

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
ON CHILD CARE

The University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Neil. Thank you, Professor Seefeldt. Thank you, Congressman Hoyer. Thank you, President Kirwan.

As I was sitting up here and Steny was introducing the President's family, when he introduced his wife, President Kirwan turned to me and said, you know, I met her in junior high school. (Laughter.) He said, she sat behind me and she couldn't stand me. (Laughter.) And I thought, that's exactly the kind of memories I have from junior high school -- you know, the boy you really liked at the end of the year was the one you couldn't stand at the beginning of the year.

But this junior high school romance has certainly stood the test of time. And I'm delighted to be here with your family and with the family of this great university.

I came here today for a number of reasons. Part of it, as the President suggested, is because I enjoyed my visit to be the commencement speaker so much and was very honored to receive an honorary degree, and also because I have followed with great interest the work that is being done at this university in many areas. But in particular, I have been impressed by the work that has been done in

the area of human development, social and public policy. And we, of course, as you know, we're blessed in the White House by having Professor Galston with us for a number of years, so I feel a real kinship with the work that is done here and the people who are part of this great university community.

So when the opportunity arose for me to come and speak with you about an upcoming White House Conference on Child Care, I immediately seized it, because, as the Congressman said, the President and I are hosting a White House Conference on Child Care on October 23rd, and I wanted to come and tell you why this is an issue that deserves White House attention, deserves the attention of our nation, one that we hope will raise awareness of these issues around our country.

Some of you may recall that last spring the President and I hosted a Conference on Early Learning and Brain Research, and we brought to the nation's attention the very exciting work that has been done by researchers here at NIH and elsewhere across the country that demonstrates clearly how important it is that we take the first three years of life, because of what is happening in a child's brain. And we wanted to get that information out because, although many people intuitively knew that, and experts like Professor Seefeldt taught that, there wasn't the hard data that supported that information until recently, with the kind of work that has been going on in brain research.

And so, for a lot of reasons, this is a time when all of us have to focus on what we best can do in our own homes and

families, as well as in our larger society, to ensure that each child has a chance to live up to his or her promise.

I saw that in action this morning here at the Center for Young Children. What a wonderful facility you have here -- a child care center that is warm and inviting, with workers that are creative and energetic and focused, a range of books and toys and crafts materials.

I answered question from the five-year-olds who wanted to know, among other things, what my favorite food was, what my favorite color was -- and then a real stumper was what my favorite

roller coaster was. (Laughter.) I had to confess to this little boy that it has been so long since I've been on a roller coaster I couldn't remember the names of any of the roller coasters I like. But I certainly had the feeling that this is a place where children are treasured and valued and stimulated, a place that any of us would happily stay for juice and nap time any day.

But that center is far too rare, even though more and more families are seeking child care. In fact, over half of the infants under age one are in day care; 12 million children under the age of six, and 17 million more age six through 13, have both parents or their only parent in the work force. The plain fact is that there is simply not enough quality care for the children who need it. Quality child care is financially out of reach for the hard-working American families whose children deserve the best attention they can receive.

So today I come with a very straightforward proposition that this situation must change for the sake of our children and our future. And there are ways I want to suggest that each of us can participate in this change.

Every working parent in this room and in this country knows how urgent the matter is. Any mom or dad who has ever left a child with a care-giver for even a minute has felt at the gut level the importance of quality care. The stress around child care affects families ranging from the poorest all the way to the most affluent. It is a daily pressure for parents with preschoolers and parents with children in school who, for whatever reason, cannot get home to supervise a child themselves.

For more than 25 years, I have worked on issues affecting children and families. But in the last four and a half years I've been privileged to travel around our country on my own and with my husband, listening and talking with parents about their economic concerns, the issues that affect them on the streets where they live, whether it's crime or the environment, and I've heard over and over again how important child care is. Yet, despite its importance in our everyday lives, it is not an issue that has been dealt with effectively by our society.

Now, there are many reasons for this oversight, and some of you who are students of human development and child care could

recite many of them, I'm sure. But I think it's fair to say that until the demographics of our citizenry changed, until economic forces and women's choices led so many mothers into the work force, this was not an issue that many people thought was serious. It was, like many issues affecting children in the past, viewed as a soft issue that was of disproportionate concern to women. Yet now we know it is one of the hardest issues we face and it is an issue that has economic and social implications that go far beyond the individual concern that each of us brings to it.

Fortunately, times are changing -- partly because of the work that many of you are doing, partly because more and more parents are speaking out, partly because America's employers have come to

understand that the strength of their bottom lines depends on workers who are not absent, who will have their mind on their work when they're there, whose child care needs are being met; and partly because we have people in leadership like the President of this university, like this member of Congress before you who represents you, and because of my husband and members of Congress and state legislators of both parties and many governors who have made this a priority.

All of this brings us together in the name of a shared belief that the children of our country deserve child care as fine as that provided right here at this university. In fact, American children deserve the best care in the world.

Now, there are many reasons to put our children's needs first, but let me just mention a few of them. One reason, as I've already stated, is because we know that how we care for our children is critical to their intellectual and emotional development. You know, it wasn't so long ago -- and I can actually recall when I was younger and thinking about children a lot and even pregnant with my own -- that it used to be kind of a joke among a lot of fathers that I knew that they would say, well, you know, let's wait until he can throw a ball or she can talk to me and then I'll pay attention. And it was the kind of attitude that had been prevalent for most of history that very young children should be cared for by their mothers, other women, that there wasn't much for fathers to do because there wasn't much happening until a child started to in some way assert a personality, act on his or her own. Well, now we know

clearly that that was mistaken. As we talked about at the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development in April, what happens to a child in those earliest years can make all the difference for a lifetime.

Just 15 years ago, even scientists thought that a baby's brain structure was virtually complete at birth. Now, neuroscience tells us that it is a work in progress and that everything we do with a child has some kind of potential physical influence on that rapidly forming brain. As one participant at the White House Conference put it, nature and nurture don't compete, they cooperate.

Children's earliest experiences -- the sights and sounds and smells and feelings they encounter, the challenges they meet -- they determine how their brains are wired. For those of you who know a lot more about computers than I know, we're talking about how the brain shapes itself through repeated experiences. The more something is repeated, the stronger the neurocircuitry becomes. And those connections, in turn, can be permanent. In this way, even the seemingly unimportant, totally forgettable events of our first years are anything but trivial. It is during this time that children learn to soothe themselves when they're upset, to empathize, to get along with others, to become -- and we hope they will -- human beings of the finest order.

Experiences in those first three years of life can also determine how well a child learns. When someone speaks, reads or plays with an infant or toddler, her or she, whether it is a parent, a grandparent, an older sibling or a care-giver, is activating the connections in that child's brain that will one day enable her to think and read and speak and solve problems herself. Now, what that means is that sub-par care, whether in the home or in a child care setting, means that a young brain is being deprived of what it needs to live up to its natural potential.

Now, that is a very serious conclusion for us to reach, and now we have no more excuses. If we know that ignoring the child, being impatient, pushing off an 8-month-old or a 16-month-old, failing to invest the time that is necessary in that two-and-a-half-year-old, then we have to acknowledge it's not just a momentary action, but it adds to the past and the present and the feelings that that child is internalizing, and it also, literally, affects the

brain.

Another reason we need to act is that we now have evidence that child care is too often inadequate. Research presents a troubling picture. A recent national study of child care centers found that 70 percent of children are in care that is barely adequate; 10 percent are in care that is dangerous to their health and safety. Infants and toddlers are at the greatest risk, with 40 percent in care that poses a threat to their health and well-being. That means that they spend hours of their days with care-givers who do not follow basic sanitary practices, who rarely cuddle, talk to or play with these infants and toddlers, in rooms that lack toys and other materials to encourage development, and in places where the ratio of children to adults is too high for individual attention. Only 20 percent of our children are in what we could call "high quality care," such as what I saw this morning.

A study of child care in family-based settings found equally disturbing patterns. Only 56 percent of these programs provided adequate care. Thirty-five percent were deemed inadequate, which means, as we now know, that the hours spent there could actually undercut a child's development. And only nine percent offered high-quality care, which was defined as enhancing the growth and development of children. And even where quality care is available, it 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 24 to 25 percent of their income for child care. That takes a big chunk out of a household budget. But it was still not enough to ensure quality care. I asked about the cost of the child care centers here on this campus, and there is a sliding scale, which is very important, but it still costs between \$340 and \$600 a month. Middle class families are hit hard as well. Families earning up to \$36,000 pay out 12 percent of their income for child care without any guarantee that that 12 percent is buying quality. It is difficult to think of a consumer situation in America where so many people are paying so much and too often getting so little.

Another reason we need to act is that we now know from another study that was just completed by the National Institute for Child Health and Development that good child care can be beneficial

to young children, whether it is care given at home or in a day care center. Now, there's not doubt that the most important, lasting influence on any child is that child's family. But we do know that good, quality child care can improve a child's chances, if that child is in a difficult family situation or enhance a child's learning and maturity if that child is in a good family situation. And for children who come out of family situations that are not always conducive to their well-being, bad child care can make a difficult situation even worse.

Now, a final reason we need to act is because of the changing nature of the work force. We know that the American work force has changed dramatically in the past 40 years and that has meant dramatic changes in family life. Half of all mothers with children under the age of one are working outside the home, and not only are more parents working, they are working longer hours. So this issue must become a policy challenge for all of us because it clearly affects the well-being of children, American workers, and the dynamism of our economy itself.

I would imagine that many of you who are parents and those of you who are students, not yet parents, can equally shut your eyes and imagine or think back to one of those work-family conflicts that has occurred in all of our lives. Even though my daughter is a freshman in college, I still remember vividly the days when my child care arrangements fell through and I was not able to do anything about them. Now, luckily for me, those were very few because I had the kind of job where if my daughter were sick or if she had a special occasion that I wanted to take advantage of in her preschool or her school years, I could arrange my schedule. That is not the case for the vast majority of working moms and dads.

I also had the advantage, except for two years of her life, to live in a Governor's Mansion where there were lots of people around. That is not a common experience for most working mothers. And so I'm very aware that my situation was unique. But even with it, I recall vividly those few times when, despite my best efforts and a very supportive husband and all of the balancing we all do, it just all fell through and I had to scramble like crazy to make up for it.

One time in particular when I couldn't cancel something or just not go into work or go in late -- I had to be in court at

9:00 a.m. -- and Chelsea was up all night sick and my baby-sitter was sick, probably with the same thing Chelsea was sick with, and my husband was out of town and my family wasn't around, and I called one of my best friends and she wasn't available. And it was just a real terrible feeling that you get when you know that you want to be with your child and because of work demands you can't. And I was lucky enough to find a neighbor who could come in and sit with her. And I called home every chance I had a break and rushed home when I finished to find her very well taken care of.

But that is not what is available to most parents. And I know it is infinitely tougher for most women who every day are trying to do the best they can. And I honestly don't know how single parents do it. And I think we ought to be very sympathetic and very supportive of all parents, but particularly of single parents.

Too many children end up because of their parents' challenges, caring for themselves or being supervised by older siblings. And we know what happens when children are left unsupervised. According to the FBI, it is during the late afternoon that our youngest children, those who are in their preteens or early teens, are most likely to experiment with drugs, to become involved with criminal gangs, to get pregnant, to commit violence or to get in trouble in other ways. So, when that 3:00 p.m. bell rings, kids are relieved, but a lot of working parents panic. And we have to find a way to help parents with school-aged children as well.

So we know we need to act, but where do we start. Well, we can learn from models of excellent child care around our country. They can provide the energy and expertise and inspiration for what we need to do now. One very bright spot is the military's child care system. Our Defense Department runs the largest child care system in the world, taking care of the children of the parents who are in the front lines of America. I was privileged just two days ago at Quantico Marine Base to be able to see firsthand what is being provided for the children of our Armed Forces and I have to say I saw what every parent would want for her child -- a beautiful facility, well-trained workers, high standards, unannounced inspections both in the center and in the family day care settings, a toll-free number for parents to call with their concerns, mandatory training for everyone that comes into contact with and works with a child, and, most importantly, good wages and solid benefits and respect for staff. Now, that has resulted in lower turnover and more experienced

care-givers.

Now, that wasn't always the case, and I learned in a very open discussion that the military's child care was not always what we would hold up as an example. In fact, even the center that I visited at Quantico is brand-new because the previous one had to be shut down because it didn't make the grade a few years ago. But, the leadership of our military knows that readiness depends upon mothers and fathers being able to do their work without worrying about who's caring for their children. So the military made a commitment to turning its child care system around and Quantico is now a shining example of what can be done.

I want to tell two stories that I heard. The first, from one of the commanders there was what happens before good child care in the military. I heard about a mother and a father who were both called to duty on an emergency basis at the same time. I believe they were both pilots. They had to be in the air at the same time. When that happened, they had to bring their two infants in bassinets to the office of their commander -- (laughter) -- leave those bassinets in their commander's office with instructions for care and feeding. Now, that beats any story about child care challenges that I've ever heard.

The second story is about what happens now that there is quality care available, no matter what the occasion. I met a staff sergeant, a single dad raising two little girls. He said that when he took his daughters to day care the first day they cried when he dropped them off, but the second day they cried when he came to pick them up. (Laughter.) I was especially impressed by this very tough Marine who's obviously put in his time at the weight training facility, talking with great pride about how he mastered pigtails and ponytails for his daughters. But I think part of the reason his confidence is so high about embarking on the rather daunting task of being a single dad of two little girls is because he's gotten a lot of support from the child care facility and the care-givers who have been there, helping him along, encouraging him, giving him advice, helping to create that village.

On a serious note also, we were privileged to have Lt. Colonel Pote (phonetic), who I see in the audience here, speak about the perspective of the child care system from the perspective of a commander. He said that his soldiers are more productive when they

don't have to worry about their children. Now, I probably should say his Marines are more productive when they don't have to worry about their children. And the result of that is a much higher level of preparedness 24 hours a day.

Now, there are certainly differences between the military and civilian sector, but I believe that the military's experience can serve as a beacon for the American workplace in general. When parents don't have to come to work feeling concerned about how their children are doing, they can make a much more positive contribution which benefits all of us.

Just before I visited Quantico I was in Miami at Baptist Hospital there that also has made a commitment to child care. I saw another first-class facility. I learned about how they had adjusted the hours because, just like the military, they have 24-hour work days in a hospital. And I heard a lot of detail from the chief executive officer about why it is good economic sense to provide this service.

I met at the hospital with the Board of Directors of something called Florida's Child Care Executive Partnership, a group of business executives appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles to address child care issues. In creating this partnership, Florida put aside \$2 million the first year to match dollar for dollar corporate contributions for child care. And the board was charged with engaging the private sector in this effort.

Once asked, the Florida business community responded quickly and generously, and this year the legislature and the business community are doubling their commitment so that we're taking both public dollars and private-sector dollars and pooling them to create more affordable quality child care. And because of this effort, thousands of more working families in Florida now have access to the kind of care I saw at Quantico, I saw at Baptist Hospital, and I saw here at the university.

Because we know that providing good child care requires community involvement. The grant money in Florida only goes to communities where businesses have come together with child care organizations to forge a plan of action. And when I asked these business leaders why they thought the partnership was successful, they didn't hesitate to answer in very businesslike terms; they said

it was good for the bottom line. They said they didn't have to spend as much time recruiting new workers who left because of child care problems, they didn't have to spend as much money recruiting new workers who had to be trained, they didn't have to worry about absenteeism, which had been cut dramatically. Now, that was also the experience of many other businesses with whom I have met, and I just find it being repeated over and over again.

So, because I find the partnership concept so impressive, I'm very pleased to announce today that the Department of Health and Human Services is awarding a half million dollar grant to the Families and Work Institute, the National Governors Association, and the Finance Project, to assist states in developing these partnerships with the private sector.

And the President has, earlier this year, tasked the military, the Department of Defense, to work with the private sector to take the experience they've gained, their guidelines which have been carefully written, and bring those to the table to discuss with more child care centers and family day care providers what can be done to use money like that available in Florida to make models that can be replicated. Because all sectors of society have to be involved -- businesses, schools, police departments, religious organizations, libraries, citizens organizations, the federal, state and the local governments.

We hope that the White House Conference will be a catalyst to bringing many of these sectors together. I also hope that at the White House Conference we will discuss ways that could assist parents who wish to make the choice to stay at home with their children more economically feasible, because it's not just creating good child care centers and family day care centers outside the home; how do we create real choices that are available to working families so that they, in the privacy of their family, can make a decision that it is economically feasible for one parent to be there for their children.

It is important to remember that this conference is a starting point. I hope that it marks the beginning of national discussion and action. And I hope that its focus on the three key areas will spark individual ideas around the country. Now, the three key areas are the lack of affordable child care, quality concerns, and the need for school-age care.

We have already discussed affordability, and we've made some progress. The President took some steps to address this need. For starters, he expanded federal funding for child care. In fact, since 1993, child care funding has risen by approximately 68 percent, and it now reaches more than one million children through subsidies which is critical if they're going to have financial access to quality care. And I'm encouraged, too, that in the last four years more states are committing their own resources to help working people pay for quality child care.

In the balanced budget agreement, the \$500 child tax credit will go to 27 million families with 45 million children under the age of 17. Now, for the typical American family with two kids, this child tax credit will mean \$1,000 more in take-home pay per year. That is especially important for low-income families who are also going to benefit from this child tax credit. Thirteen million children from families with incomes below \$30,000 will receive the credit. That's a lot of young teachers, police officers, farmers, nurses, and others who will have some extra income to put into whatever their family decides, but certainly one of the great expenses is improving child care. Also, through the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit, more working families have had a cut in their taxes, which has on average meant an increase in their income of over \$1,000.

So there have been real steps forward so that there is more child care available, it's subsidized, and there is more of an opportunity for families with children to take advantage of these programs.

The President has also made child care an essential component of welfare reform. He insisted that welfare reform include spending for child care because we're putting a lot more women, single women with children, into the work force. So it will be increased by nearly \$4 billion over the next six years.

But that is still not enough and we have a long way to go to explore how better to enable parents to meet their child care costs.

Quality is the second key issue. We have to do more to support child care providers. We have not done a good job of lifting

up the profession that is so important in taking care of our children and matching that with increased income and job opportunities and benefits.

I've been to a lot of child care centers and I've met many, many terrific people running and working in them. But their salaries are woefully low, and many leave the profession because it's not one that enables them to support themselves and their own families. I remember one provider who told me with tears in her eyes that with the birth of her second child, she had to leave taking care of children, which is what she loved to do more than anything, and go to work in an office because she needed to make more income.

So we have to do all we can to encourage and support child care workers to get training, to build their skills and increase their knowledge, which will demand higher salaries and benefits. We have to find the very best people to take the jobs of caring for our children because parents should not have to worry whether their child is safe at day care. And the vast majority of teachers are absolutely superb in caring for their children, but there are a few who we need to make sure do not go into the classrooms of our day care centers.

And we also have to help parents do a better job of searching out good child care. In survey after survey, when parents are asked, they really don't know what they're looking for. They don't know what kind of equipment should be there; they don't know what kind of training they would be demanding for the child care workers. Too often, parents are better informed about what kind of car to buy than what kind of child care to choose. So we have to help parents become more informed consumers to create that demand that will absolutely say to the marketplace: we must have higher quality for the money we're paying.

One of the interesting results of a lot of the research that has been done recently is that good quality child care is

generally, but not always, more expensive than inadequate child care. And in the middle, there is a lot of child care that could be vastly improved with some good training and better guidance, that would make a big difference for the money that is being paid.

Now, I hope that we will continue to focus on safeguarding the health and safety of children in our disparate system around the country. Certainly, the President earmarked money going to the states for child care for quality improvements. And this summer he proposed a new rule requiring that child care programs that receive federal dollars make sure that all children are immunized.

And in 1995 the administration launched the Healthy Child Care America Campaign, which promotes partnerships between child care centers and health agencies. That initiative, now in 46 states, teaches child care centers how to create safe healthy environments. A lot of times when we do these surveys and we get the results, and people go in and say, this isn't sanitary, this is not appropriate -- the child care workers don't know that; nobody's told them; they're not sure about what they're supposed to be doing. So through the Healthy Child Care America Campaign, we intend to do a better job of educating child care workers.

And, finally, school-age care, a critical issue for millions of working American families. I have visited some excellent school-age child care programs. The other day in Quantico, I visited one of their schools and saw what was available for the children there. But most children and their parents do not yet have access to good school-age child care -- places where the children can do homework or play sports or learn to play a musical instrument. "Home Alone" might have been a hit movie, but it is not a good script for real children's lives, and we need to move to make sure more children can safely and productively spend those after-school hours in a place like a school or a library or some other setting that is good for them.

I'd like to close with one thought and then invite your questions. We are privileged to live in a time of tremendous bounty in our country. We are at peace. Our economy is booming. Social problems that for years held us back are receding. The crime rate is down. The teenage pregnancy rate is down. On so many fronts we're making progress together. And a time such as this presents a special opportunity. Free from crisis, we can do work that might not be possible in stormier moments. So we should use this good fortune to make a difference, to lay the groundwork so that the generations of children to come will be able, themselves, to build a country that has so many opportunities and take advantage of the blessings that we

all have.

So turning to child care is not just something that is a nice issue to talk about. It is, as the President calls it, the next great frontier of public policy. To build up and strengthen our families, to give them more support so they can do their jobs both at home and in the workplace will help us chart that frontier not only so that we are led to a better world for the children I saw today, but for generations of American children to come. And I invite all of you to be part in taking action to make sure that happens.

Than you all very much. (Applause.)

I'm glad there were babies here. That's a wonderful reminder of why this is so important. (Applause.)

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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 child 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 a 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 American 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 care 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.

END

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MARTHA RADDATZ
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First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Remarks on Child Care

University of Maryland, College Park

October 3, 1997

Thank you very much. (applause) Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you Neil, thank you Professor Seefeldt, thank you Congressman Hoyer, thank you, President Kirwan. As I was sitting up here and Steny was introducing the President's family, when he introduced his wife, President Kirwan turned to me and said you know, I met her in Junior High School. He said, she sat behind me and she couldn't stand me and I thought, that's exactly the kind of memories I have from Junior High School, you know, the boy you really liked at the end of the year was the one you couldn't stand at the beginning of the year but this Junior High romance has certainly stood the test of time and I'm delighted to be here with your family and with the family of this great University. I came here today for a number of reasons. Part of it as the President suggested, is because I enjoyed my visit to be the Commencement Speaker so much and was very honored to receive an Honorary Degree and also because I have followed with great interest the work that is being done at this University in many areas but in particular, I have been impressed by the work that has been done in the area of human development, social and public policy, and we of course, as you know, we're blessed in the White House by having Professor Galston with us for a number of years so I feel a real kinship with the work that is done here and the people who are part of this great University community. So when the opportunity arose for me to come and speak with you about an upcoming White House Conference on Child Care, I immediately seized it. Because as the Congressman said, the President and I are hosting a White House Conference on Child Care on October 23rd and I wanted to come and tell you why this is an issue that deserves White House attention, deserves the attention of our Nation, one that we hope will raise awareness of these issues around our country. Some of you may recall that last spring the President and I hosted a Conference on Early Learning and Brain Research and we brought to the

Nation's attention the very exciting work that has been done by researchers here at N.H. and elsewhere across the country that demonstrates clearly how important it is that we take the first three years of life because of what is happening in a child's brain and we wanted to get that information out because although many people intuitively knew that and experts like Professor Seefeldt taught that, there wasn't the hard data that supported that information until recently with the kind of work that has been going on in brain research and so for a lot of reasons, this is a time when all of us have to focus on what we best can do in our own homes and families as well as in our larger society to insure that each child has a chance to live up to his or her promise. I saw that in action this morning here at the Center for Young Children, what a wonderful facility you have here, a Child Care Center that is warm and inviting with workers that are creative and energetic and focus, a range of books and toys and crafts materials. I answered questions from the five year olds who wanted to know, among other things, what my favorite food was, what my favorite color was, and then a real stumper, what my favorite roller coaster was. I had to confess to this little boy that it has been so long since I've been on a roller coaster, I couldn't remember the names of any of the roller coasters I like but I certainly had the feeling that this is a place where children are treasured and valued and stimulated, a place that any of us would happily stay for juice and nap time any day. But, that Center is far too rare. Even though more and more families are seeking child care, in fact, over half of the infants under age one are in day care, twelve million children under the age of six, and seventeen million more, age six through thirteen, have both parents or their only parent in the work force. The plain fact is that there is simply not enough quality care for the children who need it. Quality child care is financially out of reach for the hard working American families whose children deserve the best attention they can receive. So today I come with a very straightforward proposition that this situation must

change for the sake of our children and our future. And there are ways I want to suggest that each of us can participate in this change. Every working parent in this room and in this country knows how urgent the matter is, any Mom or Dad who has ever left a child with a care giver for even a minute has felt at the gut level the importance of quality care. The stress around child care affects families ranging from the poorest all the way to the most affluent. It is a daily pressure for parents with preschoolers and parents with children in school who for whatever reason cannot get home to supervise a child themselves. For more than twenty five years, I have worked on issues affecting children and families, but in the last four and a half years I've been privileged to travel around our country on my own and with my husband, listening and talking with parents about their economic concerns, the issues that affect them on the streets where they live, whether its crime or the environment, and I've heard over and over again how important child care is. Yet, despite its importance in our everyday lives, it is not an issue that has been dealt with effectively by our society. Now, there are many reasons for this oversight and some of you who are students of human development and child care could recite many of them, I'm sure. But, I think its fair to say that until the demographics of our citizenry changed until economic forces and women's choices led so many mothers into the work force, this was not an issue that many people thought was serious. It was, like many issues, affecting children in the past, viewed as a soft issue that was a disproportionate concern to women. Yet now we know it is one of the hardest issues we face and it is an issue that had economic and social implications that go far beyond the individual concern that each of us brings to it. Fortunately, times are changing. Partly because of the work that many of you are doing, partly because more and more parents are speaking out, partly because America's employers have come to understand that the strength of their bottom lines depends on workers who are not absent, who will have their mind on their

work when they're there, whose child care needs are being met and partly because we have people in leadership like the President of this University, like this member of Congress before you who represents you, and because of my husband and members of Congress and State Legislators of both parties and many Governors who have made this a priority. All of this brings us together in the name of a shared belief, that the children of our country deserve child care as fine as that provided right here at this University. In fact, American children deserve the best care in the world. Now, there are many reasons to put our childrens needs first but let me just mention a few of them. One reason, as I've already stated is because we know that how we care for our children is critical to their intellectual and emotional development. You know, it wasn't so long ago and I can actually recall when I was younger and thinking about children a lot and even pregnant with my own, that it used to be kind of a joke among a lot of fathers I knew that they would say, well, you know let's wait until he can throw a ball or she can talk to me and then I'll pay attention and, you know, it was the kind of attitude that had been prevalent for most of history that you know, very young children should be cared for by their mothers, other women, that there wasn't much for fathers to do because there wasn't much happening until a child started to in some way assert a personality, act on his or own. Well, now we know clearly that that was mistaken. As we talked about at the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development in April, what happens to a child in those earliest years can make all the difference for a lifetime. Just 15 years ago, even scientists thought that baby's brain structure was virtually complete at birth. Now, neuroscience tells us that it is a work in progress and that everything we do with a child has some kind of potential, physical influence on that rapidly forming brain. As one participant at the White House Conference put it, "nature and nurture don't compete, they cooperate."

Children's earliest experiences, the sights and sounds and smells and feelings they encounter, the challenges they meet, they determine how their brains are wired. For those of you who know a lot more about computers than I know, we're talking about how the brain shapes itself through repeated experiences. The more something is repeated, the stronger the neurocircuitry becomes. And those connections in turn can be permanent. In this way, even the seemingly unimportant, totally forgettable events of our first years are anything but trivial. It is during this time that children learn to soothe themselves when they're upset, to empathize, to get along with others, to become and we hope they will, human beings of the finest order.

Experiences in those first three years of life can also determine how well a child learns. When someone speaks, reads or plays with an infant or toddler, he or she, whether it is a parent, a grandparent, an older sibling or a care giver, is activating the connections in that child's brain that will one day enable her to think and read and speak and solve problems herself. Now, what that means is that subpar care, whether in the home or in a child care setting, means that a young brain is being deprived of what it needs to live up to its natural potential. Now that is a very serious conclusion for us to reach and now we have no more excuses. If we know that ignoring a child, being impatient, pushing off a 8 month old, or a 16 month old, failing to invest the time that is necessary in that two and a half year old, then we have to acknowledge, its not just a momentary action, but it adds to the past and the present and the feelings that that child is internalizing and it also literally affects the brain. Another reason we need to act is that we now have evidence that child care is too often inadequate, research presents a troubling picture. A recent national study of child care centers found that 70 percent of children are in care that is barely adequate. Ten percent are in care that is dangerous to their health and safety. Infants and toddlers are at the greatest risk with 40 percent in care that poses a threat to their health and well-

being. That means that they spend hours of their days with care givers who do not follow basic sanitary practices, who rarely cuddle, talk to or play with these infants and toddlers, in rooms that lack toys and other materials to encourage development and in places where the ratio of children to adults is too high for individual attention. Only twenty percent of our children are in what we could call "high quality care," such as what I saw this morning.

A study of child care in family-based settings found equally disturbing patterns. Only 56 percent of these programs provided adequate care, 35 percent were deemed inadequate, which means as we now know, that the hours spent there could actually undercut a child's development and only 9 percent offered high-quality care which was defined as enhancing the growth and development of children and even where quality care is available, it is often financially out of reach for parents, particularly low income parents. According to the 1995 census, families earning under \$1200.00 a month pay an average of 24 to 25 percent of their income for child care. That takes a big chunk out of a household budget but it was still not enough to ensure quality care. I asked about the cost of the child care centers here on this Campus and there is a sliding scale which is very important, but it still costs between \$340.00 and \$600.00 a month. Middle class families are hit hard as well. Families earning up to \$36,000. pay out 12 percent of their income for child care without any guarantee that that twelve percent is buying quality. It is difficult to think of a consumer situation in America where so many people are paying so much and too often getting so little.

Another reason we need to act is that we now know from another study that was just completed by the National Institute for Child Health and Development that good child care can be beneficial to young children. Whether it is care given at home or in a day care center. Now, there's no doubt that the most important lasting influence on any child is that child's family. But we do

know that good, quality child care can improve a child's chances, if that child is in a difficult family situation or enhance a child's learning and maturity if that child is in a good family situation. And for children who come out of family situations that are not always conducive to their well-being, bad child care can make a difficult situation even worse. Now a final reason we need to act is because of the changing nature of the work force. We know that the American work force has changed dramatically in the past forty years and that has meant dramatic changes in family life. Half of all mothers with children under the age of one are working outside the home and not only are more parents working, they are working longer hours. So this issue must become a policy challenge for all of us because it clearly affects the well-being of children, American workers, and the dynamism of our economy itself. I would imagine that many of you who are parents and those of you who are students, not yet parents, can equally shut your eyes and imagine or think back to one of those work family conflicts that has occurred in all of our lives. Even though my daughter is a Freshman in College, I still remember vividly the days when my child care arrangements fell through and I was not able to do anything about them. Now, luckily for me those were very few because I have the kind of job where if my daughter were sick or if she had a special occasion that I wanted to take advantage of in her preschool or her school years, I could arrange my schedule. That is not the case for the vast majority of working Moms and Dads. I also have the advantage, except for two years of her life, to live in a Governor's Mansion where there were lots of people around, that is not a common experience for most working mothers. And so I'm very aware that my situation was unique but even with it, I recall vividly those few times when despite my best efforts and a very supportive husband, and all of the balancing we all do, it just all fell through and I had to scramble like crazy to make up for it. One time in particular when I couldn't cancel something or just not go into work or go in

late, I had to be in court at nine o'clock and Chelsea was up all night sick and my babysitter was sick, probably with the same thing Chelsea was sick with and my husband was out of town and my family wasn't around and I called one of my best friends and she wasn't available, and it was just a real terrible feeling that you get when you know that you want to be with your child and because if work demands you can't and I was lucky enough to find a neighbor who could come in and sit with her and I called home every chance I had a break and rushed home when I finished to find her you know, very well taken care of. But, that is not what is available to most parents and I know it is infinitely tougher for most women who everyday are trying to do the best they can. And I honestly don't know how single parents do it. And I think we ought to be very sympathetic and very supportive of all parents but particularly of single parents. Too many children end up because of their parents challenges, caring for themselves or being supervised by older siblings. And we know what happens when children are left unsupervised. According to the FBI, it is during the late afternoon that our youngest children, those who are in their pre-teens or early teens, are most likely to experiment with drugs, to become involved with criminal gangs, to get pregnant, to commit violence or to get into trouble in other ways.

So, when that 3 o'clock bell rings, kids are relieved but a lot of working parents panic and we have to find a way to help parents with school age children as well. So, we know we need to act but where do we start. Well, we can learn from models of excellent child care around our country. They can provide the energy and expertise and inspiration for what we need to do now. One very bright spot is the military's child care system. Our Defense Department runs the largest child care system in the world. Taking care of the children of the parents who are in the front lines of America. I was privileged just two days at Quantico Marine Base to be able to see first hand what is being provided for the children of our Armed Forces and I have to say I saw what

every parent would want for her child. A beautiful facility, well-trained workers, high standards, unannounced inspections both in the Center and in the family day care settings, a toll free number for parents to call with their concerns, mandatory training for everyone that comes into contact with and works with a child. And, most importantly, good wages and solid benefits and respect for staff. Now, that has resulted in lower turnover and more experienced care givers. Now, that wasn't always the case and I learned in a very open discussion that the military's child care was not always what we would hold up as an example. In fact, even the Center that I visited Quantico is brand new because the previous one had to be shut down because it didn't make the grade a few years ago. But, the leadership of our military knows that readiness depends upon mothers and fathers being able to do their work without worrying about whose caring for their children. So the military made a commitment to turning its child care system around and Quantico is now a shining example of what can be done. I want to tell two stories that I heard. The first, from one of the Commanders there was what happens before good child care in the military. I heard about a mother and a father who were both called to duty on an emergency basis at the same time. I believe they were both pilots. They had to be in the air at the same time. When that happened, they had to bring their two infants in bassinets' to the office of their Commander, leave those bassinets' in their Commander's office with instructions for care and feeding. Now, that beats any story about child care challenges that I've ever heard. The second story is about, "what happens now?" That there is quality care available no matter what the occasion. I met a Staff Sergeant, a single Dad, raising two little girls. He said that when he took his daughters to day care the first day they cried when he dropped them off, but the second day they cried when he came to pick them up. I was especially impressed by this very tough Marine whose obviously put in his time at the weight training facility, talking with great pride about how

he mastered pigtails and ponytails for his daughters but I think part of the reason his confidence is so high about embarking on the rather daunting task of being a single Dad of two little girls is because he's gotten a lot of support from the child care facility and the care giver's who have been there, helping him along, encouraging him, giving them advice, helping to create that village. On a serious note also, we were privileged to have Lt. Colonel ... who I see on the audience here speak about the perspective of the child care system from the perspective of a commander. He said that his soldiers are more productive when they don't have to worry about their children.

Now, I probably should say his Marines are more productive when they don't have to worry about their children and the result of that is a much higher level of preparedness 24 hours a day. Now, there are certainly differences between the military and civilian sector, but I believe that the military's experience can serve as a ... for the American work place in general. When parents don't have to come to work feeling concerned about how their children are doing, they can make a much more positive contribution which benefits all of us. Just before I visited Quantico I was in Miami at Baptist Hospital there that also has made a commitment to child care. I saw another first class facility, I learned about how they have adjusted the hours because just like the military they have 24 hour work days in a hospital and I heard a lot of detail from the Chief Executive Officer about why it is good economic sense to provide this service. I met at the hospital with the Board of Directors of something called, Florida's Child Care Executive Partnership, a group of business executives appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles to address child care issues. In creating this partnership, Florida put aside two million dollars the first year to match dollar for dollar Corporate contributions for child care. And the Board was charged with engaging the private sector in this effort.

Once asked, the Florida business community responded quickly and generously and this year the legislature and the business community are doubling their commitment so that we're taking both public dollars and pulling them to create more affordable quality child care and because of this effort, thousands of more working families in Florida now have access to the kind of care I saw at Quantico, I saw at Baptist Hospital, and I saw here at the University.

Because we know that providing good child care requires community involvement. The grant money in Florida only goes to communities where businesses have come together with child care organizations to forge a plan of action.

And, when I ask these business leaders why they thought the partnership was successful, they didn't hesitate to answer in very business like terms. They said it was good for the bottom line. They said they didn't have to spend as much time recruiting new workers who left because of child care problems. They didn't have to spend as much money recruiting new workers who had to be trained. They didn't have to worry about absenteeism which had been dramatically. Now, that was also the experience of many other businesses with whom I have met and I just find it being repeated over and over again.

So, because I find the partnership concept so impressive, I'm very pleased to announce today that the Department of Health and Human Services is awarding a half million dollar grant to the families and work institute, the National Governors' Association, and the Finance Project, to assist states in developing these partnerships with the private sector. And, the President has earlier this year, ... the military, the Department of Defense, to work with the private sector, to take the experience they've gained, their guidelines which have been carefully written and bring those to the table to discuss with more child care centers and family day care providers what can be done to use money like that available in Florida to make models that can be replicated. Because all

sectors of society have to be involved, businesses, schools, police departments, religious organizations, libraries, citizens' associations, the Federal, the State, and the local governments. We hope that the White House Conference will be a catalyst to bringing many of these sectors together. I also hope that at the White House Conference we will discuss ways that could assist parents who wish to make the choice to stay at home with their children more economically feasible because its not just creating good child care centers and family day care centers outside the home, how do we create real choices that are available to working families so that they in the privacy of their family can make a decision that it is economically feasible for one parent to be there for their children.

It is important to remember that this Conference is a starting point. I hope that it marks the beginning of National discussion and action. And I hope that its focus on the three key areas will spark individual ideas around the country. Now, the three key areas are the lack of affordable child care, quality concerns, and the need for school age care. We have already discussed affordability and we've made some progress. The President took some steps to address this need. For starters, the expanded Federal funding for child care. In fact, since 1993, child care funding has risen by approximately 68 percent and it now reaches more than one million children through subsidies which is critical if they're going to have financial access to quality care. And I'm encouraged too that in the last four years more states are committing their own resources to help working people pay for quality child care.

In the balanced budget agreement, the \$500 child tax credit will go to 27 million families with 45 million children under the age of 17. Now for the typical American family with 2 kids, this child tax credit will mean 1,000 more dollars in take home pay

per year. That is especially important for low-income families who are also going to benefit from this child tax credit. Thirteen million children from families with incomes below \$30,000 will receive the credit. That's a lot of young teachers, police officers, farmers, nurses and others who will have some extra income to put into whatever their family decides, but certainly one of the great expenses is improving child care. Also through the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit, more working families have had a cut in their taxes which has on average meant an increase in their income of over a thousand dollars. So, there have been real steps forward so that there's more child care available, it's subsidized, and there's more of an opportunity for families with children to take advantage of these programs. The President has also made child care an essential component of welfare reform. He insisted that welfare reform include spending for child care because we're putting a lot more women, single women with children, into the work force. So it will be increased by nearly \$4 billion over the next 6 years. But that is still not enough and we have a long way to go to explore how better to enable parents to meet their child care costs. Quality is the second key issue. We have to do more to support child care providers. We have not done a good job of lifting up the profession that is so important in taking care of our children and matching that with increased income and job opportunities and benefits. I've been to a lot of child care centers and I've met many, many terrific people running and working in them but their salaries are woefully low and many leave the profession because it's not one that enables them to support themselves and their own families. I remember one provider who told me with tears in her eyes that with the birth of her second child, she had to leave taking care of children which is what she loved to do more than anything and go to work in an office because she needed to make more income. So we have to do all we can to encourage and support child care workers to get training, to build their skills and increase their

knowledge which will demand higher salaries and benefits. We have to find the very best people to take the jobs of caring for our children because parents should not have to worry whether their child is safe at day care and the vast majority of teachers are absolutely superb in caring for their children, but there are a few who we need to make sure do not go into the classrooms of our day care centers. And we also have to help parents do a better job of searching out good child care. In survey after survey when parents are asked, they really don't know what they're looking for. They don't know what kind of equipment should be there; they don't know what kind of training they would be demanding for the child care workers. Too often parents are better informed about what kind of car to buy than what kind of child care to choose. So we have to help parents become more informed consumers to create that demand that will absolutely say to the market place, we must have higher quality for the money we're paying. One of the interesting results of a lot of the research that has been done recently is that good quality child care is generally but now always more expensive than inadequate child care. And in the middle, there's a lot of child care that could be vastly improved with some good training and better guidance there would make a big difference for the money that is being paid. Now I hope that we will continue to focus on safeguarding the health and safety of children in our ... system around the country. Certainly the President earmarked money going to the states for child care for quality improvements. And this summer he proposed a new rule requiring that child care programs that receive Federal dollars make sure that all children are immunized. And in 1995 the administration launched the Healthy Child Care America Campaign which promotes partnerships between child care centers and health agencies. That initiative now in 46 states teaches child care centers how to create safe healthy environments. A lot of times when we do these surveys and we get the results and people go in and say, this isn't sanitary; this is not appropriate, the child

care workers don't know that. Nobody's told them. They're not sure about what they're supposed to be doing. So through the Healthy Child Care America Campaign, we intend to do a better job of educating child care workers.

And, finally, school age care. A critical issue for millions of working American families. I have visited some excellent school age child care programs. The other day in Quantico, I visited one of their schools and saw what was available for the children there, but most children and their parents do not yet have access to good school age child care. Places where the children can do homework or play sports or learn to play a musical instrument ... *Home Alone* might have been a hit movie but it is not a good script for real childrens' lives and we need to move to make sure more children can safely and productively spend those after school hours in a place like a school or a library or some other setting that is good for them.

I'd like to close with one thought and then invite your questions. We are privileged to live in a time of tremendous bounty in our country. We are at peace. Our economy is booming. Social problems that for years held us back are receding. The crime rate is down, the teenage pregnancy rate is down. On so many fronts we're making progress together. At a time such as this presents a special opportunity free from crisis we can do work that might not be possible in stormier moments. So we should use this good fortune to make a difference, to lay the ground work so that the generations of children to come will be able themselves to build a country that has so many opportunities and take advantage of the blessings that we all have. So turning to child care is not just something that is a nice issue to talk about. It is as the President calls it, the next Great Frontier of Public Policy, to build up and strengthen our families, to give them more support so they can do their jobs both at home and in the work place will help up chart that Frontier not only so that we are

led to a better world for the children I saw today, but for generations of American children to come. And I invite all of you to be part in taking action to make sure that happens.

Thank you all very much. (applause) I'm glad there were babies here. That's a wonderful reminder of why this is so important. Well, as I understand what we're going to do now. We have two people with microphones in the isles. If anybody has any questions, they should line up behind the gentleman here and the young woman there and take a turn, but if not, that's all right too. I don't mind at all.

Hi.

Hi. (Mrs. Clinton)

I have a question. I'm an employee on campus. I've been a secretary here for fifteen years. I have a four year-old son. I'm a single mother. I wanted to get my son to go to school here at the nice center. It would cost me over \$500 a month and my salary is \$25,000 a year. So how can that help employees here on campus? And I'm not the only single mother that has had a problem with this.

Mrs. Clinton - And that is one of the reasons why I mentioned that we have to do more to provide more slots in child care for working parents like yourself and we have to help subsidize quality child care because you are a perfect example of the problem that I'm trying to illustrate. You make \$25,000 a year ...

With no child support.

Mrs. Clinton - with no child support. So that's your total income.

Correct!

Mrs. Clinton - And that's before taxes ...

Correct! And I live at home with my parents.

Mrs. Clinton - And you're doing all you can to keep expenses down living at home and good quality child care such as we see here at the university would cost \$500 a month, which is \$6,000 a year, which is a 25 percent of your before tax income. I mean that is exactly the problem that I'm talking about. So what have you done for child care?

Well, I went to a Catholic school in the area and they gave me a scholarship for just this year. So I pay \$200 a month to have him in full-time pre-K. But if I did not have that and I didn't have my parents, I would probably have to quit my job and go on welfare because who would watch my child during the day and how could I afford that and live in an apartment.

Mrs. Clinton - Well, that is the problem. I could not more vividly describe it. And, so, I hope that some the proposals that will be discussed at the White House Conference, your child will be in school before we probably get much of the changes that I would like to see happen, but then you'll need, you know, after school care which is another part of this debate. But I hope that some of these proposals will focus exactly on what you're talking about. We need more subsidies for working families, particularly single parents. If we are going to have a policy in our country of ending welfare and expecting everyone to work, we have to do more to support those parents with children who are trying to do the best they can by working. And I want to thank you for what you're doing. (applause)

Hi, I'm the Director at Galludette University Child Development Center and have worked with children with disabilities for the last 20 some years in child care and I'm curious what you all are suggesting the focus and direction more and more children with special needs are now in child care centers because of Special Ed laws and I'm curious where you all stand on that.

Mrs. Clinton - Well, we stand with you as an educator of children with special needs and with parents of children with special needs because it is more expensive to care for a child with special needs. And, again, parents face the same difficulties, only more so because of the additional costs. And it's not just financial costs. It's also emotional and psychological costs that is much higher when you have a child, whether it's your only child, or one of a number of your children with special needs that you need help caring for and also for many children, you want to integrate them as early as possible into as typical a life as you can possibly arrange for them and that requires, often times, you know special transportation, special equipment, whether it's wheel chairs or other kinds of medical equipment, it often requires, in your case, with deaf children, specially trained caregivers. So this is an issue that is a part of our overall issue of quality and affordability. I am old enough to -- I keep saying that -- I think that's because I'm going to turn fifty this month. I'm old enough, I'm nearly a half century old. Think about it for all you young people. It's hard to believe it happens. (laughter) So I can remember (applause) many, many years ago when I worked for the Childrens Defense Fund and when I was involved in other activities concerning children, going into places where children with disabilities were literally just left on the floor all day. I cannot tell you some of the places I have seen. Now that was twenty-five years ago. I haven't seen places like that recently, but I'm not invited to those places in my current position and I know that there are lots of excellent facilities for special needs children and I know that there are some that are really very inadequate. So this is a big part of what we're going to be talking about. Yes.

Thanks for coming. I'm a student here and I would like to know how does the European child care or World child care compare to the United States and are you planning to have any World input on planning for American child care.

Mrs. Clinton - That's an excellent question. I want to thank you for asking that because often times we don't learn about what works in other places and there are some very good models in Europe of National Commitment to Child Care. In fact when I was at the child care center here at the university, I learned this morning that the facility is modelled on facilities in northern Italy. The university architects went and visited because of the great room with the classrooms off the side and it's really something beautiful to behold. But there are some very good programs in a number of European countries that I think bear some attention. I have personally visited child care centers in France and in a few other countries, particularly in France and Denmark which were very impressive to me because there was a national commitment to the provision of quality affordable child care that went beyond political ideology. I remember when I visited France, I went to various cities and looked at their child care facilities and whether I was in a city that was run by a very conservative mayor and city council or one run by the socialists party, I didn't see any difference. And I asked a very conservative mayor in a French city how he could explain this national consensus about spending both national and local dollars to build excellent facilities, make them affordable, and he said but they're all our children. You know we are creating future French citizens and he said it as only a Frenchman could say it with a lot of flourish. It was like I asking such a ridiculous question. How could politics have anything to do with taking care of one's children. They fight about other things and even in the recent efforts to reign in the budgets in a lot of the European countries to make them more economically competitive, their caring for children has not been an issue of debate between the political factions in the countries that I'm aware of. They are going to remain committed to universal health care for all of their people and for adequate education and child care for preschool and I think it's a very important National commitment and I think we should look to see if we can

learn anything from that. I write a little bit about the French system in my book because I was impressed by it. Yes.

Being college students, most of us don't recognize there's a problem in child care but also being very involved in community service, what can we do as college students?

Mrs. Clinton - That's also a very good question and I think community service is a critical key to being able to provide enough voluntary manpower to help out in a lot of the centers that are particularly serving lower income families. And I know that a number of young people both through university community services and through Americore have signed up to work on things like America Reads and mentoring and tutoring children and I think looking for opportunities to work with even younger children to give them the attention that they need would be a very good way of working with at least one family, one child. Maybe showing a mom or a dad how to read to a child with just by you doing it, modelling it for them, playing, teaching some of those silly games and songs that you were taught -- all of which help build the brain. I mean all those little things that we used to do all make a difference. And you know there's a lot of evidence now that you know young women, young mothers when they speak to children in those little high voices we all adopt when we see little kids. Like oh, oh Michael, you're so cute. You know our voices just go up like, you know, full register. That has an impact. The child really can hear it. And young men and fathers who are more physical with babies and, you know, play games with them, that also stimulates the brain development. So there's a lot that both young men and women could do in giving of their time to work with some of these kids, especially as I say in lower income family areas where there may be too many adults taking care, too few adults taking care of too many children.

Good afternoon. My name is Cecilia Johnson and I'm a family child care provider and I have

been for twenty years. My question is of the eight parents that I have who are single mothers, one who just recently came off of welfare, the biggest problem that they undertake is getting benefits from the jobs in which they work to help take care of their children, especially medical benefits. And with the rising costs of child care and the costs of taking care of your child, I would like to know how do we plan to help our single mothers who can't get benefits from their jobs to help take care of their children.

Mrs. Clinton - Thank you for asking that and thank you for being a family day care provider. Until we have some program that takes care of all of our children's health care needs, we will not solve this problem completely, but in the Balanced Budget Agreement, we made a big step forward as a Nation. Because through the commitment of \$24 billion that was raised by raising the tax on tobacco, we will be able to provide health care for half the children who are currently uninsured, many of whom fall into the category you're talking about. Now a lot of mothers getting off of welfare should be very sure they're not still eligible for Medicaid because they often are. We have 3 million children in America who are eligible for Medicaid but their mothers and fathers don't know they are so they are left to the whims of the emergency room or not being taking care of. So making sure your eight moms check to see whether they're available and eligible is the first thing. Secondly, this new money -- this \$24 billion will expand coverage in every state. So making sure they know where to go to find out how to sign up their child for health care I think is the best advice you could give them and to help them, you know, know where to contact somebody and to try to find out. But we still have too many Americans who do not get health insurance through their work, are not eligible for any kind of government assistance, and they just fall into this large pool of 40 million uninsured Americans, about 11 million of whom are children. And so we just have to keep making

sure everybody who's covered with Medicaid and the new Child Health Program are covered, then we need to see what else we're going to do to cover the remaining children and adults. So please give them that information.

Mrs. Clinton, I hate to do this but your staff has suggested that you maybe should take only one more question.

Mrs. Clinton - All right.

Well, actually instead of a question I wanted to issue an invitation to you to come visit me at the Childrens Developmental Clinic on this campus. Come back one more time this Saturday and see a new program or different program from what we've been talking about today, which is undergraduate and faculty members volunteering their time on Saturdays to play with the children, provide role models for the children, and to deal with those hours of concern that you mention for late afternoon hours, excuse me, the week days when they are unsupervised. And the special thing about our program is that it's for children with physical disabilities, who have self-esteem issues and who get isolated at schools and also children from disadvantaged neighborhoods, from disadvantaged backgrounds. I work with children from the Cools Spring Elementary School who are Hispanic mostly and who have parents who are very disengaged from education and if you ever have the time to come visit us on Saturday, I'd love to show you what can happen when people volunteer for free.

... expenses

Mrs. Clinton - Well, the young man who asked the question what he might do, you need to sign him up. (laughter & applause) Well, unfortunately I can't be there this Saturday (laughter) but I'm very glad you stood up to invite me and did such a good job describing what you do because I

think that's the kind of a model that more people need to hear about. That there is something literally for everybody to do. Whether it's in our own homes spending more time with our own children, maybe the children next door or down the block or if somebody else in your family who doesn't have the time and is working too hard and needs a helping hand, or whether it's being involved professionally as so many of you are as child care providers at a center or in a home. We all have something we can do and volunteering to help support parents and child care providers is a very important way of not only providing a service but for each of us to know firsthand what you know about what a difference it can make in a child's life. And so I hope that you'll be engaged in this issue and thinking about it and sharing ideas and here on this campus try to reach out to everybody, you know, whether it's the young people who are at this center or the young women who stood up who is working here as a secretary already who needs some support, needs a helping hand. I bet if everybody on this campus just looked around at the people you already know, you'd find that there's something you can do to help relieve some of the burdens of taking care of children, especially for single parents. I really want to stress that. It is so important that we support them and give them the kind of attention and volunteer activities that will enable them to know they're being good moms and dads because that's what everybody wants to feel. And if we could get that idea across, I think a lot of our other problems in this country would take care of themselves.

Thank you very much. (applause)

President Kirwan --Mrs. Clinton I hope that you can sense the very strong and special feelings of support there are on this campus for you and the work that you're doing and also sense how honored we are to have you at College Park. We know that during school breaks, there will likely be some colors of another school prominent in the White House (laughter) and we think you need to be able

to retaliate with the colors of one of your schools. So we have a little gift we want to give to your
that we hope you'll wear when Chelsea is home.

Mrs. Clinton - Absolutely! (applause)

CHILD CARE ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS July- Sept

State Child Care Plans must be submitted by States by July 1, 1997. The ACF regional office in conjunction with the Child Care Bureau will approve the plans by October 1, 1997.

Publication of NPRM - July

Child Care: Coming Together for Children and Families: Annual Meeting of State Child Care Administrators July 14-15, in D.C.

Healthy Child Care America Conference Sept. 12-13, Washington, D.C.

ANNOUNCEMENTS- Early Fall

The Child Care Public Private Partnership Project promotes the exploration of public private partnerships as innovative strategies to increase the supply of affordable, high quality child care. The Project identifies and tracks promising models, disseminates information on best practices, and will hold a national meeting to focus on the topic.

The Child Care Inclusion Project for Children with Disabilities is designed to provide technical assistance to 10 selected States on the issue of including children with disabilities in child care. The culmination of the Project will be a National Institute at which States can share their results and advise others as they embark on inclusion efforts.

Information Systems Technical Assistance is provided to States to assist them in tracking and managing their CCDF program and expenditures by enhancing their ability to collect, analyze, and report relevant data.

The Tribal Child Care Technical Assistance Center provides specialized TA through visits to Tribes, the dissemination of models, and software to help the Tribes with fiscal management and data reporting. Information is accessible to grantee through an Information and Referral Line, a Tribal newsletter, and a Tribal child care link on the Internet.

Expansion of the Child Care Research Partnerships

The National Study of Low-Income Child Care *and mid range 5 yrs.*

Head Start Expansion grants to serve 50,000 additional children place a priority on collaboration with child care to provide more children with high quality, comprehensive care in full day, full year arrangements. Awards in Fall 1997

focus on child care.

ONGOING

The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) conveys the latest consumer education, information, research on child care issue via an information and referral line, a webpage, The Child Care Bulletin, and targeted technical assistance.

Healthy Child Care America Campaign is collaborative effort of health care professionals, child care providers, and families of children in child care, which provides seed money and technical assistance to State and communities to work toward health and safety for all children in child care.

Caring for America's Children

The Clinton Administration and Child Care

October 23, 1997

Over the past decade, the number of American families with working parents has expanded dramatically. Making high quality child care more affordable and accessible is critical to the strength of our families and to healthy child development and learning..... Each of us --from businesses to religious leaders to policy-makers and elected officials --has a responsibility and an important stake in making sure that children of all ages have the best possible care available to them. From infancy through adolescence, in child care settings and after-school programs, children can learn and thrive with the right care, attention, and education.

-- President Clinton, July 23, 1997

President Clinton is hosting the first-ever White House Conference on Child Care to focus the nation's attention on the importance of addressing the need for safe, affordable, quality child care. This Conference underscores and builds upon the President Clinton's commitment to strengthen the American family by giving parents the tools they need to fulfill their responsibilities and giving children the ability to reach their full potential.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

- **Putting Families First.** Throughout his presidency, President Clinton has worked hard to help America's working families. That is why the President fought for the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to allow workers to take up to 12 weeks unpaid leave to care for a newborn or adopted child, to attend to their own serious health needs, or to care for a seriously ill parent, child or spouse. In June 1996, President Clinton proposed expanding FMLA to allow workers to take up to 24 unpaid hours off each year for school and early childhood education activities, routine family medical care, and caring for an elderly relative. The President also has fought for greater health security for America's families. He signed into law the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act which includes important new protections for an estimated 25 million Americans who move from one job to another, who are self-employed, or who have pre-existing medical conditions. And in August 1997, President Clinton signed the Balanced Budget Act which included \$24 billion for the Children's Health Initiative -- the single largest investment in health care for children since 1965 -- to provide meaningful health care coverage to millions of uninsured children.
- **Providing Economic Opportunity.** In 1993, President Clinton put into place an economic strategy that invests in people and provides real opportunity. President Clinton has fought for policies that help working parents fulfill their responsibilities, including winning inclusion of a \$500 per-child tax credit for children under age 17 in the Balanced Budget Act -- helping 27 million families with 45 million children. The new Child Tax Credit is in addition to the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (tax credits President

Clinton protected during the balanced budget negotiations). President Clinton also expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit to give 15 million working families tax relief. In 1997, the average tax credit is \$1,450 on family income up to \$29,290. And the President proposed and signed into law an increase in the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15. For a full-time, year-round worker at minimum wage, this 90-cent increase raises yearly income by \$1,800 -- as much as the average family spends on groceries over seven months.

INVESTING IN CHILD CARE

- **Increasing Child Care Funding.** Because of President Clinton's leadership, federal funding for direct child care subsidies has increased by nearly 70 percent since he took office, providing child care services for over one million children. The 1996 welfare law increased child care funding by \$4 billion over six years, providing child care assistance to low-income working families and parents moving from welfare to work.
- **Increasing Participation in Head Start and Improving Program Quality.** For more than thirty years, Head Start has been one of our nation's best investments ensuring that low-income children start school ready to learn. President Clinton has made expanding and improving Head Start a priority of his Administration. Since 1993, funding for the program has increased by 43 percent -- in fiscal year 1997, Head Start will serve nearly 800,000 low-income children four years old and younger. The Balanced Budget continues the expansion of Head Start toward the President's goal of serving one million children in 2002. Over the last three years, the Clinton Administration has also invested significantly in improving program quality, providing local programs with the resources they need to attract and retain high quality teachers, and ensuring the safety of Head Start centers.
- **Created Early Head Start for 0-3 Year Olds.** Initiated by the President in 1994, there are now 143 *Early Head Start* programs across the country, expanding the proven benefits of Head Start to low-income families with children age three and under. The program provides early, continuous and comprehensive child development and family support services, preparing children for a lifetime of learning and development. In FY 1997, the program will have served nearly 25,000 children and their families.
- **Developed a Full-Day, Full-Year Head Start Initiative.** In March 1997, the Administration announced a new Head Start initiative that will expand Head Start services for children while also helping parents, including those moving from welfare to work. Under the new initiative, child care providers will be given priority for Head Start expansion funds to deliver full-day, full-year Head Start services in partnership with Head Start. Children will stay in one place all day rather than attending Head Start for half a day then moving to child care for the remainder of the day.

- **Expanding Child Care in Rural America.** Under the Clinton Administration, the Agriculture Department's Rural Housing Service's Community Facilities program is directing its efforts towards meeting the need for quality child care in rural areas. As a part of this effort, 31 child care centers were created in FY 1997 and the program will expand in FY 1998. In addition, the Rural Housing Service has been forming partnerships with other federal programs (including Head Start) and the private sector to help provide child care in rural America.
- **Providing Child Care in Urban Communities.** Under the Clinton Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is supporting working families and those moving to work by providing both quality child care for their children and opportunities for parents to become self sufficient. Community Development Block Grants fund initiatives that include education/training opportunities, on-site after-school child care and construction of child care and youth centers. The Ounce of Prevention Program enhances efforts already underway in Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities with summer and after-school education/recreation activities and mentoring and tutoring programs. In 1997, the Department awarded \$550 million in urban revitalization (HOPE VI) funds which will be used to physically revitalize communities and fund initiatives such as on-site day care centers and transportation services that provide access to employment centers and health care facilities. In 1997, the Administration funded \$42 million for the Family Economic Development and Supportive Services (EDSS) program that will include child care services, youth leadership and mentoring skills and family/parental development counseling.
- **Serving Children with Special Needs.** Under the Clinton Administration, the Department of Justice has worked hard to make sure that children with disabilities have access to child care along with non-disabled children. For instance, the Justice Department has entered into agreements regarding children with disabilities with the two largest child care companies in the country -- KinderCare has agreed to do "finger-prick" tests as requested by doctors and parents for children with diabetes and, in another agreement with KinderCare, the company has agreed to develop a model policy to enable a child with mental retardation to attend one of its centers with a state-funded personal care attendant. In addition, La Petite Academy has agreed to do the same "finger-prick" tests, to keep epinephrine on hand for severe and possibly-life-threatening allergy attacks, and to make changes to some of its programs so that children with cerebral palsy can participate. The Justice Department also provides information through its ADA information hotline (1-800-514-0301, 1-800-514-0383 TDD) and produces *Commonly Asked Questions about Child Care Centers and the ADA* for distribution. Additionally, the HHS Child Care Bureau has launched a special initiative to assist ten states to develop and implement effective plans aimed at improving and expanding their child care service delivery system. The project, "Map to Inclusive Child Care," will expand to other states over the next three years.
- **Easing the Commuting Dilemma for Families.** The President is fighting for welfare-to-work transportation grants to assist states and local communities in moving individuals from welfare-to-work -- including helping parents with small children obtain transportation to their jobs *and* to child care. Proposed legislation is included in the transportation authorization bills currently before Congress. In addition, as a part of the Transportation Department's Livable Communities Initiative, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has provided opportunities

for on-site community services -- Head Start facilities, a health clinic, and child care centers -- at transit facilities across the country to help parents obtain child care for their children on their commuting routes to work or training.

ENSURING HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN CHILD CARE

- **Improving Health and Safety with Healthy Child Care America.** In an effort to improve the health and safety of child care programs and to provide child health education to child care providers and parents, in 1995, the Clinton Administration launched the Healthy Child Care America initiative. This effort has established partnerships between child care providers and health care services in 46 states, helping to ensure that children in child care are in safe and healthy environments.
- **Ensuring that Children in Child Care Settings Are Properly Immunized.** In July 1997, President Clinton proposed new child care regulations to ensure that children in child care receive the immunizations they need on time. The proposed rule would require that all children in federally subsidized child care be immunized according to state public health agency standards. This proposed regulation will particularly affect those children in child care arrangements that are legal but exempt from state licensing requirements.
- **Providing Quality Nutrition to Children in Child Care.** President Clinton has maintained the commitment to providing quality nutrition in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks in child and adult day care facilities. In 1997, the program provided meals to about 2.5 million children and almost 50,000 adults in approximately 35,000 child care centers (including after-school centers), 195,000 family and group day care homes, and 1,500 adult day care centers. Child care providers in the CACFP must serve meals that meet federal nutrition guidelines, and must offer free or reduced-price meals to those eligible. The General Accounting Office identified CACFP as one of the most effective vehicles for reaching family child care providers and enhancing the care they provide because of its unique combination of resources, training, oversight and peer support. Notably, 87 percent of family child care homes that are considered to be providing good quality child care are participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, according to the Families and Work Institute's *Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care*.

CARING FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

- **Convened the 1997 School-Age Child Care Forums.** The Child Care Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services convened ten regional conferences to share promising initiatives for school-age children among child care, education, and community based organizations from nearly every state. These conferences spurred additional dialogue among participants and stimulated planning to address "out of school time" in states and communities across the country.

- **Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers -- A Guide.** In May 1997, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton released *Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School*. The Department of Education, along with the National Community Education Association, Policy Studies Associates, and the American Bar Association, wrote the step-by-step guidebook on how school facilities can be used for after-school programs.
- **Providing After-School Activities Through 21st Century Learning Centers and Title I.** The Clinton Administration's Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This law included a new statutory requirement that encourages schools receiving funding to enhance their instruction with such programs as extended school years, before- and after-school programs, and summer programs -- effectively giving "teeth" to after-school options. For instance, Title I -- which is funded by the Improving America's Schools Act and provides extra help with basic and advanced skills to disadvantaged students in elementary and secondary schools -- has been successful in helping Title I funded schools provide after-school programs. In addition, under this law, the 21st Century Community Learning Center program has been developed -- a program that once fully implemented will benefit urban and rural schools and their communities, allowing schools to stay open beyond the normal hours, offering expanded learning opportunities to children after-school. The President's current budget request includes \$50 million to fund 350 21st Century Community Learning Center programs in FY 1998.
- **Supporting Positive After-School Choices with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.** Because children unsupervised after school are more likely to engage in risky behaviors like substance use, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act funds before and after-school programs. In the 1994-95 school year, over 2,700 school districts used these funds to support before- and after-school activities.
- **Staying Safe After School with Community Schools.** In the Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Initiative, the President has called for 1,000 new after-school initiatives across the country. Schools that stay open longer and are open on weekends and during the summer can provide students, parents and communities with access to valuable resources. Turning schools into after-hour safe havens can help to prevent violent crime and violent behavior while boosting our children's academic achievement.
- **Helping Children Through Service.** As co-chair of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, President Clinton helped bring businesses, nonprofits, states and communities, and volunteer groups to Philadelphia in April 1997 to focus on service and to ensure that every child in America has five key resources -- a caring adult, a safe place, a healthy start, a marketable skill, and a chance to serve. Many of the hundreds of corporations and nonprofits that made commitments at the summit pledged to become involved in after-school and mentoring programs. America's Promise, the nonprofit organization founded to follow up on the summit promises, is now working with these organizations to ensure that they do so.

- **Enhancing Child Care and After-School Care with the Corporation for National Service.** Established by President Clinton in 1993, the Corporation for National Service, through AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and the National Senior Service Corps, is addressing the needs of children through service activities. Approximately two-thirds of the national service programs work to address the needs of children and youth often in child care and after-school settings. AmeriCorps members, college students, and senior volunteers, working alongside child care providers, are serving as tutors and mentors, health and nutrition educators, in both child care and after-school programs across the country.
- **Aiding the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.** The Clinton Administration is providing resources to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to establish and enhance more clubs throughout the United States. These Clubs are situated in at-risk communities and reach thousands of kids through violence prevention and reduction, educational health programs and youth leadership development. For instance, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America was awarded an AmeriCorps grant to provide education awards to 100 full-time and 800 part-time AmeriCorps members in up to 100 clubs early next year. The AmeriCorps members will be either older (17 and 18 year-olds) Boys or Girls Clubs members or club member alumni who will serve as tutors, mentors, and recreation activity coordinators in after-school programs.

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- **Providing Child Care Information.** In 1995, the Clinton Administration established the Child Care Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to streamline child care program operations and improve the quality and efficiency of service. In addition, HHS launched the National Child Care Information Center to disseminate child care information, publications and resources to help providers start up child care centers, parents locate child care in their communities, and researchers and policy makers attain access to policy information. Through the Technical Assistance Project, HHS has brought states together to share promising practices and has held special forums on school-age care, consumer education, Tribal child care programs, and a range of other topics.
- **Promoting Public/Private Partnerships.** The Child Care Bureau has launched a nationwide effort to promote public/private partnerships in child care by providing technical assistance to states on promising initiatives going on across the country.
- **Providing a Resource and Referral Clearinghouse for Working Families.** The Department of Labor Women's Bureau recently published a report entitled: *What Works! The Working Women Count Honor Roll Final Report* which highlights employers who have made real change in the areas that working women and their families care about most -- pay and benefits, family friendly workplaces (including child care) and respect and fair treatment on the job. Hundreds of employers accepted this challenge to deliver real change -- especially in child care. This guide was a result of the Working Women Count national questionnaire which surveyed 250,000 working women -- the largest questionnaire of working women ever. Notably, child care was identified as a top issue for working women. In addition to this guide, the Labor Department has expanded its resource and referral clearinghouse for employers and working

families. The agency has established a toll-free number (1-800-827-5335) and provides materials like the *Work and Family Resource Kit* and *Care Around the Clock: Developing Child Care Before 9 and after 5*.

- **Training Caregivers -- a Nationally Acclaimed Program.** The Education Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement supports the regional laboratory in San Francisco, California called WestEd. WestEd has developed a nationally acclaimed Infant/Toddler Caregiver Training Program which teaches caregivers how to provide nurturing and stimulating environments to promote quality child care. Research-based videos and printed materials are available in Spanish, Chinese, and English. Eight thousand caregivers have been trained in California and the program has been expanded across the nation.

LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE MILITARY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- **Providing High Quality Child Care -- The Military Model.** Under the Clinton Administration, the Department of Defense (DoD) has made important strides to improve the quality of child care for the children of the men and women who serve our country. The DoD Child Care System serves over 200,000 children (age zero to 12) daily making the U.S. military system the largest employer-sponsored child care program in the nation. The DoD Child Care System, known as the Child Development Program, includes Child Development Centers, Family Child Care homes, School Age Care programs, and Resource and Referral services. Through this system, the military offers full-day, part-day, and hourly child care, part-day preschools, before- and after-school programs for school age children, and extended hour care which includes nights and weekends to accommodate shift workers. Because of the Department of Defense's commitment to excellence in child care, since 1992, the number of military child care facilities that are accredited by the independent National Association for the Education of Young Children has risen from 55 to 353. Currently, over 75 percent of military child care programs are accredited, as compared to only 7 percent of other child care facilities nationwide. Since the early 1990s, the DoD has focused on improving the quality, availability, and cost of child care for military families.
- **Sharing the Military's Expertise.** Because of the DoD's high quality, comprehensive child care programs, in April 1997, President Clinton directed the Secretary of Defense to share the expertise and lessons learned from the Military Child Development Programs with Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies, as well as with private and nonprofit groups, that are responsible for providing child care. In his Directive the President stated, "The Military Child Development Programs have attained a reputation for an abiding commitment to quality in the delivery of child care. The Department of Defense's dedication to adequate funding, strict oversight, improved training and wage packages, strong family child care networks, and commitment to meeting national accreditation standards is laudatory. I believe that the military has important lessons to share with the rest of the Nation on how to improve the quality of child care for all of our Nation's children." In response to the President's directive, the Pentagon is implementing a plan to reach out to states and civilian child care centers to share its expertise.

SUPPORTING A FAMILY-FRIENDLY FEDERAL WORKPLACE

- **Promoting Family-Friendly Initiatives.** Under President Clinton's leadership, the federal government, striving to be a model employer for other private and public employers, has implemented family-friendly leave initiatives that enhance the ability of employees to balance family and employment obligations. In addition to leave initiatives, the federal government offers compressed or flexible work schedules to many workers so that they may spend more time with their families.
- **Providing Child Care for Federal Workers.** In addition to the Department of Defense's model child care program, there are more than 230 child care centers for civilian government employees in federal buildings in as many as 36 states. The General Services Administration (GSA) oversees 108 of these centers, making GSA the largest civilian sponsor of work-site child care in the nation. Under this Administration, the emphasis on quality has continued -- with 73 percent of GSA sponsored centers accredited by the independent National Association for Education of Young Children, and with a goal of reaching 100 percent accreditation within two years. Striving to meet the needs of parent workers, 89 percent of GSA centers have infant care, 74 percent have drop-in/emergency care, and 42 percent provide summer programs for school aged children. In addition, more than 80 percent of centers are open 11 or more hours per day. Nearly 70 percent of the child care center directors have ten or more years of experience in early childhood education.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

If you're a working parent, chances are that you have struggled to find affordable, quality child care. Like millions of others, you know just how important child care is to your family's well being and to your ability to work without worry. Yet for too long, parents across our country have struggled with too little information, too few choices and too much anxiety.

For far too long, America's families have faced this problem alone. Now it is time to move this issue to the top of our country's agenda. We have a special opportunity to do that when the President and I host a White House conference on child care on October 23. We hope that this conference will begin an honest national discussion about child care and build on promising efforts already underway in states and communities.

Here are some of the questions we need to answer -- as individual parents and as a nation: How can we ensure that children in care are safe from harm? What are the best ways to make the hours children spend in care as stimulating and nurturing as possible? How can we do a better job of valuing the important work of child care professionals? How can we encourage employers to provide child care benefits to their employees, a practice that makes sense not just for children, but for the corporate bottom line, as well? How can we put into practice what research tells us -- that when children participate in good after-school programs, they do better in school, don't engage in risky behavior and thrive? And how can we genuinely support parents who choose, often at significant economic cost, to stay at home with their children?

When I was a working mother with a young child, my friends and I shared these concerns. Today, when families are under even greater stress, I continue to worry about how we can meet the challenge of strengthening child care for American families. The President and I believe it will take parents, businesses, child care providers, experts, advocates, and officials at all levels of government working together to ensure that children get the care they need to learn and grow, that parents have peace of mind while on the job, and that employers can count on responsible, attentive workers. I hope you will join in this important discussion.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 23, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND FIRST LADY
AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILD CARE

The East Room

10:00 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you and please be seated, and welcome to the White House Conference on Child Care. We are delighted to have with us in the East Room today members of Congress and the President's Cabinet, other officials from the government here in Washington. We have many elected officials from around the country and a great group of distinguished guests, including parents and experts in this important issue.

I also want to greet the hundreds of people gathered at the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Health and Human Services here in Washington, and to the thousands more who are joining us via satellite from the more than 100 sites at universities, hospitals and schools and businesses around the country.

I'd like to take a minute for all of us to think about what's happening in America this morning, and about what happens every morning. Parents are making the preparations to get to work, and those preparations include for most working families putting their children in the care of others. And most, even before they're out the door, are worrying about the logistics of the care that their children will receive. Some are even worrying about the safety or quality of that care.

There are many who are wondering whether they would get better quality care if they could pay more. Others are struggling to determine how they'll be able to afford next month's payment. And there are many who are in the work force who worry every day about how they'll care for their child and hold down the job that they need. Many parents will go to work, but have trouble focusing on work because they are worried about the snuffle that their daughter had or wondering how their son is faring.

And before we finish today, many more working parents will keep looking anxiously at the clock and will murmur into telephones the instructions that their children need after school, because their concerns don't end at the end of the day for their children's school time, because parents won't get home, so that they have to worry about what happens to keep their child safe and well occupied during those hours, as well.

These are just some of the questions that America's parents are asking themselves this morning and every morning that they prepare to go to work. Some parents ask themselves these questions in the afternoon, as they prepare to go to a swing shift, or at midnight as they start to work in one of the other jobs that are essential to keeping our economy strong.

Earlier this month I went to the University of Maryland to visit its center for young children, and as soon as I walked in the door I knew immediately it was the kind of place any of us would feel comfortable sending our children. I was, frankly, tempted to sign up myself. The walls were painted bright colors. There was lots of natural light. The workers there were creative, energetic and focused. Inside there were toys and crafts material. Outside there was a playground. And the children looked happy and occupied and full of energy.

Now, later I left the center to make a speech, and after the speech I opened the floor to questions. And the very first question was one that I thought summed up the dilemma that we face today. It came from a divorced mother who works full-time as a secretary at the university. To send her 4-year-old son to the center I had visited, she told me, would cost \$6,000 a year, a quarter of her income, and she just couldn't do it. She had to do some real juggling to get the situation that she told me about. She was able to send her son to another less expensive center because she

qualified for a scholarship, and she moved back in with her parents. Otherwise, she said, I would have to quit my job and go on welfare, and then I would have to worry about who would watch my child as I looked for a job.

She and so many women like her are the reason we are here today, and parents like Paula Broglio, who is here with us in the East Room, represent the millions of parents who worry about this important issue. Thirteen million American children spend all or some of their day being cared for by someone other than their parent. Yet, a recent national study found that child care at most centers in our country 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, as Paula and so many others know, when it is available is often financially out of reach. According to the 1995 census, families earning under \$1,200 a month or less than \$15,000 a year pay an average of 25 percent of their income for child care. Middle class families are hit hard as well. These families, earning up to \$36,000 a year pay 12 percent of their income for child care.

The urgency of this conference today to focus on child care is heightened by the new scientific information we have about the emotional and intellectual development of young children. As we learned at the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development in April, what happens to a child in the earliest years affects how well he or she learns for a lifetime. With 45 percent of our children under the age of 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 other studies that good care, whether given at home or in a day care setting, is good care. Done right, day care can be beneficial for children, and it is, therefore, worth our investment.

There's another reason that compels us to act, and that is demand. Demand for quality child care is growing, hastened on by our new economy, which has meant in the last 40 years dramatic changes in the American work force and in the American family's life. We know, for example, that 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. Also, with welfare reform we know that many more children will be needing quality child care.

So this conference is meant to start a conversation. It is only one day, but we hope it is a day that will renew our efforts to improve child care in America. We also hope it will involve our entire national community, because every aspect of our life together must be involved in looking for solutions. The federal government has a role to play, but so do state governments, business and labor, the nonprofit and religious communities, school systems, individual citizens, and especially parents.

We also know there are models of excellent child care around the country and we will hear about some of them -- like the military's day care system or the Smart Start Program in North Carolina. These initiatives provide examples of best practices and can energize and inspire us to do more.

We also know how important it is to ensure choice for parents in their selection of child care. One size fits all child care does not fit America's families. We don't work the same hours, we don't have the same economic or other kinds of pressures that we're dealing with, so we have to provide more options and we have to empower parents with good information to enable them to become good consumers. We also have to find ways that would make it easier and more affordable for parents who want to stay home with their children for some period of time to be able to afford to do so.

So I hope we approach this conversation with a certain fearlessness, with the same kind of energy that I see on the face of a three or four-year-old who's going about some task that he knows will occupy himself. We need to have the same kind of fearless approach, asking the hard questions and then listening to the answers.

There will be a lot of questions raised today -- questions about how to ensure the safety of every child in child care; how to do a better job of training and paying care-givers; how to encourage more employers to provide child care benefits of some variety to employees; how to make successful after-school programs more widely available; how to meet the needs of children with disabilities; how to better support parents who choose, often at significant cost, to stay home with their children; how to ensure that quality and affordability do not come at the expense of one another; and how to learn from the good models that we have in every community and state of our country; and, also, how do we leave ideology at the door and honestly address the real needs of America's families.

These are tough questions, and there are many more that we will be considering today. But we consider these questions at an opportune time. And we hope that this conference will spur the conversations around kitchen tables and water coolers and standing in supermarket aisles or at soccer games, or while going to or from work in the carpool -- whatever it takes to engage more Americans in this discussion, to make it clear that we want American parents to succeed at the most important task they have, caring for the next generation, and to be good workers who contribute to the economy and the quality of life that we enjoy in our country.

Now I'd like to address your attention to a video produced by New Screen Concepts, in association with the Families and Work Institute, entitled, "Why Should We Care about Child Care?"

(Video is shown.)

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THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Welcome to the White House. Thank you very much, Kathy Carliner, for your remarkable statement. And I thought you were very good in the film. Rob Reiner wants to give you a screen test. (Laughter.)

I am so happy to see all of you here. There are many people here who might well be introduced, but I think I must start with the people who are terribly important to whether we will be able to fully achieve our part of the great agenda we are going to lay out

today -- the members of Congress who are here. And I'd like to call their names, and then when I finish, ask them all to stand.

Senator Herb Kohl, who sponsored legislation on child care; Senator Jack Reed; Congressman Bill Clay; Congressman Sandy Levin; Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro; Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey; Congresswoman Sue Kelly; Congresswoman Maxine Waters; Congressman Xavier Becerra; and Congressman Nick Lampson. Would the members of Congress who are here please stand. Thank you for coming. (Applause.)

I'd also like to thank my longtime friend -- Hillary and I have been friends of Governor Jim Hunt and his wife, Carolyn, who are here, for almost 20 years now. And I think Governor Romer is here or on his way. Mayor Clever, we're glad to see you. And John Sweeney, the head of the AFL-CIO, and others who have come to be with us today. I thank you very much.

This is a happy day at the White House, first for all the people in the administration and all those who have worked with them for months and months and months to help this day come to pass; and second, and even more important, from my point of view, this is a happy day because I have been listening to the First Lady talk about this for more than 25 years now -- (laughter) -- and it may be that I will finally be able to participate in at least a small fraction of what I have been told for a long time I should be doing. (Laughter.) And I say that in good humor, but also with great seriousness.

This is an anniversary of sorts for me. It was six years ago today as a newly-announced candidate for President that I went back to my alma mater at Georgetown and began a series of three speeches outlining what I thought America ought to look like in the 21st century and what I thought we would have to do to create a country in which everyone had an opportunity, everyone was expected to be a responsible citizen, and where we came together across all the lines that divide us into one community.

There are many things that are necessary for that to be done, but clearly two of them are, first, people in this country have to be able to succeed at work and at home in raising their children. And if we put people in the position of essentially having to choose one over the other, our country is going to be profoundly weakened. Obviously, if people are worried sick about their children, and they

fail at work, it's not just individual firms, it's the economic fabric and strength of the country that is weakened. Far more important, if people fail at home, they have failed in our most important job, and our most solemn responsibility.

Second, we'll never be the kind of country we ought to be unless we believe that every child counts and that every child ought to have a chance to make the most of his or her God-given abilities.

That's why we're here today -- to examine where we are and what we still have to do. And what we still have to do is quite a lot, to make sure we live by what we believe when we say that all parents should be able to succeed at home and at work and that every child counts. No parent should ever have to choose between work and family: between earning a decent wage and caring for a child. Especially in this day and age when most parents work, nothing is more important, as you have just heard Kathy Carliner say, than finding child care that is affordable, accessible, and safe. It is America's next great frontier, in strengthening our families and our future.

As the Catholic Conference has noted, no government can love a child and no policy can substitute for a family's care. But there is much that we can do to help parents do their duty to their children. From my days as governor of Arkansas to my service as President, strengthening families has been a central goal of what I have worked on. I'm very proud that the first bill I had the opportunity to sign into law as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act, so that no parent has to choose between caring for a child or keeping a job when a family member is ill.

The expanded earned income tax credit helps to ensure that parents who work don't have to raise their children in poverty. No one who is out there working full-time with children should have to worry about that. Expanded Head Start programs are serving more families than ever before. We've collected record sums of child support enforcement. The historic balanced budget I signed this summer provides a \$500-per-child tax credit and helps parents to pay for their children's college education through IRAs, expanded loans and Pell Grants, the HOPE Scholarship and other tax credits.

The Congress has before it now a program of Secretary

Riley's called 21st Century Community Schools in which we ask for funds to help our states keep our schools open after classroom hours for children who have no place else to go and need that environment.

We've also made some progress on child care. Since 1993, child care assistance has increased by 70 percent to help families pay for nearly a million children. Last year in the welfare reform debate, we fought and won the battle to expand child care assistance by \$4 billion over the next six years, giving states an unprecedented opportunity to lead, to innovate in efforts to make child care more affordable.

But we have to do more. With more families required to rely on two incomes to make ends meet, with more single-parent families than ever, more young children are left in the care of others even in their earliest years. And as the First Lady said, we learned at our Conference on Early Childhood and the Brain, that's when children develop or fail to develop capacities that will shape the entire rest of their lives. It's also true that more and more schoolchildren are returning to empty homes after school.

The first thing we have to do is to make it possible for parents to spend time with their children whenever possible. That's why I hope the Congress will vote to expand the Family and Medical Leave law so that parents at least can take some time off for their children's medical appointments, teacher conferences and other basic duties. And I support flex-time laws that will allow workers to choose between receiving overtime in pay or in time off with their families.

But during those times when children can't be with their parents, they must get care that keeps them safe and that helps them to learn and grow. As we all know, too often that isn't the case. Too often, child care is unaffordable, inaccessible and, sometimes, even unsafe. The cost, as Hillary said, strains millions of family budgets. And government assistance meets just about a quarter of the need. Even for those who can afford it, sometimes good care is hard to find, as Kathy said in her remarks. Waiting lists sometimes takes months or years to move, forcing many parents to cobble together unstable arrangements.

The shortage of care puts older children at risk, as

well. Five million of them between the ages of five and 14 are left to fend for themselves after school. And as they get older, that increases the chances that they'll be exposed to drugs, tobacco and crime.

Finally, studies have shown that too many child care facilities are literally unsafe. The tragedies that have befallen families who depended on child care continue to make headlines all across our nation. This conference is an important step forward in addressing all these issues. What we learn today should spur us on to find ways to help parents, all parents, afford safe, affordable, high quality child care, whether it's at home, a child care center or a neighbor's house.

In the coming months, our administration will develop a plan to be unveiled at the next State of the Union, to improve access and affordability, and to help to ensure the safety of child care in America. In the meantime, I want to announce four specific things we can do right now.

First, I'm asking Congress to establish a new scholarship fund for child care providers. (Applause.) Too many care-givers don't have the training they need to provide the best possible care. Those who do have training are rarely compensated with higher wages. The scholarship program I propose will help students earn their degrees as long as they remain in the child care field for at least a year, and it will ensure that care-givers who complete their training will receive a bonus or a raise.

Second, we have to weed out the people who have no business taking care of our children in the first place. I am transmitting to Congress the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, which will make background checks on child care providers easier and more effective by eliminating state barriers to sharing criminal histories for this specific purpose. I urge Congress to pass and states to ratify this legislation.

Third, I've asked Secretary Rubin to oversee a working group on child care, composed primarily of business leaders working with labor and community representatives to find ways more businesses can provide child care or help their employees afford high quality child care. And again, I thank John Sweeney for his important support of this initiative. (Applause.) In some ways the most

gripping part of that film we saw was the father talking about how he was just consumed with worry at work. No parent should ever have to go through that.

Finally, we must use community service to strengthen and expand access to after-school programs. Today, the Corporation for National Service through its To Learn and Grow Initiative will pledge to help after-school programs all across our country to use volunteers to provide better care to children. It is releasing a how-to manual for groups who want to incorporate community service into after-school programs. And I think that, Secretary Riley, if we can win in our little budget battle here on the 21 century community schools, then together, we can do some real good out there on this issue.

My friends, for centuries, over two now, the American Dream has represented a compact that those who work hard and play by the rules should be able to build better lives for themselves and for their children. In this time, and even more into the future, child care that is too expensive, unsafe or unavailable will be a very stubborn obstacle to realizing that dream. So let us commit ourselves to clearing the obstacle, to helping parents fulfill their most sacred duty, to keeping the American Dream alive for them and most important, for their children.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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7 re:
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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 12, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE DINNER

Private Residence
Washington, D.C.

10:29 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hardly know what to say.
(Laughter.) You have unwittingly uncovered how Elizabeth came to be appointed an ambassador. In 1992, these 10 guys came to see me from Washington. They said, if you can make Smith Bagley hush for three years -- (laughter) -- we'll support you for president. (Laughter.) I'll never look at you the same again -- I'll always think of you as the President of the American Women's -- for the rest of my life. (Laughter.)

I can see, this is going to be on Pat Robertson's television show tomorrow night. There's something brewing here. (Laughter.)

I'd like to thank Smith and Elizabeth, first of all, for opening their home to us. This is a beautiful, beautiful place, and a very interesting place. I got a little history of the house tonight. If you haven't gotten it, I think you should. I'd also like to thank you, Elizabeth, for your truly extraordinary service in Portugal. You did a great job and I'm grateful. And thank you for making Hillary and Chelsea feel so welcome over there.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have not a long talk to give tonight. I'm feeling rather nostalgic today. We were talking around the table -- I spoke today, earlier, at the memorial service for Congressman Walter Capps, who was a particular friend of mine because

his daughter, Laura, has worked for me for several years and used to work as George Stephanopoulos's assistant. So she was literally in the room next to the couple of room I occupy along with the Oval Office in the White House.

He was about 62 years old and only served 10 months in Congress. He was a college professor for over three decades, and he got elected in '96, after having been defeated in '94. But he was a wonderful, wonderful human being and a very close friend of ours. And he, like me, absolutely idolized his daughter, and so he used to hang around the White House all the time -- even when congressmen shouldn't have been there -- just to catch a glimpse of his sweet child.

All these eulogies today were talking about how Walter Capps was always in a good humor, and always basically felt relaxed and at peace and was so unpolitical in the Washington sense of the term -- and also, that even though he was in his early 60s, how utterly completely devoid of any kind of cynicism he was, which I think is an admirable thing.

So, anyway, I got myself in the right frame of mind. And then right before I left to start my rounds this evening I spent an hour and a half with my political director, Craig Smith, who is here with me, and we sat around a table, along with Mick Ebarra (phonetic) and Marie Echeveste who also work in the White House, with -- I don't know -- 12 or 15 young people, all under 30. And there was an Indian American state legislator from Minnesota who is one of four South Asian state legislators around the United States. There was a young Hispanic city councilman from Tucson who persuaded his wife that they should delay their honeymoon so that he could come to this meeting with me. I personally thought that was going a little far. (Laughter.)

There was a young woman who is head of the Future Farmers of America in South Dakota. There was a young Native American woman who had a degree in physics and was going back to study to teach physics to children on Indian reservations in the United States. It was a very impressive group of people -- a number of others.

And we just went around the room and they said whatever they wanted to say to me. They asked me whatever they wanted to ask.

There was a young African American man who is a Rhodes Scholar who went to Jackson State University in Mississippi. And they talked about a lot of different things, but I left the meeting feeling really good about our country, that we had young people like that and that, contrary to a lot of the stereotyping about Generation X, they didn't have a bit of cynicism and they were quite upbeat about their future. And they were very determined to see that their generation did its part in meeting the problems of our time. They were all especially interested in citizen community service, which I found was very moving.

I say that by way of background because we are coming to the end of the year -- I guess Congress will go home in the next day or two when we -- we've got a few little disputes outstanding. And then we'll resume again around the time of the State of the Union in January.

And I feel a great deal of gratitude this year. We have the lowest unemployment rate we've had in nearly a quarter of a century; lowest inflation rate in 30 years. The deficit has been reduced by 92 percent before the balanced budget kicked in on October 1st -- 92 percent reduction from the day I took office.

We have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food and we're cleaning up more toxic waste sites than ever before. The crime rate has gone down, the welfare rolls have had a record drop. And I think, more importantly, people really know down deep inside America can work again, and we can really make this thing work.

Your presence here tonight is important because it's very important as we get ready to go into an election season that we do our dead level best to make sure people understand what the real choices are before them, and what policies we have adopted that are, for instance, the Republican Party would never have adopted and people can make a judgement about whether they're right for America.

But if you take this balanced budget bill, for example, if there had been a Republican president and a Republican Congress they might have adopted the balanced budget bill and it would have had a capital gains tax in it. It might have had the \$500 per child tax credit, even if they controlled the presidency and both Houses. It never would have had the tax credits for all forms of higher education after high school that effectively opened the doors of

college to all Americans. It never would have had the biggest increase in education since 1965, with funds to put computers in all the classrooms of the country. It certainly would not have had the biggest increase in child health since 1965. I doubt very seriously it would have had the Medicare reforms we have and the Medicaid reforms we have. The American Diabetes Association said that the diabetes changes were the most important things since the discovery of insulin 70 years ago.

We added 12 years to the Medicare trust fund and covered more women for mammographies; did a lot more work in testing of prostate cancer, which is I think the most under-researched and under-treated major form of cancer in America today now -- now that we've more than doubled the efforts that we're making in breast cancer. And I'm very grateful for that and the country will be stronger because of it.

We passed the Chemical Weapons Convention in a bipartisan fashion. We got bipartisan support to expand NATO, and that's good. And we're heading into a Thanksgiving with -- tomorrow, I believe, I'm going to sign the appropriations bill which finally, finally secures a victory I've been working for since the State of the Union -- Congress has agreed to let us proceed to establish national academic standards -- not federal government standards, but national academic standards -- and have voluntary tests in reading and mathematics for the 4th and the 8th grades. So I'm very, very happy about that.

They also fund our America Reads program, which is now in 800 colleges around America. We have tens of thousands of college kids going out into schools every single week now -- more than once a week -- teaching young people to read. So it's a good thing, and I feel very good about it.

As we look ahead next year, we've tried to set the framework for what we still have to do. We're about to appoint congressional leaders in both parties as members to a Medicare commission that will attempt to come up with a bipartisan long-term solution to the Medicare problem so that we won't -- when my generation retires we won't bankrupt our children and prohibit them from taking care of our grandchildren.

We're now working full steam ahead, hoping we can reach

an agreement with other countries in Kyoto about how the wealthier countries of the world can together reduce the threat of global warming and climate change without having to give up economic growth. I am absolutely positive, based on the evidence, that it can be done if we can organize ourselves properly to do it.

We had a great conference on hate crimes yesterday, which I think will lay the foundation for our continuing efforts to reconcile people across all the lines that divide us in this country. And not very long ago, Hillary and I hosted the first White House Conference on Child Care ever, which I think is one of the great outstanding social issues of our time.

One of the young men who was at our meeting today said, you know what I'm worried about? He said, I'm worried about how I'm supposed to feel secure in a world where I might get laid off at any time and a lot of my friends don't have any health insurance. And I want to have children, but I want to know how I'm supposed to feel secure. And so we had this interesting discussion about what security meant when I was his age. I said, you know, when I was your age -- he was about 20, I think -- I took it for granted that my folks would have the jobs they had as long as they wanted them. I mean, they might get laid off in a recession or something, but people generally had one job and they kept it for their careers. And if they were lucky, they had health insurance on the job; and if they didn't, health care wasn't all that expensive anyway.

And so we talked about that. And we talked about how for a long time you knew at least if you could get an education you could have security. And he said, well, I'm not even sure Social Security will be there for me. And I said, it will be there for you. I know that people say your generation doesn't believe it -- it will be there. We have to -- it's another thing we're going to work on.

But if you think about what I've been doing, a lot of what I've been trying to do is to prepare a way for us to get into the future so that that young man and people in his generation can feel a sense of social security in a time dominated by global economics, global technology, rapid changes and, oftentimes, big changes in the workplace.

One of the reasons we had as much trouble with the fast track as we did -- and I still believe we'll succeed in getting some

fast track authority in this Congress -- but one of the reasons we had the trouble we did is that people feel, even though it might have nothing to do with trade, they pick up the paper three days before the vote and see that Levi Strauss is laying 10,000 people off. And then today they see Eastman Kodak is laying 10,000 people off. And one man in Louisiana who said, I'm an ardent free trader, had to deal with the fact that one company laid 2,400 people off in his congressional district right before he got ready to vote on this.

Now, how do we create an atmosphere of security there? Everybody knows that the economy is in good shape today, but they're still looking at tomorrow. The one thing we cannot do is to say we're not going to trade with the world, we're going to run away, we're going to freeze everything in place, because we can't freeze everything in place. We can't.

We did a study, the Council of Economic Advisors did, which said that 80 percent of our job loss was due to technological change; 20 percent due to trade and business failures, where people just stop buying your product or service. So a lot of this is just intrinsic to the changing economy, which means we have to have a new definition of security in a more dynamic world. What would that be? First of all, everybody's got to have access to a good education, and people have to have access to education for a lifetime. If people my age lose their jobs, they have to be able to get a good education to go back to work. You have to set up a system of lifetime learning that operates at higher levels of excellence at critical points than sometimes it does today.

Secondly, people have to have portability of health insurance and portability of retirement. It's not enough to secure Social Security because most people can't live on just Social Security; at least they can't maintain their lifestyle on Social Security.

Now, we have actually done quite -- I've been trying, under Democratic and Republican Congresses now, for five years to pass what I called my G.I. Bill of Rights which would set up -- go a long way toward setting up a system of lifetime learning, because if you're eligible for public aid and you lose your job, what I think we ought to do, since nearly everybody in America lives within driving distance of a community college, is just give people a certificate and let them take it wherever they want and get whatever training

they want. And take a lot of the government programs out of it and let the educators and the marketplace decide. That's what -- I'm trying to do that.

The tax credits that we gave to college students, though, or to their parents to pay the cost of college also go to adults who have to go back to school. We have made health insurance somewhat more portable with the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, although there is increasing evidence that there are people, lots of people, working in America where their employers are offering health insurance, but they still don't feel they can afford to buy it. And there are a lot of younger people now who are worried sick that they work in places where they can't buy health insurance, and they don't need it most of the time, but if they have a car wreck or develop a serious illness, they'll really be in trouble if they don't have health care. So I intend to keep doing more on that. We're going to add five million kids to the rolls in this budget. We're going to do more.

Perhaps in an area kind of unheralded where we've done the most good in the last five years is in protecting and making more portable pension plans. In December of '94, I signed the legislation which stabilized 40 million people's pensions and outright saved 8.5 million people's pensions that were under water. Since then, we have slowly but surely added provisions that make it easier for people to get pensions, private pensions, 401K plans and take it around if they move from place to place.

The next big challenge is child care. Every family I know with school-age children, even people with very high incomes, has -- every single family I know, without regard to income, has felt some significant tension at some point in their children's lives between their obligations at work and their obligations at home. And I think we are really going to have to work hard to find the way -- the government can't afford all this -- we've got to find a way to have a quality child care network in America that's safe and affordable. We've got to have -- we've got to do more than we've done so far on family leave law, and we've got to have more flexible working hours so that people, if they earn overtime -- if they work overtime -- a lot of people in this country, keep in mind, have to work overtime. It's a part of their job. They have to do it. And a lot of people want to work overtime. But if you have children, you ought to be able to take your overtime in cash or time at home. I

strongly believe that.

These are the sort of things we need to be thinking about. These are the kinds of things that will create a new sense of social security and a highly dynamic economy. And I'm convinced if we deal with our long-term challenges like climate change and entitlements, if we continue to work on education, if we try to build a country where you can balance family and work, and then if we keep working on trying to solve this problem of how we can celebrate our diversity and still be bound together as one America, I think things are going to work out pretty well for this country -- for that group of young people.

And what I'm hoping people will say when our time here is done -- it won't be so long now -- I keep telling my eager Republicans bashing me around, they ought to just relax; time is taking care of a lot of their problems. (Laughter.) That people will say that we are really prepared for a new century, we are really prepared for a new era, we really have a chance to create a country where there's opportunity for everybody responsible enough to work for it, where we're coming together and where we're still leading the world for peace and freedom.

And we have been able to do that, in no small measure because there was a core of people in our party -- not just in the Congress, but among the governors and mayors -- who believed that we could be faithful to our values and still embrace new policies for the new times, and that it would work.

And I don't think anyone can seriously argue that we're not better off today than we were five years ago. And you'd have to be pretty disingenuous -- (applause) -- and you'd have to be pretty disingenuous to say that the policies of our administration had nothing to do with it. So I feel good about it.

But I just tried to have a little conversation with you tonight -- these are the things that I'm thinking about, and I'm feeling a little mellow because I went to my friend's memorial service today, and I feel very reassured because of the young people I saw today. But the last thing I'd like to say is, I think what you have done here in supporting this party is a good thing. And I disagree with those who say that people in both parties who support their political convictions with their financial support are doing a

bad thing -- I disagree with that.

And I passionately believe we should change the campaign finance laws. I also believe if we want to make it work we're going to have to change the media availability laws, because most of us do not -- most of us in public life don't spend our time hitting on people like you in private life repeatedly because it's all we want to do in office. This is not a demand -- people don't just sit around thinking, I think I'll raise a lot of money and then go throw it out a window somewhere. This system we have was driven by the increased cost of communicating with the public, primarily through the electronic media, although not entirely. And if we want it to work, in the absence of a Supreme Court decision which allows us to limit the size of contributions that people make to their own campaigns -- wealthy people -- or that limit the amount of money you can spend on a campaign -- the only way to make it work is to provide in exchange for the willingness to observe certain limits, to provide free and reduced air time.

And so I want to say to you I think you have done a good thing. I think our country is better because of what you have done. I want you to help our party in the '98 elections. I believe if we have a clear, unambiguous agenda to try to create the kind of framework for life in the 21st century I talked about, that our people running for Congress will do quite well.

But I also hope you'll continue to help us reform the campaign finance laws. But I want you to understand -- you know this, a lot of you who have been with us a long time, you know that what is driving this is the cost of communicating with the voters. And every time we see an election where only one side is doing the communicating, I know of no example where the voters ignored the person who was talking to him or her the most and instead embraced the person who was totally silent -- although there have been times when I wanted to do that myself, as a voter. I know of no example where that, in fact, occurred.

I'd also like to thank you, Mr. Grossman, for your willingness to take on a very difficult job at a tough time and to do a good job of it, and I'm very grateful to you.

And again I say to all of you, this is an act of high citizenship, what you're doing. And we cannot afford to let the

American people become skeptical or cynical about this endeavor just at the time when our country is on a roll. And if we do the right things, it will stay on a roll and we'll be able to have a positive impact on all the good people in the rest of the world who are trying to make the most of their freedom, too. That's what you're part of, and when you go home tonight I want you to be proud of it.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

10:50 P.M. EST