YWCA
of the U.S.A.

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Nicole Rabner, Special Assistant to the President
Office of Policy Development, Domestic Policy Development, White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
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Dear Nicole:

I appreciated having the opportunity to meet with you on Wednesday, August 4th to discuss child care and school-age program funding. It is good to know we have strong advocates for children in the White House.

Enclosed, as you requested, is the packet of information given to approximately 100 Congressional Staff members at the National Council of Women's Organizations Child Care and School-Age Programs Briefing on July 16th.

As we said at the meeting, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers are a wonderful new addition to school-age program funding. The YWCA of the U.S.A. strongly supports the increases in funding for that program as well as the Child Care Development Block Grant program and hope that the President will continue to place this issue high on his agenda.

We also know that the President's recommendation that there be a set-aside for community-based organizations as the fiscal agents of 21st Century Community Learning Center grants is needed. There are many communities where YWCA affiliates have had successful collaborations with the school district. However, in some cases, children who need after-school care the most fall between the cracks because community-based organizations are prevented from applying directly for grants.

The YWCA and the National School-age Care Alliance (NSACA) followed up visits with Senate staff members with examples of scenarios experienced by our affiliates. Pamela Browning, NSACA Washington staff, will send you examples her organization's members have experienced. The following are two scenarios experienced by local YWCA's.

1. *A YWCA in a large city contacted the school district about applying for a 21st CCLC grant. The school district has had severe problems for many years, with several different Superintendents, high drop-out rates, and poor test scores. The YWCA has a long successful history in running school-age programs and is the largest provider of after-school programs in that state but they cannot apply for funding 21st CCLC directly. The end result is that the children in this school district will not have the after-school program they desperately need.*

2. *A school district did not respond to requests by community-based organizations (made immediately after the RFP went out) to convene a meeting to plan a collaboration to apply for 21st CCLC funds. Instead, three weeks before the deadline for proposals to the Department of Education, the school district sent out a request for proposals to local community-based organizations. CBO's were put in the position of competing with each other quickly rather than collaborating on a plan which will benefit the children of the community. The submitted proposal was not funded by the Department of Education.*

Thank you again for meeting with us. The YWCA with over 750,000 children in child care and school-age programs are always available to work with you in your efforts for children and their families.

Sincerely,

Rhea

Rhea Starr,
Special Assistant/Child Care Advocate

YWCA

of the U.S.A.

The Mission of the YWCA

The Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America is a women's membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.

The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.

YWCA
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SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS PRESENTATION

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

July 16, 1999

Rhea F. Starr, Special Assistant/Child Care Advocate, YWCA of the U.S.A.

Good morning. It is a pleasure to talk to you about the needs of school-age children and their parents. It is a subject that is increasingly on the minds of communities across the country. That is a change for the United States and a welcome one at that. In the next few minutes, I am going to go over the reasons why school-age programs are increasingly needed, the current federal funding of school-age programs, and the components necessary for quality programs.

I can remember when I first became aware of the need for after-school programs some 25 years ago. In those "dark ages", I was a middle-class parent fortunate to be working for the YWCA, an organization that recognized the needs of working parents and permitted me to work flex-time to arrange for transporting my children to their after-school activities and to permit me to have them with me at the YWCA when they would otherwise be home alone. Unfortunately, that was not an option for many parents in my community nor in most communities in our country then, nor is it now.

As the need for consistent quality school-age programming became increasingly evident, our local YWCA opened its first after-school program in 1978. Soon we found out that the program was not just needed after-school, but before school, during the summer, on school holidays, and in-service and snow days. We also discovered that the staffing for such programs is extremely difficult, even more so than for pre-school child care, which is hard enough. The odd hours, the low pay, and the conbination of skills needed for this work make finding and keeping qualified staff a constant struggle.

The good news is that more people know the importance of quality affordable accessible school-age programs now than was known in the past. We now have research that shows us that children who attend quality programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, grades, and conduct in school, more learning opportunities; academic or enrichment activities; spend less time watching television; have better social skills and higher self-esteem; become more cooperative, and learn to better handle conflicts than their peers who are unsupervised after school. According to a 1994 study, the positive results from children who participate in school-age programs created a savings of over one million dollars for the school districts studied.

A child's need for a safe, constructive program does not end when she or he enters middle school, as we might have thought previously. As we look for causes for the increased violence among our young people, we also find studies which reflect that positive after school activities reduce negative behaviors such as truancy, substance abuse, violent juvenile crime, and teen pregnancy. Violent juvenile crime triples during the hours of 3 and 8 p.m. with approximately 280 children arrested for violent crimes every day.

As you can see by one of the resources in your packet, middle school students in after-school programs are less likely to use drugs and to become teen parents than students who are on their own after school Eighth graders who take care of themselves are at twice the risk for substance abuse compared to those who are not in self-care at all. Children are also most likely to be victims of a violent crime by a non-family member in the after-school hours.

The higher risks cuts across all income groups. But in urban and rural settings with low-income families, communities often lack the necessary resources to provide programs during non-school hours.

Let me ask you something. If you were the parent of a 10 year old who was home alone, would you want to stand up and announce it to everyone? I doubt it and that is the reason it is so hard to collect exact figures of how many children are on their own after school lets out.

Employers have noticed the lowering of productivity after 3 o'clock as employees begin waiting for their daily reporting-in call from their children. Parents who know their children participate in quality school-age programs can work steadily at ease because they know that their children are safe and supervised.

Many schools, unfortunately, have had to decrease their extracurricular activities. Only 30 out of every 100 schools offer some kind of extended-day program and in rural areas, only 18 out of 100 do, and most of these programs are for younger children. Community-based organizations such as the YW have offered school-aged programs and youth development activities for more than a century but their financial resources, frankly, are often stretched to the limit.

Notice please that throughout my remarks I have spoken of the need for "quality" programs. What does quality include? Programs certainly can and should provide academic support— help with homework, computer time, etc. But quality programs are much more than extended hours in the classroom.

As Michelle Seligson, founder and formerly Executive Director of Wellesley's National Institute on Out-of-school Time said at the White House Child Care Conference,

> "Informal learning environments offer an opportunity to build good social relationships with other children, and the chance to try to learn something you don't know how to do--physical or artistic or intellectual--in a safe place where you don't pass or fail. Good after school programs make that possible. As do appropriate ratios of adult staff, who understand the age group, who are comfortable in a relaxed setting that is different from the regular school day, who use their unique talents and personalities and their capacity to engage the children. Good after school programs respect the power of play as children's work, and the unique characteristics of an individual child. These are the fundamentals of quality."

One way to improve the quality of school-age programming is accreditation by a national organization such as National School Age Care Alliance (NSACA). NSACA has identified the key components necessary for a quality school-age program as part of their accreditation program.

The National Collaboration for Youth is a collaboration of 30 of America's leading national youth organizations, among whom are the largest providers of after-school and summer care in the country. This collaboration joins with NSACA in recommending that school-age programs should adhere to standards of quality and accreditation supporting safe, enriching, non-formal settings; well-trained program staff who convey care and concern for each child; activities appropriate to each child's stage of growth, unique personality and interests; and curriculumand staff which reflects the racial and cultural heritage of the children and which promotes diversity.

The increased awareness of the need for school-age programs has led to passage of legislation providing for some federal funding. The Child Care Development Block Grant has an Resource and referral and school-age care set-aside of $19.1 million dollars, out of the total CCDBG funding of over $3 Billion. In the past few years, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers have been developed with increased funding for school-age programs.

Have these funding opportunities met the needs of our children? The answer is unfortunately a very loud NO! Today only one of five of the children needing after school programs are currently enrolled in one. Nearly five million school-age children spend time without adult supervision during a typical week; The Government Accounting Office estimates that in the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school time programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25% of the demand in some urban areas. In rural areas the need is even greater for after-school programs.

To begin to better meet the needs of school-age children and their families, CCDBG needs a $7.5 billion increase over five years including an increase of the $19.1 million set-aside for before and after school care and resource and referrals. The response to the Department of Education's RFP's for 21st Century Community Learning Centers is one more indication of the need for increased funds for after-school programs. Last year, the Department received over 2000 grant applications, of which they were only able to fund 176. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers, scheduled to be reauthorized as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, need to be increased by at least $400 million per year.

One of the largest funding sources for child care and school-age programs is the Child and Adult Care Food and Nutrition program. While there were positive changes in that funding last year, there is one gap which needs to be rectified. Currently funding for dinner in after-school programs is permissible only to the age of 12. To meet today's needs, programs are running longer in the day and serve older children as well. Therefore, the CACFP funding should be expanded to include dinner for youths in after-school programs up to the age of 18.

The public is behind these needed increases. According to a Mott Foundation study, 92% of Americans believe that there should be organized activities for children and teens during the after-school hours. 80% of Americans say they would pay an additional $10 per year in taxes to fund programs in their communities. Fight Crime, Invest in Kids reports that a recent study of police chiefs revealed that nine out of ten surveyed, support prevention programs for youth as an effective way to fight crime.

Schools, community-based organizations, civic groups, parents, elected officials, and employers must look at the gaps in service together and develop strategies to fill those gaps. Schools certainly provide a natural setting for after-school programs, as recognized in the current language of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The YWCA and other community-based organizations run their programs in schools, and have done so for many years. It makes good sense for all segments of a community to collaborate and determine the best solutions for their children. Current 21st Century Community Learning Center legislation supports such collaborations. One concern raised by community-based organizations, however, is the requirement that LEA's be the fiscal agent for all 21st Century Community Learning Center grants. With that requirement, some communities needing after-school programs can not apply. Therefore, community-based organizations have suggested language to permit other groups to apply for this funding.

The need for out-of-school time programs is evident; America's will to provide the resources is clear; the way has been shown by communities in a variety of strategies. What is needed now is the legislation to make programs available for all who need them, no matter where they live or their economic status. Only then will the rich opportunities of the non-school hours truly provide developmental experiences which build skills and competencies so that children can move successfully from childhood and adolescence to adulthood.

THE YWCA CARES FOR CHILDREN

The YWCA of the U.S.A. is the nation's oldest multi-cultural women's movement dedicated to empowering women and eliminating racism. The 364 member associations work to create personal and professional opportunities for women and girls from diverse racial, ethnic and class backgrounds. The YWCA has provided child care for millions of children since 1868.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

296 YWCAs provide child care services to 451,319 children

CHILD CARE CENTERS

276 YWCAs care for more than 388,911 children in over 1,000 sites

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE

223,000 school age children are cared for in 384 YWCA sites

CHILD CARE FOR ABUSED CHILDREN

7 YWCAs care for 2,461 abused children

DAY CAMP FOR CHILDREN OF WORKING PARENTS

210 YWCAs care for 59,178 school-age children in day camps

TRAINING FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

44 YWCAs train 7,957 child care providers

BABYSITTING TRAINING

98 YWCAs train 7,618 babysitters;
92 YWCAs include babysitting for 8,594 teens in their youth development programs

PARENTING EDUCATION AND OTHER SERVICES FOR PARENTS

290 YWCAs provide parenting education and other services for 503,914 parents;
52 YWCAs teach parenting skills to 5241 teens

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YWCA FACT SHEET: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The YWCA of the U.S.A. is a women's membership movement dedicated to empowering women and girls and to eliminating racism. From its inception, YWCA leaders have realized that in order to accomplish the organization's Mission, programs and advocacy must join together to meet the needs of children from birth.

YWCAs nationwide provide services for children ages 0 to 3. Programs provided locally are based on each community's individual needs. Child care, pre-natal services, housing, parenting programs, and motor development are among those benefiting the very young at a critical time in their development.

YWCA **pre-natal services** reach more than 5500 parents, including many high-risk pregnant teens. The YWCA, recognizing that parents are the first teachers of children, **provide parenting services** to more than half a million parents, including parenting classes for 175,000 parents in 234 cities.

The YWCA is the oldest provider of **child care** in the nation, having established the first day nursery in 1864 and today is one of the largest nonprofit providers of care in the country. In 1994, the YWCA provided child care services to 451,319 children, including direct child care for 388,319 children in 276 programs in over 1,000 sites.

Quality child care requires **professional development** opportunities for caregivers. In addition to such opportunities for YWCA employees, YWCAs have classes for other providers in 44 communities. Babysitters for short term care are also trained in almost 100 YWCAs.

Parent and child development activities in 122 communities benefit almost 23,000 children and begin with age-appropriate activities for the very young.

(Over)

Our society requires attention to children for whom basic needs such as safety and housing are not guaranteed. YWCAs provide **violence prevention programs and services** for more than half a million parents. Children in abusive family situations, including very young children, receive services in almost 100 YWCAs.

Housing for 200,000 people is provided by the YWCA. Young children live with their mothers in safe, well-kept residences. In many cases, **case management, job training, and other services** are provided so that when families move out of the YWCA, young children will continue to live in homes where the mothers can be self-sufficient and the children safe.

Children have to be "carefully taught" from birth that racism is wrong. YWCAs include that teaching and modeling in all programs. In addition, many associations offer **culturally sensitive and bilingual** services to reach culturally, racially and economically diverse members of the communities they serve.

Program services are combined with **advocacy** efforts on the national, state, and local levels to ensure that legislation and necessary funding is available to ensure safe, affordable, accessible child care. The YWCA Child Care Advocacy Network has over 200 members across the country. The YWCA works in **partnership** nationally with other child care advocacy organizations on these and other issues of importance to the **empowerment of women and the elimination of racism.**

A Comprehensive Look at Child Care and School-Age Programs

Inside this packet....

✔ Working Families Need Access to Affordable, Quality Child Care Right Now!
NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund & The National Women's Law Center

✔ Women's Stake in Improving the Availability, Affordability, and Quality of Child Care and Early Education
The National Women's Law Center

✔ Why Quality Matters
Children's Defense Fund

✔ Balancing Family and Work: Facts About Working Families
Center for Policy Alternatives

✔ Tax Relief for Employed Families: Improving the Dependent Care Tax Credit
The National Women's Law Center

✔ Here's What US Parents Really Need, *San Diego Union-Tribune* article
Nancy Duff Campbell & Judith Appelbaum, National Women's Law Center

✔ YWCA Child Care and School Age Programs
YWCA of USA

✔ Windows on Child Care: Executive Summary
National Council of Jewish Women

✔ Child Care: Talking Points for Welfare Reform
NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund

✔ TANF Funds Are Not the Child Care Solution
Children's Defense Fund

✔ After School and Summer Programs
National Collaboration for Youth

(OVER)

✔ Fact Sheet on School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College

✔ Early Childhood and After-School Programs Fight Smoking, Crime, Teen Pregnancy, and Drugs

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

✔ New Resources Are Available for Serving Snacks in After-School Programs

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

✔ Who's Watching Our Families: Valuing Our Caregivers

Center for Policy Alternatives

✔ Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages: The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988-1997

Center for the Child Care Workforce

✔ Child Care Workforce Earnings in Perspective

Center for the Child Care Workforce

✔ CARES Bill (Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability)

Center for the Child Care Workforce

WORKING FAMILIES NEED ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE RIGHT NOW!

The need for quality full-time child care and after-school programs is a daily concern for millions of American working parents. Quality child care and constructive after-school programs are too often unaffordable or simply not available. Congress and the Clinton Administration must join together this year to pass legislation to ensure that all working families have access to affordable quality care.

The child care needs of American women and their families have increased dramatically now that the majority of women with children are in the paid labor force. According to the Department of Labor, over 70% of all women with children under 18 work outside the home. Every day 13 million preschoolers -- including 6 million infants and toddlers -- are in child care, and millions more school-age children are in after-school programs and summer activities. Because the majority of working women need to work in order to support their families, access to affordable child care is essential. Without it, women risk unplanned disruptions in their employment which can affect job performance, restrict opportunities for their advancement in the workforce and result in lower wages or even job loss.

Working families with children are faced with high child care costs that consume a significant portion of their household budgets. For families with children between the ages of 3 and 5 at all income levels, child care is the third greatest expense after housing and food. Full-day child care easily costs $4,000 to $10,000 a year per child -- at least as much as college tuition at a public university. Even though subsidies are available for low-income families, funds are severely limited. Currently, no state can afford to serve all families eligible under federal guidelines. Indeed, only 1 in 10 eligible children who need help are getting assistance, and often the subsidies available are not enough to pay for quality care.

Many working parents in the United States are forced to rely on low quality child care arrangements. Although recent studies reveal that the early years of a child's life are critical to intellectual development and academic success, high quality care is in short supply. The quality of child care has a lasting impact on children's well-being and ability to learn. Children in poor quality care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills, and display more aggression toward other children and adults. A recent study has found that about half of the child care provided for the youngest children in the United States can be considered only fair in quality.

Supporting child care workers is key to providing quality child care. Quality child care is hard to find in a marketplace where child care workers (98% of whom are female, and one third of whom are women of color) earn exceptionally low wages. Child care workers earn an average of only $11,780 per year, and preschool teachers have an average annual salary of just $15,580. Due in part to low wages and the lack of benefits, there is a high turnover rate among child care workers. This high turnover rate can undermine the strength of relationships between children and their providers, resulting in unreliable, low-quality care.

Although there are many problems with child care in the United States, they are not insurmountable. They can be overcome once Congress and the Clinton Administration make the enactment of significant child care legislation a national priority. Only then will American families have a chance at having access to affordable, quality child care.

This information was prepared by NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, 395 Hudson Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10014 and the National Women's Law Center, 11 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036, in conjunction with the Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

WHAT CONGRESS MUST DO TO MAKE AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL AMERICAN FAMILIES

This nation can and must do more to ensure that all families have access to safe, affordable child care and constructive programs for school-age children. At a time when the overwhelming majority of women with children work outside the home, Congress must make a major investment in improving the availability, quality and affordability of child care.

IN 1999, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO ARE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS ISSUE MUST MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THE FOLLOWING:

A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT. The block grant provides states with funds to help working families pay for child care and improve child care quality. Currently, the block grant serves only one of 10 eligible children. A $20 billion increase over 5 years would double the number of families receiving help. Additional funds should also be used to improve the quality of child care programs, particularly for infant and toddlers and enhance the compensation and training of child care providers.

INVESTMENTS IN EARLY LEARNING. Early learning is vital to ensuring that children enter school ready to learn and succeed. Congress should support $3 billion over five years for an Early Learning program focused on preschool children.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DEPENDENT CARE TAX CREDIT. The DCTC reduces taxes for employment-related dependent care expenses. To make the DCTC a more effective mechanism for helping families pay for child care, Congress should increase the amounts of the credits for lower and moderate income families and make it refundable so that families with no or low federal income tax liability can benefit from it.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNING CENTERS. Nearly five million school-age children are home alone after school. A $400 million increase in funding for this program in FY 2000 will allow communities to provide constructive before and after-school programs for school-age children which can help reduce truancy, substance abuse and other risk taking behavior.

LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE. Promoting the retention of good child care workers requires providing them with financial assistance. Congress can help by appropriating at least $10 million to support loan forgiveness for individuals who earn a degree in early childhood education and work as child care providers.

CAMPUS-BASED CHILD CARE. On-site child care is very important in helping parents complete their education. Congress should support an increase to $10 million for campus-based child care centers.

EXPANSION OF THE HEAD START PROGRAM. To ensure that more low income preschool children have access to this early education program, an additional $607 million is needed to improve and expand Head Start.

EXPANSION OF THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT. The FMLA guarantees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to employees with a new child or a serious illness in the family, but it currently applies only to employers with 50 or more workers. By expanding the FMLA to employers with 25 or more employees and encouraging employers to give employees paid leave, more parents will be able to stay at home with their children during the critical early months of a child's life. This expansion would also alleviate problems in finding infant care which is in short supply.

ENCOURAGING PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT. To encourage the private sector's role in the development of child care facilities and the provision of child care services, Congress should establish a capital financing program to provide capital assistance for the construction and renovation of child care facilities.

CO-SPONSORSHIP OF COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND OTHER BILLS ADDRESSING ISSUES SUCH AS SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE. Several comprehensive child care bills have been or will be introduced, including the Child Development Act by Sen. Wellstone and the "ACCESS Act" sponsored by Sen. Dodd and others. Other bills that will focus on building and rewarding a skilled child care workforce, enhancing school readiness, and other issues, should also be supported.

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Balancing Family and Work: Facts about Working Families

State-by-State Data
May 1999

CENTER FOR
POLICY
ALTERNATIVES

WOMEN'S STAKE IN IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY, AND QUALITY OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

The child care needs of American women and their families have increased dramatically in recent years, as women with children have entered the paid workforce in unprecedented numbers. *Seven out of ten American women with children under the age of 18 -- and nearly three out of four women with school-age children -- work in the paid labor force today*, representing a major societal change since the 1940's when fewer than one in five women with children worked outside the home. Working parents know that providing their children with a safe and nurturing child care environment can make an important contribution to their children's healthy development. Yet high-quality child care is too often unaffordable or simply not available; recent studies have shown that most child care and early education in the United States fails to provide developmentally appropriate activities, and in the most egregious cases, fails to maintain basic safety and sanitary standards. Women and their families thus have a tremendous stake in public policies that will help make high-quality child care available and affordable to those who need it.

Women have another interest in effective child care policies as well: as child care providers. The vast majority of child care providers in this country -- some 98% -- are women. These women are working in a demanding occupation, charged with providing loving care and a healthy learning environment for the children entrusted to them. Yet the compensation these teachers and care-givers receive -- between $10,500 and $14,800 per year, on average, often with no benefits -- shortchanges not only the workers but also the children in their care, because the lack of decent wages and career advancement opportunities in child care make it difficult to attract and retain trained, qualified care-givers.

Women thus have a profound and dual interest in the enactment of effective child care policies. As parents, they need access to high-quality child care that will help their children learn and grow. As providers of child care services, they need compensation, training and advancement opportunities that will reflect the value of their important work while enhancing their skills and the quality of the care they provide to our nation's children.

It is not surprising, then, that child care is high on the list of working women's concerns.[1]

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I. WORKING FAMILIES AND THE NEED FOR CHILD CARE

It is an undeniable fact of American life today that a large and steadily growing majority of women with children -- married and single, with children of all ages from pre-school to teens -- must look to child care to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children during working hours. In addition, an increasing number of women with children are seeking a college education, and these women, too, need affordable, high-quality child care if they are to have access to the enhanced job prospects and increased earning power that a college degree can bring them.

The Reality of the Workforce

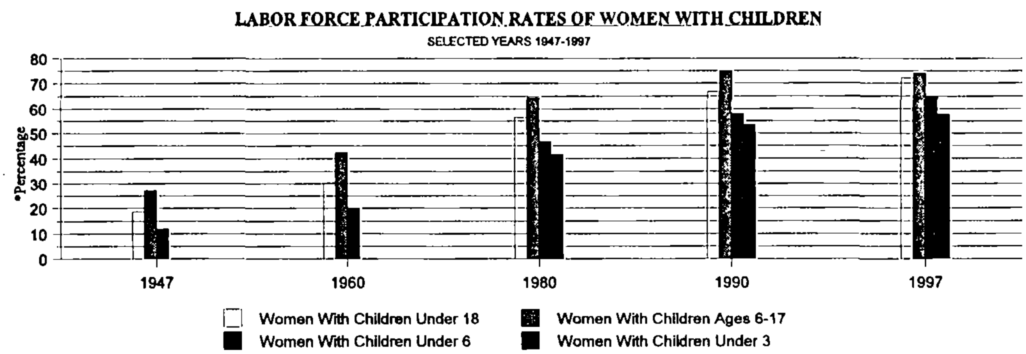
A large majority of American women with children work outside the home.

- Nearly 72% of American women with children under age 18, and 74% with children between the ages of 6 and 17, are in the paid labor force.[2]

- 65% of women with children under age 6 are in the paid labor force, and 58% of mothers with infants (under age 1) are either in the paid labor force or looking for paid employment.[3]

- 73% of all employed women with children under age 18, almost 70% of these women with children under age 6, and over 65% of these women with children under age 3 are working *full time*.[4]

Labor force participation rates for women reflect a steady and dramatic increase over the last 50 years.



Sources: *1. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 1997.*
2. U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means 1996 Green Book, Table10-1.

National Women's Law Center, Washington, DC, February 1999

- In 1947, at the end of World War II, only 19% of women with children under age 18 were in the paid labor force. By 1960, that number had jumped to nearly one-third, by 1980 it was over half, and by 1990 it was over two-thirds.[5]

- Similarly, in 1947, only 12% of women with children under age 6 were in the paid labor force; by 1960 that number had climbed to over 20%, by 1980 it was over 46%, and by 1990 it was over 58%.[6]

- As women have moved into the labor force in greater numbers, they have increasingly taken jobs that are both full time and year round, partly due to economic necessity and partly due to their movement into traditionally male-dominated occupations that require full-time, year-round work.[7]

Mothers working outside the home today include married women as well as women who are sole heads of their households.

- In nearly 70% of married couples with children under age 18, the mother is in the paid labor force, and 70% of these women are working full time.[8]

- Over 70% of mothers who are sole heads of households with children under age 18 are in the paid labor force, and 80% of these women are working full time.[9]

- Today, only 23% of married-couple families with children under age 18, and only 25% of married couples with children under age 6, fit the traditional model of husband as sole breadwinner.[10]

Most women who work outside the home do so as a result of economic necessity.

- Some 10 million households with children -- almost 30% of all U.S. households with children -- are headed by women alone (women who are divorced, separated, widowed or never married).[11] These women must earn a living in order to feed, clothe, house and otherwise sustain themselves and their children.

- Child support alone does not enable these women to provide for their children, because so few child support orders are established or enforced, and when they are, the amount collected is generally insufficient to contribute significantly to meeting the demands of raising a child.[12]

- In a 1997 survey of working women, more than half of the married women respondents (52%) reported that they contribute half or more of their household income.[13]

A mother's income can often mean the difference to a family between living below the poverty line and living above it. A mother's income can also protect her against total economic dependency.

- One in five married women with children who do not work outside the home live in poverty, while only one in one hundred married women with children who work full-time live in poverty.[14]

- Some married women work in order to protect against complete financial dependence on a spouse and being left with no job skills and inadequate means of support in the event of divorce -- a concern that is well-founded, in light of the inadequacy of child support awards, as noted above.

Many Families Need Help Paying for Child Care

Working parents who rely on child care often have a hard time paying for it.

- For families with children between the ages of three and five, at all income levels, child care and early education is the third greatest expense after housing and food.[15]

- Nationally, child care consumes between 6% and 25% of a family's income.[16] However, one study of child care prices in six cities found that, for a minimum-wage worker, the average cost of care for an infant in a child care center would be at least 50% of the family's annual income.[17]

- The cost of child care today can range from $4,000 to $10,000 annually.[18] Yet about half of families with young children earn less than $40,000 a year,[19] and single mothers with children earn even less -- in 1997, the median income of families with children headed by a woman was $17,256, 40% less than the median income of families with children headed by a man ($28,668) and more than two-thirds less than the median income of married couples with children ($54,395).[20]

- The following are *average* annual child care costs for *one* 4-year old child in a child care center in selected cities:

Atlanta: $4,990	**Columbus:** $4,940	**Kansas City:** $5,200	**Raleigh:** $5,070
Boston: $7,900	**Denver:** $4,580	**Los Angeles:** $4,630	**Seattle:** $6,140[21]

Many low-income families who are eligible for child care and early education assistance never receive it.

- The Head Start Program (a comprehensive child development program designed to help low-income children enter school ready to learn and succeed) currently serves more than 800,000 low-income children and their families.[22] However, due to limited funding, the program still serves only 40% of all eligible children.[23]

- The Child Care and Development Block Grant allows states to help pay for child care for families with incomes up to 85% of state median income. However, all but four states disqualify families for help before they reach this federally authorized level.[24]

- In some states, the income eligibility cutoffs are so low that only the poorest of the working poor can qualify. For example, in West Virginia, the cut-off is at $15,000 per year for a family of three (barely above the 1997 federal poverty level of $13,330), while Iowa and South Carolina cut off eligibility at $16,700.[25]

- As of January 1998, about half the states had to turn away eligible low-income working families or put them on a waiting list due to inadequate funds. In California, over 200,000 families – mostly non-welfare, low-income workers – are on the child care subsidy waiting list.[26]

- A 1998 Children's Defense Fund study confirms that inadequate federal and state funding prevents at least nine out of ten eligible children in low-income working families from getting the child care assistance they need.[27]

Child care subsidies are often too low to meet the needs of working families.

- In some cases, the amount the state will pay for care is so low that parents cannot find qualified providers who can afford to serve their children.[28] Delaware, for example, pays a maximum child care subsidy for a four-year-old in a child care center that is $200 per month less than the amount needed to allow parents to access care from three-quarters of Delaware providers.[29]

- In other cases parents have to pay so much in parent fees or co-payments that child care expenses remain a staggering financial burden.[30] In South Dakota, for example, a parent earning $1,670 per month must contribute $500 per month (30% of the family's income) in order to get a child care subsidy.[31]

Families are required to pay the lion's share of the cost of child care and early education, with very little help from the government, in contrast to government support for higher education.

- Families pay roughly 60% of total annual estimated expenditures for child care and early education, while families pay only about 23% of the cost of a public higher education.[32] The total government resources for higher education far exceed those for child care and early education, amounting to about $4,552 for every postsecondary student compared to $1,395 for every child under age six in child care.[33] This disparity in government support is compounded by the fact that families are usually better off financially by the time their children enter college than they are when their children are younger and in need of child care.[34]

- Just as there is ample evidence that a college education results in economic and other benefits to graduates, researchers have found that seven dollars in public expenditures is saved for every dollar spent for quality child care and early childhood education.[35]

High-Quality Child Care and After-School Programs are Often Unavailable

Working parents need access not just to affordable child care, but to a child care setting that is safe and nurturing and will contribute to their children's healthy development and education.

- Research on early brain development and school readiness demonstrates that the experiences children have and the attachments they form in the first three years of life have a decisive, long-lasting impact on their later development and learning.[36]

- Recent breakthroughs in neuroscience show that early interactions directly affect the way the brain is "wired".[37] Brain development is non-linear: there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills.[38] By age two, a child's brain contains twice as many synapses and consumes twice as much energy as the brain of an adult.[39]

- The quality of child care has a lasting impact on children's emotional well-being, social skills and ability to learn.[40] Children in poor-quality child care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills, and display more aggression toward other children and adults.[41]

- Children in higher-quality preschool classrooms display greater receptive language ability and pre-math skills, view their child care and themselves more positively, have warmer relationships with their teachers, and have more advanced social skills than those in lower-quality classrooms.[42] In addition, higher-quality programs can lead to children's long-term success, including better school achievement, higher earnings as adults, and decreased involvement with the criminal justice system.[43]

- Many young children are being cared for in settings in which books and toys required for physical and intellectual growth are missing; warm, supportive relationships with adults are lacking; and in some cases, basic sanitary conditions are not met and safety problems are endangering infants.[44]

Constructive activities for school-age children and youth are critical to their development and to help keep them out of trouble.

- It is estimated that nearly five million children are left unsupervised after school each week, and many children are in settings that do not help them grow and learn because there are no constructive activities to promote their physical and intellectual development.[45] The problem is most acute in low-income communities, where fewer before- and after-school programs are offered.[46]

- Studies have indicated that school-age children who are left alone after school are at greater risk of truancy, risk-taking behavior, substance abuse, poor grades, and stress.[47] FBI data show that violent juvenile crime triples in the hour after the school bell rings with nearly half occurring between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.[48]

- In a recent survey, 92% of police chiefs nationwide identified an increased government investment in programs like child care and after-school programs as the most effective anti-crime weapon by a four-to-one margin over trying more juveniles as adults or even hiring additional police officers.[49]

II. The Early Childhood Workforce: Women As Child Care Providers

The vast majority of child care providers in this country are women.

- The child care workforce is 98% female, and one-third women of color.[50]

- These women -- approximately 2.3 million early childhood teachers and teachers' assistants, family child care providers, and in-home providers[51] -- carry the responsibility of providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating setting for the children entrusted to them each day. The services these women provide can have a critical impact on the successful development of the children in their care.

In light of their tremendous responsibility, child care workers are shockingly under-compensated.

- The U.S. Department of Labor reports that, in 1997, the median weekly salary for a family child care provider was $202 per week, which is $10,504 annually, based on

52 weeks of wages.[52] *This is below the poverty threshold* for a household that includes one parent and one child.[53]

- For an early childhood teaching assistant, the median weekly salary was $239 per week, or $12,428 annually, and for a worker in a child care center it was $285 per week, or $14,820 annually.[54]

- Child care workers thus earn far less than the median earnings for all workers ($26,156 in 1997), and less than the median earnings for bus drivers ($21,060), janitors ($16,276), or bartenders ($16,024).[55]

- Many child care workers receive little if anything in benefits from their employers. Even among child care centers, the availability of health care coverage for staff workers remains woefully inadequate.[56]

Many child care workers cannot afford to stay in the system.

- In order to support themselves, many child care workers are forced to hold second jobs, live with their parents, rely on a second income, or forgo health insurance and medical care.

- As a result, many do not stay long in child care: 31% of all teaching staff leave their child care centers each year.[57]

This system is shortchanging not only the providers, but the children as well.

- The compensation of child care staff is clearly linked to the quality of care and education children receive. According to one study, "teachers' wages, their education and specialized training were the most important characteristics that distinguish poor, mediocre, and good-quality centers."[58]

- Another study identified staff wages as the most important predictor of the quality of care children receive: better quality centers paid higher wages, hired teachers with more education and training, and experienced lower staff turnover.[59]

- Reducing turnover is critical, because the stability of the relationship between the child and the care-giver is important to the child's social development.[60] For example, the U.S. Department of Defense, in its Military Child Development System, ties wages and advancement for its child care workers to training and education, and in so doing has significantly reduced turnover and thereby improved the morale and motivation of care givers and the quality of care.

III. SOLUTIONS: CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE CHILD CARE POLICY

An effective child care initiative must ensure that all families have access to affordable, high-quality child care for infants and toddlers as well as school-age children. It must include the following components.

(1) Help Working Families Pay for Child Care

Without assistance, the cost of decent child care is beyond the reach of many low- and moderate-income families. To help these families with their child care expenses:

- The Child Care and Development Block Grant should be substantially expanded to enable states to better serve eligible families; and
- The Dependent Care Tax Credit should be improved to better meet the needs of families, by making the credit refundable, adjusting the sliding scale of percentages of eligible expenses that can be claimed, and raising the limits on eligible expenses.

(2) Protect the Health and Safety of Children by Improving the Quality of their Care and Education

A stronger child care infrastructure must be created, through funds to states for:

- Improved licensing standards and enforcement, including sufficient staff to adequately monitor and inspect programs to reduce the risk of harm;
- Increased reimbursement for programs meeting high-quality standards;
- Policies to improve staff compensation and benefits in order to attract qualified staff and reduce staff turnover;
- Scholarships for care-givers pursuing a degree in early childhood education;
- Statewide staff development systems and policies that help to improve training for staff;
- Targeted funding to enable child care and early education programs to offer comprehensive services through linkages and support from health, social services,

and mental health systems;

- Improved consumer education efforts, including the expansion of local resource and referral programs; and
- Support to child care and early educations programs to use technology, such as long-distance learning, more effectively.

(3) Expand Good Care for Infants and Toddlers

Substantial funding should be made available for states to strengthen and enrich programs serving very young children, as well as increase support to parents of young children and other care-givers. Specifically, funds should be available for activities such as:

- Operating family child care networks that serve infants and toddlers;
- Expanding the supply of infant and toddler care, especially for care that is in short supply;
- Supporting initiatives to increase the compensation of care-givers caring for very young children;
- Providing specialized training for care-givers working with infants and toddlers;
- Expanding resource and referral programs;
- Assisting programs serving young children in becoming accredited;
- Helping child care programs serving young children to link with other essential services in the community;
- Providing parenting education and support programs;
- In addition, the Family and Medical Leave Act should be expanded to cover more workplaces and employees, and to provide leave for a broader range of family needs. Strong family leave policies are critical, as they enable working parents to stay home during the critical early months of a child's life or when a child is seriously ill, and to play an active role in their children's early development.

(4) Keep Children and Youth Safe and Productive through Better Use of Out-of-School Time (School-Age Care)

- Sufficient funds must be made available to local communities to support before- and after-school, summer, and weekend activities for more children and youth. These activities should be available in a range of settings, including schools, child care settings, homes, and community and youth centers. Resources should be used to start, operate, and expand programs; support staff training and professional development, accreditation, and program assessment and improvement; and facilitate coordination that can make the most of public and private resources.

(5) Continue Support for Head Start and the Child and Adult Care Food Program

- Head Start is an essential component of any initiative to strengthen families' access to strong early learning experiences. The Head Start program should continue on its path toward serving all eligible children. It should also recognize the growing need to reach younger children by expanding funds available for Early Head Start.

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) should allow for-profit child care centers serving low-income children to participate in CACFP, and restore the option of a fourth meal or snack for children spending extended hours in child care centers and family child care homes.

The National Women's Law Center is a non-profit organization that has been working since 1972 to advance and protect women's legal rights. The Center focuses on major policy areas of importance to women and their families including child and adult care, child support, employment, education, reproductive rights and health, public assistance, tax reform, and social security– with special attention given to the concerns of low-income women.

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Why Quality Matters

High Quality Child Care Programs Contribute to School Readiness

◆ A new update to the Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers study found that the quality of child care matters for all children, and that children at-risk of school failure benefit more from quality child care than do other children. Perhaps most importantly, the study found that the quality of child care has a long-term effect on school achievement.

> "Children attending child care classrooms with higher quality practices scored better in receptive language ability (i.e., understanding of language)...children who attended high quality child care had better language skills than children in low quality child care...Children in higher quality child care also scored better in math ability than children in low quality care. Further, the math skills of children in high quality care were better at all ages, from the preschool years through second grade...[C]hild care quality had even stronger influences for children at greater risk of school failure. For children with less highly educated mothers, better quality child care was even more strongly related to better math skills and fewer problem behaviors through second grade."

(Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Team, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, (1999). *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go To School: Executive Summary*)

◆ In a recent study from the National Research Council designed to identify successful strategies to improve the literacy skills of young children, the study found that quality preschool experiences were highly related to the development of language and literacy skills.

> "The Bermuda Day Care Study showed that quality of conversation in the classroom and amount of one-on-one or small-group interactions that children engaged in were highly related to language measures. Also, for low-income children at age 4, the quality of group book reading experiences was found to be correlated with kindergarten language and literacy measures."

◆ The study also found that the more time children spend in quality preschool settings, the higher their school achievement in later years, at least through the third grade.

> "The number of months that children spend in preschool has been found to be related to achievement test scores in second grade, behavior problems in third grade, and school retention in kindergarten through third grade. Children with more preschool experience had higher achievement scores and fewer behavior problems and were less likely to be required to repeat a grade."

(Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns and Peg Griffin, Eds. National Research Council, (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, pg. 148-149)

◆ Findings from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care demonstrate that participation in quality child care settings can improve mother-child relationships, while contributing to positive linguistic and cognitive outcomes. The study was able to show that lower quality programs have an opposite effect, contributing to less positive child development.

> "Higher quality care was found to be related to: better mother-child relationships; lower probability of insecure attachment in infants of mothers low in sensitivity; fewer reports of children's problem behaviors; higher cognitive performance in child care; higher children's language ability; and higher level of school readiness." In addition, the study found that "the converse is also true. Lower quality care predicted: less harmonious mother-child relationships; a higher probability of insecure mother-child attachment of mothers who are already low in sensitivity to their children; more problem behaviors, lower cognitive and language ability and lower school readiness scores."

(Robin Peth-Pierce, *The NICHD Study of Early Child Care* (1998). National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

◆ Researchers from the National Center for Early Development and Learning followed a group of children from the time they were 3 through the early elementary years. They found that participation in quality early childhood settings led to better language and cognitive skills through preschool.

> "Each year from preschool to kindergarten, children in preschool classrooms where higher quality practices were observed had better language skills than children in classrooms of lower quality; children in classrooms with higher quality practices also had better math skills over this time; and children in higher quality classrooms also had better reading skills during the first year of preschool, but there were no differences in reading skills after that."

(Dick Clifford, Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, Mary Culkin, Carollee Howes and Sharon Lynn Kagan, (1998). National Center for Early Development and Learning, UNC-Chapel Hill.)

◆ After examining the outcomes from nine early intervention programs, RAND found that high quality programs have lasting benefits for school readiness, school performance over time and overall academic achievement.

> "Although the IQ effects produced by early intervention programs may be short lived, there appear to be strong and longer-lasting benefits in terms of educational outcomes, such as academic achievement and other aspects of school performance."

(Lynn A. Karoly, et. al., (1998). *Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know about the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions*, Rand)

Indicators of Quality

◆ The new Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study shows that the long-term benefits of quality child care are closely related to classroom practices and the teacher-child relationship.

> "[T]wo different aspects of the quality of child care experiences, classroom practices and teacher-child relationship closeness, influenced cognitive and socio-emotional development...While actual classroom practices, including materials, activities, and interactions, contributed most strongly to children's language and math development, early relationships with caregivers were the strongest predictors of children's social and behavioral skills."

(Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Team, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, (1999). *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go To School: Executive Summary*)

- The NICHD Study of Early Child Care has demonstrated that the generally accepted indicators of quality—staff/child ratios and provider education and training do contribute to positive outcomes for children.

> "Children's outcomes were better when they attended classes that met the recommended child-staff ratios at 24 months and the recommended levels of teacher training and education at 36 months. Further, the more recommendations met, the better the outcomes for school readiness, language comprehension, and behavior problems at 36 months."

(NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (n.d.). "When Child-Care Classrooms Meet Recommended Guidelines for Quality," NICHD unpublished manuscript)

- Other studies have also found a relationship between the characteristics of quality programs and positive outcomes for children, regardless of child or family characteristics.

> "Results of this study indicated that quality of child care was a modest to moderate predictor of cognitive and language development among African-American children at 12, 24, and 36 months of age, with child care being more related to overall levels of development rather than to rates of change over time. These results provide further evidence that the quality of the child's environment in child care plays an important role in cognitive and language development during the first three years and address questions about the potential impact of child care on patterns of development during early childhood...
>
> As in other studies correlating child care quality and development among toddlers, and preschoolers, this study indicated that higher quality child care is correlated with significantly better cognitive and language development during the first three years of life. Even after adjusting for child and family characteristics, contextual analyses indicated that infants and toddlers in classes with better quality tended to have better cognitive and communication skills at one, two, and three years of age...Furthermore, these analyses provided more limited evidence that the rate at which children acquired expressive language skills was slower for children in poorer than higher quality classrooms."

(Margaret R. Burchinal, Joanne E. Roberts, Rhodus Riggins, Jr., Susan A. Zeisel, Eloise Neebe and Donna Bryant (1998). "Relating Quality of Center Child Care to Early Cognitive and

Language Development Longitudinally," (presented at the 1998 International Conference on Infant Studies), Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, UNC-Chapel Hill.)

◆ The National Center for Early Development and Learning study found that, over the 3-year period studied, the quality of care made a difference in the development of children from all backgrounds.

> "Child care quality affects children's development across the range of language, academic, and social skills. The quality of child care matters for all children, with similar effects for children from a variety of backgrounds. These effects are long term, lasting at least through kindergarten."

(Dick Clifford, Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, Mary Culkin, Carollee Howes and Sharon Lynn Kagan, (1998). National Center for Early Development and Learning, UNC-Chapel Hill.)

◆ The *Cost, Quality* report (1995) found that "across all levels of maternal education and child gender and ethnicity, children's cognitive and social development are positively related to the quality of their child care experience."

> "Children in higher quality classrooms displayed more advanced cognitive skills in two areas: language development and pre-math skills. They scored higher on individual assessments of receptive language ability, indicating that they had a better understanding of language than children in lower quality classrooms. Children in higher quality classes also had better pre-math skills...Children's understanding of language showed the strongest relationship to quality of all the outcomes measures studied, while a more moderate relationship was found for children's pre-math skills. Children in higher quality classrooms also evidenced better socio-emotional development.... While better quality care had a positive influence on cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes for all children, in two instances higher quality care had an even stronger positive influence on the development of children typically considered at risk for school failure. Better quality child care was even more strongly related to better language abilities for minority children compared to nonminority children. For children whose mothers had relatively less education, there was an even stronger relationship between being in higher quality care and having more positive attitudes about their child care and their own competence."

(Suzanne Helburn, et. al., (1995). *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers*, University of Colorado, Denver)

◆ In a study that specifically examined family child care providers and relative caregivers, the Families and Work Institute found that high quality care results in positive outcomes for children. As caregivers exhibited increased sensitivity and responsiveness, the quality of care increased.

> "When the care children receive is sensitive, responsive, and of better quality, children are more likely to be securely attached to their providers and achieve higher levels of cognitive competence." Specifically, "children with more sensitive and responsive

providers are more likely to be securely attached to their providers; children with more responsive providers are more likely to engage in high-level or more complex play with objects."

(Ellen Galinsky, et.al. (1994). *The Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care*, Families and Work Institute)

◆ *Starting Points* found a clear link between quality child care and positive outcomes for very young children. The relationship between the child and the caregiver helped children develop their cognitive skills in the most supportive environment, which in turn led to school readiness and success.

> "Quality child care enables a young child to become emotionally secure, socially competent, and intellectually capable. The single most important factor in quality care is the relationship between the child and the caregiver. Children who receive warm and sensitive caregiving are more likely to trust caregivers, to enter school ready and eager to learn, and to get along well with other children. The quality of caregiver-child relations depends in part on the sensitivity of the caregiver and in part on the ratio of caregivers to children, the number of children in a group, and the education and training levels of the caregiver. A quality program also attends to the basic issues of health and safety and emphasizes a partnership between parents and caregivers. Children who receive inadequate or barely adequate care are more likely later to feel insecure with teachers, to distrust other children, and to face possible later rejection by other children."

(Carnegie Corporation of New York (1994), *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children*, Carnegie Corporation of New York)

Contact Helen Blank, Children's Defense Fund, (202) 662-3547.

Tax Relief for Employed Families: Improving the Dependent Care Tax Credit

The dependent care tax credit ("DCTC") assists families in meeting the costs of child and adult care by allowing taxpayers to offset a portion of their employment-related dependent care expenses against their federal income tax liability. The DCTC has provided significant federal assistance to millions of families with child and dependent care expenses since its enactment in 1976. In 1997, the most recent year for which Internal Revenue Service data are available, 5.4 million taxpayers claimed the credit and received over $2.3 billion in tax relief.[1]

Since the credit was last expanded in 1981, however, its value has eroded, particularly for low-income families with employment-related care expenses. The loss in value of tax support for child and dependent care expenses is significant for many families who are struggling to pay for increasingly expensive care for their children and adult dependents.

To provide a framework for evaluating proposals to change the DCTC, this paper examines the current structure of the DCTC, the sound policies the credit serves, and the reasons why the value of the DCTC has eroded. In addition, it suggests several ways in which to strengthen and restore the value of the DCTC for families with employment-related child care expenses.[2]

I. What is the Dependent Care Tax Credit?

The DCTC allows taxpayers who have employment-related[3] expenses for the care of a child under the age of 13, or for the care of a spouse or dependent who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care, to set off a percentage of those expenses against their federal income tax liability. The amount of the credit that may be claimed is determined by the amount of the taxpayer's expenses and the taxpayer's adjusted gross income ("AGI").[4] A credit may be claimed for a percentage of the taxpayer's qualifying expenses up to $2,400 for one child or dependent or $4,800 for two or more children or dependents, with the percentage varying according to the taxpayer's AGI to provide the greatest benefit to low-income taxpayers.[5] Families with AGIs of $10,000 or less are eligible for a credit equal to 30% of their qualifying expenses, while families with AGIs over $28,000 are eligible for a credit equal to 20% of their qualifying expenses.[6] Between $10,000 and $28,000 AGI, the value of the credit decreases as the applicable percentage declines by one percentage point for each $2,000 increase in AGI.[7] **The maximum value of the credit for a family with an AGI of $10,000 or less is $720 for one dependent ($1,440 for two or more dependents), and for a**

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family with an AGI of $28,000 or more is $480 for one dependent ($960 for two or more dependents).

Dependent Care Tax Credit Amounts

Adjusted Gross Income	Maximum Credit for One Child/Dependent	Maximum Credit for Two or More Children/ Dependents	Adjusted Gross Income	Maximum Credit for One Child/Dependent	Maximum Credit for Two or More Children/ Dependents
$0-$10,000	$720	$1,440	**$20,001-$22,000**	$576	$1,152
$10,001-$12,000	$696	$1,392	**$22,001-$24,000**	$552	$1,104
$12,001-$14,000	$672	$1,344	**$24,001-$26,000**	$528	$1,056
$14,001-$16,000	$648	$1,296	**$26,001-$28,000**	$504	$1,008
$16,001-$18,000	$624	$1,248	**$28,001+**	$480	$960
$18,001-$20,000	$600	$1,200			

The DCTC permits flexibility in care arrangements, covering both in-home and out-of-home care in a variety of settings.[8] However, institutional care, such as that provided by a nursing home, is not covered for adult dependents, and care provided by a dependent care center (defined as a facility which receives payment for its services and provides care for more than six individuals) must meet all applicable state and local laws and regulations, such as licensing requirements, and building and fire code regulations.[9]

The DCTC is not refundable -- that is, a family whose credit is larger than its tax liability is *not* entitled to receive the difference from the Internal Revenue Service as a tax refund. For example, a family that qualifies for a credit of $600 but only owes $400 in taxes will receive a credit of only $400. If the credit were refundable, the family would receive a tax refund of $200. In addition, although the expense limitations of $2,400 and $4,800 once represented average care costs, they do not reflect the cost of care today, have not been raised since 1981, and are not indexed for inflation.

II. Policies Served by the Dependent Care Tax Credit

Several sound policy goals underlie the provisions of the DCTC:

- **Assisting Families with Employment-Related Child and Dependent Care Expenses.** Many families have employment-related child and dependent care expenses that put a severe strain on the family budget. Nationally, child care consumes between 6% and 25% of a family's income, with a larger proportion of a family's income consumed by child care the lower the family income.[10] In 1993, the most recent year for which Census data are available, the average child care cost for families with a pre-school age child was $79 per week, or $4,100 a year.[11] More recent data suggest that the cost of child care today can range from $4,000 to $10,000 annually.[12] Yet about half of families with young children earn less than $40,000 a year,[13] and single mothers with children earn even less -- in 1997, the median income of families with children headed by a woman was $17,256, 40% less than the median income of families with children headed by a man ($28,668) and more than two-thirds less than the median income of married couples with children ($54,395).[14] Employment-related care expenses for adults can also be very high. The average cost of adult day care varied from a low of $16.50 per day in New Hampshire to a high of $54 per day in California in 1995[15] -- $4,290 and $14,040 a year, respectively. Many families simply do not have the financial resources to pay for care of children or adult dependents; as a result, the cost of employment-related care keeps many individuals out of, or limits their participation in, the job market.

- **<u>Targeting Assistance to Low- and Moderate-Income Taxpayers.</u>** The DCTC is targeted to provide the greatest benefit to low- and moderate-income taxpayers by providing a credit of a greater percentage of care expenses to lower-income families than to higher-income families. Targeting the credit this way gives more help to families who are most in need of assistance with employment-related child and dependent care expenses, which consume a large proportion of their income.

- **<u>Promoting Tax Equity.</u>** The credit is available only for child and dependent care expenses that enable the taxpayer to participate in the labor force. An important purpose of the credit is to assure fair treatment in our nation's tax policies between families who have employment-related child and dependent care expenses and families who do not have such expenses. The DCTC reflects a recognition that families with the same income and family size who have employment-related, out-of-pocket child and dependent care expenses have less ability to pay taxes than families with the same income and family size who do not have such expenses. For example, a family that earns $25,000 a year but must spend $3,000 on child care to earn that income has less available income than a family that earns $25,000 and has no employment-related care expenses. The DCTC promotes fairness by providing a credit to partially offset a family's employment-related care expenses, thereby helping to equalize its ability to pay taxes.

- **<u>Providing Tax Support for Both Child and Adult Care Expenses.</u>** The DCTC covers expenses incurred for the care of children as well as of spouses and dependents who are incapable of self-care. This is an important recognition of the fact that many families are responsible for the care of not only their children but also of spouses and dependents other than children, all of whom require care when their caregiver is employed.

III. How the Value of the Dependent Care Tax Credit Has Eroded for Families

Although the DCTC is designed to help all families meet their employment-related care expenses, several circumstances have contributed to diminish the value of the credit for millions of families, particularly low- and moderate-income families. These factors include the credit's lack of refundability and indexing for inflation, and the increasing cost of child care. As a result, fewer and fewer low- and moderate-income families are able to benefit from the credit each year.

- **The DCTC is not refundable.** Families who have no or low federal income tax liability receive no or low benefit from the credit because it is non-refundable -- that is, a family whose credit amount exceeds its federal income liability is not able to receive the difference in the form of a tax refund. The DCTC's non-refundability affects primarily families with more limited incomes -- the very families whose need for assistance with employment-related care expenses is the greatest. For example, in tax year 1999, a married couple with two children filing a joint tax return will have no federal income tax liability if it has an income of $18,200 or less.[16] Likewise, a single parent with one child filing a return for 1999 will have no tax liability if he or she has an income of $11,850 or less[17] -- more than the $10,712 the single parent will earn if he or she has a full-time, minimum-wage job.[18] Without refundability, families below these income levels are unable to benefit from the assistance with employment-related care expenses that the DCTC offers.

- **Over time, fewer and fewer families receive the benefit of the DCTC's low-income targeting because the credit is not refundable and because the sliding scale thresholds are not indexed for inflation.** The tax code's basic provisions that determine individual liability -- the personal exemption, standard deduction, tax brackets, and for low-income taxpayers, the EITC -- are all indexed.[19] Indexing these provisions avoids increasing a family's tax burden when the only change in its adjusted gross income is the result of inflation. In contrast, the amount of AGI at which the DCTC's maximum percentage of qualifying expenses begins to decline is not indexed, and has not been adjusted since 1981.

  Because the basic tax provisions determining individual tax liability are indexed, but the DCTC is not, the amount of income a family may have before incurring any federal income tax liability increases each year, but the income thresholds at which a family may claim the DCTC's highest percentages of qualifying care expenses as a tax credit do not. As a result, each year fewer low-income families have enough federal income tax liability to claim the DCTC's highest percentages of expenses. In addition, because the DCTC is not refundable, families who have no income tax liability as the result of indexed deductions, exemptions and tax brackets are unable to derive any benefit from the DCTC at all.

For example, in 1984, the last year before any of the basic tax code provisions were indexed, both a married couple with two children filing jointly and a single parent with one child would have owed federal income taxes if either had an income of considerably less than $10,000, the income threshold for taking the maximum DCTC of 30% of qualified dependent care expenses.[20] By comparison, for tax year 1999 the tax thresholds for all married couples and heads of household with children are above $10,000, the thresholds for heads of household with two or more children or dependents are above $14,000, and the thresholds for married couples with two or more children or dependents are above $18,000. As these figures illustrate, almost **no** families are eligible for the highest credits of 30-25% of their expenses, since even families with only one or two children or dependents do not pay taxes at the income levels eligible for these percentages.

The combination of the DCTC's lack of indexing and refundability has contributed to a dramatic decline in the number of very low-income families who claim the DCTC, as IRS data demonstrate. In 1984, nearly 7.5 million taxpayers claimed the DCTC, representing 7.5% of all tax filers.[21] Many of those claimants were very low-income families -- 22% of claimants were in the bottom income quintile.[22] Most of the claimants were low- to moderate-income families -- 60% of all 1984 claimants were in the first three income quintiles.[23] Only 9% of families claiming the DCTC in 1984 were in the top income quintile[24]. In 1997, the most recent year for which IRS data are available, 5.4 million taxpayers claimed the DCTC,[25] representing a little over 3.5% of all filers.[26] Although the majority of families claiming the credit in 1996 continued to be low- to moderate-income families -- 55% of all claimants were in the first three income quintiles -- there was a dramatic decrease in the number of very low income families claiming the credit.[27] Only 13% of the 1997 claimants were in the bottom income quintile.[28]

IRS data also demonstrate that low-income families are receiving less and less of the tax assistance that the DCTC offers. Families claiming the DCTC in 1984 received over $2.6 billion in tax assistance.[29] Families in the bottom quintile received almost 22% of the tax assistance, while families in the top quintile received only 10% of the tax assistance. Families claiming the DCTC in 1997 received over $2.3 billion in tax assistance through the credit, and a smaller proportion of this assistance went to low-income families than in 1984.[30] Only 11% of the tax assistance went to families in the bottom quintile, while more than 21% of the tax assistance went to families in the top quintile. In total, 950,000 fewer families in the bottom quintile filed for the DCTC in 1997 than in 1984, and the families in the bottom quintile claiming the DCTC in 1997 received $317 million less than similarly situated families did in 1984.[31]

- **Inflation has dramatically diminished the value of the DCTC for all families.** The DCTC's qualifying expense limits have not been increased since 1981, and are not indexed for inflation. As a result, while the cost of child and dependent care has increased, the amount of qualifying expenses that determines the maximum DCTC has remained the same, diminishing for all families the credit's value in offsetting actual care expenses. Merely to restore the value of the expense limits as enacted in 1981 would require changing the limits from $2,400 for the care of a single dependent to $4,340 in 1999 dollars, and from $4,800 for the care of two or more dependents to just above $8,680 in 1999 dollars.[32]

IV. How to Strengthen the Dependent Care Tax Credit for Families with Employment-Related Child Care Expenses

Several changes should be implemented to strengthen and restore the value of the DCTC, especially for low- and moderate income families with employment-related child care expenses:

- **The DCTC should be refundable.** Low- and moderate-income families who have no or low federal income tax liability receive no or very little benefit from the credit because it is non-refundable. Without refundability, the DCTC is unavailable to the very families it is designed to help the most. The DCTC should be made refundable to restore the targeted value of the DCTC to those families who need the greatest assistance with child care expenses.

- **The DCTC should be indexed for inflation.** The DCTC's lack of indexing has eroded the value of the credit for families at all income levels and, in combination with its non-refundability, the credit's lack of indexing has reduced significantly the number of low- and moderate-income families who can benefit from the credit. Both the expense and income limits should be adjusted annually for inflation, as are all other basic tax provisions that determine individual tax liability. Indexing the DCTC would prevent the DCTC from continuing to suffer an erosion in value, and would prevent low- and moderate-income families from continuing to receive little or no tax assistance in meeting their child care expenses.

- **The limits on qualifying child and dependent care expenses should be raised.** The DCTC would provide more meaningful assistance to families with child and adult care expenses if the limits on qualifying expenses more accurately reflected the cost of care today. As shown above, inflation alone has greatly diminished the value of the dependent care expenses that qualify for a credit. The expense limits should be raised to an amount that fairly reflects the cost of purchasing care today, rather than the cost of purchasing care almost two decades ago.

- **<u>The percentages of qualifying expenses that may be taken as a credit should be raised.</u>** Currently, families receive a credit for only a small percentage of their actual child or dependent care expenses (20% to 30% of their qualifying expenses). Raising the percentages would help families cover the cost of more of these expenses. Moreover, raising the percentages would especially help low-income families, who are less likely than other families to spend up to the maximum care expense limits and are losing a greater proportion of their income to care expenses than other families.

Finally, the DCTC should continue to provide tax assistance for families at every income level:

- **<u>The DCTC should remain available to families at all income levels.</u>** One feature of the DCTC that should not be changed is its availability to families at all income levels. Although it can be argued that higher-income families do not need help in paying for child care, to impose an income limitation on the DCTC would make it the only employment-related tax benefit with an income ceiling. The result would be that taxpayers at all income levels could deduct business-related expenses for exclusive club memberships, luxury business cars and conventions in exotic locations, but not for the child and other dependent care that enables them to work. Singling out the DCTC, while leaving these and other employment-related expenses untouched, sends the signal that the child and other dependent care needs of working families are optional and less important than other employment-related expenditures. If Congress wants to limit tax assistance for employment-related expense, it should impose an income limit on **all** such assistance, not single out the child and dependent care assistance that is essential to so many families' economic livelihood.

REFERENCES

1. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Bulletin (Fall 1998), Individual Income Tax Returns, 1997: Early Tax Estimates, Table 5. The figures are estimates based on tax returns received through April, 1998.

2. The scope of this paper is limited to evaluating and suggesting improvements to the assistance that the DCTC has historically offered to families with employment-related child care expenses. This paper does not address recent proposals to offer assistance to stay-at-home parents by extending the DCTC to families with young children who have no employment-related child care expenses. In addition, although families with children may receive tax assistance through other tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the $500 Child Tax Credit, this paper does not address the assistance that these tax credits provide to families with children.

3. An expense is "employment-related" for the purposes of claiming the DCTC if it is a child or dependent care expense that is necessary to enable the taxpayer to be gainfully employed or to seek gainful employment. 26 U.S.C. § 21(b)(2); (insert volume) C.F.R. §1.44A-1(c)(1).

4. 26 U.S.C. § 21(c) and (d).

5. *Id.*

6. 26 U.S.C. §21(d).

7. *Id.*

8. 26 U.S.C. § 21(b)(2).

9. 26 C.F.R. §1.44A-1(5)(1).

10. Caspar, L., What Does It Cost to Mind Our Preschoolers?, Current Population Reports, Household Economic Studies, P70-52 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Sept. 1995), Table 3.

11. What Does It Cost to Mind Our Preschoolers?, Table 2. The average weekly cost for a family using family day care was $52, or $2,700 annually; for parents using in-home babysitters or organized child care centers, it was $65 per week, or $3,400 annually. *Id.*

12. These figures are based on the average weekly fees charged by licensed child care centers in seven cities. Child Care Information Exchange, July 1996.

13. Bureau of Census, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, Current Population Reports, P60-197, Money and Income in the United States: 1997 (1998).

14. Bureau of Census, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, Historical Income Tables-Families, Table F-10 (1998).

15. Charlene Harrington et al., 1995 State Data Book on Long Term Care: Program and Market Characteristics 33, 133 (1996). These average costs are based on Medicaid reimbursement rates and vary from state to state. Adult day care programs generally provide health, social, personal care, and related support services for functionally or mentally impaired adults.

16. These calculations are based on the federal income tax standard deduction for a married couple filing jointly and the personal exemptions for a four-person family for tax year 1998. The calculations do not include the DCTC, the EITC or the $500 per-child tax credit.

17. These calculations are based on the federal income tax standard deduction for a head of household and the personal exemptions for a two-person family for tax year 1998. The calculations do not include the DCTC, the EITC or the $500 per-child tax credit. Annual minimum wage earnings are based on 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, at $5.15 an hour, the current minimum wage.

18. These annual minimum wage earnings are based on 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, at $5.15 an hour, the current minimum wage.

19. The Economic Recovery Act of 1981 annually indexed the personal exemption, standard deductions and tax brackets, with the indexing to begin in tax year 1985. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 annually indexed the EITC, with the indexing to begin in tax year 1987. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 also substantially increased the standard deductions and personal exemptions. This one-time increase in the amounts of the standard deductions and personal exemptions, which was in addition to the annual indexing of these tax code provisions, has contributed in part to the erosion of the DCTC's value by widening the gap between the income levels at which a family may claim the maximum DCTC percentages and the income levels at which families incur federal income tax liability.

20. In 1984, a married couple with two children filing jointly would owe federal income taxes if they had an income greater than $7,400, and a single parent with one child would owe federal income taxes if he or she had an income greater than $4,300. These calculations are based on the federal income tax standard deductions and personal exemptions for tax year 1984.

21. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income, Individual Income Tax Returns,1984, Table 3.3 (1986). 1984 is used as a benchmark for showing the decline in the number of low-income families claiming the DCTC due to the DCTC'S lack of indexing and refundability because 1984 is the last tax year in which none of the tax code's basic provisions were indexed.

22. *Id*; Bureau of Census, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, Historical Income Tables, Table F-1, Income Limits for Each Fifth and Top 5 Percent of Families (All Races): 1947 to 1997. These quintiles represent the income quintiles of the entire U.S. population and is not limited to the portion of the population that files federal income tax returns. The upper income limit of the bottom quintile in 1984 was $12,575. Due to limitations in published income tax data, the estimate of the proportion of families in the bottom quintile claiming the DCTC in 1984 includes families with an adjusted gross income of up to $15,000.

23. The upper income limit of the third quintile in 1984 was $31,684. Due to limitations in published income tax data, the estimate of the proportion of families in the first three income quintiles claiming the DCTC in 1984 includes families with an adjusted gross income of up to $30,000.

24. The lower income limit of the top quintile in 1984 was $45,564. Due to limitations in published income tax data, the estimate of the proportion of families in the top quintile claiming the DCTC in 1984 includes families with an adjusted gross income greater than $50,000.

25. Part of the overall decline in the number of families who claimed the DCTC between 1984 and 1997 is due to changes in the DCTC contained in the Family Support Act of 1988. The Family Support Act required that, beginning in 1989, all taxpayers claiming the DCTC provide the care provider's name, address and taxpayer identification number on their tax returns; a qualifying child be under age 13 (lowered from 15); and taxpayers

receiving tax-free assistance from their employers under a dependent care assistance program reduce by the amount that assistance the amount they claim under the dependent care credit. These changes combined resulted in 31% fewer families at all income levels claiming the DCTC for tax year 1989 than for tax year 1988. Although the changes in the Family Support Act contributed to some of the decline in the number of low- and moderate-income families who claim the DCTC, the number of these families has continued to drop since 1989 when the Family Support Act changes were implemented -- in 1997, 13% fewer families in the bottom three income quintiles claimed the DCTC than in 1989. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income, Individual Income Tax Returns, 1989, Table 3.3, and Individual Income Tax Returns, 1997: Early Tax Estimates, Table 5.

26. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income, Individual Income Tax Returns, 1997: Early Tax Estimates, Table 5.

27. The upper income limit of the third quintile in 1997 was $53,616. Due to limitations in published income tax data, the estimate of the proportion of families in the bottom quintile claiming the DCTC in 1997 includes families with an adjusted gross income of up to $50,000.

28. The upper income limit of the bottom quintile in 1997 was $20,586. Due to limitations in published income tax data, the estimate of the proportion of families in the bottom quintile claiming the DCTC in 1997 includes families with an adjusted gross income of up to $20,000.

29. Individual Income Tax Returns, 1984, Table 3.3.

30. Individual Income Tax Returns, 1997: Early Tax Estimates, Table 5.

31. These differences are based on data provided in Individual Income Tax Returns, 1984, Table 3.3, and Individual Income Tax Returns, 1997: Early Tax Estimates, Table 5.

32. These calculations are based on the following formula: Amount in 1999 dollars = (Amount in 1981 dollars/Average CPI-U for 1981) x (Average CPI-U for the first quarter of 1999).

The National Women's Law Center is a non-profit organization that has been working since 1972 to advance and protect women's legal rights. The Center focuses on major policy areas of importance to women and their families including family economic security, employment, education, health and reproductive rights -- with special attention given to the concerns of low-income women.

The San Diego Union-Tribune Thursday, February 18, 1999; pg. B9

Here's what U.S. parents really need

By Nancy Duff Campbell
and Judith C. Appelbaum

BARRY MAGUIRE

Subsidies and tax credits to make child care more affordable. Expanded after-school programs for school-age kids. Measures to improve the quality of child care programs. To most of us, those are components of a sound government policy to help parents. To some, they are cause to instigate another battle in the "mommy wars."

Last year, when President Clinton proposed a package of initiatives to improve child care, conservatives pounced. "Putting people in a position where they are pressured to choose work over parenthood is exactly what the president and the first lady intend to do," wrote Danielle Crittenden and David Frum in *The Weekly Standard*. "The policy as a whole is irrationally biased toward the form of child care most parents like least — institutionalized group care — and against what many parents want most: to be able to afford to have one parent stay home," wrote syndicated columnist Michael Kelly.

And so the "mommy wars" erupted, at tremendous cost. The rhetoric became overheated. Critical child-care proposals were scuttled in Congress. And employed parents were forced to struggle for another year without the federal support that could give them access to higher quality, more affordable child-care programs.

In his State of the Union address this year, President Clinton again proposed a child-care package. This time, however, he also proposed a tax break for stay-at-home parents.

Some people are wondering if we are in for another "mommywar," with renewed efforts to pit mothers at home against mothers in the paid labor force. That must not happen. Our public policies should support all parents in the decisions they think best. The tax break for stay-at-home parents is a good idea, as part of a package that also improves child care for employed parents, especially those who need it most.

The supposed conflict between employed and stay-at-home parents is false. They are not even two separate groups. Many parents — and women in particular — move in and out of the work force. They are stay-at-home parents at some points in their lives, and employed parents at others.

But it is indisputable that, in America today, an overwhelming majority of American mothers work outside the home. The Labor Department reports that more than seven of 10 mothers with children under age 18, and three of four mothers with school-age children, are in the paid labor force. No more than one in four families with children under age six fits the traditional family model of an employed father and a stay-at-home mother. Our policies do not reflect this new reality.

Most mothers who work outside the home — married as well as single — do not have any other choice. Their families depend on their incomes.

Indeed, in overhauling the welfare system three years ago, our nation made a societal judgment that needy single parents *should* be in the work force rather than at home with their children. As our new welfare paradigm moves more single mothers into jobs, the need for affordable, quality child care will only intensify.

In large part, that need is going unmet. Too often, in too many communities, high-quality child care is unaffordable or unavailable.

It is time to pull our nation's policies into line with the realities of parenting today, and long past time to end the pointless, counterproductive "mommy wars."

It is simply not true that helping employed parents pay their child care expenses reflects a bias against stay-at-home parents. In fact, a family whose child care expenses are partially offset by a subsidy or a tax credit will still have less disposable income than a family with the same income and no child-care costs.

It is also not true that offering a modest tax credit for stay-at-home parents reflects a bias against parents who are in the workforce. This is especially so when, as in the Clinton proposal, the credit is targeted to the low-income families who need help the most and when it is coupled with an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act to let employees in small and mid-sized companies take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave when their families give birth or adopt a child.

It's time to stop paying lip service to a "mommy war" that is not real. A divisive approach to child care and child rearing benefits no one. Lawmakers do not have to choose between employed and stay-at-home parents. Their best course is to enact policies that support all parents, regardless of whether they hold paying jobs, stay home with their children, or do both.

CAMPBELL is co-president of the National Women's Law Center. **APPELBAUM** is vice president. The National Women's Law Center works to expand the possibilities for women and their families, addressing issues relating to education; employment; family economic security; and health and reproductive rights.

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**An NCJW Report
edited by Joan Lombardi
and Linda Carbone**

WINDOWS ON CHILD CARE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1972, the National Council of Jewish Women's groundbreaking *Windows on Day Care* study took America inside our nation's day care centers, exposing insufficient services and often deplorable conditions. Now, three decades later, NCJW has gathered leading experts on child care to revisit this issue in a new publication, *Windows on Child Care*. It will be the centerpiece of a nationwide campaign aimed at finally moving child care to the top of the nation's agenda.

NCJW will evaluate the progress that has been made in the field of child care using a cadre of renowned researchers and NCJW field volunteers. The publication will be reader-friendly – a report, rather than a book – with photographs and quotes from parents. Topics in each chapter will be compared with similar themes in the 1972 study. Estimated publishing date is September 1999.

over, please

REPORT OUTLINE

FOREWORD	
DEDICATION	To Dr. Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology, Director, Bush Center of Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University
CHAPTER I	**Magnitude of Child Care Needs 1972-1999** Child care needs today, comparing current demographic and national study information to findings reported in the original report.
Writer:	**Joan Lombardi,** former Director, Child Care Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services
CHAPTER II	**Affordability of Child Care** Costs and affordability issues, including a summary of current public support for child care.
Writer:	**Helen Blank,** Director, Child Care, Children's Defense Fund
CHAPTER III	**Quality of Child Care** Summary of the research on quality care for children, birth to five.
Writer:	**Evelyn Moore,** President, National Black Child Development Institute
CHAPTER IV	**Status of Child Care Providers** Issues related to the training and compensation of child care providers including a review of research and "voices" of child care providers.
Writer:	**Marcy Whitebook,** Co-Director Center on the Early Childhood Workforce
CHAPTER V	**School Age Care** Although the original *Windows* targeted younger children, this chapter will focus on research and findings on the status of school age children.
Writer:	**Michele Seligson,** Director, National Institute on Out of School Time
CHAPTER VI	**The Employers Role in Child Care** The importance of child care to a productive workforce and current efforts by the business community.
Writer:	**Ellen Galinsky,** President, Families and Work Institute
CHAPTER VII	**Recommendations** A set of recommendations from NCJW for government and private sector action.
CHAPTER VIII	**A Call to Action**
APPENDIX	**Community Needs Assessment Tool**

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AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

BACKGROUND

Twenty-five million children in America have working parents. During the typical week, some five million of these children between the ages of 5 and 14 are left unsupervised, while their parents work. A 1990 University of California study found that unsupervised children are at significantly higher risk of truancy, poor grades, stress, accidents, risk-taking behaviors, and substance abuse. This higher risk cuts across all income groups. But the problems are especially severe for children of low-income families in both urban and rural settings. Their communities often lack the necessary resources to provide programs during non-school hours.

When children are left unsupervised, they are exposed to real physical dangers, as well as provided with opportunities for involvement in risky behaviors, including gang, drug, and alcohol activity. FBI statistics show that the hours between 3:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. see the highest rate of juvenile violence and crime. But perhaps most importantly, children left unsupervised during the non-school hours miss out on an array of developmental activities that could be theirs if programs were available.

Quality after-school and summer programs offer constructive activities in safe, caring environments. They can provide children and youth with a positive alternative to spending time on the streets or being home alone. Parents and teachers report that participation in after-school and summer programs helps children study better, become more cooperative and resolve conflicts. But good after-school programs mean more than simply having children spend more time in the classroom. While building competencies, these programs also respect the importance of play and relationships in developing youth and enhancing their academic performance.

After-school and summer programs take place in a variety of settings. They can be found in community schools but they are also available in the facilities of community-based organizations. In fact, community-based organizations are the largest provider of after-school and summer programs. Their role is integral to building a successful school-age care system in this country. But whether provided in schools or community facilities, there is increasing evidence that the American public is aware and ready. According to a national survey conducted by the Charles Steward Mott Foundation, parents and non-parents alike overwhelmingly support the expansion of after-school programs.

NCY POSITION

The National Collaboration for Youth believes that–

- The needs of school-age children, including those with disabilities and special needs, must be included when considering this nation's child care system.

- More than merely a custodial solution, after-school programs provide a rich opportunity to provide developmental experiences which build competencies and skills so children can move successfully from childhood and adolescence to adulthood.

- School-age programs should adhere to standards of quality and accreditation, similar to those developed for early childhood development programs, supporting:

    - safe, enriching, non-formal settings;
    - well-trained program staff who convey care and concern for each child;
    - activities appropriate to each child's stage of growth, unique personality and interests; and
    - appropriate screening, professional development, and adequate pay and benefits for program staff.

- Transportation is key to successful after-school programs, whether operated in schools or the facilities of community-based organizations.

- "Glue money" is needed to link new and existing programs together into a community-wide system, which results in greater cost-effectiveness and accessibility.

- Collaboration between all segments of the community should be mandated.

- After-school programs, if school-based, should rely on multi-program delivery systems, with a variety of agencies acting as full and equal partners to provide diverse activities and expertise, with schools dedicating consistently available space, with appropriate access to cafeterias, recreation areas, computer, and library facilities as needed.

- School-age programs can, if affordable and appropriately scheduled, contribute to workforce productivity by allowing working parents to meet on-the-job responsibilities without worrying about their children's safety, need for companionship, homework help, recreation, and other developmental opportunities.

- include funds for transportation to and from school-age programs, perhaps offering incentives for schools to use their buses to provide flexible service, especially in low-income communities and in rural areas;

- provide funding for screening and training for paid staff and volunteers;

- promote an adequate level of pay and benefits to workers to ensure high quality care; and

- establish rewards and incentives for adherence to recognized standards of quality, such as those developed by the National School-Age Care Alliance and other accrediting bodies.

Fact Sheet on School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time

National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College

Revised December 1998

THE NUMBERS

· Over 22 million school-age children (62 percent) have working parents (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).

· In 1991, it was estimated that only 1.7 million K-8th graders were enrolled in 49,500 formal before- and/or after-school programs (Seppenan, et. al., 1993).

· Children spend only 20 percent of their waking hours in school (Miller, 1997). The gap between parents' work schedules and students' school schedules can amount to 20 to 25 hours per week (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1998).

· Experts estimate that nearly five million school-age children spend time without adult supervision during a typical week (Miller, 1995).

· An estimated 35 percent of 12-year-olds care for themselves regularly during after-school hours when their parents are working (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

WHAT HAPPENS DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL HOURS?

· Violent juvenile crime triples during the hours of 3pm and 8pm (Fox & Newman, 1997). Two hundred eighty children are arrested for violent crimes every day (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).

· Children are most likely to be victims of a violent crime by a non-family member between 2pm and 6pm (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 1996).

· Children without adult supervision are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior, and substance use. Children who spend more hours on their own and begin self-care at younger ages are at increased risk (Dwyer et al, 1990; Pettit, 1997).

· Children spend more of their discretionary time watching television than any other activity. Television viewing accounted for 25 percent of children's discretionary time in 1997, or 14 hours per week on average (Hofferth & Sandberg, 1998). The total amount of time children spend watching TV has declined since 1981, due in part to the fact that children are spending substantially more time in school now than they were in the past.

FACTS ABOUT OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

· Almost 30 percent of public schools and 50 percent of private schools offered before- and/or after-school care in 1993-94, compared to only 15 and 33 percent in 1987-88. These programs are least available in rural areas (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

· The Government Accounting Office estimates that in the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school time programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25 percent of the demand in some urban areas (GAO/HEHS-97-75, May 1997).

· Fees for programs for school-age children vary. Parent fees range from $2.41 per hour in Minnesota to $4.70 per hour in New Jersey (NACCRRA, 1998).

· Eighty-three percent of program income is from parent fees and 86 percent of parents pay the full program fee (Seppenan, et al., 1993).

· A number of studies have found that children who attend quality programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, grades, and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in programs. They also have more learning opportunities, academic or enrichment activities, and spend less time watching television (Posner & Vandell, 1994; Baker & Witt, 1995).

· Researchers found that children who are under adult supervision, in programs or at home, have better social skills and higher self-esteem than their peers who are unsupervised after school (Witt, 1997).

· One study found that, compared to peers with lower attendance rates, children who attend after-school programs regularly have higher grades and self-esteem (Baker & Witt, 1996).

· Teachers and principals report that students become more cooper-ative, learn to better handle conflicts, develop an interest in recreational reading, and receive better grades due to participation in after-school programs (Riley, et al., 1994).

· A study of two housing projects, one with a 32-month after-school recreation program, and one with minimal recreation services, found that in the housing project with the after-school program, juvenile arrests declined by 75 percent compared to the years prior, while juvenile arrests increased by 67 percent in the housing project offering minimal services (Jones & Offord, 1989).

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

· Students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49 percent less likely to use drugs and 37 percent less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).

· Eighth graders who take care of themselves for 11 hours or more per week are at twice the risk for substance abuse compared to those who are not in self-care at all (Richardson, et al., 1988).

PUBLIC SUPPORT

· Ninety-two percent of Americans feel that there should be organized activities for children and teens during the after-school hours (C.S. Mott Foundation, 1998).

· Eighty percent of Americans say they would pay an additional $10 per year in taxes to fund programs in their communities (C.S. Mott Foundation, 1998).

· Almost three-quarters of parents of school-age children say they would be willing to pay for a quality school-based after-school program for their children, but only 31 percent of elementary school parents and 39 percent of middle school parents report that their child attends a program in his or her school (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

· Forty-six percent of parents believe it is very important that schools stay open all day, and 43 percent of parents think after-school activities should be a high priority, despite limited education budgets (Newsweek, 4/27/98).

· In a recent survey of police chiefs, nine out of ten surveyed support prevention programs for youth as an effective way to fight crime (Fight Crime Invest in Kids, 1996).

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FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

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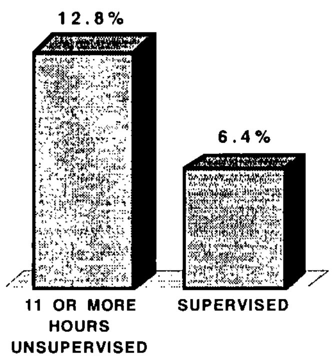
Early Childhood and After-School Programs Fight Smoking, Crime, Teen Pregnancy, and Drugs

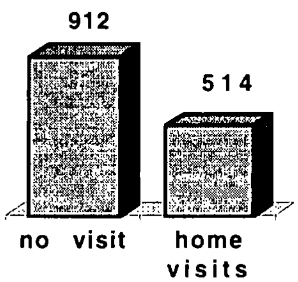
As an organization of top law enforcement leaders and crime survivors, we know when we help kids get the right start, the risk that they will become teen delinquents or adult criminals plummets – and so does the risk that they will smoke, use drugs, or become pregnant as teens. What works to reduce all these risks?

After-School Supervision Cuts in Half the Percentage of Eighth-Graders Who Smoke



Early Childhood Parenting-Support Visits Cut Teen Smoking Nearly in Half

Average Cigarettes Smoked Per Year



After-School Programs

Good after-school programs keep kids out of harm's way while teaching the skills and core values they need to succeed. The peak hours of violent juvenile crime are 3 PM to 6 PM.[1] Good after-school programs in high crime areas can cut by as much as 3/4 high school student's risk of becoming involved in crime.[2] And being supervised after school **cuts in half** the risk that middle school kids will **smoke, drink, or abuse drugs**,[3] and **reduces teen pregnancy** as well.

Early Childhood Education

Enrolling kids in the High/Scope Perry Pre-school program **cut by 4/5 the risk they would grow up to be chronic lawbreakers** — and **cut by 1/5 the risk that they would become smokers**.[4]

Parenting Education

Providing parent-coaching home visits to low-income mothers beginning prenatally up to age two **halved** the risk that their children would be **delinquent at age 15**, and **cut nearly in half their children's cigarette smoking**.[5] Equally important, the visits cut mothers' smoking during pregnancy by more than 27%.[6] Such smoking puts babies at risk of miscarriage, learning disabilities and behavior problems.[7] Among women who were smokers when they became pregnant, the visits cut premature births by 3/4.[8]

Saving Money and Lives

Each day we fail to make proven investments like these, we multiply kids' risk of smoking and every American's risk of crime. The RAND Corporation and others have also shown that these investments actually save tax dollars by cutting crime and other costs.[9] The bottom line: We'll actually have more money to spend in the future — whether on public health or tax cuts — if we invest now in quality educational child care, parenting-support, and after-school programs. These are among our most powerful weapons against crime, smoking, drug use and teen pregnancy.

For more on how investments in kids cut crime: go to www.fightcrime.org

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FOOD RESEARCH & ACTION CENTER

New Resources Are Available for Serving Snacks in Afterschool Programs

School's out and the kids are coming into your afterschool program ready for a snack. You know from experience it has been hours since the kids had lunch and they need a good snack to keep them going through the afternoon. The problem has often been finding the resources. The good news is that finding resources just got easier.

Thanks to recent legislation, two federal food programs have been expanded and improved to increase the resources available to serve snacks in afterschool programs. The Child and Adult Care Food Program and the National School Lunch Program (for school sponsored programs) provide reimbursement for the food, snack preparation, and paperwork costs of snacks served in afterschool programs. Now these programs are even more valuable because the new options expand eligibility for children, increase access for afterschool programs, reduce paperwork and increase the resources available.

What are the exciting new options?

- The food programs can be used to serve snacks to teenagers, allowing afterschool programs to provide snacks for kids from kindergarten to their senior year of high school.

- Afterschool programs in low-income areas can qualify for the highest level of reimbursement for every child in the program, without having to determine the family income of each child participating. An afterschool program in a low-income area with 35 children would receive over $3,600 in reimbursement each year for serving snacks.

How do I apply?

The program o is administered by your State Child and Adult Care Food Program agency, which is usually located in the Department of Education. For a list of these State agency contacts and additional information, please see the Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) website at www.frac.org or contact Crystal Weedall at 202-986-2200 Ext. 3006 or cweedall@frac.org.

In addition to the option of using the Child and Adult Care Food Program, school-sponsored afterschool programs also have option of using the National School Lunch Program to provide snacks. To find out if the school that sponsors your program would be able to provide snacks using the National School Lunch Program, contact the school food service director.

Next Step:

To obtain additional information contact Crystal Weedall with FRAC at 202-986-2200 Ext. 3006 or cweedall@frac.org.

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Prepared by the Food Research and Action Center.

Family & Work: An Investment Strategy for Communities

Who's Watching Our Families: Valuing Our Caregivers

American parents admit to worrying about the quality of their child's care at least once a week. Our children are our most precious resource – we owe it to them and to our communities to work towards solutions that provide quality childcare in safe environments where teachers further the development of our children.

Care issues occur not only with children but also with the elderly. As America's population ages, it faces ever greater strains on its care giving system. Women bear the brunt of that burden. Seventy-two percent of informal caregivers – those who provide care for children or elderly at no pay – are women. They are being squeezed between the demands of their jobs, their children and elderly relatives and friends whom they care for.

Investing in Our Caregivers is Investing in Our Children

The key ingredient to quality childcare is the caregiver. Yet most caregivers are underpaid, receive little professional training and have few benefits. If we are serious about starting our children out on the right foot, we must invest in their caregivers. Investing in our childcare teachers means paying them a liveable wage. Childcare teachers earn an average of $6.89 an hour or $12,058 a year. That is less than we pay people to cut our hair or trim our lawns. The people who care for our children deserve an adequate salary that recognizes the numbers of years they have served and the educational/professional training they have undertaken.

Numerous studies show that the impact of the quality of care giving on the development of children from birth to three years old. It is critical that our children's caregivers are trained to provide the developmental support and nurturing that our children need to get them started on the right course in life. Investing in our children's future and our childcare teachers means giving childcare teachers opportunities for further training and incentives for undergoing that training. Roughly three million child caregivers provide care for ten million children in the U.S. each day. We must ensure that those caregivers are qualified and valued for the care they give. Providing training and accreditation programs and rewarding caregivers for completing them will raise the quality of care and decrease the staff turnover at childcare centers.

Finally, investing in our children's caregivers means providing them with the same benefits most workers expect and receive when they enter the workforce. Only eighteen percent of childcare centers provide health coverage to their teaching staff. To attract qualified caregivers, lower the currently high staff turnover rates and ensure that our children are receiving the quality care they need, we must provide our caregivers with the benefits they need to feel secure and healthy in their workplace. Investing in our children's caregivers is an investment in our children.

Informal Caregivers: Providing a Critical Service for America's Families

For those who care for our elderly population, the needs are slightly different. The majority of those caring for America's elderly are unpaid and are providing care for a relative, a friend or a neighbor. They contribute $194 billion annually to America's health care system with their time and services. Yet for many of them, caregiving is a strain on an already busy life. The average caregiver is a forty-six year old woman who works full time and spends an additional eighteen hours a week caring for her mother who lives nearby. Forty percent of those caring for America's elderly are also caring for young children.

Supporting long-term family caregivers can be as simple as providing support groups and easy access to resource materials and referral services. We should not stop there, but it would make a world of difference for those providing care, who often feel isolated. Informal caregivers also face a financial burden, often contributing their own savings towards the needs of those they are caring for. Additionally, they face strains at the workplace and often lose part of their paycheck due to caregiving duties or emergency situations. We must recognize the tremendous value family caregivers contribute to our society and support them in their work.

In addition to family caregivers, healthcare paraprofessionals provide much needed services that help elders remain at home longer, enhance quality of life both in and out of institutions and lower long-term health care costs. Paraprofessionals act as home health aides, certified nurse aides and personal care attendants, providing many of the personal services the elderly and chronically ill need on a daily basis. Over two million healthcare paraprofessionals work in assisted living facilities, hospitals, clients' homes and nursing homes. Unfortunately they are poorly paid and rarely supported in their work. There is a desperate need for more healthcare paraprofessionals, and it could be a source of self-sufficiency for many of today's low-income population if their financial needs and the care needs of today's elderly were matched. Appropriate salaries and benefits as well as support could go a long way towards increase the quality and size of America's care giving workforce.

WORTHY WORK, UNLIVABLE WAGES: THE NATIONAL CHILD CARE STAFFING STUDY, 1988-1997

Center for the Child Care Workforce, Washington, D.C.

Principal Investigators: Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D., Co-Director, Center for the Child Care Workforce; Carollee Howes, Ph.D., Professor of Education, University of California, Los Angeles; Deborah Phillips, Ph.D., Director, Board on Children, Youth and Families, National Academy of Sciences.

In 1988, the National Child Care Staffing Study first gathered information on staffing and quality from a sample of child care centers in five metropolitan areas–Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Phoenix and Seattle–and returned to the study sites for updated information in 1992. In 1997, we again had the opportunity to contact the directors of the original sample of centers still in operation in order to collect basic information on staffing and funding nine years after the first data collection. The NCCSS offers a unique opportunity to look at the characteristics and stability of a segment of the child care workforce during a decade when significant new funding was infused into the US child care system. It also offers insight into the differences between centers that did and did not remain in operation during this period. The 1997 sample consisted of 158 centers providing full-day care that were still in operation and willing to participate in a follow-up interview, constituting 70 percent of the original sample.

Highlights of 1997 Findings

Child care teaching staff continue to earn unacceptably low wages, even in a sample of relatively high-quality centers.

- Real wages for most child care teaching staff have remained stagnant over the past decade. Teachers at the lowest-paid level earn an average of $7.50 per hour or $13,125 per year. Teaching assistants at the lowest-paid level earn an average of $6.00 per hour or $10,500 per year, and $7.00 per hour or $12,250 per year at the highest-paid level. (Figures are based on a 35-hour week and 50-week year.)*
- Real wages for the highest-paid teachers within child care centers, who constitute a small segment of the overall child care workforce, average $10.85 per hour or $18,988 per year. This translates to a very modest improvement over the past decade of approximately $1.32 per hour.

Approximately one third of child care centers (35 percent) employ welfare (TANF) recipients, sometimes at less than the prevailing wage and often with limited training.

- Centers employing TANF recipients are more likely to pay lower wages across all positions, and to experience higher teaching staff turnover.
- Eighty percent of for-profit chain centers, 40 percent of independent nonprofit centers, 30 percent of church-sponsored centers, and 20 percent of independent for-profit centers currently employ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.
- Only 16 percent of programs currently offer TANF recipients college-credit-bearing training, which is nearly always required by the better-paying child care jobs that offer the best hope of achieving economic independence.

More child care centers received public dollars in 1997 than in 1988, allowing more of them to assist low-income families with child care costs. But because this increased public funding for child care was rarely targeted to quality improvements or increased compensation, these dollars have not resulted in better wages or lower staff turnover.

- Centers paying the lowest wages are experiencing the greatest increase in public subsidies. For-profit chain centers have experienced a threefold increase in revenue from public subsidies over the past decade, and independent for-profit centers have seen such revenue double. Independent nonprofit centers, by contrast, experienced a four-percent *decrease* in revenue from public subsidies, and church-sponsored programs received a modest four-percent increase.

Child care centers continue to experience very high turnover of teaching staff, threatening their ability to offer good-quality, consistent services to children.

- More than a quarter of child care teachers (27 percent) and 39 percent of assistants left their jobs during the past year–for an average turnover rate of 31 percent for all staff–at a time when the *demand for their services has grown dramatically.*
- One-fifth of centers reported losing half or more of their teaching staff during the past year.
- Only 14 percent of child care teachers have remained on the job in the same center over the past decade, and only 32 percent have been employed in their centers for five years or more.
- Independent nonprofit centers are more likely to retain their teaching staff than are other types of programs, particularly those run by for-profit chains. Thirty-nine percent of teaching staff in the *independent nonprofits* have been employed in their centers for five years or more, compared to 20 percent in the *for-profit chains* and 29 percent in independent for-profit and church programs. These turnover figures are related to the significantly higher average salaries paid by independent nonprofit vs. for-profit chain centers.

Centers which paid better wages in 1997, as in 1988, experienced less teaching staff turnover. These are also the centers which were rated higher in quality in 1988.

- Centers which are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) pay higher wages to teaching staff, report lower teacher turnover for the past year, and have retained twice as many staff over ten years.
- Centers that have remained in business over the nine-year span of the study pay higher wages, employ more college-educated staff, and report lower staff turnover than did centers that have ceased operation. Preschool classrooms in centers that remained open were rated *higher in quality in the initial study.*

A substantial number of centers have improved their level of health coverage, especially for teachers, during a period of declining levels of coverage by U.S. employers as a whole. The majority of centers, however, still offer their teaching staff limited or no health insurance, despite heavy exposure to illness in child care employment.

- Twenty percent of centers offer fully-paid health coverage to teachers only, and 21 percent of centers offer fully-paid health coverage to teachers and assistants. Of those centers, fewer than 23 percent provide dependent health coverage.

- All dollar amounts used in this report are 1997 dollars, thus adjusting for the impact of inflation.

Recommendations

The best long-term solution to the problems identified in this study is a well-targeted new investment of public funding to ease the child care burden on parents and caregivers alike—and the mobilization of a well-informed American public that is ready to support this investment. Such a solution will be costly, and yet we must recognize that the status quo carries an even higher cost, in continuing to place the healthy development of young children at serious risk.

The answer is not simply to grow more programs, but rather, as Military Child Care and Head Start have shown, to foster higher-quality programs staffed by better-trained and better-paid adults. Nor is the answer to shift the burden onto consumers, but instead, to address at once the twin needs of improved workforce compensation and of greater affordability of services for parents. Our recommendations fall into four categories:

⇒ **An increase in public funds for child care, targeted to quality and compensation.** Any federal child care legislation should include specific language on targeting funds for child care workforce compensation. As was done in the Head Start Expansion and Quality Improvement Act, at least 25 percent of new child care funds should be targeted to improving the quality of services, and at least half of that amount should go directly to raising child care teacher and family child care provider salaries.

⇒ **Linkages between training and financial reward.** Public funding for child care professional development and teacher credentialling programs should be linked to concrete rewards, such as wage supplements or "retention grants," for teachers and providers who pursue further training and education. Without this linkage, such programs will continue to spend an undue proportion of funds on constantly re-training new groups of caregivers, as the best-trained personnel continue to leave the field for better opportunities elsewhere.

⇒ **Reimbursement rate reform.** Public reimbursements of child care programs fall far short of covering the true cost of providing quality care; at present, many states pay less than the going market rate. States receiving federal child care funds should be required to pay programs no less than the current market rate, and experimental efforts should encourage differential rates to programs based on such quality indicators as higher wages, low staff turnover, higher educational attainment of teaching staff, and center accreditation.

⇒ **Stronger standards tied to public funding.** All child care programs receiving public funds should be required to demonstrate a commitment to the education, training, financial reward and job stability of their teaching personnel—the key element of program quality.

The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988
Highlights of Major Findings From the Original Study

The quality of services provided by most centers is barely adequate. Better-quality centers have:
- higher wages
- better adult work environments
- lower teaching staff turnover
- better educated and trained staff
- more teachers caring for fewer children

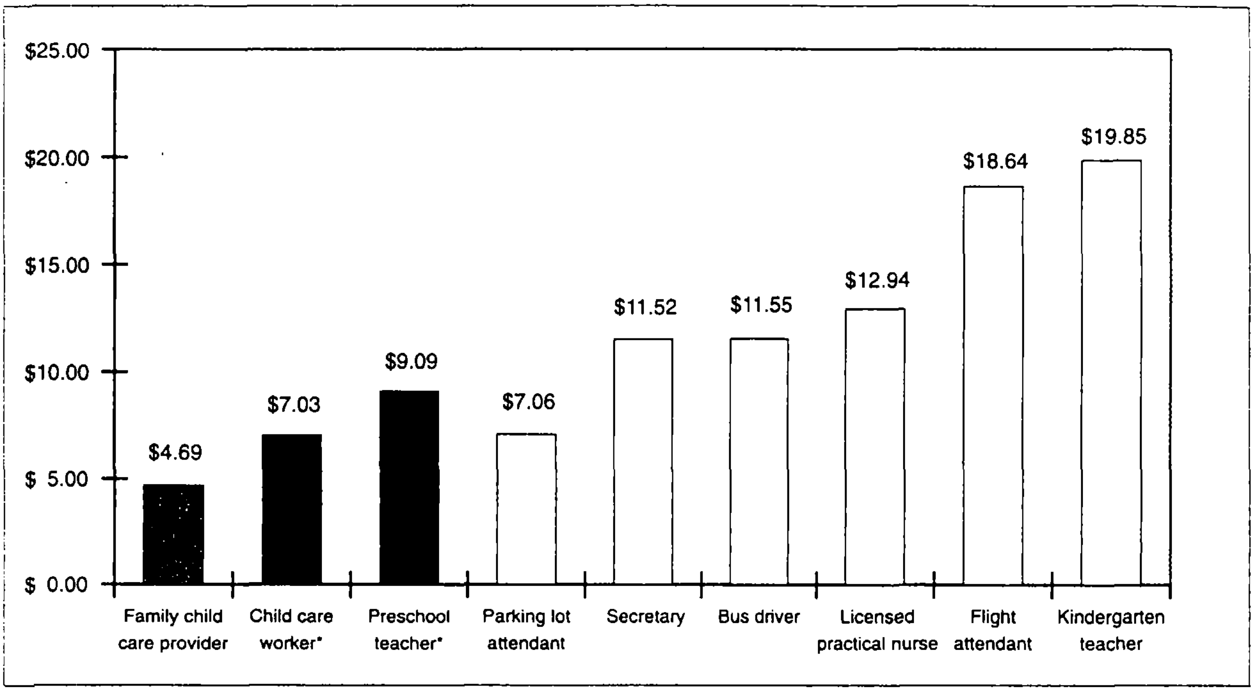
Better-quality centers are more likely to be:
- operated on a nonprofit basis
- accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- located in states with higher quality standards

Children attending lower-quality centers and centers with more staff turnover are less competent in language and social development.
- Staff turnover nearly tripled from 15 percent in 1977 to 41 percent in 1988.
- The most important determinant of staff turnover among the adult work environment variables is staff wages. Teaching staff earning the lowest wages are twice as likely to leave their jobs as those earning the highest wages.

The education of child care teaching staff and the arrangement of their work environment are essential determinants of the quality of services children receive.
- Teaching staff provide more sensitive and appropriate caregiving if they complete more years of formal education, receive early childhood training at the college level, earn higher wages and better benefits, and work in centers devoting a higher percentage of the operating budget to teaching personnel.
- In 1988, child care teaching staff earned less than half as much as comparably educated women and less than one-third as much as comparable educated men in the civilian labor force. Real child care staff wages (adjusted for inflation) decreased more than 20 percent between 1977 and 1988.

Child Care Workforce Earnings in Perspective

A comparison of median hourly wages between child care jobs and other occupations
Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Data 1997
Compiled by the Center for the Child Care Workforce



* "Preschool teachers" and "child care workers" are job titles defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For more information about occupational classifications, see page 1, paragraph 2 of this report.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reports the median wage for 764 occupations, as surveyed by the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program. (A "median wage" indicates that 50 percent of workers in an occupation earn wages below this figure, and 50 percent earn wages above it.) The median wage for family child care providers is surveyed through the Bureau's Office of Current Employment Analysis. According to the most recent OES survey, based on data from 1997, only 14 occupations report having lower median wages than child care workers. Those who earn higher wages than child care workers include service station attendants, messengers and food servers.

These data are based on the OES occupational title definitions, which include the categories of managerial, professional, sales, clerical, service, agricultural and production employment. Unfortunately, the OES categories create a misleading division of the child care workforce into "preschool teachers" and "child care workers." Employees of before- and after-school child care programs may be included in the "child care worker" category, or in other categories such as "teacher's aides," which also includes K-12 classroom assistants and aides.

Only 2.8 percent of the professional occupations, among which preschool teachers are classified, earn an average wage of less than $10.00 per hour, and nearly 74 percent of professional workers earn a mean wage above $19.24 per hour. Child care workers are classified as service workers, the lowest-paid division, in which 55 percent of workers earn less than $8.50 per hour, placing them at the low end of the wage range for all occupations surveyed by the OES.

The median weekly wage for family child care providers is $258.00, based on the 1997 Current Population Survey (CPS) definition of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage-earning and salaried workers. The figure of $4.69 per hour reflects a 55-hour week, the typical work week for U.S. family child care providers.

Center
for the
Child Care
Workforce

CARES Bill
Compensation and Recognition Encourage Stability

The CARES bill would establish the Child Development Corps, a pilot program in a limited number of sites, to build and reward a skilled and stable child care workforce. Members of the Child Development Corps will receive, in addition to their salaries, monetary rewards ranging from $500 to $6,000 per year, depending on their education and experience. The program shall be funded in the amount of $350,000,000.

Child Development Corps

Center-based child care staff, licensed family child care providers and license-exempt child care can join the Corps and be eligible for a stipend if they have:

- Achieved certain educational levels as stipulated below;
- Completed a minimum of 20 hours of on-going professional development training during each calendar year;
- Participated in two Child Development Corps meetings annually; and
- Worked in a child care program on a full-time basis as defined by the program in the preceding year.

Stipends range from $500 to $6,000 a year depending on the Level for which a member is eligible. In addition to the general Corps requirements:

- Level One shall be paid an annual stipend of $500.
  To qualify for this stipend a member of the Child Development Corps must have met their state's pre-service and on-going educational requirements for the position which they hold.
- Level Two shall be paid an annual stipend of $1,500.
  To qualify for this stipend a member of the Child Development Corps must have acquired a CDA or, if a family child care provider, their program has been accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body.
- Level Three shall be paid an annual stipend of $2,000 or $2,500.
  To qualify for a $2,000 stipend a member of the Child Development Corps must have acquired an Associate of Arts degree. The Child Development Corps member will qualify for a $2,500 stipend if the Associate of Arts degree is in Early Child Development or a related field.
- Level Four shall be paid an annual stipend of $5,000 or $6,000.
  To qualify for a $5,000 stipend a member of the Child Development Corps must have acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree. The Child Development Corps member will qualify for a $6,000 stipend if the Bachelor of Arts degree is in Early Child Development or a related field.

Stipends can be paid either directly as a salary supplement or as a contribution to a retirement fund.

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For More Information....

Please Note: The following list is a "starting point" resource list. It is not meant to be considered as a complete list of child care and school-age program resources.

Center for the Child Care Workforce
733 15th St, NW Suite 1037
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 737-7700
www.ccw.org

Center for Policy Alternatives
1875 Connecticut Ave, NW Suite 710
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-6030
www.cfpa.org

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
25 E St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 628-8787
www.childrensdefense.org

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
1334 G St, NW Suite B
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 638-0690
www.fightcrime.org

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
1875 Connecticut Ave, NW Suite 540
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 986-2200
www.frac.org

National Assoc. for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1509 16th St, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 232-8777
www.naeyc.org

National Collaboration for Youth
1319 F St, NW Suite 601
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 347-2080
www.nassembly.org

National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
1707 L St, NW Suite 950
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-2588
www.ncjw.org

National Women's Law Center
11 Dupont Circle Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 588-5180

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund (NOWLDF)
395 Hudson St, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10014
(212) 925-6635 (202) 544-4470
www.nowldf.org

YWCA of the USA
Empire State Bldg
350 Fifth Ave., 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10118
(212) 273-7800 (202) 628-3636
www.ywca.org

This briefing is part of a series presented by:

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