Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements

Household Economic Studies

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What's in this Report?

INTRODUCTION

Interest in child care intensified as more women entered the labor force and sought to balance both family and work. The need for child care may increase further as welfare reform encourages recipients, who often have young children, to seek work. This report shows the number and characteristics of children in different child care arrangements (including those in more than one type of arrangement) and the characteristics of their families. The data come from the fall 1995 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and continue a series that dates back to 1985.

Past reports presented only the primary child care arrangements of employed mothers. New information in this report shows child care arrangements while the designated parent (see box for definition) is not at work nor in school.[1] Additional new information shows specific types of arrangements such as Head Start, enrichment activities, and self care. The child care module in SIPP was redesigned for the fall 1995 survey to collect this new information.

The report contrasts child care arrangements for preschool- and grade-school-age children. These two age groups differ in their needs and activities in that the primary focus of child care for infants and preschoolers is on meeting their basic needs. For older children, more attention is on structured activities, educational programs, and socialization.

[1] The child care questions in this survey capture the arrangements that families use in a typical week and not necessarily those used consistently on a regular basis in the past month. For this reason, usage rates for particular child care arrangements may be higher than expected.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Multiple child care arrangements are common. In 1995, about 44 percent of children under 5 years old (or preschoolers) and 75 percent of children 5 to 14 years old (or grade-school-age children) regularly spent time in more than one arrangement per week.
- Fifty percent of preschoolers were cared for by a relative, with grandparents being the single most frequently mentioned care provider (30 percent).
- Forty-nine percent of children under 5 were cared for by nonrelatives, with 30 percent in an organized facility, which includes day care centers, nursery or preschools, Head Start programs, and kindergarten.
- Preschoolers spent an average of 28 hours per week in child care; however, more time was spent in child care when the parent worked or was in school (on average, 35 hours per week).
- On average, children ages 5 to 14 of parents who were employed or in school were cared for in 3.4 arrangements per week. Children whose parents were neither employed nor in school were cared for in 1.6 arrangements.
- Thirty-nine percent of grade-school-age children participated in enrichment activities, including sports, lessons, clubs, and before- or after-school programs.
- Approximately 6.9 million children 5 to 14 years old (18 percent of children in this age group) cared for themselves on a regular basis.
- Average child care costs per family (in 1995 dollars) rose from $59 in 1985 to $85 in 1995. In 1995, poor families who paid for child care spent 35 percent of their income on child care, compared with 7 percent spent by nonpoor families.

CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD

After describing the multiple arrangements families use for child care, this section turns to more detail on the patterns of use and then turns to how the arrangements vary with other characteristics of the family. The section concludes by summarizing some historical trends and by giving detailed information about the role of Head Start.

Multiple Arrangements

In 1995, 14.4 million (75 percent) of the 19.3 million children under 5 years of age were in some form of regular child care arrangement during a typical week (see Table 1). About 8.5 million children (44 percent) were cared for in multiple arrangements (two or more per week). Overall, children using a regular arrangement averaged 2.0 arrangements.[2]

About one-quarter (4.9 million children) of preschoolers had no regular child care arrangement. The vast majority of them (96 percent) had a designated parent who was neither employed nor in school and presumably available during the day to care for the children.

Virtually any preschool-age child whose parent[3] was either employed

[2] The survey does not ask whether the parents or siblings care for the child during the designated parent's nonwork hours.

[3] The *parent's* characteristics refer to the characteristics of the designated parent who responded to the child care questions. See the box on page 2 for the definition of the designated parent.

Definitions

The universe of respondents in the SIPP child care module consists of adults who are the parents of children under 15 years old. To avoid asking each parent the same questions, a *designated parent* is selected in households where both parents are present. In married-couple families, the mother is the designated parent. If the mother is not available for an interview, proxy responses are accepted from the father or husband. In single-parent families, the resident parent is the designated parent. If neither parent is in the household, the guardian is the designated parent. Designated parents include biological, step- and adoptive parents, or other relatives/nonrelatives acting as a guardian in the absence of parents. In this report, unless otherwise noted, the term *parent* is used to refer to the designated parent.

Relatives include mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, and *other relatives* such as aunts, uncles, and cousins. An *organized child care facility* is a day care center, nursery school, or preschool. A *family day care provider* is a nonrelative who cares for one or more unrelated children in the provider's home. *Nonrelatives* include in-home babysitters, family day care providers, and other nonrelatives providing care in the provider's home. To present a comprehensive view of the regular weekly experiences of children under 15 years old, this report defines child care broadly to include school, enrichment activities (such as sports, lessons, clubs, and before- and after-school programs), and time with parents.

Table 1.
Number of Child Care Arrangements for Preschoolers During Their Parent's Work, School, and Nonwork/School Hours: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Activity status of parent	Number of children	With a regular arrangement		Number of arrangements per child				Total arrangements	
		Number	Percent	One	Two	Three	Four or more	Number	Average per child[1]
Children under 5 years	19,281	14,428	74.8	5,943	4,875	1,959	1,651	29,093	2.0
Parent Employed									
Total	10,309	10,129	98.3	3,266	3,696	1,640	1,527	22,547	2.2
During work hours	10,309	10,072	97.7	5,466	3,186	1,104	316	16,512	1.6
During nonwork hours	10,309	4,496	43.6	3,176	1,128	166	26	6,035	1.3
Parent in School									
Total	859	846	98.5	218	405	124	98	1,842	2.2
During school hours	859	846	98.5	546	224	67	9	1,231	1.5
During nonschool hours	859	487	56.7	403	52	28	5	611	1.3
Parent not Employed nor in School	8,112	3,452	42.6	2,458	775	194	26	4,696	1.4

[1]Averages are based on those who reported having child care arrangements for specified periods of parental activity. Some parents do not report any regular child care arrangement for their child.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

or in school was in some type of regular child care arrangement during their parent's work or school hours (98 percent),[4] compared with fewer than half of preschoolers with a parent who was neither employed nor in school (43 percent). The high prevalence of child care use among preschoolers with a parent who was neither employed nor in school may be due to these parents using child care arrangements for enrichment purposes or educational development.

Use of multiple child care arrangements is also more common among children whose parents were employed or in school than among other children. Preschoolers of employed parents who were in child care arrangements had an average of 2.2 arrangements per week: 73 percent of these 22.5 million arrangements were used during the parent's work hours (see Table 1). Preschoolers of parents who were in school also averaged 2.2 arrangements per week, suggesting that parents who have structured schedules that take them out of the house for set periods of time face similar complexities in arranging for child care providers. Preschoolers of parents who were not employed nor in school, on the other hand, used an average of only 1.4 arrangements per week.

Parents use child care similarly during their nonwork/school hours, regardless of their employment or enrollment status (see Figure 1). More than half of both groups of children did not have a regular nonparental arrangement during nonwork/school hours, and presumably were being cared for by their parents. Fewer than 35 percent were in one regular arrangement, roughly 10 percent were in two arrangements, and only around 2 percent were in three or more arrangements during their parent's nonwork/school hours.

Types of Child Care Arrangements

Table 2 presents the use of different types of child care arrangements for preschoolers. Since many children are in more than one type of arrangement, these percentages total more than 100 percent.[5] Of the 19.3 million preschoolers, 50 percent were regularly cared for by a relative. Grandparents were the single most frequently mentioned care provider, with 5.8 million preschoolers, or 30 percent, in this type of arrangement. Parents relied on the child's other parent (18 percent, usually the father) more than other relatives (15 percent). Some preschoolers were cared for by the

[4] Not having any regular child care arrangement during work/school hours may indicate instability in child care arrangements or difficulty in identifying what is regularly used. It may not mean that no one looked after the child.

[5] If no regular arrangement was mentioned, then the child is not represented in the distribution as using an arrangement.

designated parent while working (5 percent) or by siblings (2 percent).

Nonrelatives also played a prominent role in the care of preschoolers. In 1995, 49 percent of children under 5 were cared for by a nonrelative on a regular basis. Similar proportions of preschoolers were cared for in either an organized facility[6] (30 percent) or by some other nonrelative either in the child's home or in the provider's home (29 percent). In addition, comparable proportions of preschoolers were in a day care center or in a nursery or preschool (15 percent and 14 percent, respectively). Children under 5 years old were also cared for by family day care providers (13 percent), and similar proportions were cared for by other nonrelatives in the child's home or the provider's home (9 percent each). This last category probably consisted of friends or neighbors of the family who were not officially licensed as family day care providers.

Arrangements used during the parent's work and nonwork hours

Of the 19.3 million preschool-age children in 1995, 11.2 million had a designated parent who was either employed or in school. Similar proportions were cared for by either relatives or nonrelatives as child care providers (about 61 percent of children) while the parent was at work or in school (these percentages exceed 100 percent because some children were in both types of arrangements).

[6] Organized facilities include day care centers, nursery or preschools, or federal Head Start programs. For these younger children, the small proportion of children enrolled in kindergarten and grade school are also included in this overall category.

Use of regular child care arrangements tends to be less common during the parent's nonwork/school hours. For example, only 26 percent of children under 5 were cared for by relatives as regular care providers during their parent's nonwork/school hours, compared with 62 percent of children under 5 during their parent's work/school hours. This relationship holds true for most of the arrangement types.

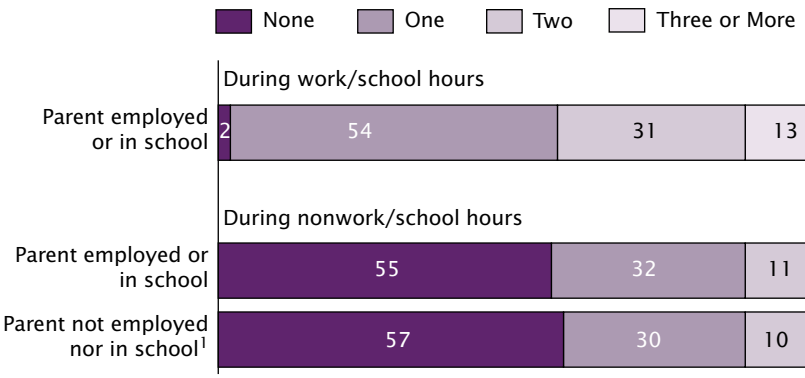
Some similar patterns of child care emerge regardless of the time period examined. In particular, care by grandparents was prevalent regardless of when the arrangement was used.

Number of hours spent in child care

The proportion of children cared for by a particular provider shows only one dimension of child care. Examining the number of hours spent in the arrangement can shed light on how and with whom children may be spending significant periods of the day. Table 2 shows the average number of hours per week children were in different arrangements among those parents reporting use of a specified arrangement. The table distinguishes between time in particular arrangements during their parent's work/school hours and the time spent, if any, in arrangements during the other periods of the day. Time spent with either a parent or sibling was not collected during the nonwork/school hours as we attempted to separate "family time" from child care arrangements used by the family during the designated parent's work hours.

On average, children under 5 spent 28 hours per week in child care. If cared for by nonrelatives, preschoolers spent an average of 39 hours per week in nonrelative care, but those cared for by relatives spent only 23 hours per week in relative care. Preschoolers spent the most time in day care centers and with family day care providers (both an average of 33 hours per week), and they spent the least amount of time in sibling care

Figure 1.
Number of Arrangements for Preschoolers During Their Parent's Work/School and Nonwork/School Hours: Fall 1995
(Percent distribution)



Parent refers to designated parent.
[1]Includes designated parents who are looking for work or out of the labor force.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

(11 hours per week). Preschoolers received care from a grandparent and their other parent for similar amounts of time each week (18 hours per week and 17 hours per week, respectively) among children who were in these arrangements.

Preschoolers spent more time in various child care arrangements during their parent's work/school hours (35 hours per week) than during their parent's nonwork/school hours (8 hours per week). This difference is to be expected as employed parents are likely to need child care for reasonably longer stretches of time.

In addition, preschoolers spent more time in the care of a nonrelative than in the care of a relative during their parent's work/school hours (33 hours and 24 hours per week, respectively) and also during their parent's nonwork/school hours (20 hours and 12 hours per week, respectively). The fact that relatives provided fewer hours of care than nonrelatives suggests that parents use relatives as supplemental care providers.

Primary and Supplemental Arrangements

This section explores primary and supplemental arrangements used by parents, the amount of time children spend in these arrangements per week, and some of the most common child care combinations.

Table 2.
Preschoolers In Different Types of Arrangements by Activity Schedule of Designated Parent: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Arrangement type	Activity schedule of designated parent								
	Total[1]			During work/school hours[3]			During nonwork/school hours		
	Receiving care		Average hours[2]	Receiving care		Average hours[2]	Receiving care		Average hours[2]
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Children under 5 years[4]	19,281	(NA)	27.9	11,168	(NA)	34.8	19,281	(NA)	7.8
NUMBER USING:									
Relative Care	9,656	50.1	23.4	6,908	61.9	24.1	5,020	26.0	11.9
Designated parent	945	4.9	18.9	945	8.5	18.9	(X)	(X)	(X)
Other parent	3,516	18.2	17.3	3,512	31.4	17.4	(X)	(X)	(X)
Sibling	369	1.9	10.5	369	3.3	10.5	(X)	(X)	(X)
Grandparent	5,781	30.0	18.2	3,241	29.0	19.8	3,809	19.8	10.7
Other relative	2,788	14.5	13.7	1,078	9.7	18.3	1,948	10.1	9.6
Nonrelative Care	9,342	48.5	39.0	6,798	60.9	32.6	4,436	23.0	19.5
Organized facility	5,758	29.9	32.6	3,936	35.2	26.8	2,967	15.4	19.7
Day care center	2,848	14.8	32.5	2,535	22.7	27.4	796	4.1	28.7
Nursery or preschool	2,598	13.5	19.2	1,371	12.3	19.7	1,734	9.0	13.1
Head Start	582	3.0	25.8	224	2.0	(B)	453	2.4	21.1
School[5]	291	1.5	24.9	143	1.3	(B)	168	0.9	(B)
Other nonrelative care	5,559	28.8	27.1	4,215	37.7	27.6	2,357	12.2	14.3
In child's home	1,749	9.1	18.4	894	8.0	23.6	1,112	5.8	9.3
In provider's home	4,043	21.0	25.2	3,369	30.2	27.0	1,293	6.7	11.1
Family day care	2,426	12.6	32.6	2,196	19.7	28.8	594	3.1	27.0
Other care arrangement	1,735	9.0	23.7	1,221	10.9	26.3	706	3.7	11.2
Other									
Self care	20	0.1	(B)	13	0.1	(B)	14	0.1	(B)

B Base too small to show derived statistic. NA Not applicable. X Category not asked for nonwork/school hours.

[1]If a child uses the same type of arrangement during different parental activity schedules, the arrangement type is counted only once in this column.
[2]Average hours based on those reporting using this type of arrangement.
[3]Limited to children whose designated parent was either employed or enrolled in school.
[4]Number of children includes those children for whom no regular arrangement was used.
[5]Includes kindergarten or grade school.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, children may appear in more than one arrangement type; thus, the numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

Table 3.
Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Child Care Arrangements for Preschoolers: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to children with one or more arrangements)

Arrangement type	Primary			Secondary			Tertiary		
	Receiving care		Average hours[1]	Receiving care		Average hours[1]	Receiving care		Average hours[1]
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Percent	Number	
Children in care arrangements during work/school hours	10,917	(NA)	28.9	4,905	(NA)	10.2	1,498	(NA)	5.6
NUMBER USING:									
Relative Care	5,192	47.6	25.8	2,741	55.9	9.1	672	44.9	5.2
Designated parent	649	5.9	24.4	195	4.0	(B)	73	4.9	(B)
Other parent	2,010	18.4	24.1	1,215	24.8	9.3	222	14.8	(B)
Sibling	138	1.3	(B)	133	2.7	(B)	64	4.2	(B)
Grandparent	2,048	18.8	26.3	1,013	20.6	9.1	153	10.2	(B)
Other relative	546	5.0	29.1	352	7.2	8.0	160	10.7	(B)
Nonrelative Care	5,998	54.9	31.2	1,512	30.8	12.0	351	23.5	6.2
Organized facility	3,066	28.1	29.6	836	17.0	12.3	232	15.5	(B)
Other nonrelative care	3,456	31.7	31.1	712	14.5	11.7	119	8.0	(B)
Self Care	6	0.1	(B)	-	-	-	6	0.4	(B)
Children in care arrangements during nonwork/school hours	8,436	(NA)	15.3	2,400	(NA)	6.2	445	(NA)	3.4
NUMBER USING:									
Relative Care	4,248	50.4	12.4	1,095	45.7	4.8	164	36.9	(B)
Designated parent	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Other parent	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Sibling	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Grandparent	3,085	36.6	12.1	601	25.0	5.1	124	27.8	(B)
Other relative	1,340	15.9	12.0	543	22.6	4.3	59	13.3	(B)
Nonrelative Care	4,384	52.0	17.9	823	34.3	7.8	97	21.7	(B)
Organized facility	2,524	29.9	19.7	362	15.1	9.7	39	8.8	(B)
Other nonrelative care	1,893	22.4	16.2	457	19.1	6.2	57	12.9	(B)
Self Care	8	0.1	(B)	6	0.3	(B)	-	-	-

- Represents zero or less than zero. B Base too small to show derived statistic. NA Not applicable. X Category not asked for nonwork/school hours.

[1]Average hours based on those reporting using this type of arrangement.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, children may appear in more than one arrangement type; thus, the numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

Child care patterns

Table 3 presents the primary, secondary, and tertiary child care arrangements for preschoolers in 1995 during both the parent's work/school hours and the nonwork/school hours so that they may be compared. Primary, secondary, and tertiary arrangements are defined in terms of hours per week.[7]

[7] Ties in arrangements for primary, secondary, and tertiary arrangements are counted once for each arrangement in the tie, so the sum of the individual arrangements may exceed the total number of children. Children with no regular arrangements are not included in this total.

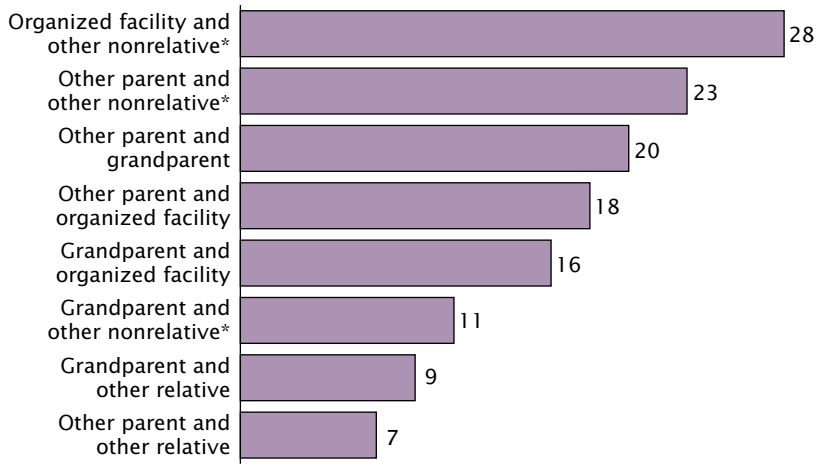
During the parent's work/school hours, nonrelatives were more likely than relatives to be the primary providers of child care for preschoolers. In 1995, 55 percent of preschoolers were cared for by nonrelatives as the primary provider during the parent's work/school hours, while 48 percent were cared for by relatives. A large proportion (28 percent) were primarily cared for in an organized facility.

An interesting pattern emerges when looking at the secondary and tertiary arrangements used to care for preschoolers during the parent's work/school hours. More than half (56 percent) of preschoolers using a secondary care arrangement were cared for by a relative and only 31 percent were cared for by a nonrelative. A similar pattern exists for the tertiary care arrangement during the parent's work/school hours and also when the designated parent was not at work or in school. In particular, large proportions of children are cared for by their grandparents while parents are not working or in school, a time when parents presumably

Figure 2.

Common Child Care Combinations Used for Preschoolers During Their Parent's Work/School Hours: Fall 1995

(Percent in specified combination)



Note: Data are for preschoolers in two or more arrangements. Children may be in other arrangement types as well as these combinations.
*Includes care in the child's home or the provider's home.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

could care for their children. Parents may welcome or even encourage involvement of their own parents in the everyday lives of their children on a regular basis. Regular contact with other family members may also provide another type of social interaction for children. This greater reliance on relatives for supplementary care arrangements is understandable as families seeking additional care provision will attempt to secure providers at little or no financial cost, and relatives often meet this criterion.

Hours spent in primary and supplemental arrangements

Table 3 shows also that preschoolers spent an average of 29 hours per week in their primary arrangement during the parent's work/school hours. Among preschoolers who had multiple child care arrangements, an average of 10 hours per week was spent in their secondary arrangement, and 6 hours per week was spent in their tertiary arrangement.

Children under 5 spent nearly twice as much time in their primary arrangement during their parent's work/school hours as in their parent's nonwork/school hours (29 hours per week compared with 15 hours per week). In secondary arrangements, children also spent more time in care during their parent's work/school hours than outside such hours.

While relatives may be more likely to pitch in and help out as a supplemental arrangement, they generally are used for fewer hours per week than nonrelatives regardless of whether the care is during the parent's work/school hours or during the parent's nonwork/school hours. For example, preschoolers secondarily using a relative during the parent's work/school hours spent only 9 hours per week in that arrangement compared with 12 hours per week for preschoolers secondarily cared for by a nonrelative.

Common child care combinations

When parents require a combination of child care arrangements to cover their work schedule, they must choose among professional providers, relatives, neighbors, and friends. Figure 2 shows frequently used combinations of arrangements for preschoolers cared for by two or more providers during the parent's work/school hours. The most frequently used combination was an organized facility (such as a day care center) and a nonrelative, which would include friends and family day care providers (28 percent). About one quarter were cared for by the child's other parent and a nonrelative.

The child's other parent and grandparents are key child care providers. In 1995, 20 percent of preschoolers were cared for by the other parent and the grandparent combination during the parent's work/school hours. Similar proportions of preschoolers were cared for either by the other parent and by an organized facility or a grandparent and an organized facility (18 percent and 16 percent, respectively). Smaller proportions of preschoolers combined other relatives with either the other parent or a grandparent. Examining the multiple arrangements of preschoolers shows that relatives, especially grandparents, pitch in as supplemental care providers.

Family Characteristics

This section shows variations in child care use by family characteristics such as marital status, race and ethnicity, educational level, family income, and child's age.

Table 4.
Preschoolers Receiving Care by Selected Arrangements and Family Characteristics: Fall 1995

(Number in thousands)

Characteristic of parent/family	Number of children	Percent in selected arrangement							Percent in multiple care
		Relative care				Nonrelative care			
		Total[1]	Designated parent	Other Parent	Grandparent	Total	Organized facility	Other nonrelative	
Children under 5 years	19,281	50.1	4.9	18.2	30.0	48.5	29.9	28.8	44.0
Marital Status									
Married	13,722	48.7	5.3	20.7	27.6	49.1	29.3	29.9	42.4
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,956	50.7	3.5	11.2	29.3	58.7	39.1	34.0	54.9
Never married	3,554	54.9	4.0	12.6	39.5	40.4	26.9	21.7	44.1
Race and Hispanic Origin									
Non-Hispanic White	12,998	51.9	5.6	20.7	32.2	51.5	30.2	32.1	46.1
Non-Hispanic Black	2,632	47.9	3.0	11.5	27.9	49.9	34.9	27.6	49.2
Non-Hispanic other races	835	52.9	8.1	19.6	31.8	45.6	30.8	25.6	48.0
Hispanic (of any race)	2,816	43.0	2.6	12.7	21.1	33.9	23.3	15.7	28.4
Educational Level									
High school or less	9,752	48.0	4.0	13.3	30.0	37.9	25.2	20.9	36.3
College, 1 or more years	9,529	52.3	5.8	23.3	30.0	59.3	34.6	37.0	51.9
Poverty Status[2]									
In poverty	4,332	40.8	2.8	9.4	25.0	32.4	23.4	15.2	31.2
Not in poverty	14,748	52.9	5.5	21.0	31.3	53.5	32.1	32.9	48.0
During Work/School Hours	11,168	61.9	8.5	31.4	29.0	60.9	35.2	37.7	43.9
Marital Status									
Married	7,972	62.4	9.2	35.7	26.9	61.2	33.8	38.8	44.1
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,300	50.2	5.2	16.8	23.8	74.1	48.3	42.5	45.5
Never married	1,897	67.7	7.5	23.5	41.3	50.6	32.4	30.1	42.2
Race and Hispanic Origin									
Non-Hispanic White	7,872	61.8	9.2	34.1	29.4	62.6	34.8	39.1	45.6
Non-Hispanic Black	1,603	58.5	4.9	18.9	27.9	60.0	41.1	37.1	40.0
Non-Hispanic other races	513	71.7	6.2	31.9	35.7	55.8	34.0	36.3	52.2
Hispanic (of any race)	1,180	62.8	13.2	30.3	25.3	52.9	30.7	30.3	34.5
Educational Level									
High school or less	4,621	65.2	8.5	28.0	32.7	52.7	33.4	31.6	43.3
College, 1 or more years	6,547	59.5	8.4	33.9	26.4	66.6	36.5	42.1	44.3
Poverty Status[2]									
In poverty	1,405	67.9	8.6	29.0	33.7	52.5	35.9	31.2	43.5
Not in poverty	9,709	61.0	8.4	31.9	28.2	62.1	35.3	38.6	44.0
During Nonwork/School Hours	19,281	26.0	(X)	(X)	19.8	23.0	15.4	12.2	12.4
Marital Status									
Married	13,772	24.2	(X)	(X)	18.0	23.3	15.4	12.4	11.4
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,956	28.4	(X)	(X)	21.4	24.0	18.3	14.5	16.8
Never married	3,554	31.8	(X)	(X)	25.7	21.2	13.9	10.3	13.9
Race and Hispanic Origin									
Non-Hispanic White	12,998	26.4	(X)	(X)	21.0	23.4	14.8	13.7	13.6
Non-Hispanic Black	2,632	24.3	(X)	(X)	17.5	26.8	19.3	13.6	13.0
Non-Hispanic other races	835	27.0	(X)	(X)	21.3	22.1	16.3	6.8	9.4
Hispanic (of any race)	2,816	25.7	(X)	(X)	15.7	18.1	14.3	5.7	7.5
Educational Level									
High school or less	9,752	26.9	(X)	(X)	20.3	20.2	14.5	9.6	12.0
College, 1 or more years	9,529	25.1	(X)	(X)	19.2	25.9	16.3	14.9	12.9
Poverty Status[2]									
In poverty	4,332	25.3	(X)	(X)	17.9	21.9	17.1	9.3	12.6
Not in poverty	14,748	26.1	(X)	(X)	20.1	23.5	15.0	13.1	12.2

X Category not asked for nonwork/school hours.

[1]Total includes care by siblings and other relatives not shown separately in this table.
[2]Excludes those with missing income data.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, the total numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

Marital status

Interesting relationships emerge when the marital status of the parent is considered. Preschoolers of never-married parents were more likely to be cared for by a relative (55 percent) than by a nonrelative (40 percent), with grandparents playing a large role in the care of these children (see Table 4).[8] While 40 percent of children of never-married parents were usually cared for by a grandparent during the week, this arrangement applied to 29 percent of children of previously-married[9] or married parents.

Children living with both married parents were much more likely to be cared for by their other parent (21 percent), usually the father, than children living with a single parent (12 percent), demonstrating the importance of living arrangements in determining the father's involvement in the care of their children. However, the sex of the single parent seems to make a difference with regard to whether the child is cared for by the nonresident parent on a regular basis. Preschoolers living with a single father were about three times as likely (32 percent) to be cared for by their nonresident parent as preschoolers living with a single mother (11 percent). This difference suggests that mothers are more regularly involved in the care of their children even when they do not live with them.

How are children in different living arrangements cared for during their parent's work/school hours? Children living with married parents were cared for by similar proportions of relatives and nonrelatives during the work/school hours (62 percent and 61 percent, respectively). However, children of previously-married parents relied more heavily on nonrelatives (74 percent) than on relatives (50 percent) during the parent's work/school hours. Half of children under 5 living with a previously-married parent were cared for by organized care facilities.

Race and Hispanic origin

Table 4 shows that preschoolers of non-Hispanic White parents regularly used child care by relatives and nonrelatives similarly (52 percent for both). About 32 percent were cared for by a grandparent, and similar proportions were cared for by other nonrelatives. While similar proportions of preschoolers of non-Hispanic Black parents were in relative and nonrelative care, these children were often cared for in an organized facility (35 percent). However, preschoolers of Hispanic[10] parents were more likely to be cared for by a relative (43 percent) than a nonrelative (34 percent). Common to all groups is the heavy reliance on grandparents as care providers among relatives providing child care.

Hispanics have lower levels of multiple child care use than the other racial and ethnic groups (28 percent). All three of the other racial and ethnic groups have similar levels of multiple care arrangements (about 47 percent).

Educational level

Parental educational level appears to be a factor in the decisions parents make regarding care for their preschoolers. Parents with at most a high school diploma relied more often on relatives than nonrelatives. Conversely, parents with a higher educational level — at least some college — relied more often on nonrelatives than relatives. In addition, Table 4 shows that preschoolers of parents with some college education were cared for by two or more child care arrangements — 52 percent compared with 36 percent of preschoolers of parents with a high school degree or less. Similar patterns exist during the parent's work/school hours, except the variation in use of multiple arrangements disappears.

Use of a nonrelative's care during the parent's nonwork/school hours is also related to the parent's educational level. Children under 5 of parents with at least some college were more likely to use care by a nonrelative during the parent's nonwork/school hours (26 percent), than children of parents with less than a high school education (20 percent). However, the use of organized child care facilities shows little difference by the parent's educational level, regardless of their work or school status.

Family income

Families in poverty rely more on relatives than nonrelatives to provide child care. About 41 percent of preschoolers in families below the poverty level were cared for by relatives and 32 percent were cared for by nonrelatives. In families not in poverty, children were about equally likely to be cared for by relatives as by nonrelatives – about 53 percent in each (these percentages exceed 100 percent because

[8] Because parents and grandparents are important adult role models for young children, this table highlights these categories of care by relatives. More detailed child care arrangements by family characteristics can be found in PPL-138 or on the Census Bureau's Web site (see the "More Information" section at the end of this report).

[9] Previously married includes those who are separated, divorced, or widowed.

[10] Hispanics may be of any race.

some children were in both types of arrangements).

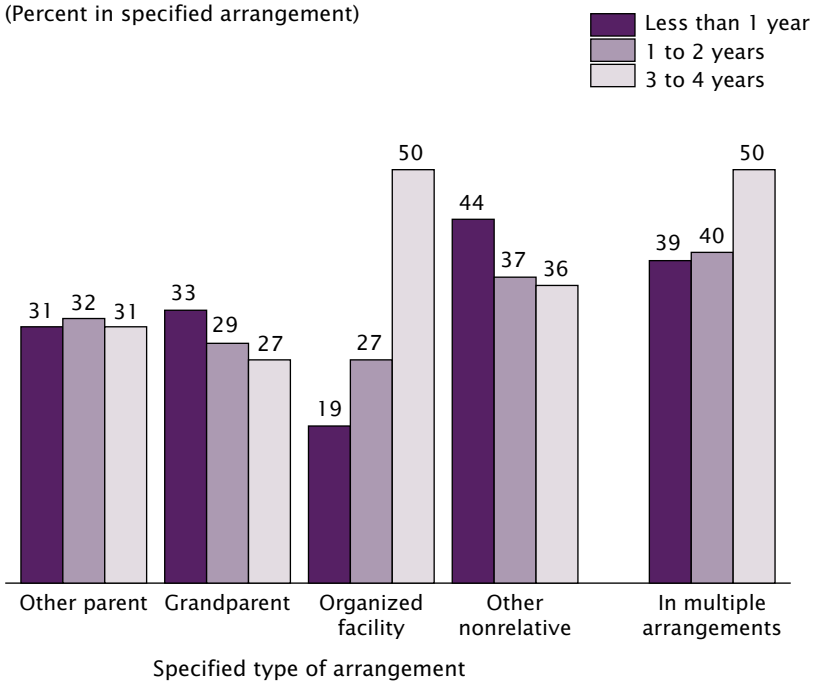
About 23 percent of poor preschoolers and 32 percent of nonpoor preschoolers were in an organized facility. This difference derives from whether a child has a parent who is employed or in school.[11] For children with a parent at work or in school, about 35 percent of both poor and nonpoor preschoolers were in an organized facility while their parent was at work or at school. In addition, about 68 percent of poor preschoolers received care by relatives, compared with 61 percent of nonpoor children, while the parent was working or in school.

Outside of a parent's hours at work or at school, the poor and nonpoor were about equally likely to rely on relatives for care – about 26 percent of both groups of preschoolers.

Figure 3.

Arrangement Usage During the Parent's Work/School Hours by Child's Age: Fall 1995

(Percent in specified arrangement)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

Child's age

Use of nonrelatives as child care providers varies widely by age. For example, use of organized facility care increases dramatically by age: only 19 percent of children less than one year old during their parent's work/school hours but 50 percent of children 3 to 4 years old did so (see Figure 3). Care by two other arrangement types — other nonrelatives and grandparents — appears to work in reverse of organized facilities, as the proportion decreases with age of the child. The percent of children who were cared for by an "other nonrelative" falls from 44 percent of children under 1 year old to 36 percent for children 3 to 4 years old. Children cared for by a grandparent falls from 33 percent for children under 1 year old to 27 percent for children ages 3 and 4. Care by the other parent does not differ by the age of the child.

Taken all together, the SIPP data suggest that parents of preschool children face different constraints securing child care during their work/school hours depending on the child's age. Parents may have difficulty securing infant care at organized facilities because infant care is not provided, or they may prefer their very young children to be cared for in a home environment. As children age, however, school readiness may weigh in as an important factor in the choice of child care, thus explaining the high proportion of children 3 to 4 years old in organized facilities. Multiple child care arrangements also appears to be more common when a child is 3 or more years old than among younger children.

Historical Trends in the Primary Child Care Arrangements of Employed Mothers

Child care data were first collected in the SIPP in 1985, which now provides the opportunity to examine 10 years of child care trends for preschoolers with employed mothers.[12] The distribution of arrangements shown in this table is slightly different from previous tables to provide comparable data with previously published reports.

[11] Although similar proportions of poor and nonpoor children use organized facilities during the hours their parents are at work or in school, nonpoor children are more likely to have employed or enrolled designated parents (66 percent) than nonpoor children (32 percent).

[12] Before 1995, data are shown only for the primary arrangements. Data for 1995 distribute the "tied" responses proportionally for the primary arrangement to make the distributions comparable to prior survey years.

Table 5.
Primary Child Care Arrangements Used by Employed Mothers of Preschoolers While Working: Selected Years

(In percent)

Type of arrangement	Winter 1985	Fall 1988	Fall 1990	Fall 1991	Fall 1993	Fall 1995[1]
Number of children (in thousands)	8,168	9,483	9,629	9,854	9,937	10,047
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Parents	23.8	22.7	22.9	28.7	22.1	22.0
Mother while working	8.1	7.6	6.4	8.7	6.2	5.4
Father	15.7	15.1	16.5	20.0	15.9	16.6
Relatives	24.1	21.1	23.1	23.5	26.0	21.4
Grandparent	15.9	13.9	14.3	15.8	17.0	15.9
Sibling and other relative	8.2	7.2	8.8	7.7	9.0	5.5
Organized facility	23.1	25.8	27.5	23.1	29.9	25.1
Day care center	14.0	16.6	20.6	15.8	18.3	17.7
Nursery/preschool	9.1	9.2	6.9	7.3	11.6	5.9
Federal Head Start program	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	1.5
Other nonrelative care	28.2	28.9	25.1	23.3	21.6	28.4
In child's home	5.9	5.3	5.0	5.4	5.0	4.9
In provider's home	22.3	23.6	20.1	17.9	16.6	23.5
Family day care	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	15.7
Other nonrelative	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	7.8
Other	0.8	1.6	1.3	1.6	1.1	2.9
Self care	-	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.1
Other arrangement[2]	0.8	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.1	0.6
No regular arrangement	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	2.2

- Represents zero or less than zero. NA Not available.

[1]To make the 1995 data consistent with prior surveys, the 1995 distribution was proportionately redistributed to account for tied responses for the primary arrangement (including responses of no regular arrangement) to make the percentages total to 100 percent.

[2]Includes children in kindergarten/grade school-based activity.

Source: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P-70-9 Table 1; P-70-30 Table 1; P-70-36 Table 1; P-70-53 Table 2; and this report P-70-70, U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

In 1995, 10 million preschoolers lived with employed mothers, up from 8.2 million in 1985 (see Table 5). Fewer than half (43 percent) were cared for by either a parent (including the mother herself) or by some other relative in 1995, lower than in 1985 (48 percent). Organized child care facilities and other types of nonrelative care made up at least one-half of all primary arrangements in 1995, a pattern similar for every survey year since 1985, except for in 1991. In 1991 fathers reached an all-time high as a primary care provider for preschoolers of employed mothers.

The use of nonrelatives has had an erratic trend over the period from 1985 to 1995, with parents' reliance on nonrelatives waxing and waning in response to economic and other situations. In 1985 and 1995, the proportion of preschoolers who were in nonrelative care (either in the child's home or in the provider's home) was 28 percent. In 1993, only 22 percent were cared for in a home-based arrangement by a nonrelative of the child. Care by nonrelatives in the child's home remained steady at roughly 5 percent throughout the entire 10-year period; thus, the significant changes in care by nonrelatives in informal settings can be attributed to changes in the care of preschoolers by nonrelatives in the provider's home (see Table 5).

During the same 10-year period, the use of organized facilities for preschoolers fluctuated. From 1985 to 1990, the proportion of preschoolers being cared for in organized facilities rose from 23 percent to 28 percent, and it has wavered since then.

Rates of family and relative care also have varied during this 10-year period. Care by fathers, while remaining around 15 percent between 1985 and 1988, increased sharply to 20 percent by 1991. However, by 1995, this proportion had dropped back down to around 17 percent. Interestingly, the overall declining trend in care by mothers while working was interrupted

in 1991 as well, when it reached a level similar to the 1985 level, and then it decreased to 5 percent by 1995. Care by grandparents did not change much across the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The lower levels of child care by mothers and fathers in 1995 relative to 1991 supports prior research suggesting that the relatively higher use of father and mother care in 1991 was in response to the economic recession at the time.[13] Apparently parental care of preschoolers — father care and mother care — is more responsive to changes in the economy than care by grandparents, who seem to be a stable component of child care arrangements.

Head Start Programs

For many parents, reliable child care is an integral component of their ability to find a job and remain employed. Federal programs such as Head Start aim to improve school readiness among children from low-income families by integrating child care with high quality early education. In addition, Head Start programs provide the participants and their families with links to social and health services, job training, and schooling, while encouraging parental involvement.

Head Start eligibility is determined prior to enrollment based on income level and other special needs, such as disability of the child.[14] Because the SIPP asks questions on current socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and not when the child first enrolled in Head Start, characteristics may have changed since the child's enrollment. Furthermore, Head Start programs may enable parents to further their education or gain employment which would increase their income level over time. For these reasons, some children currently in Head Start may have characteristics which would normally not have qualified them for enrollment; however, they are still enrolled because they initially qualified. These caveats should be kept in mind when considering current characteristics of children enrolled in Head Start.

Estimates of Head Start participation

The fall 1995 SIPP estimates show that 710,000 children under 6 (3 percent of children in that age group) were enrolled in a federally funded Head Start program.[15] According to the SIPP, the majority (74 percent) of children enrolled in Head Start were either 3 or 4 years old; smaller proportions were 5 years old (18 percent) or under 3 (8 percent).[16]

Family characteristics of Head Start enrollees

Because many poor families with children are headed by single parents, it is not surprising that Head Start serves more single-parent households than married-parent households (see Table 6). For example in 1995, 62 percent of Head Start enrollees lived with a single parent, including 25 percent who lived with a previously-married parent and 37 percent who lived with a never-married parent. Among children in Head Start, equal proportions were non-Hispanic White or Black, comparatively fewer were Hispanic.

For children in Head Start, 42 percent had a parent who was a high school graduate, but only 24 percent had some college education, and very few had completed four or more years of college (5 percent). In 1995, 55 percent of parents of Head Start enrollees were not employed in the fall of 1995, 28 percent were employed full-time, and 17 percent were employed part-time.

About two thirds of the Head Start enrollees lived in families that received some government assistance (62 percent): 52 percent received food stamps and 31 percent received Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.[17] Participation in other government programs may reflect the degree to which the family is integrated into networks that assist low-income populations.

Enrollment in Head Start differs by region of residence and metropolitan status. Children enrolled in Head Start were more likely to live in the South (45 percent) or the West (27 percent), than in the Northeast or the Midwest (both about 15 percent). More enrollees lived in central cities (47 percent) than in other areas. These variations may reflect differences in levels of poverty, knowledge of programs, and availability of programs.

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[13] Lynne Casper and Martin O'Connell. "Work, Income, the Economy, and Married Fathers as Child-Care Providers." *Demography*, 35(1998):243-250.

[14] Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. "1995 Head Start Information Memorandum: The 1995 Family Income Guidelines." Washington, DC; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1995.

[15] The SIPP estimate, which represents only current enrollment in the month preceding the interview during the fall 1995, is lower than the National Head Start administrative number of funded enrollment slots (750,696).

[16] Head Start Administrative records show that 7 percent of Head Start enrollees were 5 years old and 4 percent were 3 years old in 1995 (1995 Head Start Fact Sheet, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families).

[17] WIC is the supplemental nutrition program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provides supplemental food and nutritional education to mothers with children under 5 years of age to reduce the possibility of nutrition-related illnesses.

Characteristics of Head Start enrollees and nonenrollees

With changes in welfare reform, federal agencies and programs, including Head Start, are looking for ways to facilitate transitions from welfare to work. Because child care problems can hinder low-income parents looking for employment, Head Start is contemplating ways to expand its program to reach more members of the low-income community. The following comparison of Head Start participation among a group of children who are potential candidates for enrollment promotes a better understanding of the variations among those who participate in Head Start and those who do not. Official Head Start guidelines or eligibility criteria are not used here to define potential candidates, since each Head Start program determines eligibility based on a set of programmatic, community, and family considerations, which include but are not limited to poverty and the child's need based on disabilities. Rather, potential candidates are defined simply as those children ages 3 and 4 living in families at 185 percent of the

Table 6.
Characteristics of Children in Head Start: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic of parent/family	Children in Head Start		Potential candidates for enrollment in Head Start[1]				
				Enrollees		Nonenrollees	
	Number	Percent	Total	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total children	710	100.0	3,765	401	100.0	3,364	100.0
Marital Status							
Married	269	38.0	1,894	122	30.3	1,773	52.7
Separated, divorced, widowed	175	24.7	836	64	16.1	771	22.9
Never married	265	37.3	1,035	215	53.6	820	24.4
Race and Hispanic Origin							
Non-Hispanic White	274	38.6	1,859	158	39.4	1,701	50.6
Non-Hispanic Black	291	40.9	876	156	38.9	720	21.4
Non-Hispanic other races	30	4.2	188	10	2.4	179	5.3
Hispanic (of any race)	116	16.3	841	77	19.3	764	22.7
Educational Level							
Less than high school	210	29.6	1,164	129	32.2	1,035	30.8
High school	298	41.9	1,452	165	41.0	1,288	38.3
College, 1 to 3 years	169	23.8	971	107	26.7	864	25.7
College, 4 or more years	34	4.8	177	-	-	177	5.3
Employment Status							
Not employed	390	55.0	2,444	249	62.1	2,195	65.2
Employed full time	197	27.8	766	83	20.7	683	20.3
Employed part time	122	17.2	555	69	17.2	486	14.4
Receipt of Assistance							
No assistance	268	37.7	1,749	102	25.5	1,646	48.9
Any assistance[2]	442	62.3	2,016	299	74.5	1,718	51.1
Receipt of AFDC[3]	298	41.9	1,156	198	49.5	957	28.5
Receipt of food stamps	366	51.6	1,642	264	65.8	1,378	41.0
Receipt of WIC	217	30.6	1,190	161	40.0	1,030	30.6
Region							
Northeast	107	15.1	783	44	11.0	739	22.0
Midwest	90	12.7	847	43	10.8	804	23.9
South	321	45.2	1,194	177	44.1	1,017	30.2
West	192	27.0	941	137	34.2	804	23.9
Metropolitan Residence							
In central city	332	46.7	1,535	171	42.8	1,363	40.5
Outside central city	221	31.1	1,456	133	33.3	1,323	39.3
Nonmetropolitan	157	22.1	774	96	24.0	678	20.1

- Represents zero or less than zero.

[1]Includes children 3 and 4 years old who were living at 185 percent of poverty level or lower. Those Head Start children whose families lived above 185 percent of poverty level in 1995 were excluded from this analysis. Children age 5 are excluded from this analysis because Head Start programs do not accept children age 5 as new enrollees.

[2]Includes receipt of general assistance, AFDC, food stamps, or WIC.

[3]AFDC was the government sponsored welfare program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services in 1995.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

poverty level or lower in 1995, a group that encompasses low-income families who are eligible for many government assistance programs. In this analysis, the family income level of the potential candidates is higher than the poverty line because poverty is episodic — a transitory condition for many — and low-income families are at risk of experiencing multiple short-term spells of living in poverty.[18]

The right hand panel of Table 6 compares the characteristics of children's families who were potential candidates for Head Start, by the children's current enrollment status. Only 401,000 (11 percent) of these 3.8 million potential candidates were enrolled in Head Start in the fall of 1995. Head Start enrollees were more likely than nonenrollees to be living with a single parent who had never married — 54 percent compared with 24 percent — and less likely than nonenrollees to be living in a married-couple family (30 percent and 53 percent, respectively). As previously noted, fathers and other relatives play an important child care role among poor families. Children of unmarried parents may not receive care from both parents and these families may seek free day care services from Head Start.

Head Start enrollees were more likely to be non-Hispanic Black than were nonenrollees. Head Start programs may be more accessible to Black families because of their history of serving this minority group since the onset of the Head Start program in the 1960s and because of the trust the program has earned in Black communities.

The two groups were quite similar when comparing the educational and employment characteristics. About one-quarter of the designated parents in both groups had attended 1 to 3 years of college, and more than half were not employed. This similarity is expected as these children were selected into this "potential pool" because they were living in families with low incomes.

Across the board, higher proportions of Head Start enrollees than nonenrollees lived in families that received government assistance. Head Start participant families were much more likely to receive AFDC (50 percent) than nonenrollee families (29 percent). They were also more likely to receive food stamps. This finding suggests that families with children enrolled in Head Start programs may be better connected into networks of assistance and are more aware of the variety of government assistance programs available to low-income families. Some families may not know that they are eligible for Head Start even though they may qualify for the program because of their low income levels.

Lack of access to a Head Start program may also be an impediment to enrollment. A larger proportion of the Head Start enrollees lived in the South (44 percent) compared with nonenrollees (30 percent), and many fewer enrollees lived in the Midwest (11 percent) compared with nonenrollees (24 percent). This difference may reflect variations in the number of and accessibility to programs in different regions.

Child care characteristics of Head Start enrollees

The SIPP data show that Head Start programs, although used by a small fraction of the overall population, were an important source of child care or school readiness for many poor families. Overall, children in Head Start spent about 26 hours per week in the program (see Table 7). Head Start was the primary care provider for 79 percent of Head Start children; for 31 percent, it was their only arrangement. Even though the Head Start program was used by families for a large portion of their child's daytime hours, many families still found it necessary to seek out other care providers to cover all their child care needs.

Child care provided by relatives plays a more important role than that provided by nonrelatives among Head Start participants (46 percent and 32 percent, respectively), with grandparents playing the most prominent role. This pattern is to be expected because Head Start families typically have low incomes and tend to rely on less expensive supplemental care arrangements, such as family members or relatives, rather than nonrelative care arrangements.

Patterns of child care use by Head Start enrollees and nonenrollees

Among potential Head Start candidates, actual Head Start enrollees tend to use more child care arrangements than nonenrollees (an average of 2.3 arrangements compared with 1.3 arrangements per child, respectively). They also spent twice as much time in child care — 41 hours per week in all of their child care arrangements combined compared with only 23 hours.

[18] Mary Naifeh. *Dynamics of Economic Well-Being, Poverty 1993-94: Trap Door? Revolving Door? Or Both?* Current Population Reports, P70-63. U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 1998; Mary Jo Bane and David Ellwood. *Welfare Realities: From Rhetoric to Reform*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994.

Although enrollees and nonenrollees were cared for by relatives to a similar extent, nonenrollees were more likely to be cared for by nonrelatives (excluding Head Start and school). Among the potential pool, 19 percent of nonenrollees were in a nursery or preschool compared with 3 percent of Head Start enrollees. This difference suggests that low-income families may seek educational and school-readiness programs for their children through enrollment in child care arrangements, such as a nursery or preschool, if Head Start slots or programs are not available.

CHILDREN 5 TO 14 YEARS OLD

After describing multiple child care arrangements families use for grade-school-age children, this section examines different patterns of use by characteristics of the family. The section concludes by giving detailed information about enrichment activities and self care.

Multiple Arrangements

More and more parents and policymakers are asking what grade-school-age children are doing when not in school? In 1995, virtually all of the 38.2 million children 5 to 14 years old (98 percent) were in a regular child care arrangement, including school, during a typical week (see Table 8). Three quarters of grade-school-age children (28.7 million) were cared for in multiple arrangements. Overall, grade-school-age children were regularly in an average of 2.8 arrangements per week. School is counted in this report in the tally of all arrangements and activities because the intention is to show children's various activities during the day and because school activities figure prominently in their daily lives.

Multiple arrangements are more common among children whose parents are employed/in school than among those whose parents

Table 7.
Child Care Characteristics of Children in Head Start: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Child care characteristics	Children in Head Start		Potential candidates for enrollment in Head Start[1]				
				Enrollees		Nonenrollees	
	Number	Percent	Total	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total children	710	100.0	3,765	401	100.0	3,364	100.0
Average number of arrangements	2.4	(NA)	1.4	2.3	(NA)	1.3	(NA)
In multiple arrangements	488	68.7	1,563	253	63.0	1,310	38.9
Average hours in Head Start	25.6	(NA)	2.5	23.9	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Average hours in all arrangements	45.6	(NA)	25.1	41.2	(NA)	23.2	(NA)
Use of Head Start:							
As only arrangement	222	31.3	149	149	37.0	(NA)	(NA)
As primary care provider	561	79.0	327	327	81.4	(NA)	(NA)
As secondary care provider	136	19.2	68	68	16.9	(NA)	(NA)
Use of other child care providers:							
Relative Care	327	46.1	1,728	192	47.9	1,536	45.7
Designated parent	18	2.5	102	13	3.3	89	2.6
Other parent	81	11.4	495	44	10.9	451	13.4
Sibling	27	3.8	85	10	2.4	76	2.2
Grandparent	215	30.2	1,020	126	31.3	895	26.6
Other relative	111	15.7	551	78	19.4	473	14.1
Nonrelative Care[2]	226	31.8	1,393	110	27.4	1,283	38.1
Day care center	25	3.6	425	26	6.5	399	11.9
Nursery or preschool	25	3.6	665	13	3.3	652	19.4
Other nonrelative care	125	17.5	694	77	19.2	617	18.4

NA Not applicable.

[1]Includes children 3 and 4 years old who were living at 185 percent of poverty level or lower. Those Head Start children whose families lived above 185 percent of poverty level in 1995 were excluded from this analysis. Children age 5 are excluded from this analysis because Head Start programs do not accept children age 5 as new enrollees.

[2]Excludes Head Start and school (some of the Head Start children are in kindergarten).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

are not — children of employed parents were cared for in 3.4 arrangements per week compared with 1.6 arrangements for children whose parents were neither employed nor in school. Most of the 79.0 million arrangements of children of employed parents were used during their parent's work hours (68 percent). Among children whose parent was in school, the majority of arrangements occurred during the parent's school hours (60 percent).

Types of Child Care Arrangements

Older children experience a wider array of daily activities than do preschoolers. They may have extended peer groups of friends at school and participate in various afterschool or enrichment programs that are not available to younger children. To capture these activities, the child care arrangements shown in the tables for grade-school-age children differ from those shown for younger children.

Relatives are important contributors to the overall care of grade-school-age children — 43 percent regularly received care from a relative (see Table 9). A slightly higher proportion of children received care by a grandparent (17 percent) than by the other parent (16 percent). Care by a sibling is not common for grade-school-age children (9 percent), but is more common than among preschoolers.

Grade-school-age children are less likely to be cared for by nonrelatives (such as organized care facilities or other nonrelative care in the child's home or the provider's home) than by relatives. Only 17 percent of children 5 to 14 years old were cared for by these types of nonrelatives on a regular basis. This relatively low use of nonrelatives may be due to the high rate of school enrollment for these children as well as their involvement in other structured activities. Nearly all grade-school-age children (93 percent) were in school and a large proportion (39 percent) participated in enrichment activities such as sports, lessons, clubs, and before- or after-school programs. In addition, 18 percent (6.9 million) grade-school-age children cared for themselves on a regular basis without any adult supervision.

Arrangements used during the parent's work/school and nonwork/school hours

In general, parents are more likely to use arrangements during their work or school hours than during their nonwork/school hours, primarily because many parents care for their children themselves during this time. In 1995, there were 24.7 million grade-school-age children whose designated parent was either employed or in school. Fifty-two percent were in relative care during their parent's work/school hours and

Table 8.
Number of Child Care Arrangements for Grade-School-Age Children During Their Parent's Work, School, and Nonwork/School Hours: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic of parent	Number of children	With a regular arrangement		Number of arrangements				Total arrangements	
		Number	Percent	One	Two	Three	Four or more	Total	Average per child[1]
Children 5 to 14 years	38,228	37,465	98.0	8,751	10,035	8,221	10,458	103,751	2.8
Parent Employed									
Total	23,472	23,324	99.4	1,578	5,496	6,652	9,598	79,012	3.4
During work hours	23,472	23,114	98.5	4,692	9,496	6,309	2,617	53,923	2.3
During nonwork hours	23,472	16,160	68.8	9,385	5,068	1,295	412	25,089	1.6
Parent in School									
Total	1,226	1,222	99.7	65	354	288	515	3,960	3.2
During school hours	1,226	1,197	97.6	395	525	187	90	2,373	2.0
During nonschool hours	1,226	1,055	86.1	645	317	75	18	1,586	1.5
Parent not Employed nor in School	13,531	12,921	95.5	7,109	4,186	1,281	345	20,780	1.6

[1]Averages are based on those who reported having child care arrangements for specified periods of parental activity.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

25 percent were cared for by the child's other parent. Only 18 percent of children 5 to 14 years old were cared for by a relative during the parent's nonwork/school hours.

Care by nonrelatives was less common than care by relatives during the parent's work/school hours — 18 percent compared with 52 percent. Nonrelative care during the parent's nonwork/school hours was also low (7 percent).

Comparing the use of school, enrichment activities, and self care across the two different activity schedules of the parent reveals some important findings. Among children whose parent was employed or in school, 88 percent were in school during their parent's work/school hours. Many parents' work/school schedules overlap substantially or coincide with their children's school hours, thus reducing the overall need for child care arrangements.

Thirty-five percent of children of employed/in-school parents regularly participated in at least one enrichment activity during the

Table 9.
Grade-School-Age Children In Different Types of Arrangements by Activity Schedule of Designated Parent: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Arrangement type	Activity schedule of designated parent								
	Total[1]			During work/school hours[3]			During nonwork/school hours		
	Receiving care		Average hours[2]	Receiving care		Average hours[2]	Receiving care		Average hours[2]
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Children 5 to 14 years[4]	38,228	(NA)	43.0	24,698	(NA)	38.7	38,228	(NA)	19.5
NUMBER USING:									
Relative Care	16,270	42.6	15.7	12,709	51.5	15.0	6,897	18.0	9.5
Designated parent	1,341	3.5	14.6	1,341	5.4	14.6	(X)	(X)	(X)
Other parent	6,106	16.0	13.1	6,106	24.7	13.1	(X)	(X)	(X)
Sibling	3,486	9.1	9.1	3,479	14.1	9.1	(X)	(X)	(X)
Grandparent	6,634	17.4	11.7	3,840	15.6	11.3	4,396	11.5	7.8
Other relative	4,362	11.4	10.7	1,407	5.7	11.0	3,334	8.7	9.4
Nonrelative Care	6,414	16.8	15.1	4,549	18.4	14.1	2,672	7.0	11.2
Organized care facility	1,344	3.5	22.7	831	3.4	19.1	772	2.0	18.9
Day care center	557	1.5	25.1	505	2.0	19.3	196	0.5	(B)
Nursery or preschool	736	1.9	18.2	344	1.4	16.6	482	1.3	15.8
Head Start	128	0.3	(B)	31	0.1	(B)	122	0.3	(B)
Other nonrelative care	5,398	14.1	12.3	3,921	15.9	12.3	2,246	5.9	8.0
In child's home	1,875	4.9	10.9	1,025	4.1	12.4	1,097	2.9	6.8
In provider's home	3,687	9.6	10.8	2,931	11.9	10.5	1,179	3.1	7.0
Family day care	1,731	4.5	14.8	1,560	6.3	13.4	321	0.8	14.3
Other care arrangement	1,997	5.2	10.6	1,402	5.7	10.3	862	2.3	6.9
Other									
School	35,486	92.8	35.1	21,681	87.8	28.2	22,881	59.9	25.2
Enrichment activities[5]	15,020	39.3	7.9	8,556	34.6	7.0	10,411	27.2	5.7
Sports	8,545	22.4	6.6	4,598	18.6	5.7	5,930	15.5	5.1
Lessons	6,169	16.1	3.9	3,347	13.6	3.4	3,940	10.3	3.3
Clubs	5,545	14.5	3.1	2,604	10.5	2.7	3,955	10.3	2.5
Before/after-school program	2,132	5.6	10.0	1,659	6.7	9.5	817	2.1	6.8
Self care	6,880	18.0	6.1	5,018	20.3	5.7	3,257	8.5	4.1

B Base too small to show derived statistic. NA Not applicable. X Category not asked for nonwork/school hours.

[1]If a child uses the same type of arrangement during different parental activity schedules, the arrangement type is counted only once in this column.

[2]Average hours based on those reporting using this type of arrangement.

[3] Limited to children whose designated parent was either employed or enrolled in school.

[4] Number of children includes those children for whom no regular arrangement was used.

[5]This category consists of organized sports, lessons (such as music, art, dance, language, and computer), clubs, and before- or after-school programs located either at school or other places.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, children may appear in more than one arrangement type; thus, the numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

parent's work/school hours. Although fewer participated in enrichment activities during their parent's nonwork/school hours, enrichment activities were the most frequently used arrangement, aside from school, during this time (27 percent). These findings suggest that enrichment activities play a large role in what children are doing when outside school, regardless of their parent's employment or enrollment status. Some parents may use enrichment programs as a type of child care provider, especially if they occur after school and before the parent returns home from work. However, many activities, for example Saturday morning soccer leagues, are scheduled outside of parents' work or school hours.

Among children whose parent was either employed or in school, 20 percent regularly spent time in self care during the parent's work/school hours. This figure is more than twice the proportion for grade-school-age children who regularly spent time in self care during their parent's nonwork/school hours (9 percent).

Number of hours spent in child care

The amount of time a child spends in a particular arrangement can have a lasting effect on development. Overall, grade-school-age children spent 43 hours in child care per week — the greatest number of hours were in school (35 hours per week). They were regularly cared for by relatives and nonrelatives for approximately 15 hours per week each. Children 5 to 14 years old spent about 8 hours in enrichment activities per week and about 6 hours per week in self-care situations.

Primary and Supplemental Arrangements

Arrangement use patterns

Table 10 presents the primary, secondary, and tertiary child care arrangements for children 5 to 14 years old by their parent's employment/enrollment status. Of the 24.3 million grade-school-age children with a primary arrangement during the parent's work/school hours, 80 percent were in school at this time. Comparatively small proportions of grade-school-age children had relatives (14 percent) and nonrelatives (5 percent) as their primary arrangement. Only 2 percent of grade-school-age children were either in enrichment activities or in self care as their primary arrangement.

The role of enrichment activities becomes more apparent when one looks at the secondary and tertiary arrangements. In 1995, 24 percent of grade-school-age children participated in enrichment activities as their secondary arrangement, and 30 percent participated as their tertiary arrangement when their parent was at work or in school. In addition, greater proportions of grade-school-age children cared for themselves as their secondary or tertiary arrangements than as their primary arrangement (13 percent and 17 percent compared with 2 percent).

Enrichment activities are also important supplemental arrangements when their parents are not working or attending school. Grade-school-age children were nearly two times as likely to participate in enrichment activities as their secondary arrangement during the parents nonwork/school hours (44 percent) than during the work/school hours (24 percent).

Hours spent in primary and supplemental arrangements

On average, grade-school-age children spent 28 hours per week in their primary arrangement during the parent's work/school hours compared with 22 hours per week during the parent's nonwork/school hours. About 25 hours per week was spent in relative and nonrelative care during the parent's work/school hours.

The number of weekly hours spent in enrichment activities is twice as high during the parent's work/school hours than during their nonwork/school hours (14 hours compared with 7 hours per week, respectively). The longer hours noted during the parent's work/school hours suggests that they use enrichment activities to meet both their child care needs and to promote child well-being.

Family Characteristics

This section shows the variations in child care use regarding family characteristics such as marital status, race and ethnicity, educational level, and family income.

Marital status

Grade-school-age children of married parents were more likely to receive care by the other parent (20 percent) than were children of single parents, while children of unmarried parents were most likely to have grandparents as their principal source of relative care (see Table 11). Children of married parents were also more likely to participate in enrichment activities (42 percent) compared with those of previously- or never-married parents (38 percent and 22 percent, respectively). Higher proportions of grade-school-age children

of previously-married parents took care of themselves (22 percent) compared with children of married parents (18 percent) or children of never-married parents (8 percent).

Overall, 64 percent of grade-school-age children of never-married parents were in multiple arrangements, a lower proportion than children of previously or currently married parents (about 76 percent). However, children of all three marital status groups experience multiple care arrangements about the same extent (all approximately 78 percent) when parents are at work or at school.

Race and Hispanic origin

Child care use varies by the race and ethnicity of the parent (see Table 11). Similar proportions of grade-school-age children of non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White parents use relative care (both 44 percent), but Hispanics tend to use relative care

Table 10.
Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Child Care Arrangements for Children 5 to 14 Years Old: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to children with one or more arrangements)

Arrangement type	Primary			Secondary			Tertiary		
	Receiving care		Average hours[1]	Receiving care		Average hours[1]	Receiving care		Average hours[1]
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Children in care arrangements during work/school hours	24,311	(NA)	28.3	19,224	(NA)	10.2	9,203	(NA)	4.8
NUMBER USING:									
Relative Care	3,450	14.2	24.9	8,005	41.6	9.9	2,997	32.6	5.3
Designated parent	370	1.5	29.1	689	3.6	10.4	212	2.3	6.3
Other parent	1,827	7.5	23.4	3,066	16.0	10.1	1,012	11.0	5.7
Sibling	523	2.1	20.0	1,976	10.3	8.5	770	8.4	5.0
Grandparent	639	2.6	26.9	1,983	10.3	10.4	931	10.1	4.8
Other relative	219	0.9	28.6	751	3.9	9.9	282	3.1	4.5
Nonrelative Care	1,091	4.5	25.5	2,852	14.8	11.0	669	7.3	5.5
Organized facility	415	1.7	24.9	363	1.9	12.8	79	0.9	(B)
Other care arrangement	688	2.8	25.9	2,502	13.0	10.7	611	6.6	5.2
Other									
School	19,500	80.2	29.6	1,968	10.2	16.7	194	2.1	(B)
Enrichment activities[2]	581	2.4	14.2	4,575	23.8	8.4	2,791	30.3	4.2
Self care	477	2.0	11.7	2,435	12.7	6.6	1,537	16.7	3.8
Children in care arrangements during nonwork/school hours	30,136	(NA)	21.6	12,977	(NA)	5.9	3,397	(NA)	3.2
NUMBER USING:									
Relative Care	3,002	10.0	13.6	3,282	25.3	5.8	1,027	30.2	3.0
Designated parent	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Other parent	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Sibling	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Grandparent	1,683	5.6	12.3	2,100	16.2	5.5	507	14.9	3.0
Other relative	1,425	4.7	14.9	1,305	10.1	6.4	567	16.7	2.8
Nonrelative Care	1,376	4.6	16.5	1,278	9.8	6.4	270	7.9	3.6
Organized facility	670	2.2	19.3	109	0.8	(B)	7	0.2	(B)
Other care arrangement	720	2.4	13.9	1,182	9.1	5.8	264	7.8	3.4
Other									
School	21,787	72.3	25.8	976	7.5	13.8	114	3.4	(B)
Enrichment activities[2]	3,634	12.1	7.3	5,740	44.2	5.0	940	27.7	3.4
Self care	963	3.2	6.2	1,587	12.2	3.7	567	16.7	2.4

B Base too small to show derived statistic. NA Not applicable. X Category not asked for nonwork/school hours.

[1]Average hours based on those reporting using this type of arrangement.
[2]This category consists of organized sports, lessons (such as music, art, dance, language, computer), clubs, and before- or after-school programs located either at school or other places.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, children may appear in more than one arrangement type; thus, the numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

Table 11.
Children 5 to 14 Years Olds Receiving Care by Selected Arrangements and Family Characteristics: Fall 1995

(Number in thousands)

Characteristic of parent/family	Number of children	Percent in selected arrangement							
		Relative care					Other		
		Total[1]	Other parent	Sibling	Grand-parent	Non-relative care[2]	Enrich-ment activity	Self care	Percent in multiple care
Children 5 to 14 years	38,228	42.6	16.0	9.1	17.4	16.8	39.3	18.0	75.1
Marital Status									
Married	26,820	42.5	20.1	8.5	15.6	15.8	41.9	17.9	76.2
Separated, divorced, widowed	7,914	43.2	7.7	11.8	20.3	18.6	38.3	22.4	76.4
Never married	3,495	41.4	3.0	7.5	24.2	19.9	21.8	8.4	63.8
Race and Hispanic Origin									
Non-Hispanic White	25,292	43.5	18.3	9.1	17.8	18.7	44.6	21.1	79.5
Non-Hispanic Black	5,510	43.5	7.5	11.1	20.2	16.1	30.2	12.0	68.8
Non-Hispanic other races	1,497	39.9	14.6	10.2	12.8	15.0	33.8	12.4	71.3
Hispanic (of any race)	5,929	38.4	14.1	7.2	13.7	11.9	26.6	11.8	63.1
Educational Level									
High school or less	20,508	40.7	13.7	8.5	16.9	14.1	30.7	14.7	68.4
College, 1 or more years	17,721	44.7	18.6	9.8	17.9	19.9	49.3	21.8	82.9
Poverty Status[3]									
In poverty	8,609	29.7	6.4	6.7	13.9	11.9	23.7	11.1	54.3
Not in poverty	29,300	46.4	19.0	9.9	18.4	18.3	44.1	20.2	81.5
During Work/School Hours	24,698	51.5	24.7	14.1	15.6	18.4	34.6	20.3	77.8
Marital Status									
Married	17,537	52.5	30.7	13.1	13.4	16.7	35.1	19.9	77.2
Separated, divorced, widowed	5,549	48.1	11.0	16.8	19.3	20.1	36.5	24.3	79.7
Never married	1,612	51.9	6.6	15.9	26.0	30.8	23.5	11.4	78.7
Race and Hispanic Origin									
Non-Hispanic White	17,494	49.6	26.5	13.1	14.3	18.9	37.1	22.6	78.3
Non-Hispanic Black	3,213	54.7	12.9	18.8	21.0	18.2	28.6	15.8	74.1
Non-Hispanic other races	950	55.4	23.0	16.1	15.0	18.0	33.7	15.3	84.8
Hispanic (of any race)	3,041	57.7	27.6	14.1	17.3	16.1	26.9	13.4	77.1
Educational Level									
High school or less	11,346	55.3	24.8	15.3	16.4	17.2	29.2	17.9	76.7
College, 1 or more years	13,351	48.2	24.6	13.0	14.8	19.4	39.2	22.4	78.8
Poverty Status[3]									
In poverty	2,981	51.9	18.4	19.2	15.6	17.2	27.1	15.4	71.1
Not in poverty	21,666	51.5	25.6	13.4	15.6	18.6	35.6	21.0	78.8
During Nonwork/School Hours	38,228	18.0	(X)	(X)	11.5	7.0	27.2	8.5	33.9
Marital Status									
Married	26,820	16.4	(X)	(X)	10.3	6.9	29.9	8.6	35.3
Separated, divorced, widowed	7,914	20.6	(X)	(X)	13.0	6.2	23.0	10.0	29.9
Never married	3,495	24.8	(X)	(X)	17.3	9.5	16.6	4.2	33.2
Race and Hispanic Origin									
Non-Hispanic White	25,292	17.7	(X)	(X)	12.0	7.4	31.0	10.0	37.0
Non-Hispanic Black	5,510	21.1	(X)	(X)	12.9	7.7	21.0	4.3	30.9
Non-Hispanic other races	1,497	15.9	(X)	(X)	8.2	5.2	20.9	5.4	23.8
Hispanic (of any race)	5,929	17.1	(X)	(X)	8.8	5.1	18.8	6.8	26.4
Educational Level									
High school or less	20,508	18.3	(X)	(X)	11.7	5.9	22.0	7.4	31.6
College, 1 or more years	17,721	17.7	(X)	(X)	11.2	8.2	33.3	9.8	36.7
Poverty Status[3]									
In poverty	8,609	16.9	(X)	(X)	10.6	6.6	19.2	7.5	32.5
Not in poverty	29,300	18.2	(X)	(X)	11.8	7.1	29.8	8.9	34.4

X Category not asked for nonwork/school hours.

[1]Total includes care by the designated parent and other relatives not shown separately in this table.

[2]Includes care in an organized facility or by other nonrelatives.

[3]Excludes those with missing income data.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, the total numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

less frequently (38 percent). Use of nonrelative care (organized facility or other nonrelatives) was also similar among non-Hispanic White and Black parents. In addition, children of non-Hispanic White parents were more likely than the other three racial/ethnic groups to participate in enrichment activities (45 percent), while Hispanic children were least likely to participate in enrichment activities (27 percent). Non-Hispanic White children were also more likely to be in a self care situation at some time during the day (21 percent) than either non-Hispanic Black children or Hispanic children (both 12 percent). The cumulative result is that children of non-Hispanic White parents are most likely to use multiple child care arrangements (80 percent), while children of Hispanic parents are least likely to use multiple arrangements (63 percent).

Do the patterns differ when comparing the care used during different times in the parent's schedule? Higher participation in enrichment activities and self care among grade-school-age children of non-Hispanic White parents seen above repeats itself regardless of the parent's activity schedule.

Educational level

Parents with one or more years of college education are more likely than parents with less education to use nonrelative care and have their children participate in enrichment activities. This pattern prevails during and outside the parent's work or study hours (see Table 11). Greater use of care by nonrelatives probably reflects higher income and the ability to purchase such care by parents with higher levels of education.

Family income

Children living in households above the poverty line experienced a wider variety of child care arrangements. Eighty-two percent of grade-school-age children living in nonpoor families were cared for in multiple arrangements, compared with 54 percent of those living in poverty. Compared with grade-school-age children living in poor

Table 12.
Participation in Enrichment Activities Among Children 5 to 14 Years Old: Fall 1995

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic of child/family	Number of children	Participation in enrichment activities									
		Total[1]		Sports		Lessons		Clubs		Before/after—school program	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Children 5 to 14 years[2]	38,228	15,020	39.3	8,545	22.4	6,169	16.1	5,545	14.5	2,132	5.6
Child's Age											
5 to 8 years	15,953	4,535	28.4	2,028	12.7	1,884	11.8	1,759	11.0	1,004	6.3
9 to 11 years	11,368	5,246	46.2	2,827	24.9	2,284	20.1	1,945	17.1	725	6.4
12 to 14 years	10,907	5,239	48.0	3,690	33.8	2,001	18.4	1,841	16.9	402	3.7
Child's Gender											
Female	18,669	7,461	40.0	3,662	19.6	3,719	19.9	2,916	15.6	1,006	5.4
Male	19,559	7,559	38.7	4,884	25.0	2,450	12.5	2,628	13.4	1,125	5.8
Family Poverty Status[3]											
Less than 100 percent of poverty	8,609	2,040	23.7	965	11.2	859	10.0	700	8.1	228	2.6
100 to 199 percent of poverty	9,214	3,030	32.9	1,674	18.2	1,056	11.5	1,065	11.6	394	4.3
200 percent and above poverty	20,085	9,894	49.3	5,882	29.3	4,232	21.1	3,779	18.8	1,501	7.5
Monthly Family Income[3]											
Less than $1,500	9,374	2,246	24.0	1,039	11.1	888	9.5	736	7.9	303	3.2
$1,500 to $2,999	9,817	3,632	37.0	2,073	21.1	1,345	13.7	1,269	12.9	500	5.1
$3,000 to $4,499	7,837	3,388	43.2	1,876	23.9	1,456	18.3	1,337	17.1	391	5.0
$4,500 and over	10,881	5,698	52.4	3,533	32.5	2,478	22.8	2,203	20.3	928	8.5

[1]This category consists of organized sports, lessons (such as music, art, dance, language, computer), clubs, and before- or after-school programs located either at school or other places.
[2]Number of children includes those children for whom no regular arrangement was used.
[3]Excludes those with missing income data.

Note: Because of multiple arrangements, the total numbers and percentages may exceed the total number of children.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

families, higher proportions of children living in nonpoor families use nonrelative care, enrichment activities, and self care.

During the parent's work/school hours, grade-school-age children were cared for by relatives and nonrelatives similarly regardless of the families' poverty status; however, participation in enrichment activities remains higher among children living in nonpoor families (36 percent) than in poor families (27 percent). A similar pattern is seen during the parent's nonwork/school hours.

During the parent's work/school hours, grade-school-age children in nonpoor families are more likely to care for themselves (21 percent) than are children in poor families (15 percent). This difference may arise if a larger proportion of parents of children in nonpoor families work full-time and therefore need child care for longer amounts of time during the day. However, a slightly higher proportion of grade-school-age children living in nonpoor families compared with poor families were in self care during their parent's nonwork/school hours (9 percent and 8 percent, respectively).

Enrichment Activities

Because there is interest in a comprehensive view of the regular weekly experiences of children, greater detail is provided on enrichment activities. For some parents, enrichment activities may be a form of child care. In 1995, 15 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 (39 percent) participated in at least one enrichment activity during the week (see Table 12). The most frequently mentioned enrichment activity for grade-school-age children was sports (22 percent). Similar proportions of grade-school-age children participated in lessons and clubs (16 percent and 15 percent, respectively). A smaller proportion of grade-school-age children participated in before- or after-school programs (6 percent). Overall, 24 percent participated in one activity per week while 15 percent participated in two or more activities.

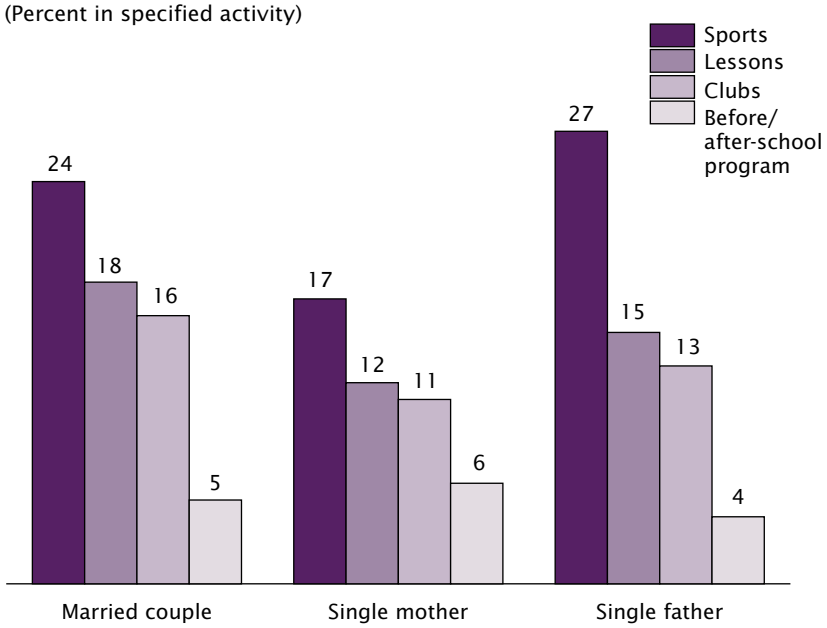
Hours spent in enrichment activities

On average, grade-school-age children spent 8 hours per week in enrichment activities among those who participated in enrichment activities (see Table 9). Although the lowest proportion of children participated in before- or after-school programs, these children spent 10 hours per week doing so, the greatest average number of hours per week in an enrichment activity. Grade-school-age children spent seven hours per week in sports; they spent fewer hours per week in lessons or clubs (four hours and three hours per week, respectively).

Participation in sports activities is almost three times as likely among 12- to 14-year olds (34 percent) than among 5- to 8-year olds (13 percent). Table 12 also shows that 5- to 8-year olds were less likely to participate in lessons or clubs than older grade-school-age children. However, children 5 to 8 years old participated in before- and after-school programs similarly compared with children 9 to 11 years old (both 6 percent). Children 12 to 14 years old were less likely to be enrolled in before- or after-school programs (4 percent).

Girls and boys were about equally likely to participate in at least one enrichment activity, but the type of activity differs. While boys were more likely than girls to participate

Figure 4.
Participation of Children 5 to 14 Years Old in Enrichment Activities by Family Type: Fall 1995
(Percent in specified activity)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

in sports, girls were more likely than boys to participate in lessons or clubs. Similar proportions of both girls and boys were enrolled in before- or after-school programs.

Child's living arrangements

Participation in specific enrichment activities differs by the child's living arrangements. Figure 4 shows that children living with a father in the household, for example a married-couple family or a single father household (both approximately 25 percent), were more likely to participate in sports than children living with a single mother (17 percent). A higher proportion of children living in a married-couple family participated in lessons (18 percent) than children living with a single mother (12 percent). Similarly, participation in clubs is higher among children living in married-couple families than among children living in single-mother families (16 percent and 10 percent, respectively). Enrichment activities, which may involve expenses to families, may be least affordable by single mothers. Participation in before- or after-school programs, which are more likely to be of low cost or free as part of the school curricula, did not differ significantly by the child's living arrangements.

Enrichment activities may be costly in terms of money and time to transport children to and from the site. Table 12 shows that children living in families with a monthly income of $4,500 or more were more than twice as likely to participate in enrichment activities than were children living in families with a monthly income of under $1,500 (52 percent and 24 percent, respectively). These differences by income persist regardless of the type of activity.

In addition, the number of enrichment activities in which a child participates differs by the income level of the family. Half of the children living in families at or above 200 percent of the poverty line participated in at least one enrichment activity, while one quarter of the children living below the poverty line did so. In sum, children from economically advantaged families are more likely to be exposed to activities that would assist their development and transition to adulthood than children in families with fewer economic resources.

Self Care

Self care can be an important part of the natural process of independence, allowing children structured opportunities for successful transitions to adulthood. While some children may encounter self care in a safe environment, with neighbors and parents checking in periodically, other children may experience self care in a less structured and unsafe environment. Parents base their decisions to allow their children to care for themselves on a number of factors including the age and maturity level of the child, the environment in which the child will be in self care, the financial resources and parental time available to provide alternative care arrangements, and the perceived risks associated with self care.

Estimates of self care

In 1995, 6.9 million (18 percent) of the 38.2 million children 5 to 14 years old were reported to be in self care on a regular basis (see Table 13). The majority of these children were of middle-school age, 12 to 14 years old (65 percent). An upward trend exists in the use of self care by the age of the child, from 2 percent among 5 year olds to 48 percent among 14 year olds (see Figure 5). Grade-school-age children are separated into two groups depending on the generally accepted age cut-offs for elementary and middle school: roughly 9 percent of children 5 to 11 and 41 percent of children 12 to 14 were in self care.

Because being in school is considered a child care arrangement, self care is not a prevalent primary care arrangement for grade-school-age children — 1 percent of children 5 to 11 and 7 percent of children 12 to 14 years old (see Table 13). However, use of self care as a secondary or tertiary arrangement is more prevalent, especially among older children. Among children 12 to 14 years old who have two or more arrangements, 24 percent were in self care as their secondary arrangement. Among children with three or more arrangements, 23 percent were in self care as their tertiary arrangement. Self care is a less prominent supplemental arrangement for children 5 to 11, with 4 percent in self care as a secondary arrangement and 6 percent as a tertiary arrangement.

On average, children 5 to 14 years old in self care spent six hours per week doing so. Fifty percent spent less than five hours per week in self care, while only 13 percent spent more than 10 hours per week in self care. Children 12 to 14 years old spent an average of 2.4 hours more per week in self care than children 5 to 11 years old and were more than twice as likely to spend more than 10 hours per week in self care than those aged 5 to 11 (16 percent and 7 percent, respectively).

Historical trends in self care: 1990 to 1995

According to the 1990 National Child Care Survey, 12 percent (3.4 million) of children 5 to 12 years old were in self care. SIPP data for 1995 also indicate that 12 percent (3.7 million) of children 5 to 12 years old were in self care.[19] Similar percentages of self care in 1990 and 1995 likely reflect stable labor force participation rates of mothers during this time. For example, 76 percent of mothers with their youngest child between 6 and 17 years old were in the labor force in 1995, up only one percentage point from 1990.[20]

Parental time

Research indicates that the amount of time a child will be in self care is associated with the amount of parental time available to care for children, which in turn, depends on family structure and labor force participation.[21] In 1995, grade-school-age children living in a single-parent household were not significantly more likely to be in self care than children living in a two-parent family (18 percent each). However, when the sex of the single parent is considered, large differences emerge. Figure 6 shows that grade-school-age children living with a single father were more likely to be in self care than children living with a single mother (31 percent and 17 percent, respectively). This relationship persists for 12- to 14-year olds.

Patterns of self care use also vary by the labor force participation of the parent. Grade-school-age children of parents who were employed were more than twice as likely to be in self care than those whose parent was not employed: 25 percent of children ages 5 to 14 whose parent worked full-time and 21 percent of children whose parent worked part-time were in self

Table 13.
Prevalence of Self Care Among Grade-School-Age Children: Fall 1995

Characteristic	Child's age in years		
	5 to 14	5 to 11	12 to 14
Total number of children (in thousands)	38,228	27,321	10,907
Number in self care (in thousands)	6,880	2,433	4,446
Percent in self care	18.0	8.9	40.8
PERCENT IN SELF CARE:[1]			
Type of Arrangement[2]			
Percent using self care as:			
Primary arrangement	2.6	0.8	6.9
Secondary arrangement	9.8	4.0	24.0
Tertiary arrangement	11.0	6.0	22.6
Employment Schedule and Marital Status			
Married couple	17.9	8.6	41.0
Both employed	24.2	12.1	50.8
One employed	9.6	4.1	26.3
Neither employed	4.9	3.0	8.9
Single parent	18.1	9.7	40.2
Employed	25.1	13.0	52.8
Not employed	8.0	5.0	17.7
Poverty Status			
Less than 100 percent of poverty	11.1	6.4	24.5
100 to 199 percent of poverty	15.8	7.8	38.3
200 percent and above poverty	22.2	10.7	48.1
Enrichment Activities			
Participated in any activity	26.1	13.8	49.0
Did not participate in an activity	12.7	6.2	33.1
Child Care Arrangements			
Received care by relatives	17.7	10.4	41.4
Did not receive care by relatives	18.2	7.7	40.4
Received care by nonrelatives	17.6	9.0	40.8
Did not receive care by nonrelatives	25.2	6.4	40.8
HOURS PER WEEK:[3]			
Average hours per week	6.1	4.5	6.9
Number of Hours per Week (percent distribution)			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 2 hours	24.1	36.1	17.5
2 to 4.9 hours	26.1	25.3	26.5
5 to 10 hours	36.8	31.5	39.7
More than 10 hours per week	13.1	7.2	16.4

[1]Percent of children with specified characteristic in self-care arrangements.
[2]Primary includes children with one or more arrangements; secondary includes children with two or more arrangements; tertiary includes children with three or more arrangements.
[3]Average hours and distribution based only on those children in self care arrangements.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

[19] The 1990 National Child Care Survey (NCCS) was a national sample and the construction of the questions on self care in the 1995 SIPP and the 1990 NCCS are similar and permit useful comparison across these surveys.

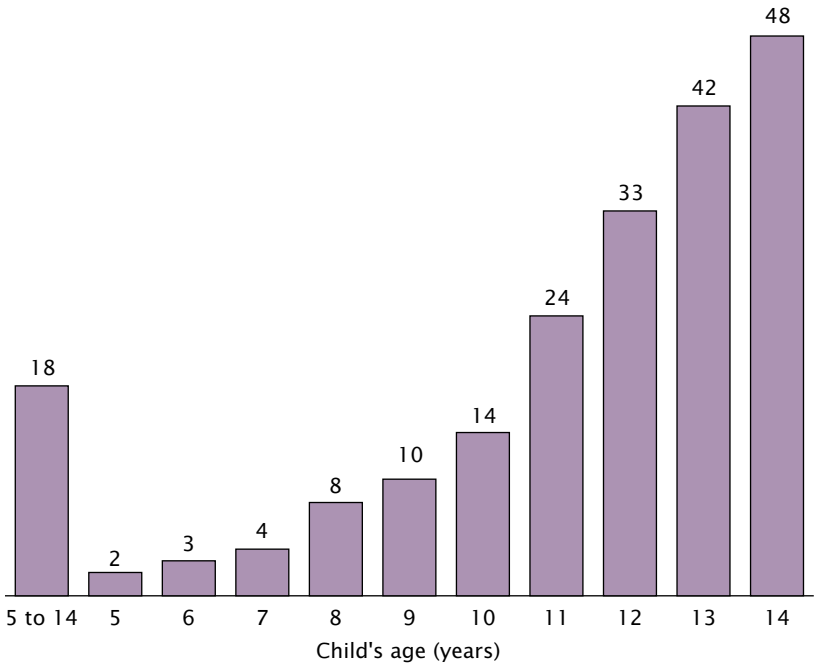
[20] Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Employment Status of Women by Presence and Age of Youngest Child, March 1975-98." Information provided by the Labor Force and Women Branch, August, 1999.

[21] Virginia Cain and Sandra Hofferth. "Parental Choice of Self-care for School-age Children." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 51(1994):65-77; Harriet Presser. "Can We Make Time for Children? The Economy, Work Schedules, and Child Care." *Demography*. 26(1989):523-543; Kristin Smith and Lynne Casper. "Home Alone: Reasons Parents Leave Their Children Unsupervised." Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America. New York, NY, March 1999.

Figure 5.

Grade-School-Age Children in Self Care: Fall 1995

(Percent in self care)

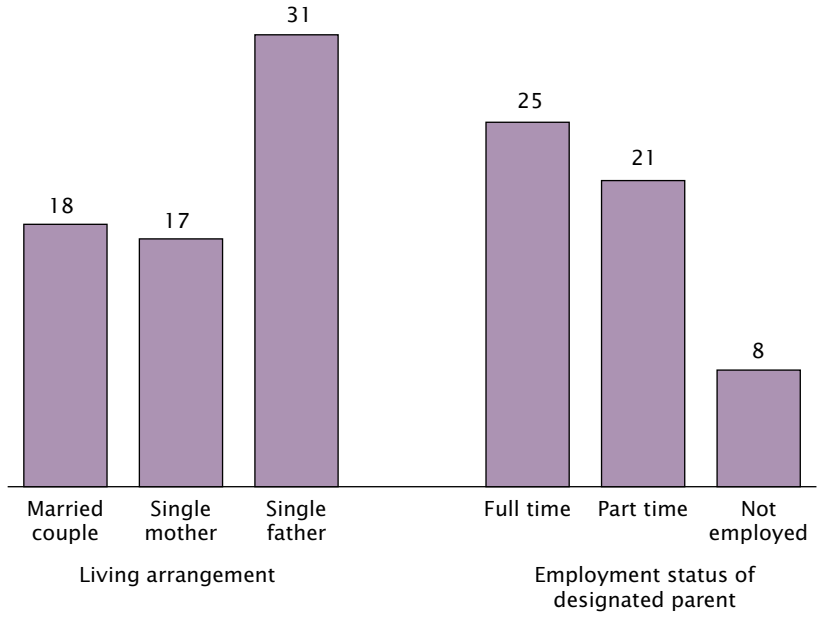


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

Figure 6.

Grade-School-Age Children in Self Care by Selected Family Characteristics: Fall 1995

(Percent in self care)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

care compared with only 8 percent of children of nonemployed parents (see Figure 6). This pattern holds true for children ages 12 to 14 years old.

It is important to simultaneously consider the marital and employment statuses of the parents when examining the prevalence of self care. Table 13 shows that the prevalence of self care was comparable among children of dual earner married-couple families and single working parents (24 percent and 25 percent, respectively). Use of self care was greatly reduced among children living in a married-couple family where one or neither of the parents worked, and in single-parent families where the parent did not work. This suggests that families with less time (married couples who are both employed or single parents who work) are more likely to have children who are in self care.

Due to the strong and significant correlation between parent's employment status and self care, changes in mothers' labor force participation (due to welfare reform for example) may be associated with changes in the proportion of children in self care, especially if affordable child care is not concurrently available.

Family income

Children in self care were more likely to live in families with higher average monthly family incomes than the overall population of children. For example, the average monthly income of families with children 5 to 11 years old in self care was $4,512, whereas the average monthly family income of children not in self care was $3,664. The same pattern exists for children 12 to 14 years old. Table 13 shows that self care is more

prevalent among more economically advantaged families. In 1995, 11 percent of children living in poverty, 16 percent of children living just above the poverty line (between 100 and 199 percent of poverty), and 22 percent of children living at or above 200 percent of the poverty line were in self care. Since families with higher incomes are likely to have both parents working, some of the income correlation with self care is likely to be related to employment rather than the income.[22] In addition, families with higher incomes tend to live in safer neighborhoods and parents may be more comfortable with self care.

[22] In recent research by Smith and Casper, "Home Alone: Reasons Parents Leave Their Children Unsupervised" (1999) where socioeconomic, demographic, and neighborhood variables were considered simultaneously in a multi-variate logistic regression model, the income level of the family was not a statistically significant predictor variable of self care.

Enrichment activities

Children who participated in enrichment activities were more likely to be in self care than those who did not. While 49 percent of children 12 to 14 years old who participated in enrichment activities spent some part of their day in self care, a much smaller proportion (33 percent) of children 12 to 14 years old who did not participate in enrichment activities were in self care. A similar relationship also exists for children 5 to 11 years old. This pattern may occur because parents see these activities as building more confidence and responsibility in their children or because the time that would be spent in self care is significantly shorter.

FAMILY EXPENDITURES ON CHILD CARE FOR ALL CHILDREN UNDER 15 YEARS OLD

Family Payments for Child Care

Of the 19.9 million employed women with children under 15 years of age in the fall of 1995, 41 percent (8.1 million) reported they made a cash payment for child care for at least one of their children, the highest percentage recorded since 1985, with the possible exception of 1988 (see Table 14). In 1995, a family paid an average of $85 per week for child care.

Table 14.
Weekly Child Care Payments by Families With Employed Mothers for Selected Periods: 1984 to 1995

(Numbers in thousands. Excludes people with no report of family income in the last 4 months)

Period	Number of mothers	Making payments		Weekly child care payments				Income spent on child care per month	
				Actual dollars		1995 dollars			
		Number	Percent	Average[1]	Standard error	Average[1]	Standard error	Percent[2]	Standard error
Sept. to Dec. 1995	19,907	8,065	40.5	85.0	3.3	85.0	3.3	7.4	0.2
Monthly family income									
Less than $1,500	2,657	990	37.2	71.1	10.6	71.1	10.6	30.6	22.7
$1,500 to $2,999	5,181	1,866	36.0	69.5	5.7	69.5	5.7	12.8	6.9
$3,000 to $4,499	4,787	1,885	39.4	79.8	5.4	79.8	5.4	9.4	5.0
$4,500 and over	7,282	3,225	45.7	100.7	5.8	100.7	5.8	5.2	0.1
Below poverty level	1,734	570	32.9	75.3	15.6	75.3	15.6	34.8	8.7
Above poverty level	18,173	7,496	41.2	85.7	3.4	85.7	3.4	7.0	0.2
100 to 199 percent of poverty	4,278	1,459	34.1	75.0	7.8	75.0	7.8	16.9	7.4
200 percent and above poverty	13,894	6,037	43.4	88.3	3.7	88.3	3.7	6.2	0.1
Sept. to Dec. 1993	19,798	6,987	35.3	70.0	1.1	73.8	1.2	7.3	0.3
Sept. to Dec. 1991	19,180	6,616	34.5	63.3	2.4	70.6	2.7	7.1	0.3
Sept. to Dec. 1990	18,938	7,202	38.0	59.7	1.3	68.7	1.5	6.9	0.2
Sept. to Dec. 1988	18,843	7,520	39.9	54.0	1.2	69.0	1.5	6.8	0.2
Sept. to Dec. 1987	18,501	6,168	33.3	48.5	1.8	64.6	2.4	6.6	0.3
Sept. to Dec. 1986	18,305	5,742	31.4	44.3	1.4	61.6	1.9	6.3	0.3
Dec. 1984 to March 1985	15,706	5,299	33.7	40.3	1.1	58.5	1.3	(NA)	(NA)

NA Not available (not tablulated for this survey).

[1]Average expenditures per week among people making child care payments.
[2]Percent is a ratio of average monthly child care payments (prorated from weekly averages) to average monthly income.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1993 Panel Wave 9.

In constant 1995 dollars, child care costs increased from $59 in the winter of 1985 to $85 in the fall of 1995, an increase of 44 percent. In addition, families are spending a greater portion of their family income on child care per month. The proportion of family income spent on child care increased from 6 percent in 1986 to 7 percent in 1995.[23]

In 1995, relatively fewer poor than nonpoor families paid for child care (33 percent compared with 41 percent). Poor families paid about the same amount per week for child care as nonpoor families ($75 compared with $86). However, larger variations in the cost of child care exist when one considers the broader income distribution. For example, those with monthly family incomes under $1,500 (approximately $18,000 annually) paid an average of $71 per week, while those with monthly family incomes of $4,500 or more (approximately $54,000 or more annually) paid $101 per week.

Income Spent on Child Care

In 1995, poor families who paid for care spent five times more of their budget than nonpoor families on child care (35 percent compared with 7 percent). This large gap in the proportion of income paid for child care by poverty status has persisted over the period 1987 to 1995.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

The estimates in this report come from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), collected in the fall of 1995 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data highlighted in this report come primarily from the child care topical module of the 1993, Wave 9 SIPP panel. The SIPP is a nationally representative longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals by the Census Bureau. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics, such as child care, is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The SIPP employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to under coverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact Reid Rottach, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, at 301-457-4228 or on the Internet at reid.a.rottach@census.gov.

MORE INFORMATION

The report is available on the Internet (www.census.gov); search for children's data by clicking on the "Subjects A-Z" button and selecting "child care" under "C." A detailed table package presenting more in-depth child care information for both preschool- and grade-school-age children is also on the Internet, as well as more information on child care. Future child care reports will focus on the costs of child care.

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USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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pop@census.gov

SUGGESTED CITATION

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[23] Family income data are not tabulated for 1985 from the SIPP.