

Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2005/Summer 2006

Issued August 2010

Household Economic Studies

P70-121

INTRODUCTION

Parents in the labor force face numerous decisions when balancing their work

and home life, including choosing the type of care to provide for their children while they work. Deciding which child care arrangement to use has become

Current Population Reports

By
Lynda Laughlin

CHILD CARE DEFINITIONS

The universe of respondents in the Survey of Income and Program Population (SIPP) child care module consists of adults who are the parents of children under 15 years old. In households where both parents are present, the mother is the *designated parent*. Questions on child care arrangements for each child are asked of the designated parent. If the mother is not available for an interview, the father of the child can give proxy responses for her. 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 guardians in the absence of parents. In this report, unless otherwise noted, the term *parent* is used to refer to the designated parent.

Child care providers can be broadly classified as relatives or nonrelatives of children. *Relatives* include mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents; *other relatives* are individuals such as aunts, uncles, and cousins. *Nonrelatives* include in-home babysitters, neighbors, friends, and other nonrelatives providing care in either the child's or the provider's home. Another subcategory

of nonrelative care is *family day care providers* who care for two or more children outside of the child's home. *Organized child care facilities* include day care or child care centers, nursery schools, preschools, and Head Start programs. Kindergarten/grade school is also included in the organized care total for children 0 to 4 years of age. To present a comprehensive view of the regular weekly experiences of children under 15 years old, this report also shows the incidence of children enrolled in school and enrichment activities (such as sports, lessons, clubs, and before- and after-school care programs), and the time children are in self-care situations. These later arrangements may not actually be interpreted or reported by parents as child care arrangements and hence, should not be used as measures of child-related activities or compared with other estimates of children's daily activities in other Census Bureau reports on child well being.* The child care questions are available on the Internet at <www.census.gov/ipp/top_mod/2004/quests/2004w4tm.pdf>.

*For information on the number of children participating in extracurricular activities, regardless of their status as a child care arrangement, see Jane Lawler Dye and Tallese Johnson, *A Child's Day: 2003 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)*, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P70-109, Washington, DC, 2003.

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Helping You Make Informed Decisions

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

