be accessible on a sliding scale, which in a sense is a subsidy, so that the lowest-paid federal workers would have the same access to the child care centers.

But on the broader issue, we're going to be exploring a whole range of options that would include not only the national and state governments but also businesses and the not-for-profit sector, and how to create more of a supply of affordable child care. And part of that will have to be looking at some kind of subsidy as well.

SECRETARY SHALALA: The vast majority of federal workers use child care near their homes. They don't want to bring their kids on public that. So that improving all of child care is important to us in our responsibility to federal workers.

Q Much of the economic analysis of child care comes down to one bottom line, which is that parents cannot pay enough to support the kind of wage and compensation that will in turn support quality care-giving. And many of the people I spoke to in the last few days have come to the conclusion that since parents cannot afford to fully fund an appropriate level of care, then there has to be essentially a massive infusion of money from either governments or business or both. And I'm wondering if anyone has ever quantified how much additional money beyond parent tuition would be required to bring this country up to some much more acceptable level of status quo, and where this might come from?

SECRETARY SHALALA: I think there have been attempts to quantify it, and the estimates range. But I would like to see more widespread efforts like happened in Colorado, and we do begin to see them. The Governor of Colorado appointed a group of 25 business men and women who were not necessarily the champions for child care; they were the people with good, sound financial knowledge. And what they did was to really look at how to finance child care better in the

state and came up with 12 recommendations, several of which have already been passed into law, and you will hear from Doug Price tomorrow at the conference. He will be talking about that.

But I see a real need to bring in financial expertise to look at how we can better both use the money that we have, because often child care programs don't use the money that they have -- their preparation is in taking care of children and teaching children and not in managing the finances of either their home or their center; but also to bring new money into the system. There clearly has to be.

So I think that there are efforts needed. Boston is another example where they're creating a license plate that will go into child care. Some states, like Georgia, are using lottery money to finance pre-K. Connecticut has created a system where in 20 percent increments they're going to move in universal pre-K.

So I think it's perfectly possible -- and the financing systems that they've put together to do those are fascinating -- it's perfectly possible to do it, and I think that business people with financial expertise have a very important role to play in this.

MRS. CLINTON: I would just reiterate that there are now enough models around. You know, Florida is another model where the legislature created a public-private partnership. They put the first year I think \$2 million of state money, and then with that money the commission, which was largely composed of business people, went out to communities and said, okay, if you raise matching funds -- and mostly it went for subsidies, training, and pay increases for workers -- we'll give you the money from the state. But you have to raise the matching funds. And they've had a tremendous response.

So there is a lot of good models that weren't there even five years ago that have a proven track record. So a lot of the people who are saying, well, you know, the financing is an obstacle, may not yet know how states and localities are beginning to deal with it. We still will probably have gaps, even after we look at all these models, but then we'll be talking about a smaller financial commitment than we are now, because people aren't taking into account what's working in a lot of these states.

SECRETARY SHALALA: There are 9 million children who are eligible for the existing government programs that can't get into them because we're short of resources. But I agree, the solutions are somewhere in a public-private partnership, but it's clear that the market alone can't solve this. And in many ways, the group that's been left out is the same group that we just worked very hard to get children's health insurance for. This is a group of working parents who are above the poverty line and don't have access to the welfare piece of this child care, and don't get the tax break because they don't have the tax liability.

MRS. CLINTON: And on average are spending 25 percent of

their income on child care.

(End of side one, begin side two.)

Q (In progress) -- the 10 largest welfare case loads, that five of those states were directing their child care subsidies to welfare recipients and people making the transition, ahead of the working poor, with the idea that they wanted to provide as much assistance as possible to meet their work requirements. But the feeling was what that does is penalize those working poor families that are staying off welfare. And I just wanted your opinion about that policy.

SECRETARY SHALALA: In many ways I just made that point, about the *nine million eligible kids that can't get access to* child care. We don't know exactly what the number is right now in terms of the gap. The President fought for a huge increase in the commitment attached to the welfare to work, to the Tannoff (phonetic) plan, so that the states would have the resources for that transition, that child care transition. And we're going to be short, we believe we're going to be short for working families that didn't go through the welfare system.

Those working families are exactly what the President has been directing the increase in the earned income tax credit, the minimum wage increase, the child support enforcement pieces, and child care in particular, and most recently, the health insurance for those families. And there is going to be a gap there. We're not sure precisely what it is as states draw down on their child care money. But they clearly have focused their initial attention to these families that are moving from welfare to work. They have -- all the states have been supporting some working families.

But part of this discussion as it ends up in a longer budget discussion is going to be, where is the direct gap for a federal role and where's the gap for a state and this public-private role.

MRS. CLINTON: I haven't seen that study yet, Tony, I've heard about it. But I've talked with some of the people in the states and, of course, you know, under welfare reform they're given broad discretion to make judgments about where the money will best be spent. And some of the state decision makers make the following argument, that they've got this huge number of welfare recipients with kids that they need to try to assist become self-sufficient, and that this population has so many fewer resources in terms of social support that they don't even know where to look for child care. They don't have transportation to get a child to a child care facility; they don't have neighbors they feel they know well enough or can trust to take of their children; they don't have centers in their neighborhoods.

So that the idea is, yes, we cannot leave out the working poor and it is not fair or a long-term strategy that anybody should follow, but that for the time being, given the choice, some of these states are saying we have to deal where the fewer resources are, not just financial resources, but infrastructure for providing child care.

That's their choice, and we're going to carefully watch that. But part of the reason we want to focus on the broader issue of child care is to keep reminding people that there are many, many folks out there every day who get up and go to work who don't know whether they're going to have their child care needs taken care of, and it has adverse effects on the economy. So that it's not a zero sum game, take care of one group and not the other. We have to figure out how to take care of everybody.

SECRETARY SHALALA: That's why the Florida model is interesting. And one would hope that there are going to be other models that emerge. But the Florida model is aimed at the working poor, at the people, so that it's a public-private partnership to try to put more money into subsidizing the care. And it's just a beginning in Florida, but it's an interesting model.

And there's a movement around the country that we called community mobilization, where in states and communities people have gotten together and they've said basically, we're tired of these task force reports that don't lead to action, we're tired of generation after generation of children being sacrificed in a sense. And so these efforts that I've been describing grow out of what is really a social movement, a grass-roots movement in this country, led sometimes by governors, sometimes by advocates, sometimes by legislators, but --

Q And sometimes by business leaders.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Yes, by business leaders. There was an announcement last week of 38 organizations that included businesses and early childhood -- foundations that support early childhood efforts committing \$11.4 million to try to improve the quality of dependent care around the country. So we see these efforts beginning to take hold and they need to be encouraged, more of them need to happen.

Q Can I pick up on one thing you talked about where you see specifics coming forward and ask you a question about moving forward as well as back. Are there some specifics that you have in mind in terms of legislation or action by the federal government coming out of the conference in particular? And second, in looking back at your own experiences -- and for many of us around the table who have gone through child care -- is there any personal experience you can look back on, because I believe you worked all the way through, that kind of brought this issue home for you?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, under the first point, yes, there will be some announcements that the President will make tomorrow that will concern policy that will be recommended.

Q Do you want to say here --

MRS. CLINTON: No, can't do that. You'll just have to stay tuned and hear what he says. But I don't think there is any parent who has ever worked who hasn't had a lot of experiences to look back on.

I had the advantage for most of Chelsea's life of living in public housing, and so there were always people around who, in an emergency, could help out, because there were many times when the person who I hired to be the baby-sitter, the child care provider, different people for different times a day, weekends, all of that, got sick, couldn't get there, whatever the emergency might be. And I write in my book about the two years that we were living in our own house and I had a trial one morning. And first my child care worker was sick and then Chelsea was sick, and because I had more control over my life than most people do -- which goes to the issue we were talking about, how people feel about their employment -- had it not been that I had to actually be in court, I could have stayed home. I could have made arrangements, I could have worked from home, I could have done a lot of filling in.

But that particular day, I couldn't, and so I had to just call around desperately to find somebody who would come in. And luckily, one of my neighbors was willing to come in. But it didn't relieve the feeling I had -- at every break and recess, going into the ladies room and calling on the phone, or doing what I could to make sure everything was all right.

And I used to think a lot about that every day at about 2:30 p.m. or 3:00 p.m., in every place I ever worked, every mother who worked there, particularly the secretarial and clerical staff, was on the phone trying to make sure that their child, their school-age child got home safely. You could just see all these women bent over, whispering into the phone. And it's just one of the most common sights in any American workplace, because a lot of kids, after a certain age, are permitted to go home alone, but that causes all sorts of distress. Other people rely on friends and neighbors to pick up their kids in carpools, and sometimes that doesn't work. So there's just this constant theme all through the years that I was raising Chelsea and also working that I and every other mother I knew would get together, and probably the biggest topic was all the problems that we were having trying to balance all of these responsibilities.

And I don't think that the conversation has changed much. And in some respects, I think it's gotten even harder, because even fewer people live near families, even fewer people have a network of friends that they can call on at the last minute.

Oftentimes, the commutes are far away from where you live, but you want your child to be kept nearby so that the child is in some kind of setting that is near your home, but you're not there. So it's just a never-ending litany of concerns and worries.

And I think that there are many reasons why we should care about this subject. I mean, the most important to me is the well-being of our children and what we should do to invest adequately in them. But there are many other reasons, among which are the economic ones. And we'll talk about those tomorrow, too, because there is a lot of evidence now that if we can get secure child care available there will be less absenteeism and other decreases in productivity because of parents being distracted.

There's one other thing that I want to throw into this, and I think it's an important issue. We also don't do very much to help parents who would like to make the choice to stay home for some period of time, whether it be the first year of their child's life, the first three years, the pre-school years. We don't do a very good job in this country, despite our rhetoric about family values, to create work and family situations that permit more families to make the choice that they may think is right for them. And I hear that all the time as well.

We don't want one stereotypical, one size fits all approach to child care because we know that there is no typical American family. Everybody has a different set of aspirations and talents and confidences. And so we want to have as broad a range of choices as possible. But look at the battle we had for nine years to get family and medical leave -- unpaid family and medical leave -- which still doesn't cover the workers who often need it the most, who are in small employment settings, who don't have the financial resources to be able to take the time off. We don't make it very convenient or easy for people to have part-time work for a period of time.

We are really not looking at the whole range of child care options as broadly as we should. And we shouldn't get into, as other speakers have said, some kind of blame assigning and finger-pointing debate about who makes what choice. We should instead try to create enough options so that the people who feel comfortable going right back to work have that option because they have good child care that they can count on, and the people who want a longer period of time to be with their infants or to have time off from work can make that choice without being unduly penalized.

So I think there is a lot about this that needs to be brought out into the light of day and looked at in a non-ideological, non-emotional way so that we can get more ideas on the table about what we can do to support families.

Q So is it fair to say that your primarily interested

Thursday in airing the problem, or are there going to be concrete solutions proposed?

MRS. CLINTON: Both. We will do a lot of airing and we will do a lot of recommending.

SECRETARY SHALALA: And a lot of examples.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, a lot of examples of other people.

Q But recommending seems to be the key here.

MRS. CLINTON: There will be recommendations.

Q I mean, recommending as opposed to any kind of mandated action.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, the federal government can take certain actions, but as we've said, most of what happens in child care happens at the state level and in private settings. So we can come up with what we hope will be some good incentives and good models that we can encourage, and then we can take action where it's appropriate for the federal government to take action, which we will be recommending.

Q Mrs. Clinton, to follow up on a point you made about families who want to choose not to go into a work and day care setting -- all the incentives in the tax code in public spending are to improve day care quality. The incentives, to put it politely, in the welfare reform bill are to get women out of the home, and not to go back to the bad old days of aid to families with dependent children, which essentially paid women to stay home with their children. What are you proposing or what can you propose in order to put some new incentives in government spending or in the tax code for those families who do want to stay home?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think we've done a number of things. Donna mentioned a number of the steps that have been taken to increase family income on the lower end of the financial scale. And we will continue to do that. I mean, that's one of the reasons the President fought so hard that the education tax credit and the child tax credit extend all the way down the income scale and not just be given to people whose incomes were above a certain level. So there's a number of steps that have been taken to increase family income, but many families still don't think that that's a realistic choice for them.

And particularly when it comes to family leave, it's hard to argue that it's a real choice when it's unpaid. So that those families who are able to take it oftentimes have two salaries coming in, so that one of the parents can choose to stay home, or it's in a dire family emergency like a dying child or a dying spouse and they have no choice and they just forego the salary. So it's something that I just want people to think about and try to square

with what we believe are our national commitment to children and families.

Q The movement to make the workplace more family-friendly and to provide more flexibility has largely been a movement of larger companies. And I think that it's critical -- we tracked this at the Families and Work Institute, and you can see that particularly for families who are lower income, they can't stay home. I mean, more than three-quarters of them can't stay home to take care of a sick child. We're talking about very basic things.

And I think we need to extend the discussion so that it includes smaller business; that it includes the companies that employ low wage workers, because when these welfare recipients go into the work place it's very important for them also to have the flexibility to care for their children as well. So we've set up a counsel of employers of low wage workers at the Families and Work Institute that can begin to address these issues.

There's something, though, very important about making this invisible problem visible. And probably the most dramatic experience I had with it was this year, this fall when I went to Grand Forks, North Dakota, and the flood had made -- and it was really tragic that it took the flood -- had made what was largely an invisible problem to a community, visible, because the basements had been flooded out. And they weren't just flooded that you could then paint them and fix them up, they were destroyed. A substantial part of the child care in that community was closed, had to closed and couldn't be reopened. And suddenly everybody began to pay attention to child care. The business community hadn't really recognized how dependent they were on child care to get both the mothers and the fathers in their businesses to work. And the government, as well.

So it was tragic to me that it took a flood and the destruction of child care to make it evident that it's in everyone's self interest to address it. But, boy, they were beginning to take action.

Q But, see, that's the point, and the point of tomorrow, I think, is that child care is part of the national economic strategy; that it's an integral part, not only of the quality of life for our families, but it's absolutely critical to the success of a strong economy. It's not only whether the parents could be there, because of what happens to their investment in child care and whether their child care provider is going to be there for them. But it's also that what we're doing is supporting strong workers, as well as strong families. And the fact that Bob Rubin is going to be there tomorrow and business leaders are going to be there tomorrow says that this is an investment in the future of the country, and is as much an investment in the economy as it is in the quality of the workers that we're going to have in the future.

MRS. CLINTON: We'll also have a bipartisan group from Congress tomorrow, both at lunch and at the reception, some of whom

will speak specifically about legislation that they're supporting, that they want to get a broader audience for. And some of it will address these issues about providing broader choices.

Q And Mrs. Clinton, as I understand the President's and your recommendations tomorrow, it's two-stage -- it's what he's going to say specifically tomorrow, as well as the longer discussion in the budget process that will come out as part of the President's new budget.

Q I wanted to ask about that. In Florida and in Quantico you, thinking out loud, seem to be bursting with ideas on liability protection for child care centers, and on child care registry subsidies. Are these things that we'll see coming out as part of the recommendations or as part of the budget process? And how much of a hand will you have, personally and directly, in working on those initiatives?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm just going to have to ask you to wait until tomorrow and see what the announcements are. And I think Donna's made a good point. I mean, tomorrow there will be some announcements; but there will also, both because of congressional leadership and administration action, be a continuing series of efforts that will go toward trying to address the problem over the next several months.

Q People have already been told that the registry idea has gone away. Can you talk about why --

MRS. CLINTON: Wait until tomorrow. Really, that's all I can say, is wait until tomorrow.

Q No role in doing this between now and the budget?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm just going to keep working on it the way I have for 20 years or so -- it's the same old story for me.

Q I know you will talk about this tomorrow, but could you briefly talk about what you would advise parents to look for, so they can become better consumers?

MRS. CLINTON: That's a wonderful question and I'm going to have our experts talk on it, too. There's a group in Washington named Zero To Three, they do vignettes, which I find a very effective way to convey information. Again, I wrote about them in my book because I couldn't think of a better way of talking about it so that parents get attuned to what they look for. You know, when you bring your child in, does somebody pay attention to your child? Do they have age appropriate toys? How many adult care givers are they? Before you place a child, assuming you've got the time and resources to do this, have you dropped in unannounced to see whether people are standing around talking, the adults are talking to each other, or they're engaged with the child? Check out the kitchen area. Check out the restroom area.

The basic kinds of issues that Consumer Reports tells us to look toward when we're making any major purchase ought to be part of what parents look to. And don't be snowed by what you're told -- trust your eyes and your gut about what you see happening between the adults and the children in these settings. And it's particularly important in a lot of family day care settings, because a lot of times the television is the primary caretaker of children in such settings. And so if every time you show up the TV is on, ask yourself is that how you want your child spending his or her day.

But, Debra, why don't you give the real list here.

Q You've got the real list, for sure, there. I really think of it both as what to look for, when they should look for it, sort of when and how, which gets at going -- you know, take some time to look for your child care provider. People spend more time looking for their cars, everybody says, than their child care providers, because you can do that in the evenings and on the weekends. It takes time away from work to do this and drop in unannounced.

But I also really encourage parents to sort of look for key episodes. Like, watch what happens during a mealtime, and is the provider sitting down with the children and talking to them. It's a wonderful learning opportunity -- they can talk about colors and textures and social interaction. Or are they off making a telephone call because the kids happen to be lined up in their highchairs or sitting at a table. It's kind of these little litmus tests. Look at a diaper change -- is the care-giver mechanically going through a diaper change or is the care-giver signing and talking and tickling the toes and, again, sort of using opportunities to make them joyful and happy and learning opportunities for the little kids.

I also tell them to look at arrivals and departures. That's such a critical moment. And is there, either by some written piece of paper or a conversation, an exchange between the provider and the parent so that the provider can say, here's what your child's day was like and here are some issues I have for you to think about, or questions. Likewise, in the morning, do they want to know from the parents did the child sleep well that night. You know, that again really gets at that shared care-giving that is so critical and that is that nugget of what makes for quality day care.

Q Yes, I mean, communicating with your care-giver is probably -- I'm sure Ellen and Debra would agree that once you've chosen a child care arrangement, it doesn't matter whether it's on-site or family day care or a nanny coming into your home, that continuing to communicate with that care giver -- a lot of parents, oh, gosh, I've got it all set up, that's all I have to do. But that continued communication is absolutely key to the success of the arrangement. And part of what you're touching on is that asking the care giver about your working is really important; that part of what a lot of parents don't do -- I mean, I think this is mothers and

fathers -- is find out whether that care-giver is going to be supporting their choice. And there's so much guilt, as we've all experienced and felt, that knowing that they're supporting what you've decided to do is really key to the happiness of the kids.

Q We did a study once where we looked at the relationship between parents and providers and we found that when the provider did not believe the parent should work, the mother should work, that their relationship was worse.

There are two things that I just wanted to add to this. One is that we've found that the best care is what we call intentional. That is, the person wants to be doing it and continues to learn about how to do it and plans to continue to do it in the future. So look at whether or not people -- you know, why are you doing this, what are your plans for the future. If you're just watching kids to help the parents out, our studies show that the people aren't as good as when they really enjoy and are excited by children.

And then there's a national organization called "Child Care Aware," with an 800 number. Maybe someone -- and they are linked to more than 500 organizations around the country. So if a parent calls them, they'll be switched into their local organization and those people can help parents talk through the specifics of how much money they have, where they want their care, what their finances are, what kind of care they want and so forth.

MRS. CLINTON: But the other thing, it's also really important, this point that Ellen made about kids' secrets. You have to pay attention to how your child is responding. I mean, one setting can be great for one kind of child and terrible for another kind of child. And since we know that children are often themselves a little disoriented at the end of the day and they get picked up and their parents are in a rush and everybody is trying to get home for dinner and all that's going on, it's sometimes difficult to know what a child is trying to communicate. And I think parents have to develop some ways of talking to their children, to get their child's response.

Now, a child one year of age is not going to be able to tell you much verbally, but physically can tell you things. And in addition to the usual separation and emotional issues that come with taking a child to child care while you go to work -- and lots of times your child will go through stages of development where they don't want you to leave them and they don't want the separation and they will do anything to avoid it. So that's the be expected.

But there are some other behaviors and actions where they're just not comfortable in the setting and the people aren't nice to them and they don't pay attention to them, and where the care givers don't pay attention to the emotional stage of the child is

going through. And if they just brush off this period and say, well, he'll get over it, instead of giving him a little extra attention to help him, then that may not be the kind of person that you think is sensitive enough to your child.

Q I hate to do this, but we probably have time for, like, one more question.

Q She said early on about families deserve to get good information not be subjected to propaganda or scare tactics. Who do you think is engaging in propaganda and scare tactics?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think it is something that happens on a regular basis, not by any particular element in the society, but a combination of reasons leads people to raise all of the guilt issues and the choice issues, as well as advocating a certain kind of care over another kind of care. I read some article in the last month or so that said you shouldn't have any licensing -- they were talking about even state licensing -- you shouldn't have any state licensing because we all know that if you license child care workers that prices them out of the market and nobody can afford them. So don't license.

Well, who's behind saying something like that? So there's a lot of ideological and financial forces at work that keep this issue in a turmoil and make it very hard for people to just take a deep breath, a practical look and make good choices for themselves. Debra, did you want to add something to that?

Q No, I just absolutely agree with what you're saying. We remain very ambivalent in this society about working mothers -- as long as they're not poor. If they're poor, we want them to work because we don't want them to be a societal burden. And child care bears the brunt of that ambivalence. There was an Op Ed in the Washington Post just the other day that was basically saying, children need these six things, anytime they're in child care, no matter how good it is, they can't get three of them. It mis-cited the research literature. That terrifies parents to make them again feel like, I have to work, I have to put my child in child care. By doing that, ipso facto, I cannot meet my child's needs. It's destructive, it's not accurate, it undermines parents. And it doesn't do anybody a service.

As the First Lady said, we're dealing with practical issues here. We know a lot more about how to do it all well. It's not a mystery anymore and I really have high hopes that this conference can give us some good models, some good ideas, and will be followed up, I know, with action.

Q The idea that child care is going to harm the family, where in fact, good child care supports the family.

Q Can I just ask real quickly how you might get smaller businesses -- you mentioned that the corporations, and Secretary Shalala, you did, too -- that big business has been a part -- how do you get smaller businesses to provide some child care, particularly when those are the same businesses that may not be providing health care and forcing parents to choose?

SECRETARY SHALALA: There are a couple of things that small business can do. First of all, one of the things that's most important to families managing work and family life is how their supervisor treats them, and what the culture of the workplace is, whether they are forced to choose between -- or at least believe they are forced to choose between having a life and having a job. And we find that in smaller businesses, the culture tends to be more supportive of families and supervisors -- people know each other, they tend to be, even though they may not have a policy, they tend to let them take time off for sick children and so forth and so on.

So to recognize that small business is already doing a lot; people aren't really conscious of that. And then, small businesses can get together. In Colorado, there are coalitions of small businesses that have gotten together to, in a community-wide effort to address what they can do collectively. And I think that's really an important new direction for small business.

Q Is there federal support for these efforts, or will there be as part of your initiative?

SECRETARY SHALALA: I think the point is that small business has roles, too, whether it's supportive inside. But for many small businesses, it's impossible for them to provide some subsidies directly, but they can work in a referral network, they could be supportive in their community and making sure their state invests the resources. They can be very supportive of the quality of child care and whether those child care centers are open.

Did you ever listen to the radio in this town when it snows? The first thing that we close are child care centers and Head Start centers. I actually once wrote a letter to the editor I was so appalled. They cannot get the streets cleared in the suburbs around here, so that people can get their children to their child care centers and then get to work. And I have never been in a community like this community in which that happens. (Laughter.)

Wisconsin, in 10 feet of snow, they get the roads clear -- in part, because they have to get the milk to market. But they get the roads clear so that people can get to their child care centers. The business community, the employers putting pressure on local government can make all the difference in the world in terms of the child care centers being regularly open. That's the kind of thing that small businesses can have as much clout as big businesses. And that's the kind of thing that we're talking about. Everybody is in this now.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, thank you all so much, and I hope we'll see you tomorrow at the conference, and then after that. Thanks.

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