Families rely on a patchwork of child care services to meet their work and family needs. Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) helps us understand child care usage among families.

In 2011, 32.7 million children were in a regular child care arrangement while their parents worked or pursued other activities outside of the home.

A greater percentage of preschoolers participated in child care compared to grade schoolers.

Percentage of grade schoolers who participate in a regular child care arrangement.

One block represents approximately one million children in a regular care arrangement.
Who's Minding the Kids?

Increases in the number of working mothers and the desire to provide young children with educational opportunities have driven up the demand for various types of child care. Relatives regularly provide care for preschoolers.

- **Relatives** (27%): One in five relatives who provided care was a grandparent.
- **Organized facilities** (25%): Preschoolers of nonemployed moms spend 15 hours per week more in child care than preschoolers of employed moms.
- **Parents** (22%): On average, preschoolers of employed mothers spend 15 hours per week more in child care than preschoolers of nonemployed mothers.
- **Other nonrelative** (13%): Parents and relatives make up half of all preschool child care arrangements.
- **Other** (13%): Parents and relatives make up half of all preschool child care arrangements.

**Definitions**

- **Relatives**—grandparents, siblings, and other relatives.
- **Organized Facilities**—day care or child care centers, nursery schools, preschools, and Head Start programs.
- **Parents**—fathers who provided care while the mother worked or mothers who provided care while working.
- **Other nonrelative**—in-home babysitters, neighbors, friends, and family day care homes.
- **Other**—school, self care, and no regular arrangement.
Child Care Payments

Out-of-pocket costs for child care nearly doubled in the last quarter century. However, the percentage of families paying for child care has declined since the late 1990s.

Weekly Average Child Care Payments for Families With Employed Mothers: 1985–2011

- Families with younger children spend more on child care. The average weekly payment for a preschooler is $179 versus $93 for grade schoolers.

Married Fathers Are More Likely to Provide Primary Care if They Are Not Employed or Work Part-Time

- More than half of fathers not employed, with employed wives, are primary care providers for their children under 5.
Since 1997, the percentage of families paying for care has decreased from 42 percent to 32 percent.

Families Below the Federal Poverty Line Spent Roughly Four Times the Percentage of Their Income on Child Care as Other Families

- Families in poverty: 30%
- Families not in poverty: 8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.
For more information, visit <www.census.gov/how/infographics/sources.html>