Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2011

Household Economic Studies

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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 an increasingly important family issue as maternal employment has become the norm, rather than the exception. Child care arrangements and their costs are significant issues for parents, relatives, care providers, policy makers, and anyone concerned about children. This report, which is the latest in a series that dates back to 1985, describes the number and characteristics of children in different types of child care arrangements in the spring of 2011.[1] Additional historical data are also presented to provide a fuller picture of trends in child care usage in the United States.

Preschoolers and grade school-aged children require different types of care. While the primary

[1] The data in this report are from reference month four of the eighth wave of the 2008 panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Data for wave 8 were collected from January through April 2011. The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States.

CHILD CARE DEFINITIONS

The universe of respondents in the 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 reference parent. Questions on child care arrangements for each child are asked of the *reference 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 reference parent. If neither parent is in the household, the guardian is the reference parent. Reference 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 reference 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 more 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 after- and before-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 <www.census.gov/sipp/top_mod/2008/quests/2008w8tm.pdf>.

* For information on the number of children participating in extracurricular activities, regardless of their status as a child care arrangement, please refer to *A Child's Day: 2009 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)* detailed tables, <www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/children/data/sipp/well2009/tables.html>.

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Table 1.
Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2011

Arrangement type	Number of children (in thousands)	Percent in arrangement	
		Estimate	Margin of error[1]
Total children under 5 years	**20,404**	**100.0**	**(X)**
IN A REGULAR ARRANGEMENT	**12,499**	**61.3**	**1.2**
Relative care	5,885	42.1	1.2
Mother[2]	723	3.5	0.5
Father[2]	3,623	17.8	0.9
Sibling	520	2.6	0.4
Grandparent	4,834	23.7	1.0
Other relative	1,520	7.4	0.6
Nonrelative care	6,721	32.9	1.2
Organized care facility	4,797	23.5	1.0
Day care center	2,726	13.4	0.8
Nursery or preschool	1,231	6.0	0.6
Head Start/school[3]	1,140	5.6	0.6
Other nonrelative care	2,286	11.2	0.8
In child's home	750	3.7	0.5
In provider's home	1,554	7.6	0.7
Family day care	946	4.6	0.5
Other care arrangement	656	3.2	0.4
Self-care	(B)	(B)	(B)
NO REGULAR ARRANGEMENT[4]	**7,905**	**38.7**	**1.2**

(X) Not applicable. (B) Base less than 75,000.

[1] The margin of error, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, provides the 90 percent confidence interval around the estimate.

[2] Only asked for the time the reference parent was working or in school.

[3] Includes children in a federal Head Start program or in kindergarten or grade school.

[4] Also includes children only in kindergarten/grade school or only in self-care.

Note: Numbers of children in specified arrangements may exceed the total because of multiple arrangements.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

focus of child care for infants and preschoolers is meeting their basic needs, older children often engage in structured enrichment activities and are also found in self-care situations. The respective child care arrangements used for each age group are compared within this report. This report provides a full picture of child care patterns by providing data on child care arrangements that were used for *any* amount of time on a regular basis and primary child care arrangements, to represent child care arrangements that children spent the *most* time in on a regular basis during the survey period. Information is also provided about the cost of child care arrangements and the number of fathers providing care for their children.

CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD

This section shows patterns and use of child care, variations by family characteristics, and the amount of time children regularly spent in various types of care during a typical week in the month preceding the interview date. It concludes by summarizing historical trends since the first SIPP child care survey in 1985.

Child Care Arrangements for Preschoolers

In a typical week during the spring of 2011, 12.5 million (61 percent) of the 20.4 million children under 5 years of age were in some type of regular child care arrangement (Table 1).[2] In the interview, respondents report only arrangements used on a regular basis, at least once a week. Preschoolers—children under 5 years old—receiving care were more likely to be cared for by a relative (42 percent) than by a nonrelative (33 percent), while 12 percent were regularly cared for by both.[3] Another 39 percent had no regular child care arrangement.

[2] The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from the actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

[3] Since some children are in more than one type of arrangement, the sum of children in each of the arrangements exceeds the total number of children.

Twenty-four percent of preschoolers were regularly cared for by their grandparent and eighteen percent were cared for by their father. The survey asked only about care provided by the father during the time the reference parent was working. Care by other relatives (7 percent), by the mother while she worked (4 percent), or by siblings (3 percent) was less frequent.

Almost one-quarter of all preschoolers were cared for in organized facilities, with day care centers (13 percent) being more commonly used than nursery or preschools (6 percent). Overall, other nonrelatives provided home-based care to 11 percent of preschoolers, with 5 percent cared for by family day care providers.

Over one-third of preschoolers (7.9 million) were not in a regular child care arrangement during the month preceding the interview.[4] Table 2 shows that this statistic varied by the employment status of the mother—many more preschoolers of nonemployed mothers

[4] Eighty-three percent of preschoolers with no regular arrangement lived with a reference parent who was not employed. They were most likely under the supervision of their parent during the day. For those preschoolers with an employed reference parent, not having a regular child care arrangement during work hours may indicate instability in child care arrangements or difficulty in identifying regular use. It does not necessarily indicate that no one looked after the child.

Table 2.
Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2011
(Percent of children)

Characteristic	Number of children (in thousands)	Relative care				Organized care facility			Other nonrelative care			Other	
		Mother[1]	Father[1]	Grandparent	Sibling/other relative	Day care center	Nursery/preschool	Head Start/school[2]	In child's home	In provider's home: Family day care	In provider's home: Other	No regular child care[3]	Multiple arrangements[4]
Total children under 5 years	**20,404**	**3.5**	**17.8**	**23.7**	**2.6**	**13.4**	**6.0**	**5.6**	**3.7**	**4.6**	**3.2**	**38.7**	**18.4**
Living with father[5]	565	29.6	(B)	35.2	14.7	8.9	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	20.1	24.4
Living with mother[6]	19,839	3.6	17.4	23.4	9.6	13.5	6.0	5.6	3.7	4.7	3.2	39.3	18.3
MOTHER EMPLOYED	**10,859**	**6.2**	**29.3**	**31.7**	**10.4**	**21.1**	**8.1**	**5.8**	**5.3**	**7.6**	**4.8**	**12.3**	**26.7**
Self-employed	787	28.2	26.3	22.2	(B)	(B)	9.5	(B)	10.2	(B)	(B)	21.7	24.3
Not self-employed[7]	10,072	4.5	29.5	32.5	10.9	22.1	8.0	5.8	4.9	7.5	5.0	11.6	26.9
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	7,724	4.5	30.5	32.3	9.8	21.8	7.8	5.1	5.0	8.2	5.4	12.4	27.1
Non-Hispanic	6,351	4.8	30.2	31.7	8.7	24.2	8.4	4.3	5.5	9.4	4.5	12.6	28.4
Black alone	1,462	3.9	22.8	31.2	18.1	22.5	8.2	9.9	3.3	4.0	3.7	9.7	23.8
Asian alone	471	9.6	32.0	41.2	9.8	20.8	9.1	3.5	11.0	7.6	3.8	11.0	35.5
Hispanic (any race)	1,525	2.5	32.0	34.1	15.8	10.9	4.5	8.9	2.6	3.0	8.9	10.8	20.2
Marital Status													
Married[8]	7,068	4.7	32.3	30.4	6.9	21.8	8.4	5.5	5.5	7.9	4.6	12.5	25.4
Separated, divorced, widowed	744	4.1	20.7	36.6	18.8	22.0	8.0	7.5	2.7	7.1	5.5	11.7	29.4
Never married	2,260	3.9	23.8	37.7	21.0	23.0	6.5	6.2	3.9	6.3	6.1	8.9	30.8
Poverty Status[9]													
Below poverty level	1,599	4.7	28.5	29.6	20.7	16.1	3.4	7.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	13.6	25.7
At or above poverty level	8,320	4.2	29.8	33.3	9.0	23.5	8.9	5.5	5.1	8.1	5.1	11.2	27.4
Employment Schedule													
Employed full-time	7,264	4.2	26.9	31.1	9.4	25.6	7.9	5.6	4.9	8.7	4.6	10.9	25.7
Employed part-time	2,808	5.3	36.5	35.9	14.9	12.9	8.0	6.4	5.1	4.4	6.0	13.5	30.2
Shift Work Status													
Worked day shift	6,650	4.4	23.3	30.9	8.8	27.3	8.8	5.8	4.7	8.7	5.0	10.7	24.0
Worked nonday shift	3,422	4.5	41.7	35.5	15.1	12.0	6.5	5.9	5.4	5.1	4.9	13.4	32.5
Child's Age													
Less than 1 year	1,739	5.5	31.0	35.3	10.0	15.9	–	–	4.0	9.6	6.7	12.9	22.4
1 to 2 years	4,383	4.3	28.6	35.0	13.1	25.5	3.9	0.4	6.1	7.2	4.8	9.3	28.5
3 to 4 years	3,950	4.2	29.9	28.5	9.0	21.1	15.8	14.1	4.1	6.9	4.4	13.6	27.2

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2.

Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2011—Con.

(Percent of children)

Characteristic	Number of children (in thousands)	Relative care				Organized care facility			Other nonrelative care			Other	
		Mother[1]	Father[1]	Grandparent	Sibling/other relative	Day care center	Nursery/preschool	Head Start/school[2]	In child's home	In provider's home: Family day care	In provider's home: Other	No regular child care[3]	Multiple arrangements[4]
MOTHER NOT EMPLOYED[10]	**8,980**	**(NI)**	**(NI)**	**13.3**	**8.6**	**4.3**	**3.5**	**5.4**	**1.7**	**1.2**	**1.1**	**71.8**	**8.0**
Race and Hispanic Origin		(NI)	(NI)										
White alone	6,692	(NI)	(NI)	12.7	7.0	2.4	3.3	4.6	1.6	1.3	(B)	75.3	6.7
Non-Hispanic	4,420	(NI)	(NI)	14.3	7.5	2.9	3.8	4.3	2.2	1.5	(B)	72.8	7.3
Black alone	1,420	(NI)	(NI)	14.9	13.7	14.1	(B)	7.6	(B)	(B)	(B)	56.8	13.1
Asian alone	403	(NI)	(NI)	6.5	2.1	3.3	10.8	8.9	(B)	(B)	(B)	79.3	7.0
Hispanic (any race)	2,592	(NI)	(NI)	10.1	7.6	(B)	2.3	5.5	(B)	(B)	1.2	78.1	6.0
Marital Status		(NI)	(NI)										
Married[8]	5,946	(NI)	(NI)	9.0	5.5	2.1	4.0	4.7	1.2	(B)	(B)	79.1	4.8
Separated, divorced, widowed	606	(NI)	(NI)	15.6	11.0	7.5	4.1	5.5	2.2	1.7	(B)	67.9	12.9
Never married	2,428	(NI)	(NI)	23.0	15.7	9.0	2.0	6.9	2.6	2.4	1.8	55.2	14.7
Poverty Status[9]		(NI)	(NI)										
Below poverty level	3,076	(NI)	(NI)	14.3	12.4	5.8	2.3	6.7	1.6	1.4	1.1	68.3	9.4
At or above poverty level	5,339	(NI)	(NI)	12.5	6.6	3.1	4.4	4.6	1.5	1.0	0.9	74.0	7.2
Child's Age		(NI)	(NI)										
Less than 1 year	1,614	(NI)	(NI)	12.5	6.1	2.6	(B)	(B)	1.2	(B)	1.7	78.7	6.4
1 to 2 years	3,685	(NI)	(NI)	15.0	10.2	4.4	(B)	(B)	1.7	1.5	0.9	71.6	7.7
3 to 4 years	3,681	(NI)	(NI)	11.8	8.1	5.0	7.9	12.9	1.8	1.1	1.1	69.1	9.0

– Represents or rounds to zero. (NI) Not included, see footnote 1. (B) Base less than 75,000.

[1] Care in parental arrangements was calculated only for the time the reference parent was working as an employee.

[2] Includes children in a federal Head Start program or in kindergarten or grade school.

[3] Also includes children only in school or only in self-care. For employed mothers, not having a regular child care arrangement during work hours may indicate instability in child care arrangements or difficulty in identifying what types are regularly used. It does not necessarily indicate that no one looked after the child.

[4] Children in two or more child care arrangements, excluding school and self-care.

[5] Mother not present in the household, so father is the reference parent. Child care arrangments are not shown by father's employment status due to small sample size.

[6] Mother present in the household, father may or may not be present. Mother is the reference parent.

[7] Wage and salary jobs and employment arrangements other than self-employed.

[8] Includes married spouse present and spouse absent (excluding separated).

[9] Excludes those with missing income data.

[10] Includes children of mothers in school (1,044,000), mothers not in school and looking for work (1,081,000), and mothers not in school and not in the labor force (6,855,000).

Note: Numbers of children in specified arrangements may exceed the total because of multiple arrangements.

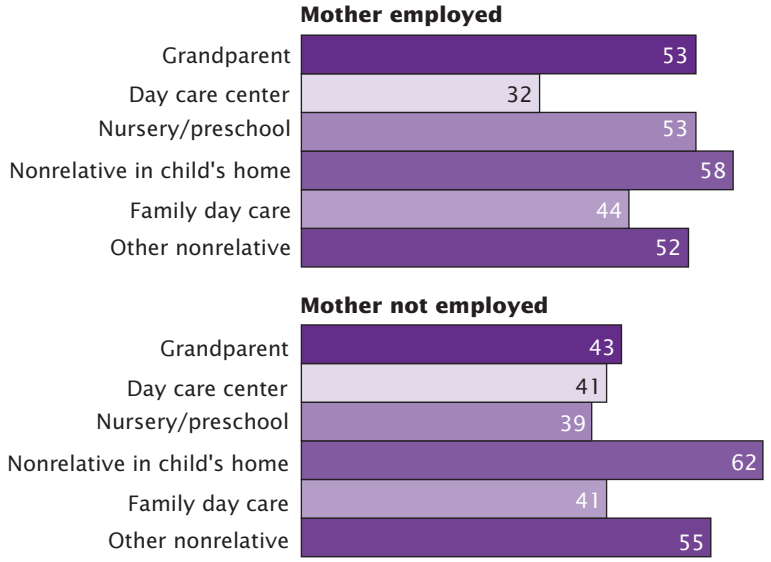
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

than employed mothers were not in a regular child care arrangement (72 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

Three percent of preschoolers lived only with their father; the remainder lived with both their mother and father or only with their mother. Grandparents were an important source of child care for father-only families, providing care for one-third of these children. Many mothers were involved as care providers for their preschoolers, even though they did not live with them. Table 2 shows that 30 percent of preschoolers living with only their father in the household were regularly in their mothers' care while their fathers worked or attended school.

Family members were important sources of child care for many employed mothers. Fathers and grandparents were regular care providers for many preschoolers. Grandparents cared for 32 percent of preschoolers, while 29 percent

Figure 1.
Percentage of Preschoolers in Multiple Child Care Arrangements for Selected Arrangement Types, by Employment Status of Mother: Spring 2011
(In percent)



Note: Employed includes wage and salary jobs, other employment arrangements, and self-employment. Not employed includes those looking for work, in school, or out of the labor force.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8.

of preschoolers with employed mothers were cared for by their fathers. Siblings and other relatives cared for 10 percent of preschoolers of employed mothers. Some preschoolers were cared for by their mother while she was working as an employee (5 percent), compared with 28 percent of preschoolers of self-employed mothers.

Arrangements Used by Nonemployed Mothers

Data on child care arrangements used by nonemployed mothers have been collected in the SIPP since 1996. It was one of the first national surveys to collect child care information for both employed and nonemployed mothers. In the spring of 2011, 88 percent of the 10.9 million preschoolers of employed mothers and 28 percent of the 9 million preschoolers of nonemployed mothers were in at least one child care arrangement on a regular basis.[5] For children of nonemployed mothers, care by a grandparent was the most common arrangement (13 percent). A smaller percentage of children of nonemployed mothers were in child care facilities such as day care and nursery schools that could provide enrichment activities, educational development, and early childhood socialization. Similar percentages of preschoolers with nonemployed mothers were in day care centers, nursery schools or preschools, and federal Head Start programs or kindergarten/grade schools—4 percent to 5 percent each.[6]

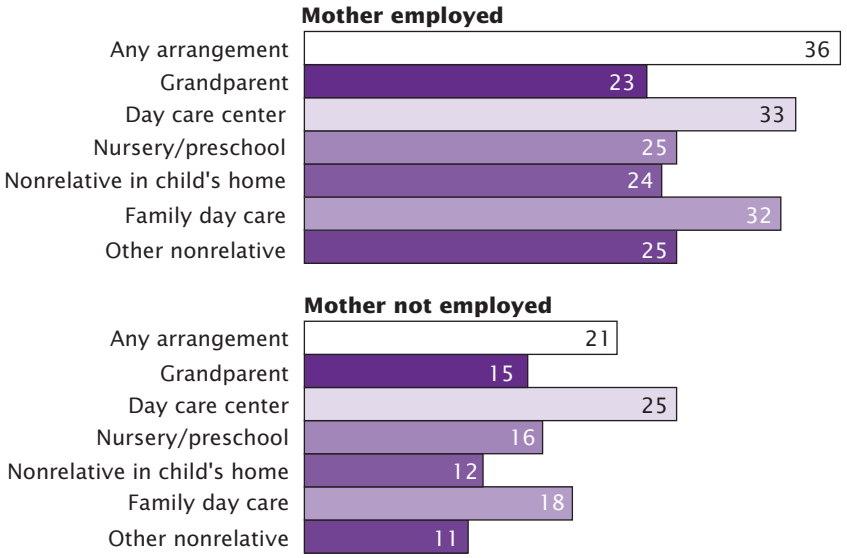
Eight percent of preschoolers of nonemployed mothers were in multiple (two or more) child care arrangements, compared with twenty-seven percent of preschoolers of employed mothers. Figure 1 shows the percentages of preschoolers in two or more arrangements, by types of arrangements and mothers' employment status. The preschoolers with employed mothers who were most likely to be in multiple arrangements were those in grandparent care, nursery school/preschool care, or with a nonrelative on a regular basis. Children in grandparent care were more likely to be in multiple arrangements if their mother was employed than if she was not (53 percent compared with 43 percent). It may be easier for grandparents to provide all of the care for their grandchild if the mother is not employed, since on average, children of nonemployed mothers spend less time in child care arrangements (Figure 2).

Children of employed mothers who spent any amount of time in a nursery school or preschool were more likely than their counterparts whose mothers were not employed to be in multiple arrangements (53 percent and 39

[5] Information on child care by the mother or father is not calculated for the time that the reference parent is not working or attending school.

[6] Differences may be noted between Head Start estimates shown in this report and enrollment numbers from the agency that administers this program. The number of children reported as being administratively enrolled in Head Start is a different measurement than the data for children in SIPP, a survey that asks parents regular child care arrangements. Many parents may not be aware that the day care, preschool, or kindergarten their child participates in is a Head Start program. SIPP data show 175,000 preschoolers were reported to be in a Head Start program as a regular form of child care from February to May 2011. Administrative data indicate that there were an average of 904,153 children 0–4 years of age enrolled in federal Head Start programs in 2010, the most recent data year available at the time this report was published <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/mr/factsheets/fHeadStartProgr.htm>.

Figure 2.
Average Time Preschoolers Spent in Selected Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status of Mother: Spring 2011
(In hours)



Note: Employed includes wage and salary jobs, other employment arrangements, and self-employment. Not employed includes those looking for work, in school, or out of the labor force.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8.

percent, respectively). Often, nursery schools and preschools offer half-day care only, which would require mothers who work full-time to use additional child care arrangements. On the other hand, children in day care centers—which are typically open during the entire working day—reported less usage of multiple arrangements than nursery school for preschoolers of employed mothers.

Number of Hours Spent in Child Care

The amount of time that children spend in care arrangements sheds light on how and with whom children are spending time during the day. In spring 2011, preschoolers spent an average of 33 hours per week in child care.[7] Figure 2 shows the average amount of time preschoolers spent in selected child care arrangements by the employment status of the mother. On average, children with employed mothers spent 15 hours more in child care than children with nonemployed mothers: 36 hours per week and 21 hours per week, respectively. For children of employed mothers, this included time spent with their mother while she was working and time with their father while their mother was working. If time in parental care is excluded, preschoolers of employed mothers spent, on average, 26 hours per week in care.

[7] The average number of hours spent in care is based on those who reported using at least one child care arrangement and include all arrangement types except self-care and school. Average hours for each specific arrangement type are based on those who reported using that specific arrangement.

With the exception of grandparent care, there were no statistically significant differences in the average amount of time spent in care between preschooler of employed or not employed mothers for each of the care arrangements shown in Figure 2. Day care centers or family day care may require a contract and be paid for by the week or month and not the hour. Thus, time spent by children in these arrangements may not vary by the mothers' daily schedule as the provider may determine the hours of care, regardless of the time the mother really requires. Day care centers and family day care homes both provided the highest average number of hours spent in an arrangement by preschoolers of employed mothers at 33 hours and 32 hours, respectively.

Family Characteristics

This section illustrates variations in child care use among children with employed and nonemployed mothers by family characteristics, such as mother's race and Hispanic origin, poverty status, work schedule, and child's age.[8]

RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

Table 2 shows that across all groups, many employed mothers relied on their relatives to act as child care providers. The likelihood of using relative care may depend on current family living arrangements such as being in a multigenerational household or in extended families. This could potentially affect the availability of grandparents or other relatives. Migration and residence patterns can also influence the proximity of relatives who could serve as child care providers.

[8] The term "employed mothers" in this section excludes self-employed workers because work schedule and shift variables may not apply to this group of workers as they do to wage and salary workers.

In spring 2011, the most widely used arrangements for preschoolers of non-Hispanic White employed mothers were fathers and grandparents (both around 30 percent).[9] Preschoolers with Black employed mothers were more likely to be cared for by their grandparents than their fathers. No statistical difference was found in the proportion of Hispanic children cared for by their grandparent (34 percent) or their father (32 percent). The use of any father care among Hispanic children increased since 2005, when 20 percent were cared for by their father while their mother was working.

Among children of employed mothers, day care centers were frequented by around 20 percent of children of Black mothers, Asian mothers, and non-Hispanic White mothers, while another 5 to 9 percent were in nursery schools or preschools. A smaller proportion of children of Hispanic mothers were in family day care (3 percent) than those with non-Hispanic White mothers (9 percent). Preschoolers of Hispanic mothers were less likely than children with non-Hispanic mothers to be in multiple child care arrangements (20 percent and 28 percent, respectively).

For preschoolers of nonemployed mothers, a higher percentage of children of Black mothers than other children were in regular child care arrangements (43 percent compared with 27 percent for non-Hispanic White, 21 percent for Asian, and 22 percent for Hispanics). Grandparents and siblings/other relatives were an important source of child care for Black, non-Hispanic White, and Hispanic nonemployed mothers.

[9] Categories are not exclusive. Hispanics may be of any race.

COMPARABILITY OF 1997–2011 SIPP DATA TO PREVIOUS SIPP CHILD CARE DATA

SIPP child care data collected in 1997 or later cannot be compared directly with SIPP child care data from previous years. Starting in 1997, child care data (collected in the 1996 SIPP Panel) were collected using a computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) instrument rather than a paper questionnaire.

In addition, two important changes were made to the module to improve data collection. First, the types of child care arrangements were expanded and differentiated by the child's age and parent's employment status. Second, instead of collecting data only on the primary and secondary arrangements, the new questions solicited responses on all arrangements used on a regular basis for preschoolers of both employed and nonemployed parents. The primary care arrangement is now defined as the arrangement used the most hours per week, rather than by asking respondents to name the primary arrangement. Respondents could also answer that they had no regular care arrangement. These alterations in the instrument and questionnaire design required changes in the processing and editing procedures.

Another comparability issue concerns the survey implementation schedule: the child care questions in the 2008 panel asked about arrangements used between January and April of 2011. Previously, the survey had been conducted for many years in the fall. Then it changed to the spring for 1997 and 1999. Child care changes observed between surveys of different years may reflect seasonal differences in child care use and the availability of providers, such as preschool closings and seasonal variations in school activities and sports for grade school-aged children.

Beginning with the 1996 SIPP panel, the survey was expanded to identify and include contingent workers and workers with alternative work schedules, such as temporary or on-call workers, in the employed category. Capturing more workers with irregular job schedules may affect the overall responses to the child care items and may account for more employed workers reporting no regular arrangements if the employment during the reference period was of a sporadic nature.*

* A discussion of contingent workers and people with alternative work arrangements is provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics online at <www.bls.gov/news.release/conemp.nr0.htm>. Using the broadest measure, this group could have included up to 5.7 million workers or 4 percent of the labor force in February 2005.

MARITAL STATUS

Preschoolers of employed mothers who were married were more likely to have fathers as care provides (32 percent) than children of never-married, employed mothers (24 percent). The latter group was more likely to be in the care of grandparents and siblings/other relatives than children of married, employed mothers. Although it was not as common as for children with a married mother, one in five children with previously married employed

mothers were cared for by their fathers, despite their parents' marital disruption.[10]

Similar percentages of children with married and never-married employed mothers spent time in day care centers on a regular basis (22 percent and 23 percent, respectively).

POVERTY STATUS

Children in poverty with an employed mother relied to a greater extent on grandparents (30 percent) and fathers (29 percent) than on day care centers (16 percent) or family day care providers (4 percent) for their care. Children in families above the poverty line were less likely to be cared for by a sibling (9 percent) but more likely to be cared for in a day care center (24 percent) or nursery school (9 percent) than children in poverty. This tendency may be due to the higher costs associated with organized care.

Work Schedule Characteristics

Overall, in spring 2011, preschoolers of mothers who worked full-time for an employer were more likely to be in certain types of nonrelative care arrangements, such as day care centers (26 percent) and family day care providers (9 percent), than were preschoolers of mothers who worked part-time (13 percent and 4 percent, respectively). On the other hand, preschoolers of mothers who worked part-time were more likely to be cared for by their father (37 percent) than preschoolers whose mother worked full-time (27 percent).[11]

In addition to the number of hours worked, the time of day that parents work can affect child care decisions. Preschoolers whose mothers worked a nonday shift were more likely to have their father as a child care provider than those with mothers who worked a day shift (42 percent and 23 percent, respectively).[12] Some families may arrange their work schedules to enable fathers to care for children while mothers work. A greater percentage of children whose mothers worked day shifts than children of mothers who worked nonday shifts were in day care centers or with family day care providers. The reliance on relatives among mothers who worked evening shifts is due in part to the scarcity of day care centers and family day care providers available during evenings and weekends.

For parents who work nonstandard work schedules, patching together a variety of arrangements may be necessary to cover all hours of employment. A higher proportion of preschoolers with mothers who worked a nonday shift were in multiple arrangements than those with mothers who worked a regular daytime shift (33 percent compared with 24 percent). Mothers working nonday shifts, particularly those with irregular schedules, may have difficulty securing regular arrangements and instead rely on a patchwork of child care arrangements.[13]

CHILD'S AGE

Fathers and grandparents played an important role in caring for infants and toddlers of employed mothers. A greater percentage of both infants and children 1 to 2 years of age spent time in the care of a grandparent or father than in any of the other types of arrangements. Among infants, the proportion being cared for by their grandparent was almost twice as high (35 percent) as those cared for in day care centers (16 percent). Among children 1 to 2 years of age, a larger percentage spent time in grandparent care (35 percent) than in day care centers (26 percent). Among children aged 3 to 4 years old, grandparent and father care was still more common than day care centers, but the differences were relatively smaller than for infants less than 1 year old.

Historical Trends in the Primary Child Care Arrangements for Preschoolers

Table 3 presents data on primary child care arrangements for preschoolers of employed mothers since the first SIPP child care survey was conducted in 1985.[14] The primary child care arrangement is defined as the arrangement used for the most hours per week.[15] In spring 2011, 10.9 million preschoolers lived with employed mothers, up from 8.2 million in 1985. The numbers and ages of children and the rise in mother's labor force participation throughout the 1980s and 1990s helped to increase the demand and need

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

[11] Full-time work is defined as working 35 or more hours per week in the month preceding the interview.

[12] Day shift is defined as usually working the majority of one's hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Other work schedules are defined as nonday shifts.

[13] Karen Fox Folk and Yuane Yi, "Piecing Together Child Care with Multiple Arrangements: Crazy Quilt or Preferred Pattern for Employed Parents of Preschool Children?" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 56 (1994): 669–680.

[14] Beginning with the 1996 panel, after all child care information (arrangement types used, hours spent per week, and costs paid per week) was collected, separate questions regarding whether the child attended school and whether the child usually cared for himself or herself (and the hours spent in self-care per week) were asked.

[15] Before 1995, respondents were asked to specify their primary arrangement. Data for 1995 and after distribute the "tied" responses proportionally among the primary arrangements to make the distributions comparable to prior survey years. In addition, the option for reporting that no regular arrangement was used was not available before 1995.

Table 3.
Primary Child Care Arrangements of Preschoolers With Employed Mothers: Selected Years, 1985 to 2011
(Numbers in thousands)

Type of arrangement	Winter 1985	Fall 1988	Fall 1990	Fall 1991	Fall 1993	Fall 1995[1]	Spring 1997[1]	Spring 1999[1]	Winter 2002[1]	Spring 2005[1]	Spring 2010[1]	Spring 2011[1]
Children under 5 years	**8,168**	**9,483**	**9,629**	**9,854**	**9,937**	**10,047**	**11,041**	**11,397**	**9,823**	**11,334**	**10,879**	**10,859**
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION												
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	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**	**20.8**	**20.1**	**20.7**	**21.6**	**22.8**	**22.0**
Mother while working	8.1	7.6	6.4	8.7	6.2	5.4	3.2	3.0	3.2	4.3	4.3	2.4
Father	15.7	15.1	16.5	20.0	15.9	16.6	17.7	17.1	17.5	17.2	18.4	19.6
Relatives	**24.1**	**21.1**	**23.1**	**23.5**	**25.3**	**21.4**	**24.9**	**27.7**	**24.8**	**25.8**	**25.0**	**26.6**
Grandparent	15.9	13.9	14.3	15.8	16.5	15.9	17.5	19.7	18.6	19.4	19.2	21.1
Sibling and other relative	8.2	7.2	8.8	7.7	8.8	5.5	7.4	8.0	6.2	6.4	5.8	5.5
Organized facility	**23.1**	**25.8**	**27.5**	**23.1**	**29.9**	**25.1**	**20.4**	**21.0**	**24.3**	**23.8**	**24.0**	**25.2**
Day care center	14.0	16.6	20.6	15.8	18.3	17.7	15.4	16.7	18.3	18.1	17.6	19.6
Nursery/preschool	9.1	9.2	6.9	7.3	11.6	5.9	4.2	3.9	5.2	5.0	5.7	5.0
Federal Head Start program	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	1.5	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
Other nonrelative care	**28.2**	**28.9**	**25.1**	**23.3**	**21.6**	**28.4**	**20.2**	**18.8**	**17.2**	**15.6**	**13.0**	**12.9**
In child's home	5.9	5.3	5.0	5.4	5.0	4.9	3.8	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.1
In provider's home	22.3	23.6	20.1	17.9	16.6	23.5	16.3	15.6	13.4	12.0	9.7	9.8
Family day care	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	15.7	9.8	10.2	8.9	7.4	5.9	6.5
Other nonrelative	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	7.8	6.5	5.4	4.5	4.6	3.9	3.3
Other	**0.8**	**1.6**	**1.3**	**1.6**	**1.1**	**2.9**	**13.7**	**12.4**	**13.0**	**13.2**	**15.2**	**13.2**
Self care	–	0.1	0.1	–	–	0.1	–	–	–	–	–	0.1
Other arrangement[2]	0.8	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.1	0.6	2.2	2.7	2.6	2.5	3.6	3.5
No regular arrangement[3]	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	2.2	11.5	9.7	10.4	10.8	11.7	9.7

– Represents or rounds to zero. (X) Not available.

[1] Distributions were 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 and comparable to earlier years.

[2] Includes kindergarten/grade school and school-based activities for 1985 to 1995. Only includes kindergarten/grade school from 1997 forward.

[3] Not in a child care arrangement on a regular basis (also includes children who were only in kindergarten/grade school or only in self-care for 1997 and forward).

Note: Employed mothers are those with wage and salary employment or other employment arrangements including contingent work and self-employment. Starting with the 1997 data, edits of employment categories were changed to better capture arrangements other than wage and salary employment, as well as including the self-employed in the employed total, which may affect comparisons to survey data from earlier years. Percentages shown here reflect these new edits and supersede previously reported percentages for years 1997 and 1999. The 2002 Winter data omit women who only had self employed work due to an error in the editing procedure.

Source: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P70-9 Table 1; P70-30 Table 1; P70-36 Table 1; P70-53 Table 2; P70-70 Table 3; U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996 Panel Waves 4 and 10, 2001 Panel Wave 4; SIPP 2004 Wave 4; SIPP 2008 Wave 5. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

for child care.[16] In spring 2011, 49 percent were cared for by a parent (including the mother herself while working) or by some other relative. Organized child care facilities and other types of nonrelatives made up another 38 percent of primary arrangements in spring 2011, while 10 percent reported having no regular arrangement other than school or self-care.

[16] For more information on women's labor force trends see *Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (2010 Edition)*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Changes in the survey design over the period warrant caution when making comparisons between years. In 1995, the number of child care response categories was expanded, and beginning with the 1996 SIPP panel, the data collection procedure was changed from a self-administered paper questionnaire to a personal interview using a computer-based instrument. The changed necessitated adjustments to question wording and answer categories in some cases. In addition, shifts in work schedules and the availability of other family members, organized child care facilities, or family day care providers during certain times of the year may affect the comparability of data from surveys conducted in different seasons. Aside from these survey design and seasonal issues, societal changes, the economic climate, and stages of the business cycle during the time the surveys

were conducted may also influence child care usage.[17]

The use of nonrelatives for child care followed an erratic pattern during the 1985 to 2011 period. In the late 1980s, the proportion of preschoolers who were in home-based, nonrelative care (either in the child's home or in the provider's home) was about 29 percent. It dropped to 22 percent in 1993 and rose back up to 28 percent in 1995. By spring 2011, 13 percent were cared for in a home-based arrangement by a nonrelative. Care by nonrelatives in the child's home decreased slightly between 1985 and 2011 from 6 percent to 3 percent. The use of nonrelative care in the provider's home was 22 percent in 1985 and dropped to 17 percent in 1993 and rose back to 24 percent in 1995. By 1997, the use of nonrelative care in the provider's home dropped to 16 percent and continued to drop to a low of 10 percent of preschoolers in 2011.

The use of organized facilities for preschoolers fluctuated. From 1985 to 1990, the proportion of preschoolers cared for in organized facilities rose from 23 percent to 28 percent. Use of this arrangement dropped to around 21 percent in the late 1990s and rose to 25 percent of preschoolers in 2011.

Rates of family and relative care also have varied over the past 20 years. The rate of care by fathers

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

Table 4.

Grade School-Aged Children in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2011

(Percent of children)

Characteristic	Number of children (in thousands)	Relative care				Nonrelative care			Other arrangements			Other	
		Mother[1]	Father[1]	Grandparent	Sibling/other relative	Organized care facility[2]	Nonrelative in child's home	Nonrelative in provider's home[3]	School	Enrichment activity[4]	Self-care	No regular child care[5]	Multiple arrangements[6]
Total children 5 to 14 years	**40,547**	**3.3**	**15.7**	**13.8**	**12.6**	**5.1**	**2.3**	**3.2**	**93.6**	**15.4**	**11.1**	**50.2**	**16.1**
Living with father[7]	1,957	19.5	4.9	23.4	15.0	4.5	4.0	6.6	95.2	15.0	12.4	37.0	21.4
Living with mother[8]	38,590	3.2	15.5	13.4	12.5	5.1	2.2	3.0	93.5	15.4	11.0	50.9	15.8
MOTHER EMPLOYED	**24,136**	**4.8**	**23.8**	**17.2**	**14.9**	**7.2**	**2.7**	**4.1**	**94.3**	**18.9**	**13.7**	**36.1**	**21.7**
Self-employed	1,915	18.2	21.8	8.5	10.2	2.2	2.6	3.5	95.7	17.3	11.7	46.5	21.3
Not self-employed[9]	22,221	3.6	24.0	17.9	15.3	7.6	2.7	4.2	94.2	19.0	13.8	35.2	21.7
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	17,179	3.8	24.7	18.0	13.8	7.3	2.8	4.4	94.0	19.4	14.9	36.2	21.9
Non-Hispanic	13,453	3.8	25.3	17.3	12.0	8.0	3.1	4.5	93.7	20.3	16.3	36.8	22.3
Black alone	3,359	2.1	18.3	18.5	22.2	9.0	2.2	2.6	94.8	16.2	10.1	31.9	19.5
Asian alone	852	7.1	29.7	17.2	16.3	9.3	3.0	3.9	92.6	21.8	10.1	28.4	26.6
Hispanic (any race)	4,116	3.4	23.2	19.9	20.5	6.1	2.1	4.1	95.4	16.0	9.6	32.5	20.2
Marital Status													
Married[10]	15,417	4.2	28.5	14.8	13.2	7.2	2.4	3.5	93.7	18.7	13.9	37.3	21.8
Separated, divorced, widowed	3,825	2.4	13.5	22.4	20.3	7.3	2.7	5.5	96.6	20.8	18.8	34.3	22.3
Never married	2,978	2.1	14.2	28.0	19.9	10.3	4.6	5.6	93.3	18.1	7.2	24.9	20.4
Poverty Status[11]													
In poverty	3,263	2.6	19.6	20.5	22.4	6.8	2.4	4.1	94.5	13.6	9.8	34.1	20.1
Not in poverty	18,778	3.8	24.9	17.5	14.1	7.8	2.8	4.2	94.1	19.9	14.6	35.3	22.1
Employment Schedule													
Employed full-time[12]	16,724	3.4	24.9	19.1	15.7	8.5	3.2	4.2	94.2	20.2	13.8	31.7	22.9
Employed part-time	5,497	4.3	21.3	14.3	14.1	4.8	1.3	4.1	94.0	15.4	14.0	45.8	18.0
Shift Work Status													
Worked day shift	15,593	3.4	21.0	17.9	14.1	8.9	2.5	4.2	94.3	21.1	14.5	35.5	21.1
Worked nonday shift	6,628	4.2	31.1	17.9	18.4	4.6	3.4	4.0	94.0	14.0	12.4	34.5	23.0
Child's Age													
5 to 8 years	8,977	3.9	26.1	21.9	12.8	14.6	3.6	6.1	88.9	18.2	2.3	27.1	23.9
9 to 11 years	6,573	3.7	24.5	18.7	17.2	4.6	2.5	4.0	97.8	21.4	10.5	33.2	22.8
12 to 14 years	6,671	3.1	20.8	11.8	16.9	1.2	1.8	1.6	97.7	17.7	32.7	47.9	17.6

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4.

Grade School-Aged Children in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2011—Con.

(Percent of children)

Characteristic	Number of children (in thousands)	Relative care				Nonrelative care			Other arrangements			Other	
		Mother[1]	Father[1]	Grandparent	Sibling/other relative	Organized care facility[2]	Nonrelative in child's home	Nonrelative in provider's home[3]	School	Enrichment activity[4]	Self-care	No regular child care[5]	Multiple arrangements[6]
MOTHER NOT EMPLOYED[13]	**14,454**	**(NI)**	**(NI)**	**7.0**	**8.4**	**1.6**	**1.3**	**1.1**	**92.2**	**9.6**	**6.5**	**75.7**	**6.1**
Race and Hispanic Origin		(NI)	(NI)										
White alone	11,169	(NI)	(NI)	6.1	6.8	1.2	1.3	0.9	91.8	9.5	6.7	77.3	5.0
Non-Hispanic	7,419	(NI)	(NI)	7.0	6.7	1.6	1.6	1.2	90.8	12.2	7.9	74.2	6.1
Black alone	2,018	(NI)	(NI)	11.8	15.8	3.2	1.6	2.4	94.2	9.6	5.3	68.1	11.5
Asian alone	615	(NI)	(NI)	7.4	4.8	2.2	–	0.5	90.2	15.2	8.5	73.7	6.9
Hispanic (any race)	4,154	(NI)	(NI)	4.9	7.4	(B)	(B)	(B)	94.0	3.9	4.0	82.4	2.7
Marital Status		(NI)	(NI)										
Married[10]	10,614	(NI)	(NI)	4.5	6.7	1.0	1.1	0.8	91.4	9.9	6.8	78.7	4.5
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,808	(NI)	(NI)	15.9	13.6	1.7	2.2	2.0	94.7	9.6	7.1	65.7	10.9
Never married	2,032	(NI)	(NI)	12.0	12.9	4.2	1.6	1.7	94.0	8.2	4.3	68.8	9.9
Poverty Status[11]		(NI)	(NI)										
In poverty	4,845	(NI)	(NI)	9.4	10.7	1.6	0.9	1.3	93.8	6.4	5.9	75.3	6.9
Not in poverty	8,827	(NI)	(NI)	6.2	7.1	1.5	1.2	0.8	91.4	11.8	7.1	75.7	5.7
		(NI)	(NI)										
Child's Age		(NI)	(NI)										
5 to 8 years	6,143	(NI)	(NI)	7.6	7.7	3.0	1.3	1.7	85.7	7.5	1.2	75.7	5.8
9 to 11 years	4,529	(NI)	(NI)	7.3	10.0	0.8	1.1	0.8	96.3	10.8	5.6	73.9	6.7
12 to 14 years	3,782	(NI)	(NI)	5.7	7.8	–	1.6	–	97.9	11.8	16.1	77.7	5.8

– Represents or rounds to zero. (NI) Not included, see footnote 1. (B) Base less than 75,000.

[1] Care in parental arrangements was only calculated for the time the reference parent was working as an employee.

[2] Includes care in day care centers, nursery or preschools, or federal Head Start programs.

[3] Includes care by a family care provider and other nonrelatives in the provider's home.

[4] Organized sports, lessons (such as music, art, dance, language, and computer), clubs, and before- or after-school programs located either at school or other locations.

[5] Also includes children only in school or only in self-care. For employed mothers, not having a regular arrangement during work hours may indicate instability in child care arrangements or difficulty in identifying what is regularly used. It does not necessarily indicate that no one looked after the child.

[6] Children in two or more child care arrangements, excluding school and self-care.

[7] Mother not present in the household so father is the reference parent. Child care arrangments are not shown by father's employment status due to small sample size.

[8] Mother present in the household, father may or may not be present. Mother is the reference parent.

[9] Includes mothers with wage and salary jobs and employment arrangements other than self-employed.

[10] Includes married spouse present and spouse absent (excluding separated).

[11] Excludes those with missing income data.

[12] Those who work 35 or more hours per week are considered working full time.

[13] Includes children of mothers in school (1,420,000), mothers not in school and looking for work (1,904,000), and mothers not in school and not in the labor force (11,129,000).

Note: Numbers of children in specified arrangements may exceed the total because of multiple arrangements.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

was around 15 percent between 1985 and 1988, increased to 20 percent in 1991, and settled between 16 and 17 percent beginning in 1993 until 2011 when father care increased to 20 percent. The rates for both mother care and father care while the mother worked decreased and leveled off in the latter half of the 1990s. In 2011, 2 percent of women were the primary caregiver for their child while they were working. The lack of a consistent trend since 1985 in the use of specific child care arrangements for preschoolers makes it difficult to foresee which arrangements will grow or wane in popularity in the future. Since 1997 the use of organized day care centers and father provided care have increased while the proportion of children in nonrelative care in the provider's home has decreased.

CHILDREN 5 TO 14 YEARS OLD

This section shows the patterns and use of child care arrangements for grade school-aged children. The child care experiences of grade school-aged children differ from those of preschool-aged children primarily in that older children experience a wider array of daily activities.

Child Care Arrangements for Grade School-Aged Children

Grade school-aged children—children 5 to 14 years old—engage in different daily activities than do preschoolers, such as school, enrichment programs, and self-care. Therefore, the child care arrangements shown in the tables for grade school-aged children differ from those shown for younger children. Although not generally considered a child care arrangement, school attendance is included since it accounts for a large portion of a child's day. School activities figure prominently in the daily lives of grade school-aged children and may influence the demand for other arrangements before and after school.

Half of grade school-aged children were in a child care arrangement on a regular basis other than school or self-care. Relatives were consistent contributors to the overall care of many grade school-aged children (Table 4). In spring 2011, similar proportions of grade school-aged children received care from a grandparent or other relative, including siblings (14 percent each), while 16 percent of grade school-aged children were cared for by their fathers.

Grade school-aged children were less likely to be cared for by nonrelatives, such as organized care facilities or other nonrelatives in the child's home or the provider's home, than by relatives other than their mother. Five percent of children 5 to 14 years old were cared for in organized care, two percent by a nonrelative in the child's home, and three percent by a nonrelative in the provider's home. The low use of nonrelative care compared with the rates for younger children reflects that fact that 94 percent of older children are enrolled in school, and 15 percent were involved in enrichment activities such as organized sports, lessons, clubs, or programs before or after school.

Children in Self-Care

As children grow and mature, many parents allow them to spend some time in unsupervised situations. Parents base this decision on a number of factors, including the age and maturity 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.[18] Sometimes parents experience difficulty in securing supervised arrangements and self-care may be used more out of necessity than choice. Other times, parents may feel that self-care provides an opportunity for their child to learn to be more independent. Self-care excludes any care provided by older siblings and includes only those children who were identified as talking care of themselves by the reference parent.

ESTIMATES OF SELF-CARE

In spring 2011, 4.2 million (11 percent) of the 38.6 million grade school-aged children living with a mother cared for themselves on a regular basis during a typical week in the month preceding the interview. Children are shown in Table 5 in two age groups that generally correspond to elementary and middle school ages (5 to 11 years old and 12 to 14 years old). Among all children who lived with their mother and were in self-care, 69 percent were in the older age group. Within each age group, 5 percent of elementary school-aged children and 27 percent of middle school-aged children living with their mother were in self-care for some time during a typical week. The use of self-care ranged from 2 percent among 5- and 6-year-olds to 29 percent of 14-year-olds.

Among children 5 to 14 years old who were regularly in self-care situations, the average time spent in self-care was 7 hours per week. Forty-four percent of children 5 to 14 years old in self-care spent between 2 and 9 hours per week supervising themselves. Children 5 to 11 spent an average of 5 hours per week in self-care, and children 12 to 14 years old spent an average of 7 hours per week in self-care. The older group was more likely than the younger group to spend 10 or more hours per week in self-care (26 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

PARENTAL AVAILABILITY

The prevalence of self-care has been found to be related to the amount of time parents are available to care for children, which in turn is influenced by family structure and labor force participation.[19] In spring 2011, grade school-aged children living with a separated, divorced, or widowed mother were more likely to be in self-care (15 percent) than were those living

[18] Lynne Casper and Kristin Smith, "Self-care: Why do Parents Leave their Children Unsupervised?" *Demography*, vol. 41(2004): 303–314.

[19] Virginia Cain and Sandra Hofferth, "Parental Choice of Self-care for School-age Children," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 51 (1994): 65–77; Harriet Presser, "Can We Make Time for Children? The Economy, Work Schedules, and Child Care," *Demography*, vol. 26 (1998): 523–543.

Table 5.

Prevalence of Self-Care Among Grade School-Aged Children, by Selected Characteristics for Those Living With Mother: Spring 2011

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Age of child	
		5 to 11 years	12 to 14 years
Total children 5 to 14 years	**40,547**	**28,947**	**11,600**
LIVING WITH FATHER[1]	**1,957**	**1,318**	**639**
Number in self-care	243	41	202
Percent in self-care	12.4	3.1	31.6
LIVING WITH MOTHER	**38,590**	**27,629**	**10,961**
Number in self-care	4,238	1,293	2,944
Percent in self-care	11.0	4.7	26.9
Race and Hispanic Origin of Mother			
White alone	11.6	4.9	28.1
Non-Hispanic	13.1	5.6	31.3
Black alone	8.6	3.4	22.3
Asian alone	10.7	4.7	25.7
Hispanic (any race)	6.8	2.8	17.8
Marital Status of Mother			
Married[2]	10.9	4.7	26.7
Separated, divorced, widowed	15.1	6.4	31.5
Never married	6.5	3.1	19.3
Poverty Status of Family[3]			
Below poverty level	7.8	3.9	19.4
At or above poverty level	12.1	5.0	29.2
100–199 percent of poverty level	9.1	3.6	23.0
200 percent of poverty level or higher	13.4	5.5	31.8
Employment Schedule of Mother			
Not Employed	6.5	3.1	16.1
Employed (All)	13.7	5.7	32.5
Self-employed	11.7	4.9	30.4
Not self-employed[4]	13.8	5.8	32.7
Full-time[5]	13.8	5.5	33.2
Part-time	14.0	6.7	30.9
Worked day shift	14.5	6.1	34.0
Worked nonday shift	12.4	5.0	29.5
Enrichment Activities of Child			
Participated in an activity	17.9	8.8	40.1
Did not participate in an activity	9.7	3.9	24.4
Average hours per week in self-care among children in self-care	**6.5**	**4.5**	**7.4**
Number of hours in self-care per week (Percent distribution)			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 2 hours	32.8	47.9	26.2
2 to 4 hours	23.3	20.9	24.3
5 to 9 hours	21.1	16.1	23.3
10 or more hours	22.8	15.1	26.2

[1] Mother not present in the household, so father is the reference parent. Self-care is not shown by father's characteristics due to small sample size.

[2] Includes married spouse present and spouse absent (excluding separated).

[3] Excludes those with missing income data.

[4] Includes mothers with wage and salary jobs and employment arrangements other than self-employed.

[5] Those who work 35 or more hours per week are considered working full time.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

with a married mother (11 percent) or a never-married parent (7 percent).

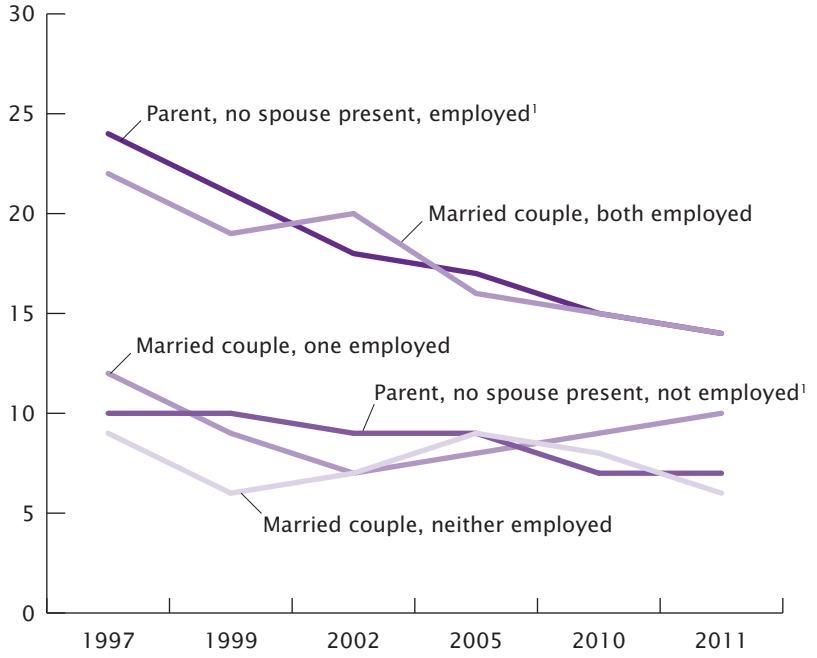
Patterns of self-care also varied by the mother's labor force participation. Fourteen percent of grade school-aged children of an employed but not self-employed mother were in self-care compared with 7 percent of children whose mother was not employed. Regardless of a mothers' employment schedule, percentages of children whose mother worked full-time or part-time cared for themselves are not different (14 percent). Children whose parent worked a day shift were more likely to be in self-care at some point during the week than children whose parent worked a nonday shift.

The use of self-care also differed by race and Hispanic origin. Thirteen percent of 5 to 14 year olds with a non-Hispanic White mother spent some time in self-care, compared with 7 percent of children 5 to 14 years old with a Hispanic mother.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of grade schoolers in self-care by whether children lived with married parents or a single parent (either their mother or father) and whether one, both, or neither parent was employed. The figure shows data for 2011 as well as for 2010, 2005, 2002, 1999, and 1997, the five previous survey years for which comparable questions on self-care were asked. For each of these years, grade school-aged children living in homes where all parents present were employed were the most likely to be in self-care situations. In 2011, similar percentages (about 7 percent) of children living with married parents, where neither parent was employed, and children living with a nonemployed parent without a spouse present, were in self-care. In each of these situations, at least one parent was

Figure 3.
Percentage of Grade School-Aged Children in Self-Care by Parent's Employment Status and Marital Status: 1997 to 2011

(In percent)



Note: Employed includes wage and salary jobs, other employment arrangements, and self-employment. Not employed includes those looking for work, in school, or out of the labor force.
[1] Includes both mothers and fathers.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996 Panel Waves 4 and 10, 2001 Panel Wave 4, 2004 Panel 4, 2008 Panel Wave 8.

not working and therefore more likely to be available to care for their child.

The only consistent trend over time appears for children of an employed parent with no spouse present—their chance of being in self-care statistically declined at each timepoint (except between 2002 and 2005 and between 2010 and 2011) from 24 percent in 1997 to 14 percent in 2011. The decline in self-care for children with a single employed parent maybe related to changes in child care arrangements or public policy initiatives. For example, between 1997 and 2011 the percent of grade-schoolers for whom school was reported as a child care arrangement increased among children living with a nonmarried employed mother from 85 percent to 95 percent. While enrollment is generally required, more parents may interpret school as a workday child care support and report school as an arrangement. Funding for after-school programs has also increased since 1998, providing more opportunities for children after the school day that don't include self-care.[20] Since a number of after-school programs often reside in the same schools that children attend, parents may report after-school programs as school, contributing to the increase in school care.

[20] Afterschool Alliance, *21st Century Community Learning Centers: Providing Afterschool and Summer Learning Supports to Communities Nationwide.* <www.afterschoolalliance.org/21st%20CCLC%20Fact%20Sheet_5_3_12_FINAL.pdf>.

Self-care among children with two married, employed parents fluctuated during the same time period. In 1997, the proportion of grade school-aged children in self-care was 22 percent. It dropped to 19 percent in 1999 and by spring 2011, 14 percent were in self-care.

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

Weekly Child Care Expenditures

This section examines weekly family expenditures for child care by selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and shows the expenditures as a percentage of monthly family income. The spring 2011 data refer to payments made between January and April of 2011. For prior survey years, data most often reflect the time period between September and December, or between March and June for the 1997 and 1999 estimates. Seasonal differences in arrangements and changes in the economy can affect child care costs and may affect the comparability of the 2011 data with data from prior surveys.

Family Payments for Child Care

In spring 2011, 32.7 million mothers lived with at least one of their children who was under the age of 15 (Table 6). Twenty-four percent of these mothers reported they made cash payments for child care for at least one of their children, and they paid an average of $135 per week or approximately $7,020 a year. Families with children under 5 paid, on average, $179 per week or over $9,300 a year for child care. Nonemployed mothers were less likely to make a payment for child care than were employed mothers (10 percent and 32 percent,

Table 6.

Average Weekly Child Care Payments of Families With Mothers Present and Children Under 15 Years, by Selected Characteristics: 2011

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

Characteristic	Number of families	Making payments		Weekly child care payments		Expenditures on child care per month	
		Number	Percent	Average dollars[1]	Margin of error[2]	Percent of income[3]	Margin of error[2]
Families with mothers and children under 15 years	**32,716**	**7,893**	**24.1**	**135**	**5.8**	**7.0**	**0.3**
Mother not employed	11,624	1,173	10.1	92	10.1	5.6	0.5
Mother employed	21,091	6,720	31.9	143	6.6	7.2	0.3
Self-employed	1,985	580	29.2	144	28.5	3.6	0.1
Not self-employed[4]	19,559	6,314	32.3	143	6.6	7.9	0.8
Employment Schedule of Mother							
Full-time[5]	14,783	5,192	35.1	148	7.3	7.9	0.8
Part-time	4,777	1,122	23.5	120	14.4	7.7	1.1
Number of Children in Family							
One child	9,959	2,837	28.5	114	6.3	6.2	0.5
Two children	6,840	2,555	37.4	169	12.0	9.1	1.2
Three or more children	2,761	922	33.4	164	20.8	9.5	2.1
Age of Youngest Child							
Under 5 years	7,905	3,661	46.3	179	9.4	10.5	1.6
5 to 14 years	11,655	2,653	22.8	93	7.8	4.7	0.4
Type of Residence							
Metropolitan	16,201	5,361	33.1	150	7.4	7.9	0.8
Central cities	4,817	1,496	31.1	139	13.5	8.9	1.7
Outside central cities	11,385	3,865	34.0	154	8.9	7.6	0.9
Nonmetropolitan	3,358	953	28.4	105	10.2	7.7	1.1
Monthly Family Income							
Less than $1,500	1,977	366	18.5	97	15.0	39.6	37.9
$1,500 to $2,999	3,277	879	26.8	96	12.0	18.8	16.0
$3,000 to $4,499	3,119	886	28.4	114	12.7	13.3	12.7
$4,500 and over	11,186	4,183	37.4	163	8.9	6.7	0.4
Poverty Status							
Below poverty level	2,467	468	19.0	93	12.5	30.1	19.9
At or above poverty level	17,093	5,846	34.2	147	6.9	7.6	0.8
100 to 199 percent of poverty level	4,101	1,057	25.8	111	14.0	17.9	15.5
200 percent of poverty level or higher	12,992	4,789	36.9	155	7.9	6.9	0.7

[1] Average expenditures per week among people making child care payments.

[2] The margin of error, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, provides the 90 percent confidence interval around the estimate.

[3] Percent is a ratio of average monthly child care payments (prorated from weekly averages) to average monthly family income.

[4] Wage and salary jobs and employment arrangements other than self-employed.

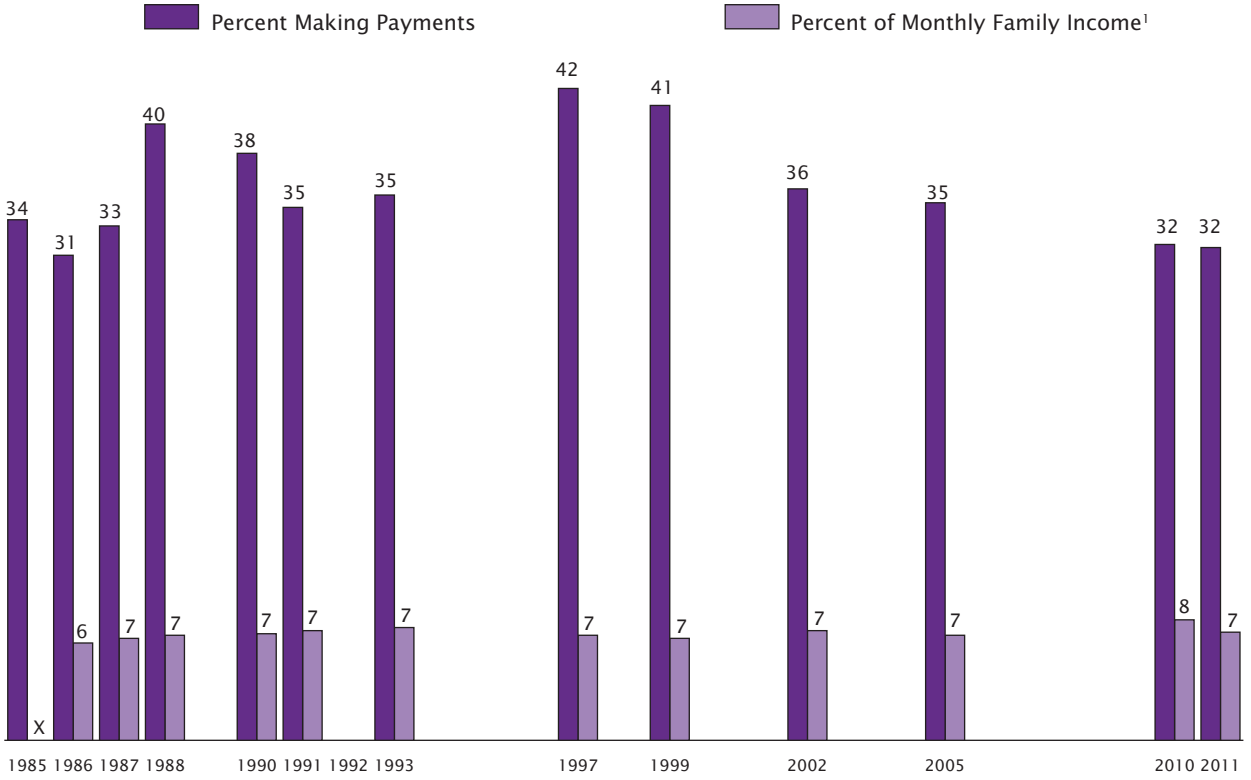
[5] Those who work 35 or more hours per week are considered to be working full time.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

respectively). Mothers who were not employed paid on average less per week ($92) than did employed mothers ($143).

Of the 20 million mothers who worked for an employer, 32 percent (6 million) reported they made a cash payment for child care for at least one of their children. The percent of families who reported making a cash payment for child care has decreased since 1997 when approximately 42 percent made some kind of cash payment for child care (Figure 4). Figure 5 illustrates the average weekly child care costs paid by families with employed mothers since 1985 in constant 2011 dollars. Adjusting for inflation, families with employed mothers spent on average $84 per week on child care in 1985. In 2011 the average child care payment increased to $143 per week. The average cost of child care for families with an employed mother increased between 2005 and 2010, from $124 to $142. While the cost of child care increased over time, the percent of family monthly income spent on child care has stayed constant between 1997 and 2011, at around 7 percent (Figure 4).

Figure 4.
Percent Who Make Payments and Percent of Monthly Family Income Spent on Child Care for Families With Employed Mothers: 1986–2011
(In percent)



X (Not available).
[1] Percent is a ratio of average child care payments (prorated from weekly averages) to average monthly family income.
Note: Beginning in 1997, edits of employment categories were changed to better capture arrangements other than wage and salary employment, which may affect comparisons to survey data from earlier years.
Source: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P70-36, Table 6, U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996 Panel Wave 4 and 10; 2004 Panel Wave 4; 2008 Panel Wave 5 and 8.

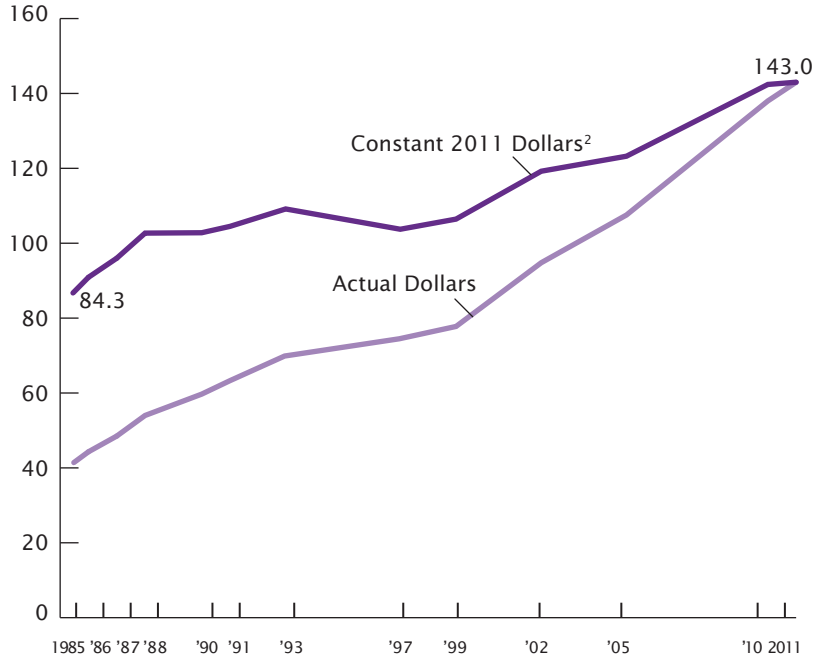
More mothers who worked full-time paid for child care (35 percent) than mothers who worked part-time (24 percent). Mothers with two or more children were more likely to make a child care payment than mothers with only one child. Families in poverty were less likely to make a child care payment (19 percent) than families not in poverty (34 percent).

Families with an employed but not self-employed mother paid an average of $143 per week for child care in the spring of 2011. Mothers working full-time paid, on average, $28 more per week for child care than mothers working part-time. On average, employed mothers with one child paid $114 per week, while those with two or more children paid about $168 per week. Thus, mothers with more children generally paid more for child care per week, but not twice the average paid for one child. Care providers may reduce their rates for care of additional children in a family. Also, many families with two or more children may have children in different age groups with different child care needs and costs. This is reflected in the fact that among families with an employed mother, those whose youngest child was under 5 years were twice as likely to pay for child care as families with children aged 5 to 14 only (46 percent and 23 percent, respectively). In addition, they paid an average of $86 more per week ($179 compared with $93 a week). Families with young children also spent a higher proportion of their family income on child care: 11 percent of income compared with 5 percent for families with only older children.

Child care expenditures varied by income level and poverty status. Families with higher incomes paid more for child care. For example, among families with employed mothers, those with a monthly income of less than $1,500 paid $97 a week for child care, while those with a monthly income of

Figure 5.
Average Weekly Cost of Child Care for Families With Employed Mothers: 1985–2011[1]

(In dollars)



[1] Average expenditures per week among people making child care payments.
[2] Computed using average Consumer Price Index for a given calendar year as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
Note: Beginning in 1997, edits of employment categories were changed to better capture arrangements other than wage and salary employment, which may affect comparisons to survey data from earlier years.
Source: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P70-36, Table 6, U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996 Panel Wave 4 and 10; 2004 Panel Wave 4; 2008 Panel Wave 5 and 8.

$4,500 or more paid an average of $163 per week. Families in poverty paid an average of $93 per week, compared to families not in poverty, who paid $147 per week. However among families who paid for child care, those below the poverty level spent roughly four times the percentage of their income on child care as other families (30 percent compared with 8 percent). This difference in the proportion of income paid for child care by poverty status has persisted since 1987.[21]

[21] For a more detailed explanation of this issue see, Kristin Smith, *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 1995,* U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P70-70, Washington, DC, 2000.

Receipt of Help to Pay for Child Care

Questions regarding whether the family received any help to pay for child care have been asked on the SIPP since 1997. The resulting data provide insight into characteristics of families that do and do not receive financial assistance to pay for child care. The number of respondents reporting that they receive child care assistance may undercount the true number of recipients if respondents are unaware that their payments are subsidized due to their income level or participation in other programs.

Of the 33 million children under 15 years who were reported to be in a regular child care arrangement in spring 2011, 2.1 million (6 percent) had a reference parent who reported receiving help paying for the care from either the government, the child's other parent, the parent's employer, or another source (Table 7). Since 1997, the percentage of families who received help paying for child care has remained fairly consistent. In the late 1990s, the proportion of families who received help paying for child care was 5 percent, increasing to 7 percent in 2005 and settling around 7 percent and 6 percent for 2010 and 2011.

Receipt of help from any source to pay for child care for children under 5 years increased from 6 percent in 1999 to 9 percent in 2011, compared with a similar increase from 4 percent to 5 percent for grade school-aged children. In 2011, 64 percent of children under 15 years whose parents received help for their care obtained it from the government (1.3 million out of 2.1 million).

Receipt of government assistance to help pay for child care is related to economic status. Preschoolers living in poverty in 2011 were more likely to be in a family receiving help from the government (12 percent) than those living above the poverty line (3 percent). Receipt of government support for child care was related to receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): 29 percent of preschoolers whose parent received TANF received government assistance for child care compared with 5 percent of those who did not receive TANF. In the same way, a larger percentage of preschoolers in families receiving Medicaid had help from the government for child care payments than those in

Table 7.

Receipt of Help to Pay for Child Care From Selected Sources, by Characteristics of Reference Parent: 1997, 1999, and 2002

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to children with a regular child care arrangment)

Characteristic	1997					1999					2002				
	Number of children	From any source[1]		From government[2]		Number of children	From any source[1]		From government[2]		Number of children	From any source[1]		From government[2]	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Children under 15 years	**34,234**	**1,626**	**4.7**	**812**	**2.4**	**35,092**	**1,662**	**4.7**	**1,089**	**3.1**	**33,032**	**2,170**	**6.6**	**1,353**	**4.1**
Children under 5 years	**12,419**	**864**	**7.0**	**466**	**3.8**	**12,828**	**791**	**6.2**	**527**	**4.1**	**11,596**	**1,118**	**9.6**	**681**	**5.9**
Race and Hispanic Origin of Parent															
White	9,893	616	6.2	280	2.8	10,076	555	5.5	335	3.3	8,884	726	8.2	421	4.7
Non-Hispanic	8,339	540	6.5	247	3.0	8,412	476	5.7	272	3.2	7,200	594	8.3	330	4.6
Black	1,995	228	11.4	177	8.9	2,230	229	10.3	185	8.3	1,952	332	17.0	234	12.0
Asian and Pacific Islander	417	13	(B)	3	(B)	371	–	–	–	–	578	28	(B)	8	(B)
Hispanic (any race)	1,652	84	5.1	38	2.3	1,787	88	4.9	67	3.8	1,870	171	9.1	119	6.3
Marital Status of Parent															
Married[3]	8,885	346	3.9	144	1.6	8,878	330	3.7	167	1.9	8,081	472	5.8	204	2.5
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,214	158	13.0	100	8.2	1,366	138	10.1	103	7.5	1,176	220	18.7	153	13.0
Never married	2,320	359	15.5	222	9.6	2,584	324	12.5	258	10.0	2,339	426	18.2	324	13.8
Poverty Status[4]															
Below poverty level	2,053	255	12.4	191	9.3	1,924	237	12.3	199	10.3	1,970	334	16.9	247	12.5
At or above poverty level	10,178	583	5.7	252	2.5	10,711	536	5.0	314	2.9	9,432	737	7.8	395	4.2
100 to 199 percent of poverty level	2,821	245	8.7	147	5.2	2,876	233	8.1	178	6.2	2,292	307	13.4	234	10.2
200 percent of poverty level or higher	7,357	339	4.6	105	1.4	7,835	303	3.9	136	1.7	7,141	430	6.0	161	2.3
Employment Status of Parent															
Employed	9,995	694	6.9	330	3.3	10,672	606	5.7	375	3.5	9,062	897	9.9	556	6.1
Self-employed	288	17	(B)	–	–	240	19	(B)	10	(B)	366	19	(B)	4	(B)
Not self-employed[5]	9,707	677	7.0	330	3.4	10,432	587	5.6	365	3.5	8,696	878	10.1	552	6.3
Full-time[6]	6,353	463	7.3	201	3.2	7,143	407	5.7	255	3.6	5,919	609	10.3	374	6.3
Part-time	3,354	214	6.4	129	3.8	3,289	180	5.5	110	3.3	2,777	268	9.7	178	6.4
Not employed	2,425	170	7.0	137	5.6	2,156	186	8.6	152	7.0	2,534	222	8.7	125	4.9
In school	627	98	15.6	81	12.9	600	86	14.4	74	12.3	595	67	11.2	43	7.2
Looking for work	363	22	(B)	19	(B)	220	37	(B)	37	(B)	386	52	13.6	25	6.5
Out of labor force	1,435	50	3.5	37	2.6	1,336	62	4.6	41	3.1	1,553	103	6.6	57	3.7
Participation in Selected Programs															
Receipt of TANF[7]	918	159	17.3	142	15.4	349	73	20.8	62	17.7	275	65	23.5	59	21.5
No receipt of TANF	11,501	705	6.1	325	2.8	12,479	719	5.8	466	3.7	11,321	1,054	9.3	622	5.5
Receipt of Medicaid	2,492	427	17.1	348	14.0	2,592	370	14.3	323	12.4	3,068	574	18.7	464	15.1
No receipt of Medicaid	9,928	437	4.4	118	1.2	10,236	421	4.1	205	2.0	8,528	544	6.4	217	2.5
Child's Age															
Less than 1 year	2,106	150	7.1	81	3.9	1,833	68	3.7	45	2.5	1,987	149	7.5	85	4.3
1 to 2 years	5,000	349	7.0	191	3.8	5,440	354	6.5	255	4.7	4,509	390	8.6	233	5.2
3 to 4 years	5,313	365	6.9	194	3.6	5,554	369	6.6	227	4.1	5,100	579	11.4	364	7.1
Children 5 to 14 years[8]	**21,815**	**762**	**3.5**	**346**	**1.6**	**22,264**	**871**	**3.9**	**562**	**2.5**	**21,436**	**1,052**	**4.9**	**672**	**3.1**

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 7.

Receipt of Help to Pay for Child Care From Selected Sources, by Characteristics of Reference Parent: 1997, 1999, and 2002—Con.

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to children with a regular child care arrangment)

2005					2010					2011					Characteristic
Number of children	From any source[1]		From government[2]		Number of children	From any source[1]		From government[2]		Number of children	From any source[1]		From government[2]		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
32,599	**2,364**	**7.3**	**1,467**	**4.5**	**33,493**	**2,219**	**6.6**	**1,448**	**4.3**	**32,683**	**2,094**	**6.4**	**1,332**	**4.1**	**Children under 15 years**
12,726	**1,336**	**10.5**	**846**	**6.7**	**12,666**	**1,160**	**9.2**	**785**	**6.2**	**12,499**	**1,063**	**8.5**	**660**	**5.3**	**Children under 5 years**
															Race and Hispanic Origin of Parent
9,642	790	8.2	440	4.6	9,617	740	7.7	460	4.8	9,258	652	7.0	378	4.1	White
7,841	614	7.8	315	4.0	7,597	539	7.1	333	4.4	7,440	560	7.5	330	4.4	Non-Hispanic
2,160	419	19.4	314	14.5	2,016	327	16.2	252	12.5	2,084	312	14.9	211	10.1	Black
396	44	11.1	22	5.6	507	(B)	6.4	(B)	4.4	552	34	6.1	20	3.6	Asian and Pacific Islander
2,013	220	10.9	162	8.1	2,280	226	9.9	148	6.5	2,087	101	4.9	57	2.7	Hispanic (any race)
															Marital Status of Parent
8,621	533	6.2	240	2.8	8,175	413	5.1	245	3.0	8,018	401	5.0	170	2.1	Married[3]
1,207	219	18.2	138	11.5	1,157	169	14.6	120	10.4	1,097	162	14.8	94	8.6	Separated, divorced, widowed
2,898	584	20.1	468	16.1	3,334	577	17.3	420	12.6	3,384	500	14.8	396	11.7	Never married
															Poverty Status[4]
2,209	392	17.7	339	15.3	2,516	401	15.9	356	14.1	2,557	361	14.1	302	11.8	Below poverty level
10,293	913	8.9	483	4.7	9,773	728	7.5	412	4.2	9,561	648	6.8	317	3.3	At or above poverty level
2,732	372	13.6	265	9.7	2,581	302	11.7	210	8.1	2,711	294	10.9	193	7.1	100 to199 percent of poverty level
7,561	541	7.2	218	2.9	7,192	426	5.9	202	2.8	6,850	354	5.2	125	1.8	200 percent of poverty level or higher
															Employment Status of Parent
10,302	1,098	10.7	693	6.7	9,829	838	8.5	544	5.5	9,896	758	7.7	468	4.7	Employed
671	66	9.9	40	6.0	656	15	2.3	6	(B)	665	49	7.3	38	5.7	Self-employed
9,631	1,032	10.7	653	6.8	9,172	824	9.0	538	5.9	9,230	709	7.7	430	4.7	Not self-employed[5]
7,021	761	10.8	453	6.4	6,674	607	9.1	391	5.9	6,759	525	7.8	324	4.8	Full-time[6]
2,610	271	10.4	200	7.7	2,499	217	8.7	148	5.9	2,471	184	7.5	106	4.3	Part-time
2,423	238	9.8	153	6.3	2,837	321	11.3	241	8.5	2,603	304	11.7	192	7.4	Not employed
687	89	13.0	55	8.0	942	174	18.5	136	14.4	871	152	17.5	83	9.5	In school
395	45	11.4	32	8.2	631	64	10.1	57	9.0	564	70	12.4	51	9.1	Looking for work
1,341	103	7.7	66	4.9	1,264	83	6.6	48	3.8	1,168	82	7.0	58	4.9	Out of labor force
															Participation in Selected Programs
250	54	21.5	49	19.6	380	119	31.2	110	28.9	246	71	28.9	71	28.9	Receipt of TANF[7]
12,475	1,282	10.3	797	6.4	12,285	1,041	8.5	675	5.5	12,253	992	8.1	589	4.8	No receipt of TANF
4,265	761	17.8	606	14.2	4,655	705	15.1	570	12.2	4,799	665	13.9	541	11.3	Receipt of Medicaid
8,461	575	6.8	241	2.8	4,655	705	15.1	570	12.2	7,700	398	5.2	119	1.6	No receipt of Medicaid
															Child's Age
2,125	190	8.9	117	5.5	2,171	139	6.4	84	3.8	2,036	112	5.5	70	3.4	Less than 1 year
5,084	498	9.8	322	6.3	5,375	452	8.4	347	6.5	5,383	415	7.7	226	4.2	1 to 2 years
5,517	648	11.7	408	7.4	5,120	569	11.1	354	6.9	5,079	536	10.5	364	7.2	3 to 4 years
19,873	**1,028**	**5.2**	**620**	**3.1**	**20,828**	**1,059**	**5.1**	**663**	**3.2**	**20,184**	**1,031**	**5.1**	**672**	**3.3**	**Children 5 to 14 years[8]**

– Represents or rounds to zero. (B) Base less than 75,000.

[1] Includes help from the government, the other parent, an employer, and other sources.

[2] Includes help from a federal, state, or local government agency, or a welfare office.

[3] Includes married spouse present and spouse absent.

[4] Excludes those with missing income data.

[5] Wage and salary jobs and employment arrangements other than self-employed.

[6] Those who work 35 or more hours per week are considered to be working full time.

[7] TANF stands for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

[8] Receipt of help to pay for child care is not broken down by characteristics for children 5 to 14 years old due to the small proportion of children in this age group with parents who receive help to pay for child care.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996 Panel Waves 4 and 10, 2001 Panel Wave 4, 2004 Panel Wave 4, and 2008 Panel Waves 5 and 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf>.

families not receiving Medicaid. A greater proportion of preschoolers with a nonemployed reference parent received help from a government source for child care payments than children living with an employed parent (7 percent and 5 percent, respectively).

Children with a reference parent who was Black were more likely than other children to receive government help to pay for child care. Preschoolers with an unmarried parent were more likely than those with a married parent to receive government help to pay for child care. Because mothers are usually the reference parent, these findings reflect the higher rates of poverty among Black mothers and unmarried mothers.[22]

In 2011, older preschoolers were more likely to be living with a parent or guardian who received any help to pay for child care than were infants: 11 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds compared with 7 percent of those under 1 year of age. The difference by age also occurred for children living with a parent or guardian who received government assistance for child care, which was a change from 1997, when it did not vary by age of the preschooler.

FATHERS AS CAREGIVERS

Economic and normative changes are forcing families and society to re-examine changes in parental employment and the role and expectations of fathers. The movement of married women into the labor force has changed the organization of family life and provided opportunities for fathers to be more available for child care while their wives are working. This section reports trends over time in the percentage of fathers providing care for children of employed and married mothers, as well as an analysis of how the father's labor force status is associated with the likelihood of being the primary caregiver for their child. In this section, only fathers who provided care while their wives worked are examined.[23] The SIPP collects information on child care arrangements, including father provided care, the survey is not designed to count the number of stay-at-home fathers.[24]

Historical comparisons of SIPP data on fathers as child care providers are complicated by changes to the questionnaire that began in 1997. Prior to that time, only the two most frequently used arrangement types were identified by the reference parent. The revised questionnaire allowed respondents to identify all of the arrangements they regularly use. As a result, increases in the percentage of

[22] Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance in the United States: 2011*, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-243, Washington, DC, 2012.

[23] For a fuller explanation of changes in father involvement, see Robert Drago, "The Parenting of Infants: A Time-Use Study," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 2009: 33–43.

[24] For estimates of stay-at-home fathers from the Current Population Survey, please refer to Table SHP-1, "Parents and Children in Stay-At-Home Parent Family Groups: 1994 to Present." <www.census.gov/hhes/families/files/shp1.xls>.

Table 8.
Fathers Providing Care for Children With Employed Mothers: Selected Years, 1988 to 2011
(Numbers in thousands. Limited to married fathers with employed wives)

Survey year	Fathers with children under 15 years[1]			Fathers with children under 5 years			Fathers with children 5 to 14 years		
		Percent providing			Percent providing			Percent providing	
	Total	Any care	Primary care[2]	Total	Any care	Primary care[2]	Total	Any care	Primary care[2]
1988	14,278	18.9	11.8	6,536	23.3	16.9	10,720	15.5	8.8
1991	14,620	22.8	13.9	6,274	30.3	22.4	11,256	17.5	9.0
1993	14,849	19.6	12.9	6,274	24.8	18.5	11,412	15.6	9.1
1997	15,882	31.8	10.0	6,589	34.0	20.3	12,451	31.5	7.4
1999	16,650	30.9	8.8	6,525	32.3	19.4	13,429	30.5	6.1
2002	15,566	26.1	8.9	6,192	29.0	19.9	12,258	25.5	6.1
2005	15,746	27.2	9.1	6,352	28.7	19.6	12,349	27.4	6.7
2010	14,581	31.6	9.5	6,085	33.4	20.3	11,298	31.7	6.9
2011	14,385	31.0	10.1	5,904	33.9	21.4	11,285	30.4	7.1

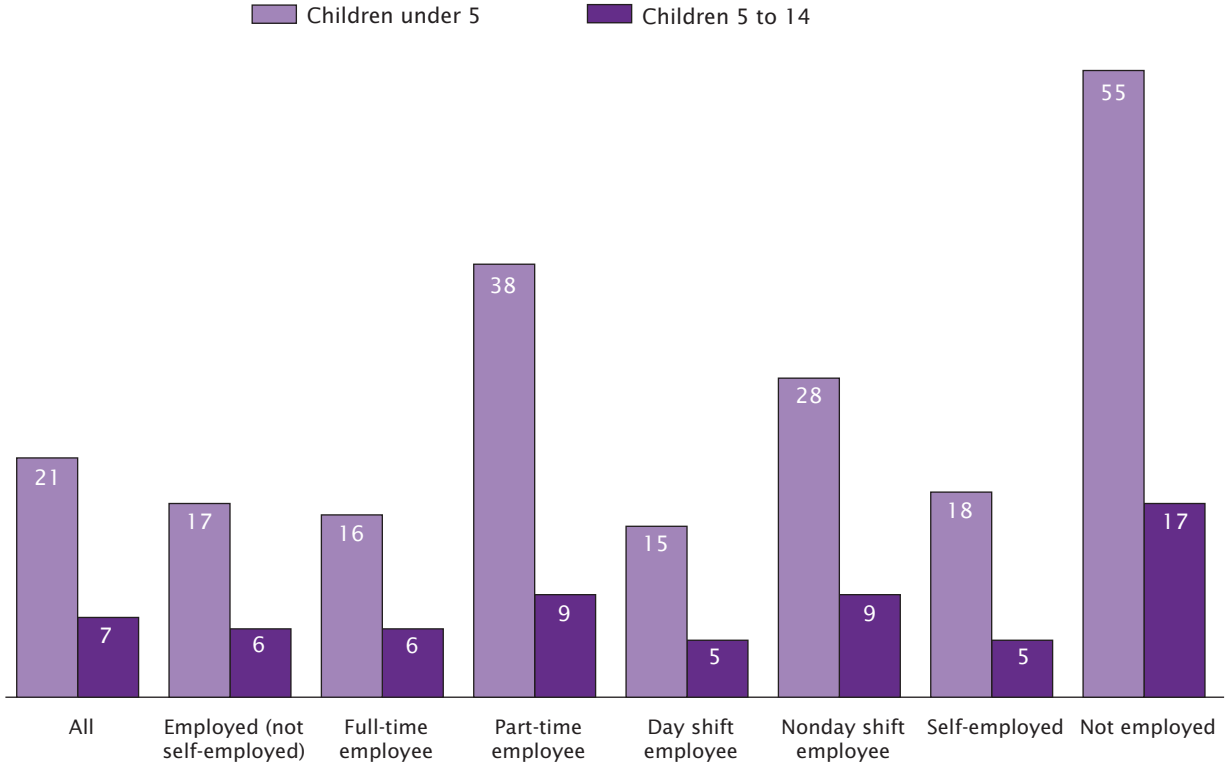
[1] The number of fathers with children in different age groups exceeds the total number with children under 15 years because some fathers have children of both ages. Includes only coresident children.

[2] Beginning in 1997, primary arrangements are derived from the number of hours each arrangement is used each week rather than a direct question asking for the primary arrangement as used in prior surveys. Also, prior to 1997, information on father care was only collected if mentioned as being the primary or secondary care arrangement.

Note: Employed mothers are those with wage and salary employment, other employment arrangements including contingent work, and self-employment. Beginning in 1997, the employment edits were changed to better capture arrangements other than wage and salary employment which may affect comparisons to survey data from earlier years.

Source: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P70-59 Tables 1 and 2, U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996 Panel Waves 4 and 10, 2001 Panel Wave 4, 2004 Panel Wave 4, and 2008 Panel Waves 5 and 8.

Figure 6.
Percentage of Fathers Who Are the Primary Child Care Provider for Their Children, by Father's Employment Characteristics: Spring 2011
(In percent)



Note: Primary care means the child spent more time in father's care than in any other arrangement, including self-care and school.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel Wave 8.

fathers providing care are due in part to the addition of fathers who were not the primary or secondary care providers for their children. From 1988 to 1993, between 19 percent and 23 percent of fathers with employed wives provided care to one or more of their children under 15 years of age (Table 8). The percentage rose to 32 percent in 1997, stayed around this level in 1999, dropped to 26 percent in 2002, and rose again to 31 percent in 2011.

The method used to determine the primary arrangement has also changed. For the more recent survey years, the arrangement in which the child spent the largest number of hours was designated as primary. Previously, the reference parent was asked to identify the primary arrangement. The percentage of fathers who were the primary care provider for their child has varied from 9 percent to 14 percent since 1988. Despite some fluctuations, the proportion of fathers providing primary care for at least one of their children under the age of 15 has followed a downward trend—from 12 percent in 1988 to 10 percent in 2011.

Among fathers with an employed wife, 34 percent were a regular source of care for their preschooler in 2011, compared to 29 percent in 2005. Changes in the use of father-provided child care are often related to changes in the family and the economy.[25] The recent recession and the drop in male employment may have created circumstances where families forego paid child care and instead fathers provide child care during their wives' working hours.

In 2011, one in five fathers (21 percent) were the primary caregiver for their preschooler, meaning their child spent more time in their care than in any other arrangement. In contrast, 7 percent of fathers provided the most hours of care for their grade school-aged child. The lower percentage of primary care by fathers for grade school-aged

[25] Sara Raley, Suzanne M. Bianchi, and Wendy Wang, "When Do Fathers Care? Mother's Economic Contribution and Fathers' Involvement in Child Care," *American Journal of Sociology,* vol. 117 (2012): 1422–1459.

children is almost entirely due to older children being in school for a large portion of the day. School is included as an arrangement in these comparisons. Less than a third of fathers provided any care for their grade school-aged children (30 percent) while the mother was working.

Father's Employment Characteristics

A father's employment status is a determinant of whether he is his child's primary caregiver while his wife is working. Figure 6 shows the percentage of fathers with an employed wife who care for their preschooler or older child by employment attributes. Among fathers with preschoolers in 2011, a greater percentage of fathers who were not employed cared for their young children than did employed fathers (55 percent compared with 17 percent). Eleven percent of fathers in the survey were not employed.

Some job characteristics may affect the availability of working fathers to care for their children. Thirty-eight percent of fathers who are employed part-time care for their preschoolers, compared to fathers who are employed full-time and care for their preschoolers (16 percent). Twenty-eight percent of fathers who regularly worked evening or night shifts were the primary source of care for their young children, compared with 15 percent of day-shift workers.

SUMMARY

Child care has become an important part of American life and American families. Increases in the number of working mothers, changes in family structure, and the desire to provide young children with educational opportunities have all driven up the demand for child care. Almost two-thirds of preschoolers are in some kind of regular child care arrangement. Relatives regularly provided child care to almost half of the more than 20 million preschoolers in the spring of 2011. Nearly one-quarter of all preschoolers were cared for in organized facilities, with day care centers being the most common. In addition to school, relatives were regular contributors to the over all care of grade school-aged children. Self-care was much more prevalent among middle school-aged children than among those in elementary schools. The percentage of grade-school-aged children of a single employed parent who cared for themselves decreased from 24 percent in 1997 to 14 percent in 2011.

Since 1997, when the CAPI instrument was implemented, there have been no significant changes in the proportion of parents or relatives who served as primary child care providers for preschoolers. During this same period, there has been a slight increase in the use of organized care and a slight decrease in nonrelative care, particularly family day care (Table 3). While the proportion of fathers providing primary child care has declined since 1993, fathers continue to play an important role in providing care for their children while mothers are working. Fathers were almost twice as likely to provide child care for children under 5 when the mother worked an evening or night shift (Table 2).

The cost of child care continues to increase. In spring 2011, families with children under 5 paid, on average, over $9,300 a year for child care. Families in poverty spent a greater proportion of their monthly income on child care compared to families at or above the poverty level. However, the percent of family monthly income spent on child care has remained relatively constant between 1997 and 2011, at around 7 percent.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2011 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. The data in this report were collected from January through April 2011 in the eighth wave (interview) of the 2008 SIPP panel. All household members aged 15 and over were eligible to be interviewed, with proxy response permitted for household members not available at the time of interview. The universe of respondents for the SIPP child care topical module consists of a reference parent of children under 15 years old. The data presented in this report reflect the experiences of respondents during the month preceding the interview. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (94 percent of the 4.0 million institutionalized population in Census 2010).

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 is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level

unless otherwise noted. This means the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. 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 the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports to minimize these errors. The Survey of Income and Program Participation weighting procedure uses 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 undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates including standard errors and confidence intervals, go to <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW9(S&A-14).pdf> or contact Mahdi S. Sundukchi of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division at <mahdi.s.sundukchi@census.gov> or Ashley M. Westra of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division at <ashley.m.westra@census.gov>.

Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following Web sites: <www.census.gov/sipp/> (main SIPP Web site), <www.census.gov/sipp/workpapr/wp230.pdf> (SIPP Quality Profile), and <www.census.gov/sipp/usrguide/sipp2001.pdf> (SIPP User's Guide).

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 Data" under "C." A detailed table package presenting more in-depth child care information for both preschool- and grade school-aged children is also on the Internet, as well as more information on 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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