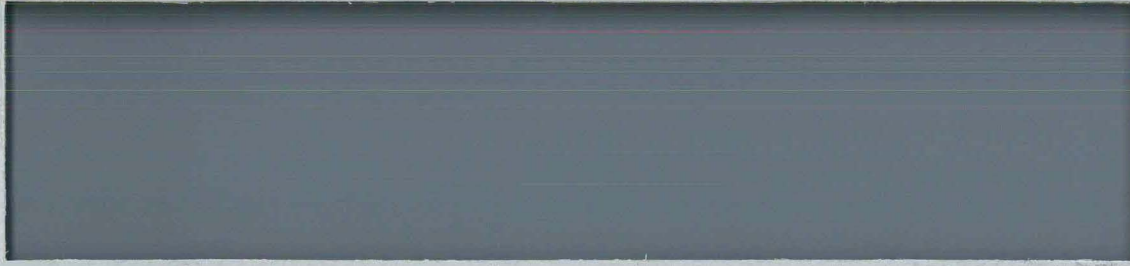


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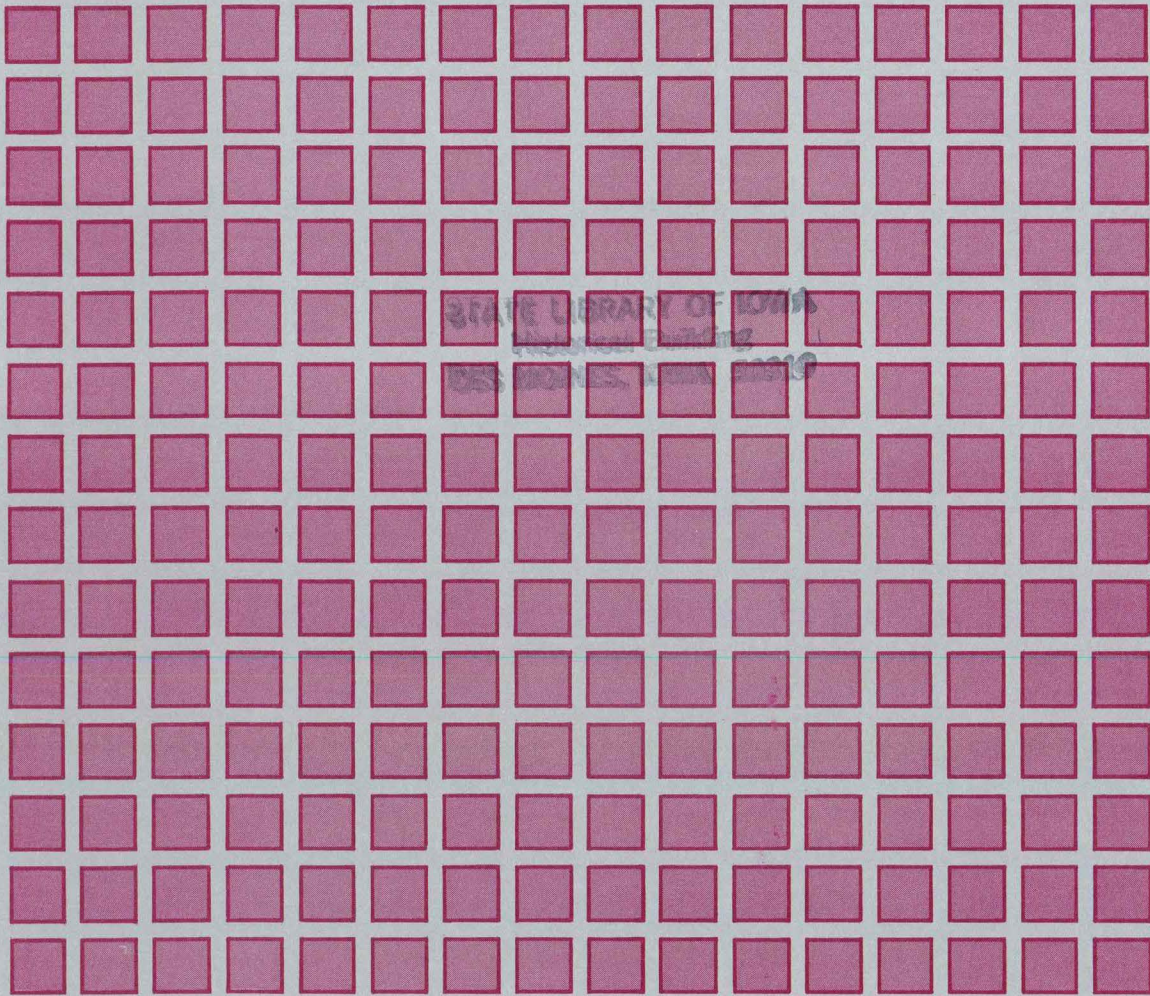
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CHILDCARE CONSUMERS:  
ASSESSING INFORMATION NEEDS OF IOWA'S PARENTS

Dorothy Pinsky and Robert Fuqua

Project Commissioned by  
THE LEGISLATIVE EXTENDED ASSISTANCE GROUP

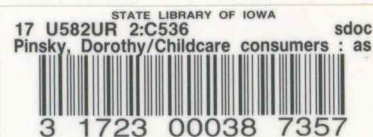
Funded by

The Iowa General Assembly  
and  
The Northwest Area Foundation  
Grant No. 515851  
to  
The Institute of Urban and Regional Research  
The University of Iowa

Report Published by  
The Institute of Urban and Regional Research  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

January 1984

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## PREFACE

Iowa's Legislative Extended Assistance Group (LEAG) was formed in 1978 to encourage interaction between state government and university researchers.\* Each year LEAG has identified issues of public policy where research is needed to aid Iowa's legislature. Specific proposals for research have been solicited, and LEAG has funded practical projects of policy research which have been undertaken by college and university faculty throughout Iowa. The results of the research work are given peer review prior to being published and made available to all members of the Iowa General Assembly.

This report, by Professors Dorothy Pinsky and Robert Fuqua of Iowa State University, is one of several LEAG reports being published for the 1984 Iowa General Assembly covering research that was completed in the fall of 1983. All of these project reports are available through The University of Iowa, which administers the LEAG program.

The research performed by Professors Pinsky and Fuqua involved an investigation of child care arrangements made by parents in Iowa. By means of data produced from a questionnaire sent to 540 Iowa parents who use child care, an analysis was made of such concerns as how parents choose child care options in Iowa; whether parents encounter problems with child care; parents' satisfaction with the child care arrangements available to them; and how consumers' child care choices might be improved. Iowa parents are generally satisfied with their child care arrangements, but a number of problems are evident (such as the difficulty of obtaining care for sick children, infants, and school-age children and the cost of care). The researchers close with suggestions for state action to improve the decision process in arranging child care, and a series of options is listed for possible legislative or administrative support of improved child care in Iowa.

The research performed for this and other LEAG reports has been supported by grants from the Northwest Area Foundation and the Iowa General Assembly.

John W. Fuller  
LEAG Executive Director

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\*Prior to 1982, LEAG stood for Legislative Environmental Advisory Group. The revised title reflects the expanded scope of LEAG research activities for 1982 and subsequent years.

## ABSTRACT

Five hundred and forty parents with children ranging in age from newborn to school-aged, and using either center-based or family day care homes were surveyed to find out about their child care arrangements: their selection procedures, problems they had encountered, their satisfaction, and suggestions for helping other parents.

Findings indicated a variety of problems parents had encountered, a large percentage of parents who had not utilized sound consumer skills in their selection process, and an overall satisfaction with present arrangements. Several findings pointed to the need for more diversity of child care options for parents, for accurate and specific information about specific programs, and for information and referral services at local levels to assist parents with selection. There is a need to provide support to families, providers of child care, and employers of parents through regulation, research, dissemination of information, and financial assistance and incentives so that all families requiring care for their children can have access to a variety of options for affordable, good quality child care.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Programs for young children, such as public schools, kindergartens, nursery schools and intervention programs like Head Start, were developed with the primary purpose of meeting the needs of children. Day care, on the other hand, has evolved less purposefully, but rapidly, with the primary purpose of meeting the growing needs of parents for the care of their children in their absence. The sharp distinction between the origins and purpose of day care and other early childhood programs has impacted on families seeking good quality affordable child care. Siegel and Lawrence (in press) state that "The supply of child care services has not developed within any rational framework of regulations, policy, or legislation. The resulting child care system is like a patchwork quilt made up of public and private agencies."

At one time, parents needing a few hours of child care bartered informally with friends, relatives or neighbors. In more recent times, social and economic conditions have resulted in an increase of women in the work force, including increasingly larger numbers of mothers of children under six years of age (Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families 1983). Because these women need to spend longer periods of time away from the home, more formal arrangements have been necessary for the care of their children. The once-familiar practice of bartering for child care has given way to direct payment for child care services. In addition, there is an emerging need for a variety of child care options to reflect the differing values and needs of Iowa's families.

### Recent Trends and Projections

Data from recent studies and public information sources dramatically illustrate the growing need for child care outside the home. The percentage of mothers in the labor force has increased greatly over the last decade. In 1970, 39 percent of all children under 18 years of age had mothers in the labor force. By 1982, that proportion had risen to 55 percent. Of those children, 29 percent were under five years of age in 1970; this figure

increased to 46 percent in 1982. The proportion of school-age children with mothers in the labor force rose from 43 percent in 1970 to 59 percent in 1982 (Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families 1983). In Iowa in 1980, 49 percent of mothers with children under six years of age were in the labor force, while 66 percent with school-age children worked outside the home (U.S. Census Bureau 1980).

The traditional two-parent family consisting of a male wage-earner and a mother who stays home to care for children has undergone many changes. In 1970, 30.3 percent of all married women with children under five years of age were in the labor force. By 1982, that proportion had increased to 48.7 percent. Of married mothers with school-age children, 49.2 percent were employed outside the home in 1970. By 1982, 63.2 percent of married women with school-age children were in the labor force (Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families 1983).

In addition to these changes, the number of female-headed families has increased. In 1970, 10.8 percent of all families with children under 18 years of age were headed by females; by 1981, that figure had increased to 18.3 percent (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1983). Today, 62 percent of all children in one-parent families have mothers who work; 50 percent of these children are under the age of six.

Finding affordable child care is particularly difficult for poor and working-class families with mothers in the labor force. Approximately 51 percent of all children under 18 with mothers who work come from families with a total income of \$15,000 or less, while more than 60 percent of all children under 18 from black families with working mothers have a total family income of less than \$15,000 (Children's Defense Fund 1982).

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1983) recently reported that finding adequate and affordable child care is a particularly acute problem for all disadvantaged female heads of household. Specifically, the lack of available adequate child care restricts labor force participation for certain subgroups in need of employment, e.g., blacks, Hispanics, young mothers 18-24, and non-high school graduates. The Commission points out that "Educational and employment opportunities that these women cannot pursue because of inadequate child care are economic opportunities effectively denied" (p.63).



There is a critical shortage of licensed child care facilities and homes. In a report prepared for the National Governor's Association this year, Maine Governor Joseph E. Brennan stated that "There are less available child care spaces today than in 1977" (p.21). In fact, in 1980, ten-year projections estimated that 50 percent of all preschool children and 60 percent of all school-age children would have mothers in the labor force. These projections have already been matched or exceeded. In 1982, 49.9 percent of all mothers employed outside the home had preschool-age children, and 65.8 percent of mothers with school-age children were in the labor force (Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families 1983). It is estimated that at least 13 million children under 13 years of age have both parents employed full time and at least 5.2 million of these children spend a significant portion of the time when their parents are at work without adult supervision. This growing "latch-key" problem is just beginning to receive serious consideration by policymakers.

#### Day Care: Shared Childrearing

One national child care consumer study has been conducted to date (Rodes n.d.). Evidence from this study supports the view that day care is primarily being used to meet parents' needs. Eighty-three percent agreed that the reason for using child care was (1) to allow parents to work or attend school (39.4%); or (2) to participate in community activities or to "go out" (43.6%). Only 10.9 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were using day care to promote development or socialization of their children. While the parents readily identify their needs as the reason for using day care, they are not sure of its place in the family configuration.

Traditional views of parenting expect that children, especially infants, toddlers and preschoolers, should be reared at home by their parents. When, under extenuating circumstances, this can not occur, friends, relatives, neighbors or people known personally are acceptable substitutes. Care by others, i.e. "strangers," is viewed with suspicion and is far less acceptable and often perceived as detrimental to children. However, the rapid emergence of child care outside the home has not allowed society an opportunity to

examine thoughtfully this trend and readjust its expectations of parents. These expectations are not always expressed directly and openly, but often in a more subtle, but still effective manner. The fact that parenting is more effective and spontaneous than rational and deliberate contributes to maintaining the status quo regarding the role of parents (Katz 1982). In addition, professionals in the fields of child development and parent education have not provided clear guidance concerning the issues relating to child care by "strangers." Conflict and confusion result in the minds of parents when there is a pressing need for child care outside the home and it is not sanctioned by society.

Caregivers also share in this confusion. Since day care, as we know it today, is a relatively new social phenomenon, caregivers, like parents, have not experienced it and are uncertain of what their role should be (Prescott, in press). Caregivers draw from child development/early childhood education preparation and the preschool/nursery school models they represent. Those without formal preparation rely more on their own personal experiences with children in group settings such as Sunday school and public school or from their own family experiences. As a result, they, as well as parents, are ill prepared to adopt the notion of shared childrearing. Caregivers, spending longer hours with children and facing the concomitant demands are not sure whether they should be fulfilling a supervisory or a childrearing role. Parents are reluctant to share the childrearing role and often mistrust care-givers. In 1975, The National Child Care Consumer Study (Rodes n.d.) reported that a large minority of respondents feel fearful about "...how their children might be treated or influenced in certain child care arrangements or that they felt guilty about leaving their children with others" (p.2-17).

The confusion, conflict and guilt experienced by caregivers and parents can lead to conditions which interfere with both the home and the day care setting positively impacting on the child's development. To the degree that parents and caregivers can maintain a positive orientation to each other and establish mutual trust and common childrearing goals, they will be able to reduce discontinuity in their shared childrearing (Bronfenbrenner 1979). However, some recent research indicates that more discontinuity than continuity exists between day care settings and homes (Powell 1978; Zigler and Turner 1982).

## Parents As Consumers

Another consequence of the child care dilemma is that parents are not trained to approach child care from a consumer viewpoint. Over the past decade, schools, popular magazines, and the mass media have all provided consumer education about product selection. However, few if any of these resources have produced consumer education to help parents become discriminating consumers of day care (Bradley and Endsley 1980). In fact, Steinberg and Green (1978) found in a sample of California families that parents typically had very little, if any, information about the care-giver, the center or program before making a decision about placing their child. They concluded that "...most Americans know considerably more about the automobiles they drive than about the person they entrust with the daily care of their child" (p.14).

Concurrently, the majority of providers of child care (family day care home providers) have not been prepared to view themselves as professionals providing child care. Many home providers do not employ business skills because they have not been prepared to view their role from a business perspective, and many providers view state regulation of their services as threatening.

Our knowledge of the day care experience and its place in today's family life is limited because researchers have not adequately studied how parents function as consumers of child care. The need for day care is great and growing. If this need is to be met, more information is needed about what it is that parents look for, where they receive their information about child care, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with different care arrangements, and the ways in which local and state governments can assist parents in making the best possible selection of child care from options which provide as a minimum, safe adequate care.

Beck (1982) has noted, "With a few exceptions, there have been no comparable increases in local, state or federal licensing, information and referral, technical assistance, or monitoring capacity to help locate, identify, and improve publicly supported child care" (p.310).

The purpose of this research is to examine the ways in which parents with varying child care needs have chosen child care options. For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire was developed and mailed to six groups of parents. The groups varied according to their use of center-based or family day care, and as to whether they were parents of an infant or toddler (newborn to 3 years), a preschool-age child (3 to 6 years), or a school-age child (6 to 12 years). The questionnaire addressed how the parents selected their present child care situation, the problems they had confronted, and the assistance they had sought and solicited suggestions about what would be helpful to other parents or what the parents would like to have available to them.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Methods

#### Subjects

Subjects of the study were 540 Iowa parents who were currently using child care. Ninety-four percent of the respondents were mothers, 4 percent were fathers, and 2 percent were others (e.g., guardians, relatives). Eighty-six percent of the families described themselves as a two-parent family, 14 percent as a one-parent family. Ninety-two percent reported mothers employed outside the home. Of these, 74 percent indicated full-time employment, 26 percent part time. Table 1 shows ages of parents, highest level of education attained by the parents, and total family income before taxes.

Table 1  
Characteristics of Subject Families

#### AGES OF PARENTS BY PERCENT

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
Under 19	0.5	0.0
20 - 24	8	0.5
25 - 29	40	29
30 - 34	38	41
35 - 40	12	20
41+	2	6

#### HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED BY PARENTS BY PERCENT

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
Grade School	4	6
Some High School	1	3
High School Graduate	23	24
Junior College	5	5
Vocational School	13	8
Some College	22	17
College Graduate	22	23
Some Graduate Work	7	8
Graduate Degree	7	12

Table 1 (continued)

TOTAL FAMILY INCOME BEFORE TAXES BY PERCENT

Under \$5,000 - 4	\$20,000 - \$24,999 - 18
\$5,000 - \$7,999 - 4	\$25,000 - \$29,000 - 14
\$8,000 - \$9,999 - 3	\$30,000 - \$34,999 - 13
\$10,000 - \$14,000 - 8	\$35,000 - \$39,000 - 11
\$15,000 - \$19,000 - 12	Over \$40,000 - 14

Instrument. A 44-item questionnaire was constructed to collect data regarding (a) selection and utilization of child care, (b) problems encountered, (c) importance of and satisfaction with certain aspects of day care, (d) assistance sought and recommended, and (e) some demographics of the families (See Appendix A).

Sample Selection. The main criterion for selecting families for questionnaire distribution was that of families currently using center-based or family/group day care homes for children of all ages (infants through school-agers). With the assistance of the Children's Bureau of the Iowa Department of Human Services (IDHS), lists were obtained of all licensed day care centers providing care for infants, preschoolers, and school-age children in the eight IDHS districts. Centers were targeted from these lists to include the following characteristics: (1) geographic location - urban/rural, (2) employer-sponsored programs, and (3) non-profit and for-profit programs. Twenty-five directors were contacted by phone to solicit their cooperation. All 25 agreed to participate.

To identify all registered group day care homes (64), a list was obtained from the Iowa Department of Human Services. Two-hundred-forty family day care homes were identified from lists of registered providers obtained from two agencies sponsoring the Child Care Food Program in family day care homes. These homes were located in central and north central Iowa, primarily IDHS districts 2, 6 and 7. To maximize the probability of obtaining information from families with children of all ages, directors and providers were asked to identify a target child from each family, with priority given to infant/toddlers and/or school-age children over preschool-age children.

Questionnaires with cover letters explaining the project were distributed to these families (See Appendix B). To maximize the probability of obtaining a large number of responses, 1350 questionnaires were distributed to the 25 participating day care centers and an equal number was distributed to the 304 participating family and group day care homes. This approach was employed because direct access to parents was not available and time constraints did not permit second and third wave follow ups (Dellman 1979).

Table 2 shows the ages of the targeted children of the subjects and the day care settings in which these children were located.

Table 2  
Ages and Settings of Children

Setting	Ages of Children			Totals
	0 - 3	3 - 6	6+	
Day Care Center	101	167	34	302
Family Day Care Home	125	66	38	229
TOTALS	226	233	72	531

Data Analysis. Descriptive statistics including percentages, means and standard deviations were calculated for the majority of the data from the questionnaire. Pearson chi-square test of significance was calculated on preference data from item 11 to determine if the first preference ranking was distributed significantly differently between child care consumers in day care homes and centers.

To determine what factors predicted overall satisfaction with present child care arrangements, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, using parents' overall satisfaction rating (item 44) as the criterion variable. Predictor variables were chosen on the basis of knowledge of previous research examining parent satisfaction with day care (c.f. Rodes n.d.; Bradford and Endsley 1980). The predictor variables were the degree of certainty parents experienced if the child care facility was licensed (item 21), whether or not they had problems with child care arrangements (item 30), the setting their child was presently in (center vs family day care home; item 2), the age of

the child (item 1), the extent to which they felt prepared to select child care (item 17), and three variables which were weighted sums of conceptually similar items. A procedure described by Strahan (1980) was used to form these last three predictors. One of these latter variables was labelled "control" and consisted of the ratings to the five components of item 43. These items were concerned with the degree of satisfaction the parent had in relation to (a) amount of contact with the caregiver, (b) whether the parents' opinions and suggestions were listened to and respected, (c) having control of the child care environment, (d) whether discipline used was similar to the parents', and (e) the amount of information parents received about their child's day. The two remaining factors were labelled "program considerations" and "logistical considerations." The former variable was a compilation of four parents' satisfaction ratings concerning different aspects of the child care arrangement from item 32. The four ratings were concerned with safe and healthy environment, appropriate activities for children, the qualifications of the provider, and similar childrearing values. Three ratings from item 32 comprised the "logistical considerations" variable. They were convenience of location, hours and cost of care.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Results

#### Patterns of Child Care Usage

The children chosen for study ranged in age from one month to 12.8 years, with a mean age of 44.8 months (SD = 26). Three hundred and two (56%) of these children were cared for in day care centers, while 229 (43%) were cared for in family day care homes. Six children (1%) were cared for in both settings. Of the two hundred and forty family day care users responding to this item, 11 (4.6%) described the provider as a relative, 81 (33.8%) as a friend or neighbor, and 148 (61.6%) as someone else.

Table 3 shows the distribution of hours per week the children spent in care outside their home.

Table 3  
Distribution of Hours per Week in Care by Percent

Hours	Both Settings (n = 522)	Centers (n = 294)	Family Day Care Homes (n = 228)
0 - 9	10	11	9
10 - 20	10	12	8
21 - 30	16	15	19
31 - 40	30	33	25
41 or More	34	29	40

Of the 167 respondents who indicated that employment characteristics made day care arrangements difficult, 9 (5.3%) listed nighttime; 73 (42.9%) irregular hours; 26 (15.3%) weekend; 37 (21.9%) of the respondents listed combinations, i.e. 6 (3.6%) indicated nighttime and irregular hours, 7 (4.1%) nighttime and weekend, 12 (7.1%) irregular hours and weekend, and 12 (7.1%) indicated that all three factors presented problems. Twenty-two (13%) respondents listed other factors, including cost, transportation and other siblings, which contributed to the difficulties in making suitable arrangements.

One hundred and ninety-two (36%) of the respondents indicated that their child had always been in the same care setting. Three hundred and forty

(64%) indicated otherwise. Two hundred and six (81%) of those children had been in two to three different settings, 37 (14.5%) had been in four to five different settings and 13 (5%) had been in more than five different settings.

Of the 340 parents who indicated that their child had not always been in the present day care setting, 327 provided information about previous arrangements. Table 4 indicates the type of previous arrangements used by parents.

Table 4  
Previous Child Care Arrangement by Percent

Type	All Parents (n = 327)	Presently Using Family Day Care (n = 186)	Presently Using Centers (n = 141)
Center	9.3	10.6	8.6
Family Day Care	57.4	66.0	51.1
Babysitter in Home	31.8	21.3	39.3
Child in Workplace	0.6	0.7	0.5
Babysitting Coop	0.6	1.4	0
Preschool	0.3	0	0.5

Table 5 shows first, second, and third place preference rankings of child care options if all were available.

Table 5  
Child Care Preference Rankings by Percent

Type of Care	All Parents				Parents Using Centers				Parents Using Family Day Care			
	1	2	3	no ranking	1	2	3	no ranking	1	2	3	no ranking
Center (n=405)	47	31	22	25	58	28	6	8	6	18	29	47
Family Day Care (n=355)	32	32	32	38	2	13	28	57	44	32	13	11
In-home (n=321)	39	31	31	41	16	15	23	46	32	23	12	33

(cont.)

Table 5 (continued)												
Before/After School (n=176)	20	35	46	67	5	12	18	65	9	9	10	72
Preschool (n=267)	21	41	39	51	14	26	14	46	5	12	26	57

Table 6 shows the distribution of first preference ranking by parents according to the present care setting for target children.

Table 6  
First Preference Ranking by Present Setting by Percent

Type of Care	Center (n = 285)	FDC (n = 220)
Center	58	6
FDC	2	44
In-Home	16	32
School-age	5	9
Preschool	14	5

The Pearson chi-square test to determine whether first preference was relatively distributed differently across settings was significant,  $\chi^2 (1,4) = 238.25 (p < .0001)$ .

Parents were asked how much they were paying for care for their child. Responses were given hourly, daily or weekly to reflect the way in which costs are designated by the center or home. Table 7 shows descriptive statistics of the costs of child care.

Table 7  
Costs by Type of Child Care in Dollars

Type of Setting	Range	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overall	.50 - 4.60 per hour	158	\$1.19	.48
	1.00 - 20.00 per day	165	9.62	3.92
	2.50 - 96.00 per week	145	42.52	14.69

(cont.)

Table 7 (continued)

Center	.40 - 4.60 per hour	54	1.25	.58
	1.00 - 20.00 per day	136	9.90	3.99
	2.50 - 96.00 per week	65	41.78	15.60
-----				
Family Day	.50 - 4.00 per hour	100	1.15	.42
Care Home	1.00 - 16.00 per day	26	8.13	3.23
	3.00 - 75.00 per week	80	43.11	13.99

Forty-two (7.9%) parents reported that they were receiving financial assistance. Fifty-one (10%) indicated that their employers were contributing to the cost of child care.

Parents were asked to respond to "How much has having your child in child care improved your family's financial status?" Using a five-point Likert-type scale with one indicating "not at all" and five indicating "very much," a mean rating of 2.54 (SD = 1.40) resulted from 507 responses.

#### Consumer Selection Experiences

Using a five-point Likert-type scale with one indicating "poorly prepared" and five indicating "very well prepared," 514 respondents rated their preparedness when first starting to look for care. A mean rating of 3.60 (SD = 1.04) resulted. Seventy-two percent of 384 parents thought that generally parents need help in choosing child care.

Of the 536 who identified their sources of information when looking for care, 413 (77%) used friends and neighbors, 232 (43%) used ads in newspapers, phone books, etc., 59 (11%) consulted information and referral centers, 80 (15%) checked with the Iowa Department of Human Services, 14 (2.6%) placed ads in papers, 30 (5.6%) investigated places of employment, e.g., hospitals with child care programs. Approximately 50 percent of all parents used only one source of information, 33.5 percent used two, 15 percent used three, and 1.1 percent used four. The pattern of usage of resources did not differ by present child care setting. However, 45 percent of the 299 parents presently using centers used one source of information, 41.7 percent used two sources, 11.69 percent used three, and 2.33 percent used four. Forty-five percent of the 228 parents presently using family day care homes used one source of information, 35.53 percent used two, 15.8 percent used three, and 3.51 percent used four sources. Of those 59 consulting referral services, a mean

satisfaction rating of 3.61 (SD = 1.22) resulted from ratings on a five-point Likert-type scale with one reflecting "very dissatisfied" and five indicating "very satisfied."

Four hundred and twenty-nine (80%) of 535 respondents indicated that they had visited child care facilities. Two hundred and sixty-eight (89%) parents presently using centers had visited child care facilities, while 154 (68%) parents using day care homes had visited facilities. Two hundred and nineteen (51.5%) visited one facility, 160 (37.6%) visited two to three programs, 17 (4%) visited four to five, and 29 (6.8%) more than five. Fifty-four (13%) visited when children were there, 7 (2%) visited when children were gone, 14 (3.3%) visited by appointment, and 16 (3.7%) dropped in. Twenty-nine percent visited when children were there by appointment, while 24 percent visited when children were there but just dropped in. Of the various types of visits, 56.7 percent did so by appointment, while 43.3 percent dropped in.

Table 8 shows the percentage of parents who had problems with child care arrangements.

Table 8  
Problems with Child Care Arrangements by Percent

	All Parents (n=531)	Parents Using Centers (n=299)	Parents Using Family Day Care (n=225)
Yes	46	44	48
No	54	56	52

Table 9 shows the percentage of parents who had various problems arranging child care.

Table 9

Percentage of Parents Indicating Problems

Problem	All Parents (n=245)
Care is not adequate	44%
Children not supervised properly	35
Physical abuse	6
Verbal abuse	2
Unsafe	6
Distance	15
Cost too high	31
Finding one place for all children	20
Inflexible hours	10
Care for handicapped children	1
Children not cared for when sick	46
Infant care hard to find	35
School-age care hard to find	21
Center or home full	15
Didn't know where to look	23

Of the 384 parents who indicated that parents need help in choosing child care, 316 provided suggestions as seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Percentage Recommending Suggestions for Selecting Child Care

Suggestion	Percentage (n=316)
Information and referral	67.1
Specific information about programs (e.g., policies, philosophies, activities, caregivers)	37.8
General information on what to look for	28.2
Information about regulations	9.9

Table 11 shows the degree of usefulness for a variety of consumer resources as rated by 519 parents on a scale of one to three with one being not useful and three being very useful.

Table 11  
Mean Ratings of Consumer Resources by Setting of Present Care

	All Parents	Center	Family Day Care Home
1. Printed directory of child care facilities in community	2.50 (0.57)*	2.51 (.58)	2.49 (.54)
2. An information and referral service that could answer your questions and refer you to specific child care possibilities	2.57 (.57)	2.55 (.58)	2.57 (.56)
3. A toll-free number you could call that could answer your questions and refer you to specific child care possibilities	2.18 (.74)	2.19 (.73)	2.17 (.74)
4. Pamphlets describing different possibilities and what to look for	2.40 (.66)	2.41 (.65)	2.38 (.66)
5. A checklist to guide you as you visit different programs	2.48 (.66)	2.51 (.67)	2.44 (.65)

\*Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Of 538 parents responding to whether the facility they were using was licensed or registered by the state, 489 (91%) responded "yes," 27 (5%) responded "no," and 22 (4%) "did not know."

On a scale of one to five with one indicating "very insecure" and five being "very secure," 512 parents' mean rating of the extent to which licensing or regulation by the state provides a sense of security was 4.19 (SD = .92). The mean rating for parents using centers was 4.37 (SD = .84), and 3.95 (SD = .97) for parents using family day care homes.

Information was obtained from 513 parents about the age at which they thought a child does not need adult supervision after school until parents return home. Table 12 shows the distribution of responses to this question.

Table 12  
Ages At Which Adult Supervision Not Required

<u>Age</u>	<u>% of respondents</u>
7	0.5
8	3
9	9
10	22
11	11
12	27
13	4
14	5
15	3
16	2

The mean age was between 11 and 12 years.

When asked if they would use before- and after-school care for school-age children if it were available, 92 percent indicated they would. Three hundred and ninety-one respondents indicated the maximum amount they would be willing to pay per hour for school-age care. The mean rate was \$1.53 (SD = .73) with a range of \$.50 to \$5.00. Thirty-two percent indicated they would pay up to one dollar per hour, 26 percent would pay \$1.00 to \$1.50 per hour.

Table 13 shows parents' mean importance and satisfaction ratings of child care program considerations and logistical considerations.



Table 13

Mean Ratings of Importance and Satisfaction with Factors in Child Care

	<u>Importance</u>		<u>Program Considerations</u>		<u>Satisfaction</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>			<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
530	4.95	.28	Safe and healthy environment	526	4.66	.61
529	4.72	.56	Appropriate activities	523	4.57	.72
526	4.77	.51	Qualifications of provider	523	4.69	.66
530	4.60	.64	Similar values about child rearing	522	4.51	.70
528	4.23	.99	Programs that prepare child for school	506	4.19	1.05
			<u>Logistical Considerations</u>			
529	3.79	1.02	Convenient location	526	4.56	.78
529	3.67	1.07	Cost of care	520	4.21	.88
528	5.32	.83	Convenient hours	524	4.54	.83

Table 14 shows the results of the analysis of variance using a multiple regression approach where parents' rating of their present child care arrangement was the dependent variable. It can be seen that the overall model was statistically significant, accounting for 51 percent of the variation in parents' ratings. It can also be seen that only the control factor and the program consideration factor related significantly to parents' ratings.

The mean rating of 515 parents' present child care arrangement was 4.38 (SD = .68), while 293 parents using center care rated their present arrangement 4.42 (SD = .64) on the average, and 222 parents using family day care had a mean rating of 4.32 (SD = .72). As can be seen from the results of the multiple regression analysis, the difference in rating between child care settings was not statistically significant.

Table 14

Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RATING

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F	R-SQUARE	C.V.
MODEL	8	103.06199302	12.88274913	58.72	0.0001	0.514084	10.6520
ERROR	444	97.41482817	0.21940277			ROOT MSE	RATING MEAN
CORRECTED TOTAL	452	200.47682119			0.46840449		4.39735099

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	F VALUE	PR > F
SECURITY DUE TO REGULATION	1	0.14664345	0.67	0.4141
PROBLEMS IN CHILD CARE	1	0.01093736	0.05	0.8234
SETTING (CENTERS VS HOMES)	1	0.11421486	0.52	0.4710
AGE OF CHILDREN	1	0.09785559	0.45	0.5046
PREPARED TO LOOK	1	0.48421236	2.21	0.1381
CONTROL FACTOR	1	18.01856638	82.13	0.0001
PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	1	22.38652063	102.03	0.0001
LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS	1	0.09759021	0.44	0.5052

PARAMETER	ESTIMATE	T FOR HO: PARAMETER=0	PR >   T	STD ERROR OF ESTIMATE
INTERCEPT	0.22261188	0.83	0.4075	0.26849825
SECURITY DUE TO REGULATION	0.02103661	0.82	0.4141	0.02573152
PROBLEMS IN CHILD CARE	1 -0.01064479	-0.22	0.8234	0.04767622
	2 0.00000000	.	.	.
SETTING (CENTERS VS HOMES)	1 0.03461090	0.72	0.4710	0.04797032
	2 0.00000000	.	.	.
AGE OF CHILDREN	0.00056003	0.67	0.5046	0.00083857
PREPARED TO LOOK	0.03353198	1.49	0.1381	0.02257160
CONTROL FACTOR	0.05970682	9.06	0.0001	0.00658847
PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	0.05826206	10.10	0.0001	0.00576784
LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS	-0.00688365	-0.67	0.5052	0.01032135

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Discussion and Recommendations

#### Needs and Patterns of Child Care

State and national trends such as increasing numbers of mothers in the labor force, larger numbers of households with children headed by single females, and a growing number of single mothers who are existing at or below the poverty level, have contributed to a need for affordable, good quality child care. For example, this study showed that 92 percent of the families responding were using child care because the mother was employed outside the home. Of these, 74 percent were employed full time and 14 percent of the families responding were described as single-parent families. Bruner (1983) reported that between 1969 and 1979 the number of Iowa families headed by women with children increased 54.7 percent and comprised one out of every ten families. A corresponding trend has found an increase of 44.9 percent in the number of these single-parent families living below the poverty level.

Besides these trends, certain aspects of parents' employment contribute to the need for a variety of affordable, good quality child care arrangements. For example, the length of time parents are away from home and the time of day they are employed determine when they need child care. While the vast majority of parents in this study needed full-time care, a large percentage (34%) needed part-time arrangements. Furthermore, some parents (34%) needed child care for more than forty hours a week. A larger percentage of these parents used family day care settings as opposed to centers (40% vs 29%). Centers traditionally have held to fixed hours typical of the work day, while home providers have been more flexible in meeting these needs. For centers to provide care for irregular times, there must be sufficient numbers of children to make it cost effective. Families needing this kind of care are widely distributed, making it easier for family day care homes to fulfill this need.

The need for a greater diversity of child care arrangements is further demonstrated by the large percentage (38%) of parents who indicated that certain aspects of their family's employment patterns made it difficult to arrange for their children's care, e.g., nighttime and/or weekend work, and irregular hours. Of 529 parents who rated the importance of convenient hours

on a five-point scale with one being not important and five very important, the mean rating was 4.32 (SD = .83). The National Day Care Home Study (NDCHS) reported that "...a sizable minority of parents worked at night or had rotating or variable work schedules, suggesting the need for flexible child care" (Fosburg 1981:66). No study to date has examined the costs of arranging care for atypical times such as evenings, all night or weekends. However, it can be assumed that because of the difficulty in locating these arrangements they are more costly. These higher costs are particularly a problem for families with low incomes, i.e., the working poor.

The type of child care that is needed has also changed over the past decade. While at one time the majority of mothers delayed entering the labor force for the first two or three years of their children's life, more mothers with infants and toddlers are needing to work. This trend addresses not only the need for a variety of child care arrangements, but the need for affordable, good quality child care as well.

The cost of infant care can be a financial problem for many families needing care for children under two years old. Parents in this study were paying as much as \$20 per day for infant care. In a typical month this could cost as much as \$400 for one child. Parents with infants and one or more children in care struggle under a particularly heavy financial burden. Data from this study indicates that the cost of child care can pose financial problems for families. Specifically, parents indicated that their family's financial status was improved only slightly by having a child in care outside the home. Indeed, 76 (31%) parents indicating problems with child care arrangements pointed to cost of care being too high. However, few employers in Iowa or elsewhere have given serious consideration to providing child care benefits for employees. This is a new idea, and its possibilities have not been fully developed. Some employers have constructed on-site centers as a way of meeting their employees' child care needs. For the most part, these employers have been hospitals who have needed to attract and retain skilled medical professionals, most of whom are women, many of whom are mothers of young children. This option may be prohibitively expensive for many businesses, which therefore have ruled out child care as a benefit. There is a need to consider less costly options, such as purchasing slots in local day

care programs, the use of a voucher system and flexible benefit plans which include child care as an option (Baden and Friedman 1981).

In this study, 10 percent of families indicated that employers were contributing to the cost of child care. Recent federal legislation has provided tax incentives for businesses and industries who provide this kind of benefit. Recently in Des Moines, a White House-sponsored briefing session was held on employer-sponsored child care, a project of the President's Advisory Council on Private Sector Initiatives. Discussion in this session focused on how public and private sectors can work together to meet the growing need for affordable, good quality child care. From this briefing session, information about Iowa's specific child care needs was presented to several Des Moines business leaders. Along with this information, employers' options in supporting working families were presented (Appendix C).

Many studies (e.g., Fosburg 1981; Rodes n.d.; Roupp, Travers, Glantz, and Craig 1979) have found that parents are generally satisfied with their present child care arrangements. The results of this study were no different; parents were very satisfied. However, this does not mean that they have not experienced problems in their child care arrangements, or that their children are receiving the kind of care that they would prefer if it were accessible and affordable. Most families would prefer a single child care arrangement that would span the years during which parents need child care. In fact, most parents have had to use more than one child care setting. In this study 64 percent of parents had used more than one, and of that group the vast majority (84%) had used two to five previous arrangements and five percent had used even more than five settings for a single child. The importance of consistent child rearing has been well documented (cf Brofenbrenner 1979). This consistency is reduced when changes need to be made which reduce the possibility of a child care setting having a positive impact on a child's development.

The traditional means of providing child care outside the home (the family day care home or the babysitter in the family's home) have not met the diverse needs of parents requiring care. While these settings are certainly preferred by many families, more recently other families are finding their needs met better by care in center facilities. In fact, in this study 90.4 percent of parents using centers had previously had in-home or family day care home arrangements. This trend may be attributed to, among other factors, the availability of more infant care in centers and the high cost of in-home care.

While centers are becoming more available and providing options not previously open to parents, a large percentage of parents in this study indicated that the type of care they were using was not their first preference. While they indicated a high degree of satisfaction with their present arrangement, in fact, 42 percent of parents using centers would choose other options if they were available, and 56 percent of consumers of family day care would choose other options. This disparity is evidence that indicators of satisfaction may mask true needs when parents are not able to choose from among a variety of options.

#### Consumer Selection Process

Parents generally felt that they were prepared to select a child care setting; however a large majority of them (72%) indicated that they felt most parents needed assistance. Furthermore, of those parents who indicated that they had problems arranging child care, 23 percent indicated that they did not know where to look. While most parents either consulted friends and neighbors or checked advertisements in their selection, they recommended that a wider variety of resources be available to parents. Most frequently parents recommended that community-based information and referral services be made available to parents. The kinds of information they suggested would be helpful included general information on what to look for and specific information about individual programs, such as policies, childrearing philosophies, activities and information about specific caregivers.

While directories, pamphlets, checklists, and a toll-free information number were all perceived as being particularly useful consumer resources, information and referral programs received the highest rating. The absence of a diversity of child care arrangements, the shortage of information about what is available and the inadequate preparation of parents in selection of child care restrict parents from choosing the best possible arrangement for their child. When dollars are few, options are restricted, and knowledge is unavailable, parents are not likely to approach child care from a consumer viewpoint.

While parents do not deliberately place their child in a less-than-adequate setting, problems do occur because of a lack of consumer skills. For example, 107 (20%) of all parents in this study did not visit the child care facility prior to placing their child there. This percentage was larger for parents using family day care settings than for parents using centers (32% vs 11%). This is not necessarily due to parents personally knowing the provider before placement, since 61.6 percent of users of family day care described their provider as a "stranger." While parents are more comfortable when visiting and inspecting a public facility such as a day care center, they are reluctant to invade the privacy of a "stranger's" home. Further ambivalence about whether or not they should visit the home to insure a safe environment occurs when day care is scarce, and/or parents not only want, but need, to establish a good relationship with the provider. They hesitate or choose not to visit, afraid that such an "inspection" might be viewed as showing a lack of trust in the provider. The confusion about whether or not it is legitimate to visit the day care home also stems from a reluctance to view the purchasing of child care from a family day care provider as a business arrangement (Sale, in press). These factors, and others, inhibit the monitoring of day care homes by parents that generally is assumed to occur. In fact, of the 429 parents who visited facilities, more than half (51.5%) visited only one, i.e. the one they chose. Because these parents did not see the range of possibilities and were not able to make knowledgeable comparisons, they did not function as wise consumers.

The fact that large numbers of parents do not function adequately as consumers of child care and that nearly half of the parents in this study have experienced problems in the selection and use of child care demonstrates clearly the need for support by the public and private sectors. The severity of these problems speaks to the urgency of this need. Large numbers of parents indicated that their children had experienced care which was less than adequate or which could be described as neglectful or abusive. Other problems experienced by parents were a result of a lack of diverse arrangements. Large percentages of parents indicated that obtaining care for sick children, infants and school-agers was a problem for them. Others found it difficult to find one place for all their children.

Historically, government has tried to assist parents in finding adequate, safe child care by some forms of regulation for some types of child care facilities (Class and Orten 1980; Morgan 1979). Findings from the National Family Day Care Home Study (Fosburg 1979) support the importance and effectiveness of regulation: quality of care was directly related to regulation. Parents in this study indicated that licensing of centers and registration of family day care homes provided them with a sense of security. It could be argued (e.g., Katz 1980) that this sense of security that regulation provides encourages and supports parents in their parental role and can lead to greater effectiveness, more advice-seeking, and increased openness to new information and ultimately empowers parents to function optimally in their parental role. This includes functioning as informal consumers and building ties with caregivers that reflect shared childrearing roles.

One way in which regulation can support parents as child care consumers is to "...encourage development of a greater role for parents in routine inspection and reporting on compliance..." (Morgan, in press). One example of this approach is described by Winget et al. (1982), who reported on a system that included parents in the evaluation of day care homes. Parents who had recently used a certain family day care setting were sent questionnaires by the regulating agency asking them to rate various aspects of that setting. This information was then used by the licensor to help upgrade the quality of care. This type of system empowers parents by educating them about indicators of child care quality and by recognizing the importance of parents by providing them a voice in the regulation process.

Results of this study indicated that a shared childrearing role is important to parents. To the degree that providers inform parents about their child's day, allow them to exert some control over the environment and respect and use their suggestions in caring for their child, the more satisfied parents will be with their child care arrangement. This is vitally important considering that a majority (61.6%) of parents purchased child care from "strangers." The National Family Day Care Home Study (Rodes n.d.) found that some parents felt that close, personal relationships between parents and providers were advantageous in dealing with issues such as attitudes or behaviors related to childrearing. Others felt that closeness made it difficult to discuss problems and dissatisfaction. Some felt that the demands



of friendships conflicted with parents' needs as consumers. These findings reflect the confusion surrounding child care as shared childrearing.

### Options for Consideration

Since this study is concerned with a limited number of issues around the fast-growing need for child care, and since other studies will need to be conducted to assist policymakers in the formulation of social policy, a few principles or guidelines may be useful in evaluating options. As recommended by Beck (1982), policy proposals should

- (a) recognize child care as a legitimate need of different families at different times,
- (b) define a legitimate role for public support,
- (c) increase the accessibility of child care,
- (d) encourage diverse child care arrangements,
- (e) not neglect to address the needs of the poor, of minorities, of migrants or of those children who are abused or neglected, handicapped, gifted or who live in remote rural or deprived inner-city areas,
- (f) include mechanisms to protect children in care and promote quality, and
- (g) empower parents by ensuring meaningful participation in the selection, planning, and evaluation of child care services, thereby recognizing a shared caretaking relationship between parents and caregiver.

At this time, state policymakers are faced with several options. One major option is to do nothing more and simply maintain the status quo. Currently, the State of Iowa supports parents as consumers of child care in the following ways. Child Care Financial Assistance funds are used to assist licensed center-based programs in purchasing materials and equipment to renovate facilities and provide training for staff. However, due to funding constraints, limited dollars must now be distributed among a large number of facilities, and these dollars are further diluted to encompass training needs once previously funded by federal and state dollars. There are no comparable funds available to assist registered group and family day care homes.

Recently the Iowa State Legislature passed legislation allowing 10 percent of qualifying child care expenses to be taken as an income tax credit. Federal support allows parents to deduct from their income taxes a percentage of child care expenses based on their adjusted annual income. A sliding scale of 20 to 30 percent of creditable expenses is used to determine maximum credits. However, parents earning below \$5,000 annually who pay no income taxes must bear the full burden of child care costs. Families who do not have enough deductions to itemize can not receive this benefit, since an itemized deduction form must be used to file for it.

Another form of public support for child care is Iowa's regulation of child care facilities. The Department of Human Services administers a varied regulatory system which has evolved in response to the erratic development of child care services. Presently, all day care centers serving seven or more children must be licensed, a process which involves an inspection by a consultant prior to the center beginning operations. Each program is visited at least annually and relicensed if minimum standards are met. Group day care homes, serving no more than six children at one time under six years of age but allowing for an additional five school-age children if an assistant is present, are required to be registered with the State of Iowa. Registration is a self-reporting process. Facilities are not visited prior to opening for operation; instead, providers agree to meet minimum standards when they register. Family day care homes which care for six or fewer children, with no more than four children under the age of two, are not required to be licensed or registered with the State. However, registration is voluntary, and the vast majority of family day care homes operate without public accountability. Whether homes are voluntarily or mandatorily registered, there is no inspection of the home prior to the issuance of a registration certificate, and at most only 20 percent of registered facilities are visited annually.

Beneficiaries of these state-supported programs include a portion of low- and middle-income families. Middle-income families are the major beneficiaries of the income tax credit. Some low- and middle-income families derive some support by using centers licensed and regulated by the state and eligible for Child Care Financial Assistance funds. With fewer federal dollars available to subsidize center-based care, centers are serving declining numbers of low-income families (Childrens Defense Fund 1983).

Families using registered group and family day care facilities receive somewhat less benefit from the state's regulatory programs, since the registration system is less stringent than the licensing system. Because the registration of family day care homes is voluntary, families using non-registered homes derive no benefits from the state. The largest number of children in care outside of their homes are cared for in day care homes, 90 percent of which are unregulated (Fosburg 1981).

As a result of eligibility and funding constraints, many poor families do not receive services for which they were previously eligible. Recently the State has changed income eligibility guidelines for child care support under the Social Services Block Grant. This change has excluded many of the "working poor" (Bruner 1983; Childrens Defense Fund 1983). In addition, only 17 of all 99 counties presently use any of their Block Grant funds to support childcare, although that option was open to all.

Many middle-income families, even though they can use tax credits, do not have child care available to them, since tax credits do not create, improve or better distribute child care. The population most ignored by state and federal support consists of low-income families earning above the poverty level but less than \$15,000. These families find themselves ineligible for a vast majority of direct service programs and reap few tax dollar benefits. For these families, good child care is unavailable, unaffordable, and unsubsidized, and what these families can afford is unattractive (Beck 1982).

There are advantages and disadvantages to maintaining the status quo. Some families receive excellent services, some receive adequate, and some receive services that they might otherwise go without. The disadvantages are reflected in the inequities that exist in availability, scope, and quality of services. Furthermore, inequities exist in the populations served.

#### Recommended Options

There are some other options available to the state for supporting child care which can be implemented by either legislation or administrative rule and which vary in real dollar costs. These recommendations address consumers' needs in the selection of affordable, available, accessible, good quality child care:

- Adopt the Governor's Task Force recommendation dealing with licensing of all child care facilities (See Appendix A).
- Encourage a greater role for parents in the regulation process by providing routine consumer feedback channels.
- Inform parents of violations of regulatory standards by posting notices of violations or noncompliance at program sites.
- Institute communication systems among Department of Human Services state and local programs such as resource and referral agencies, so that they can be informed about pending actions and violation of standards of child care facilities.
- Improve existing state government computer systems so that updated information is available to parents about their child care options.
- Encourage the development of family day care systems (e.g., centers sponsoring satellite homes, local professional family day care provider associations) by increasing the funding level and making available Child Care Financial Assistance funds for renovation of facilities, purchase of materials and equipment, and provider training.
- Promote the establishment of information and referral programs at the local level.
- Create a specially funded short-term economic and development program within the Child Care Financial Assistance program to provide start-up, facility, and operating loan guarantees for all regulated programs, family day care systems, and information and referral services.
- Adopt a sliding scale for the state's income tax credit for child care comparable to the federal government's program.
- Include a refundability provision with the state's income tax credit for child care.
- Establish at the state level tax incentives for employers to provide child care related benefits.
- Reestablish previous job training guidelines under the Social Service Block grant which would permit mothers to receive child care support while participating in job training.

- Establish an Iowa Center for Child Care Information (using private and public funds) to conduct research, evaluate, organize and disseminate information for interested constituencies, including parents, providers, researchers, and local and state policy-makers.

APPENDIX A

1. How old is the child whose name appears on the cover letter of this questionnaire?

\_\_\_\_\_  
YEARS

\_\_\_\_\_  
MONTHS

2. Is your child in: (circle number)

- 1. DAY CARE CENTER
- 2. FAMILY DAY CARE HOME (BABYSITTER'S HOME)

3. If family day care home, is the provider/sitter a: (circle number)

- 1. RELATIVE
- 2. FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR
- 3. SOMEONE ELSE

4. How many hours per week is your child at the center/home?

- 1. 0-9
- 2. 10-20
- 3. 20-30
- 4. 30-40
- 5. 40-50
- 6. 45 OR MORE

5. Is the center/home licensed or registered with the state?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO
- 3. DON'T KNOW

6. How long has your child been in child care?

- 1. LESS THAN 1 YEAR
- 2. 1-2 YEARS
- 3. 3-4 YEARS
- 4. 4-5 YEARS
- 5. 5 OR MORE YEARS

7. Is there anything about your family's employment that makes child care arrangements especially difficult?

- 1. NIGHTTIME
- 2. IRREGULAR HOURS
- 3. WEEKENDS
- 4. OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Has your child always been at the present home/center?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO

9. If no, what arrangements did you have before?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. If yes, how many different arrangements have you made for your child?

- 1. 2-3
- 2. 4-5
- 3. 5 OR MORE

11. Please rank the type of child care you would prefer if it were available. Rank only three choices using number 1 for first choice, 2 for second choice and 3 for third choice.

- \_\_\_\_ DAY CARE CENTER
- \_\_\_\_ FAMILY DAY CARE HOME (SITTER'S HOME)
- \_\_\_\_ SITTING/RELATIVE IN MY HOME
- \_\_\_\_ BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- \_\_\_\_ PRESCHOOL
- \_\_\_\_ OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

12. When you were looking for child care, which of the following did you do? (circle all that apply)

- 1. ASKED FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
- 2. CHECKED ADS IN NEWSPAPERS, PHONE BOOKS, ETC.
- 3. CHECK WITH A REFERRAL SERVICE
- 4. CHECKED WITH DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
- 5. OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you circled 3 above, how satisfied were you with the service? (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5
very		neutral		very
dissatisfied				satisfied

14. Did you visit child care facilities?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO

15. If yes, how many?

- 1. 1
- 2. 2-3
- 3. 4-5
- 4. 5 OR MORE

16. If yes, did you visit (circle all that apply)

- 1. WHEN CHILDREN WERE THERE
- 2. WHEN CHILDREN WERE GONE
- 3. BY APPOINTMENT
- 4. DROP IN

17. When you first started to look for care, to what extent did you feel prepared to select the best care?

1	2	3	4	5
poorly	somewhat	adequate	fairly well	very well

18. Generally, do you think parents need help in choosing child care?

- 1. YES
- 2. NO

19. If yes, what do you think would help parents select the best possible care?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. If employed, does your employer contribute to the costs of your child care?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DON'T KNOW

20. If you were looking for care again, please indicate how useful each of the following would be. (circle number for each factor)

	not useful	useful	very useful
1. PRINTED DIRECTORY OF CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN COMMUNITY	1	2	3
2. AN INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE THAT COULD ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AND REFER YOU TO SPECIFIC CHILD CARE POSSIBILITIES.	1	2	3
3. A TOLL-FREE NUMBER YOU COULD CALL THAT COULD ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AND REFER YOU TO SPECIFIC CHILD CARE POSSIBILITIES	1	2	3
4. PAMPHLETS DESCRIBING DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES AND WHAT TO LOOK FOR	1	2	3
5. A CHECKLIST TO GUIDE YOU AS YOU VISIT DIFFERENT PROGRAMS.	1	2	3

26. How important to you is each of these factor in child care for your child? (circle number for each factor)

	not important	somewhat	important
SAFE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT	1	2	3 4 5
CONVENIENCE OF LOCATION	1	2	3 4 5
APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN	1	2	3 4 5
COST OF THE CARE	1	2	3 4 5
CONVENIENT HOURS	1	2	3 4 5
QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PROVIDER	1	2	3 4 5
SIMILAR VALUES ABOUT CHILD REARING	1	2	3 4 5
PROGRAM THAT PREPARES CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL	1	2	3 4 5

21. If the child care facility is licensed or regulated by the state, to what extent do you feel secure about your child being there? (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5
very insecure		doesn't matter		very secure

27. At what age do you think a child does not need adult supervision after school until the parents return home? (circle one)

1. 7 yrs.	4. 10	7. 13	10. 16
2. 8	5. 11	8. 14	
3. 9	6. 12	9. 15	

22. How much do you pay for child care? (complete one)

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER HOUR
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER DAY
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER WEEK
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

28. If you have/had schoolage children would you use before and after school child care if it were available?

1. YES
2. NO

23. Are you receiving any financial assistance that covers part of the cost of child care?

1. YES
2. NO

29. If yes, what is the maximum you would be willing to pay per hour? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

30. Have you had problems with child care arrangements?

1. YES
2. NO

24. If yes, how much do you receive?

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER HOUR
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER DAY
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER WEEK
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH



31. If yes, what problems have you had?  
(circle all that apply)

1. DON'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK
2. CARE IS NOT ADEQUATE
3. DISTANCE
4. COST IS TOO HIGH
5. FINDING ONE PLACE FOR ALL CHILDREN
6. CARE FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
7. CHILDREN NOT CARED FOR WHEN SICK
8. INFANT CARE HARD TO FIND
9. CARE FOR SCHOOLAGED CHILDREN HARD TO FIND
10. CENTER OR HOME I WANTED WAS FULL
11. CHILDREN NOT SUPERVISED PROPERLY
12. PHYSICAL ABUSE
13. OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

36. How old is the father?

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. UNDER 19 | 4. 30-34 |
| 2. 20-24    | 5. 35-40 |
| 3. 25-29    | 6. 41+   |

37. Is the mother employed outside the home in a job for pay?

1. YES
2. NO

38. If yes, is it (circle one)

1. FULL TIME
2. PART TIME

39. How would you describe your family?

1. ONE-PARENT FAMILY
2. TWO-PARENT FAMILY

32. How satisfied are you with each of these factors in your present child care arrangements?

	not		some		very
	satisfied		what		satisfied
	1	2	3	4	5
SAFE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT	1	2	3	4	5
CONVENIENCE OF LOCATION	1	2	3	4	5
APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN	1	2	3	4	5
COST OF THE CARE	1	2	3	4	5
CONVENIENT HOURS	1	2	3	4	5
QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PROVIDER	1	2	3	4	5
SIMILAR VALUES ABOUT CHILD REARING	1	2	3	4	5
PROGRAM THAT PREPARED CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5

40. What is the highest level of education attained? (circle number of one choice in each column)

	MOTHER	FATHER	
1	1	GRADE SCHOOL	
2	2	SOME HIGH SCHOOL	
3	3	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	
4	4	JUNIOR COLLEGE	
5	5	VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	
6	6	SOME COLLEGE	
7	7	COLLEGE GRADUATE	
8	8	SOME GRADUATE WORK	
9	9	GRADUATE DEGREE	

41. How much has having your child in child care improved your family's financial status? (circle number)

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		some		very much
		what		

And now some questions about your family.

33. What are the ages of other children in the family?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

34. Who is responding to this questionnaire?

1. MOTHER
2. FATHER
3. OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

35. How old is the mother?

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. UNDER 19 | 4. 30-34 |
| 2. 20-24    | 5. 35-40 |
| 3. 25-29    | 6. 41+   |

42. What was your total family income before taxes last year.

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. UNDER 5,000   | 6. 20,000-24,999 |
| 2. 5,000-7,999   | 7. 25,000-29,999 |
| 3. 8,000-9,999   | 8. 30,000-34,999 |
| 4. 10,000-14,999 | 9. 35,000-39,999 |
| 5. 15,000-19,999 | 10. OVER 40,000  |

43. To what extent do you feel:

	Not at all	A Little	Average	Somewhat	Very Much
YOU HAVE ENOUGH CONTACT WITH YOUR CHILD'S CAREGIVER	1	2	3	4	5
YOUR OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE LISTENED TO AND RESPECTED	1	2	3	4	5
YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER YOUR CHILD'S CARE ENVIRONMENT	1	2	3	4	5
THE DISCIPLINE USED IS SIMILAR TO YOUR OWN	1	2	3	4	5
YOU RECEIVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DAY	1	2	3	4	5

44. Overall, how would you rate your present child care arrangement?

1	2	3	4	5
poor	below average	average	above average	excellent

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire. Please fold in half, staple or tape shut and put in the mail. No postage necessary.

APPENDIX B



Child Development Department  
101 Child Development Building  
Telephone 515-294-3040

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_

July, 1983

Dear Parent:

We are conducting a survey of parents in Iowa about child care. We are interested in how parents go about finding child care, some of the problems they may have faced, and their suggestions about what would make it easier.

You can help us by taking 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Since we need information from parents of infants, preschoolers and school-age children, please answer the questions keeping in mind the child whose name appears at the top of this letter. This will help us get information about equal numbers of children of different ages.

All responses will be kept completely confidential. To help ensure this, remove this cover letter with your child's name on it. When you've finished, fold the questionnaire in half, staple or tape shut, and put it in the mail within the next few days. No postage is necessary.

We appreciate your help. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Robert Fuqua  
Assistant Professor  
Child Development

Dorothy Pinsky  
Extension Specialist  
Human Development &  
Family Life

RF/DP/jc  
Encl.

APPENDIX C

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Employer Options to Support Working Families

An Executive Summary  
for  
Chief Executive Officers

Prepared as part of an informational initiative  
co-sponsored by the President's Advisory Council  
on Private Sector Initiatives and the White House  
Office of Private Sector Initiatives

## Executive Summary

### Overview

The significant increase in the number of working parents in this country has created a mutual dependence between businesses and the family. It is this interdependence which provides a rationale for the development of employer strategies to strengthen both the family and the workplace. Contemporary families are profoundly affected by the workplace environment and, of course, businesses are impacted by the concerns and responsibilities of employees for their families.

In the past generation, there have been dramatic increases in the number of women working full or part time. Unprecedented numbers of mothers with young children are now working and their participation in the labor force has created a spiraling demand for quality child care.

The statistics which follow reveal a dramatic change in the composition of America's work force and present a clear picture of the growing need for work policies which are supportive of families.

- o In 1950, only 12 percent of mothers with children less than six years of age were in the labor force; by 1982, 50 percent were employed.
- o In March, 1982, there were 18.5 million children under six years of age in the United States. Of this group, 8.4 million, or 46% had working mothers. Census projections suggest that there will be over 10 million preschoolers with mothers in the labor force by 1990.
- o Not only are there more women with young children working today, but they are entering or returning to the labor force earlier after the birth of a child. Among women with a child under one year, a third of married women and 40% of single mothers are working.

To respond to the obvious changes in the labor force, some businesses have developed policies and programs to support working parents and, at the same time, achieve company goals. In fact, employer supported child care programs have grown significantly in the last five years -- from 105 programs in 1978 to an estimated 600 programs in operation today.

In a recent survey of 415 employers with some form of child care program, employers reported a return on their investment in the form of increased productivity and loyalty, enhanced public image, improved recruitment and reduction in turnover, absenteeism and tardiness.

Employer sponsored child care programs can encompass a broad range of options, reflecting the differing characteristics of businesses, labor force composition, company goals, and family desires.

## Options

Programs to support working families can be grouped into the following four categories: Flexible Personnel Policies, Information Programs, Financial Assistance, and Direct Services. Options within each of these categories are listed below.

- I. FLEXIBLE PERSONNEL POLICIES can be adapted by many firms and benefit employees with a wide spectrum of child care circumstances.
  - o Flexible Working Arrangements such as flextime, job sharing, and part-time work all enable parents to care for their children and facilitate the handling of emergencies, sickness, and care for children during non-school hours.
  - o Flexible Leave Policies can enable parents to be at home when children are ill. Many working parents would prefer to use their sick leave for children as well as themselves. Flexibility in the utilization of leave time, with a specific allowance for sick child leave, represents an important support for these families.
  - o At Home Work may be an important employment option for the future. As companies convert more of their operations to computers, more employees will be able to work out of their homes, thus, caring for their children and fulfilling their job functions at the same time.
  
- II. INFORMATION PROGRAMS often represent a cost-effective means to assist working families in making use of available community resources.
  - o Child Care Information and Referral Programs (CCIR's) provide information about child care, suggestions for parents on selecting quality care and referrals to local child care providers. This service can be provided in-house or through contract with an outside organization. Many communities now have comprehensive information and referral programs and others are looking for ways to develop CCIR's drawing on a variety of local groups and resources.
  - o Parent Education Programs inform working parents about resources at work and in the community, provide support systems involving other parents and professionals, and create a forum for discussion of work and family issues.



- III FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE programs can increase parent options when child care supply is adequate in the community.
- o Flexible Benefits Plans allow employees to choose a benefit package which best suits their individual family circumstances. A core of mandatory benefits is included with optional benefits selected according to such factors as age, rate of pay, years of service, and family status. Child care is often cited as a potential benefit in this type of plan.
  - o Vendor Programs involve the purchase of slots in existing community child care programs. These slots are then sold to employees, frequently at a reduced rate. The company can retain control over the purchased slots and can reassign them when an employee no longer needs the service.
  - o Voucher Programs allow employees to select a child care program and submit a voucher to cover all or part of the cost of the services. This alternative places the selection of child care providers in the hands of the parents.
  - o Subsidies may be used to assist eligible employees with all or part of their child care costs.
  - o Charitable Donations of money and in-kind resources frequently enable existing community child care facilities to provide services at a reasonable cost for working families.
- IV. DIRECT SERVICES allow an employer to become directly involved in providing child care services.
- o Consortium Arrangements permit groups of employers to work together to develop and support a child care program. This may take the form of funding for an information and referral system or a day care center conveniently located in relation to all firms contributing to the consortium.
  - o On-Site or Near-Site Centers can offer reliable quality care with trained professionals and educational programs. Companies may own and operate their own day care centers, contract with an outside organization, or donate the facility to a nonprofit employee-operated organization .
  - o Family Day Care Systems provide care in the home of the provider. Employers may develop family day care systems which establish flexibility in hours (for parents who work odd shifts or overtime) and facilitate supervision for children during school holidays or emergencies.

## Tax Incentives for Employers

### I. DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 established a new category of tax-free benefits entitled "Dependent Care Assistance Programs". As long as the requirements of the statute are met, the I.R.S. will treat a Dependent Care Assistance Program as a tax-free benefit like other employee fringe benefits such as life insurance and medical plans. In short, the costs of providing child care, within certain limits, are not considered part of the employee's wages and therefore no FICA or other payroll taxes have to be paid by the employer.

Child care services allowed under a dependent care assistance program include care at the parent's home, at another person's home, or at a child care center. An employer can provide funds to cover any eligible services the parent might choose.

To qualify under the new tax law, the provisions of a dependent care assistance program must be set forth in a written document by the employer and must be for the exclusive benefit of its employees. The program also must satisfy certain requirements regarding participant eligibility, payments, and notification, which are outlined in detail in the yellow brochure included in your packet.

### II. OTHER TAX INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYERS

In addition to the dependent care assistance program, there are a number of other tax incentive provisions of Federal law available to employers. These include: accelerated cost recovery and a tax investment credit of 10 percent for capital expenses, amortization of "start-up" and "investigator" expenses, targeted jobs tax credit for certain categories of persons including part-time workers who might be employed by a center, and a variety of provisions relating to charitable contributions and tax-exempt programs.

### Child Care Tax Credits for Employees

A tax credit for a portion of the expenses incurred for child or disabled dependent care is available under ERTA to employed persons if the expenditures enable the taxpayer to be gainfully employed (Sec. 44A Internal Revenue Code). The credit is computed at 30 percent for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of \$10,000 or less, with the rate of the credit reduced one percentage point for each \$2,000, or fraction of \$2,000, of income above \$10,000 until the rate reaches 20 percent for taxpayers with incomes over \$28,000. Expenses for which the credit may be taken are limited to \$2,400 for 1 dependent and \$4,800 for 2 or more dependents. A table showing the amount of tax credit that may be taken at various family income levels is included in your packet.

The expenses may be for services provided in or out of the taxpayer's home, for dependent children under age 15 or dependent adults over age 14 who are disabled and who live with the taxpayer. No credit may be taken for the cost of residential care in a nursing home or similar facility for dependent adults. The credit is available to all eligible taxpayers regardless of the gross income of the family and whether or not they itemize deductions.

The child and dependent care tax credit is computed on an annual basis. For that reason, the entire \$2,400 or \$4,800 of qualifying expenses on which the credit is computed is available to eligible taxpayers having the appropriate number of dependents at any time during the taxable year.

### The Next Step

Each company is unique, as is each family, and there is no single option that can be generally recommended above any other option. Before embarking on any child care initiative, employers need to determine whether a child-care program makes sense for their company and their employees. Certain questions need to be considered—How might adoption of family supportive policies contribute to the achievement of specific company objectives? What are the child care needs of current employees? To what extent does the existing community child care system meet the needs of employees?

If some sort of family supportive policy or program seems worth considering, you may want to contact a national or local resource person or a company that has already implemented a similar policy or program. Attached to this summary is a list of local and national resource persons and a list of companies that are already implementing some of the options listed. Each of them would be more than willing to assist you as you develop your policies and programs.

### A Final Note

It is obvious that, as employers, you provide the primary requirement of parents---a job. However, with the developing complexities of our world, and the growing mutual dependence between business and the family, working parents are responsive to programs that support them in effectively balancing the responsibilities of home and work. Adoption of family supportive work policies and programs can be considered a way to address the predominant concerns of an increasingly large portion of the workforce in an attempt to serve management objectives. Many of the options presented above can be implemented at minimal cost and can yield benefits to your company in the form of increased productivity, enhanced public image, improved recruitment and reduced turnover, absenteeism and tardiness.

National Resource Persons  
In The Area of Child Care

Dr. Raymond Collins  
Mrs. Patricia Divine-Hawkins  
Department of Health and Human  
Services  
Office of Human Development  
Services  
Administration for Children, Youth  
and Families  
Post Office Box 1182  
Washington, D.C. 20013

202/755-7724

Marie Oser  
Texas Institute for Families  
11311 Richmond, L-107

713/497-8719

Dr. Arthur Emlen  
Portland State University  
Regional Research Institute  
for Human Services  
Post Office Box 751  
Portland, Oregon 97207

503/229-4040

Sandra L. Burud  
Child Care Information Service  
330 South Oak Knoll  
Pasadena, California 91101

213/796-4341

Dr. Annie W. Neal  
Mrs. Ruth Nadel  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Women's Bureau  
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20210

202/523-6624

Carole Rogin  
National Association  
for Child Care Management  
1800 M Street, N.W., Suite 1030N  
Washington, D.C. 20036

202/452-8100

Dr. Dana Friedman  
305 East 24th Street  
New York, New York 10010

212/759-0900

Jeanette M. McGinnis  
Early Childhood and Elementary  
Education Institute  
27 W. 45th Street  
Brant Beach, New Jersey 08008

609/494-8522

Joyce Black  
The Day Care Council  
22 West 38th Street  
New York, New York 10018

212/398-0380

The following is a list of companies presently utilizing one of the options discussed:

Flexible Leave Policies

Texas Commerce Bank  
Houston, Texas  
713/236-4865

Information and Referral

Honeywell Corporation  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
612/870-5247

Steelcase, Inc.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
616/247-2710

Corporate Consortium for Child  
Care  
Hartford, Connecticut  
203/277-6234

Flexible Benefits

American Can Company  
Greenwich, Connecticut  
203/726-5385

Proctor and Gamble  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
513/562-1100

Financial Assistance

Polaroid Corporation  
Boston, Massachusetts  
617/577-2000

The Ford Foundation  
New York City, New York  
212/573-5000

Child Care Centers

Intermedics, Inc.  
Freeport, Texas  
409/233-8611

CIGNA Corporation  
Hartford, Connecticut  
203/726-5385

Merck Company, Inc.  
Rahway, New Jersey  
201/574-4000

Consortium Centers

Child Care Consortium  
Clayton, Missouri  
314/726-3033

Broadcasters Child Development  
Center  
Washington, D.C.

Family Day Care Systems

Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
617/253-1000

Contractual Services

Fairfax Hospital  
Fairfax, Virginia  
703/698-1110

Kentucky Fried Chicken  
Louisville, Kentucky  
1-800/626-5885

The Herman Corporation  
(Auto Body Shop)  
Holyoke, Massachusetts  
413/536-8840

APPENDIX D

RECOMMENDATIONS  
SUBMITTED BY  
GOVERNOR'S CHILD CARE TASK FORCE  
TO  
GOVERNOR ROBERT D. RAY  
DECEMBER 1, 1982



Governor Robert D. Ray  
State Capitol  
L O C A L

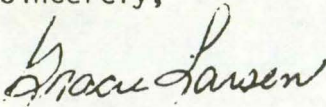
Dear Governor Ray:

In response to your request, we have been working with members of the Governor's Task Force on Child Care to study the problems in family and group day care homes for children, and the issue of confidentiality of child abuse information.

The Task Force has completed its work. Though we recognize the economic constraints upon state government in providing new services, protection of children is extremely important. Therefore, we are submitting to you the recommendations of the Task Force which we believe will be a step toward providing more protection for Iowa's young children and toward promoting their development.

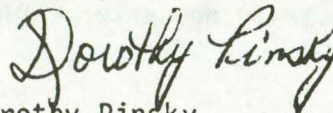
We appreciate your special interest in services to children and families and respectfully request your careful consideration of these recommendations and your leadership in implementing them.

Sincerely,



Gracie Larsen  
Co-Chairperson  
Governor's Child Care Task Force

Sincerely,



Dorothy Pinsky  
Co-Chairperson  
Governor's Child Care Task Force

CC: Dr. Michael Reagen  
Dr. Edward Stanek

Governor's Child Care Task Force Members  
Co-Chairpersons

Gracie Larsen (Co-Chair)  
Chair of the Iowa Council on  
Social Services

Dorothy Pinsky (Co-Chair)  
Chair of the Iowa Council for  
Children & Families;  
Extension Specialist, Human  
Development & Family Life;  
Iowa State University

Members

Thomas Carpenter  
Attorney; Past President of the local  
United Way; Board Member of Tiny Tot Day Care Center

Robert W. Fuqua, Ph.D.  
Department of Child Development, Assistant Professor  
Iowa State University; Author of forthcoming  
book entitled Making Day Care Better

Dorothy J. Grady  
Member, State Day Care Advisory Committee  
Parent, Manager, Ethnic School;  
former Headstart Worker and Local Public  
School Worker; Community Volunteer

Audrey Hill  
Member, State Day Care Advisory Committee  
Registered Family Day Care Home Provider;  
President of Cedar Rapids Family Day Care  
Home Association

Maury Hines  
Director of Personnel, Employers Mutual;  
Served on United Way Task Force for  
Child Care, Member of Child Care Resources  
Center Board

Karen King  
Program Manager, Child Care Resource  
Referral and Training Center, Junior  
League

JoAnne Lane  
Child Care Coordinator, Waterloo;  
Officer of Iowa and Regional Association  
for Education of Young Children, Member,  
Iowa Council for Children and Families

Glenn Pille  
Juvenile Court Referee, Fifth  
Judicial District

Patricia A. Shoff  
Attorney; Member, Iowa Child Abuse  
Prevention Council

Mark Soldat  
Kossuth County Attorney, Practicing  
Attorney

Gerald Solomons, M.D.  
Director, Child Development Clinic,  
University Hospitals; Director, Child  
Abuse Resource Center, University of Iowa;  
Professor, Pediatrics, University of Iowa

Cheri Throop  
Family Day Care Home Provider; President,  
Black Hawk County Day Care Association,  
Registered Nurse

Kay Zike  
Chair, State Day Care Advisory Committee  
Pre-School Administrator; Member, Iowa  
Association for the Education of Young  
Children

#### Staff

Shean Sherzan, Director  
Iowa Council for Children & Families

Pauline Zeece, Assistant Director  
Iowa Council for Children and Families

Harold Poore, Program Manager, Day  
Care Services, State Department of  
Social Services

## Preamble

The following recommendations have been developed by the Governor's Child Care Task Force. This Task Force was appointed by Governor Robert D. Ray in August, 1982. Task Force members included parents, family day care home providers, child care center directors, attorneys, a physician, child abuse specialists, child care experts and concerned citizens. These recommendations are a result of the Task Force's work which included extensive information collection, discussion and receipt of testimony from public hearings held in eight locations around the state. These recommendations were presented to Governor Ray December 1st. This effort was not an easy task, and while they were not all unanimous, there was a consensus on all recommendations.

These recommendations were developed in the interest of the continued health and well-being of Iowa's children. In submitting these recommendations the Task Force recognizes that the primary and ultimate responsibility for child care rests with the parents and these recommendations have been developed to supplement and assist parents.

They are in no way written to be a complete guarantee of the quality of child care a parent is using or will use in the future. The recommendations are only meant to encourage a minimal standard of health and safety for children in care outside of their homes.

The Governor's Child Care Task Force recognizes that the parents and their parental judgment of a care situation is the most important factor in assuring quality care for their children. However, in today's mobile society and with future projections that more and more families will need child care, there is an increased need to provide enforceable minimum standards that will lead to quality child care.

And lastly, in making these recommendations, the Governor's Child Care Task Force recognizes that quality child care can only be achieved through the cooperation and commitment of the entire community.

THE GOVERNOR'S CHILD CARE TASK FORCE MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. A CRIMINAL CHILD ABUSE STATUTE SHOULD BE ADOPTED.
2. A TASK FORCE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO STUDY FOSTER CARE LICENSING INCLUDING LAWS AND REGULATIONS.
3. ANNUAL LICENSING AND INSPECTION OF GROUP DAY CARE HOMES AND CHILD CARE CENTERS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AND, FURTHER, THAT ANNUAL LICENSING AND INSPECTION OF ALL FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER.
  - IN THE FIRST YEAR, ALL FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES CARING FOR 4-6 CHILDREN WILL BE LICENSED.
  - IN THE SECOND YEAR, ALL FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES CARING FOR 2-6 CHILDREN WILL BE LICENSED.
  - IN THE THIRD YEAR, ALL FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES CARING FOR 1-6 CHILDREN WILL BE LICENSED.
4. EXISTING MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES AND GROUP DAY CARE HOMES SHOULD BE USED FOR LICENSING PURPOSES WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT THE STANDARD FOR DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE AMENDED TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT INCLUDING SPANKING, SHAKING AND SLAPPING. (Existing minimum standards can be found in Appendix A.)
5. THERE SHOULD BE AN ANNUAL LICENSING FEE.
6. THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES MAY USE TRAINED PERSONS AND EXISTING COMMUNITY RESOURCES TO ASSIST IN MAINTAINING QUALITY CHILD CARE.
7. WHEN A CHILD CARE LICENSE IS DENIED, REVOKED OR SUSPENDED, PARENTS AND AGENCIES CONNECTED WITH THE FACILITY SHOULD BE NOTIFIED.
8. OPERATING WITHOUT A LICENSE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A SIMPLE MISDEMEANOR AND EACH DAY OF ILLEGAL OPERATION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A SEPARATE OFFENSE IN DETERMINING PENALTIES.
9. FAMILY DAY CARE HOME PROVIDERS SHOULD BE MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS, i.e., REQUIRED TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE INCIDENTS.
10. ANNUAL CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK OF ALL ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSONS AND CHILD ABUSE REGISTRY CHECKS SHOULD BE REQUIRED FOR ALL PERSONS WORKING OR LIVING WITHIN ANY CHILD CARE FACILITY, AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE EMPLOYMENT PROCESS FOR ALL POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES.
11. STATE LAW SHOULD BE AMENDED TO ALLOW THE PUBLIC THE RIGHT TO KNOW IF SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE HAS OCCURRED IN A CHILD CARE FACILITY; IF ANY STAFF MEMBER OR PERSON LIVING WITHIN THE CHILD CARE FACILITY HAS A RECORD OF SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE; AND, IF SO, WHETHER THAT PERSON IS STILL EMPLOYED OR LIVING WITHIN THE CHILD CARE FACILITY.

12. STATE LAW SHOULD BE AMENDED TO ALLOW CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATORS ACCESS TO ANY CHILD CARE FACILITY BY COURT ORDER.
13. STATE LAW SHOULD BE AMENDED TO GIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES EMERGENCY POWERS TO REMOVE CHILDREN FROM CHILD CARE FACILITIES IF IT IS DEEMED THAT THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER TO THEIR LIVES OR HEALTH. ALL CHILDRENS' RECORDS WILL ACCOMPANY THE CHILDREN AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY.
14. THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES SHOULD EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER EXISTING AGENCIES TO ASSIST PROVIDERS, PARENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE.

APPENDIX A

CURRENT MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A FAMILY DAY CARE HOME

The following minimum requirements are taken directly from pages 6 to 10 of the packet of information provided to Family Day Care Home Providers by the Department of Social Services.

CURRENT MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A FAMILY DAY CARE HOME

The following are the minimum requirements that a provider must comply with in accordance with Chapter 237A, Code of Iowa, and 770-110 of the Iowa Administrative Code. Read the minimum requirements for registration\* for a family day care home very carefully, because when you sign the application form, you are certifying that you comply with all requirements. In addition to the minimum requirements, we have provided comments (set off in parentheses) when a requirement needed further explanation.

Safety Requirements

Conditions in the home are safe, sanitary, and free of hazards. This shall include as a minimum:

- A. A telephone with emergency numbers posted.  
(Emergency numbers will vary according to services that may be needed in a family day care home and those that are available within the community. For example, telephone numbers might include the child's doctor, the local hospital, a poison center, fire department, and the police department.)
  - B. All medicines and cleaners secured from access by a child.
  - C. First-aid supplies.  
(As a minimum, first-aid supplies should include band aids of various sizes, antiseptics for cuts and scratches, adhesive tape, sterile gauze, pads, and a thermometer. Providers may wish to include other items like calamine lotion for insect bites, syrup of ipecac (for use if the doctor advises vomiting,) and bandage scissors. A first aid chart for quick referral may be a valuable resource to the provider.)
  - D. Medications given only with the parent's or doctor's direct authority.
  - E. Electrical wiring maintained with all accessible electrical outlets safely capped and electrical cords properly used. Improper use would include running cords under rugs, over hooks, through door openings, or other such use that has been known to be hazardous.
  - F. Combustible materials are kept away from furnaces, stoves, or water heaters.
  - G. Safety barriers at stairways for preschool age children. (Barriers should be able to be latched, such as a door or gate. All barriers should be firmly anchored. Barriers may be advisable for some older children who have a handicapping condition which would make an open stairway dangerous, or for a particularly hazardous set of stairs.)
- \* All references to registration will be changed to licensing when these recommendations are adopted.



- H. Safe outdoor play area.  
(The outdoor play area should be free from litter, rubbish, and flammable materials. Equipment should be free of sharp, loose, or pointed parts that could cause injury to a child. Permanent outdoor equipment like swing sets or climbers should be firmly anchored. The play area should be well drained, and free from contamination caused by sewage, household drainage waste, or storm water. Fencing may be advisable near a busy thoroughfare or other hazard.)
- I. Annual laboratory analysis of a private water supply to show bacteriological quality. When children under the age of two are to be cared for, such analysis shall include a nitrate analysis. (For other than city supplied water an annual laboratory analysis to show bacteriological quality must be on file. Forms and container for a laboratory analysis may be obtained from the State Hygienic Laboratory in Iowa City, Iowa 52242, or from your local health department if they have a laboratory. There is a cost for a bacteriological analysis, and an additional cost if a nitrate analysis is required when caring for children under two. A water report should be on file in the family day care home records. If the private water supply report does not show satisfactory bacteriological quality, a statement should be contained in the family day care home records indicating the alternative plan for a safe water supply.)
- J. Safety plan to be used in case of fire, tornado, or blizzard.  
(The safety plan to be used in case of fire, tornado, or blizzard should be in writing.)
- K. Regularly planned and executed fire drills.  
(Planned and executed fire drills should be practiced on at least a quarterly basis.)

#### Provider Requirements

The provider shall meet the following requirements:

- A. Is eighteen years of age or older and likes and understands children.
- B. Gives careful supervision at all times.
- C. Frequently exchanges information with the parent or parents of each child.
- D. Gives consistent, dependable care, and is capable of handling emergencies.
- E. Is present at all times except if emergencies occur, at which time good substitute care is provided. When an absence is planned, the parents are given prior notice.
- F. Has not been convicted by any law of any state involving lascivious acts with a child, child neglect, or child abuse.

### Activity Program

There shall be an activity program which includes:

- A. Active play.
- B. Quiet play.
- C. Activities for large muscle development.
- D. Activities for small muscle development.
- E. Play equipment and materials in a safe condition, for both indoor and outdoor activities appropriate for the ages and number of children present.

(A flexible schedule should be developed to aid in planning activities for the children. Examples of active play for large muscle development may include running, climbing, group games, jumping, riding toys, etc. Examples of quiet play for small muscle development may include quiet play, coloring, stringing objects, putting puzzles together, using play dough to form and squeeze, doing music and finger play activities, making things with paper, using paste and scissors, reading books, etc. There could be many variations of equipment for either outside or inside, however, variety and appropriateness to the children's ages is important. An outside play area might have a climber, a slide, a telephone spool, an old log, a tricycle, or push and pull toys, etc. A room inside might have a play house or dramatic play area in one corner, blocks and toys in one corner, and possibly a quiet area for books and puzzles in another corner of the room.)

### Number of Children

The number of children present shall conform to the following standards:

- A. No greater number of children shall be received for care at any one time than the number authorized on the certificate.
- B. The total number of children in the home at any one time shall not exceed six (6). The provider's children not regularly in school full days shall be included in the total. During times when school is not in session, the provider's school age children shall not be included in the total.
- C. There shall never be more than four children under two years of age present at any one time.

### Discipline

No discipline shall be used which is physically or emotionally harmful to a child. (It is always important that the provider discuss discipline with the child's parents before placement and each time disciplinary action is taken. Discipline should not be used which is humiliating, frightening, and should not be related to food, toileting, or napping.)\*

\* This standard would be altered to conform to the recommendation when enacted.

### Nutrition

Regular meals shall be provided which are well-balanced, nourishing, and in appropriate amounts. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks shall be served which are nutritious and appealing. (A well-balanced meal should include all four groups -- milk, meat, vegetable-fruit, and bread-cereal group. Snacks may include milk, or a fruit or vegetable juice. A good resource for information on menu planning and nutrition is the County Extension Service.)

### Records

At a minimum the following records shall be kept on file.

- A. Identifying information on each child including as a minimum the child's name, birthdate, parent's name, names of brothers and sisters, address, telephone numbers, special needs of the child, and the father's or mother's work address and telephone number.
- B. Emergency information on each child including as a minimum where the parent or parents can be reached, the doctor's name and telephone number, and the name and telephone number of another adult available in case of emergency.
- C. A signed medical consent from the parent or parents authorizing emergency treatment. (A signed medical consent form is very important in case of emergencies which occasionally occur. A signed medical consent form greatly reduces the time lost in providing emergency treatment for a child.)
- D. A physician's signed annual report on each child received for care in the home, including immunization information. (Immunization and health information is important in knowing a child is in good health. It is also very important to know when a physician's report requires limitations in a child's diet or activities.)
- E. The physician's signed statement, obtained at the time of the first registration\*\* on all members of the provider's family that may be present when children are in the home that the provider and family are free of disease or disabilities which would prevent good child care.
- F. The physical report obtained by the provider at least every three years after the first report. (A family day care home file could be contained in one "expandable file folder" or perhaps a 5 x 8 recipe file box.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The minimum requirements are basic in providing quality child care in the operation and maintenance of registered\* family day care homes. The following recommendations are included in the Family Day Care Home Information Packet.

- \* This standard would be altered to conform to the recommendation when enacted.
- \*\* All references to registration would be changed to licensing when recommendations are enacted.

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