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May 10, 1998, Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. 4A

LENGTH: 513 words

HEADLINE: PRESIDENT RENEWS PROPOSAL FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS ON;
CHILD-CARE WORKERS

BYLINE: ROBERT L. JACKSON; Los Angeles Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

President Clinton on Saturday called on Congress to approve initiatives aimed at helping working parents, including legislation to ensure that child-care workers have no criminal backgrounds.

In his weekly radio address on the eve of Mother's Day, the president sought to inject new life in his administration's package of child-care reforms, including a little-noticed "background check" proposal he submitted to Congress last fall.

That proposal would allow criminal record checks on all child-care employees through the FBI's fingerprint section by eliminating state barriers to the process.

His proposal would facilitate background checks on child-care providers by removing provisions in state laws that prevent the sharing of criminal history information for noncriminal purposes. As such, the measure would require approval by Congress and most of the 50 states.

Last month, the president directed that all federal day-care centers use the FBI's fingerprint facilities to make background checks on all employees.

Clinton said improving the quality and safety of child care would help give mothers "peace of mind."

To help parents find the best care for their children, Clinton also released a consumer guide published by the Department of Health and Human Services that suggests four steps that should be taken in choosing a child-care center: "Interview the potential caregivers, check references, evaluate how the

caregiver meets your child's needs, and stay involved."

The White House said the guide would be available to parents on the Internet.

In January the president unveiled the keystone of his child-care package -\$ 21.7 billion in proposed tax breaks and federal subsidies to reduce the financial burden on working parents.

The administration plan would give states an extra \$ 7.5 billion over five years to increase child-care subsidies they provide to parents. As a result, the number of children eligible for such assistance would double to more than 2 million.

Promoting this package, which is languishing in Congress despite a measure of bipartisan support, Clinton said, "I urge Congress to join me in making child-care better, safer and more affordable for those who need it."

But Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I., who has an alternate plan for child-care funding, said the president must do more to support the cause.

"The momentum that we were building toward consensus on a child-care bill earlier this year has sputtered out," Chafee said. "It's going to take a stronger and much more active push from the White House to get the proverbial ball rolling again."

Chafee has offered legislation that would provide tax credits for stay-at-home parents and double funding levels for the Child Care Development Block Grant program, which helps low-income and working parents with children in day care.

Some congressional Republicans have criticized Clinton's plan as favoring families where both parents are working, to the exclusion of what they call "traditional" families where the mother stays home with the children.

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May 10, 1998, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 6; National Desk

LENGTH: 670 words

HEADLINE: CLINTON URGES AID FOR CHECKS ON CAREGIVERS;
LEGISLATION: BILL GIVES ACCESS TO ANY CRIMINAL BACKGROUND ON
CHILD-CARE WORKERS.

PRESIDENT SAYS MEASURE OFFERS MOTHERS SOME 'PEACE OF MIND.'

BYLINE: ROBERT L. JACKSON, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

President Clinton on Saturday called on Congress to approve initiatives aimed at helping working parents, including legislation to help ensure that child-care workers have no criminal backgrounds.

In his weekly radio address on the eve of Mother's Day, the president sought to inject new life in his administration's package of child-care reforms, including a little-noticed "background check" proposal he submitted to Congress last fall.

That proposal allows criminal record checks on all child-care employees through the FBI's fingerprint section by eliminating state barriers to the process.

His bill, known as the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, allows background checks on child-care providers by removing provisions in state laws that prevent the sharing of criminal history information for noncriminal purposes. As such, the measure would require approval by Congress and most of the 50 states.

Last month, the president directed that all federal day-care centers use the FBI's fingerprint facilities to make background checks on all employees.

Clinton said improving the quality and safety of child care would help give mothers "peace of mind."

He cited figures showing that "three of five mothers with children under 6 are working to meet their obligations to their children and their employers."

"Juggling those responsibilities is even more difficult when quality child care is either hard to find or too expensive for those who need it," the president said.

To help parents find the best care for their children, Clinton also released a consumer guide published by the Department of Health and Human Services that suggests four steps that should be taken in choosing a child-care center:

"Interview the potential caregivers, check references, evaluate how the caregiver meets your child's needs and stay involved."

The White House said the guide would be available to parents through the Internet.

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Promoting the package, which is languishing in Congress despite a measure of bipartisan support, Clinton said, "I urge Congress to join me in making child care better, safer and more affordable for those who need it."

But Sen. John Chafee (R-R.I.), who has an alternate plan for child-care funding, said the president must do more to support the cause.

"The momentum that we were building toward consensus on a child-care bill earlier this year has sputtered out," Chafee said in a statement. "It's going to take a stronger and much more active push from the White House to get the proverbial ball rolling again."

Chafee has offered legislation to provide tax credits for stay-at-home parents and double funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant program, which helps low-income and working parents who have children in day care.

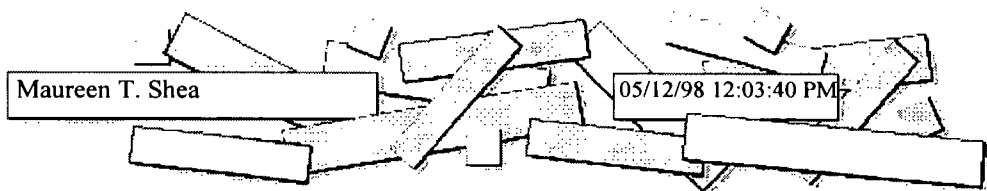
Some congressional Republicans have criticized Clinton's plan as favoring families in which both parents are working, to the exclusion of what they call "traditional" families in which the mother stays home with the children.

In his radio address, Clinton also criticized a proposed reform of the nation's bankruptcy laws, currently pending in Congress, that he said would unfairly penalize mothers who are owed child support. The proposal forces such mothers to compete with large creditors, such as banks and credit card companies, when a father owing support files for bankruptcy.

"That's not the law now, and if that competition starts, we all know who will lose the contest: our children," Clinton said. "They shouldn't have to stand in line for the support they need."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: ROTC cadets from the Aviation Academy salute President Clinton upon his arrival in Newport News, Va. Clinton was in Virginia to attend the Senate Democratic Issues Conference in Williamsburg. PHOTOGRAPHER: Associated Press PHOTO: (A2) FOR MOMS--AND DADS: On the eve of Mother's Day, President Clinton called on Congress to approve initiatives aimed at helping working parents. Above, Clinton adjusts hearing aide on his way to Marine One. PHOTOGRAPHER: Reuters

LANGUAGE: English



Maureen T. Shea

05/12/98 12:03:40 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc: Jennifer L. Klein/OPD/EOP

Subject: Mother's Day and Child Care

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Tomorrow is Mother's Day, a special moment to express the gratitude, respect, and love we feel all year round. Our mothers give us life; they offer us unconditional love, strong guidance, and the sense that we can grow up to do anything we can dream of. From our first moments, mothers are our best teachers and most selfless friends. And, like my own mother, whom I miss very much, especially on Mother's Day, they rarely ask for thanks. A mother's main wish is to see her children grow up healthy and happy.

Today, I want to talk about a few ways we, here in Washington, can give all mothers that peace of mind, whether they work in an office, a factory, a hospital, or at home. To make that tribute to motherhood, we must all take responsibility for the care of our children. For many mothers who work, as my mother did, peace of mind requires affordable, quality child care. Millions of American women have full-time jobs outside the home. Three of five mothers with children under six are working to meet their obligations to their children and their employers. Juggling those responsibilities is even more difficult when quality child care is either hard to find or too expensive to afford.

That's why I've included in my balanced budget a significant new investment in child care. I urge Congress to join me in making child care better, safer and more affordable for those who need it.

To help parents find the best care for their children, today I'm releasing a report by the Department of Health and Human Services. It's a consumer guide to child care quality that recommends four steps for parents: One, interview the potential care-givers; two, check the references; three, evaluate how the care-giver meets your child's needs; and four, stay involved. As Mother's Day reminds us, governments don't raise children, parents do. There is no substitute for a mother's love or a parent's responsibility.

We, too, in the national and state governments, however, have a responsibility; a big one is to protect America's children from abuse and neglect. Nothing gives mothers peace of mind like the knowledge their children are in safe hands. Today I'm also releasing a new Justice Department set of guidelines for screening child care workers and other care-givers; and again, I urge Congress to act on a proposal I put forth to facilitate background checks on child care-givers. There is strong bipartisan support for this proposal, and I'm hopeful that members of both parties will move quickly to give

America's children the care they deserve.

There is one other thing I'd like to talk about that we must do to protect our children. Fathers must take their share of responsibility, too. Children deserve to be raised by both parents, but when that's not possible, children must still receive the support they need. The unfortunate division of families cannot mean the end of child support. That's why we have worked so hard to toughen enforcement of child support laws; and, since 1992, we've raised collections by 68 percent a year.

We've worked too hard for too long toughening enforcement of child support laws to let our progress be accidentally undone. But that could happen if Congress goes ahead with one part of bankruptcy reform legislation now under consideration. I'm willing to work with Congress to pass responsible and fair bankruptcy reform. However, under one leading proposal, when a father declares personal bankruptcy, a mother may have to compete with powerful banks and credit card companies for the money they're owed. That's not the law now, and if that competition starts we all know who will lose the contest -- our children.

Parents have to step up to their responsibilities, and so does Congress. Some changes to consumer bankruptcy laws are in order, but mothers and children should keep their priority under the child support laws. They shouldn't have to stand in line for the support they need.

America's mothers hold a special place in our hearts. In return, we owe them the love and respect they have given us. On Mother's Day, we do so with cards, bouquets, and gifts. But today and every other day, we should also do everything in our power to give our mothers the peace of mind they deeply deserve.

Thanks for listening.

Message Sent To: _____

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES NEW EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CHILD CARE AND GIVE PARENTS PEACE OF MIND

This weekend, millions of Americans will celebrate Mother's Day and take time to recognize the critically important role that mothers play in the lives of their children. To give our nation's mothers the peace of mind they deserve, President Clinton today announced new steps to help parents choose safe, appropriate child care and again urged Congress to take action on child care legislation this year.

The President Announced New Justice Department Report to Help Protect Children in Child Care. The Justice Department report is designed to help protect children, the elderly and the disabled from abuse and neglect in care. Although the vast majority of child care providers are dedicated to the teaching and nurturing of children, one tragedy in child care is too many. Background checks are an important way to ensure that the people watching our children are fit for this responsibility. *Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working with Children, the Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities in Need of Support* offers practical guidance for screening potential caregivers and makes recommendations for developing statewide screening and background check policies. The new report underscores the need for the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, which the President transmitted to Congress last fall, has strong bipartisan support, and now awaits congressional action. The Compact will facilitate effective background checks on child care providers by eliminating state law barriers to the sharing of criminal history information for non-criminal purposes.

The President Announced New HHS Efforts To Help Parents Choose Child Care. Studies confirm that consumer education is a key ingredient to child care quality. Today, HHS releases two documents to help parents get the information they need to choose child care that is right for their children:

- **New guide will help parents select high quality child care.** The guide recommends four simple steps for parents in choosing child care: (1) interview the potential caregivers; (2) check references; (3) evaluate how the caregiver meets your child's needs; and (4) stay involved. The guide will be available to parents through the Internet.
- **New report highlights model consumer education efforts in the states and urges greater action.** The new report, *Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education*, will help states improve parent education. It highlights successful state approaches and makes recommendations to states and child care administrators on ways to provide information to parents on how to assess their child care needs, locate services, obtain subsidies for income-eligible families, evaluate quality, and choose the best, appropriate care for their children.

The President Urged Congress to Protect Child Support Collection. The President called on Congress to join him in opposing a provision in proposed bankruptcy reform legislation that may undermine the ability of single parents to collect child support and alimony. The Administration supports responsible bankruptcy reform, but under one bill in the House of Representatives, some parents who try to collect child support from former spouses who file for bankruptcy could find themselves in competition with large credit card companies. Since 1992, child support collection has increased by 68 percent, and the President is committed to safeguarding that important progress.

The President Called for Congressional Action on Child Care. Millions of Americans, struggling to be both good parents and good workers, rely on child care and after-school programs for part of each day. As part of his balanced budget request, the President called for significant new investments in child care -- to help working families pay for child care, build a good supply of after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning. Today, the President renewed his call on Congress to put aside partisan differences and take action on child care this year.

Draft 05/07/98 7:30pm

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON MOTHER'S DAY AND CHILD CARE
WASHINGTON, DC
May 9, 1998

Tomorrow is Mother's Day, a special moment to express the gratitude, respect, and love we feel all year round. Our mothers give us life; they offer us unconditional love; they endow us with self-esteem and a generosity of spirit. From our first moments, mothers are our best teachers and most selfless friends. And, like my own mother, whom I miss very much, they rarely ask for thanks. A mother's main wish is to see her children grow up healthy and happy.

Today, I want to talk about a few ways we can give all mothers that peace of mind--whether they work at an office, a factory, a hospital, or at home. To make that tribute to motherhood, we must all take responsibility for the care of our children. For many mothers, peace of mind requires affordable, high-quality child care. Millions of American women, by necessity or by choice, pursue full-time careers outside the home. Three out of five mothers with children under six are attempting this delicate balancing act--between work and home, between one's colleagues and one's kids. It is a difficult decision. And for many low-income families, it is not a decision at all--because quality child care is either hard to find or too expensive to afford.

That's why I have included in my balanced budget a significant new investment in child care. I urge Congress to join me in making child care better, safer and more affordable for those who need it.

To help parents find the best care for their children, I am today releasing a report by the Department of Health and Human Services. It's a consumer's guide to child care quality that recommends four steps for parents: one, interview the potential care givers; two, check references; three, evaluate how the care giver meets your child's needs; and four, stay involved. Because, as Mother's Day reminds us, governments don't raise children; parents do. There can be no substitute for a mother's love or a parent's responsibility.

We, too, in the national and state governments, have a responsibility--to protect America's children from abuse and neglect. Nothing gives mothers peace of mind like the knowledge that their children are in safe hands. Today I am also releasing new Justice Department guidelines for screening child care workers and other care givers; and again I urge Congress to act on a proposal I put forth to facilitate background checks. There is strong bipartisan support for this proposal, and I am hopeful that members of both parties will move quickly to give America's children the care they deserve.

But there is one other thing we must do to protect America's children: fathers must take responsibility. Children deserve to be raised by both parents; and, when that's not possible, fathers must provide the child support that's needed. If fathers simply walk away, mothers and

children wind up on the welfare rolls and taxpayers end up paying the bill. That's why my administration has cracked down on deadbeat dads. Since 1992, we've raised child support collections by 68 percent.

We have worked too hard for too long toughening enforcement of child support laws to let our progress be accidentally undone. But that could happen if Congress goes ahead with one part of bankruptcy reform legislation now under consideration. Under that proposal, when a father declares personal bankruptcy, a mother may have to compete with powerful banks and credit card companies for the money they're owed. We all know who will lose that contest: America's children. Fathers have to step up to their responsibilities and so does Congress. Some changes to the consumer bankruptcy laws are in order, but mothers and children shouldn't have to stand in line for the support they need.

America's mothers hold a special place in our hearts. In return, let us give them the love and respect they have given us. On Mother's Day, we do so with cards and bouquets. But today and every other day, we should also do everything in our power to give America's mothers the peace of mind they so deeply deserve.

DRAFT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Kharfen
(202) 401-9215**HHS HELPS PARENTS CHOOSE AND STATES BETTER INFORM PARENTS ON QUALITY CHILD CARE**

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala today released a new, practical and easy-to-use guide for parents to choose quality child care providers and a brochure for states on improving consumer education to parents. Both were announced by President Clinton in his message for Mother's Day. The guide, named "Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider", will be available on the world wide web and distributed to states and communities to share with parents. The brochure, entitled "Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education" will be sent to states and available on the web.

"As President Clinton says, no parent should have to choose between the job they need and the children they love," said Secretary Shalala. "Millions of America's working parents struggle each with three basic questions about child care: can I find it? can I afford it? and can I trust it?"

"This handy and helpful guide can give parents more confidence in selecting the best child care provider for their kids," Shalala added. "The valuable information we provide to the states will help ensure that parents learn the who, where and how of getting good child care."

The "Four Steps" guide suggests a simple, basic approach to selecting a quality child care provider: interview the potential caregiver, check references, make the decision for quality care and stay involved with the caregiver. Each step has a list of easy to follow questions for parents to ask and check off to learn about how the potential provider interacts with children, responds to parents, ensures proper health and safety standards, is affordable, and meets any special needs of their children. There are also toll-free numbers for more information on health and safety and to find a local child care resource and referral program.

A February 1998 report by the HHS Inspector General found that "most [states] were not able to provide sufficient consumer education" for parents to decide on quality child care programs. HHS's new guide to states provides successful examples and useful recommendations to states and child care administrators on efforts to inform parents better on how to their assess their child care needs, locate services, obtain subsidies for income eligible families, evaluate quality and choose the best, appropriate care for their children. The guide contains examples of effective public awareness campaigns, use of the world wide web and toll free telephone numbers, information resources, and state initiatives to enhance child care quality.

The availability of quality child care is a challenge for parents to find. A survey of parents revealed that 62 percent of working parents report major problems finding quality child care to meet their needs. A study on quality and cost of child care in several states found that only 1 out of 7 child care programs met an acceptable level of quality. Another reported that 13 percent of regulated and 50 percent of non-regulated care were found to provide inadequate care. Most importantly, a continuing study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, shows that there is a direct connection between higher quality care and better cognitive development for children.

"Though states are making investments to help improve the quality of care, most are using funds to provide as many child care spaces as they can." Golden added, "The 'Four Step' guide and the consumer education brochure for states won't go out of date to help parents find quality child care."

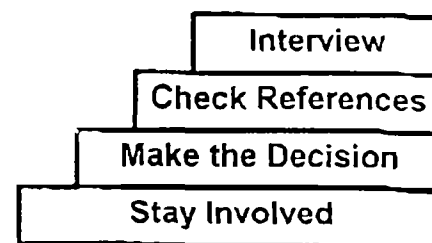
DRAFT

Early this year, President Clinton proposed an historic investment in child care for America's working families. The unprecedented \$21.7 billion program will expand subsidies for low income working families, increase tax credits for middle income families and provide resources to states and communities to enhance and ensure that parents have quality choices in child care providers. The President's plan gives parents flexible options to choose a child caretaker in their home, in a neighborhood home or a center. There are 10 million children eligible for federal subsidies, yet only 1 million children receive support. With 70 percent of America's mothers in the work force, working parents are desperately in need of help to continue to support their kids and have safe, healthy places for their children for part of the day.

"Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider" and "Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education" can be found on the world wide web at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>. For the toll-free number for a nearby child care resource and referral program, call Child Care Aware at (800) 424-2246. For more information on health and safety in child care programs, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at (800) 598-KIDS.

###

Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider



1. Interview Caregivers

Call First

Ask....

- ✓ Is there an opening for my child?
- ✓ What hours and days are you open and where are you located?
- ✓ How much does care cost? Is financial assistance available?
- ✓ How many children are in your care? What age groups do you serve?
- ✓ Do you provide transportation?
- ✓ Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- ✓ Do you have a license, accreditation, or other certification?
- ✓ When can I come to visit?

Visit Next (Visit more than once, stay as long as you can!)

Look for....

- ✓ Responsive, nurturing, warm interactions between caregiver and children.
- ✓ Children who are happily involved in daily activities and comfortable with their caregiver.
- ✓ A clean, safe, and healthy indoor and outdoor environment, especially napping, eating and toileting areas.
- ✓ A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks, and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting and which will contribute to their growth and development.
- ✓ Children getting individual attention.

Ask....

- ✓ Can I visit at any time?
- ✓ How do you handle discipline?
- ✓ What do you do if a child is sick?
- ✓ What would you do in case of an emergency?
- ✓ Are all children and staff required to be immunized?
- ✓ Do you have a substitute or back-up caregiver?
- ✓ Where do children nap? Do you know that babies should go to sleep on their backs?
- ✓ What training have you (and other staff/substitutes) had?
- ✓ May I see a copy of your license or other certification?
- ✓ May I have a list of parents (current and former) who have used your care?



2. Check References

Ask other parents....

- ✓ Was the caregiver reliable on a daily basis?
- ✓ How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- ✓ Did your child enjoy the child care experience?
- ✓ How did the caregiver respond to you as a parent?
- ✓ Was the caregiver respectful of your values and culture?
- ✓ Would you recommend the caregiver without reservation?
- ✓ If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Ask the local child care resource and referral program or licensing office....

- ✓ What regulations should child care providers meet in my area?
- ✓ Is there a record of complaints about the child care provider I am considering and how do I find out about it?

3. Make the Decision for Quality Care

From what you heard and saw, ask yourself....

- ✓ Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- ✓ Which caregiver can meet the special needs of my child?
- ✓ Are the caregiver's values compatible with my family's values?
- ✓ Is the child care available and affordable according to my family's needs and resources?
- ✓ Do I feel good about my decision?

4. Stay Involved

Ask yourself....

- ✓ How can I arrange my schedule so that I can...
 - talk to my caregiver every day?
 - talk to my child every day about how the day went?
 - visit and observe my child in care at different times of the day?
 - be involved in my child's activities?
- ✓ How can I work with my caregiver to resolve issues and concerns that may arise?
- ✓ How do I keep informed about my child's growth and development while in care?
- ✓ How can I promote good working conditions for my child care provider?
- ✓ How can I network with other parents?

These steps are only the beginning. Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. To find the Child Care Resource and Referral Program nearest you, call Child Care Aware: (800) 424-2246. For more complete guidelines on health and safety in child care, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care: (800) 598-KIDS (5437).

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Booklet, "Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education," 20 pages

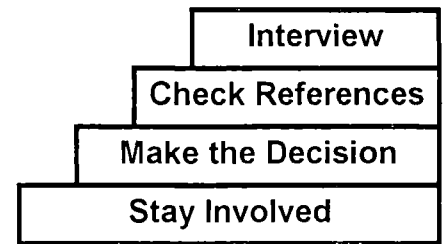
REACHING PARENTS

WITH CHILD CARE CONSUMER EDUCATION



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau

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The President Announced New Justice Department Report to Help Protect Children in Child Care. The Justice Department report is designed to help protect children, the elderly and the disabled from abuse and neglect in care. Although the vast majority of child care providers are dedicated to the teaching and nurturing of children, one tragedy in child care is too many. Background checks are an important way to ensure that the people watching our children are fit for this responsibility. *Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working with Children, the Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities in Need of Support* offers practical guidance for screening potential caregivers and makes recommendations for developing statewide screening and background check policies. The new report underscores the need for the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, which the President transmitted to Congress last fall, has strong bipartisan support, and now awaits congressional action. The Compact will facilitate effective background checks on child care providers by eliminating state law barriers to the sharing of criminal history information for non-criminal purposes.

The President Announced New HHS Efforts To Help Parents Choose Child Care. Studies confirm that consumer education is a key ingredient to child care quality. Today, HHS releases two documents to help parents get the information they need to choose child care that is right for their children:

- **New guide will help parents select high quality child care.** The guide recommends four simple steps for parents in choosing child care: (1) interview the potential caregivers; (2) check references; (3) evaluate how the caregiver meets your child's needs; and (4) stay involved. The guide will be available to parents through the Internet.
- **New report highlights model consumer education efforts in the states and urges greater action.** The new report, *Reaching Parents with Child Care Consumer Education*, will help states improve parent education. It highlights successful state approaches and makes recommendations to states and child care administrators on ways to provide information to parents on how to assess their child care needs, locate services, obtain subsidies for income-eligible families, evaluate quality, and choose the best, appropriate care for their children.

The President Urged Congress to Protect Child Support Collection. The President called on Congress to join him in opposing a provision in proposed bankruptcy reform legislation that may undermine the ability of single parents to collect child support and alimony. The Administration supports responsible bankruptcy reform, but under one bill in the House of Representatives, some parents who try to collect child support from former spouses who file for bankruptcy could find themselves in competition with large credit card companies. Since 1992, child support collection has increased by 68 percent, and the President is committed to safeguarding that important progress.

The President Called for Congressional Action on Child Care. Millions of Americans, struggling to be both good parents and good workers, rely on child care and after-school programs for part of each day. As part of his balanced budget request, the President called for significant new investments in child care -- to help working families pay for child care, build a good supply of after-school programs, improve the safety and quality of care, and promote early learning. Today, the President renewed his call on Congress to put aside partisan differences and take action on child care this year.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 7, 1998

TAPED WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

DATE: May 8, 1998
LOCATION: Oval Office
TIME: 9:30 AM
FROM: Bruce Reed
Megan Moloney

I. PURPOSE

In honor of Mother's Day this Sunday, you will discuss how all Americans must take responsibility for the care of our children -- through protecting child support collection and taking action on child care.

II. BACKGROUND

Your Mother's Day radio address provides an opportunity to focus on child care, urge congressional action, and make two announcements aimed at giving parents greater peace of mind on child care:

- (1) *Background Checks for Child Care Workers:* You will release Department of Justice guidelines for screening child care workers and other caregivers, designed to reduce the incidence of abuse by care providers. This report demonstrates the need for the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, which you transmitted to Congress last fall and which now awaits congressional action. The Compact is designed to facilitate effective background checks on child care providers by eliminating state law barriers to the sharing of criminal history information for non-criminal purposes.
- (2) *Parent Education on Child Care:* You will release two HHS documents: a new guide for parents on what to look for in choosing quality child care, and a report for states on improving child care consumer education.

You will also make a statement on pending bankruptcy

reform legislation and the Administration's opposition to one aspect of a bill in the House of Representatives. Under this provision, certain credit card debts would be nondischargeable under Chapter 7 and thus elevated to the same priority as taxes, educational loans, and child support and alimony. Former spouses could find themselves in competition with large credit card companies to receive their family support. Your advisers recommend strong opposition to this provision; however, such opposition should not be seen as inconsistent with our support for responsible bankruptcy reform.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing (9:15-9:30 am)

The President
Rahm Emanuel
Ann Lewis
Bruce Reed
Jen Klein
Jeff Shesol
Nicole Rabner

Radio Address (9:30 am)

The President
Megan Moloney
Rebecca Cameron
White House Communications Agency (WHCA) Staff
White House Television (WHTV)
White House photographer
Approx. 30 guests (see attached for list)

IV. PRESS PLAN

The ABC, AP, C-CPAN, CBS, NBC/Mutual/Westwood One, NPR, UPI, USA, American Urban Radio and Standard News networks will carry the address in its entirety to their thousands of stations across the country this Saturday at 10:06 AM ET.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Briefing
Deliver Radio Address
Greet Guests

VI. REMARKS

To be forwarded by the Office of Speechwriting

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GUIDELINES

**FOR THE SCREENING
OF PERSONS WORKING
WITH CHILDREN,
THE ELDERLY,
AND INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES
IN NEED OF SUPPORT**

OJJDP
Summary

Possible Mother's
Day.

HHS NEWS

DRAFT #91

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Kharfen
(202) 401-9215

HHS HELPS PARENTS CHOOSE QUALITY CHILD CARE

Public/Private Partnership with Gerber Foods will make information available to millions of parents

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala joined First Lady Hillary Clinton at the White House today to release a new, practical and easy-to-use guide for parents to choose quality child care providers. The guide, named "Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider," will be available on the world wide web and distributed to states and communities to share with parents. In a continuing, successful public/private partnership with Gerber Foods, an abbreviated version of the "Four Steps" will be printed on Gerber cereal boxes that will reach an estimated 4 million homes.

Early this year, President Clinton proposed an historic investment in child care for America's working families. The unprecedented \$21.7 billion program will expand subsidies for low income working families, increase tax credits for middle income families and provide resources to states and communities to enhance and ensure that parents have quality choices in child care providers. The President's plan gives parents flexible options to choose a child caretaker in their home, in a neighborhood home or a center. There are 10 million children eligible for federal subsidies, yet only 1 million children receive support. With 70 percent of America's mothers in the work force, working parents are desperately in need of help to continue to support their kids and have safe, healthy places for their children for part of the day.

"As President Clinton says, no parent should have to choose between the job they need and the children they love," said Secretary Shalala. "Millions of America's working parents struggle each day with three basic questions about child care: can I find it? can I afford it? and can I trust it?"

"This handy and helpful guide can give parents more confidence in selecting the best child care provider for their kids," Shalala added.

The "Four Steps" guide suggests a simple, basic approach to selecting a quality child care provider: interview the potential caregiver, check references, make the decision for quality care and stay involved with the caregiver. Each step has a list of easy to follow questions for parents to ask and check off to learn about how the potential provider interacts with children, responds to parents,

- More -

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ensures proper health and safety standards, is affordable, and meets any special needs of their children. There are also toll-free numbers for more information on health and safety and to find a local child care resource and referral program.

A recent report by the HHS Inspector General cited that there is a shortage of consumer information for parents to decide on quality child care programs.

"We are very thankful to Gerber Foods for their continuing commitment to sharing important information for children and parents. We're very excited that millions of parents will have easy access to this helpful guide to choose child care by merely reading the Gerber cereal box," said Shalala. HHS has had a successful partnership with Gerber Foods to promote childhood immunization.

A continuing study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development shows that there is a direct connection between higher quality care and better cognitive development for children. But at the same time, many surveys have found that quality care is hard to find. A study by the Family and Work Institute reported that 13 percent of regulated and 50 percent of non-regulated care were found to provide inadequate care. A four-state survey by the University of Colorado at Denver found that only 1 out of 7 child care programs met an acceptable level of quality.

"Our recent report on state child care plans shows clearly that states have set income levels for assistance that exclude working families who are struggling to get by," said Olivia A. Golden, HHS assistant secretary for children and families. "States are working hard to meet the child care needs of families moving from welfare to work, but they don't have enough money to help the low-income working families who need it."

"Though states are making investments to help improve the quality of care, most are using funds to provide as many child care spaces as they can." Golden added, "This "Four Step" guide won't go out of date to help parents find quality child care."

"Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider" can be found on the world wide web at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>. For the toll-free number for a nearby child care resource and referral program, call Child Care Aware at (800) 424-2246. For more information on health and safety in child care programs, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at (800) 598-KIDS.

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Note: HHS press releases are available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.hhs.gov>.