

CALIFORNIA CHILD CARE
FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:
THE GOVERNOR'S CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

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February 1985

G084229

I.
INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

The principal purposes of this study are to document current patterns of child care usage by California households, as well as to report the attitudes of the state's parents toward the forms of care they use and those they might wish to use.

For this study, "children" are considered to be all children under age 14. "Child care" is defined as any means by which children are looked after (or look after themselves) for any period of time. Child care arrangements may be as formal and structured as center-based care in a professional day care facility or as informal as "self care" (where the child is at home alone and is completely unsupervised).

The focus of this study is thus all modes of child care which Californians use or would like to use. The survey is not intended to assess any additional training or educational programs beyond the minimum health and safety protections provided by adult supervision--though an attempt is made to quantify the incidence of reported "special care needs."

2. Method and Scope

A total of 1,243 eligible California households (those with at least one child under age 14) were surveyed by telephone during the period November 10, 1984 to January 8, 1985. To obtain interviews with parents meeting these qualifications, over 17,000 telephone calls were made. Those who answered the telephone were screened to determine if they were the person, or one of the persons, responsible for the child care arrangements of the household. Interviews were conducted only with individuals who reported that they held (or shared) this role in the household. Because more women than men asserted that they fulfill this function, our survey of child care in California households includes more female than male respondents.

Respondents were also asked whether other languages besides English were spoken in the household. Those who indicated that Spanish was spoken were asked whether they felt able to conduct the interview in English. Where respondents preferred or required the interview to be conducted in Spanish, a Spanish-speaking interviewer was summoned, or an appointment was made to conduct a Spanish interview at a specified future time. (In all, 100 interviews with Hispanic respondents were conducted in Spanish.)

The table below indicates the racial and also the Hispanic, non-Hispanic ethnic composition of the survey sample. For purposes of comparison, the latest available Census Bureau population data for California households with children under age 14 are also depicted. The final weighted survey sample is thus a very close approximation of the Census Bureau's actual estimate of the racial and Hispanic, non-Hispanic distribution of households in the state of California.

RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN OF CALIFORNIA HOUSEHOLDS
WITH AT LEAST ONE CHILD 13 OR YOUNGER

	<u>Weighted Gallup Sample</u>	<u>March 1984 Census Current Population Study</u>
	%	%
White	82.1	82.9
Non-white	17.6	17.1
Hispanic*	28.6	29.1
Non-Hispanic	71.4	70.9

* In the tabulations of the Gallup data, "whites" refers to "non-Hispanic whites," "blacks" refers to "non-Hispanic blacks," etc. Therefore, the racial distribution in the tabulations will not match the above racial distribution.

Because the characteristics of respondents in a survey sample usually vary slightly from those of the total relevant population, a process of "weighting" is routinely used in survey analysis to

balance the characteristics of sample respondents with those of the larger group from which they are drawn. In this study, samples were weighted to adjust for the underrepresentation of Hispanic households with unlisted telephone numbers, and to balance the demographic characteristics of all respondents to correspond closely to those reported for such households in the latest available Census Bureau data. (Further detailed description of weighting procedures is included in the technical appendix to this report.)

It should be borne in mind that all survey research findings are subject to the phenomenon of sampling error. The magnitude of associated sampling error tolerance is in turn dependent on the size of the specific sample group on which observations and findings are based. In this report, findings based on the entire unweighted sample of 1,243 households may be assumed to be subject to a sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points. In simple terms, this means that there is a 95% probability that the reported frequency of a given response is within three percentage points (in either direction) of the frequency that would be obtained if all California households with the defined characteristics were interviewed on this same question.

For a number of items in the survey, questions were asked only of that portion of the total sample for which the question was pertinent--for example, satisfaction with the health and safety features of center-based care was asked only of those using such

care. In these instances, the size of the sub-sample of which these questions were asked is necessarily smaller than that of the total sample. Smaller sub-samples, it should be remembered, are subject to a larger associated sampling error than is the total base of 1,243 households. For example a table based on a sub-sample of only 50 interviews has a sampling error of plus or minus 14 percentage points. (Except where specifically noted on the tables, the sample size of each reported population group in the study is based on at least 50 or more interviews. The limited size of sub-samples smaller than this usually precludes valid interpretation). Readers are advised to bear in mind the proportion of the total sample on which specific questions are based, which is reported in each table as the number of interviews. A fuller discussion of sampling tolerances is included in the technical appendix.*

Readers should also be aware that a single underlying factor can often be responsible for the response patterns of sub-groups in more than one table if these sub-groups share an important (though not always evident) common characteristic. To take a hypothetical case, if it is observed that households with two parents who both work and households with annual incomes of \$18,000 and above report similar attitudes with regard to cost-related questions, this may

* Sampling tolerances reflect random variations in the sampling process, design effects due to clustering and weighting, and other random variations introduced in interviewing and data processing. The tolerances do not take into account sources of non-random error or other possible biases. While every effort is made to avoid such errors, it should be borne in mind that sampling tolerances alone do not reflect all possible sources of inaccuracy in the survey research process.

be because these sub-groups tend to overlap. (That is, there may be relatively few two-income households where the total combined income does not meet or exceed \$18,000 per year). In interpreting the responses given by sub-groups in a given table, therefore, readers should try to be mindful of underlying factors which may also help explain response variations between groups.

Finally, there are a number of questions in the report in which information was collected pertinent to each specific child in the household, rather than generalizing for the household as a whole. In such instances, the base for the question is all children (for all children of a certain age group, such as 5 to 13 years), and the table is labeled and reported as such.

3. Glossary

This report uses a variety of terms to define different types of care, households, and children. The following is a clarification of the meaning of commonly used terms:

A. Children

1. Infants: children aged 0 to 2 years.
2. Pre-schoolers: children aged 3 and 4 years.
3. Elementary-aged: children aged 5-10 years, inclusive.
 - a. Younger elementary: children aged 5-8 years.
 - b. Older elementary: children aged 9-10 years.
4. Pre-teens: children aged 11-13 years, inclusive.

B. Types of Households

1. Two-parent households: households in which the respondent is married, or is sharing living quarters with a person of the opposite sex. (The relative distribution of these two groups within their category is 99.5% married and 0.5% living together). In addition, those households which report only one resident adult aged 18 and over were eliminated from this category, on the assumption that the respondent and spouse are currently separated.
 - a. Two parents, both working: households meeting the above criteria where one respondent works at least one hour per day outside the home and spouse/partner is also working.

B. Types of Households (Continued)

- b. Two parents, one working: two-parent households in which the respondent is not working for one or more hours per day outside the home and spouse/partner is working; or the respondent works one or more hours per day outside the home and spouse/partner is not working.
 - c. Two parents, neither working: two-parent households where respondent does not work one or more hours per day outside the home and spouse/partner is not working. Due to the very small number of households in this category (3% of total households), data for this group are not typically displayed in the report.
- 2. One-parent households: respondent is single, divorced, separated, or widowed.
 - a. One parent, working: one-parent households where the respondent works one or more hours per day outside the home.
 - b. One parent, not working: one-parent households where respondent does not work one or more hours per day outside the home.
- 3. At least one parent is not working: combines responses from "two-parent, one working," two-parent, neither working," and "one-parent, not working" households.
- 4. No parent is not working: any resident parent is working. Combines responses from "two-parent, both employed" and "one-parent, working" households.

C. Types of Children in Household

1. Infants only: all children in household are aged 0-2 years. The 1,243 households in the sample include 89 of this type.
2. Pre-school only: all children in household are aged 3-4 years. There are 138 such households in the sample.
3. Elementary only: all children in household are aged 5-10 years. There are 236 households of this type in the sample.
4. Pre-teens only: all children in household are aged 11-13 years. There are 85 such households in the sample.

Households with:*

5. Households with infants: at least one child in household is aged 0-2 years. There are 298 households of this type in the sample.
6. Households with pre-schoolers: at least one child in household is aged 3-4 years. The sample contains 488 such households.

* Obviously, many households contain children from more than one age group, and such households are thus counted in more than one of the "households with . . ." categories. This fact should be borne in mind when interpreting data from these overlapping categories. For example, if a table displays what proportion of parents in "families with pre-teens" are satisfied with their overall child care arrangements, some proportion of the responses may refer to those arrangements used by children who are not pre-teens (but have siblings who are).

On the other hand, the categories of "infants only," "pre-school only," etc., do not overlap. Yet the sum total of these "...only" categories is only 548 of 1,243 households--or 44% of the households interviewed. In addition, households with children of only one given age group may not be fully representative of all households with children of this age, as the parents' ages (for example) may be younger or older than average.

7. Households with elementary: at least one child in household is aged 5-10 years. A total of 724 households of this sort are in the sample.
8. Households with pre-teens: at least one child in household is aged 11-13 years. Some 364 of our 1,243 households are of this type.

D. Households Regularly Using . . .

1. Households regularly using family day care: household reports regular use (for one or more children during a typical week) of child care in another home for which a fee is paid. (See Section H, Types of Care.)
2. Households regularly using center-based care: household reports regular use (for one or more children during a typical week) of center-based care. (See Section H, Types of Care.)

E. Households Using . . .

1. Households using self care: at least one child in household spends one or more hours per week looking after him- or herself, unsupervised. (See Section H, Types of Care.)
2. Households using care by other child: at least one child in household spends one or more hours per week in the care of another child (under age 14). (See Section H, Types of Care.)

F. Ethnic Background

1. White: respondent's stated race is white, and respondent is not of Hispanic descent. (See Hispanic, below.)

F. Ethnic Background (Continued)

3. Hispanic: respondent identifies self as "of Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish background."

G. Income

1. Less than \$18,000: the household's reported annual income is less than \$18,000.
2. \$18,000 and over: the household's reported annual income is \$18,000 or higher.

Note: The figure of \$18,000 per year was chosen as the dividing line because that figure has often been used as the line for the calculation of eligibility for governmental low-income assistance programs.

H. Types of Child Care

1. In this home: child is cared for (or cares for self) in his/her own home.
 - a. In this home by parent or other adult relative: child is cared for in his/her home by parent, aunt, uncle, adult sibling, etc.
 - b. In this home by self care: child is in own home and is unsupervised.
 - c. In this home by another child: child is cared for in his/her home by another child under age 14.
 - d. In this home by a non-relative, non-resident: child is cared for in his/her home by a non-resident adult not living in the household (such as a visiting neighbor or babysitter).

H. Types of Child Care (Continued)

- e. In this home by a non-relative, resident: child is cared for in his/her home by a non-relative adult who lives in the household (such as a governess, roommate, boarder, tenant, or other resident, non-relative adult).
- 2. In other home: child is cared for in another residence.
 - a. In other home (unpaid): child is cared for in another residence by someone not paid for this service (such as a friend, neighbor, or relative).
 - b. In other home (paid): child is cared for in another residence by someone who is paid for this service (that is, "family day care"--i.e., where the care provider receives payment to care for children at the care provider's residence).

 "Family day care" is used synonymously with "care in other home (unpaid)."
- 3. Center-based care: child is cared for in a day care center, nursery school, extended care facility, etc. All care outside the home which is not at a private residence is likely to be center-based care (excluding elementary or junior high school attendance).

I. Additional Terms

- 1. Alternative care: all modes of child care other than in-home care by a parent or other adult relative.
- 2. Out of home care: care in another home (whether paid or unpaid), or center-based care.

I. Additional Terms (Continued)

3. Based on: total households: the base for this question is all respondents interviewed from households which have one or more children under the age of 14 (1,243 interviews).
4. Based on: total children: the base for this question is all children under the age of 14 in the households described above (2,291 interviews).
5. Respondent: the person in a given household with whom the interview was conducted (there are thus 1,243 respondents). Respondents identified themselves as the person, or one of the persons, responsible for the household's child care arrangements. Given that more women than men report assuming this responsibility, there are thus more female (897) than male (346) respondents in the survey sample.

II.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

In November 1984, the Governor's Task Force on Child Care commissioned The Gallup Organization, Inc. to conduct a comprehensive survey among California parents of children ages 13 years and younger to:

1. Document their current use of different child care arrangements;
2. Ascertain parents' satisfaction with the child care arrangements they now use and investigate the reasons for dissatisfaction;
3. Identify any currently unmet (or inadequately met) special child care needs;
4. Assess parents' priorities in a quality child care program;
5. Determine the impact of child care on parents' employment or professional advancement;
6. Document present and potential use of employer-provided child care assistance;
7. Determine parental support for improved state-provided child care services.

B. Method and Scope

A total of 1,243 eligible California households were interviewed by telephone between November 10, 1984 and January 8, 1985. To obtain interviews with parents meeting the qualifications--in addition to having children in the target age range, respondents also had to be the person, or one of the persons, responsible for making child care decisions in each household--over 17,000 telephone calls were completed.

To ensure inclusion in the sample of a sufficiently large number of parents of Hispanic descent for analytical purposes, the survey conducted an oversample of 200 Hispanic parents, 100 of whom were interviewed in Spanish by Spanish-speaking interviewers. In all, 398 Hispanic parents were interviewed, including those who fell within the statewide cross-section and the oversample.

In considering the survey findings, it is essential to bear in mind that all survey research is subject to sampling error--the extent to which survey findings can be expected to vary from those that would be obtained by interviewing every qualified parent in the state. The magnitude of the sampling error depends mainly on the number of interviews in the sample or sub-sample asked each question. For the entire sample of 1,243 parents, 95 out of 100 times (95%) the survey findings should not vary by more than 3 percentage points in either direction from results obtained by interviewing all such parents in the state.

For example, in response to Q.18, which was asked of all parents in the survey, 21% of parents reported they had had problems that caused them to change their child care arrangements. According to the statistical "laws of probability," if we were to ask this question of all the parents in California with similar characteristics, there is a strong likelihood (95%) we would find that between 24% (plus 3 percentage points) and 18% (minus 3 percentage points) had experienced such problems with their child care arrangements.

Many questions in the survey were asked of sub-samples far smaller than the total, and hence, subject to much larger sampling error. For example, a figure based on a sub-sample of only 100 persons has a sampling error or plus or minus 8 percentage points. If Q.18 had been asked of a sub-sample of this size, the observed 21% figure might vary from 29% to 13% (plus or minus 8 points), due to sampling error. A fuller discussion of sampling error is included in the Technical Appendix of this report (see Page 229).

C. Glossary

Pages 7-13 of the report describe in detail the terms commonly used to differentiate children of different ages, household definitions, employment status, types of child care arrangements, etc.

D. Summary of the Findings

1. Inventory of Current Child Care Arrangements

a. "Typical Weekday"

Though in-home care by the parents or other adult relatives is far and away the most predominant arrangement, cited by 95% of all parents, a wide variety of other child care arrangements is also used. Chief among these are center-based care (15%), family day care (7%), unpaid out-of-home care (6%), in-home care by a non-relative, non-resident (4%), and self care (3%).

The most important determinants of the types of care used are the marital and working status of the parents and the ages of their children.

In two-parent households where both parents have jobs, 38% of the total sample, the use of center-based care rises to 22% and of family day care to 14%. In single-parent households where the parent is employed, 7% of the total, the reported incidence of center-based care is 21% and family day care is 9%. In addition, such forms of child care as self care; sibling/other child care; non-resident, non-family care; and family day care are used almost exclusively in households with no "free" (non-employed) parent present during a typical weekday.

Most households in the survey contain children in more than one of the four age categories--e.g. infants (0-2 years) plus pre-schoolers (3-4 years). However, by focusing on the comparatively few households where the children are all in a single age-group, one can get a clearer picture of the influence of age on the types of child care used.

For a typical weekday, use of center-based care is far more frequently reported (31%) in homes where all the children are ages 3-4 than in homes where all the children are ages 0-2 (8%), ages 5-10 (16%), or ages 11-13 (3%). (For this analysis, school attendance was excluded.)

Family day care is also more frequently used in homes with only 3-4 year-olds (12%) and 5-10 year-olds (10%) than children ages 0-2 (7%) or 11-13 year-olds (1%).

On the other hand, in-home care by a non-relative, non-resident (such as a babysitter) is more prevalent in homes with only infant children (11%) than in homes with only older children.

Self care is most commonly reported in homes where all the children are ages 11-13 (10%) and, to a lesser extent (2%), in those whose children are all 5-10 years old. In the former group, self care is the second most prevalent form of all care arrangements used, trailing only parental/relative care (95%). (Other aspects of self care use are explored later in this report.)

From an ethnic perspective, white (18%) and black (22%) parents report using center-based care facilities to a greater degree than do Hispanic parents (8%).

b. Alternate Arrangements During Summer, Holidays

In households with one or more school-age children (5-13), 72% of all households in the survey, 22% of parents make alternate child care arrangements at times when the schools are closed during the summer and on holidays or vacation days.

Greater use of these special arrangements is reported in working, single-parent households (32%), in two-parent homes where both parents have jobs (29%), and in homes with incomes of \$18,000 or more (24%). (Parental satisfaction with these alternate child care arrangements will be reported later.)

c. Past Use of Other Child Care Arrangements

In addition to determining normative (typical weekday) patterns of child care use, the survey queried parents in detail about arrangements they had ever used, including the frequency of such use and how they came to know about these.

In addition, parents who did not use each of the major types of child care were asked whether these services were available to them, whether they would be interested in using them, and the reasons for their not using available child care arrangements. This section of the Executive Summary briefly covers each of the above points.

1. Frequency of Use

With the exception of center-based care, more parents report they only occasionally rather than regularly use alternatives to in-home parental care.

For example, of the 58% of parents reporting any use of unpaid care in another home, only 5% do so on a regular basis while the remaining 53% say they only occasionally do so.

Of the 20% of parents who ever use center-based care, however, 12% report regular use and 8%, occasional use.

2. Information Sources

Word-of-mouth is the source of most parental knowledge of the alternative forms of child care they use. Roughly half (47%) of users of

center-based care say they first learned of it through friends, neighbors, or relatives. Advertising or bulletin board notices are cited by 23% of these users; 12% report using an information and referral service.

At least three-fourths of other types of child care arrangements are learned about from friends, neighbors, etc.

d. Knowledge of and Interest in Using Other Arrangements

Fairly high proportions of non-users cite center-based care (57%), family day care (47%), in-home care by a non-resident, non-relative (such as a babysitter) (49%), and unpaid care in another home (41%) as available options should they wish to use them.

Far fewer non-users of these types of child care to whom such services are available express any interest in using them. For example, 14% of those not using center-based care believe it to be available to them and would like to use it, while 40% think it is available but do not wish to use it.

e. Reasons for Non-Use of Alternate Arrangements

The fact that their present child care needs don't require the use of alternate child care arrangements is the leading reason for non-use,

cited by roughly 40% for each type of care not used. Cost is the second most frequent response with regard to the non-use of center-based care, named by 24%, with smaller proportions naming cost as a deterrence to their use of family day care (15%), babysitters (15%), etc.

f. Self Care by Children 5-13 or Care by Other Children

1. Incidence of Use

A 75% majority of all children between 5 and 13 years of age are reportedly never left without parental or adult supervision.

The proportion who are allowed to care for themselves or are left under the supervision of another child under 14 varies dramatically by the age of the children.

Among 11-13 year-olds, for example, 40% spent at least some time alone or accompanied by another child in the week prior to the interview. The median average time spent in this fashion was four hours per week.

Among 9-10 year-olds, 18% spent some time alone or with another child, with three hours the median time spent the prior week doing this.

For 5-8 year-olds, only 9% reportedly were left by themselves or with another child. The median time each child in this age group used self care was three hours during the week before the interview.

Important factors in the use of self care are, in addition to the children's ages, the marital and working status of the parents and family income, which are interrelated.

Not only do proportionately more children between the ages of 5 and 13 from two-parent homes where both parents work, or from one-parent homes where the parent works, spend some time alone or with another child, but these children also spend longer periods of time without adult supervision.

Since these homes tend to have higher family incomes, on average, self care in the upper-income stratum is both more frequently used and the children also spend longer periods of time looking after themselves or being looked after by a sibling or other child under 14.

The survey found that among the 20% of California children ages 5-13 who spent some time "last week" without adult supervision, roughly equal proportions were completely on their own and in the company of another child.

Not surprisingly, the tendency to leave children completely alone rises sharply as their age increases. Thus, 2% of 5-8 year-olds spent at least an hour in the "last week" without any supervision, with this proportion rising to 8% in the case of 9-10 year-olds and 30% among 11-13 year-olds.

Self-care is apparently more prevalent in both white and black homes--where 15% and 10% of children, respectively, spend some time on their own--than in Hispanic homes, where the comparable figure is 5%.

Parents using self care or care by other children for their 5-13 year-olds most often cite work or professional obligations (68%) as the reason they were not able to supervise their children during the hours they were left alone. Far fewer mention social or civic activities (10%) or other reasons.

2. Adult Help Available If Needed

Virtually all parents using self care or care by another child named one or more resources a child could turn to in case adult help is needed. The leading resources are that the child could go to a nearby neighbor or friend (76%), or could call the parent or relative (38%). In 18% of these households, the parents phone in to check on the children's well-being; 17% say the children can call the police or fire department, if necessary.

3. Age When Self Care Began; Reasons for Use

The median age at which self-care began to be used (in households using self care at least one hour per week) is 10 years of age.

Most parents (51%) said they began to use self care when they thought their children were old enough to look after themselves, while 17% said they tried it on an experimental basis and were satisfied with the results.

2. Satisfaction with Currently-Used Child Care Arrangements

a. Overall (Generic) Arrangements

On the whole, parents feel their current child care needs are being well met, with 66% of all the arrangements they use accorded a "very satisfied" rating, 30% a somewhat less enthusiastic "satisfied" rating, and merely 3% a "not at all satisfied" rating.

The survey question asked parents to describe their level of satisfaction with all the arrangements they use (generically) on a child-by-child basis, without specific focus on the types of care used.

Considering the variability of the child care arrangements used by different population segments, the degree of unanimity in their generic judgments of these arrangements is noteworthy.

For example, the same basic levels of satisfaction (or lack thereof) are expressed by the parents of children in every age category: the

parents of 65% of infants, those of 67% of pre-schoolers, those of 66% of elementary-school agers, and those of 65% of pre-teens pronounce themselves very satisfied with the child care arrangements used by their children. The minor differences between these groups are not statistically meaningful, nor are the minor differences in the "satisfied" and "not at all satisfied" ratings.

Similarly, no significant differences are found on the basis of the use of different modes of paid child care services, with statistically equal proportions of users of center-based care (64%) and family day care (babysitters et al.) (66%) expressing a high degree of satisfaction with all their child care arrangements.

What differences are found--and they are relatively minor in scope--appear to be economically related. Slightly higher levels of satisfaction are expressed by parents of children in households with annual incomes of \$18,000 or more (70% of whom say they are very satisfied with all their children's child care arrangements) than by parents in households with less than \$18,000 income (55% are very satisfied).

With few exceptions, parent groups with above average representation in the upper-income category, principally those from two-parent households and whites, tend to express slightly higher levels of satisfaction with the child care arrangements they use. Conversely, parent groups with above average representation in the lower-income category, mainly

those from single-parent households, blacks and Hispanics tend to express slightly lower levels of satisfaction with their child care arrangements.

Although these minor disparities are worthy of mention, they should not be allowed to obscure the basic conclusion that a large majority of parents in the survey (66%) say they are very satisfied with their child care arrangements, while a very small minority (3%) are not at all satisfied with these arrangements.

b. Satisfaction with Specific Features of Out-of-Home Arrangements

The survey next asked parents using one or more types of out-of-home care arrangements to evaluate these (collectively) on the basis of nine specific features, also using the "very satisfied," "satisfied," and "not at all satisfied" ratings system described above.

The features that parents find most satisfactory--as determined by their "very satisfied" ratings--are the level of supervision (57%), the comfortable atmosphere (55%), the agreement between the parents and caregivers on how the children are to be handled (54%), health and safety features (52%), and location (52%).

Only slightly fewer are very satisfied with the programs and activities (47%), the flexibility of scheduling (46%), access to transportation (43%), and the cost of the out-of-home child care arrangements they use (41%).

Please note also that the number of parents rating each feature varies in number from 625 to 732 (depending on their relevance to the types of out-of-home arrangements used) and averages about 700 parents in each. For sub-samples of this size and percentages in the general range described above--from a high of 57% very satisfied with supervision to a low of 41% very satisfied with cost--the "sampling error of the difference" is about 6 percentage points in either direction.

This means that the apparent differences between the five top-rated features are not statistically meaningful, nor are those between the four bottom-rated features. However, one can say with a high degree of confidence, for example, that parents tend to be more satisfied with supervision (57%) than with programs and activities (47%) because the 10-point difference between them exceeds the statistical requirement of 6 points.

It is important to stress, again, that relatively few parents in any population category express outright dissatisfaction with any of the features studied. The one that receives the most "not at all satisfied" ratings is the flexibility of the hours or days when the out-of-home arrangements they use are available, and only 8% say they are not at all satisfied with this feature.

c. Satisfaction with Child Care Arrangements: Problems Leading to Change

About one respondent in five (21%) reports having had problems serious enough to require a change in child care arrangements.

Such problems are considerably more apt to occur in families where no parent is available during working hours to assist with child care needs. Respondents from two-parent households, for instance, are almost twice as likely to report such problems where both parents are employed outside the home (28%) as in homes where only one parent works (15%).

Almost half of parents in households that regularly use family day care (48%) say they have had problems that led to a change in their child care arrangements, while the comparable figure among parents who use center-based care on a regular basis is 35%.

(It is important to bear in mind that the question was not specifically directed toward the types of child care arrangements in which these problems arose. In other words, these parents are not saying directly that their problems arose in family day care or in center-based care facilities.)

The problem leading most parents to change their child care arrangements is that they considered the caretaker to be undependable, untrustworthy, or not qualified to look after their children, cited by 20% of the 21% who had such problems.

Named next most often, by 15% each, are that the parent disagreed with the caretaker on how to look after or raise the children and that the level of supervision was inadequate. A more general criticism, that the parent was dissatisfied with the type of care provided, is mentioned by 13%, followed by dissatisfaction with the time of day (hours) the arrangement was available (11%).

Also mentioned are corporal punishment or verbal abuse (9%), cost (8%), poor programs or activities (6%), poor facilities in general (4%), that parents only needed to temporarily use the child care arrangements (4%), unclean physical conditions (3%), inconvenient location (2%), and inadequate nutrition of the food (1%).

d. Satisfaction with Alternate Care Arrangements

Ninety percent (90%) of the parents of children five and over using alternate child care arrangements at times when the schools are closed say they are satisfied with these arrangements.

Because of the small sample size of the dissatisfied group, it is not possible to quantify the reasons for parental dissatisfaction with these temporary, alternate arrangements.

e. Child Care Costs: Financial Assistance

1. Cost of All Child Care Arrangements

A 57% majority of all California households with children under 14 spend less than \$20 per week for all their child care needs, with 15% reporting expenses of \$20-\$49 and 24% of \$50 per week or more.

Parents reporting higher than average child care expenditures include: those with infant or pre-school children; those in two-parent households where both parents work; single, working parents; those in households regularly using (paid) family day care and/or center-based care; and those in households in the upper-income category.

Conversely, parents reporting lower child care expenditures include: those with elementary or pre-teen children; those in two-parent households where only one parent works outside the home; those in households in the lower-income category.

2. Financial Assistance for Child Care Needs

Only one California parent in 14 (7%) reports receiving any form of outside financial assistance for the child care expenses--other than from members of the household or any tax deduction they might claim.

In single-parent households, whether the parent is working or not, twice the state-wide average, or 14%, say they receive some form of financial aid.

The principal source of financial assistance is the parent's or spouse's employer, cited by 6 in 10 of those receiving such assistance. This employer-assisted group represents about 4% of all parents in the survey. Named next most often, by 3 in 10 aid recipients (2% of all parents), is a friend or relative living outside the home. Fewer than 1% of California parents say they receive financial aid from each of the following sources: local government agency, state agency, a federal agency such as AFDC, and charitable groups such as churches, synagogues, United Way, etc.

Among the small sub-sample of parents saying they receive some form of financial assistance (92 persons), roughly equal proportions said their support had increased during the past year (26%) or that it had stayed the same (24%). Comparatively few (4%) reported a decrease in funding for this purpose. Almost half the group (46%) said they did not know whether their child care support had changed.

There are too few parents reporting a decrease in support to determine how their child care arrangements have been affected.

3. Special Child Care Needs

About one California household in every five (21%) with children under 14 has one or more special child care needs, as described in the study.

Parents most often name the unavailability of their regular child care arrangement when their children are sick (10%). The other special needs and the percentages of parents naming each are: the parents' unusual work schedule (8%), problems in caring for their children when the schools are closed, such as holidays and vacations (7%), and the child has a disability or handicap (4%). Less than one-half of 1% of parents volunteered other special needs; 79% said they have no special needs or problems.

A fifth special need, that the child does not speak English, was mentioned by 2% of Hispanic parents and by 6% of parents of Asian descent. Because of the small number of Asian-American parents in the sample (30), no significance should be attached to the apparent difference between Hispanic and Asian-American parents in this respect.

Other than the fact that fewer households with pre-teen children (3%) report difficulty in caring for (all) their children when school is not in session than do households with younger children (7%), the survey found no discernible differences in the problems encountered by households with children of different ages.

Parents in the survey who cited a special child care need were asked whether they would be willing to help cover the cost of special services.

Two of the three methods of payment included receive about the same level of parental acceptance: selecting from choices in (their employer's) flexible benefits plan (70%) and paying a fee for the service (69%). Less support (45%) was found for a third method of payment: having their own employee benefits reduced by the cost of the special child care service they use.

4. Most Important Considerations for a Quality Child Care Program

Adequate supervision is the most frequently cited characteristic of a "quality child care program," named by 38% of users of out-of-home child care arrangements.

Other characteristics receiving frequent mentions are that the food served in such a program be nutritious (30%), that the program have good (interesting, instructive, enjoyable) activities for the children to participate in (21%), that the hours be convenient to users (21%), and that the children be happy in this environment (11%).

Other factors commonly mentioned are that the cost be affordable (9%), that there be a warm and loving atmosphere (9%), and that the caretaker be well qualified, dependable, and trustworthy (7%).

Desirable considerations also include a safe caretaking environment and facilities (5%), a convenient location (4%), agreement between the parent and caretaker on how to care for the child (3%), and the availability of good facilities (2%).

5. Parents and Careers: Impact of Child Care on Employment or Professional Advancement

In two-thirds (67%) of all the households in the survey, the responding parent works either full-time (56%) or part-time (11%). Additionally, about 12% of married respondents who do not have jobs outside the home have a working spouse. Thus, roughly 89% of all the homes in the survey include one or more working parents.

Nearly nine-tenths (88%) of male parents with child care responsibilities are full-time employees or self-employed, while about a third of female parents (32%) fall into these categories. More women (17%) than men (2%) work on a part-time basis, however.

Sixty-two percent (62%) of single parents work either full-time (53%) or part-time (9%), and 4% are self-employed. Single parents not in the work force are homemakers (12%), unemployed (12%), or students (11%).

Nearly three-fourths (73%) of parents who work or are students spend an average of eight or more hours away from home weekday for this activity. Male parents are more likely (82%) than females (60%) to be

away from home eight or more hours per day to work or study. (This discrepancy reflects the relatively higher proportion of women who work part-time and care for the children.

Roughly seven in ten (71%) spouses of respondents are employed, with male spouses (87%) more likely to be in the labor force than female spouses (51%).

Nearly a quarter (24%) of parents (mostly women) who are either unemployed or homemakers say a lack of adequate child care arrangements keeps them from working outside the home, or from receiving training or education for employment.

Among unemployed or homemakers in single-parent households, nearly a third (31%) say lack of child care prevents them from working outside the home or receiving training or education that might lead to employment.

Married respondents whose spouse is not currently working were asked if a lack of adequate child care was the reason for their spouses's non-employment.

Nearly nine in ten (87%) report inadequate child care is not the reason their spouse is not working, while one in ten (10%) believes it is. Eleven percent (11%) of the female spouses of respondents are reportedly not working due to a lack of adequate child care. Again, there are too few non-working male spouses of respondents in the sample to report on their behavior.

Twelve percent (12%)* of California parents say they have been kept from transferring jobs or receiving a professional promotion at some point in the past due to a lack of adequate child care arrangements.

Nineteen percent (19%)* of women have reportedly had this experience, as opposed to 5%* of men.

Among all employed California parents, 13%* have at some point been professionally hindered by a lack of adequate child care.

Nearly a third (31%) of working parents in single-parent homes say they have been prevented from transferring jobs or receiving a promotion by inadequate child care, however.

6. Employer Provided Child Care Assistance

a. Services Offered

In each household in which one or both parents hold jobs outside the home--approximately 89% of all the households in the survey--parents were asked whether their employer or their spouse's employer provided each of eight specific types of child-care assistance.

The type of assistance most often provided by employers is "allowing work telephones to be used by employees for child-related calls," named by 66%. Next, one-half of all working parents (50%) say their

* This figure includes answers given by respondents about their personal experience, as well as that of their spouse (if married).

employers allow them "to use their own sick leave to care for (their) sick children."

The other types of assistance included in the study and the percentages of working parents who say their employers provide these types of assistance, in descending order of frequency of mention are: "offering opportunities for part-time work, flex-time, or job sharing" (28%), "providing a flexible benefits package which assists with child care needs" (20%), "offering parent education programs" (16%), "helping to find child care" (21%), "establishing a child care facility, regardless of its location" (10%), and "helping to pay for child care" (7%).

b. Employee Use

The most widely-used employer services, of those provided, are "work telephones" (85%), "sick leave" (71%), "flexible benefits" (67%), and "paying for child care" (50%). Less than half report using "help in finding child care" (37%), use of employer-established "child care facility" (31%), or "parent education programs" (30%).

These figures can be misleading unless both the availability and use of these services are taken into account. For example, as reported above, 37% of working parents whose employers offer them help in finding child care say they use this type of assistance. However, because this service is offered by only 12% of employers, its net use among all working parents is only about 5% (37% x 12%).

c. Potential Users

The service that would be most in demand if available is "providing a flexible benefits package which assists with child care needs," named by 55% of working parents whose employers do not presently offer this service.

Other unprovided services with a high level of potential demand are employers' "helping to pay for child care," cited by 54% and "allowing employees to use their own sick leave to care for sick children," named by 53%.

Almost half of working parents, 48%, say they would use "parent education programs," if offered: while 44% would use their employer's "help to find child care;" 42% say they would make use of their employer's "offering opportunities for part-time work, flex-time, or job sharing," if provided.

If their employer established "a child-care facility, regardless of its location," 40% of working parents whose employers do not now provide such a service say they would use it. The same percentage, 40% would use "work telephones for child-related calls," if provided.

7. Support for Improved State Child Care Services

All parents in the survey were asked to assess each of eight services the state government might provide in the future to improve the quality of California child care.

Using the survey's most rigorous criterion--approval of a proposed new child care service even at the price of increased taxes--the top-rated proposals, with the percentages saying they would favor each under these terms shown in parentheses, are:

- * Special child care facilities for handicapped or non-English speaking children (60%).
- * Financial aid for child care for needy families (59%).
- * Using extra space in the public schools for child care programs (56%).
- * Personal tax credits for workers who need day care services (54%).

Only slightly less support is found for these proposed state services:

- * Expanding child care information and referral services (52%).
- * Establishing state-run community child care centers at a reasonable cost to users (51%).

- * Tax credits for businesses that provide assistance for their employees with day care (51%).
- * Encouraging local businesses to get involved in child care (48%).

By roughly a three-to-two ratio (61% to 22%), California parents feel the state should be involved in providing child care services and funding, even at the cost of additional taxes or a shift in funds now being spent for other purposes.

The feeling that the state should be involved in child care prevails in every major population group, by margins of two-to-one or better.