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THE CURRENT ISSUES OF CHILD DAY CARE (CDC)

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

submitted to the Faculty

of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

by

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**Alla Grebelsky**

Date: December 18, 2001

Approved:

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Professor Patrick P. Dunn

1. day care
2. europe

## Letter of Transmittal

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December 18, 2001

Dear Professor Dunn:

Attached is one copy of the Interactive Qualifying report: **The Current Issues Of Child Day Care (CDC)**, Project Number PPD-1903.

Sincerely,

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Alla Grebelsky

Distribution: Library: 1 copy  
Professor Patrick P. Dunn: 1 copy

## **Abstract**

Recent studies have proclaimed the state of child care in the United States with the bold statement such as ". . . most child care--especially for infants and toddlers--is mediocre in quality and sufficiently poor to interfere with children's emotional and intellectual development" (Helburn et al. 1995). However individual experiences reflect a different reality. Through gathering of up-to-date data this paper contrasts the current academic opinion with the experiences of everyday childcare users [6].

## **Acknowledgements**

The survey participants who were kind enough to provide information for this research paper. A special thanks goes to Professor Patrick P. Dunn who meticulously reviewed numerous drafts and provided advice on this project.

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# 1. Introduction

In sharp contrast to the situation thirty or forty years ago, most preschool children currently have some form of out-of-home child care as they are growing up. In 1967, only 17 percent of mothers with preschool children were employed. Today, about 65 percent of mothers of preschool children are in labor force. In 1967, nearly 40 percent of their preschool children (about 140,000) were enrolled in paid child care services, most often through informal arrangements (only 2 percent were in licensed child care or nursery school). Today, about 54 percent (over 700,000) of the much larger number of preschool children whose mothers are in the labor force or students are in paid child care. In other words, there has been a 400 percent increase in the use of paid child care services for preschool children of families having employed mothers over this thirty-year period. About 250,000 of these children are in licensed services, including child care centers, licensed family home care and nursery schools [2].

Child care allows parents to be employed when their children are young, and this employment provides both private and public benefits. However, far more important as a justification for public assistance to child care are the direct effects of good child care on the children themselves. The early years of childhood are now recognized as crucial ones for the development of cognitive and social abilities [2].

Studies in the neurosciences, child development, and early intervention show that the period from conception to age six is critically important. During this period children develop essential language and intellectual skills required to learn reading and arithmetic, and the ability to manage their emotions and stress, as well as co-operate with others. How well a child fares in these early years holds life-long consequences both for the child and for society [5].

Research demonstrates that quality child care contributes to successful outcomes. It has the ability to compensate children from disadvantaged backgrounds and provide

early detection and intervention for children with special needs. Conversely, studies indicate that even advantaged families are unable to compensate for poor quality care arrangements [5].

The quality of care children receive during their early years is, therefore, of great concern to parents, educators, and policy makers. Neither the child's, nor the public's interest is served by public policy neglect nor investments that produce poor quality care environments [5].

The purpose of this project is to discuss the current issues of child day care. I will show that conditions such as low adult/child ratios; caregiver education and training in child development; caregivers who feel valued, are paid adequate wages, and have satisfactory working conditions; low turnover of caregivers and children; appropriate physical environment; and regulations supporting quality standards and adequate enforcement are important factors to quality child care and are essential to children's well-being and development [8].



## **2. Contrast of Child Day Care in Europe versus United States of America**

### **2.1 Europe**

Much of social policy is concerned with families and family life. Children and their families are very often a central issue in contemporary political and policy debate in most western welfare states. This special interest in children's well-being can be explained in many ways: It is said that the well-being of children is not only an indication of a society's moral worth, but children are also a human capital, the most important resource for a society's future [8]. Almost every action that welfare states take has impacts on families and family life.

In the past twenty years there has been various attempts to classify different family policy systems. Sheila Kamerman and Alfred Kahn (1978) categorized countries according to their family policy-making styles. They distinguished between countries that had explicit and implicit family policies. At that time comprehensive explicit family policy countries included France, Sweden, Norway, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Countries with an explicit, but more narrowly focused, family policy included Denmark, Germany, Austria, Poland and Finland. Countries without an explicit family policy, which often rejected the idea of such a policy, included the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel and the United States [8].

In a much more recent study on family policy, Anne H. Gauthier presented a historical review of the development of family policy in Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. She clustered countries in four different groups.

First, in the countries belonging to pro-family/pro-natalist model in which the major concern is low fertility and the main task of family policy is to encourage families to have children. This is done by helping mothers reconcile work and family life. In this model, relatively high levels of support are provided for maternity leave and child-care facilities. Great emphasis is placed on cash benefits and more particularly, the third child. Gauthier names France and Quebec as examples in this group [8].

In the second, pro-traditional model the preservation of the family is the main concern. Government takes some responsibility for supporting families, but the most important sources of support are seen as the families themselves and voluntary organizations. Under this model, a medium level of state support for families is provided. The low provision of child care does not give women the opportunity to combine employment and family responsibility easily. Germany is an example given [8].

In the third, pro-egalitarian, model countries seeks to promote gender equality. Men and women are treated as equal breadwinners with equal careers, and policy aims to support dual parent/worker roles. Liberal policies on marriage, divorce, and abortion mean that there are few restrictions on how people can choose their family life. The principle of voluntary parenthood describes this family policy model. The best representatives of this model are Sweden and Denmark [8].

In the fourth, pro-family but non-interventionist model, the main concern is families in need. The participation of women in the labor force is not discouraged, but limited benefits are provided by the state to support them. Families are viewed as

basically self-sufficient and able to meet their own needs through the private market with only a limited help from the state. It is believed that the market will meet any needs that emerge, as long as it is not hindered by government regulation. The UK and USA can be regarded as the best examples of this model [8].

Jane Millar and Andrea Warman (1996) compared welfare states by what kind of family obligation the countries presented. They did not construct a typology of national approaches to defining family obligations because 'the data they had told only a part of the story'. In spite of this they group countries according to the legislation that takes into account the family (see table 1). In the Scandinavian countries the emphasis is on individual entitlements and citizenship rights available to all. Those in need are most likely to expect and receive state, rather than family, provision and there are rarely any legal requirements to provide support. Children in the Scandinavian countries are more likely to be treated as individuals with rights of their own than they are elsewhere [8].

The countries where family obligations are mainly assumed to lie in the nuclear family are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK. Individualization is relatively undeveloped; benefits and taxes almost always recognize these family obligations. Within this group of countries there are some differences of emphasis. In some countries the legal obligations to provide financial support extend only downward (from parents to children) and in some countries only upwards (from adult children to parents).

Ireland and the UK fall into the first category and the other countries into the second category. However, although these obligations exist in laws in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, they are rarely enforced.

Millar and Warman identify differences in approach in respect to care of children. In some countries there is a presumption of family care for children. This is true in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK. In these countries child care coverage seems to be low and school hours make it difficult for mothers to be in full-time work. In Belgium and France child care is seen as a responsibility of the state [8].

In Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece the extended family plays a more important role. Families are expected to support one another across a broad range of relationships and someone in need is expected to look first to their family for support. Services that exist are mainly for those without family. State provision for child care for young children is relatively low and is not primarily intended as support for working parents [8].

**Table 1. Indicators of family policies in various countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. [8]**

	Child benefit	Single parent benefit	Child maintenance guarantee	Paternity leave	Leave to care for sick children	Coverage of day care	Regulation of family day care	Family policy index
Finland	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	8
Belgium	+	-	+	+	+	++	+	7
Sweden	+	-	+	+	+	++	+	7
Denmark	+	+	+	+	-	++	+	7
France	+	+	+	+	-	++	+	7
Norway	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	6
Austria	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	5
Germany	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	4
Italy	-	-	-	-	+	++	+	4
Greece	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	3
Spain	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	3
UK	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	3
Australia	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	2
Luxembourg	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	2
Portugal	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	2
USA	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	1
Netherlands	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Source: Millar & Warman 1996 (tables 3.4 and 3.5) except the family policy index and countries Australia and USA. Family policy index is calculated as following: ++ = 2 points, + = 1 point and - = 0 point.

Table 1 above allows us to compare the levels of family support in seventeen countries. There is a great variation in family policy legislation. Scandinavian countries together with France and Belgium have quite a wide range of family policy legislation. Most countries in Southern Europe have the legislation just above or at the same level as the countries belonging to the liberal welfare state regimes. This firms the difficulty to place Southern European countries to traditional regimes. Somewhat surprising is the

Netherlands – usually ranking very highly in the quality of the welfare states – is here among the lowest rankings. The Dutch family policy has been developed under the male breadwinner ideology. Day care services were, until the 1990's, quite underdeveloped. In the beginning of 1990s there occurred drastic changes in Dutch policy especially towards single parent families. Individualization and the fragmentation of life styles gave rise to the perception that lone motherhood was a self-selected life style that no longer required social protection. The results of these changes various in different groups. According to Bussemaker et al. (1997) for those mothers who had built their identity primarily on full-time motherhood the changes were radical and strongly negative [8].

As all the family policy classifications presented above have shown, one of the key divider of the family policy systems is how different welfare states help families to reconcile family and professional life. When parental leave, leave to care for sick children, and child care are considered together it is clear that Nordic countries have gone much further than others in supporting parents to reconcile employment with family life. The liberal welfare states, together with Southern European countries, lack this kind of support almost totally (see table 1).

From the poverty point of view, day care arrangements play an important role because employment is one of the main factors which keeps families out of poverty. On the other hand it is not only the coverage of day care but also the cost of day care which matters. According to recent study (Bradshaw et al. 1996) the day care fees of single parents in relation to their incomes are highest in the UK (28 %) and USA (22 %). High day care fees might force women to return or stay at home. This has been argued to have

happened for example in Australia. In Nordic countries the coverage of day care and states' subsidies for day care costs are high.

The degree to which family policy legislation has been developed in various countries depends largely upon ideological factors. In the Nordic countries, the state has long participated in the equalization of the expense caused by children. In the traditionalist countries social rights are tied in with family status. This has resulted in women's and children's individual benefits remaining poorly developed. In liberal welfare states, the family is viewed as so untouchable an institution that the state must not interfere with how it functions. Child-raising and child care are seen as private family matters. These ideological factors reflect the way in which family policy legislation is developed.

Level of legislation tells only one part of the story. Although the social policy legislation forms the basis of family policy, it does not tell us how well the legislation is working in practice. To get this side of the picture it is necessary to include information about the outcomes of the legislation [8].

By looking at the outcomes of different policy making styles it is possible to identify two most diverse family policy systems, the Nordic one and the Liberal one. In the Nordic countries, families with children are supported not only by income transfers but also by comprehensive social services, whereas in liberal countries the support for families with children is almost totally limited to means-tested benefits. Besides the benefit system one important factor which explains the outcomes of different countries is the way day care for children is provided. In liberal welfare states the commercial-based day care with high user fees is very often too expensive alternative for low income

families (see Table 1). But unfortunately it often is the only alternative available. This situation prevents single parent families from participating in labor market. In liberal welfare states, jobless single parent families are almost automatically poor. The Nordic welfare states stress a policy in which the manifest objective is to permit parents to choose either an at-home role while children are very young or a labor market role. This choice is guaranteed by publicly provided day care and generous child benefits [8].

## **2.2 United States of America**

Contemporary myth suggests that parental care of children in the United States has all but disappeared, nearly all mothers are employed, and nearly all preschool children are being cared for in day-care centers. The facts, according to the most recently available data from the Census Bureau, present a dramatically different picture. According to the Census data, nearly half (48 percent) of all American children under the age of five do not have employed mothers and are still being cared for in the home [4].

### **2.2.1 Current Patterns of Child Rearing**

A related misconception is that maternal employment and day-care use are increasing rapidly. Although day care use did increase rapidly through the late 1980s, the increase has come to a halt in recent years. The percentage of children under age five with employed mothers nearly doubled from the mid-1970s through 1988. But in subsequent years, maternal employment remained fixed. In 1994 (the last year reported by the Census), the percentage of preschool children with employed mothers was still 52 percent, the same as it was in 1988.



Moreover, if the mother of a child under five years old is employed, she is unlikely to be employed full-time. Overall, 48 percent of preschool children have non-employed mothers, 18 percent have mothers who are employed part-time, and only 34 percent have mothers who are employed full-time. (The number of preschoolers whose mothers are employed full-time throughout the year would be even lower) [4].

When the mother is employed, use of formal day-care centers is relatively uncommon. Far more common is care given by parents and relatives. Some 12 percent of preschool children are cared for by the mother while she is employed or by the father during the mother's hours of employment. (This group includes tag-team parents who work different shifts so that one can remain at home while the other is working). Finally, some 13 percent of preschool children are cared for by other relatives, such as grandparents or aunts, while the mother's employed.

The 27 percent of preschool children who are cared for by neither parent nor relative can be divided into two groups: Some 11 percent are in informal care with neighbors' nannies; another 16 percent are in day-care or preschool centers.

### **2.2.2 The Real Picture of Preschool Care**

These figures paint a picture that is the exact opposite of that advanced by most advocates of professional day care. Examining the data on preschool children as a group reveals that:

- 48 percent are cared for by a non-employed mother;
- 12 percent are cared for by the mother or father while the mother is employed

- 13 percent are cared for by relatives;
- 11 percent are in informal non-relative care; and
- 16 percent are in formal day care of preschool while the mother is employed

Overall, some 73 percent of children under the age of five are cared for by their parents or other relatives. And only one preschool child in six is cared for in a formal day-care or preschool center while the child's mother is employed.

The high prevalence of parental and relative care means that the use of paid day care is comparatively uncommon. Only about one-third of children under age five are in some form of paid care while the mother is employed.

### **2.2.3 The Impact on Family Income**

Nearly 80 percent of the preschool children using any form of day care come from married-couple families with two income earners. In 1996, the median income of married couples with children when both parents are employed was \$57,637. By contrast, vast numbers of married couples make a large financial sacrifice so that one parent can remain at home with their children. In 1996, the median income of married couples with children when the husband, but not the mother, was employed was \$38,835. Thus, the incomes of two-parent/single-earner families are some \$20,000 a year less on average than the incomes of dual-earners families who are the predominant users of day care [4].

## 2.2.4 Families and Taxes

All families with children have suffered from the enormous increase in government taxation during the past 50 years. In 1948 the average family of four paid 3 percent of its income to the federal government in direct taxes; by 1997, the tax burden had risen to 24.7 percent. When state, local, and indirect taxes are added, the total tax was 38 percent.

Congress recently enacted family tax relief in the form of a tax credit worth \$400 per child in 1998 and \$500 per child each subsequent year. Because of this credit, federal direct taxes on the typical family of four will fall from 24.7 percent in 1997 to 23.3 percent in 1998. *This cut represents the first real and sustained reduction in the federal tax burden on families with children in all of the last half-century.*

This is a laudable first step in reducing the tax burden on families with children. Congress should build on this foundation by providing additional tax relief to families with preschool children. This tax relief should be broad-based and non-discriminatory: It should be available to all taxpaying families with preschool children—not merely the small and affluent minority of parents who use paid day care [4].

Chart 2.2.4.1: Patterns of Child Rearing for Children Under Five [4]

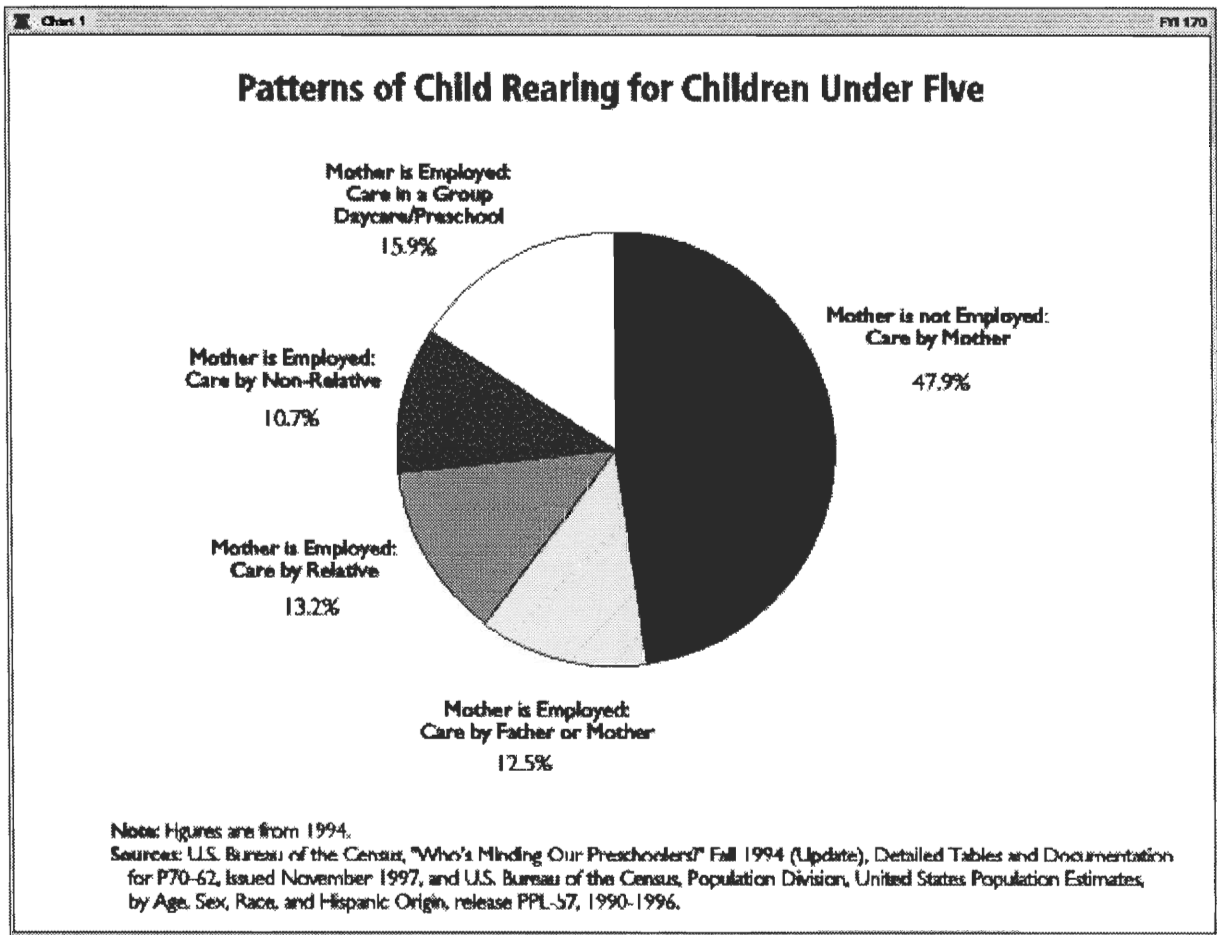
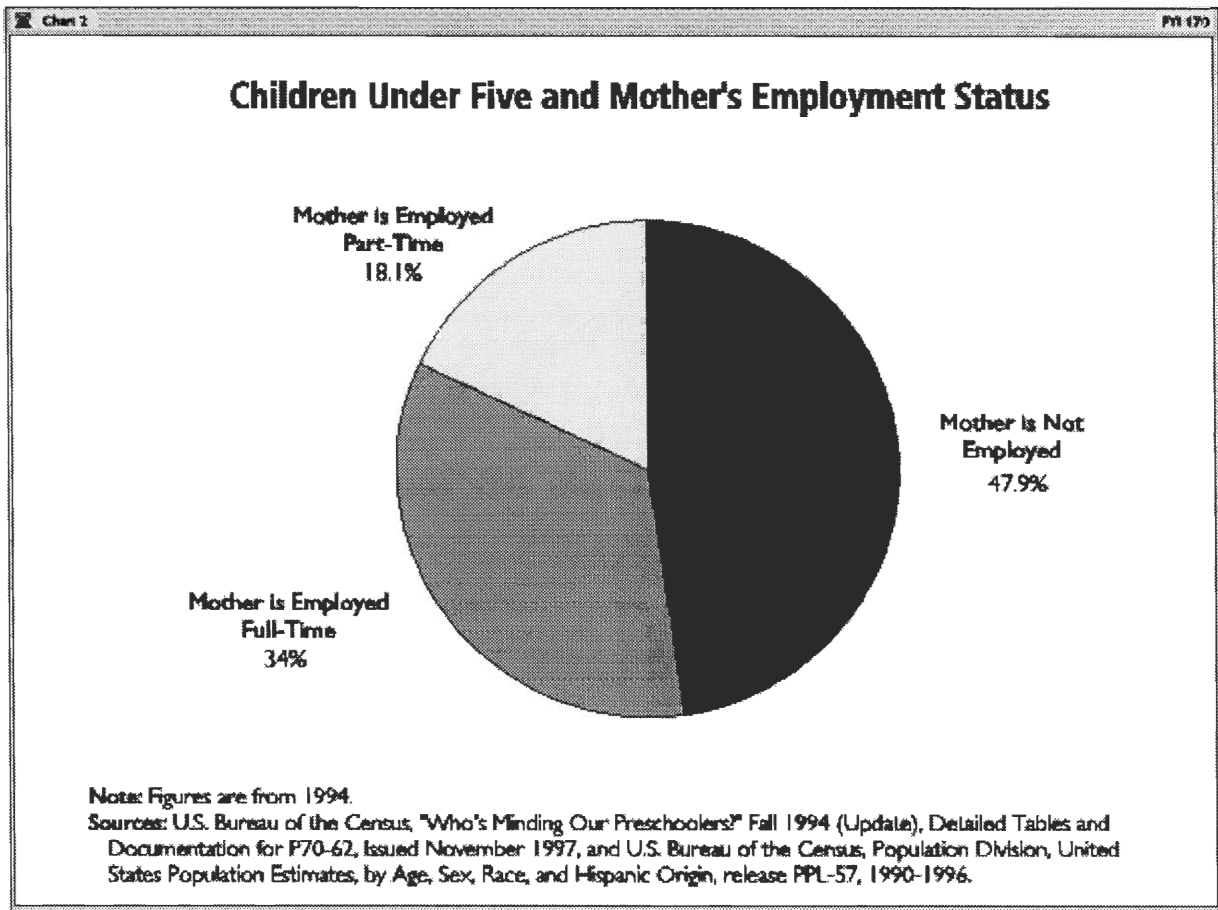


Chart 2.2.4.2: Children Under Five and Mother's Unemployment Status [4]



**Chart 2.2.4.3: Use of Paid Day Care: Children Under Five [4]**

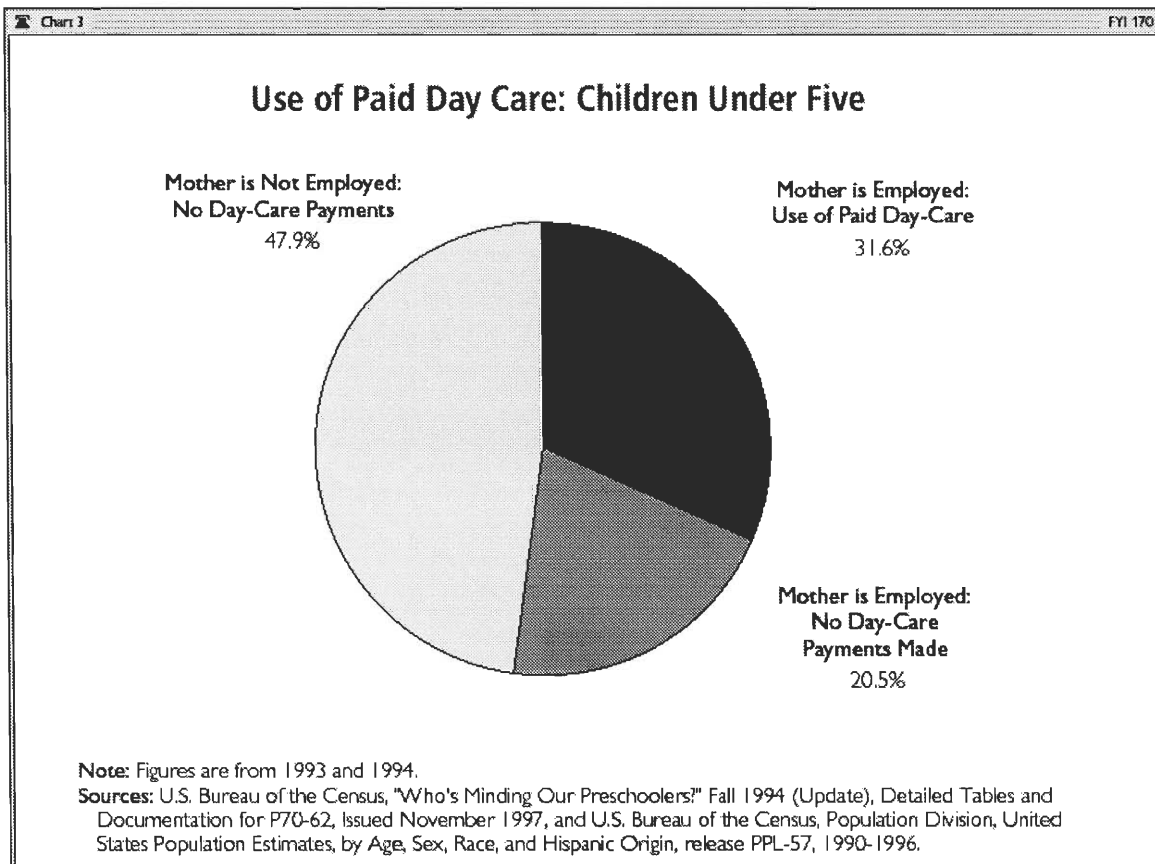


Chart 2.2.4.4: Children Under Age Five With Employed Mothers [4]

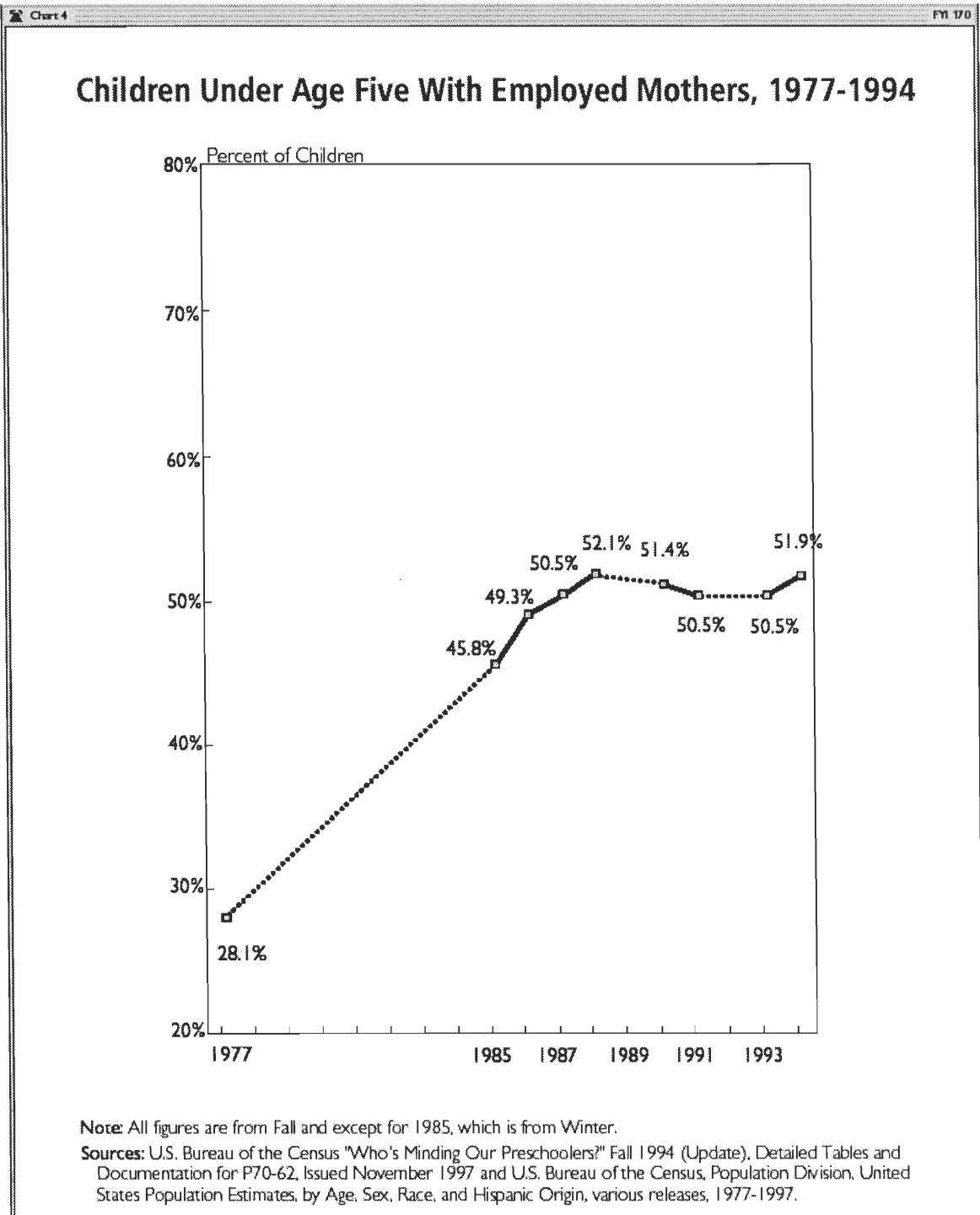


Chart 2.2.4.5: Median Incomes of Married Couples With Children [4]

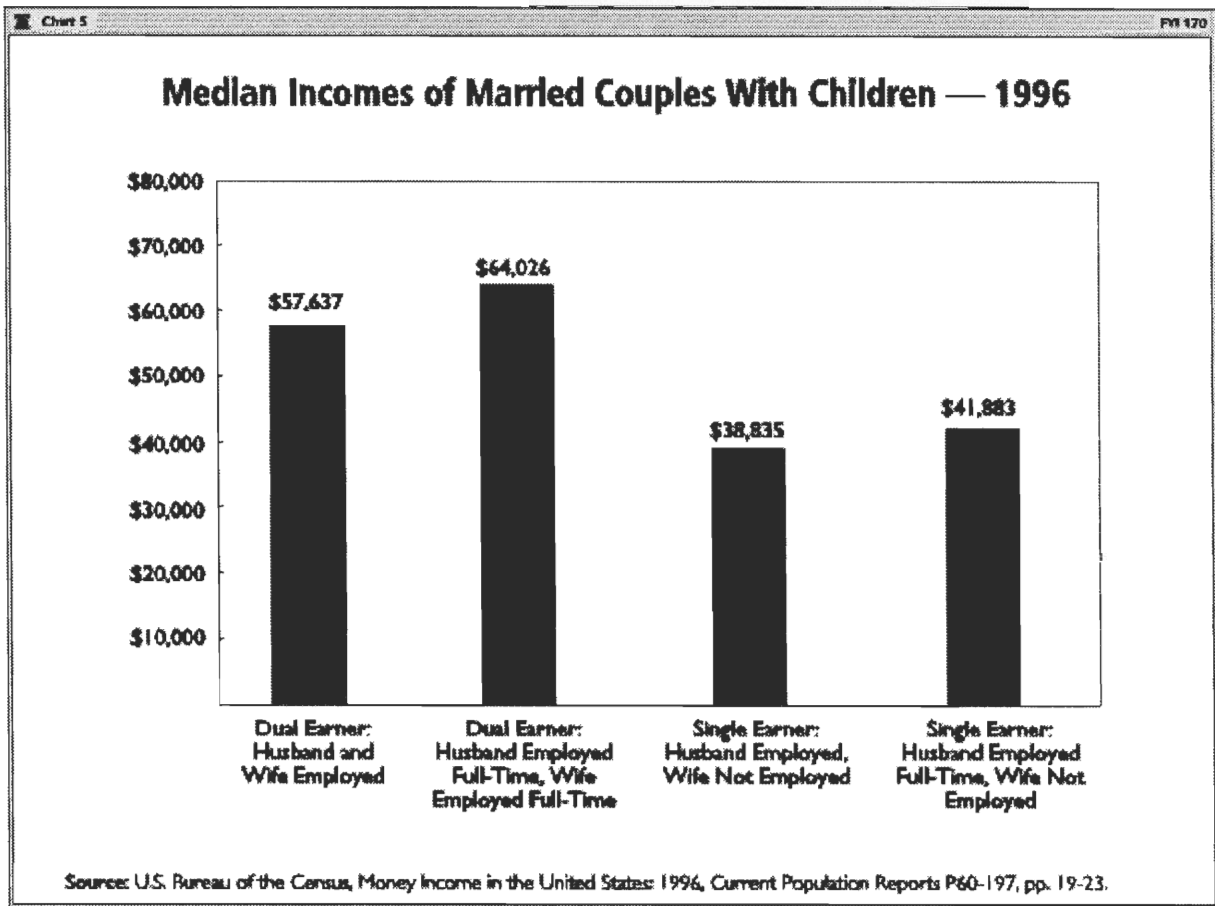




Table 2.2.4.1: Types of Child Rearing Arrangements: Children Under Five (in thousands) [4]

<b>Types of Child Rearing Arrangements: Children Under Five (in thousands)</b>			
	Number of children in each type of care	Total children under five	Percentage of children in each type of care
Mother is not Employed: Care by Mother	9,439	19,696	47.9%
Mother is Employed: Care by Father or Mother	2,461	19,696	12.5%
Mother is Employed: Care by Relative	2,592	19,696	13.2%
Mother is Employed: Care by Non-Relative	2,110	19,696	10.7%
Mother is Employed: Care in a Group Daycare/Preschool	3,126	19,696	15.9%

**Note:** Figures are from 1994.  
**Sources:** U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Who's Minding Our Preschoolers?" Fall 1994 (Update), Detailed Tables and Documentation for P70-62, Issued November 1997, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, United States Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, release PPL-57, 1990-1996.

**Table 2.2.4.2: Children Under Five and Mother's Employment Status (in thousands) [4]**

<b>Children Under Five and Mother's Employment Status (in thousands)</b>		
	<b>Children in Category</b>	<b>Percentage of Children Under Five</b>
<b>Mother is not Employed</b>	9,439	47.9%
<b>Mother is Employed Part-Time</b>	3,582	18.1%
<b>Mother is Employed Full-Time</b>	6,705	34.0%
<b>Total</b>	19,696	100%

**Note:** Figures are from 1994.  
**Sources:** U.S. Bureau of the Census "Who's Minding Our Preschoolers?" Fall 1994 (Update) Detailed Tables and Documentation for P70-62, Issued November 1997, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, United States Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, release PPL-57, 1990-1996.

**Table 2.2.4.3: Mother's Employment and Types of Child Care for Children Under Five (in thousands) [4]**

<i>Age of Child</i>	Children with Employed Mothers	Total Children in Age Group	Percent with Employed Mothers
Under One Year	1,738	3,857	45.1%
One Year Olds	2,085	3,872	53.8%
Two Year Olds	2,201	3,955	55.7%
Three Year Olds	2,088	3,987	52.4%
Four Year Olds	2,175	4,024	54.1%
All Children Under Age Five	10,288	19,696	52.2%

**Note:** Figures are from 1994.  
**Sources:** U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Who's Minding Our Preschoolers?" Fall 1994 (Update), Detailed Tables and Documentation for P70-62, Issued November 1997, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, United States Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, release PPL-57, 1990-1996.

The figures above relating to the use of day care were derived from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) conducted by the Bureau of the Census and from other Census data. SIPP findings are issued periodically in reports entitled *Who's Minding Our Preschoolers* (Series P70).

For the data presented here, the terms "**preschool**" and "**preschooler**" always refer to children under the age of five. Nearly all five-year-old children in the United States attend Kindergarten and are not included in the preschool population.

The term "**day care**" refers to care provided to a child during the time a mother is employed or engaged in self-employment activity. Day care is used to facilitate and support the mother's employment or self-employment activities intended to generate income. A number of non-employed mothers do place their three- and four-year-old children in preschool programs for a few hours per week in order to provide them with educational and developmental opportunities. Such use of preschools by non-employed parents is not considered day care, according to the SIPP survey, and is not included in the figures used in this report.

The term "**mother**" technically refers to the primary caregiver of the child within that child's family. Although most such caregivers were, indeed, the children's mothers, the category also includes a small number of guardians and fathers in single-parent/father-only families. The term "**employed mother**" also includes a small number of mothers or primary caregivers who attended school rather than held a job [4].

### 3. Cost

Cost is a big issue when it comes to day cares. So, one of the questions that you might ask is “Who will pay for Child Care?” [10].

It certainly does take a village to raise a child. Finding a high quality, affordable baby-sitter or child-care provider is a double whammy. You want the best, most nurturing care you can possibly find. The trouble is, quality commands big bucks.

Current costs for children's care in the nation's 100,000 early-childhood centers are now running \$26 billion, according to the Child Care Information Exchange. And, says Lynn White, Executive Director of the National Child Care Association, "with demands for quality, greater costs are in front of us."

Paying those bills might get easier if the political will gets stronger. Legislators in Washington, D.C. and in statehouses nationwide are beginning to make children a priority. President Clinton's announced child-care proposals would earmark \$21.7 billion to help working families pay for child care, build a good supply of after school programs, improve the safety and quality of current care and promote early-learning initiatives. It'll take that kind of money to address the system's needs.

Here's what needs to be done:

- Raise the pay and increase the benefits of child-care workers. Today, the average annual salary is a paltry \$12,000. Making child-care work more desirable would not only broaden the talent pool but likely also stabilize the current 40% turnover rate.

- In spite of the increase in the cost, day cares must improve child-care quality and safety. Recent studies found that only one of every seven child-care centers was of good quality [10].

People who have children in day care are paying more than it would cost to pay the mother to stay home and take care of all of her children when you include the tax burden on the family. The amount of money that it costs to provide day care for one child includes at least 1/6th of a salary to the day care provider (there are supposed to be about 6 children per child care worker), the cost of buying and maintaining the day care building, food and toys for the children, plus utility bills and the overhead which may include administrative costs if it is a large day care company and the cost of complying with regulations and taxes paid. Unless the day care provider is a person living at home so that the overhead cost is reduced, the total amount of money spent per child will be far in excess of what it would cost for a mother to take care of her own children at home, and it may even be in excess of what would be considered a standard comfortable wage for one person. Because states impose heavy regulation on anyone who is paid to care for children they drive up the cost of day care. In some cases the cost of child care would be a strain on the income even if two people worked. For example, in Boston the average annual cost would be about \$7,500 per child. The amount of money that is spent per child is enough to pay one parent to stay home and take care of one's own child full time. After all there is an economic choice, the money that's being spent can either go to the parents or to day care providers. People have to decide which they prefer [3].

**Table 3.1: Family Day-Care Costs Sampler [10]**

<b>City</b>	<b>Average Weekly Costs</b>
Albuquerque, NM	Infant \$85 to \$95; Toddler \$85; Preschool \$80
Austin, TX	Infant \$100; Toddler \$90
Baltimore, MD	Infant \$94; Toddler \$83; Preschool \$81
Boise, ID	Toddler \$81; Preschool \$78
Boston, MA	Infant \$137; Toddler \$121; Preschool \$119
Chicago, IL	Infant \$97; Toddler \$92; Preschool \$83
Cincinnati, OH	Infant/Toddler \$85; Preschool \$83
Columbia, SC	Infant/Toddler \$75; Preschool \$70
Denver, CO	Infant/Toddler \$105; Preschool \$93
Kansas City, KS	Infant \$80 to \$100; Toddler \$80 to \$90; Preschool \$70
Little Rock, AK	Infant \$75; Toddler \$75
Miami, FL	\$70 to \$120
Minneapolis, MN	Infant \$125; Toddler \$110; Preschool \$100
Mobile, AL	\$70
New Orleans, LA	\$45 to \$65
New York, NY	Infant/Toddler \$127; Preschool \$102
Omaha, NB	Infant \$100; Toddler \$85
Phoenix, AZ	\$75 to \$125
Reno, NV	Infant/Toddler \$85 to \$125; Preschool \$75 to \$100
San Francisco, CA	Infant/Toddler \$123; Preschool \$117

**Table 3.2: Day-Care Costs [10]**

<b>15 Most Expensive Day-Care Areas Nationwide</b>		<b>15 Least Expensive Day-Care Areas Nationwide</b>	
<b>City</b>	<b>Average Monthly Costs</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Average Monthly Costs</b>
Manhattan	\$1,125	Tampa, FL	\$260
Lower New York State	\$641	Mobile, AL	\$290
Washington, D.C./VA	\$622	Columbia, SC	\$303
Boston, MA	\$622	Casper, WY	\$305
Lower Connecticut	\$596	Jackson, MS	\$307
Northeastern New Jersey	\$595	Little Rock, AK	\$309
Long Island, NY	\$593	New Orleans, LA	\$311
Minneapolis, MN	\$572	Billings, MO	\$311
Philadelphia, PA	\$564	Tulsa, OK	\$311
Manchester, NH	\$532	San Antonio, TX	\$315
Wilmington, DE	\$529	Miami, FL	\$322
Philadelphia/New Jersey	\$525	Sioux Falls, SD	\$324
Washington, D.C./MD	\$519	Springfield, IL	\$333
Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Queens, N.Y.	\$519	Charleston, WV	\$335
Seattle, WA	\$498	Memphis, TN	\$349



The day-care costs shown above are based on monthly fees for a three-year-old child placed in a for-profit day-care center, five days a week, eight hours a day. The day-care centers are located either within city limits or in representative suburban communities surrounding the city where families reside. The ranking is based on analysis of approximately 65 metropolitan areas nationwide. All research was conducted by Runzheimer International [10].

## **4. Day Care Options**

If you are looking for child care, you probably have a good idea of what you want—a place that is safe, happy, and loving, where children can learn and have fun. At the same time, child care must also meet your needs. Child care should be convenient, affordable, and offer care when you need it [11].

Finding child care that has the quality and convenience you want—at a reasonable cost—can be a real challenge. It is rare to find the perfect situation but it is possible to find a very good situation that will meet your needs.

### **4.1 Family child care home**

Family day care is often provided by young mothers who are caring for children of their own or a child care professional who have chosen to work at home. Although regulations vary from state to state, most family day care providers are required to be licensed or registered if they are caring for more than 2 or 3 non-related children. Family child care homes that voluntarily choose to register with the state will agree to

meet certain minimum standards. Registered family child care homes usually care for a small group of children—usually six or less. Family child care homes offer a cozy, home-like setting and the opportunity for siblings to stay together [11].

#### Advantages

- Less expensive than many of the other options
- Nurturing home-like atmosphere, individualized attention
- Most offer more flexible hours of care

#### Disadvantages

- No back up care if provider is ill or takes a vacation
- Providers may not have the same level of experience and training and those who work in center programs
- Licensing standards are less stringent [1]

## **4.2 Child care centers**

15% of employed mothers use center-based day care for their preschool children as their primary source of child care. These programs include franchises, as well as individually owned centers. Day care centers may be profit or non-profit programs and can be found in a variety of locations including; hospitals, public schools, churches, youth centers, women’s shelters, colleges, spas and health clubs [1].

Child care centers care for larger groups of children. Children are usually separated by age groups and play only with children of their own age. As children grow

older, they may be moved to a different age group. In most cases this also means they will have a different caregiver every year. Because young children develop very strong attachments to their caregivers, this practice can be unsettling for some children. Child care centers are licensed by the state, which requires certain basic standards for health and safety [11].

#### Advantages

- Less expensive than in home care
- Regulated by state licensing to meet minimum standards of safe and appropriate care
- Caregivers are professionally trained
- Reliable, you don't have to worry about caregiver calling in sick
- Opportunities for your child to socialize with other children

#### Disadvantages

- May be closed on holidays or school vacation days
- Less flexible hours
- It may be difficult to find a center that takes infants
- Children are more exposed to contagious illnesses
- Less individualized attention [1]

### 4.3 In-home care

The caregiver comes to or lives in your home. In-home care works well if you need care for an infant or toddler, after-school care, or evening and weekend care. This type of arrangement can include a relative or child care professional caring for your children within your own home. In-home care is convenient, but can be costly. You also may be responsible for paying social security and workers compensation for your in-home provider. In-home caregivers are not regulated by the state. The most popular example of a child care professional, of course, is Mary Poppins. There are nannies and Au pairs. The major difference is that Au pairs are usually young ladies that come in from a different country. They almost always stay with the family, whereas nannies may or may not stay within your home. In either case, many nannies and Au pairs are also asked to perform light housekeeping duties in addition to child care [1].

#### Advantages

- Most convenient in location and scheduling
- More personalized attention for the child
- Child is in a familiar setting
- You have greatest control over activities, discipline and other policies

#### Disadvantages

- Most expensive option
- Lots of paperwork and taxes involved

- May be left without care if caregiver gets ill or quits without notice
- May have to provide room and board
- Child does not have as many opportunities to interact with other children [1].

#### **4.4 Drop-in care**

Some family providers and center programs allow drop-in care. You will usually need to visit with the provider and sign your child up beforehand. Then when you need child care, you can call to see if the provider or center happens to have an opening that day. This type of child care works well as a back-up for times when your regular care won't work [11].

#### **4.5 Corporate/Workplace care**

One of the most rapidly growing options, corporate day care is gaining popularity because employers are recognizing that providing onsite day care is not only a nice benefit for employees but makes good business sense. Employers that provide day care find they improve employee moral, productivity and retention [1].

##### Advantages

- Convenience of location
- Ability to visit your child during breaks or join them for lunch
- Often a reduced cost

#### Disadvantages

- Care ends when your employment does
- Less personalized attention

## 4.6 Cooperative care

Cooperative day-care programs are non-profit programs often started by a group of parents who wish to have a direct influence on the kind of care their children receive. A cooperative belongs to the people who start and run it, these owners are also the customers [1].

#### Advantages

- Direct control over all policies and curricular issues
- Extensive involvement in decisions that effect the care your child receives

#### Disadvantages

- You may be responsible for making decisions that affect the care of other people's children
- You will need to devote a substantial amount of time, energy and money to the daily operation of the program
- You may find yourself serving as a substitute, making bookcases, answering phones and many other tasks

## **4.7 Other Programs**

### **4.7.1 Head Start**

**Head Start** is a full day or part day program that cares for children and provides educational learning activities. Head Start is a federally funded program aimed at low-income children. The purpose of this program is to prepare children from low-income families for school by focusing on reading and positive social interaction. More than 350,000 children are currently enrolled and services have been recently expanded for younger children. Head Start programs can be located in centers, schools, or family child care homes. Services are usually free. Families who have low income or who have a child with special needs may be eligible.

### **4.7.2 Public schools**

**Public schools** in many communities offer programs for pre-kindergarten children and some also offer before- and after-school programs for school-age children [11].

### **4.7.3 Montessori programs**

**Montessori programs** were born from the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. She believed children learned best in what she called the "the prepared environment." There is an ordered arrangement of sequential learning materials, designed to be developmentally appropriate and aesthetically appealing. Used in the non-competitive Montessori classroom, the materials allow each child to develop at his/her

own individual rate. All Montessori teachers are required to undergo extensive training in addition to a baccalaureate degree [1].

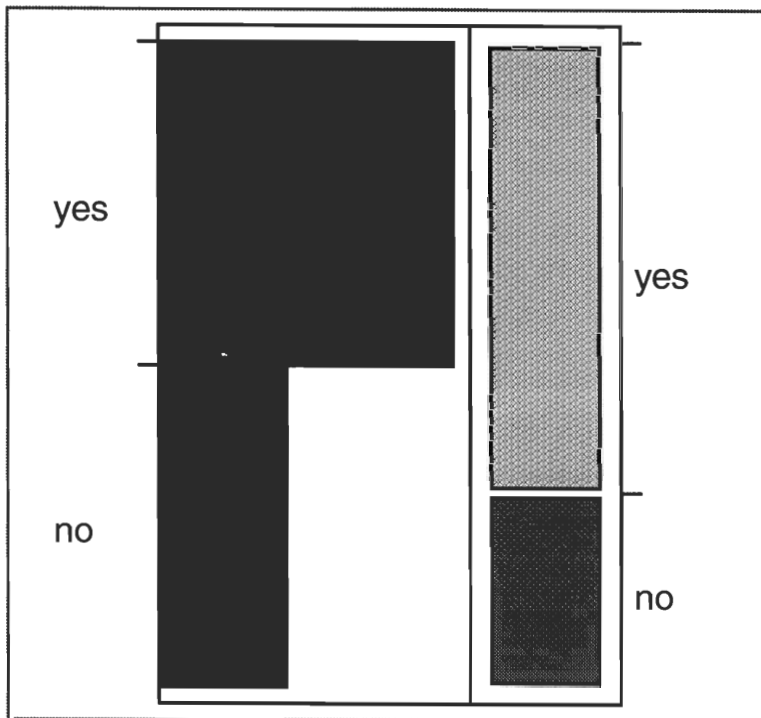
## **5. Results Of The Survey**

The information above represents a compendium of studies. Although it gives a very detailed picture, the goal of this study was to demonstrate the “real life” child care experience. The web with its thousands of users provided an excellent way to survey a wide number of people that come from different background. Granted that the Web user does not represent a typical US citizen, however if statistics that show that more than fifty percent have access to the Web, then it stands to reason that the sample size is sufficiently large and diverse.

A survey was set up at <http://www.zoomerang.com> containing twenty questions that the survey participants must answer (Appendix A). These questions were meant to prove people’s attitudes and experiences with child care. This section presents the results of the survey.



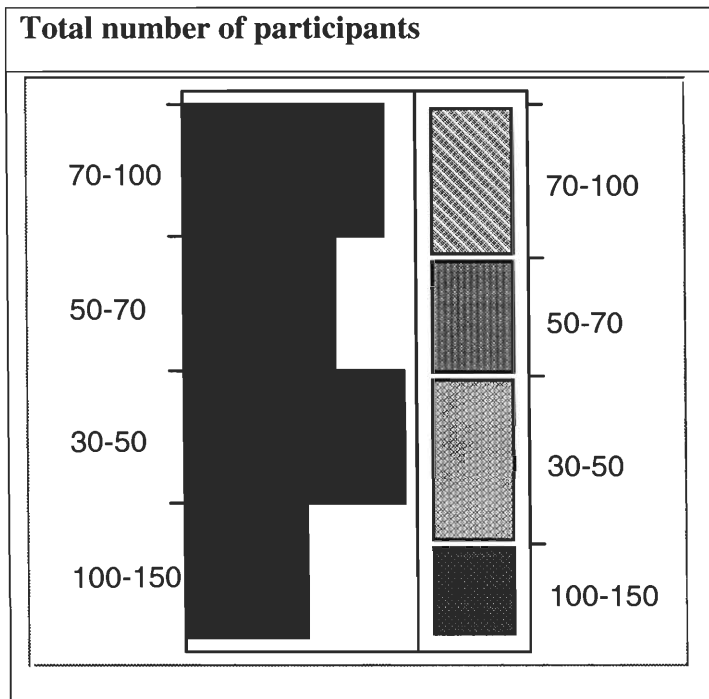
**Question 1: Do you use day care?**



**Frequencies:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Probability</b>
<b>No</b>	23	0.30667
<b>Yes</b>	52	0.69333
<b>Total</b>	75	1.00000

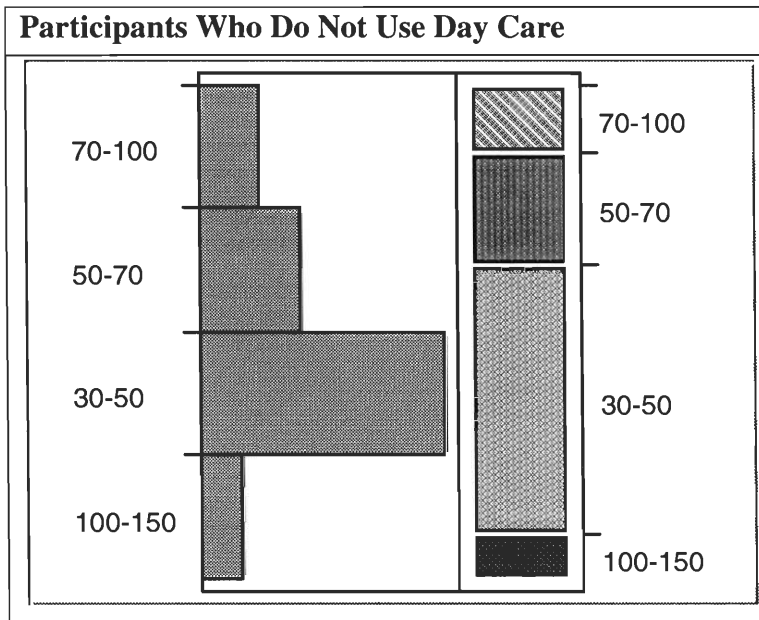
**Question 2: What is your Annual Family/Household Income?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the salary distributions.

**Frequencies:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Probability</b>
<b>100-150</b>	13	0.17808
<b>30-50</b>	23	0.31507
<b>50-70</b>	16	0.21918
<b>70-100</b>	21	0.28767
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1.00000</b>

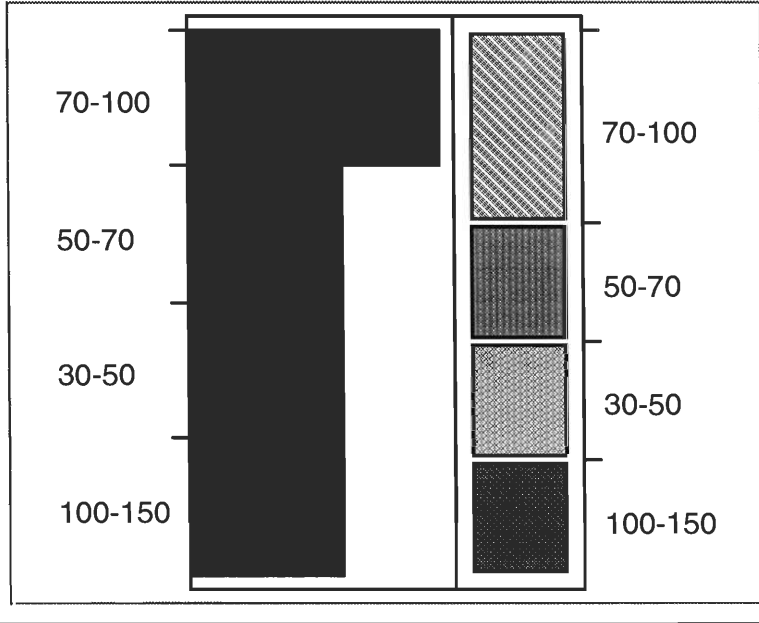


In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants who do not use a day care, while the y-axis represents the salary distributions.

**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
100-150	2	0.09091
30-50	12	0.54545
50-70	5	0.22727
70-100	3	0.13636
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1.00000</b>

### Participants Who Use Day Care

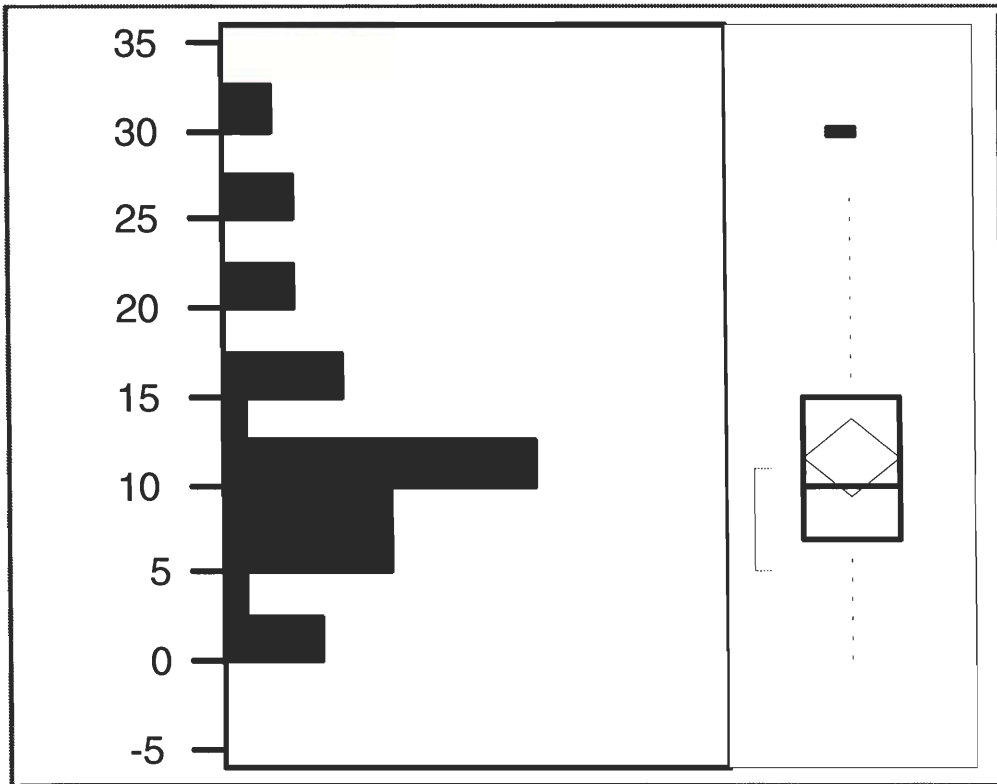


In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants who do use a day care, while the y-axis represents the salary distributions.

### Frequencies:

Level	Count	Probability
100-150	11	0.21569
30-50	11	0.21569
50-70	11	0.21569
70-100	18	0.35294
Total	51	1.00000

**Question 3: What percentage of your income used for day care expenses?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the percentage of the participants income that is used for day care expenses.

**Quintiles:**

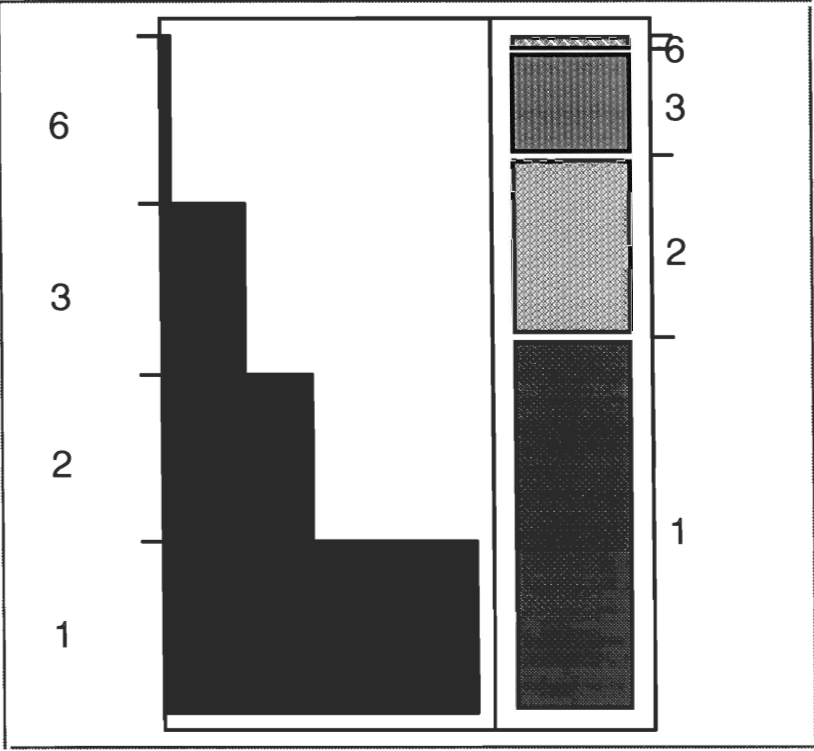
100.0%	Maximum	30.000
99.5%		30.000
97.5%		30.000
90.0%		25.000
75.0%	Quartile	15.000
50.0%	Median	10.000
25.0%	Quartile	7.000
10.0%		3.500
2.5%		3.100
0.5%		0.000
0.0%	Minimum	0.000

**Moments:**

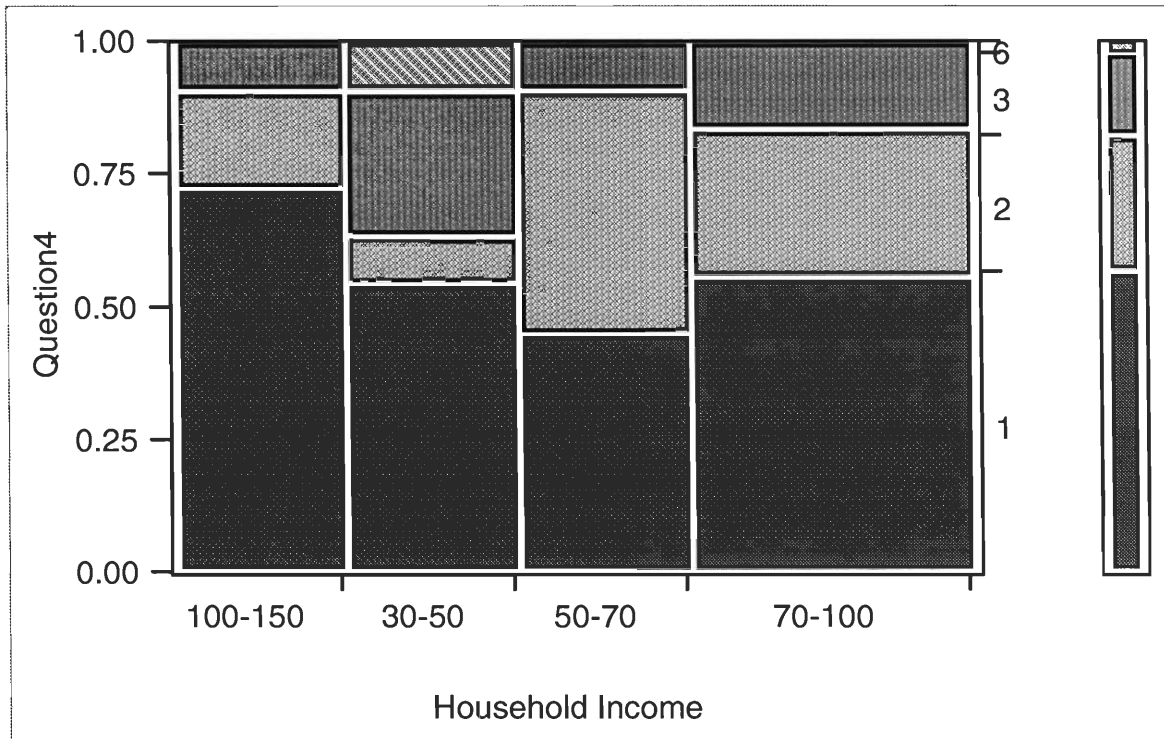
Mean	11.613043
Std Dev	7.3095861

The mean percentage is 12% with a range of 3 to 30%. It is worth noting that the poorer households with incomes between 30,000 - 50,000 pay higher percentage of day care expenses. This is most likely is a result of higher number of children in families with such income range.

**Question 4: How many children do you have?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants who do not use a day care, while the y-axis represents the number of children each participant has.



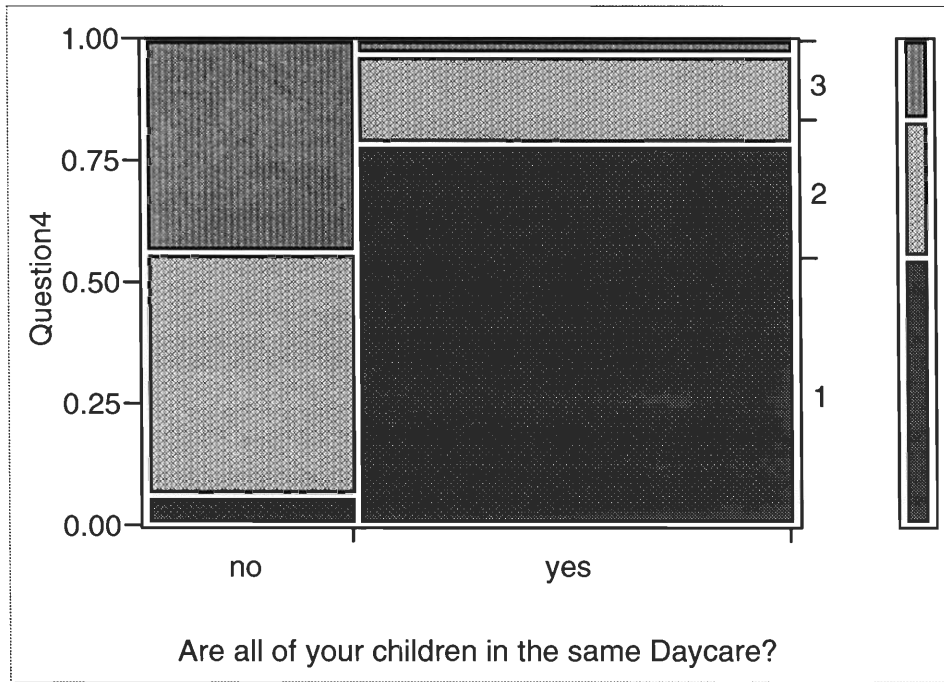
The mosaic plot shows the distribution of number of children when compared to household income. Higher numbers of children are prevalent in two lower income groups.

**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
1	29	0.55769
2	14	0.26923
3	8	0.15385
6	1	0.01923
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1.00000</b>



**Question 4: Are all of your children in the same day care?**



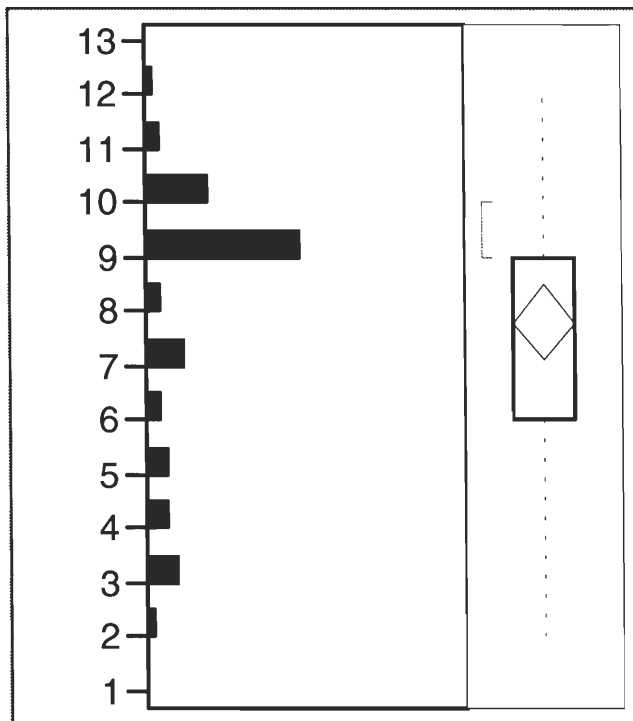
In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not all of the participants children are in the same day care, the number on the left represents distribution of number of children when compared to household income, while the number on the right represents the number of children.

It is clear that most people who have more than one child are using multiple day care institutions.

**Question 6: If you answered no to Question 5 could you please provide why?**

The most common answer was due to age difference between siblings.

**Question 7: How many hours is your child in day care during a typical day?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the number of hours the participants child spends at the day care during a typical day.

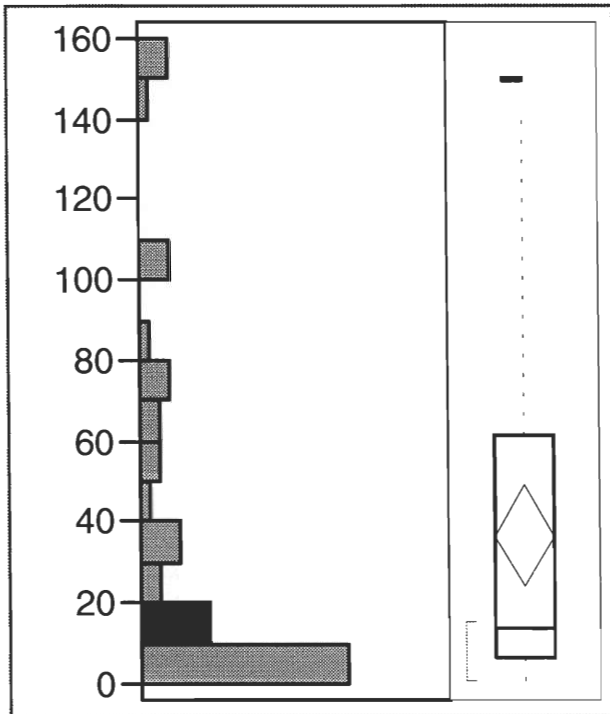
**Quintiles:**

100.0%	Maximum	12.000
99.5%		12.000
97.5%		11.700
90.0%		10.000
75.0%	Quartile	9.000
50.0%	Median	9.000
25.0%	Quartile	6.000
10.0%		3.200
2.5%		2.300
0.5%		2.000
0.0%	Minimum	2.000

**Moments:**

Mean	7.8039216
Std Dev	2.4820927

**Question 8: How many children are in the day care you are using?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the number of children that are in the day care that the participant is using.

**Quintiles:**

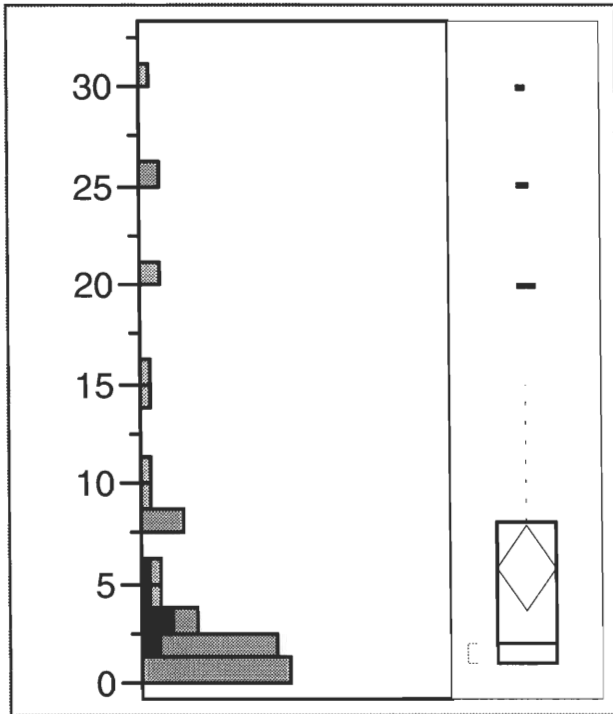
100.0%	Maximum	150.00
50.0%	Median	13.50
2.5%	Minimum	1.00

**Moments:**

Mean 36.56  
N 50

There is a broad range of answers to this question. This reflects the diversity of day care models that are available. Smaller day cares are mostly prevalent with more than 50% having fewer than 15 children. However there is a number of day care which have more than 100 children. This is a new development representing “big-business” interest in day care.

**Question 9: How many teachers are in the day care you are using?**



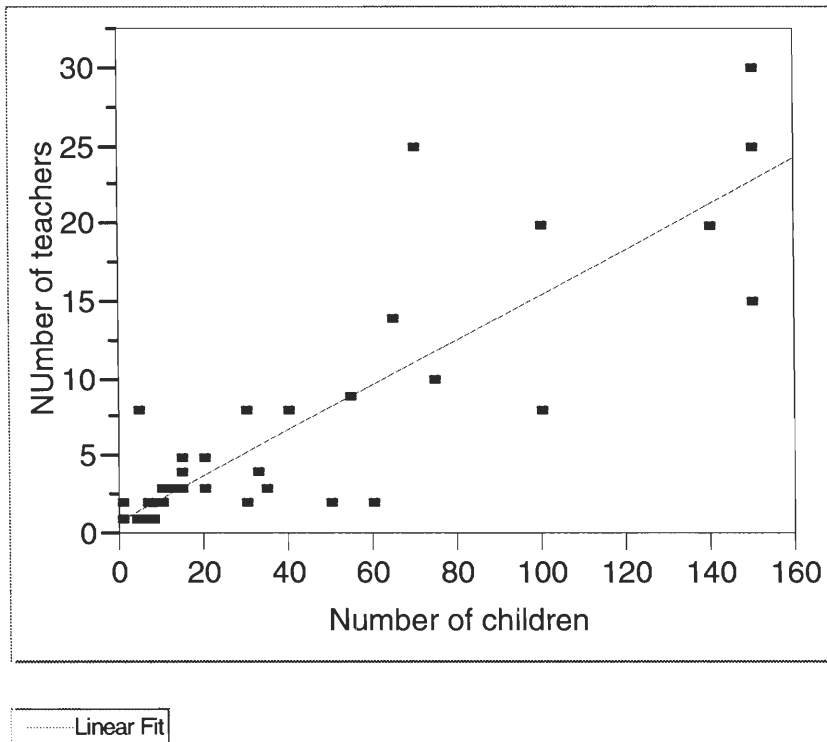
In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the number of teachers that are in the day care that the participant is using.

**Quintiles:**

100.0%	Maximum	30.000
50.0%	Median	2.000
25.0%	Quartile	1.000
10.0%	Minimum	1.000

**Moments:**

Mean	5.7446809
N	47



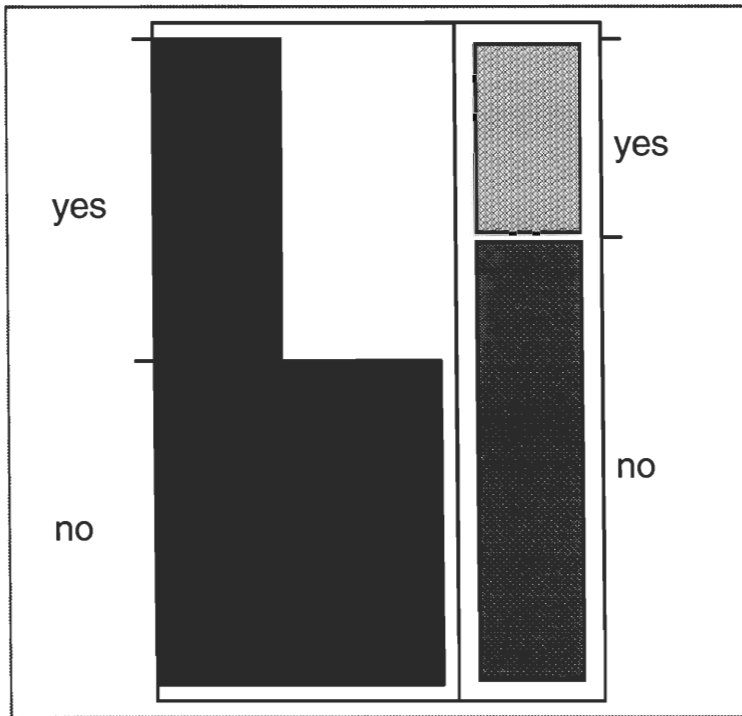
In this graph the x-axis represents the number of children, while the y-axis represents the number of teachers that are in the day care that the participant is using.

**Linear Fit:**

$$\text{Question9} = 0.8543991 + 0.1462111 \text{ Question8}$$

The mean is 6 teachers in any particular day care but what is more significant is the scatter plot that presents the ratio of number of children to number of teachers. There is a clear trend that dictates that on an average there are five to six children per every teacher. This is consistent with federal regulations.

**Question 10: Are all children in the same age group?**

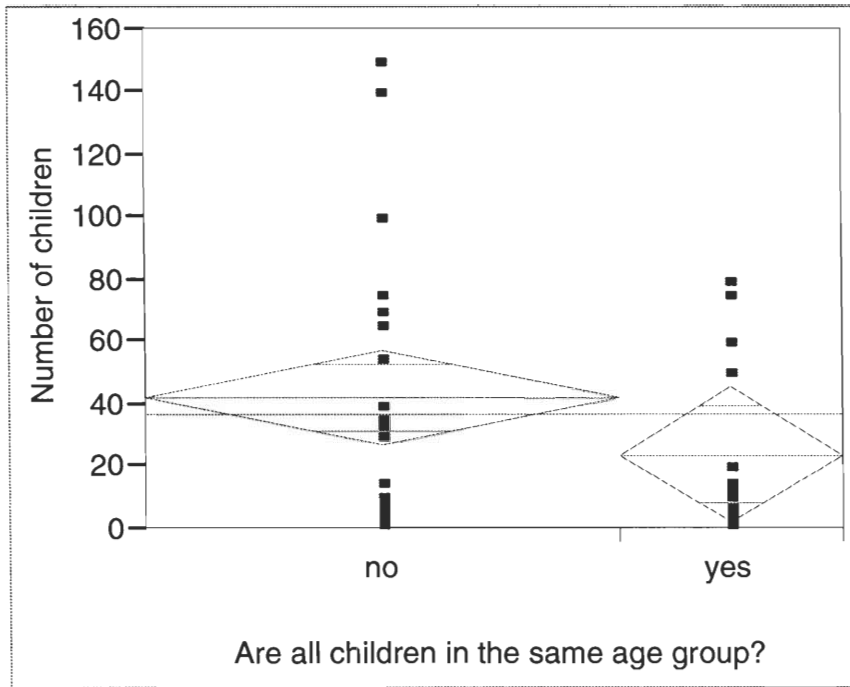


In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the whether or not all of the children in the day care are in the same age group.

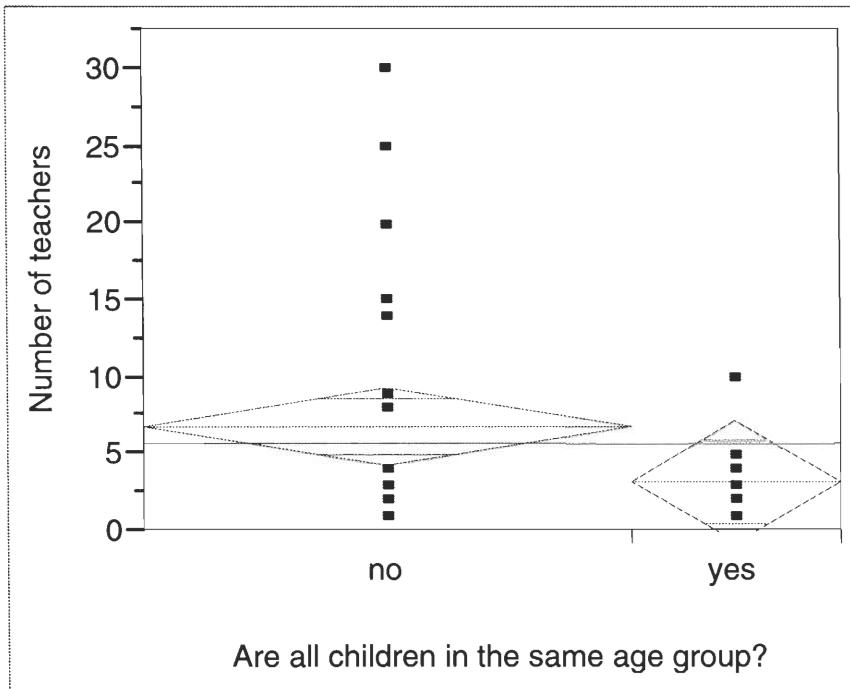
**Frequencies:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Probability</b>
<b>No</b>	36	0.69231
<b>Yes</b>	16	0.30769
<b>Total</b>	52	1.00000





In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not all of the children in the day care are in the same age group, while the y-axis represents the number of children that are in the day care that the participant is using.



In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not all of the children in the day care are in the same age group, while the y-axis represents the number of teachers that are in the day care that the participant is using.

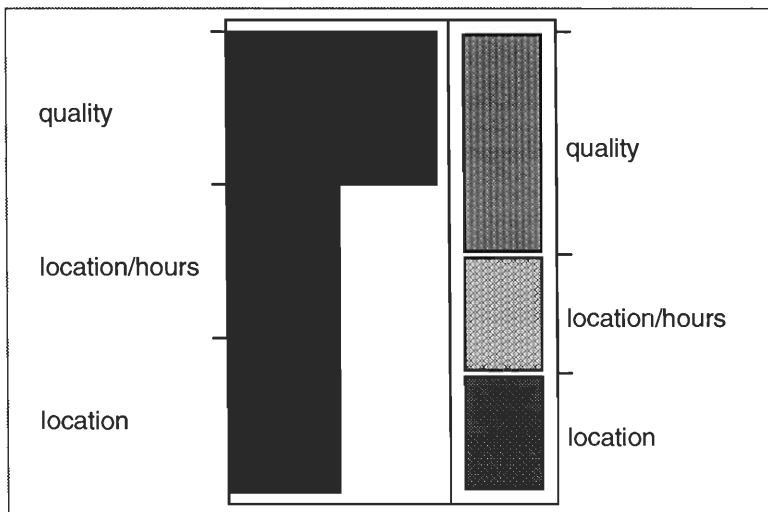
Close to 70% of people surveyed have children in day care with multiple age groups. Not surprisingly smaller day cares with fewer children specialize in one age group.

**Question 11: What does your day care provide?**

Majority of participants noted that day care provides snacks. Participants using larger day care also said that various activities are also provided.

**Question 12: What was the major deciding factor when picking day care?**

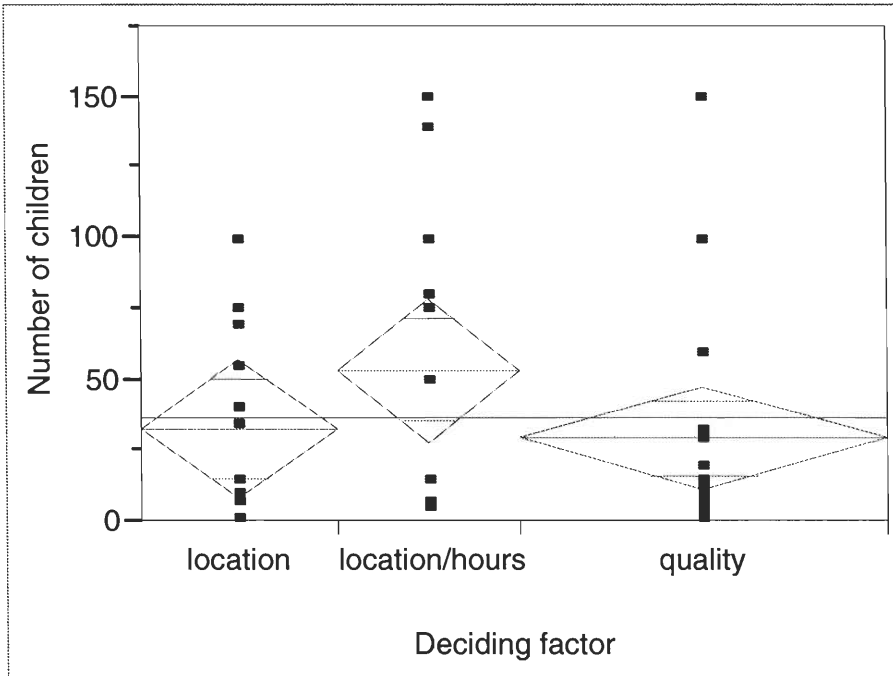
**Distributions:**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the major deciding factor that was used by the participant when picking the day care.

**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
Location	13	0.26000
Location/Hours	13	0.26000
Quality	24	0.48000
Total	50	1.00000

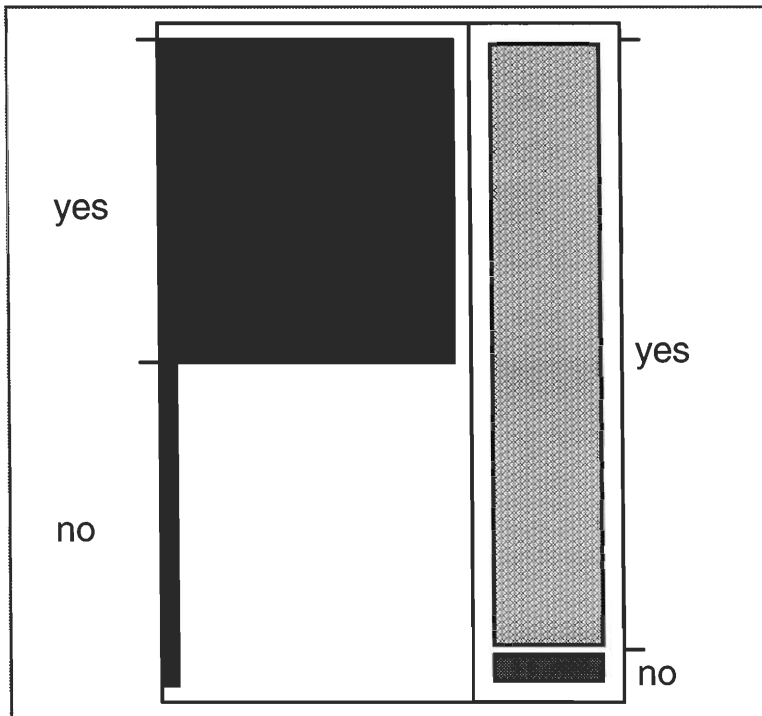


In this graph the x-axis represents the major deciding factor that was used by the participant when picking the day care, while the y-axis represents the number of children that are in the day care that the participant is using.

Quality was the main decision factor. It is also correlated to day care with small number of children. Location/hours was a decision factor that highly correlates to larger day care. This is of some note since the previous question clearly showed that larger day care provides enrichments that are not available in smaller day care. Hence its stands to

reason that “quality” in the mind of the consumer is not determined by available activities but by something else.

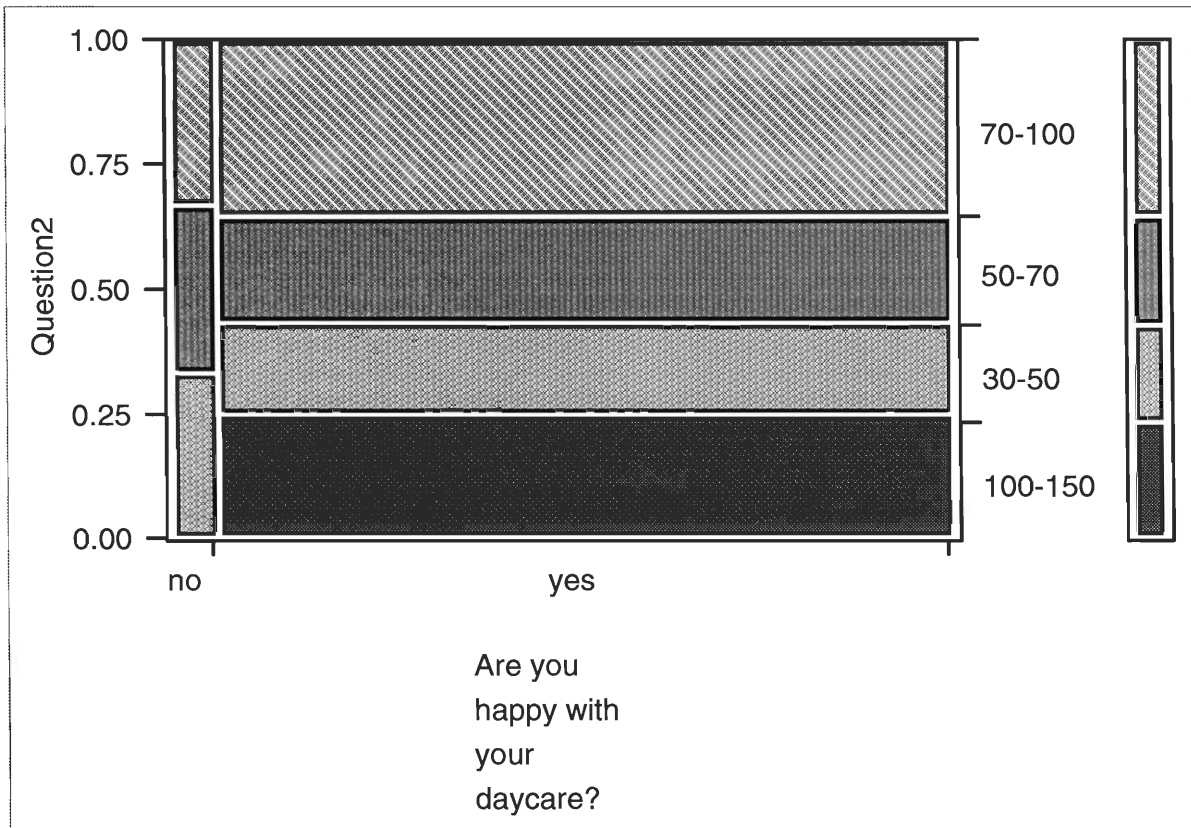
**Question 13: Are you happy with your day care?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the whether or not the participant is happy with the day care.

**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
No	3	0.05769
Yes	49	0.94231
Total	52	1.00000

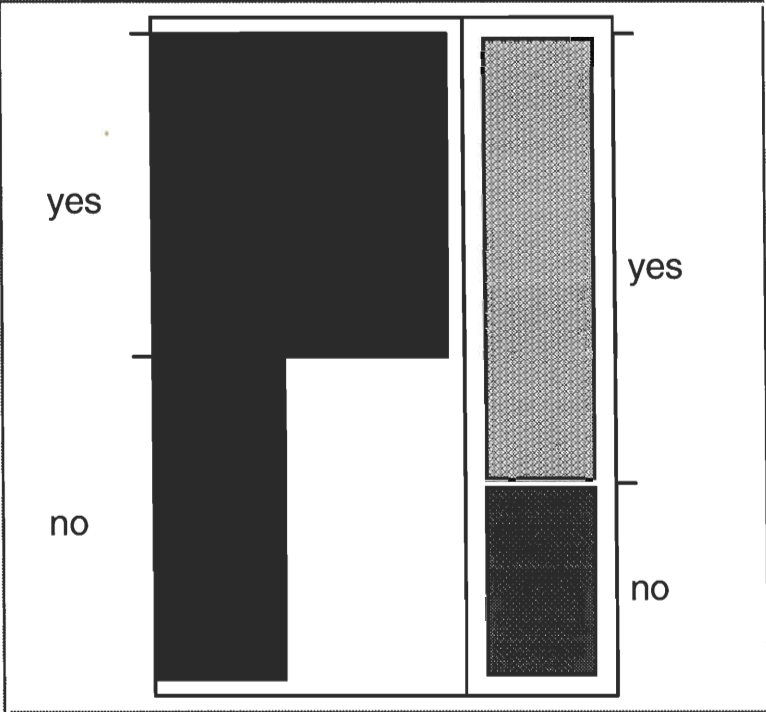


In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not the participant is happy with the day care, while the y-axis represents the salary distributions.

Overwhelmingly participants were happy with their day care. Lower income families were disproportionately unhappy with their day care choices.

**Question 14: Do you believe that child care provides your child with social skills that he/she would be lacking under at home care?**

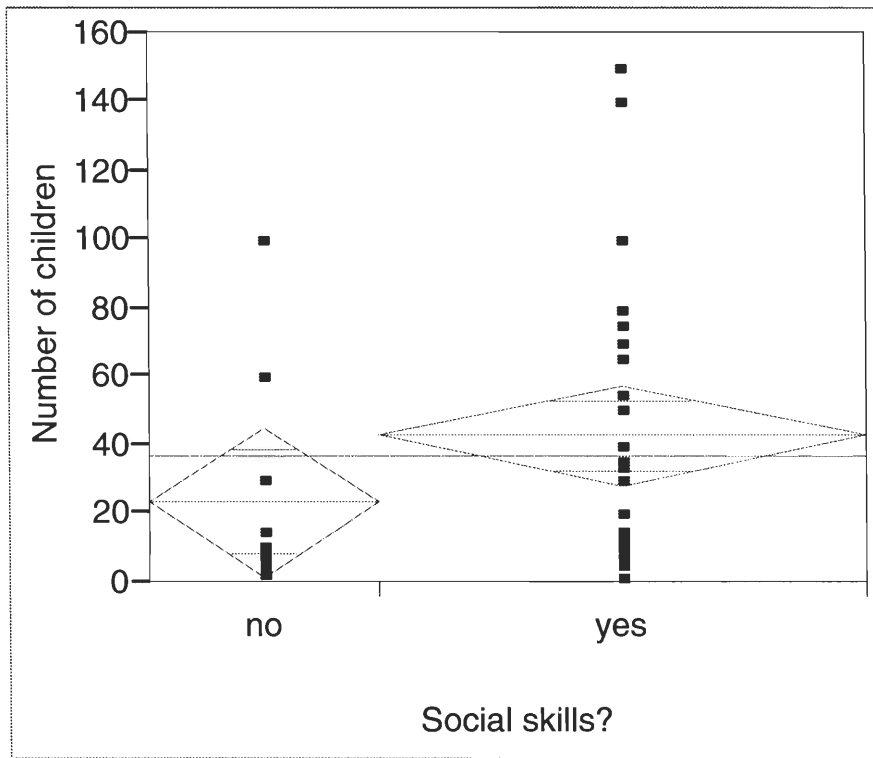
**Distributions:**



In this graph the x-axis represents number of participants, while the y-axis represents whether or not the participants believe that child care provides their child with social skills that he/she would be lacking under home care.

**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
No	16	0.30769
Yes	36	0.69231
Total	52	1.00000



In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not the participants believe that child care provides their child with social skills that he/she would be lacking under home care, while the y-axis represents the number of children that are in the day care that the participant is using.

70% of participants agreed that their day care provides social skills that “at home” day care would not provide. This group also indicated that they use day care with larger number of children. In contrast participants who answered no to this question had enrolled their children in smaller childcare.



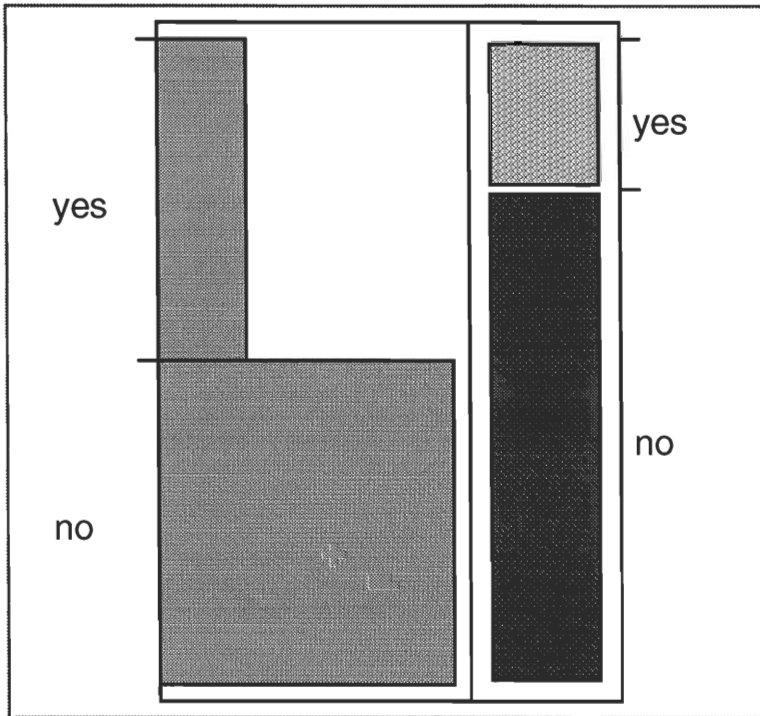
**Question 15: Name one feature you could change in your day care provider?**

Although there is no common answer, majority of answers fell into two categories -- cost and more hours.

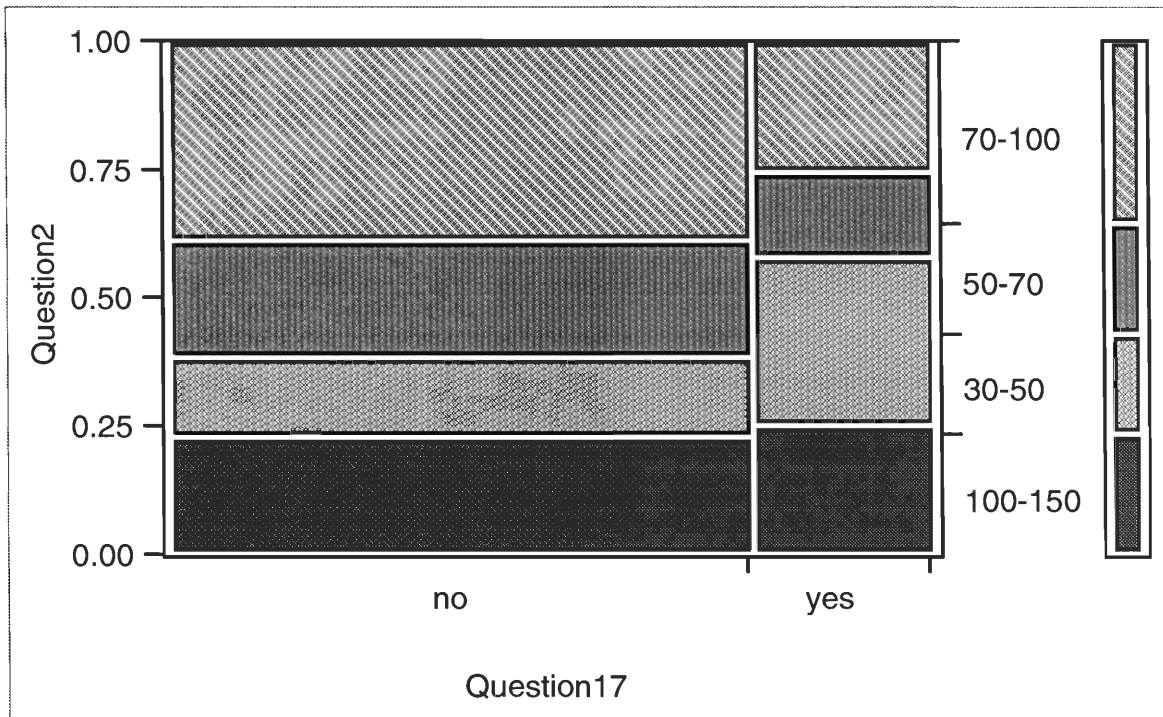
**Question 16: Name one feature you wish your day care provider had?**

Similarly no common answer can be extracted. A number of participants mentioned web-cams.

**Question 17: Does your employer subsidize your day care expenses?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents the whether or not the participants' employer subsidizes their day care expenses.



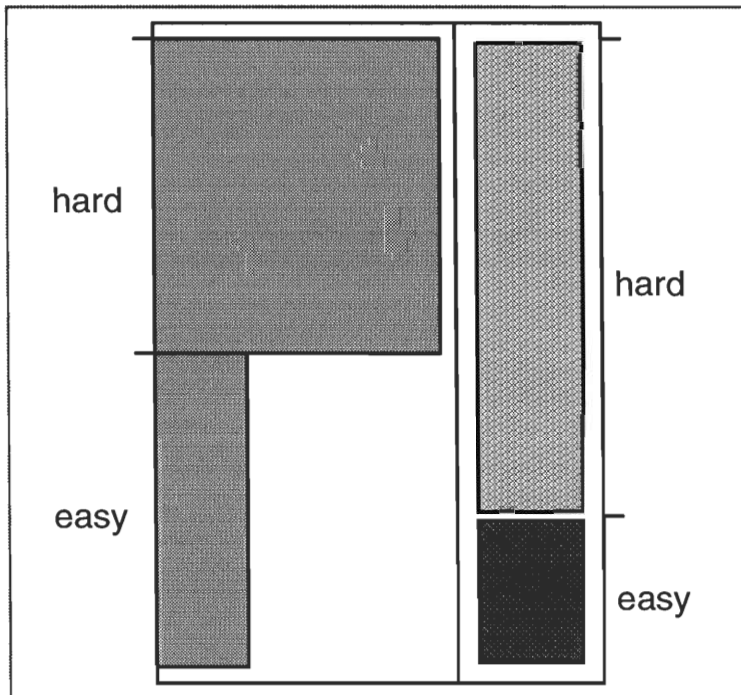
In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not the participants' employer subsidizes their day care expenses, while the y-axis represents the salary distribution.

**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
No	40	0.76923
Yes	12	0.23077
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1.00000</b>

Surprisingly, only 23% of participants receive subsidies from work. Interestingly the mostly household with income between \$50000-%70000 receive most subsidies.

**Question 18: If your day care provider stopped operating how easily would you be able to find replacement?**

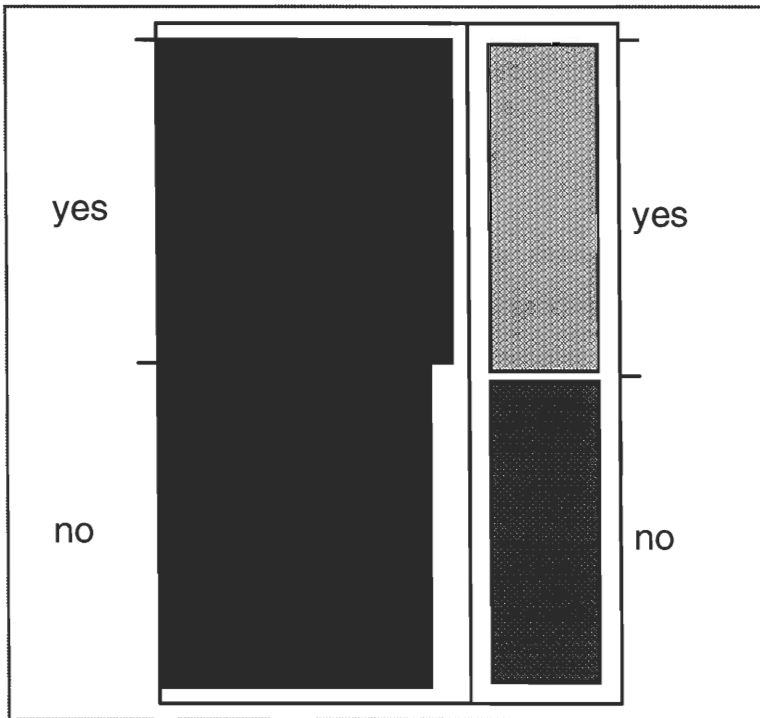


In this graph the x-axis represents number of participants, while the y-axis represents how easy or hard it would be for the participant to find a replacement day care in case the current provider stopped operating.

**Frequencies:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Probability</b>
<b>Easy</b>	12	0.24490
<b>Hard</b>	37	0.75510
<b>Total</b>	49	1.00000

**Question 19: Are you a proponent of government-sponsored day care?**

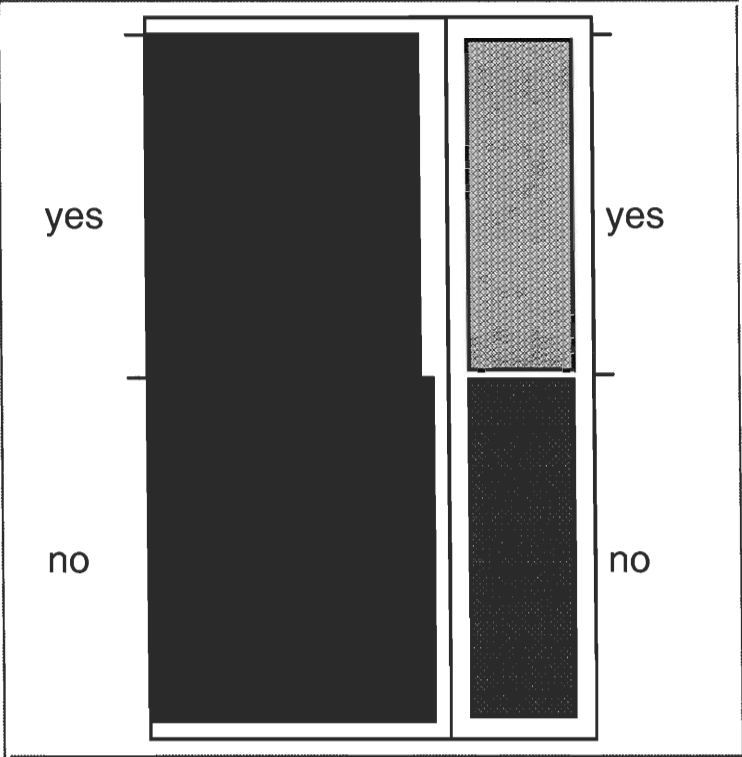


In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents whether or not the participants is a proponent of government-sponsored day care.

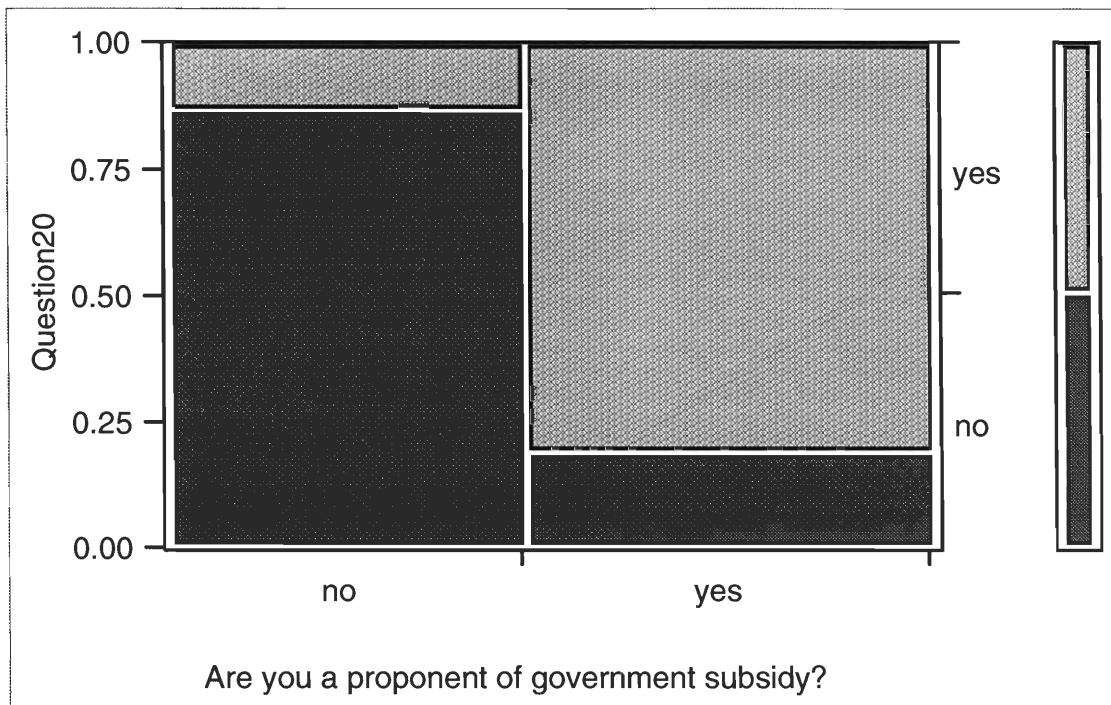
**Frequencies:**

Level	Count	Probability
No	24	0.48000
Yes	26	0.52000
Total	50	1.00000

**Question 20: Would you be willing to pay higher taxes to pay for such a program?**



In this graph the x-axis represents the number of participants, while the y-axis represents whether or not the participants would be willing to pay higher taxes to pay for a government-sponsored day care.

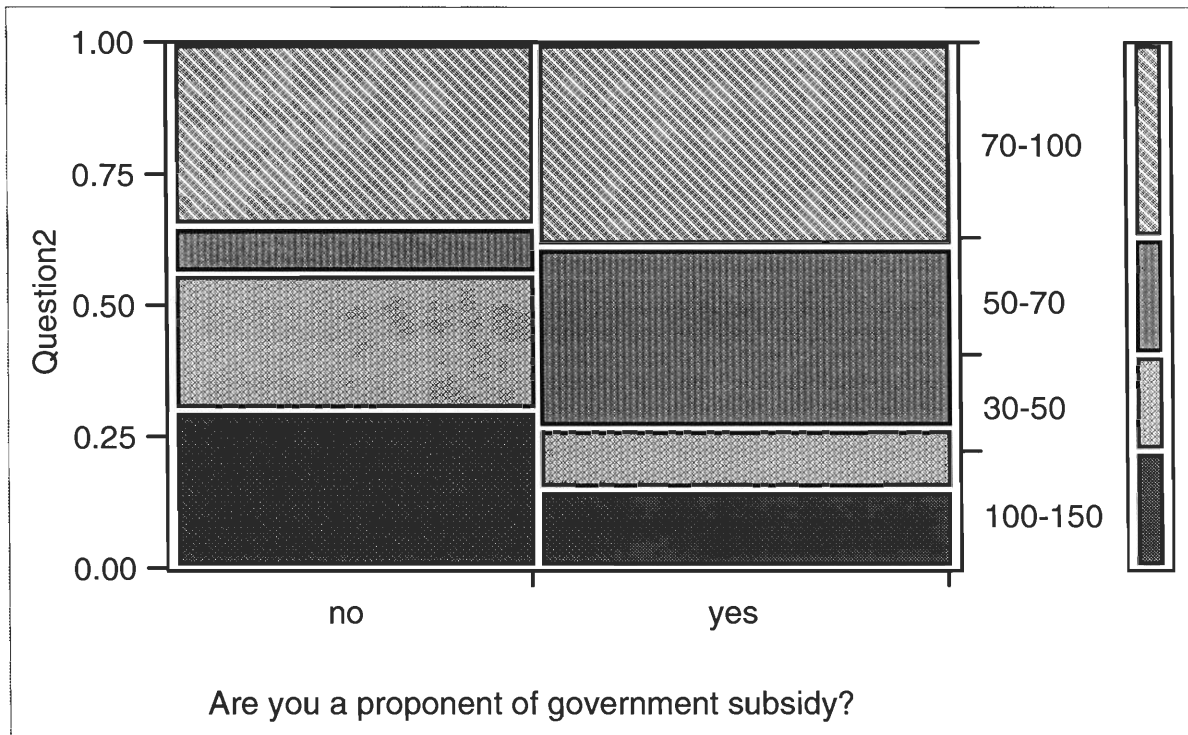


In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not the participants is a proponent of government-sponsored day care, while the y-axis represents whether or not the participants would be willing to pay higher taxes to pay for a government-sponsored day care.

**Frequencies:**

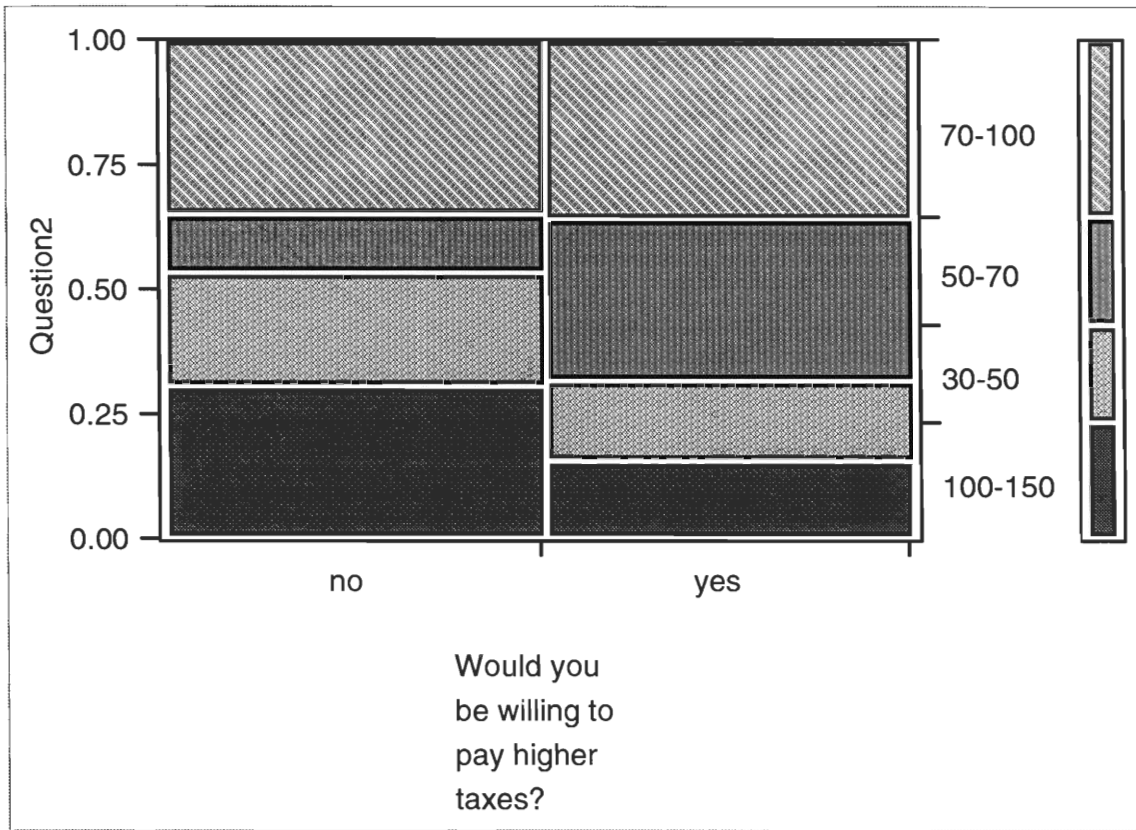
Level	Count	Probability
No	26	0.50980
Yes	25	0.49020
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1.00000</b>

The opinion is equally split. Interestingly, contrast of question 19 and 20 reveals that people who favor government subsidized programs are not willing to pay higher taxes.



In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not the participants is a proponent of government-sponsored day care, while the y-axis represents the salary distribution.





In this graph the x-axis represents whether or not the participants would be willing to pay higher taxes to pay for a government-sponsored day care, while the y-axis represents the salary distribution.

Finally, it is clear from the plots above that the middle class (50,000 - 70,000) who is willing to pay more taxes to get child care relief. Surprisingly the poor (30,000 - 50,000) are against government-sponsored programs. Here lies a puzzle, it is the poor who have more than average number of children, its also the poor who pay highest percentage of their salary, yet it's the poor who are most against the idea of government relief.

## 6. Conclusions

It is clear that the issue of child care and its use by various layers of our society is complicated and diverse. There are multiple and at time conflicting views on the current state of child care. This is no doubt a result of a political interest in this issue. However, my own research provided me with a baseline that allowed me to judge the relevance of multitude of papers on this topic. From the results its clear that majority of people do in fact use some sort of day care for their children. The results also indicated that it is the middle class households that use day care services. The very poor and the rich do not use day care and usually have a stay-at-home mom to take care of the children.

This fact alone presents a significant finding and has major socioeconomic consequences. Its is a given that larger child care centers promote social skills and development in children. Furthermore, families that are uneducated or those with poorly developed social skills (immigrants, inner city, etc) tend not to use day care. This puts the children of such families at a disadvantage very early in their lives. In addition, data shows that the poorer households tend to have more children. Thus, producing an underclass that is locked in is microcosm without benefits of early upward mobility that child care interaction would provide. It is clear then that, if there would be any government subsidy it would have to be aimed at the poorer households. However, that presents a legislative dilemma since it is the middle class that already uses day care that pays the majority of taxes and has the most to say during public elections.

Surely there where a number of limitations to this study. Major limitation was the sample population. Although N of 75 is large enough to draw conclusions, the population that was sampled may not be truly representative of the entire population

poop. The WWW provided an easy way to perform the survey, however it also inadvertently selected people who are more educated or computer savvy. More careful selection would have made this study more representative. In addition, actually sitting-in some day cares and seeing how they operate from the inside would be of benefit.

In conclusion, day care and day care related legislation is changing to suit the time we live in. As more women join the work force, and the separation between classes becomes more visible—day care will have to change to accommodate these trends.

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## Appendix A



### Child Day Care Survey



Hello. My name is Alla Grebelsky and I am a senior at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). At WPI, each student is required to complete an Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP). The IQP challenges students to identify, investigate, and report on a topic examining how science or technology interacts with societal structures and values.

The topic of my project is The Current Issues of Child Day Care (CDC). This survey is to help me put together some data for my report. If you could take a couple minutes of your time and fill out this survey for me I would greatly appreciate it. It is strictly anonymous and confidential. In return you will see the results so far.

Thank you for participating in my study,

Alla Grebelsky



**1**

Do you use a Day Care?

YES	NO
-----	----

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## 2

What is your Annual Family/Household Income:

- Under \$15,000
- \$ 15,000 - \$ 29,999
- \$ 30,000 - \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 - \$ 69,999
- \$ 70,000 - \$ 99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 - \$199,999
- \$200,000 and over

---

## 3

What percentage of your income is used for day care?

---

## 4

How many children do you have?

---

5

Are all of your children in the same Day Care?

YES  NO

---

6

If you answered No on question #5, could you please provide why?

---

7

How many hours is your child in Day Care during a typical day?

---

8

How many children are in the Day Care that you are using?



---

**9**

How many teachers are in the Day Care that you are using?

---

**10**

Are all of the children in the same age group?

Yes

No

If no, please provide some ages of the children:

---

**11**

What does your Day Care provide? Diapers, Lunch, Snacks, Drinks, etc.  
Please specify:

---

## 12

What was the major deciding factor when picking Day Care?

- Location
- Hours
- Other, Please Specify

---

## 13

Are you happy with your Day Care?

- Yes
- No
- Other, Please Specify

---

## 14

Do you believe that Child Day Care provides your child with social skills that he/she would be lacking under at home care?

 YES  NO

---

**15**

Name one feature that you would change in your day care provider.

---

**16**

Name one feature that you wish your day care provider had.

---

**17**

Does your place of work provide day care or subsidize your day care expenses?

 YES  NO

---

**18**

If your day care provider stopped operating how easily would you be able to find replacement?

---

**19**

Are you a proponent of government-sponsored day care such as found in Europe?

---

**20**

Would you be willing to pay higher taxes to support such a program?

---

Thank you for your participation.

After answering all the questions, click the "submit" arrow below to complete the survey.

