



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 22, NO. 9, SECTION 1

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APRIL, 1989

The Child Care and Career Dilemmas

Danger From Daycare Diseases

The extravagant publicity given to a very few scandalous cases of physical or sexual abuse of children in daycare centers has obscured the more important danger in store for the majority of children who are placed there. It is "daycaritis" or daycare disease, an ailment that can be any of the many contagious diseases which infants and babies catch so easily from other children.

Historically, infants have been cared for in the home. They need this relative isolation from disease. They should not have to face the big, bad world of disease until their naturally immuno-deficient systems have had a chance to develop some immunity to infectious agents.

A baby in the home is subject to diseases brought home by an older sibling, but these diseases usually come one at a time, and a new infectious agent isn't attacking every day in the year, as is the case in a daycare center. I still shudder when I remember having five children, including one three-month-old infant, with chickenpox at the same time; but that trauma did finally pass, it was not a week-in-week-out occurrence.

Dr. Reed Bell, a Pensacola pediatrician who spoke at a January 1989 child care conference held in Washington, says that "children in daycare, especially infants and toddlers, are at increased risk for acquiring and spreading infectious diseases, compared to children not in daycare." He says they have more respiratory, gastro-intestinal, skin and epidemic childhood infections, and are at a higher risk for serious secondary infections such as meningitis, than are children in home care.

Dr. Bell also says that children in daycare have infectious diseases more often, they are more severe, and they have more complications, than children in home care. Dr. Bell listed a whole catalogue of illnesses that are prevalent in daycare centers. Daycare children are especially at risk for secondary bacterial complications such as ear infections, sore throats, tonsillitis, laryngitis, and pneumonia, as well as for invasive blood-borne infections. He told how daycare settings are responsible for community outbreaks of hepatitis.

While most daycare centers do not admit sick children, and in many cases it is against the law to drop off a sick child at the daycare center, the unpredictability of children getting ill

comes into conflict with the perceived need of the parent to report to her job.

The result is a practice known in the daycare industry as "masking." This means that the mother gives the child aspirin or tylenol to mask the child's fever and other symptoms so that the unsuspecting caregivers at the center will not detect the illness of the child until the mother has put in several hours of work on the job and perhaps can get credit for a day's work before the fever returns to the child.

The *Pediatric Infectious Diseases Journal* last year reported that "the data are now convincing that half of children younger than age 3 years who are cared for in group daycare with more than 50 children are likely to acquire CMV." CMV stands for the very common virus Cytomegalovirus, which the magazine article defines as "a complex and poorly understood chronic infection" that is easily passed from one to another by all body fluids, including saliva, urine, tears, semen, and cervical secretions.

The transmission of infection through body fluids is an ordinary daily fact of life in daycare centers, where babies are wetting and soiling their diapers, putting hands and objects in their mouths, and sneezing and coughing. Scrupulously sanitary conditions have only a marginal effect in preventing the spread of viral infection.

CMV is not only a hazard to the babies, but even more so to the mothers who take the babies home at night. This poses a specific danger to pregnant women because CMV is known to invade the womb very easily and can cause deformities in the unborn baby during the first half of pregnancy.

The mothers of babies in daycare are usually women of child-bearing age and frequently do get pregnant again. This same medical journal states that about 40 percent of mothers infected with CMV during pregnancy pass the virus to their fetus, and "between 10 and 20 percent of infected infants whose mothers acquired a primary infection in the first half of pregnancy develop significant sequelae" (an abnormal condition resulting from a previous disease).

These "sequelae," or abnormalities, in the unborn baby range from hearing loss to severe mental retardation. There is no way to guard against them because, as the journal says, we do not know how to prevent CMV transmission from the daycare child to his mother, and *in utero* diagnosis for CMV

infection or disease is not available.

The medical journal concluded that "hundreds of thousands of women will acquire primary CMV infection as a result of group daycare," and therefore "it is important to understand the effect of group daycare on the transmission of CMV." Indeed it is but, funny thing, we don't read about this problem in any of the literature or television specials promoting universal daycare funded by the U.S. taxpayers.

A Child's Place Is In the Home

More and more research is piling up to indicate that a young child's place is in the home and there is no adequate substitute for the bonding and attachment that take place between a child and his mother. A secure attachment in infancy provides the basis for self-reliance, self-regulation, and ultimately the capacity for independence combined with the ability to develop mature adult relationships.

"The primary goal of parenting should be to give a child a lifelong sense of security — a secure base from which he can explore the world, and to which he can return, knowing he will be welcomed, nourished, comforted and reassured," according to child psychologist John Bowlby of London's Tavistock Clinic. Bowlby is one of many psychologists who emphasize the importance of what is called the "attachment theory." The child's ability to establish intimate emotional bonds throughout life, as well as his mental health and effective functioning, depend on the strength and quality of his attachment to his parents, particularly his physical and emotional contact with his mother.

Research by Mary Ainsworth at the University of Virginia, Mary Main at the University of California, and Alan Sroufe at the University of Minnesota has consistently shown that the pattern of attachment developed in infancy and early childhood is profoundly influenced by the mother's ready availability, her sensitivity to her child's signals, and her responsiveness to his need for comfort and protection.

When a child is confident that his mother is available, responsive and helpful, he develops a pattern of secure attachment. Extensive research shows how patterns of attachment that have been developed by 12 months of age are not only highly indicative of how the child will act in nursery school, but how he will act as an adolescent, as a young adult, and as a parent.

While the scientific and medical evidence shows the importance of a mother's consistent and ready availability, it does not show the need of a perfect mother. Pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, who was as influential in England as Dr. Benjamin Spock was in America, showed that the conditions for secure attachment are fulfilled with what he called "good-enough mothering" and "holding" the child.

Winnicott said that adequate "holding" of a baby is indispensable to emotional development and essential for developing the child's capacity for empathy. The child should experience his mother as a "good and happy" person, and should also know that his mother sees her infant as a "good and happy" person. Later, the child internalizes and draws on these images to comfort himself when the mother is not present. These same images are a reservoir from which the child can draw as he comforts others in his adult life.

Pennsylvania State University psychologist Jay Belsky (a former advocate of daycare) has concluded that recent research reveals that infant daycare is "a risk factor for the development of insecure infant-parent attachment, non-compliance and aggression." Fifty percent of the daycare children he studied developed insecure attachments to their mothers and a wide range of negative behaviors.

Of course all children's behavior problems cannot be blamed on daycare. Belsky describes what he called the "ecology" of daycare, by which he means the child's total environment including the mother's and father's emotional attitudes and skills, the family's socio-economic circumstances, and the behavior of the mother upon reunion with the child.

Recent research by other scholars confirms that the greatest risks in non-maternal care come from the failure of mother-infant attachment which results from frequent and prolonged separations. Daycare infants are more likely to cry, more likely to be troublemakers, more likely to withdraw and be loners, more easily influenced by their peers, less cooperative with adults, and less likely to pursue tasks to completion. While it would be wrong to conclude that daycare harms all children, it clearly adds a significant level of extra distress and conflict to the all-important infant-mother-father relationship.

Mommy Tracks and Sequential Careers

An article in the *Harvard Business Review* of January-February 1989, written by a credentialed career woman, Felice Schwartz, argues that corporations should offer their management-level female executives a "Mommy track" instead of foolishly expecting them to perform like men with 100 percent commitment to their careers. This heretical proposal has upset the feminists like the little boy's assertion that the emperor has no clothes. Congresswoman Pat Schroeder denounced it as "tragic" and other feminist spokesmen are keeping their word processors hot by writing angry letters.

Ms. Schwartz comes from a feminist perspective. She admits that some women are "career primary" and says they should have every opportunity to rise to the top, in competition with men. But this decision, she points out, "requires that they remain single or at least childless or, if they do have children, that they be satisfied to have others raise them."

Ms. Schwartz argues that the majority of women are "career- and-family women" who could be induced to stay on the job if the company would offer part-time work, flexible hours, job-sharing, and a Mommy track with lower pay and reduced rates of advancement. She says that "most career- and-family women are entirely willing to make that trade-off." She says this would be smart business for corporations because it would enable them to keep talented mothers on the job and eventually realize their investment in them.

Meanwhile, the *American Medical News* has just published an article called "Medicine + Motherhood" featuring authentic accounts of women doctors who successfully and happily had "sequential careers." The article gave example after example of women who raised their children first and then went to medical school, or had their babies immediately after graduation or residency training, dropped out for 10 to 20 years, and then started a medical career.

No, they didn't earn as much money as some full-time career-primary doctors. But most sequential physicians earn more than \$50,000 and some more than \$70,000.

The article described the lifetime satisfaction enjoyed by these sequential women. They made comments such as, "I have had the best of both worlds of parenthood and a medical career. . . . The time I spent with my wonderful daughters is worth every minute of the 10-year delay. . . . I would advise my daughters to have children early and pursue a professional career later."

Now that even the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have conceded that we are in the "post-feminist" era, it's time to shed some of feminism's silliness and bias against motherhood and recognize that, despite all the media propaganda and peer pressure on young women to become career-primary just like men, that's not what the majority of women want, especially if they are past 30.

Whether women want to be career-primary and childless, or mothers and then career women sequentially, or part-time mother/part-time careerist, is a personal choice. It's a choice that should be allowed by our laws and business practices, not be restricted by laws that require a mindless gender-neutrality.

Unfortunately, the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the proposals for federally-mandated parental leave and daycare for employed mothers, are incentives to push new mothers back into the workforce a few weeks after delivering a baby, where they rejoin the fast-track of competition against career-primary men and women. Mothers deserve other options, and a frank debate about the Mommy track could start making them available.

The Right To Work At Home

President George Bush works at home (as has every President since James Madison moved into the White House). No wonder he looks so relaxed, as did Ronald Reagan before him. Our Presidents don't have to cope with getting to and from work during rush hour, as do most Americans.

About 13 percent of currently employed Americans work at home, and we enjoy many advantages over those who travel daily to another workplace. We heave a sigh of relief every morning when we hear the helicopter traffic report about cars moving bumper-to-bumper at 20 miles an hour. We don't have to worry about auto accidents or street muggings on the way to and from a job. We don't need money to buy lunch or special clothes to wear on the job. If we have small children or disabled dependents, we do not have to hire special care-providers because we can tend to those duties simultaneously while working at home.

So what's the big deal? It's a free choice, isn't it — to take a job or work at home? Not exactly, because whether or not you have that choice depends on what kind of work you do, and the criteria are so silly that reasonable people can hardly believe them. I work at a word processor so nobody interferes with me — yet. But some women who do other kinds of work have discovered that Big Brother wants to stop them from working at home.

The homework issue is a women's issue because it disproportionately affects women. A much larger percentage of women than men prefer to work at home for a variety of

reasons: to combine paid work with care of preschool children or other dependents, a personal disability, to fit a more flexible schedule, to facilitate part-time work, lack of transportation, to continue as a one-car family, or because they live in rural or isolated areas.

Those who follow societal megatrends predict that the new technology mushrooming everywhere will be a great liberator that can make it possible for multi-millions of women to choose their own working conditions in the home rather than be tied to certain hours in an office or factory. Experts predict that as much as 20 percent of the workforce will be able to work in the home before the end of this century. This could be the answer to the employment problem of mothers of small children, almost half of whom are now in the paid labor force.

The unions are upset about the prospect of millions of women working at home. Sol Chaiken of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union said, "If supporters of homework claim that it is necessary to enable mothers to keep their children safely supervised during the day, I would instead encourage them to put their energies to use in establishing a system of high quality, inexpensive day care centers." But that's exactly what these mothers have achieved when they work at home: high-quality, inexpensive care for their children, provided with loving constancy by their own mothers. They don't need to look elsewhere for what they already have.

The real reason Mr. Chaiken doesn't like homework is that the women are independent entrepreneurs who don't need unions. They can set their own hours, decide the quality of their own work environment, and work as much or as little as they please. They don't have to put up with bossy supervisors or disagreeable fellow-workers, and they don't have to pay transportation costs to get to a job across town.

Bureau of Labor Statistics figures say that 18 million people do some work at home, half of whom work at least eight hours per week in their homes. Three million of these are operating a home-based non-farm business, and 42 percent of these are women.

However, of those who work entirely at home, 71 percent are women. The number of women who work entirely at home is probably much higher than the reported 777,000 because so many are reluctant to admit they have home-based businesses for fear of running afoul of various restrictions.

The National Center for Policy Analysis of Dallas reports that legal barriers faced by home-workers are often complex, contradictory, arbitrary, and unclear; the cost of complying is excessive; the penalties for non-compliance are severe.

A survey made by the American Policy Association of Chicago found that 90 percent of 1,000 cities surveyed have some restrictions on home-based work. Restrictions range from requiring a special permit, to licensing or zoning regulations, to a requirement to appear before public hearings. The patchwork quilt of local restrictions on home-based work includes the following: 46 percent of the cities have restrictions on traffic, 42 percent have restrictions on outside signs, 33 percent have restrictions on on-street parking, 33 percent have restrictions on the employment of workers, 20 percent have restrictions on the amount of floor space used, 13 percent have restrictions on sales, and 11 percent have a prohibition on outside storage of materials.

Many of the restrictions were put on the law books years ago, when the purpose was to prevent the noise and dirt of manufacturing from infringing on the property rights of others in the neighborhood. These restrictions have no relevance to the quiet and clean work which people want to do in their homes in the Information and Computer Age.

Home-based work is a women's issue because 80 percent of employed women will have a baby, and most want flexibility in their employment in order to meet the needs of their family. Women should have the option to do income-producing work in the home without the costs and harassments of outmoded laws written for a long-gone era.

The Politics of Daycare

When President George Bush delivered his Budget Message to Congress on February 9, 1989 the conservative, pro-family approach to child care came of age. With striking clarity, he said: "I support a new child care tax credit . . . without discriminating against mothers who stay at home."

The child care tax credit is the plan that is fair to both employed mothers and homemaker mothers. As President Bush pointed out, the overwhelming majority of employed mothers use daycare by relatives and neighbors, churches and community groups, and families who choose these options should be just as eligible for tax-credit help as those who choose institutional care.

With his proposal, President Bush seized the initiative on the child care issue and shot an arrow into the Achilles' heel of the coalition of interest groups which has promoted federally financed and federally regulated daycare for the past year. There are four separate segments to this coalition, and each supports daycare for its own purposes.

The first leg in this four-legged coalition is the feminists. Their ideology has taught them for years that society's expectation that mothers take care of their own children is unfair, degrading, and oppressive to women. They think this is what makes women second-class citizens, makes wives a servant class, and impedes women's opportunity to participate full-time in the paid labor force and thereby achieve economic equality with men.

Feminist spokesmen and activists have taught young women to expect men to share equally in changing diapers and other child-tending duties. Since their rising expectations of changing human nature remain unfulfilled, the feminists argue that government must provide daycare for all children outside the home in order for women to have full equality with men in the workplace.

The notion of universal federal daycare did not originate with the feminists but with the so-called social engineers who used the 1970 White House Conference on Children to recommend that "federally-supported public education be made available for children at age three."

That conference explained in its final report: "Daycare is a powerful institution. A daycare program that ministers to a child from six months to six years of age has over 8,000 hours to teach him values, fears, beliefs, and behaviors." The federal legislative proposal designed to implement that report was the 1971 Comprehensive Child Development bill sponsored by Senator Walter Mondale (D-MN) and Rep. John Brademas

(D-IN), which called for a \$2 billion network of federal daycare institutions.

That bill passed Congress but was vetoed by President Richard Nixon, who called it a "radical piece of legislation" and "a long leap into the dark." He said it would "lead toward altering the family relationship."

The chief ideologue of these child developmentalists is Edward F. Zigler of Yale University who testified on February 9 in behalf of a new bill sponsored by Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D-CA), which is really a reincarnation of the old discredited Mondale-Brademas bill. Zigler urged spending tens of billions of dollars a year to establish a federal network of daycare for all children headquartered in the public schools.

Zigler called for a "comprehensive school-based child care" network as an integrated system that would be "part of the very structure of society." He eagerly looks forward to the day when America will have 26 million children in some type of paid daycare.

The third component of the new daycare coalition is the liberal Democrats, who have been following a campaign strategy laid out during their retreat at the Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, in January 1988. Their game plan is to use "kids as politics" to try to reclaim the family issues that the liberals lost to the Republicans during the Reagan years. They think they can do that by taking over the baby-sitting of preschool children.

The fourth factor in the new daycare coalition is the social service professionals. This is the vast army of tax-salaried people who would like to expand their ranks, their pay, and their turf by taking over more social problems that require more care and more counseling, more staff and more funds.

This formidable, four-pronged coalition is loudly demanding a gigantic federal baby-sitting bureaucracy and apparatus. But it is unlikely that the liberals will be able to sell their risky and high-priced product because the American people don't want the feds to take over the raising of our children.

Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund

sponsored two major conferences on Child Care: in September 1988 in St. Louis and in Washington, D.C., in January 1989. The 18 addresses by national experts are being published this month under the title *Who Will Rock the Cradle?* (\$14.95). Eagle Forum is a national organization of volunteers who participate in public policymaking at the national, state and local levels. Its president, Phyllis Schlafly, is an attorney, author of 13 books, syndicated columnist and radio commentator.

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Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by The Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002. Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois. Postmaster: Address Corrections should be sent to the Phyllis Schlafly Report, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Subscription Price: \$15 per year. Extra copies available: 50 cents each; 4 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.