

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

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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

Current Population Reports

By
Lynda Laughlin

CHILD CARE DEFINITIONS

The universe of respondents in the Survey of Income and Program Population (SIPP) child care module consists of adults who are the parents of children under 15 years old. In households where both parents are present, the mother is the *designated parent*. Questions on child care arrangements for each child are asked of the designated parent. If the mother is not available for an interview, the father of the child can give proxy responses for her. In single-parent families, the resident parent is the designated parent. If neither parent is in the household, the guardian is the designated parent. Designated parents include biological, step- and adoptive parents, or other relatives/nonrelatives acting as guardians in the absence of parents. In this report, unless otherwise noted, the term *parent* is used to refer to the designated parent.

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

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

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

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

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Table 1.

Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2005

Arrangement type	Number of children (in thousands)	Percent in arrangement	
		Estimate	Margin of error ¹
Total children under 5 years	20,047	100.0	(X)
IN A REGULAR ARRANGEMENT	12,726	62.8	1.2
Relative care	8,270	41.3	1.2
Mother ²	859	4.2	0.5
Father ²	3,171	15.7	0.9
Sibling	540	2.7	0.4
Grandparent	4,614	23.0	1.0
Other relative	1,337	6.7	0.6
Nonrelative care	6,988	34.9	1.2
Organized care facility	4,679	23.3	1.0
Day care center	2,703	13.5	0.8
Nursery or preschool	1,257	6.3	0.6
Head Start/school ³	942	4.7	0.5
Other nonrelative care	2,688	13.4	0.8
In child's home	758	3.8	0.5
In provider's home	1,956	9.8	0.7
Family day care	1,123	5.6	0.6
Other care arrangement	870	4.3	0.5
Self-care	(B)	(B)	(B)
NO REGULAR ARRANGEMENT⁴	7,321	36.5	1.2

(X) Not applicable. (B) Base less than 75,000 or numerator too small for comparison.

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 designated 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), 2004 Panel Wave 4. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

an increasingly important family issue as maternal employment has become the norm, rather than the exception. Child care arrangements and their costs are important 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, shows the number and characteristics of children in different types of child care arrangements in the spring of 2005 and the summer of 2006.¹

¹ The data in this report are from reference month four of the fourth and eighth wave of the 2004 panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Data for wave 4 were collected from February through May 2005. Data for wave 8 were collected June through September 2006. The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States.

Preschoolers and gradeschoolers require different types of care. While the primary focus of child care for infants and preschoolers is meeting their basic needs, older children often engage in structured enrichment activities and are found in self-care situations. The respective child care arrangements used for each age group are compared within this report. Information is also provided about the cost of child care arrangements and the number of fathers providing care for their children. This report examines new topics such as summer child care arrangements for both preschoolers and gradeschoolers.

CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD

This section shows patterns and use of child care, variations by family characteristics, and 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 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) child care survey in 1985.

Child Care Arrangements for Preschoolers

In a typical week during the spring of 2005, 12.7 million (63 percent) of the 20 million children under 5 years of age were in some type of regular child care arrangement (Table 1).² In the interview, arrangements

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.

Table 2.

Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2005

(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 provider's home		No regular child care ³	Multiple arrangements ⁴	
									In child's home	Family day care			Other
Total children under 5 years . . .	20,047	4.2	15.7	23.0	2.7	13.5	6.3	4.7	3.8	5.6	4.3	36.5	17.3
Living with father ⁵	413	20.0	(B)	30.4	4.3	13.1	5.2	7.9	6.3	15.0	5.2	31.5	27.1
Living with mother ⁶	19,633	4.3	15.7	22.9	2.7	13.5	6.3	4.6	3.7	9.6	4.3	36.6	17.1
MOTHER EMPLOYED . . .	11,334	6.8	25.4	29.5	10.4	21.1	7.4	5.2	5.0	8.8	6.6	11.4	24.6
Self-employed	851	25.6	26.8	17.7	(B)	14.5	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	23.9	27.6
Not self-employed ⁷	10,483	5.3	25.3	30.5	10.8	21.6	7.1	5.2	4.7	9.1	6.9	10.4	24.4
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	8,016	5.5	26.9	31.1	9.5	20.8	7.2	4.1	5.4	9.8	7.0	11.0	25.8
Non-Hispanic	6,505	5.7	28.6	30.6	7.0	23.1	8.1	3.2	6.0	10.9	6.1	10.9	27.5
Black alone	1,782	4.3	16.7	25.9	15.0	24.3	6.6	10.7	2.8	8.2	6.0	9.2	18.2
Asian alone	276	4.1	17.9	39.1	12.9	25.3	7.3	4.1	1.9	3.6	10.4	9.9	22.1
Hispanic (any race)	1,692	4.4	20.3	33.4	19.2	12.7	3.3	8.3	2.7	5.0	10.5	10.9	19.1
Marital Status													
Married ⁸	7,425	6.2	27.9	29.2	8.0	21.0	8.4	4.6	4.9	9.6	6.1	11.1	24.4
Separated, divorced, widowed	900	3.3	15.0	28.8	12.4	29.7	6.6	6.3	6.8	8.2	7.6	9.8	19.7
Never married	2,158	3.1	20.3	35.5	19.6	20.1	3.0	6.6	2.9	7.6	9.2	8.4	26.2
Poverty Status⁹													
Below poverty level	1,512	7.5	27.0	27.1	14.2	19.3	1.6	5.6	5.8	5.1	6.9	11.4	22.1
At or above poverty level	8,860	4.9	25.1	31.2	10.0	22.2	8.1	5.1	4.6	9.9	6.8	10.0	24.9
Employment Schedule													
Employed full-time	7,582	3.7	22.1	30.2	10.6	24.5	7.4	5.3	4.1	9.7	7.1	10.0	22.6
Employed part-time	2,901	9.4	33.6	31.1	11.3	14.1	6.4	5.0	6.1	7.5	6.3	11.6	29.0
Shift Work Status													
Worked day shift	6,860	4.0	18.3	30.1	9.4	26.0	8.3	5.3	4.2	11.3	7.3	8.8	21.6
Worked nonday shift	3,623	7.9	38.5	31.2	13.3	13.3	5.0	5.0	5.6	4.9	6.1	13.5	29.7
Child's Age													
Less than 1 year	1,824	6.5	27.0	34.0	10.5	17.5	(B)	—	4.9	10.0	8.0	12.9	22.9
1 to 2 years	4,169	4.6	24.2	30.5	9.9	23.6	3.3	—	3.9	10.3	6.8	10.4	21.5
3 to 4 years	4,490	5.5	25.6	29.0	11.7	21.5	13.5	12.0	5.3	7.7	6.4	9.4	27.7

See footnotes at end of table.

included only those used on a regular basis, at least once a week. Preschoolers—children under 5 years old—were more likely to be cared for by a relative (41 percent) than by a nonrelative (35 percent), while 11 percent were regularly cared for

by both.³ Thirty-seven percent had no regular child care arrangement.

Twenty-three percent of preschoolers were regularly cared for by their grandparent and 16 percent were cared for by their father. The survey only asked about child care

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.

provided by the father for the time the designated parent was working. Care by other relatives (7 percent), or 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 (14 percent) being more commonly used than nursery or preschools

Table 2.

Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2005—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/pre-school	Head Start/school ²	In provider's home		No regular child care ³	Multiple arrangements ⁴	
									In child's home	Family day care			Other
MOTHER NOT EMPLOYED¹⁰	8,299	(NI)	(NI)	13.8	6.9	3.1	4.8	3.9	2.1	1.0	1.3	71.0	6.9
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	6,559	(NI)	(NI)	12.3	5.8	2.4	5.0	3.5	2.4	1.0	1.1	73.4	6.4
Non-Hispanic	4,671	(NI)	(NI)	14.1	5.9	2.5	6.7	3.3	2.9	1.1	1.4	70.9	7.7
Black alone	1,054	(NI)	(NI)	23.5	12.1	7.9	2.5	7.2	(B)	2.0	2.5	57.6	10.3
Asian alone	407	(NI)	(NI)	10.1	5.2	3.9	7.5	2.0	(B)	(B)	1.1	73.9	5.6
Hispanic (any race)	2,028	(NI)	(NI)	7.9	6.0	2.2	1.1	3.9	1.0	(B)	(B)	78.8	3.3
Marital Status													
Married ⁸	6,199	(NI)	(NI)	9.5	4.8	2.2	5.4	3.2	2.1	(B)	1.0	76.8	5.4
Separated, divorced, widowed	493	(NI)	(NI)	20.7	10.7	4.1	5.1	7.6	4.5	(B)	1.6	58.4	11.2
Never married	1,607	(NI)	(NI)	28.3	13.9	6.3	2.0	5.3	1.0	2.6	2.0	52.4	11.5
Poverty Status⁹													
Below poverty level	2,382	(NI)	(NI)	15.0	7.7	2.9	1.6	5.4	2.1	1.2	1.5	69.7	6.0
At or above poverty level	5,501	(NI)	(NI)	14.0	6.4	2.9	6.2	3.2	2.1	(B)	1.2	71.3	7.4
Child's Age													
Less than 1 year	1,695	(NI)	(NI)	15.5	6.6	1.8	(B)	(B)	2.0	1.3	1.1	74.4	5.8
1 to 2 years	3,408	(NI)	(NI)	14.7	6.0	3.5	2.0	(B)	1.9	(B)	1.2	72.6	5.9
3 to 4 years	3,197	(NI)	(NI)	11.9	8.0	3.5	9.9	10.0	2.2	1.0	1.4	67.5	8.5

(-) Represents or rounds to zero. (NI) Not included, see footnote 1. (B) Base less than 75,000 or numerator too small for comparison.

¹ Care in parental arrangements was calculated only for the time the designated 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 designated parent. Child care arrangements 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 designated 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 (770,000), mothers not in school and looking for work (1,020,000), and mothers not in school and not in the labor force (6,503,000).

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), 2004 Panel Wave 4. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

(6 percent). Overall, other nonrelatives provided home-based care to 13 percent of preschoolers, with 6 percent cared for by family day care providers.

Over one-third of preschoolers (7.3 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 than employed mothers were not in a regular child care arrangement (71 percent and 11 percent, respectively).

Two 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 20 percent of preschoolers living with only their father in the household were regularly in their mother's care while their father 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 30 percent of preschoolers, while a slightly smaller percentage (25 percent) of

⁴ Eighty-four percent of preschoolers with no regular arrangement lived with a designated parent who was not employed. They were most likely under the supervision of their parent during the day. For those preschoolers with an employed designated 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.

fathers cared for preschoolers of employed mothers. 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 26 percent of preschoolers of self-employed mothers.

Arrangements Used by Nonemployed Mothers

In the spring of 2005, 89 percent of the 11.3 million preschoolers of employed mothers and 29 percent of the 8.3 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 (14 percent). A smaller percentage of mothers who were not employed used organizational child care facilities such as day care and nursery schools that could provide enrichment activities, educational development, and early childhood socialization for their preschoolers. Similar percentages were in day care centers, nursery schools or preschools, and federal Head Start programs or kindergarten/grade schools—3 percent to 5 percent each.⁶

⁵ Information on child care by the mother or father is not calculated for the time that the designated parent is not working for an employer 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 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 204,000 preschoolers were reported to be in a Head Start program as a regular form of child care from February to May 2005. Administrative data indicates that there were an average of 905,851 children 0–4 years of age enrolled in federal Head Start programs in 2005 <<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/about/fy2005.html>>.

Seven percent of preschoolers of nonemployed mothers were in multiple (two or more) child care arrangements, compared with 25 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. Preschoolers with employed mothers were most likely to be in multiple arrangements when they were in nursery school/preschool 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 (50 percent compared with 34 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).

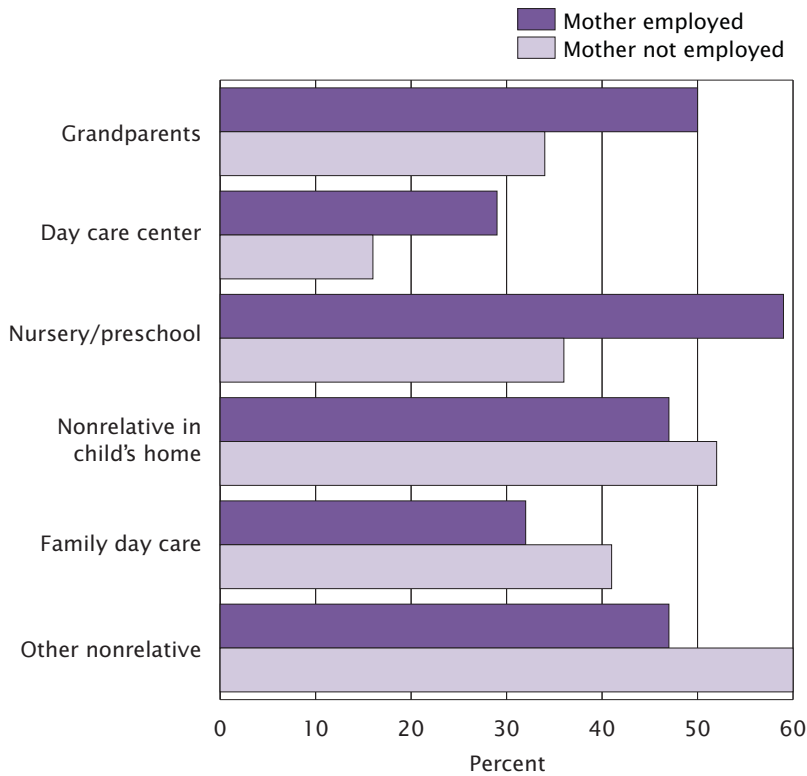
Children of employed mothers who spent any amount of time in a nursery school or preschool were more likely than their counterparts whose mothers were not employed to be in multiple arrangements (59 percent and 36 percent, respectively). Often, nursery schools and preschools offer half-day care only, which would require mothers working 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 preschoolers for both children of employed and not 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

Figure 1.

Percentage of Preschoolers in Multiple Child Care Arrangements for Selected Arrangement Types, by Employment Status of Mother: Spring 2005



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), 2004 Panel Wave 4.

the day. In spring 2005, preschoolers spent an average of 32 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

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.

mothers spent 16 hours more in child care compared to children with nonemployed mothers: 35 hours per week and 19 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, 25 hours per week in care.

Preschoolers usually spent more time in an arrangement if their mother was employed. This was true for those in each of the care arrangements shown in Figure 2, with the exception of those in day care center or family day care. Day care centers or family day care may tend to be more contractual and 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. Preschoolers of employed mothers spent 10 more hours in the care of a grandparent than those with mothers who were not employed. The highest average number of hours spent in an arrangement by preschoolers of employed mother was 33 hours for those in a day care center.

Family Characteristics

This section shows variations in child care use among 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

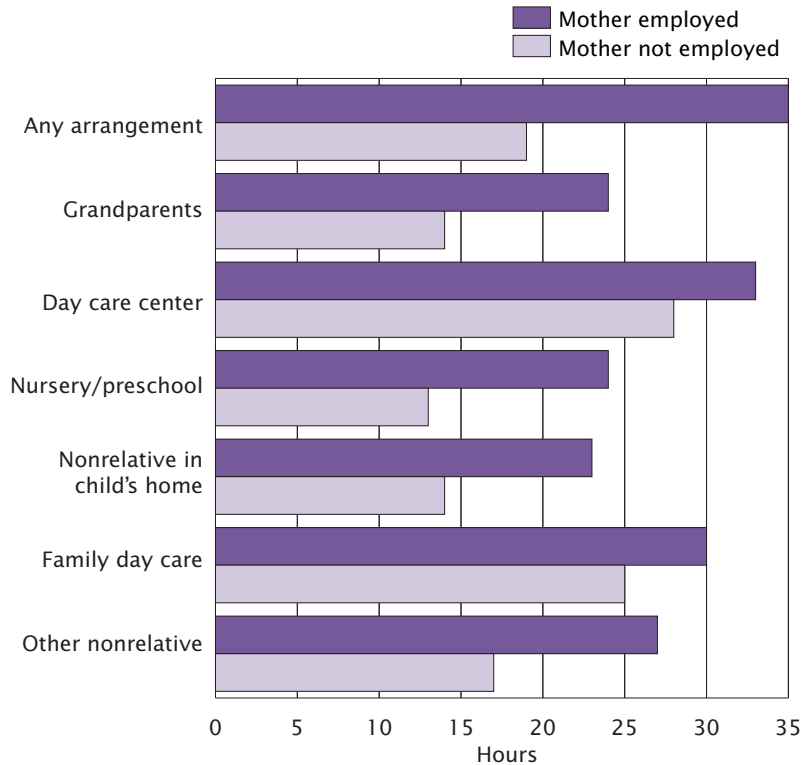
Table 2 shows that across all groups, many employed mothers relied on their relatives to act as child care providers. The likelihood of using relative care may depend on current family living arrangements such as being in a multigenerational household or in extended families. This could potentially affect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

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.

Figure 2.

Average Time Preschoolers Spent in Selected Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status of Mother: Spring 2005

(Average hours per week among children in specified care arrangement)



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), 2004 Panel Wave 4.

influence the proximity of relatives to serve as child care providers.

In spring 2005, 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, Hispanic, or Asian mothers were more likely to be cared for by their grandparents than their fathers. Hispanic mothers were twice as likely to rely on care from a sibling or other

relative (19 percent) as non-Hispanic White mothers (7 percent).

Among children of employed mothers, day care centers were frequented by around one-quarter of children of Black mothers, Asian mothers, and non-Hispanic White mothers, while approximately 7 percent were in nursery schools or preschools. A smaller proportion of children of Hispanic mothers were in family day care (5 percent) than those with non-Hispanic White mothers (11 percent). Preschoolers of either Black or Hispanic mothers

were less likely than children with mothers in the other groups to be in multiple child care arrangements, 18 percent and 19 percent¹⁰ compared with 28 percent of children of non-Hispanic White mothers.

For preschoolers of nonemployed mothers, a higher percentage of children of non-Hispanic White mothers (71 percent) had no regular arrangement than children of Black mothers (58 percent). About 4 out of 5 children of nonemployed Hispanic mothers were not in a regular child care arrangement.

Poverty Status

Families in poverty with an employed mother relied to a greater extent on grandparents and fathers (around 27 percent each) than on day care centers (19 percent) or family day care providers (5 percent) to care for their preschoolers. Children in families above the poverty line were less likely to be cared for by a sibling (10 percent) but more likely to be in family day care (10 percent) than those children in poverty. This tendency may be due to the higher costs associated with organized care.

Work Schedule Characteristics

Overall, in spring 2005, 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 (25 percent) and family day care providers (10 percent), than were preschoolers of mothers who worked part-time (14 percent and 8 percent, respectively). On the other hand, preschoolers of mothers who worked part-time were more likely to be cared for by their father (34

⁹ Categories are not exclusive. Hispanics may be any race.

¹⁰ Not significantly different from each other.

Table 3.

Primary Child Care Arrangements of Preschoolers With Employed Mothers: Selected Years, 1985 to 2005

(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
Children under 5 years . . .	8,168	9,483	9,629	9,854	9,937	10,047	11,041	11,397	9,823	11,334
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION										
Total	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
Mother while working	8.1	7.6	6.4	8.7	6.2	5.4	3.2	3.0	3.2	4.3
Father	15.7	15.1	16.5	20.0	15.9	16.6	17.7	17.1	17.5	17.2
Relatives	24.1	21.1	23.1	23.5	25.3	21.4	24.9	27.7	24.8	25.8
Grandparent	15.9	13.9	14.3	15.8	16.5	15.9	17.5	19.7	18.6	19.4
Sibling and other relative	8.2	7.2	8.8	7.7	8.8	5.5	7.4	8.0	6.2	6.4
Organized facility	23.1	25.8	27.5	23.1	29.9	25.1	20.4	21.0	24.3	23.8
Day care center	14.0	16.6	20.6	15.8	18.3	17.7	15.4	16.7	18.3	18.1
Nursery/preschool	9.1	9.2	6.9	7.3	11.6	5.9	4.2	3.9	5.2	5.0
Federal Head Start program	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	1.5	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.8
Other nonrelative care	28.2	28.9	25.1	23.3	21.6	28.4	20.2	18.8	17.2	15.6
In child's home	5.9	5.3	5.0	5.4	5.0	4.9	3.8	3.3	3.9	3.6
In provider's home	22.3	23.6	20.1	17.9	16.6	23.5	16.3	15.6	13.4	12.0
Family day care	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	15.7	9.8	10.2	8.9	7.4
Other nonrelative	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	7.8	6.5	5.4	4.5	4.6
Other	0.8	1.6	1.3	1.6	1.1	2.9	13.7	12.4	13.0	13.2
Self-care	—	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
No regular arrangement ³	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	2.2	11.5	9.7	10.4	10.8

(—) Represents or rounds to zero. (NA) 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 error in the editing procedure.

Sources: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P-70-9, Table 1; P-70-30, Table 1; P-70-36, Table 1; P-70-53, Table 2; P-70-70, Table 3; 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. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>

percent) than preschoolers whose mothers worked full-time (22 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 (39 percent and 18 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 of mothers who 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.

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 (30 percent compared with 22 percent). Mothers working nonday

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.

shifts, particularly those with irregular schedules, may have difficulty securing regular arrangements and instead rely on a patchwork of child care arrangements.

Child's Age

Fathers and grandparents played an important role in caring for infants and toddlers of employed mothers. A greater percentage of infants 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 twice as high (34 percent) than those cared for in day care centers (18 percent). Among children aged 1 to 2 years old, a larger percentage spent time in grandparent care (31 percent) compared with a day care center or in their fathers' care and day care centers (24 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 less 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 1985.¹³ The primary child care arrangement is defined as the arrangement used

the most hours per week.¹⁴ In spring 2005, 11.3 million preschoolers lived with employed mothers, up from 8.2 million in 1985. Forty-seven 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 39 percent of primary arrangements in spring 2005, while 11 percent reported having no regular arrangement other than school or self-care.

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 paper questionnaire to a computer-based instrument. Changes in the mode of data collection asked and presented the child care questions and categories in a different manner. 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 and the economic climate and stages of the business cycle during the time the surveys were conducted may also influence child care usage.¹⁵

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Lynne Casper and Martin O'Connell, "Work, Income, the Economy, and Married Fathers as Child-Care Providers." *Demography*, vol. 35 (1998): 243–50.

The use of nonrelatives for child care followed an erratic pattern during the 1985 to 2005 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 2005, 16 percent were cared for in a home-based arrangement by a nonrelative. Care by nonrelatives in the child's home did not change much over time; it was the primary arrangement for 3 percent to 6 percent of children in any of the survey years. 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 12 percent in 2005.

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 24 percent in 2005.

Rates of family and relative care also have varied over the past 20 years. The rate of care by fathers was around 15 percent between 1985 and 1988, increased to 20 percent in 1991, and settled between 16 and 18 percent beginning in 1993. The declining trend since 1985 in the rate of care by mothers while they were working was interrupted in 1991, when it rose to 9 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 2005, 3 percent of women were the primary caretaker

¹³ 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.

COMPARABILITY OF 1997–2005 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.

The types of child care arrangements were expanded and differentiated by the child's age and parent's employment status. Also, 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 2004 panel asked about arrangements used between February and May of 2005. 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.

In addition, 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 <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/conemp.nr0.htm>>. Using the broadest measure, this group could have included up to 5.4 million workers or 4 percent of the labor force in February 2001.

for their child while they were working. The lack of a consistent trend since 1985 in the use of specific child care arrangements makes it difficult to foresee which arrangements will grow or wane in popularity in the future, although the proportions appear to have stabilized since 1997 estimates may be biased.

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-Age 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 in order to show all of children's activities during the 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 only in school or in self-care. Relatives were regular contributors to the overall care of many grade school-aged children (Table 4). In spring 2005, similar proportions of grade school-aged children received care from a grandparent or other relative, including siblings (13 percent each), while 15 percent of grade school-aged children were cared for by their fathers.

Grade school-aged children were less likely to be cared for by non-relatives, 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. Six percent of children 5 to 14 years old were cared

Table 4.

Grade School-Aged Children in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2005

(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	Non-relative in child's home	Non-relative 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	39,570	3.8	15.4	12.8	13.0	5.5	2.5	4.0	94.0	14.1	14.2	49.5	15.1
Living with father ⁷	1,732	18.5	(B)	21.6	13.8	5.5	6.0	3.9	94.6	17.6	19.0	35.3	17.9
Living with mother ⁸	37,837	3.8	15.2	12.4	13.0	5.5	2.3	4.0	93.9	14.0	14.0	50.4	15.0
MOTHER EMPLOYED	25,676	5.4	21.6	15.1	15.3	7.5	2.9	5.2	95.2	16.6	16.5	37.3	19.1
Self-employed	2,409	17.1	19.4	9.8	9.2	3.6	3.6	3.3	94.6	17.8	15.1	49.7	21.2
Not self-employed ⁹	23,267	4.2	21.9	15.7	15.9	7.9	2.8	5.4	95.3	16.5	16.7	36.0	18.9
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	17,884	4.5	22.9	14.9	14.5	7.8	2.7	5.7	95.8	16.8	17.6	37.4	19.1
Non-Hispanic	14,469	4.7	23.6	14.3	13.3	8.0	3.0	5.5	95.6	18.1	18.7	38.3	20.1
Black alone	3,884	3.4	15.8	18.7	22.0	8.1	2.9	4.8	94.8	13.6	13.9	32.1	17.1
Asian alone	712	3.7	24.1	13.2	17.5	10.2	1.8	4.7	96.1	21.2	8.4	30.3	20.3
Hispanic (any race)	3,729	3.8	20.3	17.9	19.2	6.9	1.9	5.9	94.8	11.3	13.0	33.3	15.5
Marital Status													
Married ¹⁰	16,408	4.2	25.9	13.1	12.9	7.3	2.3	4.5	95.1	16.4	16.0	39.0	18.2
Separated, divorced, widowed	4,006	4.4	12.4	17.7	22.8	9.0	4.2	8.3	96.2	18.6	22.6	31.0	20.1
Never married	2,853	4.1	12.3	27.3	23.5	10.1	3.6	6.9	95.1	13.8	12.4	25.7	21.3
Poverty Status¹¹													
In poverty	2,632	3.8	20.9	16.2	21.8	6.8	3.2	7.0	94.6	9.5	13.9	32.3	17.5
Not in poverty	20,477	4.3	22.0	15.6	15.2	8.0	2.7	5.3	95.3	17.4	17.1	36.4	19.1
Employment Schedule													
Employed full-time ¹²	16,977	3.8	21.3	17.0	16.8	9.1	2.7	6.0	95.3	17.5	18.0	32.6	19.3
Employed part-time	6,290	5.6	23.5	11.9	13.5	4.7	2.9	3.9	65.2	13.5	13.2	45.2	17.8
Shift Work Status													
Worked day shift	15,505	3.5	17.4	15.7	14.9	9.3	2.5	5.7	95.7	17.9	17.5	37.1	17.3
Worked nonday shift	7,762	5.8	30.8	15.5	17.9	5.1	3.4	4.9	94.4	13.5	15.0	33.7	22.2
Child's Age													
5 to 8 years	8,461	4.9	25.8	21.4	13.7	14.6	3.1	7.9	89.2	16.1	2.3	24.4	23.1
9 to 11 years	7,141	4.6	22.3	15.6	18.3	6.6	3.5	5.6	98.6	18.1	11.1	33.7	19.4
12 to 14 years	7,665	3.2	17.2	9.4	16.1	1.8	1.7	2.6	98.9	15.3	37.7	50.9	13.8

See footnotes at end of table.

for in organized care, 3 percent by a nonrelative in the child's home, and 4 percent by a nonrelative in the provider's home. The low use of nonrelative care compared to younger children reflects that fact that 94 percent of older children are enrolled in school, and 14 percent were involved in enrichment activities.

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.¹⁶ 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

¹⁶ Kristin Smith and Lynne Casper, "Self-care: Why do Parents Leave Their Children Unsupervised?" *Demography*, vol. 41 (2004): 303-14.

Table 4.

Grade School-Aged Children in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Spring 2005—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	Non-relative in child's home	Non-relative in provider's home ³	School	Enrichment activity ⁴	Self-care	No regular child care ⁵	Multiple arrangements ⁶
MOTHER NOT EMPLOYED¹³	12,162	(NI)	(NI)	6.7	8.1	1.3	1.2	1.3	91.2	8.4	8.5	78.2	6.3
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	9,517	(NI)	(NI)	6.0	7.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	90.3	8.7	8.7	79.5	5.9
Non-Hispanic	6,797	(NI)	(NI)	6.8	7.5	1.5	1.3	1.4	90.1	10.4	10.1	77.1	6.9
Black alone	1,686	(NI)	(NI)	11.2	12.2	2.3	1.5	2.8	94.7	8.1	7.6	69.6	9.1
Asian alone	561	(NI)	(NI)	5.7	5.7	—	(B)	—	94.2	6.9	7.5	84.1	5.0
Hispanic (any race)	2,868	(NI)	(NI)	3.9	7.1	(B)	(B)	(B)	90.7	4.5	5.0	85.2	3.5
Marital Status													
Married ¹⁰	9,123	(NI)	(NI)	4.7	7.1	1.2	1.0	(B)	90.6	9.0	7.9	80.7	5.7
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,705	(NI)	(NI)	12.5	10.8	2.0	1.4	3.1	93.5	8.1	12.3	70.2	8.1
Never married	1,334	(NI)	(NI)	12.4	11.3	1.8	2.2	2.6	92.8	5.2	8.2	71.6	8.1
Poverty Status¹¹													
In poverty	3,548	(NI)	(NI)	7.9	9.6	1.3	1.0	2.6	92.4	5.4	7.4	77.4	6.8
Not in poverty	8,087	(NI)	(NI)	6.3	7.3	1.4	1.3	(B)	90.6	10.0	9.1	78.4	6.3
Child's Age													
5 to 8 years	5,077	(NI)	(NI)	8.4	7.6	2.7	1.8	1.7	83.7	7.5	1.2	76.2	7.2
9 to 11 years	3,643	(NI)	(NI)	7.0	8.1	(B)	(B)	1.1	96.3	10.4	6.7	77.9	7.1
12 to 14 years	3,442	(NI)	(NI)	3.8	8.7	(B)	(B)	(B)	96.9	7.8	21.3	81.6	4.0

(—) Represents or rounds to zero. (NI) Not included, see footnote 1. (B) Base less than 75,000 or numerator too small for comparison.

¹ Care in parental arrangements was only calculated for the time the designated 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 designated parent. Child care arrangements 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 designated 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 (834,000), mothers not in school and looking for work (1,793,000), and mothers not in school and not in the labor force (9,534,000).

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), 2004 Panel Wave 4. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

those children who were identified as talking care of themselves by the designated parent.

Estimates of Self-Care

In spring 2005, 5.3 million (14 percent) of the 37.8 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, 74 percent were in the older age group. Within each age group, 5 percent of elementary school-aged children and

Table 5.

Prevalence of Self-Care Among Grade School-Aged Children by Selected Characteristics for Those Living With Mother: Spring 2005

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Age of child	
		5 to 11 years	12 to 14 years
Total children 5 to 14 years	39,570	26,986	12,584
LIVING WITH FATHER¹	1,732	1,050	683
Number in self-care	330	76	254
Percent in self-care	19.0	7.2	37.2
LIVING WITH MOTHER	37,837	25,937	11,901
Number in self-care	5,285	1,404	3,881
Percent in self-care	14.0	5.4	32.6
Race and Hispanic Origin of Mother			
White alone	14.6	5.8	33.9
Non-Hispanic	16.0	6.3	36.4
Black alone	11.8	4.3	27.7
Asian alone	8.4	2.8	22.0
Hispanic (any race)	9.7	3.8	24.1
Marital Status of Mother			
Married ²	13.2	4.9	32.0
Separated, divorced, widowed	19.5	8.6	37.4
Never married	10.8	4.7	27.6
Poverty Status of Family³			
Below poverty level	10.4	5.1	22.9
At or above poverty level	14.9	5.5	34.7
100–199 percent of poverty level	10.5	4.1	25.7
200 percent of poverty level or higher	16.6	6.1	37.9
Employment Schedule of Mother			
Not employed	8.5	3.5	21.3
Employed (all)	16.5	6.4	37.2
Self-employed	15.1	6.7	32.2
Not self-employed ⁴	16.7	6.3	37.7
Full-time ⁵	18.0	6.7	39.9
Part-time	13.2	5.3	31.3
Worked day shift	17.5	6.7	39.1
Worked nonday shift	15.0	5.7	34.9
Enrichment Activities of Child			
Participated in an activity	21.2	9.3	49.4
Did not participate in an activity	12.8	4.8	30.1
Average hours per week in self-care among children in self-care	6.0	4.9	6.4
Number of hours in self-care per week (Percent distribution)			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 2 hours	28.4	37.6	25.1
2 to 4 hours	26.8	24.5	27.6
5 to 9 hours	23.9	22.5	24.4
10 or more hours	20.9	15.4	22.9

¹ Mother not present in the household, so father is the designated 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), 2004 Panel Wave 4. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

33 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 1 percent among 5- and 6-year-olds to 39 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 6 hours per week. Close to half of children 5 to 14 years old in self-care spent between 2 and 9 hours per week supervising themselves (51 percent). Children 5 to 11 years old spent on average 5 hours per week in self-care, and children 12 to 14 years old spent an average of 6 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 (23 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

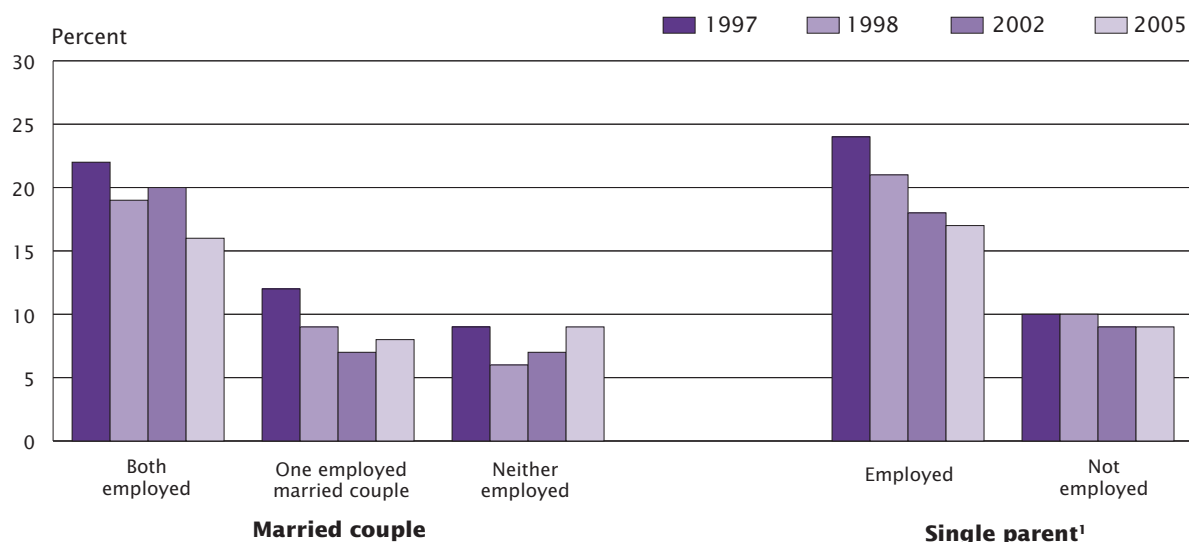
Parental availability

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.¹⁷ In spring 2005, grade school-aged children living with a separated, divorced, or widowed mother were more likely to be in self-care (20 percent) than were those living with a married mother (13 percent) or a never-married parent (11 percent).

Patterns of self-care vary also by the mother's labor force participation. Seventeen percent of grade school-aged children of an employed but not self-employed mother were in self-care compared

¹⁷ 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): 523–43.

Figure 3.
Grade School-Aged Children in Self-Care by Parent's Employment Status and Marital Status: 1997 to 2005



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.

¹Includes 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.

with 9 percent of children whose mother was not employed. Also, children whose mother worked full-time were more likely to be in self-care than those whose mother worked part-time (18 percent and 13 percent, respectively). 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 non-day shift.

Differences in self-care also appeared by race and Hispanic origin. Sixteen percent of 5- to 14-year olds with a non-Hispanic White mother were in self-care situations, compared with 10 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 2005 as well as for 1997, 1999, and 2002, the three previous survey years for which comparable questions on self-care were asked. In 2005, similar percentages (about 9 percent) of children living with married parents, where one or neither parent was employed, and children living with a single parent who was not employed, were in self-care. This was also the case for 1997. In each of these situations, at least one parent was not working and therefore more likely to be available

to care for their child. The only consistent trend over time appears for children of a single, employed parent—their chance of being in self-care declined from 24 percent in 1997 to 21 percent in 1999 to 18 percent in 2002 and 17 percent in 2005. The decline between 2002 and 2005 was not statistically significant. Self-care among children with married, dual employed parents fluctuated between 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 rose back up to 20 percent in 2002. By spring 2005, 16 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 2005 data refer to payments made between February and May of 2005. 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 that can affect child care costs may affect the comparability of the 2005 data with data from prior surveys.

Family Payments for Child Care

In spring 2005, 33.7 million mothers lived with at least one child of their own who was under the age of 15 (Table 6). Twenty-seven 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 \$104 per week or approximately \$5,400 a year. Families with children under 5 years old paid, on average, over \$6,000 a year for child care, an increase of over \$1,000 a generation ago. Not employed mothers were less likely to make a payment for child care than were employed but not self-employed mothers (10 percent and 36 percent, respectively). Mothers who were not employed paid on average less per week (\$78) than did employed but not self-employed mothers (\$107).

Of the 23 million mothers who were employed but not

self-employed, 35 percent (8 million) reported they made a cash payment for child care for at least one of their children. The percent of families who reported a cash payment for child care has decreased since 1997 when approximately 42 percent made some kind of cash payment for child care. However, the percent of family monthly income has stayed relatively constant between 1997 and 2005, at around 7 percent.

More mothers who worked full-time paid for child care (38 percent) than mothers who worked part-time (29 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 (24 percent) than families not in poverty (36 percent).

Families with an employed but not self-employed mother paid an average of \$107 per week for child care in the spring of 2005. Mothers working full-time paid, on average, \$23 more per week for child care than mothers working part-time. On average, mothers with one child paid \$84 per week, while those with two or more children paid about \$124 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 have children in different age groups with different child care needs and costs. This age difference is reflected in the fact that among families with an employed mother, those whose youngest child was under 5 years old were twice likely to pay for child care as families with children aged 5 to 14 only (51 percent and 25 percent,

respectively), and they paid an average \$48 more a week (\$127 compared with \$79 a week). Families with young children also spent a higher proportion of their family income on child care; 9 percent of income compared with 4 percent of income for families with only older children.

Child care expenditures by income level and poverty status varied. The amount paid for child care increased with income. For example, among families with employed mothers, those with a monthly income of less than \$1,500 paid \$74 a week for child care, while those with a monthly income of \$4,500 or more paid an average of \$122 per week. Families in poverty paid an average of \$94 per week, not statistically different from families not in poverty who paid \$108 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 (28 percent compared with 7 percent). This difference in the proportion of income paid for child care by poverty status has persisted since 1987.¹⁸

FATHERS AS CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Fathers as Caregivers

The involvement of fathers with their children is a growing topic of interest. The movement of married women into the labor force has changed the organization of daily life and has allowed fathers to be more available for child care while their wives are working. Trends over time in the percentage of fathers providing care for children

¹⁸ 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.

Table 6.

Weekly Child Care Payments of Families With Mothers Present and Children Under 15 Years by Selected Characteristics: 1984 to 2005

(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	Actual dollars		2005 dollars ¹		Percent of income ⁴	Margin of error ³
				Average ²	Margin of error ³	Average ²	Margin of error ³		
Families with mothers and children under 15 years . . .	33,672	9,043	26.9	103.9	3.5	103.9	3.5	5.9	0.1
Mother not employed	10,712	1,054	9.8	77.8	8.1	77.8	8.1	3.6	0.1
Mother employed	22,960	7,989	34.8	107.3	3.8	107.3	3.8	6.4	0.0
Self-employed	2,395	651	27.2	108.2	16.6	108.2	16.6	3.8	0.1
Not self-employed ⁵	21,062	7,498	35.6	107.2	3.8	107.2	3.8	6.8	0.1
Employment Schedule of Mother									
Full-time ⁶	15,792	5,987	37.9	111.8	4.3	111.8	4.3	6.8	0.1
Part-time	5,269	1,511	28.7	89.3	7.7	89.3	7.7	6.8	0.8
Number of Children in Family									
One child	10,728	3,496	32.6	84.2	4.2	84.2	4.2	5.0	0.1
Two children	7,403	2,927	39.5	123.5	6.8	123.5	6.8	8.1	0.9
Three or more children	2,931	1,075	36.7	138.0	11.7	138.0	11.7	9.9	0.4
Age of Youngest Child									
Under 5 years	8,564	4,380	51.2	127.4	4.8	127.4	4.8	9.3	1.0
5 to 14 years	12,498	3,118	24.9	78.9	5.9	78.9	5.9	4.2	0.1
Type of Residence									
Metropolitan	17,679	6,394	36.2	111.9	4.3	111.9	4.3	6.8	0.1
Central cities	5,883	2,096	35.6	103.6	6.4	103.6	6.4	8.2	0.2
Outside central cities	11,796	42,299	36.4	115.9	5.6	115.9	5.6	6.3	0.2
Nonmetropolitan	3,383	1,104	32.6	80.3	6.9	80.3	6.9	6.8	0.2
Monthly Family Income									
Less than \$1,500	2,182	567	26.0	74.1	13.5	74.1	13.5	31.4	66.0
\$1,500 to \$2,999	4,092	1,334	32.6	84.7	7.5	84.7	7.5	16.4	20.2
\$3,000 to \$4,499	3,891	1,253	32.2	93.5	7.5	93.5	7.5	10.8	13.2
\$4,500 and over	10,896	4,344	39.9	122.4	5.4	122.4	5.4	5.3	0.1
Poverty Status									
Below poverty level	2,063	518	25.1	93.5	17.2	93.5	17.2	28.2	12.5
At or above poverty level	18,999	6,980	36.7	108.3	3.9	108.3	3.9	6.5	0.1
100 to 199 percent of poverty level	4,349	1,361	31.3	79.0	6.2	79.0	6.2	14.7	8.3
200 percent of poverty level or higher	14,650	5,619	38.4	115.3	4.5	115.3	4.5	5.9	0.1
Families With Mother Employed⁷									
February to May 2005	22,960	7,989	34.8	107.2	3.5	107.2	2.5	6.8	0.1
January to April 2002	22,208	7,926	35.7	95.2	3.9	103.1	3.9	7.1	0.5
March to June 1999	23,397	9,606	41.1	79.0	2.8	92.6	2.8	6.6	0.3
March to June 1997	22,297	9,413	42.2	74.2	2.3	90.3	2.3	6.8	0.3
September to December 1993	19,798	6,987	35.3	70.0	1.8	94.6	1.8	7.3	0.3
September to December 1991	19,180	6,616	34.5	63.3	3.9	90.8	3.9	7.1	0.3
September to December 1990	18,938	7,202	38.0	59.7	2.1	89.2	2.1	6.9	0.2
September to December 1988	18,843	7,520	39.9	54.0	2.0	89.2	2.0	6.8	0.2
September to December 1987	18,501	6,168	33.3	48.5	3.0	83.4	3.0	6.6	0.3
September to December 1986	18,305	5,742	31.4	44.3	2.3	78.9	2.3	6.3	3.0
December 1984 to March 1985	15,706	5,299	33.7	40.3	1.8	73.2	1.8	(NA)	(NA)

(NA) Not available.

¹ Computed using average Consumer Price Index for a given calendar year as calculated by Bureau of Labor Statistics.² Average expenditures per week among people making child care payments.³ The margin of error, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, provides the 90 percent confidence interval around the estimate.⁴ Percent is a ratio of average monthly child care payments (prorated from weekly averages) to average monthly family income.⁵ Wage and salary jobs and employment arrangements other than self-employed.⁶ Those who work 35 or more hours per week are considered working full-time.⁷ 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.

Sources: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P-70-36 Table 6, 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. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/source.html>.

Table 7.

Fathers Providing Care for Children With Employed Mothers: Selected Years, 1988 to 2005

(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		
	Total	Percent providing		Total	Percent providing		Total	Percent providing	
		Any care	Primary care ²		Any care	Primary care ²		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

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.

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, employment edits were changed to better capture arrangements other than wage and salary employment which may affect comparisons to survey data from earlier years.

Sources: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P-70-59, 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. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <www.census.gov/sipp/source.html>.

of employed and married mothers is included in this section, as well as an analysis of how the father's labor force status is associated with the likelihood of being the primary caregiver for his child. In this section, only fathers who provided child care while their wives worked is examined.¹⁹

Historical comparisons of SIPP data on fathers as child care providers are complicated by the changes to the questionnaire that began in 1997. Prior to that time, only the two most frequently used arrangement types were identified by the designated parent. The revised questionnaire allowed respondents to identify all of the arrangements they regularly use. As a result, increases in the percentage of fathers providing care are due in part to the addition of fathers who were not the primary or secondary care providers for their children.

¹⁹ 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.

From 1988 to 1993, between 19 percent and 23 percent of fathers of employed wives provided care to one or more of their children under 15 years of age (Table 7). The percentage rose to 32 percent in 1997, stayed around this level in 1999, and dropped to 27 percent in 2005.

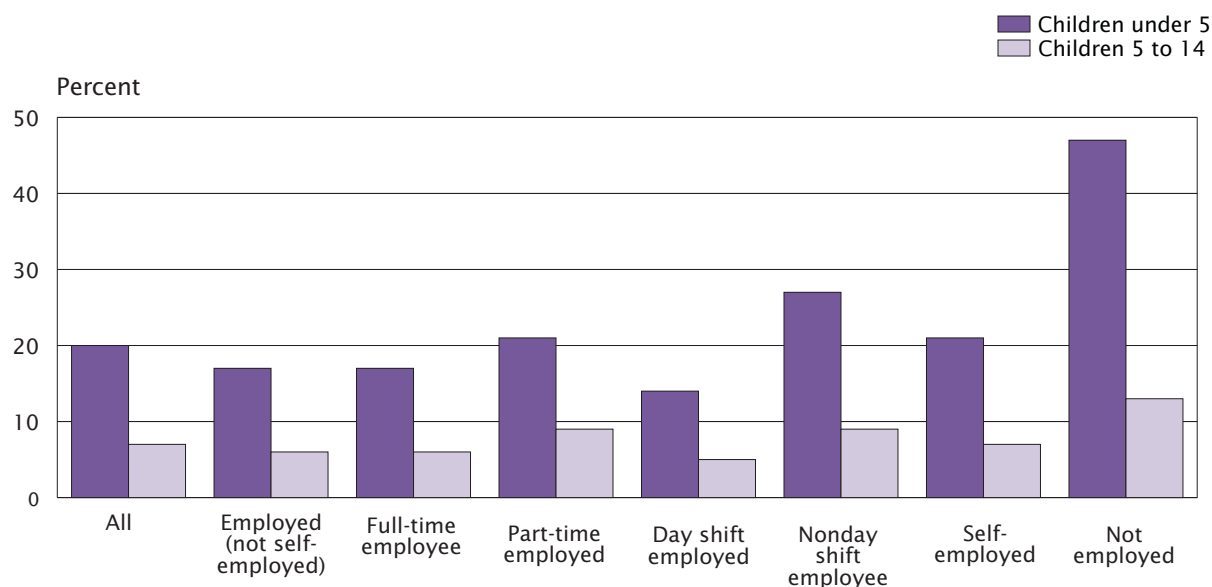
The method used to determine the primary arrangement has also changed. For the more recent survey years, the arrangement in which the child spent the most number of hours was designated as primary. Previously, the designated parent was asked to name the primary arrangement. The percentage of fathers who were the primary care provider for their child has varied between 9 percent and 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 9 percent in 2005.

Among fathers with an employed wife, 29 percent were a regular source of care for their preschooler in 2005. One in five fathers were the primary caregiver for their preschooler, meaning their child spent more time in their care than in any other arrangement (20 percent). 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 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. Similar percentages of fathers provided any care to both their grade school- and preschool-aged children (27 percent and 29 percent, respectively).

Father's Employment Characteristics

A father's employment status is a determinant of whether he is his child's primary caregiver while his

Figure 4.
**Fathers Who Are the Primary Child Care Provider for Their Children
 by Fathers' Employment Characteristics: Spring 2005**



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), 2004 Panel Wave 4.

wife is working. Figure 4 shows the likelihood that fathers with an employed wife will care for their preschooler or older child based on several employment attributes. Among fathers with preschoolers in 2005, a greater percentage of fathers who were not employed cared for their young children than did employed fathers (47 percent compared with 17 percent). Seven percent of fathers in the survey were not employed.

Some job characteristics may affect the availability of working fathers to care for their children. Twenty-one percent of fathers who are employed part-time care for their preschoolers, not statistically different from fathers who are employed full-time and care for their preschoolers (17 percent).

Twenty-seven percent of fathers who regularly worked evening or night shifts were the primary source of care for their young children, compared with 14 percent of day-shift workers.

SUMMER CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Summer can present a challenging time for parents. Families often have to make additional child care arrangements for children who had previously been in school or increase the number of hours that a child is in care to make up the gap between the school and nonschool year. The eighth wave of the 2004 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) provides a unique opportunity to examine summer child care arrangements. The 2006 child care data were collected for

the months of May, June, July, and August.

Patterns of child care can vary from week to week for families, and this may be especially true in the summer because of work and vacation schedules. The estimates presented here are the average of the monthly patterns between May and August and may not be representative of any given summer month. In the following section, patterns and use of child care for preschool-aged and grade school-aged children are summarized for summer 2006.

Summer Child Care Arrangements for Preschoolers

In the summer of 2006, 55 percent of preschoolers (10.8 million) were not in a regular child care

Table 8.

Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Summer 2006

(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/pre-school	Head Start/school ²	In child's home	In provider's home		No regular child care ³	Multiple arrangements ⁴
										Family day care	Other		
Total children under 5 years	19,573	3.2	14.9	21.7	10.3	9.2	4.2	10.8	3.3	3.9	2.7	55.3	19.8
Living with father ⁵	461	3.3	20.6	33.6	16.9	4.2	1.7	14.6	2.4	6.0	2.3	47.7	26.0
Living with mother ⁶	19,122	3.2	14.7	21.5	10.1	9.4	4.2	10.7	3.3	3.8	2.7	55.4	19.7
MOTHER EMPLOYED	11,316	5.2	24.0	25.5	11.0	14.5	5.4	11.1	4.4	6.2	3.7	42.1	27.6
Self-employed	907	15.3	21.1	16.1	6.0	3.4	6.0	11.3	4.1	1.4	4.3	53.4	22.0
Not self-employed ⁷	10,410	4.3	24.2	26.3	11.4	15.5	5.4	11.1	4.5	6.6	3.6	41.1	28.1
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	7,932	4.3	25.7	27.7	11.1	15.1	5.7	10.6	4.9	6.7	4.4	38.9	28.8
Non-Hispanic	6,398	4.9	26.3	28.1	10.1	16.6	6.1	9.9	5.7	7.4	4.2	37.4	29.9
Black alone	1,738	3.2	14.1	18.9	12.9	16.6	5.0	14.9	1.9	5.7	1.4	52.4	22.2
Asian alone	373	4.3	29.4	32.2	12.2	18.8	4.8	6.4	7.2	11.3	—	31.3	36.7
Hispanic (any race)	1,672	2.0	22.7	25.4	13.8	8.8	3.6	14.2	1.4	3.7	5.1	46.6	23.1
Marital Status													
Married ⁸	7,549	4.9	26.2	23.8	9.3	16.0	6.1	10.5	5.1	6.9	3.3	41.5	28.2
Separated, divorced, widowed	818	3.7	19.7	24.5	16.6	13.2	3.8	15.8	3.8	3.0	5.0	45.1	24.3
Never married	2,042	2.4	18.6	36.5	17.0	14.4	3.5	11.1	2.4	7.1	4.3	38.0	29.6
Poverty Status⁹													
Below poverty level	1,198	0.5	21.3	30.2	13.5	11.7	2.5	14.6	2.6	3.5	2.6	48.1	24.5
At or above poverty level	9,121	4.7	24.7	25.9	11.1	16.0	5.7	10.7	4.8	7.0	3.8	40.1	28.6
Employment Schedule													
Employed full-time	7,424	4.3	22.4	25.0	11.1	16.8	5.8	11.1	4.2	7.4	3.9	41.5	27.7
Employed part-time	2,985	4.2	28.8	29.6	12.1	12.0	4.4	11.0	5.2	4.5	2.9	40.0	29.2
Child's Age													
Less than 1 year	1,444	4.8	31.9	36.8	15.2	11.6	5.2	1.2	5.7	8.1	3.5	26.0	32.5
1 to 2 years	4,463	5.1	27.4	27.9	12.7	18.7	4.7	0.7	5.6	7.8	4.0	34.6	31.3
3 to 4 years	4,502	3.3	18.7	21.4	8.9	13.4	6.1	24.5	3.0	5.0	3.3	52.4	23.6

See footnotes at end of table.

arrangement (Table 8). Preschoolers were more likely to be cared for by a relative (47 percent) than by an organized care facility (24 percent). Grandparents were more likely to care for preschoolers (22 percent) than fathers (15 percent). Similar proportions of preschoolers received care from a nonrelative in the child's or provider's home.

Employed mothers were more likely to have regular care arrangements than nonemployed mothers. In summer 2006, of the 11.3 million children of all employed

mothers, 42 percent were in no regular arrangement, compared with 75 percent of the 7.8 million preschool-aged children of nonemployed mothers. What is the notable difference between seasonal use of child care arrangements? A large difference in child care usage between the summer May–August 2006 panel and the prior nonsummer panel of February–May 2005 period was the use of any child care arrangement. Among all employed mothers in 2005, only 11 percent of preschoolers were in no regular arrangement

compared with 42 percent in 2006. This could be the effect of child care closings and the irregularity of arrangements and work schedules and vacations in the summer. For nonemployed mothers, there was a small increase between the summer 2006 period and the 2005 period as 75 percent and 71 percent of the children, respectively, had no regular arrangement.

Family members were a regular source of child care for employed mothers. Similar percentages of fathers and grandparents care for

Table 8.

Preschoolers in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Summer 2006—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		No regular child care ³	Multiple arrangements ⁴
										Family day care	Other		
MOTHER NOT EMPLOYED¹⁰	7,796	(NI)	(NI)	15.6	8.9	1.9	2.5	10.2	1.6	0.4	1.3	74.8	8.1
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	6,091	(NI)	(NI)	15.5	8.0	1.8	2.4	10.0	1.9	0.4	1.3	75.9	8.2
Non-Hispanic	4,251	(NI)	(NI)	17.8	8.9	2.2	3.3	10.1	2.6	—	1.4	69.6	9.7
Black alone	966	(NI)	(NI)	16.5	15.5	1.7	1.6	12.2	0.7	0.6	1.5	72.2	9.8
Asian alone	418	(NI)	(NI)	10.4	1.4	4.1	5.8	6.5	0.5	—	1.2	79.8	2.9
Hispanic (any race)	1,966	(NI)	(NI)	10.7	5.8	1.0	0.5	9.8	0.5	—	1.0	83.5	4.5
Marital Status													
Married ⁸	5,724	(NI)	(NI)	13.4	6.4	1.5	3.1	10.0	2.0	0.3	1.2	78.0	6.7
Separated, divorced, widowed	394	(NI)	(NI)	17.2	7.4	8.7	0.8	18.4	1.1	0.5	—	69.7	10.2
Never married	1,678	(NI)	(NI)	22.7	17.8	1.8	0.7	8.7	0.5	0.6	1.8	65.2	12.3
Poverty Status⁹													
Below poverty level	2,104	(NI)	(NI)	17.5	11.4	2.4	1.6	10.3	0.6	0.5	1.4	72.4	7.9
At or above poverty level	5,330	(NI)	(NI)	14.6	7.8	1.6	3.0	9.9	2.1	0.3	1.3	75.9	8.2
Child's Age													
Less than 1 year	1,356	(NI)	(NI)	17.1	7.6	1.0	1.2	—	1.3	0.2	1.3	76.8	6.9
1 to 2 years	3,240	(NI)	(NI)	17.4	10.7	1.7	2.7	0.5	1.7	0.4	1.4	72.3	9.3
3 to 4 years	3,201	(NI)	(NI)	13.1	7.7	2.5	2.7	24.2	1.7	0.4	1.2	76.5	7.5

(-) Represents or rounds to zero. (NI) Not included, see footnote 1. (B) Base less than 75,000 or numerator too small for comparison.

¹ Care in parental arrangements was calculated only for the time the designated 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 designated parent. Child care arrangements 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 designated 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 (770,000), mothers not in school and looking for work (1,020,000), and mothers not in school and not in the labor force (6,503,000).

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), 2004 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

preschoolers of employed but not self-employed mothers. Siblings and other relatives cared for 11 percent of preschoolers of mothers who were employees. A smaller proportion of preschoolers were cared for by their mothers while she worked as an employee (4 percent).

Organized care facilities were also utilized by preschoolers with mothers who were employees in the summer of 2006. Preschoolers were more likely to use a day care center (16 percent) compared with Head Start, kindergarten, and grade schools (11 percent) and nursery schools and preschools (5 percent).

The relatively high proportion of children responding to school-based care during the summer may reflect the availability of summer programs housed in schools, even though the academic year is generally closed. Parents' responses may reflect where these child care activities are located, rather than

Table 9.

Grade School-Aged Children in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Summer 2006

(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	Non-relative in child's home	Non-relative 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	39,999	3.6	14.1	14.5	15.7	3.6	2.5	3.7	59.6	10.6	17.1	58.3	17.4
Living with father ⁷	1,647	4.1	18.4	21.3	18.1	4.0	3.4	5.6	63.4	13.8	19.0	46.4	24.1
Living with mother ⁸	38,352	3.6	13.9	14.2	15.6	3.6	2.5	3.6	59.4	10.4	17.0	58.8	17.1
MOTHER EMPLOYED	26,049	5.2	20.1	17.1	18.3	4.8	3.2	4.6	59.6	12.9	20.0	48.9	22.4
Self-employed	2,391	16.4	21.2	13.5	14.3	3.8	2.3	2.9	56.3	10.5	16.6	55.0	22.7
Not self-employed ⁹	23,659	4.1	20.0	17.4	18.8	4.9	3.3	4.7	60.0	13.1	20.3	48.3	22.4
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	18,291	4.4	20.8	16.4	18.0	4.7	3.8	5.0	59.3	13.5	21.1	48.5	22.4
Non-Hispanic	14,616	5.0	22.0	17.3	16.9	5.2	3.9	5.3	57.9	14.1	21.5	48.1	23.6
Black alone	3,891	2.8	14.5	21.4	22.8	6.1	1.4	4.3	61.2	10.7	17.5	49.2	21.8
Asian alone	691	3.8	24.6	15.6	13.2	2.8	2.6	2.3	71.3	16.3	16.6	46.2	21.8
Hispanic (any race)	4,000	2.1	16.3	13.8	22.8	2.8	3.1	3.6	64.7	8.3	14.4	49.4	16.1
Marital Status													
Married ¹⁰	16,574	4.3	22.9	14.8	16.4	3.9	3.2	3.7	59.8	13.3	20.1	51.0	21.0
Separated, divorced, widowed	4,145	4.5	16.5	22.4	26.0	6.7	4.8	8.7	61.4	14.7	24.4	38.1	28.6
Never married	2,939	2.2	8.8	25.5	21.6	7.9	2.2	5.1	58.6	9.6	15.9	47.7	20.9
Poverty Status¹¹													
In poverty	2,533	3.0	12.7	18.0	19.3	4.7	3.9	3.2	61.3	7.4	15.2	52.3	17.7
Not in poverty	20,929	4.2	20.9	17.4	18.6	4.9	3.3	5.0	59.8	13.8	21.0	47.9	22.8
Employment Schedule													
Employed full-time ¹²	17,709	3.7	20.2	18.6	19.7	5.6	3.0	5.1	60.8	14.2	20.4	46.5	23.6
Employed part-time	5,950	5.2	19.5	14.0	15.8	3.0	4.2	3.6	57.5	9.9	20.1	53.9	18.8
Child's Age													
5 to 8 years	8,828	3.7	20.5	19.7	14.6	8.3	3.5	6.0	55.5	10.9	9.7	48.6	22.2
9 to 11 years	7,070	5.1	22.0	18.3	19.3	4.4	4.0	4.9	60.5	15.1	21.6	45.8	24.9
12 to 14 years	7,761	3.5	17.6	14.1	23.0	1.6	2.6	3.1	64.6	13.8	31.1	50.4	20.3

See footnotes at end of table.

who is the actual sponsor of these activities.

The amount and type of child care used in the summer of 2006 varied by the employment status of the mother. A smaller percentage of children of nonemployed mothers than all employed mothers used grandparent care and organizational child care facilities such as a day care center or nursery school. Similar percentages of preschoolers of nonemployed mothers were in day care centers and nursery or preschools—2 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

Summer Child Care Arrangements for Grade School-Aged Children

During the school year, making child care arrangements for grade school-aged children primarily involves finding care to supplement the hours that children spend in school. Therefore, the child care arrangements shown in the tables for grade school-aged children differ from those shown for younger children. In this section, patterns of summer child care for grade school-aged children and hours spent in care are described.

During the summer, less than half (42 percent) of grade school-aged children were in a child care arrangement on a regular basis. Relatives were regular contributors to the overall care of grade school-aged children in the summer of 2006 (Table 9). Similar proportions of grade school-aged children received care from their father, a grandparent, or another relative, including siblings—14 to 16 percent.

Grade school-aged children were less likely to be cared for by nonrelatives, such as organized

Table 9.

Grade School-Aged Children in Types of Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status and Selected Characteristics of Mother: Summer 2006—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	Non-relative in child's home	Non-relative in provider's home ³	School	Enrichment activity ⁴	Self-care	No regular child care ⁵	Multiple arrangements ⁶
MOTHER NOT EMPLOYED¹³	12,303	(NI)	(NI)	8.0	9.7	1.0	0.9	1.6	59.0	5.3	10.8	79.6	5.9
Race and Hispanic Origin													
White alone	9,549	(NI)	(NI)	7.8	8.5	0.8	1.0	1.8	59.0	5.7	10.5	80.4	5.8
Non-Hispanic	6,689	(NI)	(NI)	9.2	10.4	1.1	1.1	2.0	56.8	6.1	12.8	77.4	6.8
Black alone	1,724	(NI)	(NI)	11.5	14.3	2.4	0.9	1.1	57.4	3.4	9.7	75.1	7.6
Asian alone	596	(NI)	(NI)	1.7	11.1	—	0.9	—	68.4	2.9	16.0	85.4	3.2
Hispanic (any race)	3,036	(NI)	(NI)	4.4	7.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	65.7	2.8	4.8	86.3	3.1
Marital Status													
Married ¹⁰	9,112	(NI)	(NI)	6.5	8.6	0.4	1.0	1.2	58.2	5.7	10.7	81.6	5.2
Separated, divorced, widowed	1,644	(NI)	(NI)	12.2	13.6	2.2	1.1	3.4	63.0	5.4	14.0	72.6	8.5
Never married	1,547	(NI)	(NI)	12.4	11.8	3.2	0.5	1.6	59.9	2.9	8.2	75.4	7.0
Poverty Status¹¹													
In poverty	3,696	(NI)	(NI)	9.2	10.3	1.7	0.6	1.6	60.8	3.4	10.4	78.8	4.7
Not in poverty	8,129	(NI)	(NI)	7.5	9.3	0.6	1.2	1.6	57.8	6.4	11.2	79.9	6.5
Child's Age													
5 to 8 years	5,432	(NI)	(NI)	8.9	7.8	1.7	1.1	1.7	56.0	4.1	6.6	80.6	5.6
9 to 11 years	3,589	(NI)	(NI)	9.1	9.1	0.3	1.0	1.5	59.3	6.2	11.8	79.1	6.3
12 to 14 years	3,282	(NI)	(NI)	5.4	13.3	0.5	0.6	1.5	63.6	6.2	16.7	78.6	5.9

(—) Represents or rounds to zero. (NI) Not included, see footnote 1. (B) Base less than 75,000 or numerator too small for comparison.

¹ Care in parental arrangements was only calculated for the time the designated 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 designated parent. Child care arrangements 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 designated 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 (589,000), mothers not in school and looking for work (810,000), and mothers not in school and not in the labor force (10,902,000).

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), 2004 Panel Wave 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

care facilities or other nonrelatives either in the child's home or provider's homes. Four percent of grade school-aged children were cared for in organized care, 3 percent by a nonrelative in the child's home, and

4 percent by a nonrelative in the provider's home.

Child care data was collected for the months of May, June, July, and August. While children are not typically enrolled in school during the summer months, in 2006, grade

school-aged children may be still enrolled in grade school in May and June, and many children return to school in August. Sixty percent of older children were enrolled in school and 11 percent were involved in enrichment activities.

Seventeen percent of grade school-aged children cared for themselves on a regular basis without adult supervision.

Overall, employed mothers were more likely to have regular care arrangements than nonemployed mothers. In the summer of 2006, of the 23.7 million grade school-aged children whose mothers were employees, 48 percent were not in a regular arrangement other than school or self-care, compared with 80 percent of the 12.3 million grade school-aged children of nonemployed mothers.

HOURS IN CARE FOR GRADE SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

The amount of time children spend in care during the summer may vary from other times of the year because they are not in school and may participate in various extracurricular activities.²⁰ Table 10 compares the average number of hours spent in specific types of child care arrangements, excluding school, for the spring of 2005 and the summer of 2006 by the employment status of the mother.

Among children of employed mothers, significant increases in care hours per week were noted especially for organized care, increasing from 3 to 13 hours per week. Smaller increases, in the range of 3 to 4 hours, were also recorded for care by grandparents, nonrelatives in the provider's home, and self-care. No significant differences between the spring of 2005 and summer of 2006 were noted in the hours of care provided by nonrelatives in the child's home.

²⁰ For a detailed examination of summer child care arrangements, see Lynda Laughlin and Joseph Rukus, *Who's Minding the Kids in the Summer? Child Care Arrangements in Summer 2006*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, April 30–May 2, 2009.

Table 10.

Average Time Grade School-Aged Children Spent in Selected Child Care Arrangements by Employment Status of the Mother: Spring 2005 and Summer 2006 (Average hours per week among children in specified care arrangement)

Characteristic	Spring 2005	Summer 2006
Mother Employed¹		
Grandparent	13	16
Sibling/other relative	11	13
Organized care	3	13
Nonrelative in child's home	14	14
Nonrelative in provider's home ²	10	14
Self-care	6	9
Mother Not Employed		
Grandparent	13	14
Sibling/other relative	9	9
Organized care	13	15
Nonrelative in child's home	7	13
Nonrelative in provider's home	5	9
Self-care	4	5

¹ Employed includes wage and salary jobs, other employment arrangements, and self-employment.

² Includes care by a family care provider and other nonrelatives in the provider's home. Not employed includes those looking for work, in school, or out of the labor force.

Note: For specific types of child care arrangements, excluding attendance in school. In spring 2005, 94 percent of children aged 5 to 14 spent some time in school (Table 4) compared with 60 percent for summer 2006 (Table 9).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2004 Panel Waves 4 and 8. For information on sampling and nonsampling error see <[www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12\(S&A-9\).pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-9).pdf)>.

Among children of nonemployed mothers, nonrelative care provided in the child's home increased from 7 to 13 hours per week. The hours of care provided by nonrelatives in the provider's home slightly increased from 5 hours to 9 hours per week. No significant differences were noted in the hours of care provided by grandparents, siblings, or in self-care situations.

SUMMARY

Child care has rapidly become the norm for children in the United States. Increases in the number of working mothers, changes in family structure, and the desire to provide 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 19 million preschoolers in the spring of 2005. Almost 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 overall care of grade school-aged children. Self-care was much more prevalent among middle school-aged children than among those in elementary schools.

Since 1997, when the computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) instruments were implemented, there have been no significant changes in the proportion of parents or relatives who served as primary child care arrangements for preschoolers. During the same time 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 child care role, especially for working mothers. Fathers were almost more than 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 2005, families with children under 5 paid, on average, over \$6,000 a year for child care, an increase of over \$1,000 a generation ago. Families in poverty spent a greater proportion of their monthly income on child care compared to families at or above the poverty level.

This report expands on previous reports to show summer child care arrangements. Seasonal variations in the availability of child care can pose additional challenges for families as they try to fill the gap between summer and the school year. Summer child care arrangements for preschoolers primarily consisted of relatives, such as grandparents and fathers. Less than half of grade school-aged children were in a child care arrangement during the summer. Relatives were regular contributors. About one-fifth of grade school-aged children cared for themselves during summer months. Grade school-aged children also spent more hours in various child care arrangements in the summer compared to the spring, reflecting the closure of schools during the summer.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2005 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 February through May 2005 in the fourth wave (interview) and June through September in the eighth wave (interview) of the 2004 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 adults who are the parents 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 (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized population in Census 2000).

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.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_w1tow12\(S&A-9.pdf](http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_w1tow12(S&A-9.pdf)> or contact Stephen Clark of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division at <Stephen.Clark@census.gov>.

Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following Web sites:

<www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/> (main SIPP Web site), <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/workpapr/wpp230.pdf> (SIPP Quality Profile), and <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/usrguide/sipp2001.pdf> (SIPP User's Guide).

MORE INFORMATION

The report is available on the Internet at <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-aged and grade school-aged children is also on the Internet, as well as more information on child care.

CONTACTS

Child care issues—

Lynda L. Laughlin
301-763-2416
<Lynda.L.Laughlin@census.gov>

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:

Chief, Housing and Household
Economic Statistics Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

or send an e-mail inquiry to:
<hhes@census.gov>.

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