child care and
early education

MEMORANDUM

TO: Media Strategies Group

FROM: Karen A. Cowles

RE: Media Analysis

DATE: November 18, 1997

This month, the child care press clips are quite extensive and cover the last six weeks (September 30 - November 14). There are a total of 120 feature or news stories, 41 editorials, and 29 op-eds/commentaries. The majority of clips focused on the White House Conference on Child Care; however, the trial of au pair Louise Woodward produced a significant amount of child care clips as well.

AUDIO PRESS BRIEFING COVERAGE

As many of you know, we held an audio press briefing of leading children's advocates on October 21, 1997. Nearly fifty journalists participated in the briefing, many from major media markets (see attached). From that briefing, we received significant coverage from major daily newspapers including *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*. These clips quoted audio press briefing spokespersons and specifically cited messages presented during the briefing. Messages within these clips included workforce issues and the need for higher wages and better training of child care providers, the need for school-age care in the reduction of crime, and the importance of business involvement. However, it is important to note that there was consistent coverage of information and facts taken directly from the child care and early education press kit in many other stories. Journalists that used information from the press kit in their stories were primarily those that either signed up to participate or participated in the audio press briefing. The child care and early education press kit was mailed to nearly 150 journalists nation-wide, including many who were unable to participate in the briefing, but still requested a kit. The audio press briefing provided an opportunity to get out Media Strategy Group messages at a time when journalists would already be covering the issue of child care. It is also important to note that several other Media Strategy Group members that did not participate in the audio press briefing were also quoted in various media outlets, assisting further in getting out our messages.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILD CARE COVERAGE

The majority of news coverage reported on the White House Conference on Child Care and its messages. The three main messages presented by various media outlets were quality, affordability, and the importance of higher wages and training for child care providers. However, there was still significant coverage of other MSG messages including the importance of business involvement and child care to a young child's developing brain as well the need for quality after-school programs in the reduction of juvenile crime. Several other articles also mentioned that a "national investment" was needed, particularly because of the booming economy, which has recently been incorporated into the latest message memo. In summary, MSG messages, which resonated with many of the messages set forth at the White House conference, are getting out there and are consistently appearing in many media outlets.

In regard to quality and affordability, many news stories, features, editorials, and op-eds focused on working families. Welfare reform messages appeared in several stories; however, it was only briefly mentioned and was not the focus of many stories. Welfare messages that did appear primarily focused on the need and increased demand for child care as more single parents move into the work force. The Clinton's proposal of forming a national registry to do criminal background checks was mentioned in several articles, but, again, was only briefly mentioned and was not the main focus of any story. In particular, there was consistent coverage of workforce issues centering around the President's announcement of a \$300 million scholarship program to improve training of child care providers and many journalists also reported on the need for higher wages. The issue of making night and weekend care available was featured in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

There are some important trends to note from the news and features stories. Hillary Clinton's 50th birthday received significant media coverage and led to many stories that mentioned child care and the White House conference and Mrs. Clinton's "return to the domestic policy stage" since health care reform.

Positive news stories by Joan Beck of the *Chicago Tribune*, "Business Must Respond to the Changing American Family," and Thomas Oliphant, *The Boston Globe*, "Economy Eases Way for Child Care Action" also appeared in various media outlets including the *Denver Post* and *Houston Chronicle*.

AU PAIR TRIAL COVERAGE

The trial of Louise Woodward has continued to place a spotlight on the issue of child care during and particularly after the White House Conference. The White House Conference on Child Care obviously brought light to the issue; however, the trial prompted many journalists to examine the issue of child care who did not cover the conference. Several news stories, editorials, and op-eds stated the trial has exposed the nation's conflict in finding acceptable, affordable child care and the need for our

country to value its children more. Others stated how the trial has forced Americans to reflect on what we consider acceptable child care arrangements in this country. Some articles mentioned the need to reexamine the au pair system—specifically addressing their lack of training and low wages.

The press coverage of the trial of Louise Woodward helped to reinforce and “drive home” several messages presented at the White House conference, particularly the importance of quality child care. Two good examples of the au pair coverage leading to positive coverage of child care include *The Washington Times* (11/7/97), “Nanny Case Shows Need for Quality Care” and Judy Mann’s 11/14 column in *The Washington Post*, “Help Wanted for Child Care System.”

The au pair trial has also sparked a debate from the “right” against Deborah Eappen for choosing to work and selfishly hiring an inexperienced, cheap means of child care. However, this “backlash” against Deborah Eappen has generated several positive stories about the need for more quality child care as more and more women must work and the limited child care choices they have. The trial has also sparked several stories about child abuse and neglect and the important lessons parents should learn and how they must investigate the background and training of their child care provider.

EDITORIAL AND OP-ED ANALYSIS

Of the 41 editorials, approximately 16 were negative. These editorials included messages primarily opposing increased government involvement in child care and inferring parents should stay at home, messages stating institutional child care is bad for kids, as well as messages condemning the President and First Lady for calling the child care system a “national crisis.” The majority of editorials were positive and applauded the Clinton Administration for bringing the issue of child care to the nation’s attention. Messages within these editorials were consistent with MSG messages and stressed the importance of providing quality and affordable child care to American families, the importance of quality child care to a young child’s developing brain, the importance of business involvement, and the importance of compensating and training our nation’s child care workforce. Several positive editorials were written surrounding the Louise Woodward trial. Examples of headlines include “Au Pair Trial Exposes Nation’s Conflict with Finding Acceptable, Affordable Day Care” and “The Universal Struggle for Quality Child Care.” Negative editorials surrounding the Louise Woodward trial stated that the “nanny” trial is being used by politicians as an advertisement for more government regulations on child care and more government-operated child care.

Of the 29 op-eds/commentaries, seven were negative consisting of messages that included no more government involvement, hiring welfare recipients to become child care providers, and day care is bad for kids. The majority of op-eds submitted were positive and were consistent with MSG messages. Examples of headlines included, “Affordable Child Care is Everybody’s Business” and “The Bottom Line: Quality Child

Care Makes for Good Business." Op-eds appeared in *USA Today* from Child Care Action Campaign and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.

There are some important trends of persons quoted to note and keep in mind. Stanley Greenspan's (Professor, George Washington Medical School) op-ed featured in *The Washington Post*, "The Reasons Why We Need To Rely Less on Day Care" (10/19/97), appeared in several other smaller media markets. However, Mr. Greenspan was also consistently quoted or mentioned in several news stories and features primarily stating that day care is bad for kids. Specifically, Mr. Greenspan was cited in a column written by Mona Charen, Creators Syndicate, which appeared in several other newspapers including *The Tampa Tribune* and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Ms. Charen's column stated that the notion of a child care "crisis" is a myth and that parents are the best guardians of young children. Gary Bauer, President, Family Research Council, also was consistently quoted or featured in several negative editorials, op-eds and news stories stating he was against day care and "empowering government to spend more time with our kids." Specifically, Mr. Bauer was quoted in the E.J. Dionne Jr. op-ed "Child Care Without Ideology" from *The Washington Post* (10/10/97).

Overall, there was significant media coverage in various media markets. However, media outlets that have consistently covered child care over the last six weeks include *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Newsday*, *The Star Ledger* (Newark, NJ), *The Washington Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Baltimore Sun* and the Associated Press. It is also important which journalists have consistently been covering child care over the last few weeks. In analyzing the bylines, the majority were women. Those who have done two or more stories include Ruth Sheehan, *News & Observer* (Raleigh, NC), Jan Crawford Greenburg, *Chicago Tribune*, Barbara Vobejda and Judy Mann, *The Washington Post*, Marie Cocco, *Newsday*, Peggy McGlone, *Star-Ledger* (Newark, NJ), and Laura Meckler and Sandra Sobieraj, Associated Press.

The majority of news coverage received was positive and our messages are appearing in various media outlets nation-wide. The White House conference has leveraged our messages, now we must keep it going.

**10/21 CHILD CARE AUDIO PRESS BRIEFING
PRESS ATTENDEES**

MEDIA OUTLET	JOURNALIST(S)
ABC RADIO	DEBORAH LYNN HOOK
ACKRON BEACON JOURNAL	TOM DIBOCCO
AP	LAURA MECKLER
APA MONITOR	OLGA RESWOW
CD PUBLICATION	STEVE ALBRIGHT
CHICAGO TRIBUNE	BONNIE RUBIN
CHILD MAGAZINE	HEATHER O' CONNER
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR	MARILYN GARDNER
CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER	TOM BRACITIS
CONTEMPORARY PEDIATRICS	JUDITH ASH GOODKIN
COX NEWSPAPERS	JULIA MALINE
DETROIT NEWS	LARRY BIVENS
EARLY CHILDHOOD NEWS MAGAZINE	SANDRA DUNCAN
EMPLOYMENT BENEFIT NEWS	MARTHA GOLD
FLORIDA TODAY	AUDI MURPHY
FORT LAUDERDALE SUN SENTINEL	JOE MILLER
FOX NEWS	JULIE ASHER
FREELANCER	DEBRA COHEN
FREELANCER	KRISTINA FIRVIDA
INDIANAPOLIS STAR & NEWS	KATHLEEN SCHUCKEL
L.A. TIMES	ELIZABETH SHOGREN
MCKEESPORT DAILY NEWS	CAROL WATERLOO FRAZIER
NEWS & OBSERVER	TIM SIMMONS RALEIGH
NEWSDAY	MARIE COCCO
NEWSDAY	GLEN KESSLER
NY TIMES	ROBERT PEAR
PARENTS MAGAZINE	DIANE DEBROVNER
PARENTS MAGAZINE	KAREN RUBENSTEIN
PEORIA JOURNAL STAR	BARBARA DRAKE
PHILADELPHIA CITIZENS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH	PATTY LOFF
PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE	SALLY KALSON
PORTLAND PRESS HERALD	ANDREW GARBER
REASON MAGAZINE	MICHEAL LYNCH
REUTERS	DEBRA ZABORENKO
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE	DIANE CURTIS
SANTA BARBARA PRESS	BEN HELLWORTH
SARATOGIAN NEWSPAPER	JOHN EVANS
SCHOLASTIC INC.	SUSAN STRECKER
ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH	RICHARD DUDMAN
TAHOE DAILY TRIBUNE	GREG RISLING
THE MACON TELEGRAPH	STEPHANIE JOHNSON

US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT	ELISE ACKERMAN
USA TODAY	MIMI HALL
WALL STREET JOURNAL	ROCHELLE SHARPE
WASHINGTON POST	BARBARA VOBEJDA
WORK & FAMILY NEWS BRIEF	SUSAN SEITAL
WORKING MOTHER MAGAZINE	KATHERINE CARTWRIGHT
YOUTH TODAY	JENNIFER DURRENCE

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WORKING MOTHER MAGAZINE	KATHERINE CARTWRIGHT
YOUTH TODAY	JENNIFER DURRENCE

OCTOBER 21, 1997
AUDIO PRESS BRIEFING CLIPS

Clinton proposes child-care breaks Kennedy ...

DOCUMENT 102 OF 343

PLQM9730300115

News

- * Clinton proposes child-care breaks
Kennedy starts ball rolling in Congress

Alexis Chiu

For The Patriot Ledger

797 Words

5200 Characters

* 10/24/97

The Patriot Ledger Quincy, MA

All

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(Copyright 1997)

- * WASHINGTON -- Saying the cost of child care is a hardship for too many working parents in America, President Clinton has urged Congress to provide tax breaks or new federal subsidies for them.

- * "Too often, child care is unaffordable, inaccessible and

- * unsafe," Clinton told a special White House conference on the subject yesterday. "Even for those who can afford it, sometimes good care is hard to find."

- * The president promised to send to Congress a measure for tax breaks and subsidies, and for providing \$300 million in federal funds over five years to improve the pay and training of child-care workers. He also said he would propose legislation to make it easier for parents to run background checks on potential day-care providers.

And he said he would instruct his Americorps national service program to divert some of its young volunteers to look after latchkey kids -- children who return to empty homes after school.

- * Clinton also ordered Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin to jawbone private employers about providing on-site child-care facilities for their workers.

- * Meanwhile, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., co-sponsored a Capitol Hill breakfast for child-care providers and started the ball rolling in Congress.

- * Child care "is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. Children ought to have a healthy start. We know what works. The issue is: Do we have the will to do it?" Kennedy said.

- * Kennedy, who has proposed naming the last Friday of every April as National Child Care Professionals' Day,

- * said child care in Massachusetts is facing a "continuing

Source: Patriot Ledger (Quincy, Mass.), October 24, 1997

challenge" that needs attention.

"We have some very outstanding centers there," he said in an interview. "But it's a continuing challenge to get good

* professionals to strengthen the quality of child care. We want to make sure the good providers are going to be replicated in the rest of the state."

Although Clinton provided the policy proposals, the spotlight at

* the White House child care conference was on first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The East Room assembly of parents, providers and government officials marked her return to the domestic policy stage after three years of relative obscurity after the controversy over her role in the administration's failed health care initiative and questions about her involvement in the complex of scandals known as Whitewater swirled around her.

But those dark days are past and Hillary Clinton is riding a wave of public popularity to draw notice to issues of concern to women and families that have animated her throughout her career.

Foremost among those issues is the plight of 17 million American children who spend all or some of their day in the care of someone other than a parent. She called it America's "silent crisis,"

saying the quality of many of the facilities ranges from mediocre

* to poor and that the pay of child-care workers is "abysmal."

"Every national survey demonstrates what, unfortunately, we have

* to recognize -- and that is too much of our child care is not adequate," the first lady said. "It's not taking care of a child's developmental needs, and, even worse, there are too many situations that don't even meet basic standards of safety and hygiene."

* But her portrayal of child care as being in a state of crisis and in need of national action was roundly rejected in a study released by the Cato Institute.

"There just is no crisis from all of the evidence that I've looked at," said Darcy Olsen, author of the report. Although she

agreed that there are pockets of severe day care shortages, she

* cited the National Child Care Survey of 1990, which found that 96 percent of the parents reported they were "satisfied" or "highly

* satisfied" with their child care arrangements.

Olsen said that the key issue is who should determine quality.

"There is a split between those who trust parents' judgment and those who want national standards." Her report argues against government regulation.

* On the other hand, child care professionals welcomed the flurry of interest from the White House but expressed concern that the one-day discussion would not lead to enough action.

* "We have to resist the public feeling that child care has become the flavor of the month," said Richard B. Stolley, president of the

Source: Patriot Ledger (Quincy, Mass.), October 24, 1997

* Child Care Action Campaign. "We would be deluding ourselves if we think this (conference) is going to make an enormous difference. This is a launch pad."

The daylong White House discussion was a testament to the Clintons' belief in the healing power of talk.

"We hope that this conference will spur the conversations around kitchen tables and water coolers and standing in supermarket aisles or at soccer games or while going to or from work in the car pool," Hillary Clinton said.

The New York Times and Associated Press contributed to this report.

I0607 * End of document.

FIRST FAMILY FOCUSES ON CHILD CARE

DOCUMENT 8 OF 12

CLEV9729700042

NATIONAL

* FIRST FAMILY FOCUSES ON CHILD CARE

TOM BRAZAITIS PLAIN DEALER BUREAU

852 Words

5566 Characters

* 10/23/97

The Plain Dealer Cleveland, OH

FINAL / ALL

13A

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Every working day in the United States, three out of five preschoolers, some as young as six weeks, spend part of the day under the care of someone other than their parents.

Three out of five women with children under age 6 and three out of four women with children ages 6 to 17 work outside the home. They leave their children with a friend or relative or take them to

* a child-care provider in a private home or public building.

In cities, full-time care for a 3-year-old typically costs \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year - about the same as college tuition plus room and board at a public university. Half the families with young children earn less than \$35,000 a year.

* The nation's 3 million child-care providers (98 percent of whom are women) are paid, on average, \$12,058 per year. Half the

* child-care workers leave their jobs every year, creating instability throughout the system.

With these statistics from the Children's Defense Fund as a background, President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

* will preside today over the first White House Conference on Child

* Care.

The all-day conference will be beamed by satellite TV to Capitol Hill and to locations across the country, including an auditorium at Ohio State University in Columbus, in the hope of drawing attention and spurring action on the problem of substandard

* child care. (C-SPAN, the public affairs network, said it plans to broadcast the conference, but as of yesterday did not know when.)

In the morning session, participants will address the

* relationship between child care and the economy and ways in which private business can team with government to provide care.

In the afternoon, Health and Human Services Donna Shalala will

* give her overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the child-care

system; state officials, military personnel, a religious leader and business and labor representatives will report on "promising
* models" for child care.

* The quality of non-parental child care in the United States has come under increased scrutiny since a 1994 Carnegie Corp. report emphasizing the importance of early childhood development.

Marian Wright Edelman, funder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, said Tuesday that "the heightened awareness about the importance of the first three years of life in a child's development" has focused attention on the fact that "the quality of
* infant and child care is shockingly low.

"In our conversations with parents we find some willing to
* visit as many as 50 child-care homes before they find one that they are comfortable enough to leave their infant," Edelman said. "This is an unconscionable burden on parents."

The welfare reform law signed by President Clinton last year
* provides more money for child care for welfare mothers who go to work, but at the expense of the working poor, who find it harder to
* get child-care subsidies from the government or private sources, she said.

Less money has been allocated for before-school and after-school care, Edelman said, despite research showing that juveniles who have positive alternatives to the street do better in school and are less apt to participate in criminal activity.

Marcy Whitebook, co-director of the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, commented on the high turnover rate
* among child-care providers.

"Why? Because even with 20 years experience and a bachelor's degree, a Wisconsin provider finds that her teenage daughter earns more as a grocery checker than she does working with children," Whitebook said.

"A gifted young after-school teacher in suburban Los Angeles knows he can earn twice as much washing UPS trucks at night as he can doing the work he loves."

Billie Osborne-Fears, director of Starting Point, the
* child-care resource and referral agency for Cuyahoga, Ashtabula,
* Lake and Geauga counties, said the average salary of a child-care worker in northern Ohio is \$12,000 - with no vacation time, sick time, health insurance or pension.

* "Most child-care workers in our community qualify for food stamps," Osborne-Fears said. "People working at the Cleveland Zoo caring for the animals make more money than those caring for our children."

Osborne-Fears was to participate today in a panel discussion on Capitol Hill between the morning and afternoon sessions at the
* White House.

Source: Plain Dealer (Cleveland), October 23, 1997

In a telephone interview, Osborne-Fears praised the emphasis Gov. George V. Voinovich has put on Head Start for 3-to-5-year-olds, but said she worries that low-income workers will

- * be forced onto welfare by the high cost of child care even as
- * welfare recipients take jobs with child-care subsidies.

Jackie Sensky, Voinovich's deputy chief of staff for children's issues, said there is no arguing with statistics that show the

- * number of children in subsidized child care has grown from 18,000 when the governor took office to 81,000 today.

Subsidies are offered to welfare recipients making the transition to work and for one full year to the working poor whose income is less than 150 percent of poverty.

- * "Child care is the most difficult issue to work on," Sensky said. "There is so much need and only so many dollars. You have to ask yourself, are you trading one entitlement for another - welfare
- * for child care?"

I0607 * End of document.

Dialogue on Child Care Is Just What U.S. Needs

TODAY, THE White House shines an unforgiving light on a dark secret. It's got nothing to do with long-lost tapes or nefarious foreign financiers. This has to do with our kids.

By and large, today's White House conference on child care will show that they aren't well-cared for while we're at work.

They are in day-care arrangements — in suburban houses and church basements, with hired neighbors and with unpaid grandmas — that are most often poor or mediocre. Infants and toddlers, the kids we love to feature on Christmas cards and in campaign ads, are subjected to the worst of it: 40 percent of centers that cater to the youngest children don't meet basic sanitary and safety conditions, according to private research.

Our kids are cared for by workers who earn poverty-level wages and who move on quickly — half of them leave in any given year — for the pay raise to be gained from taking a job as, say, a grocery clerk or a waitress. Parents are burdened by child-care costs that can eat up a quarter of the pre-tax income of a working-class family. And across all

income groups, parents — that is, mothers — are so riddled with internal conflict about leaving the child behind that they can't seem to use the same clear-eyed judgment in choosing day care that they would in choosing a new dishwasher.

"This feeling that you have to leave your child with someone else almost prevents parents from looking at this the way they would at any other thing they would purchase," said Ellen Galinsky of the Families and Work Institute, a private research foundation. Searching for child care, she said at a White House briefing yesterday, "is wanting to get the pain over."

The most cynical of Washington watchers are free to call the White House conference another photo-op by the feel-your-pain president and his feminist wife. The dismissiveness is insulting. At its core is the idea that talking about children is the equivalent of spooning out political pabulum.



Marie
Cocco

In fact, Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton are courageous in exposing the hard reality behind what our national abdication of responsibility for children has wrought. Every working parent — and every business that suffers lost productivity from unreliable child care — should thank them for finally starting a national debate about this.

After more than two decades of economic and social changes that have propelled most mothers with young children into the work force, it's high time. The last president to give this much thought to child care was Richard Nixon, who vetoed a bipartisan bill in 1971 that would have begun a child-care entitlement program for working parents.

Then, as now, the focus on child care was a by-

product of welfare-revision efforts. Then, as now, social conservatives warned of a Soviet-style system that would usurp parental authority. Patrick Buchanan, then Nixon's top speechwriter, wrote the veto message. It warned against committing "the vast moral authority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing over family-centered approaches."

A generation later, what's changed?

The United States remains unique among western nations in having no national policy for the care of children in working families. The idea that naughty working women should fend for themselves — with all the financial and emotional burdens that has imposed on families — hasn't sent us scurrying back to the kitchen. It's just left millions who need good care unable to get it, afford it or trust it. And it's left kids — not just in the cities, but in the suburban middle class — at risk of developmental problems that research shows can lead to poor school performance, social troubles and crime.

The first lady treads valiantly, but lightly into this thicket, careful to propose no grand new schemes. She wants the conference to focus not only on ways to improve care, but on how to help mothers who want to stay home.

"We don't do a very good job in this country, despite our rhetoric about family values, to create work and family situations that permit more parents to make the choice they may think is right for them," Hillary Clinton said.

The goal is to start a dialogue without igniting a shouting match. Achieving that would make the White House conference a smashing success.

Child Care to Get Brief Spotlight at a Crucial ...

DOCUMENT 18 OF 19

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National Desk

* Child Care to Get Brief Spotlight at a Crucial Time

MELISSA HEALY

TIMES STAFF WRITER

1788 Words

11790 Characters

* 10/23/97

Los Angeles Times

Home Edition

A-1

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WASHINGTON -- In the hierarchy of American occupations, it falls somewhere between hamburger flipper and truck driver.

With a median income of \$260 per week and meager if any benefits, the
* average child-care worker toils in an industry widely viewed as requiring few skills and minimal training, little continuity and scant oversight.

But those who teach and care for small children will have their day at
* the White House today as President Clinton convenes the first-of-its-kind
* child-care meeting. Clinton's conference spotlights the industry at a time of both dramatic growth and deep concern--for its workers, its standards and its product.

It will not, as they say at the changing table, be a pretty sight.

* Every year, more than one in three child-care workers--as many as half when the economy is humming--quit their jobs and go elsewhere in search of better working conditions or higher pay. That's a turnover rate almost three times that of truck drivers--another low-skill occupation, but one
* that commands far better wages than child care. In a typical light manufacturing plant, managers would panic if they had to contend with a rate of worker replacement that high.

In an industry whose finished product is young minds, however, it's an even scarier proposition. If small children are to grow up to be happy and secure adults, a mounting body of research underscores the importance of consistent supervision by adults attentive to their needs. Yet large
* numbers of child-care workers live in or at the edge of poverty, holding down more than one job, juggling children of their own and scraping to make ends meet.

"If I had to live off this with my kids, I couldn't make it," said 42-year-old Marquita Bonner, who owns a small nonprofit day-care center

in Compton called The Learning Tree. "And my workers, they're making minimum wage. I know they deserve more. I know they're worth more. But I can't afford more. I try to give them little incentives to keep them but it's just a hardship, it really is."

Bonner believes that she is giving parents good value for their \$65 per week (\$75 for toddlers). But as recently as last week, she told herself: "Maybe I'm in the wrong business."

For legions of working Americans, including many middle-class couples with two incomes, reliance on this sprawling industry is a daily fact of life.

More than 12 million children under 6--representing 60% of American preschoolers and half of all infants--are in the care of someone other than their parents for a large portion of their day. With about 4 million welfare-dependent parents being pushed into the work force, the number of * children in child care could near 20 million in the next few years.

One of Nation's Biggest Growth Industries

* As a result, child care ranks as one of the nation's biggest growth industries. Between now and 2005, the number of jobs it provides is expected to grow by 33%, more than twice the average rate of growth of the overall work force. Many fear that the dramatic growth could further erode quality control in an already-beleaguered industry.

* As Clinton convenes his White House conference today, experts say that the industry cries out for more attention, more money and more uniform oversight. But in an era of strict federal spending limits and resurgent states' rights, the president and his advisors really have only one of those powers--high-level attention--to wield.

Hard-pressed to push for expansive new federal spending and regulation, Clinton can do little more than exhort states to do the right thing by children, laying down markers for quality care, pointing to innovative new programs and creating incentives for improving and * expanding child care.

* In doing so, he has his work cut out. The child-care industry is as uneven in quality as it is vast, ranging from sparkling new company-subsidized day-care centers to squalid tenement apartments in which a single woman takes in neighborhood children.

The last authoritative count (taken in 1990, and the industry has grown steadily since) showed 80,000 American day-care centers serving nearly 5 million children and as many as 1.2 million family day-care providers operating from homes.

Beyond that, an estimated one in three parents leave their children in the care of a friend or relative--an inexpensive and almost completely unregulated form of care that is expected to grow as millions of poor women leave home for work.

* And much of the nation's child care--from high-priced ventures to low-cost alternatives--is not very good.

In an oft-cited 1995 study, researchers judging the quality of

Source: Los Angeles Times, October 23, 1997.

family-run day-care centers in four states found that 86% provided care below the level considered good. Roughly three-quarters were ranked as mediocre, and 12% provided "less than minimal" care.

For those parents who leave their children in the care of relatives or friends, the picture is even grimmer: A 1994 study found that almost 70% of situations involving friends or relatives provided care characterized as "potentially harmful to children's growth." Only 1% were judged to be "potentially enhancing."

"Our children are being raised in pumpkin seats," said 39-year-old * Patti Gleason, a 17-year "warhorse" of the child-care industry who oversees six nonprofit sites in southwestern Ohio. "They're carried in in their car seats and set down and they sit in that pumpkin seat until they scream. . . . Parents either think that's OK, or they just don't want to admit to themselves what's happening, because they couldn't live with themselves if they did."

Physical, Intellectual Risks to Poor Care

In many cases, children could pay dearly for inadequate care--with injuries, increased illnesses or lower levels of intellectual and emotional growth than might have been achieved in better settings.

But even mediocre care does not come cheaply. According to a 1995 Census report, families living at or near the poverty line pay an average * of 25% of their income for child care. Middle-class families earning up * to \$36,000 spend on average 12% of their income on child care.

As might be expected, affluent Americans tend to command good-quality * child care. More unexpectedly, researchers have found that the very poor, because of their access to federally funded programs such as Head Start, * tend to get pretty good child care as well.

Between these economic extremes, a family's hefty investment is no assurance of high quality. As First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton told an audience recently, "it is difficult to think of a consumer situation in America where so many people are paying so much and too often getting so little."

* To child-care advocates and to many of the nation's most dedicated * child-care workers, the reason for the industry's shortcomings is simple: Its consumers--parents, communities and the country as a whole--may passionately love their children and want the best for them but they do not always know what the best is. And when faced with competing priorities, many are just not willing to pay for it.

That's in spite of findings which indicate that the cost of delivering * good child care is only about \$10 more per week per child than the cost * of delivering poor child care. And in spite of consistent evidence showing that two factors--teacher training and high ratios of care-givers to children--are the best assurances of quality.

* Forty-one states require no training for child-care workers. As a result, many see the kind of training or degrees that experts believe are so key to quality day care as a costly and unnecessary frill.

Source: Los Angeles Times, October 23, 1997

"People treat you like someone who has no skills. They see you like a housekeeper," said Mirielle Belizaire, who spends 11 hours a day caring for four infants in her Charlotte, N.C., home and, in her spare time, is pursuing an associate's degree in early childhood development. "Some even say your job is easy. They don't know."

To be sure, the federal government will spend \$14 billion over the
 * next six years to help states provide child care for the nation's
 poor--an unprecedented investment prompted by the bid to put
 welfare-dependent parents to work. But the welfare reform bill that
 provided those funds would allow states to spend as little as 4% of their
 * share to ensure and enhance the quality of child care. That's down from a
 past practice of requiring 25% of such funds to go toward quality
 assurance.

Fear That Reform Will Relax Standards

* What child-care advocates fear is that states scrambling to meet
 * daunting new demands for child care from their welfare populations will
 * relax standards for day-care centers and family-based child care. They
 point to Wisconsin, which has created a new class of "provisional"
 caregivers who do not have to meet training requirements but who will
 charge half as much as accredited caregivers. And they cite states such
 as Connecticut and Michigan, where funds for the inspection of centers
 and the enforcement of standards have been deeply cut.

"There's a basic national flaw in our thinking," said Marcy Whitebook,
 co-director of the National Center for the Early Childhood Workforce. "On
 one hand, we just keep piling up information that the early years are
 really important, that what happens then determines the rest of
 children's lives. But we basically do not value the job of taking care of
 children. There's a disconnect between what we know children need and the
 kind of work environment we know we need for children."

* But in many states, the challenge of meeting rising child-care demands
 has helped spawn a flurry of innovation, and those models are expected to
 * dominate the agenda at this week's White House meeting.

Rhode Island, for instance, has begun to offer health benefits to
 * child-care workers who meet licensing standards, offering an attractive
 incentive to seek accreditation and helping day-care centers draw and
 retain more workers.

Colorado allows citizens to check a box on their income tax forms that
 automatically funnels part of their taxes to a program called the Quality
 * Care Improvement Fund. The fund provides grants to Colorado child-care
 providers wishing to expand or improve their services.

California has one of the nation's best-established mentoring
 programs. Started as a small pilot in 1991, the California Early
 Childhood Mentor Program has expanded statewide with federal funds and
 enlists experienced preschool teachers in the training of novice
 caregivers. The program not only boosts mentors' earnings by offering
 them a \$1,000 stipend but has increased professionalism and driven down

Source: Los Angeles Times, October 23, 1997

job departures among both mentors and the newcomers they help train.

- One of the most promising programs began in North Carolina in 1990, at
- * a time when turnover rates among child-care workers ran about 40% per year. The program, called Teacher Education and Compensation Helps;
 - * provides scholarships for more than 2,000 North Carolina child-care workers every year to pursue or continue their training in child development and education.

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Child Care Talks Return First Lady to Spotlight

G.O.P. Right Is Wary of Conference Today

By ROBERT PEAR

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 — Hillary Rodham Clinton convenes a White House conference on Thursday to highlight what she and the President see as an urgent need for safe, affordable child care. But conservative Republicans say they fear that the conference will lay the groundwork for plans to increase Government spending or regulation.

Hoping to overcome such skepticism, Administration officials have been trying to enlist moderate Republicans and business executives in their campaign, arguing that improved child care would not only produce healthier, happier children, but would eventually increase the nation's economic output as well.

Mrs. Clinton today described the conference and the Administration's approach to child care in purposefully reassuring terms. The most successful day care programs result from "public-private partnerships," not Government mandates, she said at a briefing for reporters.

The White House conference will probably generate several new policy initiatives, she indicated, but they will not require enormous amounts of public money or a broadly expanded state regulatory role.

And Mrs. Clinton delivered a preemptive answer to critics who say that the focus on child care sends an implicit message to women that it is better for them to work outside the home than to stay at home caring for their own children.

"Despite our rhetoric about family values, we don't do very much to help the parents who want to stay home," Mrs. Clinton said. "We don't want one stereotypical, one-size-fits-all approach to child care."

In their handling of this issue, the Clintons are clearly drawing on lessons learned from the health care debacle of the President's first term. Their proposals to overhaul the health care system were rejected in part because critics painted them as an inflexible Government-decreed solution to major social needs.

In announcing the day care conference on July 23, President Clinton said affordable, high-quality care was "critical to the strength of our families and to healthy child development." Moreover, he said, "it is good for the economy and central to a productive American work force."

Mrs. Clinton's work on the child care conference is her most visible effort at policy making since the failure of the health care project. The conference follows months of White House planning, aides said. It centers on an issue of long interest to Mrs. Clinton and was scheduled to capitalize on favorable publicity surrounding her 50th birthday on Sunday.

Although Mrs. Clinton is the event's chief organizer, she took pains today to emphasize that any policy proposals would come from her husband, not from her. "The President will make recommendations," she said.

Senator James M. Jeffords, a Vermont Republican who recently introduced a comprehensive bill to increase the supply of day care, said, "Having affordable, convenient child care is tied directly to a family's ability to produce income."

Most child care, Mr. Jeffords said, is mediocre, and some threatens the health and safety of children.

Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, said she hoped that the conference would be "a launching pad for significant new investments" in child care, by Federal and state governments and by employers across the country. "The quality of infant and toddler care is shockingly low," said Mrs. Edelman, a longtime mentor to Mrs. Clinton.

Ten million children under the age of 5 have working mothers and need

child care. The Census Bureau says that 30 percent of the children are in day care centers or nursery schools, while the others receive care from relatives or neighbors.

The debate over child care is filled with paradoxes. Parents cite the cost of care as one of their biggest concerns. Families with incomes under \$14,500 a year spend one-fourth of their income on child care, the Census Bureau reports.

But many child care experts are seeking higher pay for child care workers, higher quality care and stricter regulation, which — in the absence of new investments by government or business — could lead to increased costs for working parents.

Helen Blank, a policy analyst at the Children's Defense Fund, said that child care workers, on the average, earned less than bus drivers, garbage collectors and bartenders.

Marcy Whitebook, co-director of the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, in Berkeley, Calif., said nearly one-third of child care teachers earned the minimum wage, now \$5.15 an hour. The low wages, Ms. Whitebook said, lead to high turnover among child care workers, who come and go so fast that they cannot develop stable relationships with the children for whom they are responsible.

The White House learned a lesson from the health care debacle.

Congress is considering many bills to increase Federal spending and tax breaks for child care. Democratic authors of such measures have worked closely with moderate Republicans like Mr. Jeffords, Senator Olympia J. Snowe of Maine and Representative Nancy L. Johnson of Connecticut. A few conservatives have also endorsed the proposals.

Republican Governors in Illinois, Ohio, Rhode Island and Wisconsin have joined Democratic governors in efforts to increase spending for child care.

But the White House conference has drawn a cool reception from many conservatives, who note that Congress approved a major increase in child care spending as part of the 1996 welfare law.

Gary L. Bauer, a former Reagan Administration official who is president of the Family Research Council, said: "When I see conferences in Washington, the bottom line almost always seems to be something that makes Government grow. There are deep suspicions on the right that the purpose of this conference is to soften up the ground for proposals involving an entitlement program or new subsidies for institutional child care."

For their part, Administration officials said they wanted to raise the prominence of child care as an issue on the national political agenda, without proposing specific new legislation at this time.

The White House conference will focus on three questions: how to increase access to child care, how to make it more affordable and how to guarantee the quality of care, so children will be safe.

In a report on the nation's child care needs, prepared for the conference, the Department of Health and Human Services makes these points:

¶Forty-five percent of children under the age of 1 are in child care on a regular basis.

¶States with stronger licensing requirements have larger numbers of high-quality child care centers. But the quality of care varies immensely.

¶"Nearly five million school-age children spend time as latchkey kids without adult supervision during a typical week." Juvenile crime is most likely to occur after school hours, when children are unsupervised.

David M. Blau, a professor of economics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said the availability of "family day care," in which one person typically supervises several children, had a major effect on the entire market for child care.

"Many women are willing to take care of other people's children for relatively low remuneration," said Mr. Blau, who has studied the industry. "They are able to take care of their own kids at the same time, and that provides them with nonmonetary benefits. This tends to hold down wages, so the cost of informal child care is very low. The effects spill over to larger day care centers because the two types of child care providers compete with each other."

In the 1996 welfare law, Congress created a new program of Federal grants to the states, designating \$13.9 billion over six years to help finance child care. The Congressional Budget Office said this sum was an increase of more than \$4 billion, or nearly 50 percent, over what would have been spent under prior law.

PRIVATE SECTOR PLAYS GROWING ROLE IN CHILD CARE

DOCUMENT 236 OF 343

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NEWS

* PRIVATE SECTOR PLAYS GROWING ROLE IN CHILD CARE

By PEGGY O'CROWLEY, Staff Writer

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The Record, Northern New Jersey

All Editions.=.4 Star. 3 Star Late. 3 Star. 2 Star. 1; Star

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A 14-month-old boy at the Mahwah day-care center crawled up a set of padded stairs to look out the window. Other toddlers, barely walking, lurched from one activity to another on the carpeted floor.

The newly configured "activity centers" are designed to stimulate walking and crawling and to encourage curiosity about what children will find next _ a teacher with a picture book to look at, a little "house" to play in.

"There used to be cribs lining the walls, and we didn't have as much room," said Rae Ann Jandris, owner of the Children's Learning Center of Wyckoff at Fardale in Mahwah. Now space has been created by replacing cribs with mats.

The changes are the result of a new program, paid for by a group of New Jersey corporations, that allows day-care center directors to attend weeklong seminars to learn more about their business. A consultant then visits each center and makes recommendations _ such as changing the setup of classrooms.

The program is just one example of the public-private efforts

* that are expected to be a focus of today's White House Conference on

* Child Care.

No specific policies or new programs are expected to come out of the Washington conference. But Richard B. Stolley, president of the

* New York-based Child Care Action Campaign, and other advocates hope the gathering will encourage the private and public sectors to do more to help care for the millions of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers of working parents.

* Better child care is crucial for two reasons, said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund. First, the huge pool of mothers coming off the welfare rolls will need places to leave their children. Second, recent research has shown that the brain is enormously affected by the kind of stimulation it receives

in its first three years.

In North Jersey, it costs an average of \$6,664 a year to send a preschooler to a day-care center. The fees for infants are even higher.

Nearly all those costs are now shouldered by parents and by the government, which provides subsidies. But experts say both funding sources are about tapped out and that the private sector must get more involved if the affordability, quality, and quantity of day care are to improve.

One way businesses can get involved is to set up day-care centers on company property, experts say. A second way is to create partnerships with local day-care centers in which businesses provide resources for the center in return for a discount for employees.

A third way is simply to provide employees with day-care benefits as part of their compensation.

A recent national poll of working women found that one in 10 had
* employers that offered child-care benefits, said Karen Nussbaum of the AFL-CIO. "Despite a lot of talk about family-friendly policies,
* few women see child-care policy at the workplace," she said.

* Stolley said the Child Care Action Campaign has been focusing on how to sell the idea to businesses.

"Business needs to be convinced there's a bottom line to
* investing in child care," he said. "Now we are getting hard, true empirical evidence that workers are retained longer, it improves productivity and lowers absenteeism."

The New Jersey program is part of a national effort called the American Business Collaborative for Dependent Care. In the Garden State, 10 corporations, including AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, Bell Atlantic, and IBM, have provided \$500,000 for training day-care center directors.

* Debi Wilson, the corporate child-care specialist with Child and Family Resources of Morris County, has organized the seminars, drawing on instructors from nationally known schools and programs.

Thirty North and Central Jersey day-care center directors and operators _ including some from Bergen and Passaic counties _ are attending three weeklong seminars in Princeton. Topics include improving infant care, hiring staffers, and accommodating parents whose children don't need full-time care.

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CHILD CARE GOES TO D.C. QUALITY, QUANTITY TO BE ...

DOCUMENT 109 OF 121

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NATIONAL

- * CHILD CARE GOES TO D.C. QUALITY, QUANTITY TO BE DISCUSSED AT WHITE
- * HOUSE CONFERENCE

SALLY KALSON, POST-GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

920 Words

6075 Characters

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

SOONER

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(Copyright 1997)

- * The high social costs of poor-quality child care are clear to the nation's early childhood experts. Among them are stunted intellectual and social development that can lead to trouble with school, relationships and the law.

But the experts have had a tough time convincing the rest of

- * the country that good child care is worth the cost. Top quality centers in Pittsburgh can reach \$500 or more - a price beyond the reach of many families.

- * Tomorrow, the advocates will get a big boost from a White House Conference on Child Care, as President and Mrs. Clinton focus national attention on ways to make high-quality care more accessible and affordable for working families.

Three items expected to be on the agenda:

- * A public education campaign and literature to help parents
- * choose high quality child care.
- * * New incentives, such as loans or grants, to help child-care workers get more education.
- * * A campaign to get businesses more involved in providing child
- * care for their workers.

After-school programs will also take center stage, as conferees explore ways of keeping school-age children out of trouble in the crucial hours before their parents get home from work.

"When you're talking about fighting crime, investing in kids is one of the most powerful tools in our arsenal," said George P. Graves, police chief of Downer's Grove, Ill., and a founding member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, an anti-crime organization led by police, prosecutors and crime victims.

"Head Start for infants, after-school programs, child abuse prevention, mentoring at-risk youth - these are a public safety

issues," said Graves, who joined a roster of children's advocates
* yesterday in a nationwide phone hook-up in advance of the White
* House conference.

Nothing concrete is expected to emerge from tomorrow's events. But the advocates, mindful of the nation's aversion to large-scale entitlement programs, are looking at it as a "launching pad" for public and private action at the state and local levels.

"The private sector has played a modest role," said Richard B. Stolley, president of the Child Care Action Campaign.

* "But it must do much, much more. Child care in this country has been neglected so long, we now have some of the worst services for children in Western society. We need to use this dialogue as a launching pad for strategies in all sectors. And business alone can't do it. The government is going to have to step up to the plate."

Considering that two-thirds of the nation's children regularly
* attend some form of child care, and that major studies show that 74 percent of that care is mediocre while 12 percent is poor, the
* experts have been sounding the alarm about a child care crisis.

One major problem has been the abominable salaries of the
* nation's child care work force - almost entirely women earning under \$7 an hour, usually with no benefits. The low pay and long hours lead to high turnover, which is bad for children.

"What we call turnover, children experience as loss," said Marcy Whitebrook, co-director of the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force. Her group is looking for ways to augment teacher salaries, which will never be much higher as long as they rely on parents' ability to pay tuition.

* In conjunction with the White House conference, 22 corporations and 16 foundations - including the Heinz Endowments of Pittsburgh - have announced their intention to work together on improving quality in early childhood programs, although they've yet to set a specific agenda.

Thus far, the business and philanthropic groups have worked on parallel tracks.

The American Business Collaborative for Quality Dependent Care, formed five years ago, has invested \$9.4 million in programs to
* improve child care, especially by training staff and directors. The group, which includes Aetna, Xerox, AT&T and Johnson & Johnson, expects to spend another \$10 million in the next five years.

The foundations, which comprise the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, are spending \$2.4 million on similar initiatives. In addition to the Heinz Endowments, they include the Ford, Kellogg, Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations.

"We created a pooled fund to notch up the issue of quality," said Marge Petruska of the Heinz Endowments. The money is going to

Wheelock College in Boston, which in turn is setting up pilot programs at a dozen or more sites across the country.

The sites will look at improving quality two ways - by establishing credentials for center directors, and by getting more minorities into leadership positions.

* "Child care directors currently don't have to be credentialed," Petruska said. "Yet we know that when they have the proper education and training, it's a major factor in their centers' quality. We're going to be asking what a credentialing model should look like."

In addition, she said, "if you look at the African-American * staffers at child care centers, most are at the entry level. By the time you get to the top levels, it's a pretty white field across the country. We're going to look at whether more diversity in leadership will improve quality."

None of the sites will be in Pittsburgh, Petruska said, mainly because the Early Childhood Initiative of Allegheny County is already conducting a \$60 million quality enhancement experiment in the county's highest-risk neighborhoods. That initiative is being financed by local corporations and foundations.

As for the national joint venture, she said, "This is the first time the (business and foundation) leadership groups have * identified child care quality as their number one philanthropic priority. That, in itself, is very significant."

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Clintons to tackle child-care issues

Aides won't give specifics about Thursday conference

By Mimi Hall
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — As if on cue to illustrate the problem Hillary Rodham Clinton was describing, secretary and single mom Paula Broglio stood up and presented herself to the first lady as a living example of a working woman who can't make it on her own.

On a \$25,000 salary and with no child support from her ex-husband, Broglio lives with her 4-year-old son in the guest bedroom of her parents' house so she can afford \$200-a-month subsidized child care at a Catholic school while she's at work.

"If I did not have that, and I didn't have my parents, I would probably have to quit my job and go on welfare, because who would watch my child during the day and how could I afford to live in an apartment?" Broglio asked earlier this month at the University of Maryland, where the first lady was speaking about her latest effort to influence public policy.

"That is the problem," Clinton

answered. "I could not more vividly describe it."

But Clinton couldn't say how the White House Conference on Child Care, which she and President Clinton will host Thursday, might help the 38-year-old Adelphi, Md., secretary and her little boy, Vincent.

"Your child will be in school before we probably get much of the changes that I would like to see happen," she said.

White House aides are being deliberately vague about what the Clintons have in mind to address the problems of affordability, availability and safety in the nation's child-care industry.

During the 1993-94 health-care debates, they learned that large-scale proposals can bring protest from those who see big government taking over a responsibility that should be left to families and private businesses.

"If you're having a White House conference, I suspect you think there's a government solution," says Gary Bauer of the conservative Family Research Council.

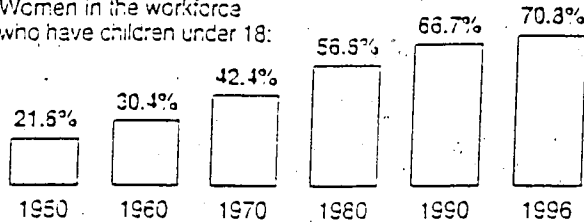
In an interview with USA



Clinton: Passionate on children's issues

Growing need for child care

Women in the workforce who have children under 18:



Source of child care

Child-care arrangements of working mothers who have children under 5 or children 5 to 14:

	Under 5	5-14
Another home	32%	4%
Organized child-care facility	31%	79%
Parental care	22%	9%
Child's home ¹	15%	5%
Child cares for self	0%	3%

Weekly cost of child care

(in constant 1993 dollars)

1986	\$64
1990	\$72
1993	\$79

¹ - Care provided by baby sitter or someone other than parent.

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau; *The 1996 Green Book*. Statistics are the most recent available.

By Genevieve Lynn, USA TODAY

TODAY on Tuesday, Hillary Clinton wouldn't say what the administration will propose.

"What I'm interested in is putting the spotlight on this issue and using the White House to... ignite a national conversation," she said.

The goal, she said, is to "call national attention to an issue that political leaders and policymakers should focus on but which has often been ignored."

She wouldn't talk specifics,

and her aides said she is not necessarily backing ideas she has mentioned recently: creating a national registry of child-care workers who have been convicted of crimes, for example, or offering protection for caretakers who fear being sued over minor accidents.

In her book *It Takes a Village*, Clinton said child care "is an issue that brings out all of our conflicted feelings about what parenthood should be and

about who should care for children when parents are working or otherwise unable to."

Children's issues have been a passion for Clinton since the early 1970s, when she worked as a lawyer at the Children's Defense Fund, a liberal advocacy group. Now she is wading back in to help tackle what the president calls "the next great frontier" in his effort to help working families.

In a recent speech at a Newark church, he ticked off a list of large and small initiatives he already has promoted: a new TV rating system to alert parents about violent or sexual content, a tobacco settlement that aims to stop smoking among children, a \$500-per-child tax credit for working families and a balanced federal budget that increases funding for health care for low-income children.

"But we still have to make sure that our parents have access to quality, affordable child care," he said. "That's the great, big hurdle left."

Richard Stolley, president of the Child Care Action Campaign, hopes Thursday's conference can help convince businesses that helping employees find child care helps productivity. "Business needs to be convinced there is a bottom-line benefit," he says.

But the nation's child-care system is in such bad shape, he says, that "we're deluding ourselves if we think this is going to make an enormous difference."

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BY GERALD MARTINEAU—THE WASHINGTON POST

Gloria Hicks, director of Teddy Bear Day Care in Fairfax, plays with Xyree Marshall, left, and Shakayla Reid. She says that when children see workers change, "all of a sudden, they have to develop a bond with a new person."

Who's Minding the Children?

Quality of Day Care Is Often a Casualty of the Booming Economy

By Barbara Vobejda
Washington Post Staff Writer

Two day-care centers in Columbus, Ohio, have closed recently because their operators couldn't find enough workers. In California, where the public schools are hiring teachers to reduce class sizes, day-care administrators say they are unable to find replacements for the staff they are losing to the schools. In Battle Creek, Mich., centers say they can't compete with factory jobs making cereal for Kellogg's, which pays two or three times child-care salaries.

This is what specialists in the field call the crisis of day care: hiring and retaining the kind of high-quality people it takes to provide good care. And with numerous national studies finding that most day care

is of poor quality, child development experts warn that the emotional and intellectual development of a generation of children is being jeopardized.

Thursday, President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will host a White House conference on child care, the single most visible effort yet to focus attention on the subject.

The conference agenda, acknowledging the problems of quality, availability and financing, is aimed at exploring solutions, primarily public-private sector partnerships to funnel new funds into the system. But even as advocates are encouraged by the high-profile platform, they are also skeptical that the federal government, states or the private sector are on the verge of making the kind of financial infusion it would

take to turn around an industry whose basic economics work against quality.

The conference comes at a particularly challenging time, industry experts say, because the nation's healthy economy and low unemployment rate have made staffing shortages and high turnover in child care even worse.

The result, said Ed Hassenger, executive director of the Altrusa Day Nursery in Battle Creek, is an applicant pool with very poor qualifications, some who struggle to read and write.

"You have a population... unable to work with children," he said, and so centers work on their skills. "Then you start over again. So you have a vicious circle."

Even when workers were in greater supply, the industry had trouble paying the kind of premium wages it would require to keep highly trained staff.

Of the 3 million day-care workers in this country, half are likely to quit their jobs this year, according to Marcy Whitebook, co-director of the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force and a leading expert on the industry's economics.

They will leave to earn more money as grocery store clerks or washing United Postal Service trucks on, if they have a college education, teaching in the public schools. It is no wonder, since a third are paid only the minimum wage.

Child-care providers say they would pay more if they could, but that would mean charging parents more, which is difficult because day care already accounts for a huge portion of family expenses.

"There simply isn't enough purchasing power in the hands of parents to insure children get good quality care," said Gail Richardson, who heads the Child Care Action Campaign, a national advocacy group.

But fixing the problem is difficult, because when it comes to day care, the standard rules of the marketplace don't apply.

First, said Suzanne Helburn, a University of Colorado economist who has studied child-care quality, "there's not enough money in the system."

Helburn and others said child care should be viewed not as a typical market, but like public education or health care, where the cost of providing the service far outweighs the capacity of consumers to pay. Yet unlike child care, public schools and health care are heavily subsidized or underwritten entirely by government or employers.

The subsidy to child care is much more limited, with 70 percent of the total price tag paid from the pockets of parents. On average, families with preschool-age children pay \$74 a week for child care, making it the third largest expense, after housing and food, for many working parents.

While it strains a family budget, that \$3,700 a year provides less than half what experts estimate quality care would cost—as much as \$8,500 per child per year.

At the Shirlington Children's Center, an Arlington day-care center, director Anna Wodzynska is familiar with the problem. Two years ago, four of her seven workers left, and within a short time, all of the replacements quit.

"If you can keep a teacher for a year, that's great," she said.

But if she wanted to raise salaries from the \$3 she now pays teachers to the \$12 she thinks would lower turnover, it would increase the price of care from \$130 a week to \$200. But she said that is impossible. "Here, in Shirlington, no one could afford that."

Even the cost of day care is more than many parents can afford, especially low-income, single mothers.

Carrie Trombetta, a 20-year-old mother with two young children, earns \$5.15 working at Barabill's Country Buffet in Pensacola, Fla. She gets up each morning and starts calling around to friends and family, asking who might care for her boys while she goes to work.

"I look all day for a babysitter until I go to work," she said. "I offer to pay them in food stamps because I can't afford to give them money."

When she applied for a government child-care subsidy, she was told there were 600 people on the waiting list in front of her.

Over the past decade, the federal government has increased what it spends to help low-income parents pay for child care from \$500 million to nearly \$3 billion. But only one in 10 children who are eligible for those funds is receiving them, leaving many states with thousands of families on their waiting lists.

Experts point to numerous studies underscoring their arguments that financing affects quality. A 1995 study by researchers at four universities rated just one in seven day-care centers as good quality and linked the problem to wages, training and experience.

A year earlier, the Families and Work Institute, a New York-based research organization, found comparably poor levels of quality in home day care, when children are taken to another person's home rather than a center.

And in April, a similar White House conference focused on brain development from birth to age 3, emphasizing that in

order to learn and develop properly, young children need consistent and positive relationships with adults.

Gloria Hicks, who runs the Teddy Bear Day Care in Fairfax, has seen firsthand the importance of that consistency.

"It's very hard for the younger ones, the infants and toddlers, to warm up to strangers," she said. "They're more fussy, crying" when new teachers take over. Hicks said she steps in and helps the children. Still, she said, "They have to develop a bond with a person, then all of a sudden, they have to develop a bond with a new person."

Even as advocates call for public and private investments to subsidize the system, they caution that simply adding dollars is not the answer.

Whitebook, the work force expert, argued that, even with the increased federal investment in recent years, little has been done to improve day-care wages or reduce turnover.

"The challenge is not just more money, but more money with an eye toward improving the care."

Indeed, even in the segment of the child-care system where there is plenty of money—high-income parents willing to pay hundreds of dollars weekly—there are still problems.

"The more affluent families are not very good consumers," said Heiburn. "They don't understand what good quality is."

In part, parents lack the expertise to be good consumers but they also lack the emotional distance it sometimes takes to make a rational choice.

"Parents, when they're looking for child care, find it a very painful process," said Ellen Galinsky, co-president of the Work and Families Institute. The process of choosing day care, she said, "symbolizes separation. They don't look with dispassion" as they do in many other instances of comparison shopping.

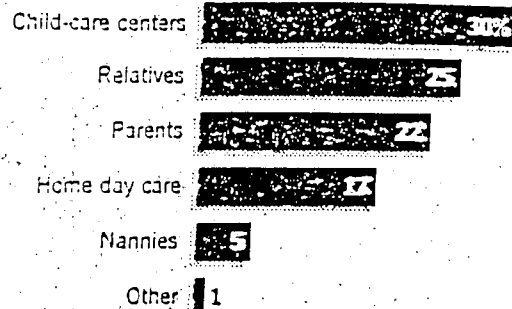
FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read a special report on Washington-area day care, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's Web site at www.washingtonpost.com

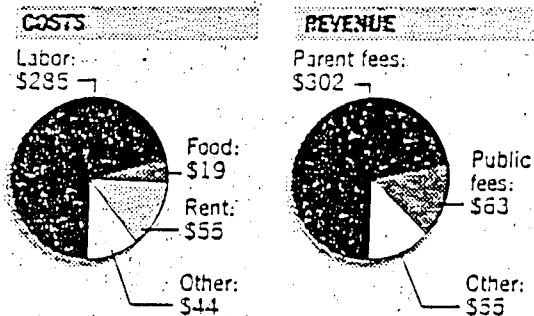
DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Experts argue that the quality of child care is harmed by high turnover among providers. One in two workers is expected to quit this year, in part because wages are limited by how much parents can afford to pay.

Care providers for preschoolers with employed mothers, 1993



Budget for a typical child-care center, per child per month



The poorest Americans spend the greatest share of their income on child care.

Annual income	Weekly expense	Share of income
Under \$14,400	\$47.29	25%
\$14,400-35,999	60.16	12
\$36,000-53,999	73.10	8
\$54,000 and over	91.93	6

- Children under 6 who have both parents or only parent in work force: **12 million**
- Licensed child-care centers: **93,221**
- Average salary for providers in child-care centers: **\$6.89 an hour**
- Amount U.S. employers lose due to child-care-related absences: **\$3 billion**
- Percentage of employees eligible for employer-assisted child-care benefits: **4 percent**

SOURCES: Packard Foundation, Child Care Action Campaign

Child-care quandary: Improving quality without ...

DOCUMENT 18 OF 61

ASP9729500034

* Child-care quandary: Improving quality without increasing cost

LAURA MECKLER

734 Words

4751 Characters

* 10/21/97

The Associated Press

BUSINESS

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WASHINGTON (AP) - The place smelled like dirty diapers.

"Yuck," thought Betsy Sullivan. She didn't want to leave her

* daughter at a child-care center like that.

But the next place was worse. No one even realized she was there.

"I could have walked in and walked off with the place, or a kid for that matter," said Mrs. Sullivan, who lives outside San Francisco. "It was really scary."

And so it went, until the Sullivans found a center that was structured, but not a boot camp; a place without foul odors; a place they could leave 18-month-old Elva, the little girl who takes months to warm to strangers.

* Cost and quality. They are the two biggest issues in child care. And they cut against each other: Improving quality usually means spending more.

Experts will sort through such problems and potential solutions

* Thursday at the first-ever White House conference on child care. But President Clinton plans to announce few concrete proposals, instead focusing on a handful of modest ideas that include:

- A public education campaign and literature to help parents

* choose high quality child care.

* - New incentives, such as loans or grants, to help child-care workers get more education.

* - A campaign to get businesses more involved in providing child
* care for their workers.

* A national registry of child-care workers with criminal records, an idea mentioned in the past by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, will not be proposed, according to administration officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials expect the conference to set the stage for Clinton's State of the Union speech next year, when he is expected to highlight

* child care. His administration also plans to include some initiative

in next year's budget proposal.

Advocates say they'll be watching.

"The proof is in the pudding," said Marian Wright Edelman of the

* Children's Defense Fund, which has child care at the top of its 1998

* legislative agenda. "A White House conference, in and of itself, won't lead to much."

* Generally, the federal government has only a small role in child
* care. One program provides about \$3 billion, mostly to help low-income parents pay bills. States are responsible for setting standards, enforcing them and adding any other money for subsidies.

* But across the states, the problems in child care are many, including wide variations in quality and inconsistent regulations that sometimes go unenforced.

Workers are paid an average of just \$6.89 an hour, and they come and go quickly. Nationally, about one-third of workers leave each year. And a forthcoming study by the Families and Work Institute found that in Florida, a state with above-average retention, just 2 percent of teachers remained after four years.

The bottom line, according to a recent University of Colorado study, is that 12 percent of centers provide less than minimal quality care, and only 14 percent are rated good.

Meanwhile, it's expensive. A typical family will spend nearly
* \$4,000 a year on child care. The poorest end up spending 25 percent of their income.

The problem cuts across class. Middle-class parents may be able
* to afford child care, but worry whether centers and homes are safe.

For mothers trying to come off welfare and into low-wage jobs, the question is how to pay. Some subsidies are available, depending on the state, but even those who qualify have the same quality concerns.

"It's probably the worst feeling in the world," said Kim Noyd of Menomonie, Wis., who stopped trusting centers after her 6-year-old daughter told her that a worker had touched her in a sexual way.

Meanwhile, the working poor are often caught in the middle, unable to afford much but too well-off to qualify for subsidies.

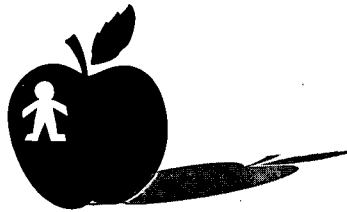
Deborah Loving works two jobs, taking home \$1,180 a month, which
* was enough when a subsidy covered most of her monthly \$650 child-care bill.

But that subsidy, for families at risk of going onto welfare, dried up last month.

"That kind of leaves parents like me stuck," said Loving, of Alameda, Calif., a part-time bank teller and office assistant in a law firm.

She's considered putting 3-year-old Yibo in a cheaper center - she knows one that charges just \$450 a month - but fears the new place would be less stimulating.

"It would be more of a baby-sitting situation - maybe some ABCs and 1-2-3s," she said. "It's worth the extra \$200, if I can come up with it."



child care and
early education

November 26, 1997

Ms. Jennifer Klein
Senior Policy Analyst
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Jennifer:

Per your request, enclosed are a set of the child care press clips as well as a written media analysis I prepared for our last Media Strategies Group meeting. I also am enclosing a copy of the list of press who participated in the October 21 audio press briefing as well as a set of clips from the briefing. I have sent copies of these materials to Steve Cohen and Brenda Anders of the press office as well.

It was a pleasure seeing you again at the adoption bill signing. Please feel free to contact me at 202/326-8700 or at 301/457-2000 if you need anything further. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Cowles

PRESS CLIPS

**WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE,
AU PAIR TRIAL, AND MORE
9/30/97 – 11/14/97**

JUDY MANN

Help Wanted for Child-Care System

The vast majority of people we entrust our children to have no more training in child care than Louise Woodward, the world's best-known au pair.

Asking an inexperienced 19-year-old to take care of one baby is a lot: thinking that she will have the creative resources, endless patience and managerial skills to handle two small children is hoping for a saint.

Yet, that's what a lot of working parents, desperate to find supervision for their children, do: gamble that their child-care workers will be saints. The miracle is that we are not hearing more horror stories out of day care than we are.

A report published last month in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* rated the quality of regulations governing center-based care for infants and toddlers in 50 states and the District and found that not one of those received a combined score of good or better. Only one-third of the states, including Maryland, had minimally acceptable standards, and two-thirds were rated poor, including Virginia and the District, or very poor.

Standards are way too low.

This month, Yale University released a major report that outlined eight concrete proposals for overhauling the early child-care system by professionalizing it and having state and local boards oversee it, much the way they do school systems. The boards, elected or appointed, would be made up of equal numbers of parents, practitioners, community and state leaders, and municipal or government agency representatives.

State boards would develop standards that align with national goals and be charged with ensuring quality. Local boards would be in charge of developing performance benchmarks for children and would involve parents in assessing changing needs and planning. They could be aligned with school districts but be distinct entities. Their mandate would go from birth to 5 years.

The report and its recommendations, which are researched-based and took four years to develop, involved hundreds of early child-care educators and researchers—both nationally and internationally—business leaders, child-care practitioners, scientists, economists, policymakers and parents. It was supported by five major foundations.

Sharon Lynn Kagan, a senior research scientist at Yale and the president-elect of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, who is the

principal author of the report, said it is "visionary, in that it looks to the year 2010 and asks what would we need to create an entire infrastructure that would live in perpetuity and not by chance. We can no longer tolerate a non-system that has evolved in a chancy way."

Among its recommendations are increasing the quality of learning opportunities and establishing clear goals and quantifiable results that we expect from children at certain ages so that child-care workers can tailor their activities to promote each child's development.

"For a long time," says Kagan, "we measured quality by group size, ratios and teachers' preparation. We are saying they are characteristics. We really have to keep our eye on the results."

All staff and centers, and people who provide child care in their homes, would have to be licensed, and practitioners would have to go through high levels of training. The report suggested a three-tiered licensing system, the least demanding of which requires at least 120 hours of formal education in early childhood development, certification in pediatric first aid, and a training period with the age group.

About 40 percent of child-care programs now are exempt from regulation, Kagan says, although studies have shown that regulation enhances quality. States should eliminate exemptions and have adequate staff to carry out licensing and inspections. "We want these licensing requirements streamlined," says Kagan. "Right now, we under-credential people and use as a safeguard for quality the nature of the environment. That's like assuming a clean, safe hospital would provide wonderful care, but having no kind of licensing for the doctors and nurses who work therein."

"A nation shares in the responsibility of educating its children from ages 5 to 17," says Kagan. "We also need to share in the responsibility below age 5."

"Not By Chance," as the report is titled, is an evenhanded proposal for creating an early care and education system for America's children that would enable us to meet an important social obligation we are currently leaving to luck. And that is to provide high-quality programs that are cost-efficient and effective for society.

We cannot expect smart, competent, creative and hard-working adults to emerge from the end of the educational system if we continue to give them such a dicey start.

Roles for Au Pairs, Others in Child Care

DOCUMENT 6 OF 6

LATM9731800212

Metro; Letters Desk

* Roles for Au Pairs, Others in Child Care

462 Words

3021 Characters

* 11/14/97

Los Angeles Times

Home Edition

B-8

Letter to the Editor

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Re "Who's Minding the Baby?" by Debra Zeifman, Commentary, Nov. 7: An au pair is supposed to be a mother's helper, not a full-time child minder. She is supposed to assist a mother who is home and in charge of her child. Au pairs might be expected to take a child for a walk or to play with the child. Maybe she could dust, wash dishes or vacuum, giving the mother a much needed break. In return, au pairs are to be treated as an older sister, a member of the family. They should pursue an education in their free time. Their pay is pocket money. No one would expect an older daughter to assume full responsibility for a child while the mother and father worked.

Grandparents should not be substitute parents. They just finished that job and should have the right to assume the role of grandparents, with all the privileges.

The tragedy of baby Matthew Eappen and Louise Woodward should tell us once and for all that there is no greater minder of children than the parents themselves. It is their responsibility, not that of any other group, related or not. No job is more important.

LOUISE E. WOOLER

Altadena

* Zeifman adds credence to the child care I provide for my great niece. The benefit of my twice-weekly commitment to Natalie Rachel--now 9 months old--is twofold. She remains in familiar surroundings with her own playthings. I receive a tremendous amount of delight and satisfaction watching her grow and develop.

Just prior to the birth of this precious bundle of joy, I was re-engineered out of my position after 29 years in a large corporation. It's my pleasure to care for this sweet child. I have the time, patience and parenting skills that I didn't possess in my youth. My own daughters

didn't receive this degree of undivided attention.

On our morning and afternoon walks, Natalie--in the stroller--becomes familiar with her neighborhood. She is fascinated with bees and butterflies, squirrels and squawking crows. Soon we'll explore weeds, worms and mud puddles.

Yes, it's an enormous responsibility to assume the care of someone else's infant. I approach the assignment with the wisdom, life experience and skills accrued by the third age, with child safety the No. 1 priority.

ANNE LIPMAN

Tarzana

I was appalled and disappointed by the insulting and sexist conclusions drawn by Zeifman on who should care for the child in the absence of the parents. Does she include a father as a parent? Has she ever heard of a father, grandfather, brother, or uncle? I helped care for my younger brothers, and most certainly helped raise my three children. Presently, I enjoy and look forward to every Tuesday when I care for my granddaughter.

GENE P. MORRIS

Dove Canyon

Passionate responses to au pair column

DOCUMENT 12 OF 110

NSL9731700005

NEWS

Passionate responses to au pair column

256 Words

1787 Characters

* 11/13/97

The Star-Ledger Newark, NJ

FINAL

001

(Copyright Newark Morning Ledger Co., 1997)

People have deep feelings about babies, about jobs and about money. So it's no wonder that the issue of working mothers- which hits all three of these hot buttons- sparks controversy.

Yesterday's column by Kathleen O'Brien stated that Deborah Eapen's decision to work part time should not be blamed for her son's death in the Massachusetts au pair case. In response to our request for your views via e-mail, we got some heartfelt responses. Here are excerpts from some:

I've been a working mother of two since my younger child was 7 months old. I had to go back to work for financial reasons. If I could have afforded to stay home with my children I would have. Even after 4 1/2 years back in the work force, I still wish I could stay home and care for my children. I feel that if one parent earns enough to permit the other parent to stay home, then that is the best choice for child care. Clearly, one of the Eappens' income as a medical doctor could support the family, and the best child care choice for them should have been a stay-at-home parent.

Also, aside from the \$4,000 fee they paid EF Au Pair, the \$139 per week they paid Ms. Woodward is shameful. They expected a quality child caregiver/housekeeper for a relatively small price. I wish I could have someone take care of my children and my house for \$139 a week. They clearly could have afforded more. You get what you pay for.

I0607 * End of document.

Conference Focuses on Early Education Learning: ...

DOCUMENT 7 OF 110

LATM9731701005

Metro; Metro Desk

Conference Focuses on Early Education

Learning: Four-day session offers workshops and exhibits on teaching children from birth to 8.

TINA NGUYEN

TIMES STAFF WRITER

315 Words

2661 Characters

* 11/13/97

Los Angeles Times

Orange County Edition

B-5

Copyright 1997 / The Times Mirror Company

ANAHEIM -- It's never too early to think about your child's education, said experts at a four-day conference that began Wednesday at the Anaheim Convention Center.

The 52nd annual conference by the National Assn. for the Education of Young Children will address an array of issues on child development.

About 1,000 workshops will focus on beginning literacy, how music can
* help children learn math, federal and state child care policies, and multicultural curricula for young students. Hundreds of exhibits will display books, videos and other resources for teachers, parents and caregivers of children from birth to 8 years old.

This year's event is expected to draw about 25,000 people from across the nation. That would make it one of the largest gatherings in the organization's history, officials said.

"That's because there's certainly a lot more public campaigns
* advocating for child care and the importance of the childhood years," said Barbara Willer, spokeswoman for the NAEYC, a Washington-based organization comprising mainly childhood professionals.
* Early child care has gained widespread attention this year because of President Clinton's \$300-million proposal to provide more training scholarships for day-care providers and boost their wages. And with welfare reform pushing single parents into the work force, the demand for
* child care is expected to grow significantly, experts said.

A growing body of child development research also contributes to the rising interest in early education. Panelists at the conference will
* offer advice on how to evaluate child care, set up literacy programs that

link preschools and families, and create strategies that help children develop self-control.

Academic researchers also will present their work on subjects as varied as the educational effects of the TV show "Sesame Street" and how Caribbean music is an effective medium for teaching math. Some sessions will be offered in Spanish.

For more information about the conference, call the Anaheim Convention Center, (714) 999-8900, and ask for NAEYC headquarters.

I0607 * End of document.

Anxiety about work fuels au pair furor

Although Deborah Eappen wasn't on trial in a legal sense, she was in the public mind.

By Kathleen Harrington and Tara Sonenshine

The case of Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old au pair convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the death of baby Matthew Eappen, has caused a national and international uproar. Monday's decision on a sentence of time served inflamed passions further. But when all is said and done, the passion stems from a fundamental anxiety about working mothers.

While Deborah and Sunil Eappen, the parents of Matthew, struggle to come to terms with the tragic loss of their child, they're battling not only grief but also public judgment. The Eappens were not on trial in this case, at least not in a legal sense. But Deborah Eappen, a physician who works outside the home, is on the receiving end of veiled suggestions that she was, in some measure, to blame for her son's death.

What is going on here? The answer lies in the complex dilemma working parents face every day. A generation after the birth of the women's movement, we're still ill-prepared to accommodate the needs of people like the Eappens in the workplace. There is still a level of unspoken discomfort and anxiety with the notion of working moms, a yearning for some bygone era when most mothers stayed home and took care of the kids.

Some blame Deborah Eappen, not for working (that would be too transparent) but for hiring a 19-year old to care for her children, as if the same tragedy couldn't befall any of us while the high school kid next door is babysitting.

The Eappens' tragedy is every working parent's nightmare. We struggle to find the right child-care provider and then pray nothing goes wrong. We agonize over how to carve up a 24-hour day in a futile search for "balance." The truth is, working parents, particularly working mothers, don't need outsiders to judge us. We do that ourselves.

What we do need is some new thinking about how to make two-earner households work. What are we doing as a society to make it possible for working parents to carry out their dual responsibilities? The debate is not about whether mothers should work. They do.

It is over now we rewrite the rules that govern how we actually live and work. What services are available at the hospital where Sunil Eappen works, so that if he wants to bring his children to work there is someone to care for them? What options exist for Deborah Eappen to share her ophthalmology beat with another doctor or see patients at home if she wants to lighten her workload?

There are more and more men expressing frustration with trying to fulfill professional aspirations while also having time with their children. But the burden still falls disproportionately on mothers, who endure extraordinary pressure to balance demands of home and office, battle enormous guilt and endless fatigue and, for all that, find precious little in the way of support to make it all fit together.

For all the talk about flexibility, the reality is that our workplaces are far from flexible and the choices for most working women remain lonely and stark. It is why so many talented professional women eventually retreat from the public arena. It is simply too difficult to navigate a reasonable course between successful work and mothering. Some women do find a place in between the all-or-nothing game, but they privately concede that part-time options fall far short of either professional or personal fulfillment. Most of us just muddle along in the faint hope that things will change.

The Eappens may have unwittingly become a prism through which to look at working families and at the gap that exists between our lives at work and our lives at home.

We must seek tolerance for working women and working men and gain respect for the difficult choices they make every day out of love for each other and for their children. Rather than judge the Eappens, we must take a hard look at ourselves, our institutions and our personal biases and how it is we are choosing to lead our lives.

Kathleen Harrington is chief of staff of the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Tara Sonenshine is senior adviser to the Brookings Institution. Each is married and the mother of two small children.

Louise Woodward got the child care bandwagon rolling

Senate numskulls are loading yet another political bandwagon in response to the media-hyped child care death case against Louise Woodward. They're promising a broad child care bill for the coming election year. Plundering tax dollars for hot-button issues amounts to nothing more than scare tactics and

political treachery.

The politicians and the media have missed the broad side of the barn entirely. We don't have a child care crisis in this country. We have a parenting crisis. Instead of futilely throwing more funds into child care, we should direct efforts at resolving the social and eco-

nomic problems of single parenting and of requiring both parents to work. What we don't need is to abandon a generation of children to the apron strings of a national nanny.

DANIEL B. JEFFS
Apple Valley, Calif.

Who should watch the children? By DEBRA ZEIFMAN

DOCUMENT 42 OF 118

TMNN9731700031

Main

Who should watch the children? By DEBRA ZEIFMAN

731 Words

4654 Characters

* 11/12/97

Times Union (Albany, NY)

THREE STAR

All

(Copyright 1997)

The story of a British au pair convicted, now, of manslaughter in connection with the death of an 8-month-old boy in Massachusetts has forced Americans to reflect on what we consider acceptable * child care arrangements in this country.

There has been considerable comment during the trial and its aftermath about the practices of upper-middle-class parents who hire teenage girls from foreign countries to watch their children while they work. It is not remarkable that women put their children in someone else's charge; what is remarkable is the uninformed and sometimes cavalier way in which they choose a substitute caregiver.

Psychologists know of several factors that predispose toward bad parenting, neglect and, at the extreme end of the spectrum, abuse. The average au pair through no fault of her own, embodies these very risk factors. She is a relatively young caregiver, she is biologically unrelated to her charge and, as a foreigner in an unfamiliar culture, she is by definition lacking in social support.

Her interest in baby-sitting may or may not be purely altruistic. After all, as critics of the au pair system have pointed out, if her sole interest were caring for children, would there not be an ample supply in her own country?

Psychologists, informed by evolutionary theory and census data, have learned something over the years about the profile of the caregiver most "at risk" for maltreating children. Evolutionary psychologists Martin Daly and Margo Wilson have shown, for example, that nonrelatives and younger mothers are far more likely to be the perpetrators of infanticide.

Evolutionary theory posits that parents are selfishly motivated to care for their young in order to perpetuate their own genes; unrelated individuals obviously lack this motivation. But age adds still another dimension to the problem, in both biological parents and their hired surrogates.

Because women's reproductive abilities diminish as they age, children born to older mothers are harder to replace and are therefore more highly valued.

Even nonrelatives are affected by this principle, because the mechanisms that underlie age-related changes in parenting are operative in adoptive and substitute parenting situations, too.

Evolution has designed women to be more sensitive and highly invested caregivers as they reach the end of their reproductive years, a fact that is borne out by the plethora of data on the inferior care provided by teenage mothers.

The au pair resembles the stepparent much more closely than the adoptive parent in that she is a nonrelative with what may be a less than altruistic agenda of her own.

When an au pair's social agenda conflicts with her duties as a hired caregiver, it will be hard to predict what the outcome will be for the baby in her care.

Another variable reliably linked to child abuse is social isolation and lack of social support. Having a spouse, an extended network of relatives or a community to call on serves to buffer against the stresses and strains of biological parenting.

By contrast, one hardly can imagine a more socially isolated individual than the average au pair. Unfortunately, when the strain of a crying infant, a boiling tea kettle and ringing telephone become too much to bear, she has far fewer resources to call upon.

If au pairs are not an option, it is reasonable to ask who should watch the children when parents are at work. In the absence of state-certified infant care programs, our first choice would have to be a nonworking female relative such as the proverbial grandmother, a sister or an aunt. If none of these is available, a mature woman with adequate resources and local social support network should come next. This solution will pose some challenges for the working parent in terms of cost and convenience; it will
* not be quite as easy to spell out your ideas about child care to a mature woman who may have had years of experience raising children of her own. But if children are indeed our most precious resource, it might be well worth the added cost and effort.

If all this makes you want to send your au pair home on the next flight back home to Europe and hire a well-credentialed nanny -- AND after your mother or mother-in-law refuses to move in -- you are probably not alone. Debra Zeifman teaches psychology at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie. She wrote this article for the Los Angeles Times.

I0607 * End of document.

DAILY PARENT NEWSLETTER OFFERS TIPS, TIMELY ...

DOCUMENT 55 OF 118

SYRC9731700115

Lifestyle

DAILY PARENT NEWSLETTER OFFERS TIPS, TIMELY ADVICE

Barbara Stith Staff writer

401 Words

2960 Characters

* 11/12/97

Syracuse Herald-Journal

City

E3

(Copyright 1997)

Here are three things you can do right now to improve the quality of your family life:

Read to or with your child every night before bed.

Make uninterrupted family meals a priority.

Turn off the television.

The advice comes from The Daily Parent, a new quarterly

* newsletter distributed by the Child Care Council of Onondaga County.

And it's just the kind of advice that families at County North Children's Center in Liverpool are looking for, says the day-care center's director, Beth Pastel.

"It's very informative, very developmentally appropriate, very practical," says Pastel, who ordered extra copies of the newsletter to hand out to the 65 families whose children attend the center.

"It's good, common-sense information."

* The Child Care Council started sending the newsletter this fall
* to the child-care centers, child-care providers and prekindergarten programs that belong to the council. They in turn are encouraged to share the information with parents, says Beth Henderson, director of parent and corporate services at the council.

"Our main purpose is to get the information out, link parents

* with the Child Care Council and other resources that can help them," Henderson says. "Parenting is a difficult job."

The quarterly newsletter is designed for parents who work outside the home. It's produced by the National Association of

* Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, with a one-page insert
* of local information from the county child care council.

The fall issue focuses on ways parents can help the day run more smoothly, with tips on how to handle the morning rush, how to function when the baby's been up all night, ideas on helping children get their homework done and more.

Pastel liked the newsletter's easy-to-read format as well as
* its content. Child care providers who received the publication have
been enthusiastic about it, Henderson says.

"It's really user-friendly," she says. "It's easy to read when
you're waiting in the doctor's office or when you have those few
precious moments of time on your lunch hour."

* The Child Care Council mailed the newsletter to businesses the
last week in October and invited them to copy the first issue free
of charge for their employees. The business subscription rate is
\$25 a year, which entitles companies to make copies of the
newsletter for workers.

Individual subscriptions are available as well at a rate of \$10

* a year. For information on the newsletter, call the Child Care
Council at 446-1220.

I0607 * End of document.

EDITORIALS A real child-care crisis For most ...

DOCUMENT 59 OF 118

ATJC9731700137

EDITORIAL

* EDITORIALS A real child-care crisis For most families, the concerns associated with safe care for their children boil down to dollars and cents

STAFF

456 Words

3538 Characters

* 11/12/97

The Atlanta Constitution

A;12

(Copyright 1997 The Atlanta Journal / The Atlanta Constitution)

A short-tempered au pair may be a nightmare, but one that haunts only the affluent. For the vast majority of metro Atlanta families, the more common distress comes from trying to find day care that is safe and reliable but also affordable.

As welfare reform weans thousands of Georgians off recipient rolls and places them on payrolls, the day-care crunch will worsen. The state Department of Family and Children Services estimates that an additional 57,000 children in the area will require care this year as their parents get jobs. For welfare-to-work to succeed beyond a political slogan, the nation has to initiate another set of reforms

* that focus on the underpaid and undervalued child-care profession.

* As attendees at the recent White House conference on child care stated, the nation's future hinges on its willingness to invest in children. A growing body of science on brain development shows that the investment pays the highest dividends when it comes early in a child's life.

At his own conference on childhood development last month, Gov. Zell Miller noted that the nurturing and stimulation a child experiences before he ever enters a classroom may determine whether he will become an honor student or a dropout. But only a handful of

* child-care facilities have the staff and training to capitalize on this critical learning window.

* Donna R. Overcash of Child Care Solutions, the largest child-care resource and referral agency in Georgia, says only 15 percent of child care nationally can be rated high-quality. Seventy percent is mediocre, while the remaining 15 percent is actually harmful to kids.

That's not surprising, when the average income for teachers at

* child-care centers is \$11,725, and family day-care providers earn \$10,000.

Many working parents devote a large portion of their take-home pay to day care. The responsibility of upgrading the salaries of

* child-care workers has to be shared by government and businesses, both of which have a stake in how well-prepared the work force will be in the 21st century.

The state also needs to impose higher educational, safety and
* health standards on child-care centers and make the monitoring of family day-care homes a priority. Now, Overcash says, only 10 percent of such homes receive an on-site visit because of state staffing shortages.

* The child-care crunch hinders uneducated single mothers because they often end up in low-paying jobs with late, overnight or weekend schedules. Not only is day care more expensive when it extends beyond the standard 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., but it is also harder to find.

A shortsighted segment of the public argues that since poor women had these babies, they alone bear the burden of caring for them. But if we ignore these children now, they may become our burden later.

I0607 * End of document.

For Matthew's mother, a no-win scenario

DOCUMENT 71 OF 118

NSL9731600003

NEWS

For Matthew's mother, a no-win scenario

589 Words

3753 Characters

* 11/12/97

The Star-Ledger Newark, NJ

UNION

001

(Copyright Newark Morning Ledger Co., 1997)

The trial is over. The verdict is in. And it is one no judge can reduce.

Deborah Eappen: Guilty.

When Robert Bork lost his nomination to the Supreme Court after political opponents mounted an organized attack on his character, a new verb was invented. From then on, to be "Borked" meant to be the victim of an ad hominem attack by one's political opponents.

Perhaps we'll now have a new word: "Eappenized."

It will mean to be painted as a money-hungry, BMW-driving, cell-phone-carrying working mother. Who, P.S., deserves whatever she gets, even the death of her own child.

As near as I can determine, the Massachusetts parents in the au pair murder case were given about 3 milliseconds of sympathy for having lost a child. Then the criticism started pouring in.

Look, I don't know if the au pair did it or not. We're left with this odd verdict in which a court says she did it- but not on purpose- while she still claims she didn't.

How the heck can anyone know what happened to baby Matthew? If it wasn't clear enough from the Simpson trial, it is now: If you have enough money, you can buy whatever scientific or medical evidence you seek.

But I wince at the sight of a grieving mother being on trial not

* only for her child care decisions but, basically, for working at all.

My shoulders sank when I heard that the somewhat vindicated- yet, let us not forget, still guilty- au pair has been offered big bucks for her story. I'll bet you right now that when it appears, the word "cold" turns up somewhere in the first 10 pages to describe Mrs. Eappen. (Or its linguistic cousins, "distant" and "aloof.")

It is factually true that Matthew's death never would've happened if Deborah Eappen had stayed at home full time.

Yet when a child is injured at the hands of an overwhelmed mother- which certainly does happen- no one sneers, "That never would've happened if she'd been working."

Instead of casting blame on each other, we might look closer at the au pair agency that took the Eappens' \$4,000 and failed to do its job properly. No matter who you believe killed Matthew, the turn of events implies negligence on the part of the agency. Either it placed a defective au pair with a blameless family, or it placed a blameless au pair with a defective family.

If there's one thing we as a society don't announce in neon lights, it's just how hard it is to take care of a baby- for anyone, parents included.

And if anyone is feeling vindicated about this divisive trial, it must be the owners of day care centers. People like to turn up their noses at the notion of group care for infants, painting it as too institutional. Yet that very group setting provides safeguards and training that the finest in-home care cannot duplicate.

No doubt I'm overly sensitive on this point, but there you have it. One tends to get that way after innumerable snotty remarks sent in one's direction. Of course, that describes just about every mother in the '90s- that oh-so-special decade in which mothers who work and mothers who stay at home feel under attack.

It will always be the primary job of parents to protect their child, and in that regard, the Eappens failed. So okay. They paid the price. Enough already. We'd be interested in hearing your opinions for a follow-up column. The e-mail address is: kobrien@mail.starledger.com.

I0607 * End of document.

Nanny Trial: Too Lenient

DOCUMENT 73 OF 118

DTNS9731600040

Editorial

Nanny Trial: Too Lenient

554 Words

3645 Characters

* 11/12/97

The Detroit News

Final

A12

(Copyright 1997)

American justice, it has been said, was vindicated by Massachusetts Superior Court Judge Hiller Zobel's ruling this week reducing Louise Woodward's mandatory life sentence to the 279 days she has already served. Judge Zobel's ruling, the London Times observed, "personified the best traditions of American jurisprudence."

Did it? Yes and no.

It is an axiom of the criminal law, in Massachusetts as in Michigan, that judges have plenary power to see that justice is done in their courtrooms. Defense attorneys routinely ask that guilty verdicts be set aside in criminal trials -- though the requests are rarely granted.

In this case, Judge Zobel followed a relatively conventional analysis. In examining the evidence, he found that there wasn't the requisite showing of "malice (in the legal sense)" to sustain a finding of second degree murder in Louise Woodward's handling of her eight-month-old charge, Matthew Eappen. A judge who finds that the prosecution did not demonstrate one of the elements of a crime is free to throw out a charge or reduce it so it conforms to the elements that have been shown.

In that sense, his decision was indeed within the "best traditions of American jurisprudence." That he freed the British-born Ms. Woodward after she had served less than one year in jail, however, when Massachusetts sentencing guidelines call for a prison term ranging from three years to five years, is more problematic.

Matthew Eappen may have been only eight months old, but he was a unique human being, as are all human beings, and thus precious and important. It may well be, as the judge ruled, that his death was the result of Ms. Woodward's "frustration" and "immaturity," rather than malicious intent, but his ruling still leaves her criminally culpable and her punishment relatively light.

For now, she must remain in Massachusetts as both her attorneys and the prosecution appeal the judge's ruling. The drama may not be at an end. But our feeling is that the judge erred too far in the direction of leniency. One needn't view Ms. Woodward as some sort of monster to believe she nonetheless should be held personally accountable for her actions. The judge, it's worth repeating, didn't quarrel with the jury's basic finding that she caused little Matthew's death.

One final note: The trial is being used as an advertisement for
* more government regulations of private child care arrangements and more government-operated day care. But government isn't the answer.

In fact, immigration laws, as a column in the Wall Street Journal noted this week, make it difficult for foreign workers who are
* interested in performing child care to come to this country or remain here. The exception is the au pair program, in which teens are allowed to come to the United States and perform baby-sitting in return for room and board. This guarantees that the inexperienced
* and immature will play a disproportionate role in child care.

* Extensive regulation of informal neighborhood child care providers tends to drive them underground, making the rules not only pointless but counterproductive. And would government-operated day-care programs be better than government-operated schools?

The Eappens will wonder until the end of their lives whether they could have, or should have, made other arrangements for the care of their children. But their loss hardly demonstrates the need for

* government-regulated or operated child-care programs.

I0607 * End of document.

LIFE LESSONS COME FROM BABY-SITTING

DOCUMENT 75 OF 118

SBEE9731700114

SCENE

LIFE LESSONS COME FROM BABY-SITTING

Anita Creamer

677 Words

4105 Characters

* 11/12/97

The Sacramento Bee

METRO FINAL

G1

(Copyright 1997)

Surely, back in the early 1970s, there must have been young girls somewhere who were motivated enough to mow lawns as a way to make a little money.

Good for them.

After all, yard work brought you the big bucks. In those years, suburban teen-age baby sitters made only about 50 cents an hour.

Deep in the heart of those rebellious years, many of us somehow failed to rebel against the prevailing gender divisions of teen work. Maybe it was because yard work involved the kind of sweaty physical labor that our parents considered more suitable for boys. Or maybe it was because baby-sitting involved the adjunct activities of watching TV and raiding strangers' refrigerators.

Whatever the reason, a lot of us girls made our spare funds by taking care of other people's kids.

In our small suburban worlds, most folks assumed girls were somehow naturally suited for minding children.

So baby-sitting was our job of choice -- not only until we turned 16 and could apply for part-time waitress jobs, but also afterward, as a way of eking out a little extra support in college.

The summer I was 16, I took care of two small children, a 3-year-old boy and his 8-month-old sister, from 6 a.m. till noon five days a week while their mom, a teacher, studied toward her master's degree.

The summer I was 19, I lived with a family and tended their two daughters, ages 3 and 5, in exchange for room and board.

These were all sweet children, and I remember them with great fondness. But even the sweetest of little boys has his tantrums; even the dearest of little girls has her cranky days, her stubborn streaks, her bad moods.

Intensive baby-sitting can convince young people like nothing else

of how challenging and important the task of raising children really is -- and how deep adults' commitment should be to nurturing and shaping the young lives they bring into the world.

As a result, it can also convince you to use birth control as if your life depended on it.

In Boston on Monday, Louise Woodward -- the 19-year-old au pair convicted in the death of 8-month-old Matthew Eappen -- was freed after the judge reduced her conviction to involuntary manslaughter and sentenced her to time served. She'd spent about nine months in jail, most of it awaiting trial.

In a better world, a baby's life would be worth more than that.

In this world, we free a 19-year-old convicted killer who has a charming little English accent and a case shown on Court TV, and we call for 14-year-old suspects from the inner city to be tried as adults, sentenced as adults, even executed as adults.

And we feel quite justified in holding the baby's parents responsible for his death.

No doubt they'd do it differently, if they had to do it over. No doubt they'd screen the sitter more carefully, pay more money for better care, insist the au pair be older and more experienced.

* Even then, child-care providers and sitters don't come with guarantees.

All too often, day care is the woman down the street with three kids of her own and the need for a little extra money. The sitter is the teenage cousin or sibling.

Minding the kids is too often an informal patchwork affair yielding precious little income, and it always has been.

I was 12 when I started baby-sitting for the neighbor children -- way too young and immature for the responsibility, but at least my parents were right next door if there were any problems.

Really, it was such a naive era.

Imagine leaving small children with a 12-year-old at night. Back then, though, a lot of people did.

Even so, no one ever told me not to get rough with babies, not to shake them or "pop" them on the bed, in Woodward's term.

And no one had to.

ANITA CREAMER's column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday in Scene. Write her at P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento 95852, or call (916) 321-1136.

I0607 * End of document.

MSPCC to launch child-care training

DOCUMENT 79 OF 118

BOGL9731600278

METRO/REGION

* MSPCC to launch child-care training.

Jordana Hart, Globe Staff

467 Words

3249 Characters

* 11/12/97

The Boston Globe

City Edition

A20

(Copyright 1997)

In the aftermath of the Louise Woodward trial and amid the ongoing debate about who should care for the children of working parents, the state's largest child-abuse prevention agency is launching what is believed to be the state's first hands-on training program open to anyone who looks after other people's youngsters.

For a fee, nannies, au pairs, day-care providers, and baby sitters from around the state can sign up for a five-day course on child development, nurturing small children, and managing difficult child behavior, offered by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

The organization also intends to offer support groups to caregivers who feel isolated in their jobs. The MSPCC already offers

* support groups and child-care training to new parents.

Four agencies that represent more than 300 au pairs and nannies in the Boston area say they will consider sending their caregivers to the course as soon as it becomes available, according to MSPCC officials, who declined to identify the four agencies.

"Matthew Eappen's death raises issues for all of us who care about children," said MSPCC executive director Joyce Strom. "Most social change for kids has come as a result of a child dying, and this {training} is basically in response to the incredible public attention to the death of an infant."

Eventually, as the program expands, MSPCC hopes to advertise the program in newspapers and other places where parents place ads

* seeking child-care help.

Strom said the new program will be an extension of her agency's parent-education program called Goodstart. She noted that especially for the hundreds of nannies and baby sitters who are not affiliated with agencies, there is a dearth of training opportunities.

Nanny and au pair agencies provide their own training. The United

States Information Agency, which regulates the au pair program, requires at least 24 hours of child-development instruction, including four hours devoted to infants. The au pair also gets eight hours of child-safety instruction, including four hours devoted to infant safety.

Nanny agency directors yesterday were loathe to enthusiastically support the MSPCC effort, saying their nannies are already highly trained and experienced. They said some of their nannies are attending a one-year nanny-certification program at Middlesex Community College that started in September.

"I don't know if it would be the kind of conceptual thing my nannies would relate to," said Marsha Epstein, who owns the American Nanny Company in Newton. "My nannies come pretty well trained and educated, so the course might be quite basic to them."

Parents looking to hire a nanny, or who have recently hired one, said they would be impressed to see the MSPCC course included in a candidate's resume. But they indicated the course would not sway their gut reaction to an applicant one way or the other.

children abuse education

I0607 * End of document.

The universal struggle for quality child care

DOCUMENT 82 OF 118

BOGL9731600255

OP-ED

* The universal struggle for quality child care

Derrick Z. Jackson, Globe Staff

901 Words

5535 Characters

* 11/12/97

The Boston Globe

City Edition

A23

(Copyright 1997)

The Louise Woodward trial provoked considerable pomposity from the people who should display it the least: parents. In these last nine months after baby Matthew Eappen died in Woodward's care, many of them carried on in the Globe as if they had total control over their children's lives.

"I cannot imagine, meeting for the first time -- at Logan Airport -- the person who is going to be taking care of my child," said one parent. "I can't imagine what people are thinking when they hire someone to take care of their children, whose primary interest is not child care but the night life and club scene in downtown Boston."

"We are not interested in Sam being part of a crowd," said another parent. "Babies don't need to be with other kids at this age. We want the focus to be on him only."

"A person who can have kids hanging all over her and love it. That's the person I want," said another. The Eappens, she said, "went the cheap route with the au pair."

This suburban self-absorption -- a loss of grip promoted by the media since we heard only from suburban, relatively well-off parents for most of the trial -- muffled out discussion of the universal struggle by all Americans for child care. While the world debates Woodward's ascent from 20 years in prison to freedom, the jail that imprisons most American parents remains locked, with no key in sight.

* Last month, the White House held a daylong conference on child care in Washington. Hillary Rodham Clinton called the lack of affordable, quality day care a "silent crisis." President Clinton called the crisis "the single, most important question about social policy today."

But neither the White House nor Congress acts as if it is a crisis. In 1970, at the end of the stay-at-home-mom era, 30 percent of children under the age of 6 were in some form of child care.

Today that percentage is 70 percent.

The percentage is so great it knows neither class nor race. The stress hits two-career families where parents are trying to succeed in work cultures that are still defined by male workaholism and involve no interference from children. It is slamming families where both parents must work because real wages in many jobs have dropped. It is swamping women who are being forced off welfare into the work force.

Lost in the argument over au pairs is that even when better-off
* parents pay the equivalent of private-school tuition for child care (au pairs, by the way, cost over \$10,000 a year, which makes it a cheap shot to call the Eappens cheap), there is no guarantee of getting what they pay for.

While parents dream of caregivers who love kids hanging all over
* them, the reality is that the average national salary for child-care workers is \$6.89 an hour, guaranteeing annual turnover rates in most states of between 30 and 50 percent. Several studies in the past
* three years have denigrated the quality of all child care in the United States, including one from Yale that found no state as practicing "high quality" standards and only 17 that were "minimally acceptable."

And that is if you have money. While parents who earn over
* \$54,000 spend 6 percent of their income on child care, households that earn under \$14,400 spend 25 percent of income on such care. The
* waiting lists for subsidized child care, lists which promise to become a deluge if states really go through with their promises to get 4 million women off welfare in the next few years, are
* staggering. Only 4 percent of eligible families get subsidized child
* care in Texas. That state has 40,000 children on its waiting list.

In California there are 250,000 in subsidized day care, 500,000 on waiting lists, and at least a million more who will become eligible as welfare ends for them. Of the 10 most populous states, only two
* -- New York and North Carolina -- are in the top 10 of child-care spending. While a handful of states, like Illinois and Connecticut,
* have added significant funds to child care, other states have merely taken subsidies from the working poor to give to welfare recipients
* or cheapened child-care quality even further by allowing different levels of regulation. Washington, D.C., is in such disarray that over half of its day-care centers are operating on expired licenses.

* The Congressional Budget Office has said federal funding for child
* care for working parents is \$1.4 billion short of what is needed over six years. That is not much, considering that Congress has added \$35 billion to the budget over the last five years for military projects that were not requested by the Pentagon. But the lack of political interest in the topic is such that Clinton has made no bold new proposals.

He has offered only the useless rhetoric of private-public partnerships. Businesses currently only contribute 1 percent of
* child-care costs and are in no rush to come to the rescue of parents.
* The Clintons call child care a silent crisis. But without action, society, given as we are to crabs in the barrel thinking, will scream only with a displaced anger. It will point a finger at families like the Eappens while our politics abuse our children and leave us in far less control of our options than any wealthy nation should ever allow.

I0607 * End of document.

Commentary PERSPECTIVE ON CHILD CARE Parenthood ...

DOCUMENT 87 OF 118

LATM9731600433

Metro; Op Ed Desk

Commentary

* PERSPECTIVE ON CHILD CARE

Parenthood Is Common Sense, Not Quantum Physics

Children need love and attention, whether from working or at-home parents, not complex mental stimulation.

CARYL RIVERS

Caryl Rivers is a professor of journalism at Boston University and the co-author, with Rosalind Barnett, of "She Works, He Works: How Two Income Families Are Happier, Healthier and Better Off" (Harper San Francisco)

814 Words

5627 Characters

* 11/12/97

Los Angeles Times

Home Edition

B-7

Opinion

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The nationwide attention to the "nanny trial" in Cambridge, Mass., in which a young au pair was found guilty of shaking to death an infant in her care, struck deep chords in the American psyche.

The media feeding frenzy may have been the result of two threads running through our culture: the "expertizing" of parenthood and its corollary, the idea that parents have complete control over how their children turn out.

Renowned baby doctor Benjamin Spock once said that parents ought to trust their own common sense to do the right thing. We no longer believe that. Parenting today seems more complex than quantum physics and much more anxiety-producing.

Callers on talk shows repeatedly asked if it wasn't very irresponsible * of the mother in this case to let a 19-year-old "child" care for an infant. Few noted that throughout history, most 19-year-olds were mothers several times over. This working mother, who made what seemed like * reasonable provisions for child care, has been attacked as if she were some kind of monster. She cut back her work schedule to three days, came home often to breast feed and worked only five minutes from home. It seems logical to assume that a young au pair would be perfectly capable

of caring for an infant.

Yet this local tragedy became a national story in which all working mothers were attacked as neglectful. Parental anxiety ran rampant: Several women were quoted on television saying that they felt they could never leave their babies again. Even New York Times pundit William Safire weighed in, saying the case showed that children were better off with even "strange" relatives than with relative strangers.

The fact is that parents probably have to worry more about being struck by lightning than by a sitter killing their child. Statistics show that a family member is more likely to harm a child. Worry about Uncle Fred or Cousin Flo's boyfriend, not the nanny. The idea that a relative with a few quirks is better for a child than a kind and caring sitter is bizarre.

Too often, we see parenthood as complex and fraught with danger. It isn't. We now know that a child's brain develops more in the first three years than we had suspected, but this knowledge should not panic us as it has. Normal, nondysfunctional parents who interact with their children always have provided plenty of stimulation for infants. You do not have to put Beethoven on his crib's musical mobile or worry that if you don't shove exactly the right size block at her at precisely the right moment, she'll never get into college. A less-than-brilliant babysitter will not harm a child's development if the parents give the child stimulation. Nor will being in day care harm the mother-child bond. British psychologist Penelope Leach made many parents anxious when she said that mother's working harms the child's attachment to her so women shouldn't go to work until their children were at least 8.

The data contradict this. Last year, a major federal study of infant day care (10 sites and 1,200 children) reported that day care did not harm the mother-child bond; the babies were securely attached to their mothers. When psychologist Lois Hoffman examined 50 years of studies, she found no significant differences on any measure of child development between the children of working mothers and at-home mothers.

Once upon a time, we expected mothers to love, bathe and feed their children. Then along came Sigmund Freud and suddenly, mothers were totally responsible for the psychological health of their children--forever. But many other social forces impinge on the development of human beings.

Family historian Stephanie Coontz keeps the report of one study tacked to her wall to remind her that we can't always predict what complex forces will affect children. In that study, researchers tracked subjects from infancy to adulthood, predicting which ones were likely to be successful. They were wrong in two-thirds of the cases. They consistently overestimated both the damage of early family stress and the positive effects of having a smooth, nonchallenging childhood and adolescence. "They had failed to anticipate that depth, complexity, problem-solving abilities and maturity might derive from painful experiences rather than

easy successes," Coontz notes. In fact, the boys and girls who were the cheerful, good-looking, popular kids in high school, the ones whom all the other kids envied and most parents wanted their kids to be like, often were those who didn't grow psychologically in later life.

New data about how children grow and thrive can help parents if we keep in mind that superhuman efforts are not necessary for happy children and that working parents can be good parents. We can't create a risk-free life; sometimes decisions we thought were good ones turn out the wrong way. Accidents happen, fate intervenes. But good parents will, most often, do the right thing.

I0607 * End of document.

Profile: In Depth; aftermath of au pair trial ...

DOCUMENT 89 OF 118

NTLN9731700005

Profile: In Depth; aftermath of au pair trial focuses attention on

* child care standards

649 Words

4199 Characters

* 11/12/97

NBC Nightly News

NBC News

Burrelle's Information Services

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TOM BROKAW, anchor:

NBC News IN DEPTH tonight: in the aftermath of the nanny trial the

* whole question of child care in this country is getting urgent
examination. Many working parents are asking if their children are
* getting adequate or even safe child care. Many working parents are
* asking if their children are getting adequate or even safe child
* care. Who's looking after your child? The answers may startle
* you. In some places, child care workers only need three hours of
training while others require 24 hours, and 18 states don't require
any training at all. Some now are saying there needs to be higher
standards. We get our IN DEPTH report tonight from NBC's Claire
Shipman.

CLAIRE SHIPMAN reporting:

Home from the hospital with a newborn girl, a joyful moment for
Mark and Candida Wolf, but one also fraught with anxiety. Both have
careers, and they agonize about who will care for their baby.

Ms. CANDIDA WOLF: I think that the first struggle is always
realizing that you're going to leave this child in three months, and
you have to find something that you're comfortable with.

SHIPMAN: The Wolfs didn't want a stranger watching Veronica, and
they got lucky, a second cousin from Austria is helping out, but they
already worry about who will come next.

Ms. WOLF: Yeah, you sort of panic even now. We say a year's
going to go very rapidly. We'll probably take a look again at day
care.

SHIPMAN: It's a choice that millions face; 65 percent of all
mothers have jobs, and almost half of all children under age one are
* in child care regularly, and for many, peace of mind has been
shattered by the nanny trial and hidden camera exposes like these
here, a nanny with a small baby, leaving parents wondering about the
competence of the people caring for their children. And it is

quality, not availability, that experts say presents the greatest
* child care challenge. There are no national standards now, and
* though most states do license child care facilities like this one,
the regulations usually cover size and cleanliness, not staff
training or quality of care.

* In California today, child care workers and experts from across
the country convened to talk about setting guidelines.

* BARBARA WILLER (Child Care Expert): We can do it by creating a
national system or by federal government providing incentive. So
the issue is making sure that every child has access to good care
that helps them grow and learn.

SHIPMAN: Still, experts say setting national standards would be
difficult, highly subjective, and politically controversial. With
few places to turn many families hire nanny screeners like Gail
* Lyons. She says the key to finding good child care is asking the
right questions.

Ms. GAIL LYONS: You want to ask about their childhood. You want
to ask about what their most--best thing that happened to them as a
child. You want to know their background. Are their far--are
their mom and dad still married? Are they divorced? How did they
handle those things? What's their...(unintelligible)...emotional
stability? Were they spanked as children?

SHIPMAN: Above all, Lyons tells new parents like the Wolfs: Trust
your instincts about the person who will be caring for your child.
Claire Shipman, NBC News, the White House.

BROKAW: A footnote--one other way to to make sure that your child
* is in good hands is to check to see if your child care center has
been accredited by something called the National Association for the
Education of Young Children, the leading organization that reviews
* the quality of child care providers in this country.

When we come back, the great carry-on debate, how much is too much
luggage when you take off.

And later, our series, ACT OF FAITH. Is it a miracle or just a
matter of the power of wishful thinking?

Program Time: 6:30-7:00 PM

Nielson Rating 13097620

Reference: 971112

I0607 * End of document.

Au Pair Case? Just a Local Event

DOCUMENT 91 OF 118

NDAY9731600121

VIEWPOINTS

Au Pair Case? Just a Local Event

By Caryl Rivers. Caryl Rivers teaches journalism at Boston University and is the co-author of "She Works, He Works: How Two Income Families Are Happier, Healthier and Better Off."

874 Words

5625 Characters

* 11/12/97

Newsday

NASSAU AND SUFFOLK

A47

(Copyright Newsday Inc., 1997)

THE NANNY TRIAL has already become a Grimm's Fairy Tale - except this time it's aimed at parents, not children.

Most fairy tales are homey fables with instructive scary stories tucked inside. Grandma is really a wolf, beautiful stepmothers turn into witches with poisoned apples and trolls live under perfectly benign bridges.

The message many people are taking from the trial of a young English au pair changed with killing the baby she cared for is that danger lurks everywhere. Even a charming British nanny spells danger. "Mary Poppins Kills Your Baby" isn't in anybody's Little Golden Books collection.

Several mothers interviewed on television have said that they felt they could never leave their babies again. Others surely are looking at their au pairs with new eyes, seeing, maybe, Charles Manson? New York Times pundit William Safire weighed in with the opinion that it's better to leave your kids with "strange" relatives than with relative strangers.

Perhaps one reason so many people wanted to see Louise Woodward declared innocent is that we don't want to believe menace could come in so proper a package. If, indeed, we could believe that there was a prior injury, and the parents had just been derelict in spotting it, we could breathe easier. Because, in our heart of hearts, we know we wouldn't make that mistake.

I remember when my kids were very young. Each time I read of some tragedy that befell a child, I'd eagerly scan the story for traces of a parental misstep. Aha! They let him play near a pond. They didn't make sure the screens were tight. They waited too long to take his temperature.

So thinking a particular set of parents were at fault in the au pair case is reassuring. But if the guilty party was a young woman like Louise Woodward - the person all us middle-class parents would hire in a minute - then we're all vulnerable.

The vulnerability we all feel in a time when so many of society's roles are changing so fast is what made this case so gripping. But what will be the legacy of the au pair trial? Will it really lead to

- * a national discussion of the sparse resources we allocate to child
- * care or will the only effect be another layer of anxiety laid on working parents' heads because this fairy tale exaggerates the lurking dangers? Lightning exists, but we do not say that we will not let our kids play outside. Having your au pair kill your child is a very rare event, comparable to a lightning strike.

I've employed a lot of babysitters, but the various injuries my kids suffered were all on my watch. The fly ball hitting the head, the sliced foot on the beach, the fall off the bike, the tons of stitches - who was in charge? Not the sitters. Me.

And Safire to the contrary, strange relatives are to be avoided. Because of the au pair trial, we are supposed to entrust our kids to nutty Aunt Matilda or weird Grandpa Fred rather than some warm, loving caretaker who just doesn't happen to be a blood relative? This is craziness.

So we need to put this Nanny Tale into perspective. This will be hard to do, because no doubt the various TV movie versions are already being cast, book advances paid and ideological knives sharpened. It's going to be a media circus. The Long Island Lolita revisited, this time with "Family Values" politics.

But we should restore common sense to this discussion. The fact is that, by huge margins, children suffer more abuse at the hands of parents and relatives than from sitters. Research shows that most working parents are happy and healthy, even though they face a lot of stress, and that their relations with their children are good.

Studies show that good parents can compensate for the effects of

- * child care that is only average. (Very inadequate care is another story.)

Part of the reason we feel vulnerable is that we have few good

- * choices on child care. With men's wages stagnant, health-care costs escalating, as we hear that if our kids don't get good educations they will not make it in the global economy, most women have to work. This being so, it's absurd that we haven't come up with strategies to
- * make child care affordable and available.

In the meantime, though, let's return to our senses. Working parents are wrestling with enough issues without having to wrestle with useless guilt. Throughout history, few infants have been cared for solely by their parents. Kinfolk, neighbors, hired hands, live-in help and slaves all cared for children and, often, the

children flourished. Millions of nannies and au pairs and day-care workers have given loyal, loving care to children. One reason the au pair trial drew so much attention was because it was so rare.

So let's not let Nanny Murder join Grimm's pantheon, along with Snow White and Hansel and Gretel. Let's see it as what it was - a local tragedy in which a young woman's moment of anger apparently turned into an event that will sear all the people involved forever. Fortunately, it has no great meaning for most of our lives.

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... WARNING SIGNS

DOCUMENT 93 OF 118

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EDITORIAL

LETTERS FROM READERS

... WARNING SIGNS

141 Words

1023 Characters

* 11/12/97

Orlando Sentinel

METRO

A16

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Copyright 1997)

THE VERDICT against Louise Woodward should cause all working
* parents to re-evaluate their child-care situations.

I own a domestic-services agency. From what I have read and heard, there were some clear signs of trouble to come. If a family has to put its nanny on a curfew, that is a clear sign of lack of maturity to one's duties. They should have sent her home. Too many families do not go by the signs; they wait until something happens or put up video cameras, which only catch abuse after the fact.

Families need to make some real evaluations. To get
* high-quality, professional child care, you need to hire a professional nanny, not an inexperienced, young girl from another country. Yes, you will spend more each week, but what is the safety of a child worth?

Flo K. Dunbar

ORLANDO

SEQN: 73150634

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Child-care choices haunt working mothers

DOCUMENT 111 OF 118

STJR9731600627

EDITORIAL

* Child-care choices haunt working mothers

Glenda Winders is a columnist with Copley News Service.

696 Words

4065 Characters

* 11/12/97

The State Journal-Register Springfield, IL

M1,M2

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OP ED COLUMN

(Copyright 1997)

The case of nanny Louise Woodward has once again brought to mind that thorny question of what a woman who works outside of the home is supposed to do with her children.

It was the nanny, of course, who went to trial, but some who telephoned a radio call-in show opined that the whole thing never would have happened if Deborah Eappen had been at home taking care of her children -- where she belonged.

That accusation caught my attention because it is one that haunts every working mother. If you don't get a job, you're not contributing to the well-being of your little ones. If you do, you're a harpy who is neglecting her children. There's no way to win.

During the years I was growing up, my mother worked as a bookkeeper at a bank, and I have to admit I envied my friends whose mothers stayed at home. If those kids got sick at school, their moms came and picked them up. If I got sick, the nurse tucked me into her cot, and that's where I stayed until the bus arrived at the end of the day. After school I was looked after first by my grandmother and later some neighbors.

I loved Wednesdays, when the bank closed at noon and my mother got home hours before I did. On those days I opened the door to the smells of brownies in the oven and spaghetti sauce bubbling on the stove. Even now, when she cooks one of my favorite meals, the aroma transports me back to childhood, and I tease her by saying, "It smells like Wednesday."

Eventually I came to realize that her job gave her more than an income, even when she wished aloud that she didn't have to go. It

nourished her intellect while it gave her the satisfaction of helping to earn the money that made our modest but comfortable lifestyle possible. An unexpected benefit is that today, in her widowhood and retirement, her house is paid for and she has the support of friends she met years ago at the bank when they were her colleagues.

By the time my children came along, I understood the stimulation her job had provided. Like my mother, I needed the money, and I was lucky enough to have a career that I loved.

From the time my kids were very young, they were looked after by baby-sitters and day-care centers, and for the most part the experiences were good. I made sure they were in situations where they could learn while they played and that they were supervised by capable, caring adults while I was away.

Both of them seemed to benefit. They were outgoing, resourceful and adaptable early on, and these qualities have served them well all the way into adulthood. That's not to say it wasn't hard to leave them, but I believe I was -- and am -- a better mother for exploring my own potential while I helped to support them instead of opting for the frustration of wondering what I might have been able to accomplish.

When I hear about a sad case such as that of the Eappens, I whisper to myself, "There but for the grace of God go I." I don't take for granted that my children survived childhood, but neither would I change the way I raised them.

Nor do I think the path I chose is for everyone. You can make a success of parenting -- or blow it -- either way. Both dual-career couples and stay-at-home parents have the option of making it work or dropping the ball.

Eappen and her husband are apparently thoughtful parents. They did what they thought was right in hiring a person they believed was capable of caring for their most precious possessions. How could they have guessed that ultimately she would be responsible for the child's death?

But now, on top of the grief, they must also deal with public criticism that they were irresponsible. And so their nightmare compounds the worries that plague every intelligent, caring mother who chooses to -- or must -- leave her children and go to work.

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Importance of child care // Au pair's trial ...

DOCUMENT 112 OF 118

AAS9731700019

- * Importance of child care // Au pair's trial exposes nation's conflict in finding acceptable, affordable day care

434 Words

2917 Characters

- * 11/12/97

Austin American-Statesman

A16

(Copyright 1997)

Behind the fascinating public trial and sentencing of au pair Louise Woodward in Boston, another issue was on trial.

Woodward's trial and the public reaction to it also exposed this

- * nation's tortured conflict over child care. If the nation and its leaders value children as much as they profess, why must every family scramble, often desperately, to find acceptable, affordable care for those children?

- * Families across the financial spectrum struggle with child care. Only the fortunate few have the financial or family resources to provide the loving care so important to infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

Some families choose a lower standard of living so one family member can stay home with the children. But many others must risk the marketplace that varies from wonderful to deplorable because staying home is not a choice.

Either the parent is single or both mother and father must work to pay the bills. Those families must rely on a hodgepodge of

- * child-care options, many of them risky and some of them dangerous.

The parents of the baby who died in Woodward's care were both doctors, though the mother worked part time, and had the money to hire a full-time au pair. Yet the mother was vilified by many for not staying home with her children, as if hiring an au pair were not showing enough care.

Most mothers in modern America can only dream of having that kind of care for their children. That is top- notch care compared to an overcrowded day-care center staffed by low-wage workers or the unregistered, illegal in-home care that thrives in low-income areas.

Those children are at far more risk than the Eappen children cared for by Woodward. But there are few good alternatives for most parents. An article in this week's Austin American- Statesman highlighted the 100 spaces available at the Bernice Foster Child Development Center. But to be eligible, a single parent of two

children could earn no more than \$13,330 a year, just above minimum wage.

So the families earning more than that, which is the vast majority of families, must search for a space in a private or church facility or find someone who will watch their children at a discount. When * the parents finally find child care, they can be so relieved they don't investigate, they accept the shortcomings.

Congress is using the Woodward case to demonstrate the need for * safe, affordable child care. Congressional leaders are considering tax incentives for employers, tax credits for families and block grants.

It would be difficult to point to a more important issue than safe, affordable care for America's children.

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Trial raises questions about ability of au pairs ...

DOCUMENT 115 OF 118

HOU9731602029

HOUSTON

Trial raises questions about ability of au pairs to care for children

LINI S. KADABA

Knight-Ridder Tribune News

1199 Words

7473 Characters

* 11/12/97

Houston Chronicle

2 STAR

3

(Copyright 1997)

The concept is obvious, right? An au pair is a young woman who comes to this country to work as a caretaker of babies and young children, right?

Think again.

While the celebrated trial of au pair Louise Woodward, who was convicted in Massachusetts of killing the 8-month-old baby under her care, may have left many with that impression, such is not supposed to be the case - at all.

Officially, an au pair comes to this country to travel and study. She comes to live with an American family. She comes to experience "a chance of a lifetime," as one agency that oversees au pair placement puts it.

Oh, yes, and she comes to "help out" with the children of her host family - an almost incidental aspect of what's described as a cultural exchange program by the federal agency that administers and regulates placement of au pairs in the United States.

That is, she is not a nanny, someone employed as a professional,
* in-home child-care provider, according to nanny placement agencies.

"This has always been a mother's helper program. This is not a professional nanny program. This is a cultural exchange program," said Cheryl Irwin, the harried spokeswoman for the United States Information Agency (USIA), which administers this country's Au Pair Program.

Woodward, 19, was recruited from England by EF Au Pair, based in Cambridge, Mass., one of eight organizations sanctioned by the USIA to screen and place au pairs with host families. Woodward was charged with so roughly handling Matthew Eappen that he suffered fatal brain damage, dying in his father's arms.

Even though most au pairs manage to care for their charges without any significant problems, the Woodward case has raised the question: Are au pairs too inexperienced to care for young children?

- * "We really did a lot of research, because quality child care was our No. 1 concern," said Nancy Rubner-Frandsen of Strafford, Pa., a lawyer and mother of three.

Even though the Frandsens had had a great experience with a nanny, they decided to try an au pair soon after the birth of their third child. The deciding factor was the chance to expose their young children to another culture.

They have no regrets, Rubner-Frandsen said.

"It just widens the scope of our children's knowledge," she said.

"You just can't get that with a nanny from America."

- * While au pairs receive some formal training in child care when they arrive in the United States, professional nannies usually boast degrees or extensive job experience.

"I was looking for someone trained to take care of children," said Nancy Durst Clementi of Villanova, Pa. She said she considered an au pair, but ruled that out because "I wasn't looking for a baby-sitter."

Her 3-year-old son, Dante, has had three nannies - two great ones obtained through the Philadelphia Nanny Network, she said, and one less than satisfactory from another agency.

Still, Clementi, a medical doctor and vice president of new product marketing for Wyeth-Ayerst, said she would never change her mind about the advantages of nannies over au pairs.

Stefanie Mann, who cares for Dante and has a degree in early childhood education from West Chester University, provides the boy with opportunities akin to those offered by preschool, said the mother.

The nanny, 24, takes the boy on nature walks and then the two make collages from items gathered along the way. They go to the library, checking out books that fit the child's interests at the moment. (He's into dinosaurs these days.) "She's specifically trained to recognize what a child needs at different stages," Clementi said.

Said Mann: "I consider it a profession, and it was a career choice I made. Obviously, to be a nanny, you have to love children. But more than a loving heart, you need to have some knowledge. I consider myself a teacher."

An au pair cannot necessarily make that claim.

- * "This is never a primary child-care giver," said Pamela McCloud, director of Au Pair Homestay USA in Washington, one of the designated programs. Au pairs, she said, would never claim to have the amount of training that would "bring them to the level of professional child-care giver."

The federally administered Au Pair Program, which began in 1986 as

a pilot program, was mandated by Congress in 1988 under the Fulbright-Hays Act, said Irwin. It allows young people, ages 18 to 26, to enter the United States on a J-1 visa for cultural and educational exchange for a maximum of one year. Participants are screened by the USIA-designated organizations, which perform language tests, criminal checks and psychological screenings, according to Irwin.

Since the Au Pair Program's inception, it has provided a taste of America to more than 50,000 au pairs, mostly women from Europe, Irwin said.

In exchange for this opportunity, the au pair, a French term that means "on par," agrees to care for the host family's children.

- * The family must limit the au pair's child-care duties to 45 hours a week and pay a stipend, recently raised to \$139.05 per week, an amount based on minimum wage rates. The cost of an au pair to the average host family is about \$12,000 a year, which includes an educational allowance and other fees.

But the au pair is not an employee, Irwin insisted. Rather, she is a member of the family, akin to an older sister.

That's the concept, anyway.

Some critics, however, say the au pairs work so much they get little time to experience the culture - or at least any culture

- * beyond child care in America.

"They're working 45 hours. That's full time," said Wendy Sachs, president of the Philadelphia Nanny Network, a placement agency. "It's not a cultural exchange program. She doesn't have time to take a class."

- * Au pair Julia Diete-Wendl, however, said she has managed easily to fulfill her child-care duties and experience American life since joining the Frandsens this summer.

"It's such a great experience," she said. "I love my (host) family." Diete-Wendl, 19, who hails from outside Munich, Germany, works about 45 hours a week, mostly caring for and playing with Kelsey, 4, and shuttling Dane, 9, and Tyler, 7, to and from school.

She said she takes two classes, Spanish and bartending, and spends her weekends with au pair friends and a boyfriend. She has traveled to New York City and has plans for a trip to Niagara Falls. When she returns to Germany after her year's stay, she said she plans to study, most likely languages, at the university.

Diete-Wendl, placed by Au Pair Homestay, is the fifth au pair for the Frandsens. Other than one who didn't match the family well enough, "I have not had a single worry," Rubner-Frandsen said. All the hoopla over au pairs and their lack of training following the Woodward conviction "irritates" her, she said. "I do not agree with that at all."

- * All of her au pairs, she said, have had lots of child-care experience, such as caring for younger siblings. As each of the au pairs has returned home, she has kept in touch with the children by letters and even visits, Rubner-Frandsen said. "They are like big sisters."

VIEWPOINT

ROSEMARY JORDANO and MARIE OATES

Putting the Children First

AN infant is dead. A 19-year-old au pair is sentenced to life in prison.

Two families grieve. But the tragedy lies not in this one sensationalized murder case, but instead in the silent crisis that afflicts parents daily as they struggle to balance the well-being of their children and the rest of life's issues.

Once the tabloid spotlight fades from this case, will parents and the child care industry learn any lessons from the heartbreak of these two families?

An estimated 60 percent of American children under age 6 are in some form of child care. But who takes care of them and how?

Even the White House recognizes that there is a silent crisis in child care. At a recent White House conference, much attention was focused on a Yale University study that reported that 86 percent of the reviewed child care centers offered poor to mediocre care.

The need for reliable, quality child care stretches across constituencies. All kinds of children are suffering from poor care, and all kinds of parents are worried. The numbers involved, in dollars and lives, are huge.

Tens of millions of workers and children depend on such services. And the demand grows by the day. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than 41 million women of child-bearing age work outside the home and that the number will reach 44 million by 2000. Moreover, 60 percent of mothers with children under age 6 are in the work force. The number of single-parent and dual-income families keeps climbing.

Though still largely fragmented, the business of child care — an estimated \$30 billion a year — is shaping into a competitive industry. Pushing all the numbers aside, at the center of the silent crisis is an outcry for quality care and respect for those who care for the children.

Children should be safe, nurtured, respected and educated. Yet parents often don't know what to expect in terms of quality. Few formal quality assurance programs are in place around the country. Licensing and accreditation policies can vary tremendously from state to state, as can the re-

quired ratios of the number of children to each child care worker.

One state may mandate that for every three infants, there must be one worker, while another state may allow eight infants for each worker. And beyond child care centers, the nanny industry is barely regulated. The silent crisis has as much to do with ignorance and expectations as it does with a lack of consistent standards.

No less a problem is the lack of professionalism and proper training among a number of child care workers. In most states, it is easier to become a child care worker than to obtain a driver's license. Often, no test is required. What effect are such workers having on the children in their care? With as many as 71 percent of all children in child care entrusted to nonrelatives, how can we guarantee that workers are reliable, nurturing and inspiring with children?

One guarantee might be simply that parents know what to expect and demand from child care. The White House conference was a step in the right direction. Americans need to learn what quality care looks like.

Solving the silent crisis, however, involves much more. Child care workers assume a tremendous responsibility but receive little respect or monetary reward. The work is among the lowest-paying in the country, often providing only part-time hours and no benefits.

A result of the low pay, of course, is high turnover, which in itself has a negative impact on proper child development and plays a hand in unreliable care.

EMPLOYERS are big losers in this, too, because they foot the bill for the days when parents call in sick or otherwise miss work because of breakdowns in care. A study by the Merrill-Palmer Institute found that such absenteeism cost the various companies in the survey \$66,000 to \$3 million a year. And the Child Care Action Campaign has estimated that such absences result in \$3 billion in lost productivity for businesses.

Businesses need to find ways to help provide their employees with quality child care services. Nothing less than optimal corporate performance and a thriving marketplace is at stake. Much more important, though, is the children's care itself. Every second of every day is a defining moment in the life of a young child. As one of the most developed countries in the world, the United States can solve this silent crisis. But to do so, we need to put our children first. □

Rosemary Jordano is the president of Children First Inc., which develops and operates corporate backup child care centers nationwide; Marie Oates is director of Bayridge, a Boston center for university and professional women.

FROM THE DESK OF

JUDITH S. LEDERMAN

Spoonfuls of Sugar, But Barrels of Salt

DO you believe in Mary Poppins? As a career woman with three wonderful children, I can attest to such faith — much as a small child is devoted to the Tooth Fairy.

And after hiring more than 25 child care workers in the last 11 years, I still want to believe that there is a nanny somewhere who can give my children the attention they need, nourish their minds and bodies, help organize their clothes, get them ready for school and return them bathed and peaceful when I come in from work each night.

For 11 years, I enthusiastically entered each new relationship — live-in, live-out, day care or other — convinced that this time it had to work, only to have my hopes dashed as I watched my children become despondent, mistrustful and angry.

Enticed by nanny agency rhetoric and colorful au pair brochures depicting fresh-faced college-aged girls gleefully pushing toddlers on a swing set, I thought that something had to be wrong with me and my family. I've now concluded, though, that the lack of good child care is a national problem that transcends all ethnic, cultural, economic and class boundaries. Demand for good baby sitters, nannies and other child care workers far outweighs the supply.

From the workers' perspective, there is no denying that the pay is awful. There are generally few or no benefits, and the hours are long. It is a service-oriented job with limited potential for career advancement. In fact, when child care is done well, the worker loses her job as the well-adjusted child outgrows a need for her.

As a mother, there are days that I'm sure I'm going out of my mind. One child is hitting the other; another refuses to get on the school bus. Frustration is part of the territory, and nobody is perfect — not even parents. But as parents, we look to the future with the hope that our efforts are building well-adjusted young men and women. Most of the time, that image gets us through the tough days.

Imagine what it must be like for a stran-

ger to walk in and have to mediate disputes, fend off anger, cajole children to do homework and protect one child from another's aggressiveness. Unless she loves and enjoys the challenges of dealing with children daily, the only reward for the child care worker is her paycheck.

No one was a bigger believer in child care than me. I was optimistic to the point of denial. What I didn't consider was that just because a child care worker was present, it didn't mean that she was observing, understanding, doting on, educating or caring for my children. Too often, she was not.

But when demand exceeds supply, parents are powerless to protest. The workers run the show. We employ them, but they act as if they employ us. The child care situation is particularly grave in the suburbs and in some cities.

Which is not to say that there aren't exceptional child care workers out there. I have heard people say: "I guess we've just been lucky. We've never had problems finding and keeping a child care provider."

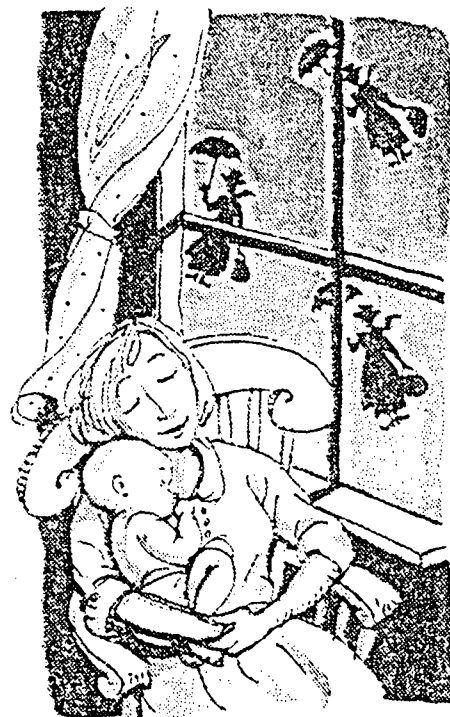
I've done a lot of soul-searching about the lucky ones. What were they doing that I wasn't? Were they paying more money, giving better working conditions, or just looking the other way when things weren't going well?

In many cases, better pay, fewer children, more amenities and easier working conditions make the relationship better. The fewer the expectations, the lower the odds that the worker is overwhelmed by the job.

NOT all of us, however, can supply a child care worker with a hefty salary and only one child. Those of us who struggle with low-paying jobs can end up spending half our salaries on child care. But we do whatever we have to, so that we can go to work free of guilt. If the parents' salaries are low, chances are that the child care worker's salary is yet lower.

Some of my stories did not end in disaster. I have had people who gave my children even more than they needed. When these angels came along, I made sure to let them know how much I appreciated them. Yet circumstances beyond our control seemed to pull these few, special people far away from us in a very short time.

"She is like a member of our family," some parents will tell you about their nanny. But this attitude gives a worker carte



Nancy Carpenter

blanche to behave any way she likes because no one will dismiss a member of the family. By the same token, this credo can also lead to exploitation of hard-working employees, because a lack of professional boundaries means vague job descriptions.

Establishing professional guidelines is as much the responsibility of parents as of the agencies and the workers. If we demand professional workers, we must treat them as professionals, keep our demands fair and make sure that our needs are clear.

From my vantage point, it seems that there are many woefully inadequate people masquerading as child care workers. Likewise, I am sure that there are many families that do not value their workers or treat them as professionals.

There is something terribly wrong in a society where hairdressers need a license yet anyone can call herself a baby sitter, nanny or au pair and be entrusted with our children. You can interview and check references forever, but until that person is under your roof, you'll never really know her. And even then, how can you possibly know what goes on when you are not around?

Overseeing my children's care turned me from ordinary mom and professional public relations person into a personnel administrator and benefits coordinator. These are skills that are not innate to every mother. But if Mom is going to succeed in managing child care workers, she must develop these skills or hire someone who has them.

The situation must change. If nothing else, the untimely death of Matthew Eappen has provided an opportunity to bring the issue of child care to the forefront. □

Judith S. Lederman is the author of *"Searching for Mary Poppins: One Family's Quest for Perfect Child Care."* This article was adapted from her book, which is to be published on Mother's Day 1998.

WILLIAM SAFIRE

Trusting A Stranger

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

Louise Woodward is the 19-year-old au pair from Britain convicted of second-degree murder by a jury and sentenced to life in prison for murdering a baby in her care. The trial judge, who can affirm or reduce the charge, or order a retrial, promises to finish his review of her case early this week.

I am not one of those jury junkies who wallow in the early-morning interviews of lawyers debating the Trial of the Month. But the Woodward case cuts many ways:

Was the defendant guilty?

That should no longer be in dispute: an impartial jury of 12 good people and true has decided the answer is yes. The finality of a jury's decision about the facts is the bedrock of criminal justice, and we overturn it at great peril.

What was the accused guilty of?

That's debatable. The defense, led by a member of O.J.'s "dream team" of lawyers, was so confident of an acquittal that it demanded the jury decide yea or nay on murder, without offering jurors the alternative of the lesser charge of manslaughter. The defense, unwilling to compromise, lost its gamble.

What recourse is there when defense lawyers err?

A judge may reduce a criminal charge, or order a retrial or even the release of a defendant mistakenly found guilty. Such re-examination goes one way, against the prosecution: A judge cannot increase a charge or retry an acquittal, because that would unconstitutionally place the defendant in double jeopardy.

What explains the overwhelming public reaction against the draconian sentence?

Millions who watched the trial on TV could consider themselves as informed as jurors, and probably would have compromised on manslaughter. Many more millions of working parents — who must leave their children in the care of inexperienced young people — want to believe they are not taking a chance on hiring potential abusers. Accidents happen; negligence occurs; but the risk of murder?

The issue wrenches the psyche of families. As families get smaller, single-parented and un-grandparented, we realize that even strange relatives can be better than relative strangers.

Will the overwhelming public reaction against the life sentence affect the judge?

Unlike the prosecutor, he's not

Facets of the au pair case.

running for anything. Massachusetts judges have tenure to insulate them from the heat of public opinion. The protests may be cathartic and the media coverage profitable, but judges are appointed for life (until age 70) to do justice without regard to public reaction or international relations.

But jurists are human; won't Judge Hiller Zobel consider the worldwide reaction?

Apparently he has already: For the first time, a judge will hand down judgment first on the Internet (www.lawyersweekly.com). Andrew Glass, a columnist for Cox newspapers, sees this as a historic step toward news disintermediation: Instead of permitting only journalists to interpret and place in context — or perhaps distort or sensationalize — the decision, the jurist aims it over journalism's head to opinion-leading webbies. As use of the new technology increases, we may see many more of these end runs by news sources.

If another jury's verdict is seen to be mistaken, how will this affect criminal justice?

Judges may be above the battle, but politicians are in it. The death penalty (never threatened in this case) was about to be approved by the Massachusetts House, but the au pair verdict caused it to be defeated. John Slattery, whose last-minute switch doomed the measure, said: "I ask people who call me in support of the death penalty what they think about this case. And they all say, 'Yeah, that gives me some cause for concern.' Mistakes can be made."

And what other effect will the au pair case have on public policy?

The White House, which expected CNN live coverage of its Washington conference on child care, was at first upset at being pre-empted by the trial in Cambridge. But now liberals led by Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts are seizing on the reaction to the Woodward verdict to propose billions in new Federal spending to subsidize child care, with standards set in Washington.

Big mistake. But the emotion churned up in a dramatic trial is a wave to be ridden by political exploiters. □

A LOOK AT... Au Pairs

Every year, about 10,000 young people come to the United States for 12 months to provide full-time, live-in child care. The recent conviction of British au pair Louise Woodward for the death of an 8-month-old boy in her care has focused attention on the au pair program.

Uncle Sam's Babysitting Service

By Alvin A. Snyder

The conviction of Louise Woodward in the death of 8-month-old Matthew Eappen raises serious questions about the merits and regulation of an international exchange program that put a 18-year-old British girl in sole charge of an infant boy. As its name suggests, the au pair program stems from a European tradition of mother's helpers, who come to the United States expecting to take courses and learn about a foreign culture as well as to care for young children. An increasing number of American host families, however, seem to look upon au pairs as a source of a year's affordable full-time babysitting. And the United States Information Agency (USIA), which oversees the program as part of its educational and cultural exchange activities, is in no position to regulate what has become a booming child-care business.

When the program was founded in 1986, some 300 au pairs came to the United States. In the 10 years since, there has been a total of about 60,000, mostly from Western Europe. The au pairs come here on J-visas, which were established in 1961 under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act for non-immigrant "bona fide" students to study in America, in order to "increase mutual understanding between countries." J-visas are typically given to teachers, medical students, research scholars or even airplane pilots in training, and holders do not require certification from the Labor Department in order to work full-time. The au pairs, who must be between the ages of 18 and 25 and stay for 12 months, are expected to sign up for a course of study.

Eight major "sponsor" agencies are certified by USIA to organize individual visits. Prospective au pairs are screened by one of these private agencies, which match up a candidate overseas with a family in the United States. The host family pays the sponsor agency about \$4,000, and gives the au pair a stipend of about \$140 per week, in addition to providing room and board, for no more than 10 hours work a day or 45 hours per week. The arrangement is cheaper and more convenient than having a live-in nanny. Families do not have to pay Social Security taxes or fill out IRS W-2 employment forms for visiting au pairs.

The sponsor agencies, which advertise widely in this country for host families, certainly emphasize the arrangement's convenience rather than its educational component. The largest of these agencies, Au Pair in America, tells families that the au pair's responsibilities include "driving children to and from school, appointments, outings or errands if required by family ... preparing meals for the children, looking after their belongings, making the children's beds, doing their laundry and straightening out their rooms."

Many of the sponsoring agencies' newspaper and magazine ads state that the "nanny" (they often choose that term over "au pair") can be left in "sole charge" of children, and claim that they are "qualified." (Only last month did the USIA require that au pairs who look after children younger than two years old have 200 hours of child-care experience.) In one of its ads, EF Au Pair of Cambridge, Mass.—the agency through which Louise Woodward came to the United States—told prospective clients that an au pair "costs you less than day care and gives your family a culturally enriching experience of host-

ing a well-educated, English-speaking European." Despite the visa requirements, in very few of the agencies' ads is the word "study" ever mentioned.

And some au pairs never do take courses. The USIA has no satisfactory means of addressing the problem. Its general counsel's office has repeatedly argued that the au pair program exceeds the agency's mandate of handling cultural, educational and international visitor exchanges. In a 1993 interview, former USIA general Counsel Alberto Mora pointed out that "it is not the function of the USIA to monitor whether the au pair attends classes, and the agency has no specified method for doing so."

Au pairs have commented wryly on their educational experience. Marie Pechilga of France wrote in a letter to her sponsoring agency: "I learned special things about Americans. They eat with their arm under the table, cut sometimes with the right hand and sometimes with the left, they eat potatoes with the skin." Last month, as the result of the Woodward case, the

USIA tightened its regulations. Not only did it increase the hours of experience but it made it a requirement that au pairs attend an "accredited institution" of higher learning to earn six hours of credits during their stay in the United States. The USIA admits, however, that it has no enforcement mechanism to monitor the program.

Inevitably, some matchups between au pairs and families don't work out, usually either because they simply don't hit it off, or because the au pair feels overworked, especially when both

parents come home late at night. That leaves the au pair looking after "some very needy children," as Anne Dotson, a coordinator for Au Pair Homestay puts it. And, once in a while, these situations have dissolved into highly publicized tragedies: In 1993, a German au pair was convicted in Massachusetts of child abuse and deported. And in 1994 in Loudoun County, a 19-year-old Dutch au pair was charged with shaking to death an infant in her care and was returned to the Netherlands on a plea bargain.

The people who benefit most from this arrangement are the sponsoring groups. Although these agencies are technically structured to qualify for tax-exempt status, most have opted to be for-profit. Not surprisingly, they have repeatedly fought tighter regulations, as they did three years ago when USIA suggested raising the age limits from 18 to 21 for au pairs who care for infants. The current setup also pleases families—and some members of Congress—who have come to rely more and more on this form of child care.

Despite the fact that USIA officials have revealed their inability to oversee the program properly, Congress appears happy with the status quo. And because USIA programs are restricted to applicants from overseas, the American public understands very little about how the organization works. If the Labor Department were involved in regulating the au pair program—which it should because 45 hours a week is a full-time job—the department would be in a position to enforce regulations. If the program were moved to the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the Justice Department, regulators would also surely modify it.

In 1988, when the USIA complained to Congress that it was administering a program of "live-in domestics," it was told to continue the program as it was and not to make any changes unless Congress specified otherwise. Congress also rejected the USIA's request to cut back the au pair workweek to 30 hours. Au pair families flooded the USIA and Congress with letters, faxes and phone calls supporting the au pair program as it stood. "All hell broke loose," recalled USIA's general counsel Normand Poirier. A former general counsel of the USIA told me that executives of the au pair agencies claimed that anything less than 45 hours a week would be "commercially unmarketable."

Alvin Snyder is a former director of worldwide television for the U.S. Information Agency.

Then, in 1990, Congress mandated that the USIA continue administering the au pair program "without change" until such time as the program is transferred to another federal agency. But the USIA, which tells America's story abroad through the Voice of America, Worldnet television—and especially through the professional foreign service officers assigned to U.S. embassies—shouldn't be saddled with bogus educational and cultural programs like this one. But it seems that it will continue to be.

Last month, President Clinton, who has the authority to conduct the government's foreign cultural exchange activities, signed a bill placing the au pair program permanently under the aegis of USIA, where Congress is happy to leave it. It's time to hold both the president and Congress accountable through public congressional hearings.

That's not because the au pair program is without merit. It provides low-cost child care to American families and it offers a rewarding experience for thousands of au pairs, parents and their children. It is because the au pair program is a work program—and it should be regulated as such. The USIA is in no position to do that.

THEY'RE NOT NANNIES

The terms "au pair" and "nanny" are not interchangeable. Key differences:

- The tradition of au pairs, or mother's helpers, has its roots in England and France, where young girls would spend time with mostly upper-class families on a student-exchange basis; the girls had no formal child-care or first-aid training and were generally unpaid.
- Nanny schools date back to 1893; many colleges in Britain offer nanny courses with several degrees and different levels of credentials. Nannies usually remain with families longer than au pairs. National Association of Nannies members average five years' experience.
- In the United States, there is a coalition of 14 schools under the aegis of the American Council of Nanny Schools (ACNS). Nanny training can take from six months to two years. There is no federal regulation or licensing for nannies. Training at the English Nanny and Governess School in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, includes courses and lectures in child behavior and development, gross motor development, how to diffuse a temper tantrum, appropriate toilet training, defensive driving, first aid and CPR for children and adults.
- Au pairs receive a stipend of about \$140 per week; nanny salaries range from \$375 to \$700 per week.

On Their Own: In Their Own Words

Current and former au pairs have shown a strong interest in the trial and conviction of British au pair Louise Woodward. Here is a sampling of what several told *Outlook*.

ANN-KATHRIN WEIDEMUELLER, 18, from Germany, cares for three boys ages 15, 12 and 4 in Providence, R.I.:

I don't think Louise is guilty, and nor do any other au pairs I know. I feel sorry for her—she's so helpless in a strange legal system—but my situation is very different. When I applied to be an au pair, I said I did not want to work with infants. I had had experience working with a 6-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy, so I asked not to be with a child under the age of 4. I just don't think I would be able to do that. It's a much bigger responsibility when you are with a baby. I have quite enough responsibility as it is. When I was in the training program, I met a girl who was going to a family with twin babies and two older children, and I was amazed. I would get crazy with so many kids.

On average, I work about 45 hours a week, and that's what I expected. Of course there are problems that come up, but I have the best match with my host family. We meet every week to discuss any problems, but mostly we end up talking about the calendar. Then there are monthly meetings with about 15 other au pairs and our community coordinator.

FRIDNY JONSDOTTIR, 21, from Iceland, cared for a 2-year-old girl in Pittsburgh during 1996-97:

I looked after Katie while her mother was at work. I had been there for about eight or nine months when [her mother] had another baby, and she stayed at home with him while I cared for the toddler. I rarely had responsibility for the two children.

I can't take sides over the Woodward case. I was in her shoes over the whole year I was in the states. I was very afraid that maybe something would happen by accident. Maybe what happened to her *was* all an accident. That might be an explanation. But I was lucky. Nothing serious did happen. Anyway, I had had courses in first aid that had been arranged by the agency when I came to the states, and the father of the family had an office at home.

When I saw the news that Louise Woodward had been given a life sentence, I thought it's one in a million. So many au pairs go over to the states and love it. Of course, it's not all easy. But I think the agency really tried to find a suitable family for us.

BIRGIT STOLLE, 28, from Germany, cared for a 1-year-old girl in Alexandria during 1988-89:

It [the Louise Woodward case] has put the whole au pair business on trial, but we're not talking about all the dysfunctional families and mothers who are not able to cope with the stress. You know, it's hard to look after a kid. People shouldn't have such bad ideas of au pairs.

Things can go wrong. I was really lucky with my family. I still visit them whenever I can. But I know a lot of cases where the families were not as good.

Why do they take au pairs? Because they are cheap. Every family has their own reasons, too. I've known au pairs who've come over to get an American husband and others who want to look after kids.

The good points are the cultural exchange. But it's very hard to meet young Americans. You really are part of the family. One of my friends had to



leave—the wife got jealous. My friend had done nothing. If they want to dispose of you, they just do. You come as a foreigner and you are exposed to that, and there is nothing you can do about it. You have a community counselor but what is she supposed to do? The family is the one who pays, so the family decides.

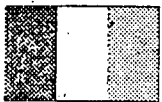
Life in the States is different. People work unbelievably much. There are regulations for the au pairs. But au pairs aren't trained. They may have some babysitting experience, but not for nine hours a day.

CHARLOTTE EDGELL, 19, from the United Kingdom, cares for an 8-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy in Alexandria:

I saw a newspaper advert before I came over, and it made it all look very attractive and appealing. The children I look after are barely 10 years younger than I am. They're old enough to know right from wrong, but I'm like a parent to them. That's a huge responsibility. I have to know where they are, what they're doing, and when they have to be somewhere. I'm not used to those sorts of responsibilities. It can get to you. The children are lovely, but it took a lot of adjusting to. I'm a child, and I'm used to my parents doing those things for me.

I watched a lot of the trial on Court TV, and I have mixed views. You always worry that something could go wrong. I'm faced with that possibility.

NO SHORTAGE OF OPINIONS FROM ABROAD



"The wider social implications here are what have really attracted attention in the English-speaking world... At a time when there is a strong public debate about the acceptability of teenage motherhood, a whole layer of prosperous people is prepared to entrust its children to teenage au pairs ..."

—the Irish Times (Dublin)



"Some argue that it was wrong of the family ... to use an 18-year-old au pair as they did. She was working long hours with sole responsibility for two infants. However much one may sympathise with their loss, this was indeed misguided, if not reckless. It would not normally be the way infants are cared for in Britain. But in Britain,

too, many parents will today quite rightly be examining their own consciences, asking themselves whether their children are well enough looked after while they are away at work. Is too much responsibility left in the hands of young strangers who are not fully qualified?"

—the Daily Telegraph (London)

"The whole reason why British girls like Louise Woodward are highly in demand in the U.S. is because of the enduring pro-British feeling there. The Eappens thought they were hiring Mary Poppins."

—the Guardian (London)

"[The Eappens] now threaten to sue ... the au pair agency for millions, claiming [Woodward] was not properly vetted or trained. But they did not want an au pair. Or even a nanny. They needed a cut-price skivvy with the patience of a saint."

—the Sun (London)

"Particularly for children old enough to speak ... au pairs can offer the ideal of affordable child care. They are, though, undeniably young and inexperienced. That poses risk to the au pair as well as to the family. I am hardly alone in thinking that Louise's youth and lack of training left her vulnerable to blame. It is a cautionary tale for teenagers who see a stint as an au pair as one of the few legal routes to working in America. In fact, it is a warning to anyone visiting the

continent about the risk of falling into a legal swamp."

—Bronwen Maddox in the Times (London)



"It has also been pointed out that Boston has a large Irish American population, and so a jury would naturally lean against a young English girl in trouble far from home. Had she been an Irish au pair, well, the verdict might have been different."

—Alan Attwood in the Age (Melbourne)

City Hall and Day-Care Centers

DC. MAYOR Marion Barry is using the financial control board's intention to overhaul the city's supervision of day-care centers to bolster his claim that the city's problems stem from a lack of money and workers, not bad management. Our take on the city's neglect of day-care centers is different. The city's protection of children in day-care centers is haphazard at best or nonexistent at worst because the city's leaders who are paid to oversee such matters were not on top of the problem.

We base our conclusion on the surprised reaction of city elected officials to last month's story by Katherine Boo reporting that more than half of all city day-care facilities operate with expired licenses. Her story proved that it doesn't require large amounts of money and staff to learn that city-funded day-care facilities are full of deficiencies. First and foremost, it requires that someone be concerned about the safety of District children. It took one enterprising reporter and a fair amount of shoe leather (Ms. Boo visited about 22 day-care centers) to find out the extent of the neglect.

This is what one person found: Although the law requires annual inspections, most of the city's 350 centers haven't been inspected in years. The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), with only five inspectors, routinely fails to meet the annual inspection requirement. And that's only one reason licenses have expired. The Post found that in other instances, license renewals had been held up because of overcrowding, rodent infestation, filthy cots and kitchens and inadequate adult supervision. And

where were most of the centers with lapsed licenses? You guessed it: in the District's poorer neighborhoods.

The scope of the problem apparently was news to Mayor Barry. Touring two of the city's publicly funded centers within days of the disclosure, the mayor called for urgent hiring of inspectors to monitor conditions at the centers and said, "I'm kind of sad we had to come to this." But the mayor wasn't the only elected city official in the dark about this shocking situation. At-large D.C. Council member Harold Brazil, who is responsible for overseeing the Consumer and Regulatory Affairs Department, and council Chairman Linda Cropp, who steered the Department of Human Services until recently, also didn't know the problem was so bad until they read about it in the paper. Other council members were equally uninformed. If you are asking, "How come?" about now, you're not alone.

Here's a possible explanation. The council attempted to beef up DCRA's inspection staff when it reviewed the mayor's budget. But hold your applause. The council's actions were motivated by a perceived shortage of liquor store inspectors, not unlicensed day-care centers. As with the mayor, the council hadn't really given much thought to the more than 15,000 District children in day-care centers or homes that require licenses until the story hit the front page. And that, we submit, is the problem. It is also the kind of inattention that cannot be remedied by means of more money and staff. There's only one way to correct that problem. Elect men and women to office who will give the city's children more than lip service.

PLANNED PARENTING / Finding Sitters Isn't ...

DOCUMENT 26 OF 31

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PART II

PLANNED PARENTING / Finding Sitters Isn't Child's Play

Liza N. Burby

618 Words

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Newsday

ALL EDITIONS

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(Copyright Newsday Inc., 1997)

GUILT IS the last thing working parents - mothers in particular - need more of. But that is exactly what many are feeling in the aftermath of the Massachusetts trial in which 19-year-old Louise Woodward, the British au pair, was convicted of fatally shaking Matthew Eappen, the 8-month-old boy in her care.

Swirling through the controversy over Woodward's guilt and sentence is a subtext of criticism of working mothers who dare to entrust their child to someone else. That's a sizable number of women - two-thirds of mothers with children under age 6 work.

"People question how these people can be working, when the economic reality of the times demands two incomes," says Pauline McGee-Egan, an associate dean at St. John's University in Jamaica. "It's not a luxury; it's a necessity. People don't get that until they're in that position themselves.

"What I find frightening with this whole case," she adds, "is that people are not looking for where the blame is - on the person responsible for bringing about the fracture of an infant's skull."

Sadly, McGee-Egan says, many of the blame-sayers are women who "are chewing each other up when they should be working together. We've already effectively proven that we can balance both a career and a family, so why are we arguing about it?"

It is possible for the Woodward case to have a positive effect, she says, if it prompts Americans to focus on the issue of quality
* child care.

"The fact is that it is so hard to get good care for children. Years ago it was not a problem when you had your aunt, your mother to watch the kids," she says. "We need to address the issue that if you're going to leave your child with someone, you need to be more conscious of who you leave them with."

* PLAYING IT SAFE WITH CHILD CARE. Although it's impossible to

guarantee that nothing bad will happen to your child while you are at work, being an educated consumer is your best defense, says Jan

* Barbieri, associate director of the Child Care Council of Nassau in Franklin Square.

As she points out, parents are on their own because there are no national childcare standards and no regulating agency for in-home care. Here are some of her tips to help you become an educated consumer and feel secure with your childcare choices:

Get information on all childcare options, from in-home to day care
* centers. Call Child Care Aware, a national advocacy group to improve
* the quality of child care, at 800-424-2246, or county child care
* resource and referral agencies: Child Care Council of Nassau,
* 516-358-9288; Child Care Council of Suffolk, 516-462-0303.

Check all references, even if the agency through which you are hiring has already done so. Tune into the reference's tone of voice and ask several questions, such as: What did you like best? What did you like least? Under what circumstances did the person leave? Were there any emergency situations and how did he or she react?

Give the prospective employee a test run for more than a half-hour. Try to spend a day or more with him or her and your child. Is he or she affectionate with your child? When your child becomes irritable, how does he or she handle it?

"You'll get a sense if the person is responding the way you would," Barbieri says. "If you do hire them, drop in unexpectedly or have someone else do it periodically."

Above all, trust your instincts. Barbieri says if you have any uneasy feelings about a person, don't hire them. It may take you more time - perhaps more than you have - but it's ultimately for the best.

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Mind the Children

Absent from Barbara Vobejda's article "Who's Minding the Children?" [front page, Oct. 22] is the issue of appropriateness of day care for very young children. Infants and toddlers need loving, committed parents with lots of time. They do not need bigger living spaces (read bigger apartments, houses and cars), electronic toys or baby Nikes, computers and swings for their parents to brag about. Rampant consumerism is straining household budgets—particularly two-parent homes—and leads to the lament, "I have to work."

If parents would devote much greater home time to a child's early years, kids would be healthier, less stressed, calmer, kinder and certainly better disciplined. This is because most children thrive better at home than in our system of turnover-ridden, poorly staffed day-care

centers and the euphemistically coined "nursery schools," which often exist to make parents feel guilt-free and convinced that their 2-year-olds are learning anything other than how to grab the biggest cookie off the plate and smash another toddler in the face.

Ask any good pre-school or kindergarten teacher, and he will quietly admit that he can spot young children who spend most of their lives in day care (yes, even the so-called high-quality care). They may be savvier, and initially more advanced academically, but they are also often sullen, moody, aggressive, poorly disciplined and just plain tired. The sooner Americans stop viewing babies as a right and children as accoutrements, easily dumped and cared for elsewhere, the better.

WANDAE E. FLEMING
Washington

Adjournment Fever in Congress

It says a lot about the vacuous state of national politics that the overriding focus of Congress right now is adjourning rather than legislating. The current target for escaping Washington is this weekend. Lawmakers usually hang around the capital past Thanksgiving. No one wants to admit it, but most in Congress believe that the more they stay at work, the less the voters like them.

This is a startling state of affairs. The last several years have been filled with partisan battles over welfare, health, taxes and budgets. Now both parties are probing for sound bites rather than leading. The Republican leaders, for example, trolled for something to restore their reputation as defenders of the taxpayer, now that archconservatives have accused them of selling out on the budget. They finally settled on a proposal to defang the Internal Revenue Service. Then President Clinton outflanked them by dropping his opposition to their plan. It was welfare reform all over again.

Mr. Clinton, on the other hand, is pushing for national education standards, which might be useful but is really a gambit for blocking Republicans on vouchers and school choice. He and his wife are spending a lot of time on child care, but where is the legislative agenda? A major issue he faces is global warming, but Mr. Clinton has yet to start any kind of tough sell in Congress. Another Administration initiative, the proposed expansion of NATO, was sup-

posed to really get the emotions going in Washington this year. But the debate has proved disappointing as all sides seek cover in a fuzzy consensus.

The Republicans, of course, have always said they had a more limited agenda than the Democrats. They are, after all, the party of less government, and the initial hope of some in the House was to adjourn as early as October. Given the leaders' opposition to campaign finance reform, just being in Washington was unpleasant and risky. Finally, to speed adjournment and avoid being seen as abusers of their power, both Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, and House Speaker Newt Gingrich agreed to take up campaign finance reform next spring.

The one major piece of business that might get trampled in the rush to adjourn is the fast-track legislation enabling Mr. Clinton to negotiate new trade agreements. Here both the White House and the Republican leadership are trying to corral votes in their own parties, with Mr. Clinton struggling against a mass defection among Democrats.

But perhaps the most telling spectacle is Mr. Gingrich's difficulty restraining conservatives from attaching riders on abortion and other subjects certain to provoke a Presidential veto. Skirmishing with a restive right wing has not been his favorite idea of fun, ever since the dissidents tried to oust him in a coup earlier this year. It's a good time, in other words, to get out of town.

Nanny case shows need for quality care

DOCUMENT 1 OF 1

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Nanny case shows need for quality care

Adrienne T. Washington

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

785 Words

5192 Characters

* 11/07/97

The Washington Times

2

C2

(Copyright 1997)

The yellow ribbons, the screaming placards, the tear-stained faces overshadow the tiny, rainbow-colored caterpillar. A grieving mother now wears the plastic pin in the peaceful place where her baby once rested his head of silky, black hair.

Below the hue and cry for Louise Woodward, the so-called "British nanny," no one cries for Baby Matthew, no one screams for little "Matty" - save for his parents. Where are the rallies for the thousands of babies, toddlers and preschoolers like Matthew Eappen who are left - by force or by choice - in the hands of questionable caretakers every day?

Accidentally or not, the 19-year-old British au pair was found to be responsible for the death of a helpless baby left in her care. That indisputable fact appears curiously lost on so many who are now emotionally consumed with Woodward's liberation.

What's more disconcerting, however, is that we can't muster an equally vocal and vociferous campaign that is clear, cohesive or credible to address the potentially life-threatening issues presented by the significant lack of available, affordable, quality day care on which so many working parents must now depend.

Here's yet another important issue that grips everyday people that's destined to get bogged down in heady ideological politics directed by those least affected as evidenced by the divisive rhetoric in the aftermath of the recent White House conference on day care.

As the nanny trial reflects, Americans are still schizophrenic about women working outside the home.

We still labor under the outdated notion of the happy homemaker as if we're blind to the disproportionate number of homes that are already headed by single women. Consciously and unconsciously, we

* expect child care to be the primary responsibility of women who often have no choice about working outside their homes, thus

* necessitating child care outside the home.

Most households - regardless of income - require two incomes to sustain their lifestyles. It is deeply disturbing that some critics and Woodward supporters would indirectly lay blame for Matthew Eappens' death at the hands of his affluent parents, particularly his working mother. Some unfairly labeled them as "parents of convenience," saying they were more interested in their rising careers than in their children.

Some questioned Mrs. Eappen's wisdom in leaving her youngsters with a 19-year-old au pair. They conveniently overlook the glaring reality that many teen-agers are either experienced baby-sitters or experienced mothers by that ripe old age.

If the Eappens, both highly educated, well-paid Boston physicians, could not guarantee their child's safety what then of the thousands of working parents who are forced to place their children in unlicensed, unsupervised, substandard care.

This is the critical juncture at which government regulation and oversight must step in. Reportedly in the District, more than half the day care centers serving poor parents are unlicensed.

The D.C. financial control board now pledges to follow its consultant's recommendations and increase inspection of these potentially dangerous centers.

The D.C. Council is also working on legislation to update 1974 regulations to license day care facilities in centers and in homes

* to reflect the contemporary changes in child care needs, according to Ellen Yung-Fatah, program manager of the social-services facilities division of the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

Karen Edwards, 33, of the District was almost forced to take her son out of day care. She struggled to pay \$60.60 a week on her \$22,000 annual salary as an administrative assistant. She receives

* a child-care subsidy from the city government - based on her gross pay - to place her 3-year-old son, Gerald, in a center in Northwest that receives \$18.55 a day from the city for his preschool care.

Her sister volunteered to pay half the costs for his current care so Karen can continue to work and attend business classes at the University of the District of Columbia.

"You want to work to get better things for yourself and your
* child but you can't afford child care and if you don't work, they talk bad about you. What are you supposed to do?" Ms. Edwards asked."

At it's core, the Boston au pair trial strikes at the world's heartstrings because it involves the young and the vulnerable - a wobbly toddler and a blossoming young woman - who should be at the start of life; not at it's tragic end.

The critical difference, however, is that Louise Woodward still

has a chance to recover from her mistake. Matty never will.

We must develop sensible public policies that do much more to
* ensure quality child care - in and out of the home - in order that
all our little caterpillars regardless of their socioeconomic
status get the chance to blossom into beautiful butterflies

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Never Too Young to Learn; With Research Showing ...

DOCUMENT 7 OF 17

WP9731000078

Weekly - MD

Never Too Young to Learn; With Research Showing Skills Are Formed
Early, County Task Force to Study Education From Birth to Age 3

Amy Argetsinger

Washington Post Staff Writer

846 Words

5923 Characters

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The Washington Post

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At age 4, the students in Priscilla Ward's pre-kindergarten class are getting the earliest start on an education that the Anne Arundel County school system has to offer.

But is it early enough? Even at storybook time, it's obvious that some children already are lagging behind. When Ward sits down to read to them, some look toward the book with anticipation, ready to listen, she said. Others look around, distracted -- not fully understanding what's about to happen.

"If they look at a picture book, they hold the book upside down," said Ward, a teacher at Germantown Elementary School in Annapolis. The problem, she says, is that many haven't had enough intellectual stimulation at home in their first few years of life.

"That," said Ward, "is when the most learning takes place."

Last month, Anne Arundel County schools convened a task force to explore the issue of early childhood education -- specifically, the years from birth to age 3.

It may seem an unusual focus for a public school system that, after all, doesn't typically deal with children that young. But the years even before preschool are a new area of concern for educators because recent research shows that a child's language and reasoning skills largely are formed long before he or she enters kindergarten.

National education experts say that Anne Arundel is among a first wave of school systems trying to expand its sphere of influence to the earliest years of life.

"That's where we are as a school system -- we begin the day they were born," Schools Superintendent Carol S. Parham told task force members at their first meeting.

In April, the White House hosted scientists and

child-development specialists at a conference highlighting new discoveries about how children's brains develop. Until recently, babies were believed to be fairly passive, detached and unaffected by their surroundings.

But new studies show that those early years are a time of frantic growth for the brain structure. Most of the brain's synapses -- the links between brain cells -- are forged before age 3. And the strength and sophistication of these connections is determined largely by the mental workout the brain gets when very young children first try to decipher language, play with toys and make sense of the world around them.

To many specialists, the research points to a child's need for challenging play and mentally stimulating activity in early years. Panelists at the White House conference called for higher-quality day care and programs to educate new parents.

But it remains uncertain who should spearhead a new initiative to promote early childhood learning. Since the White House conference, officials of public school systems across the country have started exploring what kind of role they might play, said Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States.

And already, several school systems have started programs that attempt to reach out to their communities' youngest residents.

In Michigan, some school districts contact the parents of all new babies to let them know about the various education and support programs and services available in the area. In Missouri, school systems are required to offer a program called Parents as Teachers, in which social workers visit parents of newborn children every month to advise them on child-rearing.

In a program pioneered in Louisville, illiterate and unemployed parents attend full-time tutoring sessions and parenting lessons at local schools and bring along their young children, who attend day care with a preschool-style emphasis on learning basic vocabulary and simple problem-solving.

A movement known as School of the 21st Century opens up local elementary schools to provide day care for neighborhood children -- typically just preschool or school-age children, although schools in Arkansas and Colorado are now opening their programs to infants and toddlers.

It's too soon to say whether any such initiatives are in Anne Arundel County's future.

Parham said she convened the task force as school officials came to realize that so many of the problems teachers confront in the classroom, from poor reading skills, sagging grades and misbehavior, have their roots in students' early childhood.

"We have so many children who are well along in school, and they're not reading at the level they should be," she said. "We have

* more working families, with children that are in child care 12 to 14 hours a day -- we have to come to grips with that."

The task force, made up of area parents, teachers, and health and developmental specialists, has been asked first to explore the local programs that already serve parents and young children.

Parham would not speculate about whether the task force would suggest any new programs -- they simply may recommend that existing ones strive for better coordination.

But she says that some of the school system's troubles could be solved with a new focus on the children who aren't even in the school system yet.

"Possibly, if we focus some of our resources early, we might avoid these problems later on," she said. "At the point we have to expel a child, we have failed."

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The parent trap

By MARGARET TALBOT

FOR THE mothers and fathers in the audience anyway, the recent White House child-care conference was something of a relief. Here were officials at the highest level of government talking their language, sharing their anxieties, and, well, feeling their pain. "People in this country have to be able to succeed at work and at home," said President Clinton. "If they are worried sick about their children, they fail at work." It was the kind of empathetic message no working parent could resist.

And much the same could be said of the whole conference, a family-focused, consensus-oriented showcase for Hillary Clinton's first major foray into policy since the health-care debacle. Who — outside the dwindling minority of social conservatives who think no mother should ever work — could object to an event intended simply to underscore the need for decent, affordable child care? It was smart politics, certainly.

It could be smart policy, too. With more parents of young children working than ever before, we're at something of a loss when it comes to new ideas for improving or expanding child care. Besides, problems with child care are as ubiquitous as the common cold, so there's plenty to discuss: everything from vague parental guilt to dire safety hazards; from undocumented nannies to underpaid preschool teachers.

The sleekly dressed reporter who is talking on her cell phone all throughout the morning session of the conference — first to the office, then to the nanny, then to the office, again — has a child-care problem. She'll be home late tonight, her husband is on a business trip, and the nanny will have to stay after hours. The single mother Hillary Clinton cites at the start of the day has a child-care problem, too. As a clerical worker at the University of Maryland, she can barely afford the \$5,000 a year it costs to send her 4-year-old son to the university's child-care center, and she's worried that she'll have to go on welfare.

These problems are not equal, of course, but at the White House conference, few of the speakers bothered to make the distinction. On the contrary, most wanted to stress that child care was a dilemma for parents of all classes. But, in reality, the child-care problems faced by the Dodge Caravan crowd just aren't the same as the problems faced by the scrambling-for-bus-fare poor.

Consider, for example, the availability of child-care centers. It is a predicament — but certainly not a universal one. It affects welfare mothers looking for work and in need of federal child-care subsidies that may not prove adequate. (According to an estimate by the Congressional Budget Of-

fice, the \$20 billion set aside in the welfare reform bill for child-care subsidies may be \$1.4 billion too little.)

It's also true that some people at all income levels have trouble finding places in day-care centers for very young infants. For the majority of middle- and upper-middle-class consumers, though, the quantity of available day care isn't nearly such an issue. In many cities with large immigrant populations, for example, people who advertise for a nanny are likely to be inundated with calls. For those who can afford it, the market has grown to meet the rise in demand.

Higher wages

In fact, the economics of day care are complex enough that even a relatively straightforward intervention can have unintended consequences for some consumers. Consider, for example, one of the most persuasive points made again and again at the conference: Day-care workers are inadequately paid. On average, those employed by child-care centers make \$6.89 an hour, which means that turnover is higher than it is in most other lines of work. That can be harmful to young kids, who need secure attachments to their parental stand-ins.

But the obstacles to raising wages are more formidable than they might seem. For one thing, there is competition from the vast informal sector of the child-care market. Only about 30 percent of preschool-aged children with working parents are looked after in day-care centers; the other 70 percent are cared for under various arrangements, including family day care in someone else's home, nannies and relatives. And many parents who choose these informal arrangements do so not only because they prefer a home-like environment, but also because the cost is lower.

There is a great reserve army of (mostly) women willing to do child care for low wages because it provides them with non-monetary benefits — like working in their home where they can take care of their own children, too — and that tends to depress wages in the formal sector. "You have this basic conundrum," said David Blau, an economist at the University of North Carolina who has studied the day-care market. "Advocates for child care would like to see the earnings of child-care workers increase and their work professionalized, but doing so would increase the cost of child care." That would hurt low-income parents most of all. Hillary Clinton says she's wary of a "one-size-fits-all approach" to child care. It's an obvious point, but given the problem at hand, a wise one.

Margaret Talbot is a senior editor of The New Republic, in which this article first ap-

plan. But in a private meeting, chief Clinton administration lobbyist John Hilley told Lott that Democrats would no longer accept conditions they considered anti-union. Hilley's turnabout so angered the normally composed GOP leader that the meeting disintegrated into a profane shouting match and Lott stalked out.

Silent White House. Still, some Democrats are uneasy about defending the severance-pay provision and gripe privately that labor's stand is untenable. Even pro-labor New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan cautions that unions shouldn't "close down the enterprise on which they survive." Moynihan has harsh words for the White House, which has been all but silent on Amtrak since the summer. Inside the administration the issue has been overseen primarily by political operatives, some of whom have union ties, rather than by Transportation Department officials. Asked about the White House's position on Amtrak, Moynihan replies, "There hasn't been one."

Organized labor is not the only Democratic interest group that opposes elements of the bailout package. Trial lawyers, who succeeded in stifling the bailout two years ago, object to a provision that would limit the liability of Amtrak and freight rail lines in case of a crash. In 1987, a Conrail freight train operated by an engineer who had been smoking marijuana hit an Amtrak train, killing 16 people and injuring more than 100. Conrail eventually paid out more than \$100 million in damages. Republicans say that Amtrak would be devastated by such a financial hit, and they have included in the bailout a measure to limit punitive-damage awards to no more than \$250,000 per passenger. (Several commuter railroads already have similar liability caps.) But the trial lawyers oppose virtually all efforts to limit damages in lawsuits. For the time being they are lobbying quietly and letting the unions lead the charge against the bailout package, but they say that even if the House approves the legislation, they believe they can block it in the Senate.

Taxpayers have a large stake in Amtrak's fate. Keeping the railroad going will ultimately cost much more than the pending \$2.3 billion bailout. But letting it die could also be expensive. Union leaders say that if Amtrak goes out of business they will invoke the six-year severance provision for all eligible workers. The GAO contends the government is not obligated to pay it, and a lawsuit over the question is virtually certain. But if the government loses, it's estimated that even if Amtrak closes down it could wind up costing taxpayers an additional \$6.9 billion. ■

Workfare Mary Poppins

Should welfare moms take care of other people's kids?

BY ELISE ACKERMAN

As states require more welfare mothers to work, two obvious questions arise: Where will they find jobs, and who will care for their children? It's easy to imagine the light bulbs appearing over the heads of welfare reformers. Why not solve both problems at the same time by training welfare mothers to be day-care providers? Many states are doing just that. And some women on welfare, when they are carefully screened and well trained, do prove to be capable day-care providers.

But at the White House conference on day care last week, would-be reformers were manifestly uncomfortable with the idea. "I don't believe we should allow day care to be a workstation for workfare," declared Bishop Joseph Sullivan of the Brooklyn Diocese, to resounding applause. Witness after witness emphasized that day-care employees must be better trained and higher paid than they are now. Although day-care advocates are often reluctant to discuss this publicly, they are concerned that plans to hire tens of



Kristina Thomas has left welfare and gone to work

thousands of welfare mothers will undermine the quality of care. For reasons not always of their own making, some women on welfare have poor parenting skills, a history of being abused, or not enough education and business acumen to provide adequate care for kids. "The way I hear [this idea] talked about makes me cringe," says Ellen Galinsky of the Families and Work Institute in New York City. "There is a mistaken assumption that anyone can [provide good day care]."

Violence at home. Over the next five years, as the work requirements in last year's welfare reform law kick in, the number of children needing subsidized day care is likely to triple to 4.5 million. Already, most states have lengthy waiting lists. To make things worse, experienced day-care workers are deserting the field in droves, discouraged by the meager wages. (The average salary is roughly \$12,000.) That's why New York, California, Texas, Florida, and



Diana Insula takes care of kids in her Columbia, Md., home.



at the Happy Face Day Care Center in McMurray, Pa. She hopes one day to run a center at home.

at least a dozen other states have initiatives designed to train welfare mothers to work in child care.

But state officials have discovered that many welfare recipients are not good candidates for child-care jobs. About one third of those on public assistance are depressed. Some 55 percent of welfare families have the television on seven hours or longer each day. Only half have 10 or more books in the house, and reading to kids is not routine. For young children, who need constant stimulation, the mother's own educational shortcomings may be part of the problem—more than a third of welfare recipients test at the "least proficient" literacy level. That means they could not read a street map or calculate the total cost of a purchase from an order form.

Violence plagues many welfare families. One study in Washington State showed that 55 percent of welfare mothers had been victimized by violent boyfriends or spouses. This is an especially big problem because most welfare mothers want to work at home, in part so they can continue to take care of their own kids.

Homes used for day care need to be not only violence free but well constructed.

Many women on welfare, however, live in public housing that has a multitude of housing-code violations. Earlier this year a program to train 20 women in Louisville, Ky., faltered, in part because the homes of some trainees did not meet state safety standards. In Lowell, Mass., one woman set up a day-care operation in her apartment, only to have it shut down after the unit below became infested with fleas. She ended up in a homeless shelter.

Despite their initial enthusiasm, few would-be caregivers anticipate the demands of running their own business. Social workers discovered that of the roughly 60 women in the South Bronx who trained to be providers over the past two years, hardly any had gotten their family-day-care operations off the ground. There was a strong demand for their services; waiting lists at neighborhood day-care centers were hundreds deep. Yet the 15-hour course mandated by the state didn't fully prepare them to juggle bookkeeping, menu and activity planning, budgeting, marketing, negotiating with parents, and, finally, caring for children.

Still, the ranks of public-aid recipients include some extraordinarily resilient

women well suited to child care. Twenty-six-year-old Diana Insula fit the profile of a troubled welfare recipient. Four years ago, her boyfriend broke down the door, shattered her windows, and threatened her with a weapon, leading her to jump out of a second-story window to escape. At another point, she spent nearly seven months living in a homeless shelter with her child. But rather than squelching her spirit, the experiences strengthened her determination to pursue a career. "I wanted to follow my dream to take care of kids," she says. Insula got her license to be a family-day-care provider in 1995. Working nearly around the clock as a child-care provider and at a second job as a security guard, she saved enough money to purchase a spacious, sunny townhouse in Columbia, Md., where she cares for up to seven children at a time. Her clients praise her effusively. "She has a love for children that radiates from the inside," says Sheila Hobson, the mother of two girls, ages 3 and 6, cared for by Insula.

Insula credits her success to the unflagging support of a state official who took a personal interest in her case. The handful of pilot programs that have consistently transformed welfare recipients into prosperous day-care providers all offer long-term, intensive training and follow-up assistance. Nearly all the 43 family-child-care providers linked to the Acre Family Day Care in Lowell, Mass., were once on welfare. Acre refers parents, conducts ongoing training, has a social worker on call, and provides economic aid. "I believe a welfare recipient has to be part of a network," says Anita Moeller, Acre executive director. "Being a family-child-care provider is just too isolating to make it on your own."

Mindful of the difficulties, Kristina Thomas, a 27-year-old from Claysville, Pa., completed a training course last winter and went to work at a nearby day-care center. While many welfare mothers have eschewed jobs that pay as little as Thomas's—\$800 a month—she hopes she can use the experience to someday open her own home-based day-care business.

But most welfare recipients don't want to follow Thomas's example. They aspire to jobs that pay more and have better prospects for advancement. In some ways, being a day-care worker just doesn't seem like much improvement over being on welfare. Before, women got "paid" to take care of their own kids. Now they can get paid to take care of someone else's. Welfare reformers may see this as progress. Or they may be forced to admit that there aren't many Mary Poppinses hiding on the welfare rolls. ■

Good Care for Our Kids

Hiring and retaining the kind of high-quality people it takes to provide good day care ("Who's Minding the Children," front page, Oct. 22) is not a new problem. Almost 20 years

ago, the government tried to address this issue when it examined what was then called the Federal Interagency Day Care Regulations. Even then, government agencies

and the private sector reached no consensus.

It is time to consider some incentives that would work to improve the availability and quality of child care. Why not train and hire those who are trying to get off welfare? What about tapping into the expanding pool of retirees who might work part time if an arrangement could be made about payroll taxes that otherwise greatly diminish take-home pay? Aren't high school students required to perform community service? What happened to that call for volunteers at the President's Conference on Volunteerism? The Head Start Program relied heavily on people who wanted to work with children. Since the public schools are hiring teachers who are in the day care system, why not make day care part of public school?

If we truly believe that our greatest resource is our children, let's resolve to find innovative and creative solutions to a problem that we know exists and that we seem only to acknowledge when there is a White House conference.

ALICE L. HABER
Rockville



BY MARGARET SCOTT

ARING ADULTS SHOULDN'T HAND OVER CHILD CARE TO ...

DOCUMENT 16 OF 343

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EDITORIAL

*** CARING ADULTS SHOULDN'T HAND OVER CHILD CARE TO GOVERNMENT**

Charley Reese, of The Sentinel Staff

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Orlando Sentinel

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OPINION

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- * The White House conference on day care was just another example of political theater. The evidence is irrefutable: There is no such thing as good out-of-home day care for children younger than 6. The best and most expensive, which few can afford, will still result in less-than-optimum development of the child.

That's because the research has confirmed common sense: that an ongoing, loving, intimate relationship with plenty of one-on-one interaction, stimulation and attention is necessary for a child to develop properly emotionally and intellectually.

No employee, no matter how dedicated, can provide that in a setting in which the employee has several children to care for.

Now that's a hard fact that many don't wish to face, because certain unpleasant consequences flow from it. For example, women who have a choice and choose to work, despite having children younger than 6, are sacrificing the mental and emotional welfare of their children for an economic standard of living. The choice is more time with the children or more money.

A lot of women - single moms, for example, or couples with very low incomes - don't have a choice. With them, it's not a case of choosing a bigger house or staying home. It's a case of not having sufficient income to provide for the basic care of the child unless the mother works. That's tough. Even cruel.

But the answer is not for people to hand their children over to the government so it can dump them into tax-payer-provided day-care centers. Day-care centers are the problem, not the solution.

The ideal solution is a mother at home during the first six years of a child's life. Women who can ought to plan their careers around that. Employers ought to be encouraged to allow mothers to work at home if possible. Certain jobs can be done at home with

computer and modem as easily as in the office, but employers will have to get over the archaic idea that managing people consists primarily of looking at them.

The second-best idea is an in-home care-giver, either a hired nanny or a relative. Unfortunately, families tend to be dispersed these days, which is another mark against our overly mobile society. Hired nannies, good ones, are expensive.

One of the root causes of the problem is the accumulated inflation caused by deficit spending and the practices of the Federal Reserve System. Monetary inflation is just another way of saying the buying power of the dollar has been reduced. That's why it's hard for a single breadwinner to maintain a decent standard of living. For all this you can properly and justly blame government - more specifically, the federal government because it controls the currency.

No government can be said to be a good government that debases its own currency. No economy can be said to be sound if it is impossible for an ordinary family to be supported on one paycheck. No politician is worth listening to if his or her answer to the problem is subsidized day care.

Around the turn of this century, there was a big campaign to get women out of the workplace. Our goal today should be to create an economy in which women would at least have a choice as to whether they wished to work or stay home with young children. Right now, about 70 percent of women with young children are working and most certainly not all of them because they want to. That's not a good situation for children. What's not good for children is not good for society.

We shouldn't pay any attention to feminist extremists who think that any talk of the value of a good mother nurturing and developing her children is a male plot to enslave women. That's silly nonsense. Very probably a good share of the blame for women working rests properly on husbands who encourage them to work for the financial gains or abandon them.

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Parents need options

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EDITORIAL

Parents need options

EDITORIALS

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LATE SPORTS FINAL

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The shocking guilty verdict in the nanny murder case in Massachusetts has done more to focus attention on children in day care than 100 White House conferences ever could.

It is rarely appropriate to generalize from a specific case.

But, perhaps in this case, some good can come from doing just that.

It already is happening. The Massachusetts case tried not just the

* nanny, but the values of the child's parents. The debate over child

* care, however, has to go far beyond discussion of the values of one set of parents.

The facts are not disputed: 12.9 million children under age 6

* are in child care; 45 percent of children under 1 are in child care

on a regular basis. Of children with working mothers, 30 percent are

* in child care centers, preschool or nursery schools; 25 percent are

cared for by relatives; 16 percent are cared for by their fathers; 16

percent are cared for in someone else's home, and the remaining 13

percent are cared for in various other ways.

The numbers are growing. Alternative care for children is a

fact of American life in the 1990s. That fact was the starting point

* for the Oct. 23 White House conference on child care. Unfortunately,

the conference took a myopic approach to the question. Rather than

asking: Is this the best we can do for our children? The conference

asked how to improve the quality of the alternative care they receive.

There is no intention here to belittle that issue - it is a fact

that far too many of those 12.9 million children are in substandard,

* even dangerous, child care situations simply because their parents

* cannot afford better. Still, the whole issue of child care must be

debated much more broadly.

Given the research on brain development in the first three years

of life and the importance of an intimate connection to a caregiver,

why are we not asking how to make it easier for a parent to stay home with a child at least during the critical first year? There are many ways to do that. On an individual basis, we can re-evaluate our priorities and adopt a simpler lifestyle to allow us to renew our commitment to family. In that scenario, one parent would trade the emotional and financial rewards of work for those of caring for a child. On a public policy basis, low-income and single parents could be offered a choice: Use government aid to subsidize a parent staying
* home rather than use it to make child care more affordable. On an economic basis, employers could be encouraged to give workers more flexibility to be with their children rather than simply using
* corporate resources to ensure that higher quality child care will be more affordable.

As for parents who do not have the luxury of lengthy unpaid leaves of absence, President Clinton's approach is correct. Raising
* the level of pay and the level of education for child care workers in the hope of ensuring more stability in the work force is in the best long-term interests of the children in their care. But it is too early to forgo hope that we can find a way to ensure more children will be reared by the people who care about them the most: their
* parents. Improving alternative child care is not the only way to make life better for our youngest, most vulnerable citizens. Indeed, it might not be the best way to do it.

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Activist's work starts revolution in day care

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News

Activist's work starts revolution in day care

Ruth Sheehan

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(Copyright 1997)

CARRBORO -- Sue Russell's tiny office is in the back of the building, up a narrow flight of stairs, above the Carrboro Job Service office on Main Street.

The artwork on the walls: posters of infants and toddlers. But from these cramped quarters, littered with stacks of pamphlets and reports, Russell and the Day Care Services Association staff have launched a national revolution in day care.

It's called the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project.

Inaugurated in Triangle counties in 1990 with \$23,100 from five charities, T.E.A.C.H. has brought scholarships and the promise of higher pay to nearly 5,000 day-care providers across North Carolina. Along the way, it has not only increased their education but also kept more of them on the job. All these changes improve the quality of day care that children receive, Russell says.

Today, the program runs statewide with state money. What's more, it has been trademarked and exported to five other states. And in

* October, during the White House Conference on Child Care, President Clinton announced that he would push Congress to fund a federal day-care scholarship program for day-care workers - and T.E.A.C.H. would be the model.

The program - it stands for Teacher Education And Compensation Helps - was recommended to the president by Joan Lombardi, assistant

* U.S. Health and Human Services commissioner in the child care bureau. Lombardi says she was drawn to T.E.A.C.H. because it is the only program she has seen that ties training to better compensation - and reduces staff turnover as a result.

As part of the program, scholarship recipients agree to complete a certain level of education; in return, either their employer or the

state gives them a pay raise or a bonus, provided they stay on the job for a year after the training is complete.

"The overall turnover rate in your state is 42 percent," Lombardi says. "but among T.E.A.C.H. participants, it's what? Ten percent or less. That's remarkable."

"Certainly," she adds, "the success of the program is due to the commitment of Sue Russell."

Russell would prefer that such accolades be heaped on her staff instead of her.

But even Russell beams when she recounts meeting Hillary Rodham * Clinton at a reception on the White House lawn after the child-care conference.

"When I shook her hand, I put one of our T.E.A.C.H. stickers in her palm," Russell says. "Hillary looked down at it and said, 'Oh, that's what the president wants to do for the country.' "

It's a remarkable victory for a woman who started her career as a social activist, setting up one of North Carolina's first truly multicultural day-care centers.

###

A career is born:

* Russell hadn't expected to devote her life to child care.

She was planning to pursue a Ph.D. in sociology when she got involved in the civil rights movement at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1969. The immediate issue was the university's treatment of black cafeteria workers, who were being paid less than the minimum wage and were not being paid overtime, among other concerns.

The workers went on strike, and later staged what they called a "stall-in." Students and supportive faculty would go through the cafeteria lines very slowly, ask for only a glass of water and leave.

The strategy eventually ignited a scuffle between the protesters and other students, and Gov. Kerr Scott ordered five Highway Patrol squads to Lenoir Hall.

Meanwhile, the workers and their supporters made plans to storm the university's administrative offices. More than 1,000 people were gathered when a telephone call came from Raleigh announcing that the governor and the workers had reached an agreement. The workers would receive the minimum wage, including back pay, as well as overtime.

During the struggle, Russell and some of the other activists had grown close to the food workers, and knew that even after the settlement the workers were scraping to make ends meet.

"We asked what would make their lives better, and they said,

* 'Child care,'" Russell says. So she and some of the other sympathizers set about making it happen. Their day care, the Community School for People Under Six, was started in the basement of the First Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, an African-American church.

It was a sort of egalitarian utopia. Half the staff and half the children were black. Half the staff was male. The staff and the administrator made decisions collectively.

Over the course of 10 years, Russell was a day-care worker and finally the administrator of the center. Her own three daughters, now 27, 26 and 24, attended.

###

* **Shaping child-care policy:**

After her daughters started school, Russell jumped to the policy side. She knew the challenges of providing high-quality child care, and she was eager to put that experience to work.

For a few years, she coordinated day care for the Orange County Department of Social Services. She worked for several years helping shape policy at the state level.

But starting back in 1975, she had also served on the day-care services committee of United Way. And the committee's work seemed to be growing rapidly.

By the mid-'80s, Russell had seen dramatic changes in the fast-expanding child-care industry. In 1970, when the community school was founded, federal standards for the care of low-income children demanded one worker for every four 2-year-olds. But soon the federal standards were abandoned, and the state adopted far looser standards: One caregiver could watch nine infants.

In 1986, Day Care Services Association became its own entity; and in 1988, Russell became its first executive director.

The next year, the association, along with the Frank Porter Graham Center and a child-care resource agency in Charlotte, undertook the state's first comprehensive study of center-based care. Their results were startling.

They found that 70 percent of day-care workers had no training beyond high school, that they earned less than the minimum wage, that four of 10 workers left their jobs every year.

"These were women with kids of their own who weren't being paid enough, who were working long hours," Russell says. "They were stressed enough."

So Day Care Services came up with T.E.A.C.H. In its first year, the program reached 23 day-care center workers. Now, T.E.A.C.H. provides seven types of scholarships and mentoring programs for day-care workers from directors on down. All of them are paid to attend class or provided a substitute at work. When they have completed their degree, they either receive a pay raise or a bonus of several hundred dollars.

During the 1996-97 fiscal year, participants' wages went up a minimum of 12 percent, and their turnover rate dropped by more than 75 percent.

###

Day care is a profession:

Marcy Whitebook, co-director of the National Center for the Early Childhood Workforce, said she has high hopes for the program at the national level if Congress approves it.

"Day-care workers are so poorly paid," Whitebook says. "Most * people who work in child care don't make a self-sufficiency wage. There are all these attitudes about day-care being women's work, baby-sitting. It all plays into people not understanding this is a profession."

What makes T.E.A.C.H. so special, she says, is that it doesn't just try to boost the workers' education; it rewards them.

"If you just train them without finding a way to increase their pay, it's like pouring water into a bucket with a hole in the bottom," Whitebook says. "Sue is one of the few people in the country who saw that you had to link training and compensation from the get-go. She has been courageous and creative in a situation where most people threw up their hands and accepted it."

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Sue Russell:

Born: July 2, 1946, Cleveland.

* Education: B.A., University of Michigan; master's in child care administration, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Title: Executive director, Day Care Services Association, Carrboro.

Family: Married to Bob Konrad; three daughters: Neoma, Moira and Erika.

Recent moments of pride: seeing President Clinton hail T.E.A.C.H. program as national model and seeing one of her daughters graduate from UNC-Greensboro with a degree in child development. "She is such a better teacher than I ever was."

Successes: Farming T.E.A.C.H. out to five other states - Colorado, Illinois, New York, Georgia and Florida; receiving \$1 million in recurring money from the General Assembly - ending the need to beg every year.

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CHILD-CARE SCARE THE CLINTONS' BIG GOVERNMENT ...

DOCUMENT 13 OF 343

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EDITORIAL

* CHILD-CARE SCARE THE CLINTONS' BIG GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL IS DREADFULLY WRONG

KATHLEEN PARKER

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TWO STAR

B-3

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As metaphors go, the Clinton administration is edging out the Trojan horse for deceit, while we Americans make the gullible people of Troy look like master skeptics.

Which is to say, the federal government's current initiative to
* "do something" about the lack of quality, affordable child care in America is a flimsy, Hollywood facade camouflaging a Clinton village that eliminates parents from the family equation.

Maybe the Clintons haven't consciously conspired to rid children of their parents; we'll give them the benefit of the doubt. But the ascription of America's problems to incompetent parents, deadbeat dads, violent spouses and working moms has been building steadily, such that the government stepped in to take charge.

Last month, 100 invited guests met in Washington behind closed
* doors for the White House Conference on Child Care to decide what the government ought to do about your children.

If ever you were tempted to disbelieve something that was too good to be true - or to wonder whether there might be more than meets the eye - succumb now. The future implications of a

* government-run child-care system is so sinister as to make the mythological Greek horse look like a sorority-house panty raid.

* The Clintons' argument favoring a national child-care service focuses on two irrefutable facts: Working parents need dependable,
* quality child care. They do. And welfare mothers looking for work
* need inexpensive child care. They do.

But neither of these facts supports the assumption that the
* United States needs a national child-care system. We don't. What we need are parents back on the job of parenting, and parents know it.

Our government knows it, too, but never mind. Government is in

the business of governing. The more individuals relinquish sovereignty over their own lives, the happier bureaucrats are.

Even casting aside healthy skepticism toward people who've openly declared their belief that villages (read governments) are better than parents, the Clinton administration's response to the * so-called "child-care crisis" demonstrates either a frightful lack of logic or a brazen disregard for the people's wishes.

Numerous studies document that parents want more, not less, time with their families, and that young children develop better emotionally and physically when provided consistent, long-term care, preferably from their own mother or other family member.

A May 1994 Child magazine survey of 800 mothers with children under age 13 found that 48 percent of mothers working full-time would like to reduce their hours. More than half of adults (55 percent) polled by the Independent Women's Forum in 1996 said they would trade seniority or pay for more personal time.

Stanley Greenspan, author of "The Growth of the Mind: The Endangered Origins of Intelligence" and clinical professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at George Washington University Medical School, recently wrote in The Washington Post that even the best out-of-home day care can't provide the consistent attention children need for emotional and intellectual health.

"Children and the care of them must be elevated to a higher priority, both within families and society," said Greenspan. "So we need to gradually bring about social arrangements which maximize at-home care of young infants by their parents."

Were the Clintons truly interested in families, they'd help parents spend more time with their children by offering incentives to businesses with family-friendly policies and tax relief to parents already financially strapped. Meanwhile, creating a new bureaucracy projected to cost \$100 billion is counterintuitive in an overtaxed, deficit-ridden country.

* The effect of a national child-care service, though appealing to a welfare mother in crisis, is to undermine parents' current efforts to improve workplace policies. It also would create a middle-class entitlement for which all of us will pay, none so dearly as our children.

Meanwhile, can we allow ourselves to wonder about the emotional depth and empathetic capacity of a generation reared in institutions by strangers? Can we afford the consequences of a generation "educated" by government as early as infancy?

As the people of Troy would tell you, beware governments bearing gifts, especially those charged to your account.

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Au Pair Tragedies, Though Rare, Highlight ...

DOCUMENT 14 OF 17

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A Section

Au Pair Tragedies, Though Rare, Highlight Conflicts of Opinion on

* Child Care

Barbara Vobejda and Patricia Davis

Washington Post Staff Writers

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The Washington Post

FINAL

A12

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Three years ago, it was another 19-year-old au pair in the news. A Dutch babysitter, Anna-Corina Peeze, had been accused of shaking 8-week-old Brenton Scott Devonshire to death in his Loudoun County home.

In the months that followed, public outrage led the federal government to propose much tougher standards for the au pair program, which supplies foreign babysitters to thousands of American families. But as it turned out, the public didn't want so much oversight after all: 3,500 families sent letters complaining that the new rules would have hiked the price and limited the hours au pairs could work.

And so the government backed down. It tightened requirements, but not nearly to the extent it had initially proposed.

The au pair program again in the spotlight has underscored the
* conflicting feelings Americans have about child care. With most mothers of young children now in the work force, families are hungry
* for good child care and complain when they can't find it. They may support in theory government regulation or some other means of ensuring safe day care, but not if it's going to jeopardize what is already a critically limited supply of affordable help.

* "We've assumed child care is the personal responsibility of the family and we've been ambivalent about whether we feel it's okay to have women working," said Ellen Galinsky, president of the Families
* and Work Institute, a child care research organization in New York. And that has kept policymakers and others from instituting strict standards, she said. "We assume that almost anyone alive and breathing can take care of children."

The tragic case of English au pair Louise Woodward and the nearly 9-month-old baby she was convicted of murdering has parents