



# MOTHER'S DAY FACT SHEET ON DAY CARE

A Fact Sheet Prepared for the Council on Contemporary Families

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Here's a thought for a Mother's Day gift that would go beyond the complimentary flowers passed out by restaurants and the complimentary speeches churned out by politicians every May: Affordable child care that is operated in accord with high-quality national standards.

It's a gift long overdue. In 1971 the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed a Comprehensive Child Development Act to provide quality child care for working parents. The bill mandated extensive training for child care workers and strict standards, written and enforced with extensive input from parents. But on December 9, 1971, President Nixon vetoed the bill, declaring that publicly-provided child care would be "a long leap into the dark" that might weaken American families.

Since then, American families have indeed taken a "long leap" into an unanticipated world. Consider these facts:

- In 1963, 14 percent of working women who bore a child returned to work by the baby's first birthday.
- Today, 83 percent of working moms return to work by baby's first birthday, and 55 percent of first-time moms return to work by the time their child is 6 months old.
- 70 percent of working mothers with new babies are working the same hours they worked before the child's birth.
- Ten million families of children under 14 pay for child care.
- Fewer than 10 percent of day care centers are accredited.
- Fewer than 1 percent of in-home day cares in the private sector are accredited.
- In 2005, average child care costs ranged from a low of \$58 per child per week for a pre-school aged child in Alabama to \$259 per child per week for infant care in Massachusetts.
- Parents in Massachusetts with an infant and a four year will spend an average of spend an average of \$1,926 per month on child care, more than their average monthly mortgage bill of \$1,645.
- In 2004, approximately 2.5 million daycare workers in this nation made an average of just \$8.65 an hour; this totals \$346 a week.
- Three-fourths of all child care workers work in a home care setting, and they make even less.

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## About CCF

The Council on Contemporary Families is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to providing the press and public with the latest research and best-practice findings about American families. Our members include demographers, economists, family therapists, historians, political scientists, psychologists, social workers, sociologists, as well as other family social scientists and practitioners.

Founded in 1996 and now based in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Miami, the Council's mission is to enhance the national understanding of how and why contemporary families are changing, what needs and challenges they face, and how these needs can best be met. To fulfill that mission, the Council holds annual conferences, open to the public, and issues periodic briefing papers and fact sheets.

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