

MEMORANDUM FOR MRS. CLINTON

FROM: Shirley Sagawa *Shirley*
RE: Column ideas
DATE: June 6, 2000
cc: Carol Beach, Ann O'Leary

Good ideas

I thought of a couple more evergreen column topics, which Carol thought would work well. If you like either, let us know.

Military Child Care

I know you have visited military child care centers in the past to highlight them as models for civilian centers. In May, the National Women's Law Center released a new report, "Be All That We Can Be: Lessons from the Military for Improving Our Nation's Child Care System." The report analyzes the impact of the Military Child Care Act of 1989 (which I helped to draft when I worked for Senator Kennedy) on military child care. It concludes that the legislation helped turn the military child care system from "a disaster," riddled with unsafe conditions, child abuse allegations, and 300 percent annual staff turnover, into a model for the nation. The NWLC argues that this turnaround suggests that change is possible, even in the worst systems, if we acknowledge the seriousness of the problem and its consequences, establish and enforce quality standards, and provide subsidies. A dozen newspapers, including the New York Times, have editorialized in favor of these recommendations. A copy of the report is attached. A column could use the report as a hook to discuss the military's experience and advocate for our child care initiative.

Youthbuild

I think you know about YouthBuild, which teaches unemployed and out-of-school youth construction skills while involving them in rehabilitating or constructing new housing for low income and homeless people. Participants spend alternate weeks on the job site and in school, and most receive AmeriCorps education awards for their service. The program began in 1978 when a group of New York City teenagers expressed their desire to renovate abandoned buildings in their community. Dorothy Stoneman, then director of the Youth Action Program in East Harlem Block Schools, helped them select a building, raise funds, and hire adult trainers. The teenagers' successful renovation of a Harlem tenement led Dorothy to form a coalition of local not-for-profit organizations to replicate the program. Today there 145 operating YouthBuild programs in 43 states, with 5,500 students, 90% from very low-income families and 47% of them parents. Most complete the 11 month program, and 85% go on to college or paid

PHOTOCOPY
HRC HANDWRITING



employment. Since 1993, Youthbuild students have constructed more than 2000 units of low-income housing.

We highlighted YouthBuild in one of the breakout sessions at the teen conference, and invited both Dorothy Stoneman (who has won a MacArthur fellowship “genius” award) and a young man involved in the program to speak. The President’s budget requested a significant increase for the program, \$75m in '01 compared to \$42.5m in '00. This amount is supplemented by AmeriCorps funds. There are many inspiring stories associated with Youthbuild, and a column advocating for the increased funding for both Youthbuild (which is in HUD) and AmeriCorps (which was zeroed out in the House) would be timely.

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIALS/LETTERS FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2000

A Model Child Care System

In a remarkable turnaround over the past 10 years, the Department of Defense has transformed an abysmal military child care system into a model for the nation, judging from a report by the National Women's Law Center, a research and advocacy group. A decade ago, military child care services were plagued with poorly trained staff, extremely high turnover in caregivers, long waiting lists and costs too high for many military families to afford. But child care became a key personnel issue, and in 1989 the Military Child Care Act mandated that improvements be made.

The military created a network of child care centers, child care in family homes and before- and

after-school programs. It nearly tripled the number of child care slots, and established training requirements, safety and health standards and child-to-staff ratios that are rigorously enforced. It also raised wages to \$10 an hour for experienced caregivers, significantly higher than civilian scales. And it provided substantial subsidies to ensure that child care is affordable even to low-income families.

These improvements would not have been possible without more resources. The budget for military child care has risen from \$90 million in 1989 to \$339 million in the last fiscal year. Federal and state policy makers should make a comparable commitment to improve child care in the civilian realm.

Boston Sunday Globe

MAY 21, 2000

Investing in child care

Back when the military used the draft and did not depend so much on volunteers, day care for children on bases was poor. Quality was low, waiting lists were long, fees were beyond many parents' reach, and staff turnover was endemic.

Conditions improved markedly, however, after the draft ended and the services became fully dependent on volunteers who are more likely to be married with children than draftees and can leave the military after their enlistments if they don't like conditions. In fact, improvements were so noteworthy that the National Women's Law Center last week published a report on military child care and held it up as a model for civilian life.

The report includes many excellent suggestions on standards, frequent and unannounced inspections, employer subsidies, and staff training that civilian officials would do well to follow. But the most significant lesson is more basic: Real progress in child care comes when a community – whether it is the US military or a state or a city – simply decides to give day care the importance it deserves.

"The concerns that made investing in child care for the military a high priority – a desire for a stable work force and a healthy child environment – apply equally outside the military," said Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the women's law center.

After the draft ended in 1973, day care in the volunteer military became such a drag on morale and a deterrent to reenlistment that Congress finally passed a law in 1989 to address the problem. Fortunately, the law worked in creating a system of both base child development centers and private, family-based centers.

One secret of the military's success is that its program draws families of all income levels. The program director has said that it is critical that all families, at all income levels, receive some subsidy, so that child care is seen as a universal program and not just for low-income families.

Make high-quality child care a priority and make it universal – these are principles the country as a whole should adopt. Parents should not have to join the military to get good, affordable day care.



Wednesday, May 17, 2000

Military is the model of child-care efficiency

The rest of the country could learn some lessons from the military about providing child care, says a report from the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), a non-profit organization that monitors women's issues. Ten years ago, Congress passed a law ordering the military to meet the need for better child care for increasing numbers of career-oriented women and men in the military. The military turned itself around, becoming a possible model for state policymakers around the country, the report says. The military trains child-care workers better, pays them better, and enforces health and safety standards in facilities better than much of the nation, the NWLC says. As a result of reforms, child-care staff turnover has fallen from 300% annually at some bases to 30%. "If the U.S. military can do an about-face and dramatically improve its child-care system in a relatively short period of time, there is great hope for improving child care across the United States," NWLC president Nancy Duff Campbell says.

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2000

Child Care In Military Is Praised As a Model

By ELIZABETH BECKER

WASHINGTON, May 16 — The military has so improved its child care system in the past decade that it has become a model for state and national programs, according to a study released today.

The National Women's Law Center, a nonprofit research and advocacy group in Washington, said in its report that the military had remade a program once described as a "ghetto" of child care — with long waiting lists, uneven care and costs too high for many military families — into one providing affordable, high-quality care to more than 200,000 children worldwide.

The military, according to Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the center, who discussed the report at a Pentagon briefing, "transformed a seriously deficient child care system into one that now serves as a model for child care reform nationwide."

In those 10 years, the Defense Department and the services created a network of child care centers, family care homes, after-school programs and referral services. The military tripled the number of children in its system and now meets 58 percent of the needs of service members' children requiring care, the study estimated, a level far exceeding that of the civilian child care industry.

In the last fiscal year, the military spent \$339 million for child care, the study found, as the Pentagon realized such services required large subsidies to assure that military families could afford them. Fees are based on the parents' income.

Ms. Campbell said her group hoped to use the study "to push the civilian side and say 'these are the things you can do.'"

Adequate child care became part of the armed forces' efforts to retain members of the all-volunteer services. The military also realized that quality care was needed to cut the service time lost while parents were home caring for their children.

"At first there was no money allocated for child care and we had to compete with tanks and weapons for funding," recalled M.-A. Lucas, the civilian manager for the Army's child care program.

The study praised the military for setting caregiver training requirements and improving the wages. Hourly wages for military caregivers start at \$8 and rise to \$10 after two years. Pay for civilian childcare workers averages \$7.13 an hour.

As a result, staff turnover — a serious problem in civilian child care centers — fell from more than 300 percent a year on some bases to less than 30 percent today.

"This isn't a mere nicety; it's a military necessity," said William S. Cohen, the secretary of defense. "We simply can't afford to have our service members worried about the basic well-being of their families."

Also attending the briefing were Senators Christopher Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, and James M. Jeffords, Republican of Vermont, sponsors of legislation to raise child care financing in the civilian sector.

"Child care, as it's offered to our men and women in uniform, is the gold standard," Mr. Dodd said. "You can't do a job well if you're worried about how your infant child is doing in a child care center or where the care is being given. And so this is about as fundamental as it gets."

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2000

Military Child Care Wins Raves From Study

Advocates Praise 10-Year Overhaul

By JACQUELINE L. SALMON
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the 1980s, just about everyone agrees, the military's child-care system was a mess. As more young parents joined the armed services, demand for child care swelled. But military child-care centers were not prepared for active duty.

Lead-based paint peeled from ceilings and walls in some centers, roofs leaked, poorly paid caregivers supervised as many as 15 babies and toddlers at a time, and in some facilities, entire staffs turned over three times a year.

Ten years after the military launched a massive overhaul of its child-care system, the picture is dramatically different. And yesterday, the National Women's Law Center praised the revamped operation, calling it a model for the country.

Since the Military Child Care Act passed in 1989, standards have risen, caregiver training has become rigorous and the military has started offering benefits and salaries that look positively lush when compared with those in the private sector, the policy group said in a study released yesterday.

"It's time, indeed past time, for the civilian sector to catch up," Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the Law Center, said at a Pentagon news conference attended by military top brass and two U.S. senators.

The authors of the report from the public-policy group, which focuses on women's and children's issues, say they hope it will spur Congress to increase funding for the nation's patchwork child-care system.

Policymakers "need to make the same investment in providing quality child care and affordable child care to working families who aren't in the military," said Judith Applebaum, vice president of the Law Center.

In the Washington area, thousands of service families use military child care—the largest employer-sponsored system in the country.

The system cares for 200,000 children worldwide—in 800 child-care centers, in 9,000 homes where military family members care for youngsters, and in hundreds of programs for school-age children at schools and other locations.

Quality child care is a top priority for the Defense Department, officials say. "We simply can't afford to have our service members worry about the basic care of their family members," said Defense Secretary William S. Cohen.

He said he hopes the Law Center's report will guide similar gains in the civilian world.

The report documents the money and effort the military has poured into its child-care system. Defense Department spending on child care has tripled in the past 10 years, reaching \$352 million in fiscal 2000. Still, the Defense system meets only 58 percent of demand, and military families need 126,000 more slots for their children, the report said.

Reflecting higher pay scales for military child-care workers, their entry-level pay averaged \$8 an hour, compared with the civilian average of \$7.40 an hour, Campbell said.

At the same time, military parents pay 25 percent less a week than civilian parents. Military parents earning \$23,000 or less a year pay as little as \$39 a week per child, while military parents earning \$70,000 or more pay a maximum of \$112 a week, the report said.

In addition to caring for thousands of military children in the region, the military is getting involved in the area's civilian child-care system.

Military personnel are helping revamp the District's child-care regulations, said Barbara Kamera, executive director of the D.C. Office of Early Childhood Development. And civilian child-care workers may take training classes at local military bases for free.

"It's helped tremendously," said Kamera, whose department must add 2,800 subsidized child-care slots by year-end.

Copyright 2000 Copley News Service
Copley News Service

May 15, 2000, Monday

SECTION: Washington - general news

LENGTH: 573 words

HEADLINE: Military child care improves dramatically

BYLINE: Stephen Green

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The military has dramatically improved its once deeply troubled day-care system, according to a new study.

The National Women's Law Center, which conducted the study, described the changes as a "remarkable transformation" that actually could serve as a model for civilian day-care programs.

More than 200,000 children now receive "high-quality, affordable care" at some 800 centers on bases around the world and in nearly 10,000 homes of military spouses who offer child-care services, according to the study.

"The military has shown ... that it is possible to take a woefully inadequate child-care system and dramatically improve it over a relatively short period of time," concluded the law center, which advocates fuller legal rights for women.

"If even a tradition-bound institution like the military can turn its child-care system around, similar progress should be achievable in other settings," added the study, which is to be formally presented to Defense Secretary William Cohen on Tuesday.

Legislation passed by Congress in 1989 mandated reforms in military child care. The action followed revelations of sexual abuse, overcrowded facilities, long waiting lists, fees too high for low-ranking enlisted families, and too few staff members, who also were under-trained and under-paid.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., praised the military Monday for the reforms. When a member of the House, she was instrumental in having congressional hearings focus on child abuse at the centers.

At present, surveys have found that 60 percent of families using military day care rate it as "excellent," compared to only 9 percent before the reforms were implemented, the report said.

Problems remain, however.

Although the system now can accommodate some three times as many children as it could a decade ago, the military is meeting only 58 percent of demand for its services, the study said. But the Pentagon has a goal of meeting 80 percent of demand by 2005, the report added.

Child care was made more affordable by instituting an income-based system of sliding fees, ranging from \$39 to \$112 weekly.

At the same time, Congress followed up its ordering of reform by providing a substantial increase in the subsidy for military child care. The annual appropriation has soared to \$352 million from less than \$90 million.

With the infusion of money, military child-care workers have become better compensated than their civilian counterparts.

The average national entry-level wage for child-care workers is \$7.40 an hour, compared to \$8 in the military system. Its workers get a raise to nearly \$10 an hour within two years.

Military child-care staffers also receive life and health insurance, sick leave and retirement benefits all equivalent to 22 percent of their wages.

The reforms established staff-training requirements, minimum staffing levels based on the number of children at each center, child-abuse prevention measures and standards for health and sanitation.

Installing a hotline for parents to anonymously report problems has been "critical" to enforcement of standards, the study said.

Also, the study found that "an important aspect of the inspection and certification process is the high level of visibility given to the certification results.

"Commanders of the military installations are routinely briefed on the results of the ... inspections," the study added.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 16, 2000

Project Id: NWLC

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;National Women's Law Center

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:



Example: House of Representatives

About LEXIS-NEXIS | Terms and Conditions | What's New

Copyright © 2000 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.

The Associated Press

View Related Topics

The materials in the AP file were compiled by The Associated Press. These materials may not be republished without the express written consent of The Associated Press.

May 16, 2000, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Washington Dateline

LENGTH: 284 words

HEADLINE: Women's group says military child care is a model for civilian reforms

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The military's success in improving child care for its families over the past decade offers lessons for making civilian day care more available and affordable, a women's advocacy group said Tuesday.

"The concerns that made investing in child care for the military a high priority - a desire for a stable work force and for healthy child development - apply equally outside the military," said Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the **National Women's Law Center**.

"We need the same commitment to get results in every state for every child."

At a news conference in the Pentagon, Campbell presented Defense Secretary William Cohen with a copy of her organization's report on what lessons the civilian world can learn from the military's child care programs.

The military provides day care for more than 200,000 children in more than 300 locations. The programs are heavily subsidized by the government.

Campbell said the military system is now a model in several respects, including its comprehensive standards for quality of care; its training of care givers, and its more generous pay scale for care givers.

The military estimates that it meets about 58 percent of the demand among military families for day care, and it has established a timetable for raising that figure to 80 percent within five years.

"The need is very desperate on the civilian side," Campbell said. "If we could even come close to serving 58 percent of families, I think we'd be a lot happier."

Campbell said the turnaround in the quality of child care in the military began with Congress' 1989 passage of the Military Child Care Act, which came after reports and hearings exposed serious shortcomings.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Los Angeles Times
June 4, 2000
Pg. E1

Operation: Superior Child Care

Civilians could learn a thing or two from the military model, which now has skilled providers at affordable prices to parents.

By Lynn Smith, Times Staff Writer

If 4-year-old Denton Logan were unhappy in day care, someone would surely hear about it.

"This boy's my life," said his father, Petty Officer 1st Class Ron Logan, a muscled military weapons instructor at Port Hueneme's Naval Air Station in Ventura County. "He's No. 1." Logan's wife, Tina, works off base, so Logan usually takes Denton to and picks him up from the station's Child Development Center. Whenever Logan leaves home for two-week training sessions, he knows Denton will spend more time at the facility--sometimes up to 12 hours. But he also knows the boy is safe inside the fenced-in base, that he is learning social and academic skills from caregivers, who are trained, well-compensated and content.

Most of all, he said his son is "always happy" at the center, no matter how long he stays there. And that makes Logan happy. "Since he's been in this program, I'm not worried about him at all."

At a time when a vast majority of working parents in California are unable to find licensed care, some like the Logans feel lucky to work for an employer who regards good child care as a necessity--and provides it.

Though criticized 10 years ago, military child care is now "head and shoulders above any state in the country," said Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the National Women's Law Center, a research and advocacy organization in Washington, D.C. The group issued a report in May calling for the civilian sector to emulate the military's dramatic turnaround.

Over the past three decades, the military--similar to the world around it--saw a surge of demand for child care because of a shifting work force with more women and more dual-earner and single-parent families. But unlike the patchwork system that characterizes civilian child care, the Department of Defense built a comprehensive system of child-care centers, family child-care homes, after-school programs and resource and referral services for military families, and, as space allows, civilian employees. It is the nation's largest employer-sponsored child-care program, reaching 200,000 children worldwide.

Child care rose to a top priority because it was perceived as no less than a military readiness issue, said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Victor Vasquez. When service members worry about their children's care, it's difficult "to pay attention to their jobs in areas of high stress, long hours and intensity."

Child care also is a key part of luring and keeping people in the military, said Capt. Jim McConnell Jr., commanding officer of the Naval Construction Battalion Center at Port Hueneme, which has constructed three centers in five years. His own son, Max, 3, attends center-based care regularly. "He couldn't be happier. We couldn't be happier with it," he said.

The military also was pushed to act by a rash of child abuse allegations in the 1980s. Congressional hearings found unsafe and unsuitable conditions at many facilities, a lack of comprehensive standards, poor pay and turnover rates of up to 300%. In 1989, the Military Child Care Act (MCCA) mandated improvements and authorized appropriations, which this fiscal year reached \$339 million, a small fraction of its \$278-billion budget and the cost of about eight Trident missiles.

Two decades ago, the Seabee base in Port Hueneme and its neighbor, the Naval Air Station at Point Mugu, were not much different from other bases, recalled Polly Elam Ferraro, a civilian child-development specialist. She has worked with the Navy for 27 years and is now a child-development program administrator in the Navy's southwest region.

She said the general attitude then was, "If the Navy had wanted you to have a family, they would have issued you one with your sea bag." Not subject to state licensing, the base had no strong regulations. Some children were watched in a converted Quonset hut, others in a converted liquor store. Navy caregivers, like their civilian counterparts, worked for minimum wage with few benefits and typically left for better jobs as soon as they could.

When the MCCA funds started to flow, some military officials were skeptical. "They said, 'We're going to give you money. Prove to us that money works,' " said Elam Ferraro.

Whereas states have tackled child-care demand by focusing on quantity, the military emphasized quality, even though it meant fewer children would be served at first, Campbell said.

By most accounts, the strategy succeeded. With every passing year, advocates realized that the military was solving child care's fundamental puzzle: how to change low salaries and high turnover, conditions associated with poor care, without passing on higher costs to already strapped parents.

Still, the extent of the military's transformation surprised National Women's Law Center researchers.

For instance, Campbell said, they hadn't been aware that 95% of military child-care centers are now accredited by the National Assn. for the Education of Young Children, or NAEYC. Outside the military, the average is 8%.

Teams of specialists conduct four unannounced inspections of military centers and homes every year, checking curriculum, staff-child relationships and physical conditions. California requires inspections, largely for health and safety, once a year at centers and once every three years at home child-care operations.

The military revamped its caregivers' pay scale, matching entry salaries with other GS-4 positions such as personnel clerks and providing full medical benefits. Wages also are directly linked to training and continued education--an "up or out" policy that requires caregivers to complete preservice training as well as 13 courses, from safety and cognitive development to creativity and self-esteem.

Campbell said researchers were particularly impressed by a requirement to have a curriculum specialist in every center who has no other responsibilities than to provide up-to-date training and in-house quality assurance. "That's a luxury," she said.

Turnover rates now are less than 30% and triggered primarily by military transfers. The military charges parents a sliding scale fee from \$54 a week for those families grossing under \$23,000 a year to \$101 for those earning more than \$55,000. Such fees do not cover the costs of operations so the Defense department picks up the balance. The original MCCA appropriations matched parents' fees, but now the subsidy exceeds the fees.

Universal subsidies are another expensive and controversial luxury in child care. "In this country, we can't even cover the poor, let alone reach into the middle- and higher-income families," Campbell said.

'No Home Alone' Policy at Bases

On a recent Wednesday, Elam Ferraro conducted a tour of the Port Hueneme Child Development Center, a spotless, single-story building located in a neighborhood of single-family homes within the gate-guarded base. The bases at Port Hueneme and Point Mugu have a "no home alone" policy and parents of children under 9 are referred to one of two child development centers for infants and toddlers, a youth and teen center, or family child-care homes, run by trained and monitored military spouses in their own homes.

Other than a tiny toy tank that sat alongside stuffed animals on Elam Ferraro's desk, there were few overt signs that "military" child care was different from state-of-the-art child care anywhere.

Caregiver/student ratios are low and there seemed to be a caregiver for every three toddlers, who were quietly watching snails, eating lunch or playing on the floor. Some caregivers, spelled by substitutes, were taking breaks. A housekeeper was busy cleaning up.

Elam Ferraro pointed out features she designed, such as the observation windows with sound so parents can peek into any room without disrupting the children. To protect against charges of child abuse, caregivers are not allowed to be alone with children. Video cameras also monitor the rooms at the Point Mugu facilities and images are fed live to the front desk. The tapes also can be used to answer parents' questions or complaints.

"If you have an allegation or a question, we say, 'Let's look at the tape and see,' " Elam Ferraro said. Recently a parent complained a caregiver should have been watching her child when he fell. The tape showed the child had simply tripped, she said.

Elam Ferraro said she adores the military regulations that proscribe operating details down to the provision of rattles and squeak toys, diapering procedures approved by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and daily cleaning with a quarter-cup of bleach per gallon of water solution. Even the walls are dusted.

Caregivers must not clean. "No one can say we're going to save dollars by having caregivers mop the floor," she said.

They are expected to focus all their attention on their small charges, using the developmental approach favored by the NAEYC.

Some things, like happiness and relationships, are beyond regulation. So, Elam Ferraro, a disciple of Los Angeles infant educator Magda Gerber, also sometimes applies "Polly's rules" to foster respect between children and adults.

Infants follow feeding and sleeping schedules on demand. When they are awake, they are out of their cribs, playing with caregivers. "The most important thing at this age," she said, "is developing a good sense of who they are, realizing their power, so they can get confidence to move out into the academic world."

At lunch, toddlers serve themselves and clean up their own spills. When it's time to sign in, or have their diapers changed, they climb up steps so adults don't have to lift them.

Because caregiver turnover is said to make some children insecure and distrustful of adults, some caregivers move along with their children as they mature into more advanced classes. Even if they don't, they try to stay in touch. Cmdr. Karen Coyle, executive officer of the Naval Weapons Test Squadron at Point Mugu, said her 4-year-old daughter still sees the caregiver she had at 16 months. "The teacher who helped potty train her is still the one who says hello to her every day and gives her a big hug."

Some parents like Petty Officer 3rd Class Darrell Lee and his wife, Jamie, feel a sense of security knowing their children are close to home and work, safe and observable at any time. The past few weeks, both parents have gone to the center to watch their son, Devin, 4, during nap time.

Caregivers apparently are pleased with their jobs. Turnover on the two bases is down to 15%.

Two civilian caregivers said they want to work at the base until they retire. Dolores Cabrera likes the pay. Through pay increases are linked to training, she worked her way up from \$4.07 an hour in 1987 to \$17.46 an hour as the center's director. Cindy Pearson said she appreciates the benefits. Through her job she is able to provide her husband and two children with full medical benefits, including orthodontia, dental and vision. During school breaks and vacations, her children attend day camps at Point Mugu for

a minimal fee.

Not everyone thinks the system is perfect, however most complaints about military child care center around daytime-only hours, waiting lists and costs to parents, Campbell said. Parents can wait as long as two years for an opening at the Port Hueneme Center, although exceptions are made if a commander orders it.

Elam Ferraro said the military faces problems squarely.

If a center fails one of the inspections, it has 90 days to fix the problem or the facility is closed. Four child-care homes have been closed in the past 10 years.

In 1996, a Point Mugu child-care worker was suspected of molesting a toddler. The Navy conducted a five-month investigation, bringing in an eight-member Child Abuse Response Team from San Diego and 40 federal investigators from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the FBI and the U.S. attorney's office. They interviewed 87 children in the facility as well as those in after-school programs and homes where the suspect had baby-sat. In the end, without witnesses or physical evidence, criminal charges were dropped.

The main problem in recent years is that the bases can't help all the parents clamoring for day care. Overall the military still meets only 58% of its estimated need for child care, especially for infants and toddlers. The military plans to expand, but at some point, "the taxpayers can't afford any more," Elam Ferraro said.

One solution is to partner with family day-care homes in the surrounding community. Another is to recruit more home-care providers on base.

To help providers keep high standards and still make money, the military will pay them \$100 per week in direct subsidies for each child under 3, Elam Ferraro said.

Last summer, she said she realized how far the military had come. She was sitting in the Washington, D.C., office of the assistant secretary of the Navy discussing budget cuts with top officials. She suddenly noticed they all agreed quality should not be sacrificed. Tears came into her eyes then, she said, because "these people realized it was important."

Demand for child care in all quarters is at an all-time high, Campbell said. About 72% of women with children under 18 and 78% with school-age children are now in the civilian work force. Over the next five years, women are expected to account for 60% of new labor-force entrants, according to a report this year by the National Council of Jewish Women.

Although civilian child care has improved in some areas, the system remains uneven--even desperate--in others. Some preschool teachers are said to be leaving their jobs for openings in the public school system. In Los Angeles County there are only 186,000 licensed slots for 1 million children who need them, according to a 1999 state-funded study.

Civilian Sector Should Follow Military's Lead

The military has had some obvious advantages over the civilian sector as it struggles to improve, Campbell said. The military is working with a population smaller than the state of California; it is a closed system based on following orders; and all programs are gathered under the single commander of each service.

But the differences should not be overstated, she said. Like many advocates, Campbell argues the civilian sector can model the military by increasing federal and state funding of child-care programs and shifting its attitude.

The main element that transformed the military, Campbell said, was the will to change. "The military saw it was critical to their work force. They saw the welfare of the kids was at stake," she said.

The military has begun to share its expertise in small ways.

Vasquez said so far the military has listed its best practices on its Web page (<http://dticaw.dtic.mil/milchild>), established a speakers bureau and provided some training. Elam Ferraro said her military employees in Ventura County often invite colleagues from local preschools and community colleges to training sessions and conferences and vice versa.

Experiments with elements of the military model are starting to "pop up all over the country now," said Marcy Whitebrook, senior researcher at the Institute of Industrial Relations at UC Berkeley. This month, the U.S. Senate is expected to consider an \$817-million proposal to increase child-care development block grants that would foster ways to link pay to professional improvement, improve accreditation and subsidize parent fees. In California, several counties are proposing to use funds from Proposition 10, the cigarette tax initiative, to reward caregivers for professional development. The state Legislature also is considering a proposal to provide matching funds to the grants.

"Gov. Davis, who is so concerned about education and teachers in K-12, would do well to look at the military example," Whitebrook said.

"It's an exciting time," she said. "We've moved from whether we need to intervene to what's the best way."

Two Systems of Child Care

Military -- Accreditation: 95% of all centers; Starting pay: \$8 an hour raised to \$10 in two years; full benefits; Training: Basic pre-service training and 13 more courses. Linked to pay increases; Fees: Sliding scale fees. \$3,640 average annual fee. Subsidies to all parents to cover costs.

Non military -- Accreditation: 8% of all centers; Starting pay: Average wage in centers is \$7.40 an hour; benefits vary; Training: No training required in 31 states; Fees: Annual average ranges from low of \$3,342 in Birmingham, Ala., to high of \$7,904 in Boston.

Sources: National Women's Law Center, National Council of Jewish Women.

STATEMENT OF NANCY DUFF CAMPBELL
Co-President, National Women's Law Center
May 16, 2000

CONTACT: Margot Friedman
202/588-5180

Military Provides Model For Child Care Reform Nationwide, Women's Leader Says

Thank you, Secretary Cohen, for hosting this event and for taking the child care needs of your workforce so seriously. In doing so, you set a proud and important example for the nation. Thank you, Senators Dodd and Jeffords, for being here today and for all of your efforts in the U.S. Congress to address the child care needs of American families. And thank you to the military families who are here today, representing the many families who are benefitting from military child care, for your important service in our nation's defense.

Today, the National Women's Law Center releases a ground-breaking new report, ***Be All That We Can Be: Lessons from the Military for Improving our Nation's Child Care System.*** This first-of-its-kind study shows how the military successfully transformed a seriously deficient child care system into one that now serves as a model for child care reform nationwide, offering concrete lessons that policy makers, advocates and others can draw upon to make similar improvements in child care for civilian families across the U.S.

Just a decade ago, child care in the military was plagued by problems that are all too familiar to civilian families today. Demand for child care had surged as a result of changes in the workforce that included more families with two working parents and more women. Tens of thousands of children were on waiting lists for care. Military families could not afford care, even

if they could find it. Caregivers lacked training and were so poorly compensated that they didn't stay long in the field, and the quality of care suffered. The recruiting, retention and performance of military personnel were affected, putting military readiness at risk.

But the military responded in dramatic fashion – an "about face," if you will. The Department of Defense consciously set out to – and did – build a child care system that effectively links centers, family child care homes, after-school programs, and resource and referral services, and that provides high-quality, affordable care to a steadily increasing proportion of the military families who need it.

It's time – past time – for the civilian sector to catch up. With over 70 percent of American women with children now in the paid work force, the demand for child care is at an all-time high. Yet too often, high-quality child care is unaffordable or simply unavailable to families who need it.

The military's experience teaches that it doesn't have to be this way. The Defense Department has shown that quality can be raised by establishing comprehensive standards and enforcing them with unannounced inspections, increasing provider training and pay, and helping providers meet the standards required for outside accreditation.

Today, more than 95 percent of military child development centers are accredited – compared to 8 percent of civilian child care centers in the U.S. Today, all children in military child care are cared for by staff who receive basic pre-service training – compared to the children in too many states – 31 – that require no such training. Today, the entry-level wage for a military caregiver is nearly \$8 an hour; increasing to \$10 after core competency training – compared to an average wage for a civilian caregiver of only \$7.40 an hour. All of these improvements contribute to the high quality of military child care.

The Defense Department has also addressed affordability, with subsidies and sliding fee schedules based on a family's income. The average weekly fee paid by military families is some 25 percent lower than the average weekly fee paid by civilian families for comparable center-based care. And the lower fees paid by military families are a result of the subsidies provided, not lower costs to the military of providing care – which is about 7 percent higher than the cost of providing comparable civilian care.

Finally, the military continually assesses the need of its families for high-quality, affordable child care and is moving steadily toward its goal of meeting 80 percent of the need by 2005.

Congress and the Defense Department have recognized the importance of child care to the military workforce and to the welfare of the children in care, and have committed the resources necessary to create a model system. The need is no less great – no less urgent – no less compelling – for such a commitment outside the military. Today, we call on lawmakers at the federal and state levels to learn from the military's success, to follow the military's lead, and to make a serious investment in solving our nation's very real child care needs.

Secretary Cohen, I am delighted to present you with a copy of the National Women's Law Center's new report, *Be All That We Can Be: Lessons from the Military for Improving our Nation's Child Care System*.

Embargoed Until:
Press Conference at the Pentagon
Tuesday, May 16, 2000
10:00 a.m., EST

Contact: Margot Friedman or
Maricka Oglesby at 202-588-5180
web site: www.nwlc.org

MILITARY PROVIDES MODEL FOR CHILD CARE REFORMS, NEW NWLC REPORT CONCLUDES

At a time when child care around the country is woefully inadequate, the U.S. military has achieved a remarkable transformation of its child care system and its experience provides important lessons for policy makers, child care providers and parents concerned about improving child care everywhere. These are the major findings of the National Women's Law Center's new report, *Be All That We Can Be: Lessons from the Military for Improving Our Nation's Child Care System*, which was released today and presented to Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen at a news conference at the Pentagon.

"If the U.S. military can do an about-face and dramatically improve its child care system in a relatively short period of time, there is great hope for improving child care across the United States. The lessons learned from this example should be applied to expand access to high quality, affordable child care for everyone," said Nancy Duff Campbell, NWLC Co-President.

Secretary Cohen said, "Quality military child care is essential for the readiness of our Armed Forces. America's military is the best in the world not just because of our technology, training and tactics but, above all, because we recruit and retain the best men and women the country has to offer." The military runs what is essentially the largest employer-sponsored child care program in the country, serving over 200,000 children per day in over 300 locations.

NWLC's report describes the deficiencies in military child care before the reforms; the specific steps that the military used to turn its system around; and, most importantly, a series of "lessons learned" showing how the military's experience can be applied more broadly to improve civilian child care.

With the advent of the All Volunteer Force in 1973, the military experienced significant demographic changes that had a direct impact on the demand for child care. The Services were no longer comprised mainly of single men, but increasingly of career-oriented men and women with children. But the military child care system did not meet the needs of these families. It was plagued by many of the deficiencies that are familiar to civilian parents today – poor quality care, a lack of standards addressing issues such as maximum group size and educational activities, high staff turnover due to low salaries and poor working conditions, long waiting lists for available slots, and unaffordable parent fees. Prodded by Congressional hearings and the enactment of the Military Child Care Act of 1989, the Department of Defense now runs a military child care system that is a model for the nation.

“The concerns that made investing in child care for the military a high priority – a desire for a stable workforce and for healthy child development – apply equally outside the military. We need the same commitment to get results in every state and for every child,” said Campbell.

Be All That We Can Be provides six key lessons from the military for state and federal policy makers:

Lesson 1: Do Not Be Daunted by the Task: It is Possible to Take a Woefully Inadequate Child Care System and Dramatically Improve It.

- ▶ The military consciously set out to, and did, build a system that links centers, family child care homes, before- and after-school programs, and resource and referral services to assist parents in finding care through a single point of entry.
- ▶ No state has such a systemic approach, whose adoption would dramatically improve child care across the country.

Lesson 2: Recognize and Acknowledge the Seriousness of the Child Care Problem and the Consequences of Inaction.

- ▶ Policy makers in Congress and in DoD acted to improve military child care because they recognized the harsh consequences of poor child care on military readiness and child welfare.
- ▶ With some exceptions, policy makers at the state and federal levels have not made the same commitment to improving civilian child care, despite the similar threat to workforce performance and the healthy development and learning of children.
- ▶ It is essential that policy makers recognize these connections and consequences and take action.

Lesson 3: Improve Quality by Establishing and Enforcing Comprehensive Standards, Assisting Providers in Becoming Accredited, and Enhancing Provider Compensation and Training.

a) Develop Comprehensive, Uniform Standards, and Ensure That They Are Met Through a System of Unannounced Inspections and Sanctions for Violations.

- ▶ Basic standards – encompassing health and safety, staff/child ratios, staff training, and other matters – have been established and rigorously enforced in all forms of military child care. For example, the military requires and conducts four unannounced inspections of its child care centers and family child care homes per year, and installation commanders are routinely briefed and held accountable for inspection results at their bases.
- ▶ On the civilian side, state standards vary considerably and some programs are exempt from any protections. No state requires four annual unannounced inspections of child care centers and fourteen states require visits to family child care homes only once every five years.

- ▶ States could significantly increase the quality of care by measuring state standards against those established by outside experts, strengthening them, and applying them to a wider range of care, as well as by adopting the military's model of a rigorous, unannounced inspection program with meaningful, well-publicized sanctions for non-compliance.
- b) Assist Providers in Meeting Additional Voluntary Standards, Such as Those Necessary for Outside Accreditation.**
- ▶ The military has provided the resources to help its child care centers meet the high national accreditation standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, addressing such concerns as staff/child interactions and developmental activities. Ninety-five percent of military child care centers are accredited by NAEYC, compared with just 8 percent of civilian child care centers nationwide.
 - ▶ Following the military's lead, states should encourage child care providers, through grants or other incentives, to go beyond mandatory minimum licensing requirements and to meet higher accreditation standards.
- c) Increase Staff Compensation and Improve Staff Training, and Link Compensation Increases to the Achievement of Training Milestones.**
- ▶ In military child care centers, caregivers receive systematic, ongoing training as well as compensation linked to training that is comparable to that of other individuals with similar training, seniority and experience. As a result, staff turnover has been reduced dramatically – from over 300 percent annually at some bases before the reforms to less than 30 percent today – and staff morale and professionalism have improved.
 - ▶ The civilian child care workforce lacks access to training, is poorly compensated and is prone to high turnover rates that undermine the quality of care. Unlike the military, thirty-one states do not require that child care workers receive any training before they can care for children. Moreover, the *average* wage for a caregiver is currently \$7.40 per hour in a civilian child care center and less than \$5 per hour in a civilian family child care home – below the nearly \$8 per hour *entry-level* wage for a military child care center worker, who receives a raise to \$10 per hour upon the successful completion of training.
 - ▶ States should use the military model to develop similar training and compensation strategies.

Lesson 4: Keep Parent Fees Affordable Through Subsidies.

- ▶ Parent fees in military child care centers are subject to a sliding fee schedule based on income to ensure that personnel with the lowest incomes can afford child care; in addition, commanders provide direct subsidies to family child care homes to help keep parent fees reasonable. On average, fees for center-based military care are 25 percent lower than fees paid by civilians for comparable care, even though military families typically use center care for longer hours and for younger children (including infants) than civilian families.
- ▶ In civilian care today, a patchwork of government measures assists some families in meeting their child care expenses, but not adequately. For example, the Child Care and

Development Block Grant reaches only 10 percent of children eligible under federal guidelines. Moreover, experts recommend that low-income families above the poverty level should be required to pay no more than 10 percent of their income for child care, approximately what military families pay. Yet in 1999, ten states required a family of three at 150 percent of the poverty level to pay more than 10 percent of its income in child care co-payments to receive a subsidy; in an additional nine states, such a family was eligible for no child care subsidy at all.

- ▶ Policy makers, at both the state and federal levels, should follow the military's example in making significant public resources available to help subsidize care for families who cannot afford to pay the full cost of good child care.

Lesson 5: Expand the Availability of All Kinds of Care by Continually Assessing Unmet Need and Taking Steps to Address It.

- ▶ The military made a conscious decision to focus its initial efforts on the quality and cost of care, to some extent at the expense of expanding supply. Nevertheless, the military estimates that it is currently meeting about 58 percent of its child care need and has a plan, with specific goals and timetables, to reach 80 percent by 2005.
- ▶ No state is providing subsidized, high-quality child care to anywhere near 58 percent of its families.
- ▶ Both the federal government and the states should follow the military's model of continually assessing need and developing specific plans to expand child care capacity.

Lesson 6: Commit the Resources Necessary to Get the Job Done.

- ▶ The military could not have achieved its successes without a substantial increase in resources. Funds appropriated for military child care have climbed dramatically in recent years, from about \$90 million before the enactment of the Military Child Care Act to \$352 million in FY 2000.
- ▶ Although it is difficult to quantify the level of public investment in civilian child care today, it is woefully inadequate to meet the need, especially for low-income families.
- ▶ Both the federal government and the states should recognize, as the military has, that increased funding for child care ultimately pays for itself in the stability of the workforce and the healthy development of children – and increase their investments dramatically.

NWLC will work with state and federal policy makers to implement the lessons learned in *Be All That We Can Be* to improve civilian child care. Established in 1972, the National Women's Law Center conducts public policy research, advocacy, litigation and public education efforts to protect and advance the legal rights of women and their families, with special attention given to the concerns of low-income women. NWLC has a longstanding record of involvement in child care and issues of concern to women in the military.

Note to reporters: To download a copy of the report or background materials, visit www.nwlc.org or call 202-588-5180.

###