
Contemporary Child Day Care

THE NEED FOR CHILD CARE

What do you think of when you hear the word “family”? A husband and wife and their children? Or perhaps a single mother or father with children? This may be true today, but a few decades ago, the term *family* brought to mind a much larger group—the *extended family*. The extended family included not only a husband and wife with children, but also the grandparents, sisters, brothers, cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts, and uncles. Although they didn’t all live in the same house, they often lived nearby and were in close contact with each other. The extended family provided built-in babysitters any time the mother or father needed them.

As you’ll learn later in this study unit, many factors worked to change the makeup of the family. For example, parents traveled far from their families to find jobs in new industries.

As the extended family shrank to the *nuclear family* (only parents and children), the isolated mother and father had to find someone outside of the family to care for their children. From this need, there arose a new extended family: the parents and their children, supported by others, including people in the child care field (Figure 1).

As you enter this new extended family, through the exciting child care field, you’ll find that your membership in it offers many rewards. First, you’ll receive financial rewards from caring for children in your

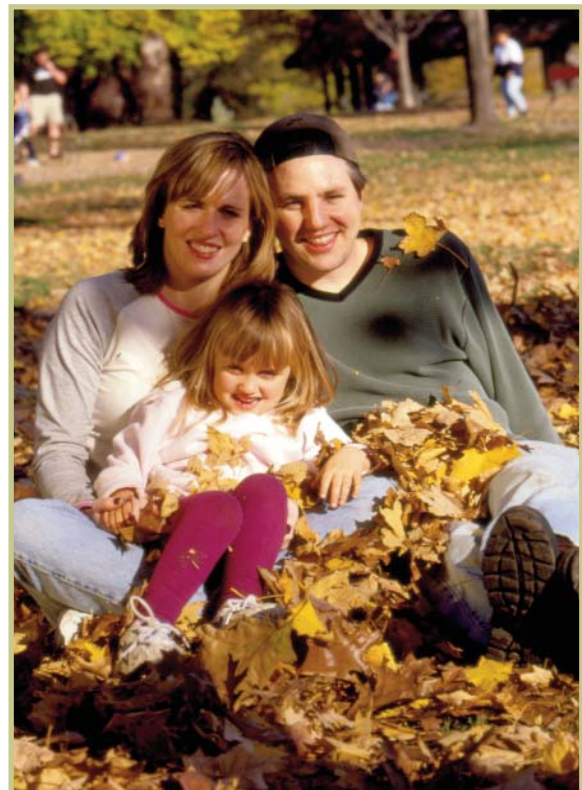


FIGURE 1—A Nuclear Family

own home, in a day care center, or in other child care arrangements. Second, you'll have an increased sense of purpose as you help to mold the children in your care. The frustration of caring for a child who won't share is more than balanced on the bright day that same child shares a wagon with a new friend.

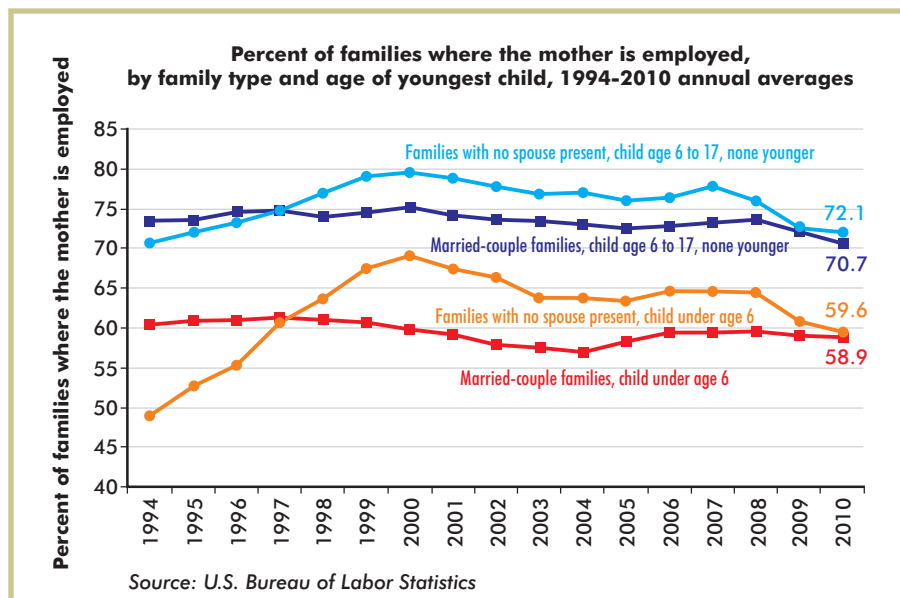
Third, you'll be helping the parents by substituting your tender loving care for theirs when they're absent, and by filling them in on their child's achievements. Parents want to share their child's first steps, or first ride on a seesaw, if only through your reports.

In addition, you'll find other personal rewards in the exciting profession of caring for children.

Today most small towns have a day care center nearby. The need for *caregivers* (people to care for children) is a fact of life, and this need is increasing rapidly. The number of working women has risen in our country from 5.1 million in 1900, to 18.4 million in 1950, to nearly 65 million in 2004. The number of working women is projected to exceed 77 million by 2012; this increase of women in the workforce directly impacts our children and the continually growing need for child care. You can see how the percentages have changed for employed mothers from 1994 to 2010 in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2—Percent of families where the mother is employed: 1994–2010

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics [2011] online at http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2011/ted_20110506.htm)



Who Is Caring for the Children?

Who is caring for these children? Relatives, babysitters, caregivers in the child's home, caregivers in family day care homes, caregivers in day care centers, and caregivers in preschools (prekindergarten schools). (*Family day care* refers to care a child receives in someone else's home.)

About 64 percent of the preschool children whose mothers work are cared for in day care centers, while about 36 percent of these children are in family day care homes, in group homes, or cared for in the child's home.

Some of the remaining children are left unsupervised in their homes, because no care can be found. Such children face dangers inside and outside of their home.

Consider the five-year-old boy from California who was left at home to watch television. The boy turned up the sound and pointed his toy gun at the screen. A police officer, called by neighbors because of the noise, opened the door, saw the shadow of a gun on the wall, and heard shouts (from the TV). He yelled a warning and then fired. The body of the boy tumbled into sight. This was an unusual accident, but other more commonplace dangers face a child who is alone: being burned, drowned, cut, or assaulted. Such young children are sorely in need of someone to care for them.

Quality Child Care

The decision to seek child care isn't always an easy one. Many people, especially mothers, have mixed feelings about child care. They need, or want, to work, yet they feel guilty about having their child cared for by someone else. (However, research has shown that quality care usually isn't harmful to the child, and can even be beneficial in many respects. In fact, quality child care by adults has been shown to be an important factor in the development of many children.)

"Quality child care" refers to a child care system that will meet many of the needs of the children. When evaluating the quality of a day care system, all parts of the system must be considered: the caregiver, the facility (the place where child care takes place), the program (what the children do),

the total number of children cared for, the number of caregivers in relation to the number of children, the interactions between caregivers and children, and the relations between caregivers and the parents.

This program will teach you what makes up a quality day care system. It will enable you to become a quality caregiver and to develop a quality program and facility.

Many times during your child care career, parents may ask questions such as: “How will child care benefit my child? How will it affect me?”

If the child care is quality care, it may possess many benefits for the child:

- A gain in independence
- A gain in social skills—learning to relate to and get along with adults and children outside of the immediate family (Figure 3)

FIGURE 3—*In a day care center, children learn to relate to children outside their immediate family.*



- A gain in intellectual and language abilities, such as problem solving, creativity, and expressive language
- An opportunity for experiences he or she may not have at home (field trips, outdoor play, or caring for an animal) (Figure 4)

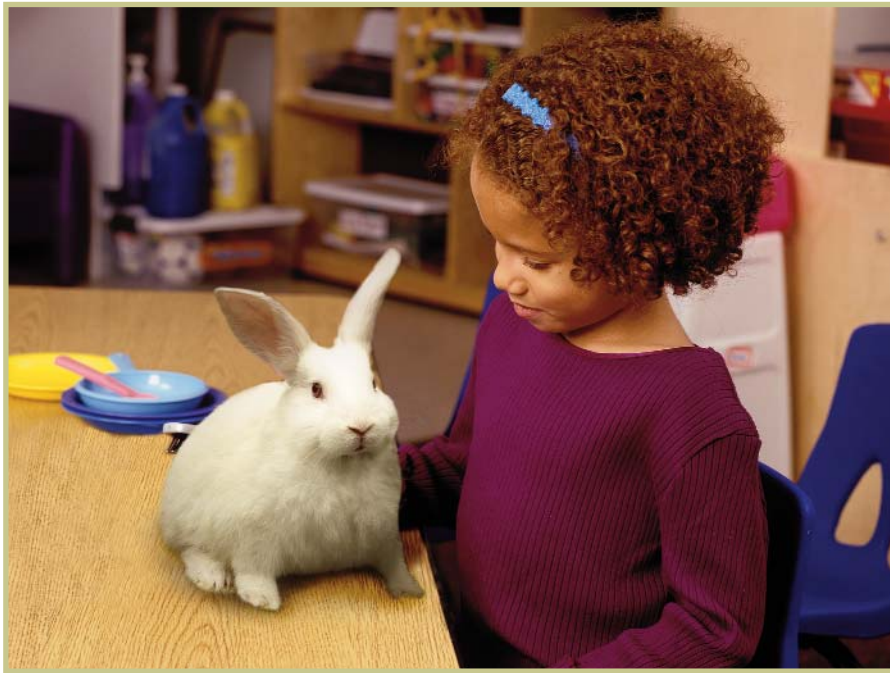


FIGURE 4—Children may have experiences in day care that they wouldn't have otherwise.

There are some benefits from quality child care for the family, which the parents might not be aware of, such as

- Providing an opportunity for parents to learn about a child's development from a professional caregiver
- Reducing strain on the family during a crisis (separation, divorce, need to work because of money problems)
- Giving parents a chance to network (communicate and share experiences) with other parents
- Freeing the mother or father to work without having to worry about the child (Figure 5)

There are also benefits from child care for society as a whole. Child care enables low-income single mothers to work, thereby avoiding total dependence on public assistance. In addition, mothers who do work are more productive when they know their children are well cared for. Children have opportunities to learn, in addition to being cared for in a safe environment. Child care for the school-age child is also beneficial. School-age children who are unsupervised by an adult after school are commonly referred to as *latchkey children* because many carry a key to let themselves into their homes. Such children may suffer physical or psychological damage or develop



FIGURE 5—Not only the child benefits from quality child care. A mother (A) or father (B) can perform their job better if they know their child is well cared for.

problems in their relations with others. For example, a nine-year-old latchkey girl received third-degree burns over 75 percent of her body while cooking an after-school snack for herself and her brother.

Many latchkey children have fears about being left alone and being harmed. One seven-year-old boy locked himself in the closet when he came home from school and stayed there until his mother got home from work at 4:30. Many of these children don't have the opportunity to play with others their own age because they aren't permitted to leave the house or to have friends over when Mom or Dad isn't home. Some have the responsibility of caring for younger brothers or sisters, which may result in resentment. Some engage in antisocial behavior such as vandalism, stealing, or taking drugs because they're left unsupervised (Figure 6).

Such problems could be avoided by enrolling latchkey children in a before- or after-school program, if one is available. If you like working with school-age children, this might be a phase of child care you should explore.

WHAT IS A HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAM?

Research and experience have shown that a high-quality early childhood program possesses these characteristics:

- Staff is trained in child development and early childhood education.
- Program is well managed and watched over.
- Parents share with caregivers the education of their children.
- Caregivers are respected and respectful.
- Caregivers in a program plan and work together to provide individual attention to children.
- Caregivers interact often with children.
- A specific program of developmentally appropriate activities is planned.
- The physical environment is designed to promote active involvement and constructive interactions.
- Caregivers receive continued on-the-job (in-service) training.
- The program is evaluated regularly to keep quality high.
- The program maintains standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.



FIGURE 6—Some children who grow up unsupervised become involved in vandalism, stealing, alcohol, and drugs.

Child Care Then and Now

In child care, as in other fields, the present is shaped by the past. As a child care professional, it will be important for you to know about the history of the child care field. It will help you to understand the child care field as it exists today.

A day care center may have been in your city or town for as long as you can remember. In addition, others may have sprung up in the area around you, a sign of an increasing need for child care. This need wasn't always present.

What changed the child care picture in our country? Why did we turn from child care within the family to child care outside of the family?

The Nineteenth Century

Between 1815 and 1860, two forces were at work that would change child care dramatically. First, there was a flood of immigrants to the United States, with hundreds of thousands of people fleeing famine in Ireland and revolution in Germany. Second, at the same time, the factory system was developing. This was part of a movement called *industrialization*. Industrialization is the change from a farming economy to a manufacturing economy.

In the past, weaving and other crafts were performed at home by both parents. The children could sit by or play near their mother as she wove or spun.

Then new machines were invented, brought together, and placed in factories, or mills, near water or steam power. Many women, including large numbers of immigrants, were forced to work in these new factories in order to survive.

What would they do with their children? Many brought their children with them, and they also were put to work. Other mothers had to leave them at home to take care of themselves or to be cared for by relatives or older children. Children of the working class didn't fare well during this time.

However, other forces were at work, trying to help with the problem of caring for children while their parents were absent. For example, the first day nursery in the United States was opened in Boston in 1838, to provide care for the children of seamen's working wives and widows. Sixteen

years later, the Nurses and Children's Hospital in New York City opened a day nursery to care for infants and toddlers of working women who had been patients there.

During the Civil War (1861–1865), day nurseries were opened to care for the children of women working in hospitals and in factories making soldiers' clothing.

In 1893, a model day nursery, set up at the World's Fair in Chicago, cared for children of visitors. By 1898, about 175 day nurseries were operating in various parts of the country and the National Federation of Day Nurseries was established.

The Early Twentieth Century

Over the next decade day care expansion continued. Generally, day care was set up in a converted home. Most day care homes or nurseries were *custodial*; that is, they merely “minded” the children. A woman usually ran them with one or two assistants who not only cared for the children but also cooked, cleaned, and washed clothes.

Some nurseries taught children cleanliness and manners, and tried to instill obedience and a belief in hard work and being on time.

Some even hired kindergarten teachers to teach reading, spelling, and weaving. Others offered classes for the mothers in child care, cooking, and sewing; access to job opportunities and training; and help with family problems.

World War I and the Depression

Child care centers were established to accommodate the children of women who were employed to assist in the war effort. Then an economic crisis in 1929 led to the Great Depression of the 1930s. To combat some of the Depression's effects, child care centers were established under the Work Projects Administration (WPA) to furnish day care for children of working parents and to provide jobs for unemployed teachers.

World War II

Women were recruited to work in factories and offices to replace the men who served in the armed forces. Child care centers were established with federal funds by the Lanham Act of 1940. In addition, industries sometimes provided their own child care services. For example, in 1943 in Portland, Oregon, Kaiser Shipyards opened a child care center at each shipyard. Henry Kaiser built the world's largest child care centers, which were open 24 hours a day. These centers provided hot meals, a nurse on staff, playrooms, and wading pools. The cost of the care was shared between the parents and Kaiser Shipyards. Most of the child care centers, including the Kaiser centers, opened because of the war and also disappeared after the war when the men returned to work and many women left their jobs.

Even though the Lanham funds were withdrawn in 1946, child care facilities continued to exist. Some were run by charitable organizations emphasizing social work and serving families with financial and other problems. Others were private, paid for by mothers who worked. Still others were set up for the purpose of enriching children's development.

The Post-War Twentieth Century

Jean Piaget, an influential developmental psychologist, spent more than 50 years observing and talking to children. He believed that a child's mind develops through a series of stages from newborn through adulthood, which he called *cognitive development*. His theories are applied at many child care centers today.

Day care homes, nurseries, child care centers, and preschools began to flourish in the 1960s. There were several reasons, among them a positive change in public attitude toward women who worked; the realization that providing day care would allow more women to get off welfare; and research studies which showed that children learn more rapidly in the early years of life. Federal support for day care became available once more for poor families.

The 1970 White House Conference on Children pointed to the need for quality child care as the most serious problem confronting families and children.

The 1980s brought cutbacks in some government-funded programs related to child care. The topic continued to be debated for the rest of the twentieth century. Perhaps as the long-term benefits of child care are recognized, more funding will become available (Figure 7).



FIGURE 7—Government funding for day care programs continues to be debated today.

The Preschool Idea

The idea that children can learn before they go to school isn't a new one. This idea was proposed in 1657 by John Amos Comenius, a Czech educator, in his book *The Great Didactic*. The book was designed for mothers to use in preparing their children for formal school. A year later, he published a picture book for children, which included parts of the body, animals, plants, and colors as well as material on moral and religious training.

About 150 years later, a Swiss educator named Johann H. Pestalozzi created preschools for young children. He stressed children learning through using their senses to discover things about their world. One of Pestalozzi's students, Frederick Froebel, a German, founded the *kindergarten* in 1842. The focus was on play rather than formal schooling such as reading or writing.

In the United States the kindergarten movement grew from the work of Elizabeth Peabody, who opened the first private English-speaking kindergarten in Boston in 1860. Peabody felt young children were self-centered. Left at home, they would become selfish, whereas in kindergarten, experiences with others would make them more sociable.

The first kindergartens were expensive and were used primarily by wealthy families. Gradually, they came to be seen, in both Europe and the United States, as a way of helping all children.

For example, Kate Douglas Wiggin started a settlement kindergarten for underprivileged children in San Francisco in the 1870s. (Wiggin was the author of children's books, such as *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*.)

Then, early in the twentieth century while working on her medical internship in Rome, Maria Montessori developed and applied materials and methods for teaching retarded children. The results were so impressive that she concluded normal children would also benefit from the same approach. So she applied her methods, with success, in the Casa Dei Bambini (Children's House), a school where children from the slum were taught. The schools she established provided a stimulating, changing environment in which children could move freely and learn.

Montessori's work influenced the establishment of the first nursery school in New York City in 1915. Montessori schools still exist throughout the United States, as does the Montessori American Society.

Also in 1915, a group of faculty wives at the University of Chicago organized a cooperative preschool. In 1919, in New York City, a nursery school was founded under the direction of the Bureau of Educational Experiments that later became a demonstration center for the Bank Street College of Education.

The Merrill Palmer Institute organized a nursery school in Detroit in 1922 to provide a laboratory for training women in child care.

By 1925 an organization of nursery schools was formed, and it's now known as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC administers a voluntary accreditation system for all types of child care programs. The system is based on an extensive self-study meeting the association's criteria. The self-study results are verified for accuracy during a site visit. NAEYC is currently the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators.

A Closer Look at Child Care

So far, the terms *child care*, *day care*, *nursery*, *preschool*, and *kindergarten* have been used almost interchangeably. Now let's look more closely at these terms and at the various types of child care. With this information, you can begin thinking about the type of child care that interests you and for which you seem most suited.

Here are definitions of the terms used.

Child care, or *day care*, refers to care given to a child by someone other than the parents or immediate family. For younger children, this care is given during the hours in which the parent or parents work. For school-age children, this care may be given before or after school hours, while the parents are working or otherwise absent.

A *nursery* is usually a room or place set apart for the care of very young children (Figure 8). A *nursery school* provides an educational program for children younger than kindergarten age (usually half-day).



FIGURE 8—A nursery is set apart for the care of very young children.



FIGURE 9—A preschool is typically designed to prepare prekindergarten-age children for school.

Preschool is a place where children go to school before they enter kindergarten (Figure 9). This term is also used in a generic sense to refer to all types of programs for prekindergarten-age children, which are typically designed to prepare children for school.

Kindergarten is a division of a school system, below first grade. Curriculum varies from developmental to academic, and programs may be half-day or full-day.

Types of Child Care

You'll find, as you learn more about child care, that there are numerous programs and arrangements for caring for children while their parents are busy. However, each of these arrangements usually falls under one of the following three types: *in-home care*, *family day care*, and *day care centers*.

In-home care. In-home care, which may include *home visitor care*, is care in the child's home (Figure 10). The caregiver comes to the child's home daily, part time, occasionally (when a child is ill or when parents are away or busy), or lives in (the caregiver stays full time). In-home care is used for about 5 percent of the children whose parents work.



FIGURE 10—An *in-home caregiver* comes to a child's home daily, part time, occasionally (when needed), or lives in.

Family day care. Family day care refers to care a child receives in someone else's home. The child is in a family setting, but outside of his or her own family. Often the children cared for are of different ages, as they would be in a family. The program centers around the usual activities in a home: cooking and eating, talking, cleaning, doing the laundry, gardening, and so on (Figure 11). Almost 31 percent of the children who have a full-time caregiver receive this care in someone else's home.



FIGURE 11—In family day care, the children cared for may be of varying ages, as in a family.

Licensing requirements for family day care vary by state and county. State agencies will be listed later in your program. Local county agencies can be found in the yellow pages of the phone book or through local government offices or chambers of commerce.

The number of children you can care for in your home may range from one to six if you're the sole caregiver, and six to twelve if you have an assistant. The number of caregivers to the number of children is called the *caregiver ratio* (or *staff ratio*). The allowable caregiver ratio differs depending on state regulations. You'll need to contact your local licensing agency or department of public welfare to find out the caregiver ratio in your state.

State government social service agencies usually require family day care homes to register with the state if care is provided for more than one family of children on a regular basis.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF IN-HOME CARE

Advantages

There are several advantages to being an in-home caregiver:

Fees and costs. In-home care may be more expensive than many parents can afford, but those seeking this form of care may be willing to pay your price. Therefore, you may be able to set your own fee. Even if you can't set your own fees, if you work more than 20 hours a week, you're covered by the minimum-wage law. Also, parents must pay Social Security tax. You won't face issues such as zoning, or costs such as for renovation to your home, or start-up and continuing costs for equipment and supplies, as are encountered by providers of family day care and day care centers.

Relations with people. You'll have the opportunity to work closely with parents and will consider their goals in planning and carrying out the program of activities for the child or children. You can choose the family or families you'll work with.

A Disadvantage: One-to-One

One aspect of in-home day care that may disturb either the parents or the caregiver is the one-to-one relation of the caregiver and the child (if there's only one child). Due to the close relation, the child may form a closer bond with the caregiver than with the parents, or the caregiver may become overly possessive of the child. This may lead to the removal of the caregiver, with disturbance to both the caregiver and the child. So, as an in-home caregiver, you must have patience to develop a good working relationship with both the child and the parents.

States including Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland Michigan, Oklahoma, and Washington require state registration if even only one child is cared for in a family day care, while Arizona, Idaho, Louisiana, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, and Virginia don't require any registration with the state for family day cares. All other states require registration of family day cares only if there are more than three or four children receiving care at the home. However, training (such as you'll receive in this program) and licensing are a real plus for advertising your business. It may be the only way you can get on your community's Child Care Resource and Referral list.

Let's take a closer look at what the Child Care Resource and Referral Service does. (In your area, this service may be known by a different name, such as the Community Coordinated Child Care Agency, or Training and Technical Assistance Program.) Parents seeking child care usually turn to a service in their community, if one is available. This service collects information about all forms of care

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FAMILY DAY CARE

Advantages

Here are some advantages of family day care:

If you're a parent, you can care for other children and earn money doing it, while caring for your own children.

You can set your own fees and the hours you want to work.

You can choose the family or families you'll work with.

You can organize your home as you desire and plan activities that you decide are best.

Your home becomes a business and may be eligible for certain tax advantages. Check with your local Internal Revenue Service office for details.

You can be associated with community agencies or belong to a network of family day care providers (if available), which will give you access to many services:

- Workshops that discuss topics such as developmentally appropriate activities (children's activities suitable to different ages); nutrition; and laws affecting child care
- Professional advice on children, families, health, safety, and business practices
- Special insurance rates on your business. These are sometimes offered to network members.

Disadvantages

The drawbacks of family day care are primarily those involving your own family. Remember, you're bringing these children into the home of your entire family. You must plan and prepare your family for this event.

You need the support of your spouse, if you have one, and of your own children. If you deal patiently with them and consider their needs, you may win their support.

In addition, you may be required to make modifications to your home to comply with local fire codes, safety regulations, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

that are offered in the community. It also provides help to caregivers, advising them on how to start their service, how to improve its quality, and how to solve problems that arise. Often such services compile data on child care supply and demand in the community. Thus, this service is valuable to the caregiver and to parents.

Day care centers. Day care centers are facilities, usually licensed by the state, which house more than 12 children. The average facility contains about 50 children.

ADVANTAGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF DAY CARE CENTERS

Like other types of child care, running a day care center has certain advantages, as well as other legal and management obligations depending on the organizational structure of the business that operates the center. The type of structure can range from a sole proprietorship in a family day care center (one owner) to a number of centers managed by a corporation.

Advantages

You have the potential of earning more money than through a family day care home.

Your hours can be predictable and stable. You can set your own schedule to a great extent. (But you must also be aware of the needs of parents whom you wish to be clients.)

You're likely to attract staff with training in child development to your center.

A day care facility is more conducive than a family day care home to providing a program oriented to a child's needs, according to the stage of the child's development.

Obligations

You must determine if there's a need for a day care center in your area.

You must determine and meet start-up (beginning) and maintenance costs for the facility and staff.

You have to develop a program (e.g., activities for children).

You'll have to choose, train, and manage your staff.

You, your staff, and your program must meet state certification requirements.

You're less free to choose the families and children you work with, unless your center is considered very prestigious or is in very high demand. Day-care centers, as public-service institutions, must be careful to avoid discrimination or the appearance of discrimination.

You must learn about and comply with zoning regulations, building codes, insurance requirements, and licensing requirements. Your city and/or county planning department can help as well as your local licensing agency. Since you serve the public, you must meet these public requirements.

A *ratio* is written using a colon to separate the numbers, like this—1:3. You would say “one to three.”

The children are often divided into groups according to age. State and local licensing agencies determine the staff-to-children ratios. Generally, for infants and toddlers, the ratio is 1:3 (1 caregiver to 3 children) or 1:4; for preschoolers, it's 1:6 to 1:8; and for school-age children it's 1:10. Most centers are attended by two- to five-year-olds.

About 64 percent of all children who have full-time caregivers attend day care centers.

Day care centers can be divided into two types: *profit* and *nonprofit*.

The nonprofit day care center is sponsored by organizations such as churches, community action agencies, hospitals, and schools, or is supported by federal and state government agencies or by corporations (for their employees' benefit). There are also cooperatives (co-ops) organized and run by parents who participate as volunteers to keep costs down.

The federal- or state-supported center usually offers the widest range of services: child care and education, meals, health care, transportation, and parent education.

Many of the centers for profit are small, private businesses, run by a family or an individual alone or in partnership with another person. The owner is usually the director and a caregiver.

Other centers run for profit are *franchise*, or *chain*, day care centers, such as Kinder-Care or La Petite Academy. Such chains are started by large corporations, an individual, or a group of people.

Before going on to the next section, take some time to complete *Self-Check 1*.



Self-Check 1

At the end of each section of *Contemporary Child Day Care*, you'll be asked to check your understanding of what you've just read by completing a "Self-Check." Writing the answers to these questions will help you review what you've studied so far. Please complete *Self-Check 1* now.

1. What name is usually given to the care of a child by someone other than the family?

2. What division of school teaches children before first grade?

3. What "school" teaches prekindergarten children?

4. In what type of care is the child cared for in his or her own home?

5. In what type of care is the child cared for in someone else's home?

6. What place cares for 12 or more children?

Questions 7–10: Before each of the following descriptions, write which type of care it describes: *i* (in-home care), *f* (family day care), or *d* (day care center).

- _____ 7. The child is usually cared for on a one-to-one basis (one caregiver to one child).

- _____ 8. The caregiver can earn money while caring for other children as well as his or her own.

- _____ 9. There are more government regulations and requirements for this kind of child care than for the other types.

- _____ 10. You can set your own fees.

Check your answers with those on page 37.
