



Invisible Labor, Visible Needs: Making Family Policy Work for Stay-At-Home (And All) Parents

By Ivana Greco and Elliot Haspel

Notes and references

1. We note that it is very difficult to determine the number of stay-at-home parents in the United States. Analysts differ on how to define who is a stay-at-home parent, as we discuss in this paper.
2. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Coping: Essays in the Practice of Government* (Random House, 1973).
3. U.S. Department of the Treasury, *The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States* (September 2021):
<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf>.
4. Kristin Butcher, Elizabeth Kepner, Kelli Marquardt, and Brianna Smith, *The Labor Market for Childcare Workers*, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (June 2024):
<https://www.chicagofed.org/publications/chicago-fed-insights/2024/childcare-labor-market>.
5. Authors' calculation.
6. Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology From the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (Basic Books 1983).
7. Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation* (Harper Perennial, 2005), xvi.
8. Erika Bachiochi, "The Duty of the Moment: Retooling the Agrarian Model of Home/Work Integration," *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy* (May 2024): <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4821336>.
9. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), *What Is the Value of Household Work?* (June 11, 2012): <https://www.bea.gov/news/blog/2012-06-11/what-value-household-work>.
10. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), *What Is the Value of Household Work?* (June 11, 2012): <https://www.bea.gov/news/blog/2012-06-11/what-value-household-work>.

capita

11. Jennifer Schuessler, "Criticisms of a Classic Abound," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/19/books/50-years-of-reassessing-the-feminine-my-stique.html>.
12. Elizabeth Warren and Amelia Warren Tyagi, *The Two-Income Trap: Why Middle-Class Parents Are Going Broke* (Basic Books, 2004).
13. Michael Lind, *Hell to Pay: How the Suppression of Wages Is Destroying America* (Portfolio, 2023).
14. *The Real Housewives of Orange County*, season 1, created by Scott Dunlop, Madman Entertainment, syndicated by Bravo, aired March 21, 2006 to May 9, 2006, Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2007, DVD.
15. Wendy Wang, Margarita Mooney Suarez, and Patrick T. Brown, *Familia Sí, Guardería No: Hispanics Least Likely to Prefer and Use Paid Child Care*, Institute for Family Studies (May 26, 2021): <https://ifstudies.org/blog/familia-si-guarderia-no-hispanics-least-likely-to-prefer-and-use-paid-child-care>.
16. D'Vera Cohn, Gretchen Livingston, and Wendy Wang, *After Decades of Decline, a Rise in Stay-at-Home Mothers*, Pew Research Center (April 14, 2014): <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2014/04/08/after-decades-of-decline-a-rise-in-stay-at-home-mothers/>.
17. Patrick T. Brown, *Five Pro-Family Priorities for the 118th Congress and Beyond: Policies and Public Opinion on Putting Families First*, Institute for Family Studies and Ethics and Public Policy Center, February 2023: <https://ifstudies.org/ifs-admin/resources/reports/ifs-congress-familypriorities-final.pdf>
18. Julia Menasce Horowitz, *Despite Challenges at Home and Work, Most Working Moms and Dads Say Being Employed Is What's Best for Them*, Pew Research Center, September 12, 2019: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/09/12/despite-challenges-at-home-and-work-most-working-moms-and-dads-say-being-employed-is-whats-best-for-them/>.
19. D'Vera Cohn, Gretchen Livingston, and Wendy Wang, *After Decades of Decline, a Rise in Stay-at-Home Mothers*, Pew Research Center (April 14, 2014): <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2014/04/08/after-decades-of-decline-a-rise-in-stay-at-home-mothers/>.
20. E.K. Holmes, J. Winkle, C.R. Thomas, M.A. Jorgensen, and B.R. Egginton, "Social Contact, Time Alone, and Parental Subjective Well-Being: A Focus on Stay-at-Home Fathers Using the American Time Use Survey," *Psychology of Men & Masculinities* 22(3) (2021): <https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000321>.
21. Jiashan Cui, Luke Natzke, and Sarah Grady, *Early Childhood Program Participation: 2019: First Look*, National Center for Education Statistics at IES, U.S. Department of Education (2021): <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020075REV.pdf>. We note that even those children enrolled in some sort of regular external childcare are frequently only

enrolled part-time, meaning daytime parental care likely still plays a very important role in these childrens' lives.

22. Proof Insights on behalf of Mother Untitled, *American Mothers on Pause*, Mother Untitled (2023): <https://www.motheruntitled.com/americanmothersonpause>.
23. Proof Insights on behalf of Mother Untitled, *American Mothers on Pause*, Mother Untitled (2023): <https://www.motheruntitled.com/americanmothersonpause>.
24. Katrina Nattress, *SAHMs Deserve Childcare, But Many Are Too Afraid to Ask*, Motherly (September 14, 2023): <https://www.mother.ly/health-wellness/self-care/sahms-deserve-childcare/>.
25. Juan Chaparro, Aaron Sojourner, and Matthew J. Wiswall, *Early Childhood Care and Cognitive Development*, National Bureau of Economic Research (2020): <http://www.nber.org/papers/w26813>.
26. Juan Chaparro, Aaron Sojourner, and Matthew J. Wiswall, *Early Childhood Care and Cognitive Development*, National Bureau of Economic Research (2020): <http://www.nber.org/papers/w26813>.
27. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Parents Under Pressure: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Parents* (2024): <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/parents-under-pressure.pdf>.
28. Depending on state laws, family child care providers can be variously registered, certified, or licensed; this is distinct from unlisted providers, who are not required to, and elect not to, identify themselves to the state. Each state has a threshold number of children above which registration is mandatory, but providers caring for fewer children can still voluntarily list themselves.
29. Juliet Bromer, Toni Porter, Samantha Melvin, and Marina Ragonese-Barnes, *Family Child Care Educators' Perspectives on Leaving, Staying, and Entering the Field: Findings From the Multi-State Study of Family Child Care Decline and Supply*, Herr Research Center, Erikson Institute (2021): https://www.erikson.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FCD_DeclineStudy_2021.pdf.
30. Pre-Natal to Three Capacity Building Hub, *State Scan of Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Policies and Supports*, The Build Initiative (2023): <https://buildinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/FFN-Policies-and-Supports-0818.pdf>.
31. Megan Hague Angus, Davis Straske, Grace Guerrero Ramirez, Joanna Nevins, and Harshini Shah, *Understanding the Strengths of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care*, Mathematica (2023): https://homegrownchildcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Understanding-Strengths-of-FFN-Care.Final_9.6.2023.pdf.
32. Sharon Lynn Kagan, ed., *The Early Advantage 1: Early Childhood Systems That Lead by Example: A Comparative Focus on International Early Childhood Education* (Teachers College Press, 2018).

33. Kristiina Kumpulainen, "A Principled, Personalised, Trusting and Child-Centric ECEC System in Finland" in Sharon Lynn Kagan, ed., *The Early Advantage 1: Early Childhood Systems That Lead by Example: A Comparative Focus on International Early Childhood Education* (Teachers College Press, 2018), 72-98:
<https://helda.helsinki.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/cb580076-5ad7-4002-98eb-3a5b7fe77a9d/content>.
34. Jan M. Olsen, "Swedes Take a New Step in Parental Leave. Grandparents Can Now Get Paid to Take Care of Grandkids," AP News, July 1, 2024:
<https://apnews.com/article/sweden-parental-leave-grandparents-stepparents-a2dc2a77530cf8f52a39bc8c830482ec>.
35. Elizabeth Bruenig, "Make Birth Free: It's Time the Pro-Life Movement Chose Life," *The Atlantic*, July 9, 2022:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/07/post-roe-pro-life-parental-support/661473/>.
36. A partial list of such programs would include those governed by Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (health care); Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (nutrition); Section 8 (housing); Family and Medical Leave Act (leave), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (cash assistance); Child Care and Development Block Grant (child care), Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (parenting support); and Child Tax Credit and Child and Dependent Care Credit (tax relief).
37. Financial Freedom Act of 1999, H.R. 2488, 106th Cong. (vetoed):
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/2488>.
38. Robert Pear, "Clinton to Propose Tax Break for Parents Who Stay at Home," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1999:
<https://www.nytimes.com/1999/01/19/us/clinton-to-propose-tax-break-for-parents-who-stay-at-home.html>.
39. *President William Jefferson Clinton State of the Union Address* (1999):
<https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/html/19990119-2656.html>.
40. Parents' Tax Relief Act of 2007, S. 816, 110th Cong (introduced):
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/senate-bill/816>.
41. Stay-at-Home Parents' Tax Credit Act of 2003, S. 1253, 108th Cong. (introduced):
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/senate-bill/1253>.
42. Right Start Act of 2001, S. 18, 107th Cong. (introduced):
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/senate-bill/18>.
43. Joshua McCabe and David Trimmer, *Left Out: A Framework for Non-Contributory Paid Parental Leave*, Niskanen Center (January 7, 2024):
<https://www.niskanencenter.org/left-out-a-framework-for-non-contributory-paid-parental-leave/>.

44. Elaine Maag, Melissa M. Favreault, and Nikhita Airi, *Extending the Earned Income Tax Credit: How the Economic Security Project's Cost-of-Living Refund Would Affect Family Caregivers*, Economic Security Project (January 31, 2020): <https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/extending-the-earned-income-tax-credit-how-the-economic-security-projects-cost-of-living-refund-would-affect-family-caregivers%E2%9F%93%BC/>.
45. Economic Security Project, *Polls: Support for EITC With Automatic Filing, Caregiver Credit* (December 10, 2020): <https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/polls-support-for-eitc-with-automatic-filing-caregiver-credit/>.
46. Fairness for Stay-at-Home Parents Act, S. 3048, 118th Cong. (2022) (introduced): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/3048/>.
47. Social Security Caregiver Credit Act of 2023, S. 1211, 118th Cong. (introduced): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1211/>.
48. Respect Parents' Childcare Choices Act, S. 4765, 118th Cong. (2024) (introduced): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4765/amendments>.
49. Child Care for America Act, HR. 9901, 118th Cong. (2024) (introduced): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/9901>.
50. US Census Bureau, "Census Bureau Releases New Estimates on America's Families and Living Arrangements," news release, November 17, 2022: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/americas-families-and-living-arrangements.html>.
51. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Child Well-Being in Single-Parent Families* (April 6, 2024): <https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-well-being-in-single-parent-families>.
52. Respect Parents' Childcare Choices Act, S. 4765, 118th Cong. (2024) (introduced): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4765/amendments>.
53. Linda Smith and Victoria Owens, *The Illusion of Parent Choice: Lessons Learned From BPC's Parent Survey Series*, Bipartisan Policy Center (2023): https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/BPC_FCI-Parent-Report_R04.pdf.
54. Audrey Stienon and Melissa Boteach, *Children Before Profits: Constraining Private Equity Profiteering to Advance Child Care as a Public Good*, National Women's Law Center and Open Markets (2024): <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e449c8c3ef68d752f3e70dc/t/669918c03d164f5b99536d79/1721309377413/Children+Before+Profits.pdf>.
55. Thriving Providers Project: <https://thrivingproviders.org/>.
56. Natalie Renew, *Pandemic Prompts Oklahoma Policymakers to Expand Access to Child Care*, Home Grown Child Care (February 16, 2021): <https://homegrownchildcare.org/pandemic-urges-oklahoma-policymakers-to-expand-access-to-child-care/>.

capita

57. Natalie Vieira and Shannon Hill, *Creating the Conditions for Family Child Care to Thrive*, All Our Kin, (2019):
https://allourkin.org/files/galleries/Family_Child_Care_to_Thrive.pdf.
58. Dennis C. Shea, *Letter for the Record: Examining Proposals to Address Housing Affordability, Availability, and Other Community Needs*, Bipartisan Policy Center (March 13, 2024):
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/letter/examining-proposals-addressing-housing-affordability-availability/>.
59. Claire Cain Miller, "The World 'Has Found a Way to Do This': The U.S. Lags on Paid Leave," *The New York Times*, October 25, 2021:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/25/upshot/paid-leave-democrats.html>.
60. Matt Bruenig, *The Case for Making Parental Leave Actually Universal*, People's Policy Project (October 26, 2021):
<https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2021/10/26/the-case-for-making-parental-leave-actually-universal/>.
61. Kaye Pestaina and Karen Pollitz, *Navigating the Family Glitch Fix: Hurdles for Consumers With Employer-sponsored Coverage*, KFF (November 21, 2022):
<https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/issue-brief/navigating-the-family-glitch-fix-hurdles-for-consumers-with-employer-sponsored-coverage/>.
62. John Jankowski, "Caregiver Credits in France, Germany, and Sweden: Lessons for the United States," *Social Security Bulletin* 71 (4) (2011):
<https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v71n4/v71n4p61.html>.
63. Patrick T. Brown, *Building Blocks for Childcare Reform*, American Compass (August 14, 2024): <https://americancompass.org/building-blocks-for-childcare-reform/>.
64. Sherrod Brown, US Senator for Ohio, "Brown, Cassidy Announce First Bipartisan, Bicameral Bill in Decades to Update Supplemental Security Income Program," news release, September 12, 2023:
<https://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/brown-cassidy-announce-first-bipartisan-bicameral-bill-in-decades-to-update-supplemental-security-income-program>.
65. Michael Novak, "The Family Out of Favor," *Harper's* (April 1976):
<https://harpers.org/archive/1976/04/the-family-out-of-favor/>.