



U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Associate Administrator
Office of Management and Workplace Programs

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Bobbie,

This has been sent in
the standard ways;
however, I'm never
sure that such letters
reach their destination.
Thus, attached is a
duplicate.

Jasen



U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Office of Management and Workplace Programs

File

July 15, 1998

Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

Thank you very much for your warm letter of greetings to the participants at GSA's Ninth Annual Child Care Conference. As I looked out at the audience last week in New Orleans and read your letter, I could tell that your words reached kindred spirits. We who put children central to our lives and careers appreciate all that you have done and will do for those children. There is no better advocate, no finer champion than you.

We are looking forward to hearing back from the President on our report on accreditation and criminal background checks. The real challenge, of course, is to make child care affordable for Federal families, and I would welcome any thoughts you might have in that regard.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Sincerely,

Susan Clampitt

Susan Clampitt
Associate Administrator for Child Care

Susan Clampitt
Associate Administrator for Child Care
General Services Administration
Remarks at the GSA Child Care Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
July 8, 1998

Thank you for that kind introduction and for this gracious welcome to the wonderful city of New Orleans. I, for one, am glad to be out of the heat and humidity of Washington, DC. Out of the frying pan....

Things are hot in Washington for child care. There are about 50 different pieces of legislation floating around Congress on child care, including the Quality Child Care for Federal Employees Act, which we still hope will pass. The President and First Lady have made child care a priority. In March, President Clinton issued an Executive Memorandum that focused on four major areas: accreditation, criminal background checks, collaborations and partnerships, and ensuring that all Federal workers receive full information about the child care benefits available to them on the Federal, state and local levels.

The President's memorandum requested that GSA and the Department of Defense report back on our efforts toward 100 percent independent accreditation and timely background checks by the year 2000, and I am pleased to tell you the report is on its way to the White House for the President's review and response.

President Clinton has sent a strong signal about the importance of child care in today's economy and the importance of quality and affordability in today's child care. Here's what he said:

"As a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce, the Federal Government should lead the way in improving child care."

Recruit and retain a strong workforce. That's a cogent *economic* argument for why government should be providing quality, affordable child care. As part of the general compensation and benefits package, Federal agencies should include child care. Now, some people argue that we should do so because it is the right thing or the nice thing to do for our employees. There's nothing nice about it. We provide child care because we want to keep our workforce strong, as well as our families and communities.

Let's not lose sight of that argument when we go back to our agencies, to our regions and communities, and discuss why we are even in this business. Quality

child care leads to a more productive workforce and to stronger families and communities.

In addition to the economic argument, let's talk about the social implications as well. First, from the point of view of the worker. I was at the University of Maryland last month at a conference called Solutions: Women's Juggle for Time. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the Lt. Governor of Maryland, talked about the time juggle that all of us, but especially women and working mothers, face. She described the juggle quite well:

"When we're at work, we worry about our kids. Whether we're sitting at our desk, or in a meeting, our thoughts are consumed by (questions like):

- Are they safe at school?
- Did they get home okay?
- Did the babysitter arrive on time?
- Are they doing their homework?
- Does my family need more from me?

When we're at home, we worry about WORK. When we want to spend our time helping our kids with their homework, our minds wander to (questions like):

- Did the meeting go well?
- Was my memo quite right?
- Am I ready for tomorrow?
- Does my job need more from me?"

Women and men are struggling with the juggle of time, the shifting boundaries between work and home. A few years ago, there was a Michael Keaton movie called "Multiplicity" in which he went to a doctor and had himself cloned so that he could devote more time to both work *and* home. The trouble began when his clone found the need to be cloned, and the third clone went out to be cloned, and by the time you get to the fourth copy things are pretty messy.

Short of cloning, we – as a society – need to do better by our working parents. Expecting things to go back to the good old days, when day care meant either sending the children off to grandma's or off to work in the factory, that's worse than plain old nostalgia. Life has changed for good. Time has become a juggling act, and it is part of our social contract to do better by our working parents.

Finally, but most importantly, we have a social contract with the children. First of all, there's a lot more of them around, have you noticed?

Within the last year, the population of children rose to 70.2 million – exceeding the peak year of baby boom. And unlike the baby boom that began in 1946, this one shows no sign of ending. They're calling this new baby boom, The Millennium Generation.

"This is a revolution in waiting," says Gerald Celente, director of Trends Research Institute. "This generation will redefine society in the 21st century just as baby boomers shaped social, political and economic changes in the last half of the 20th century."

We owe it to the future to make sure these children are prepared to shape society, and they will only be able to do so if they are well cared for today. What do we owe the children?

First of all, they must be safe and feel safe. They must be in a healthy environment, one that is non-toxic in every way. They must be stimulated by their surroundings. Children should be exposed to art at their eye-level, to creative play, to bonding and positive reinforcement. Children need music, dancing, playgrounds that encourage exploration and discovery. Even the smallest infants need to be engaged on every level, for research has shown that from the beginning, the brain is developing, and that the first three months of life are critical to laying a healthy foundation for the rest of life.

The most important ingredient is a staff of consistent, well-qualified caregivers. A staff that offers engaging and age-appropriate activities in an imaginative setting that facilitates growth. A staff that also takes into account the strengths and needs of the member families and this unique community. From the youngest infant to the pre-schoolers, all children deserve no less from an environment they live in for most of their waking hours each and every week.

Good child development centers means good teacher-to-child ratios, training opportunities, and opportunities for career advancement. Good child development centers assure continuity of care by paying staff a living wage and strengthening parental involvement.

While exemplary centers exist here and in pockets around the country, improving individual programs is not enough. The children of Federal families deserve an investment in the child development center infrastructure, and we at GSA are working together to develop a coherent plan that incorporates not just facilities but for professional development, accreditation, accessibility and affordability. Sound public investment in child development centers is an investment in everyone's future.

Part of the solution will have to be money. Money is an issue for every Federal agency which sponsors child care centers; money is an issue for child care professionals who are among the most poorly paid professionals; and money is an issue for any Federal employee seeking child care. Too many of our employees simply cannot afford to put their children in our care.

As important as the money and the quality of the facility and the elasticity and creativity of the curriculum is passion. You are certainly not in the business for the money. It's the passion for the health and well-being of children. Let's be honest: we got into this life's work because we love children. We need to translate that love into a safe, sound, affordable, and stimulating environment for children.

We have made tremendous progress over the past 13 years to make the Federal child care system a model for the nation. In many ways, our system is already the best. There are some truly excellent centers run by competent and caring staff, using curricula that fosters child development in a safe and healthy environment. Other centers, we can all admit, need work, and we are committed to making them the best they can be with the resources we have. And we're prepared to be tough where toughness is required.

We owe the Millennium that tough love. We owe their parents our best efforts.

Thank you.

I'd now like to read to you a letter of greetings from one of the nation's strongest advocates for child care, the First Lady:

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to send greetings to each of you attending the Ninth Annual Child Care Conference of the General Services Administration.

Thirteen million American children spend all or some of their day being cared for by someone other than a parent. Many child care centers, however, are of less than minimal quality. When high quality care is available it is often out of reach for many of our nation's families. I am grateful for individuals like each of you gathered today who work to foster within the community high quality child care programs for a child's formative years. If we, as a nation, commit ourselves now to modest investments in the sound development of our children, we will lay the groundwork for an American future with increased prosperity, better health, fewer social ills and ever

greater opportunities for our citizens to lead fulfilling lives in a strong country in the next century.

A nation's greatest resource is its people, especially its children. As you come together today, you recognize the importance of helping parents succeed at their most important task, caring for the next generation while at the same time being good workers who contribute to our nation's economy and quality of life. Your efforts not only benefit children and families throughout the local community, but strengthen our nation as a whole. I share your dedication to the youngest and most vulnerable members of our society and I commend your efforts of their behalf.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable and informative conference.

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

I would now like to introduce videotape messages from two legislators in Congress who have become important allies.

First, I'd like to introduce a message from Senator Mary Landrieu. Serving her first term, Senator Landrieu has a long association with the political life of the Pelican State. Her father, Moon Landrieu, had been mayor of New Orleans and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Carter Administration. Mary Landrieu began her career in the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1980, and after two terms, she became the State Treasurer, a post she held until her election to the U.S. Senate in 1996. Since coming to the Senate, she has been a strong advocate for the middle class and the poor and a champion for equal pay for women. I know that child care is especially important to her, both as a working mother and as a representative of this state. I'd now like to show the video from Senator Mary Landrieu. [SHOW VIDEO]

Next, I'd like to introduce a message from Representative Ellen O. Tauscher, who represents the 10th district of California in the U.S. Congress. She is a first-term member who was previously a child care screening executive. One of our own! Congresswoman Tauscher founded three companies that register and screen child care providers, and in 1996, she published a child care reference guide. Not only does she bring that experience to the Congress, but she was one of the first women to hold a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. I am pleased to introduce this message from Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher. [SHOW VIDEO]