



Work-Family Policy & Child Outcomes

What we know and don't know

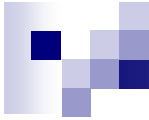
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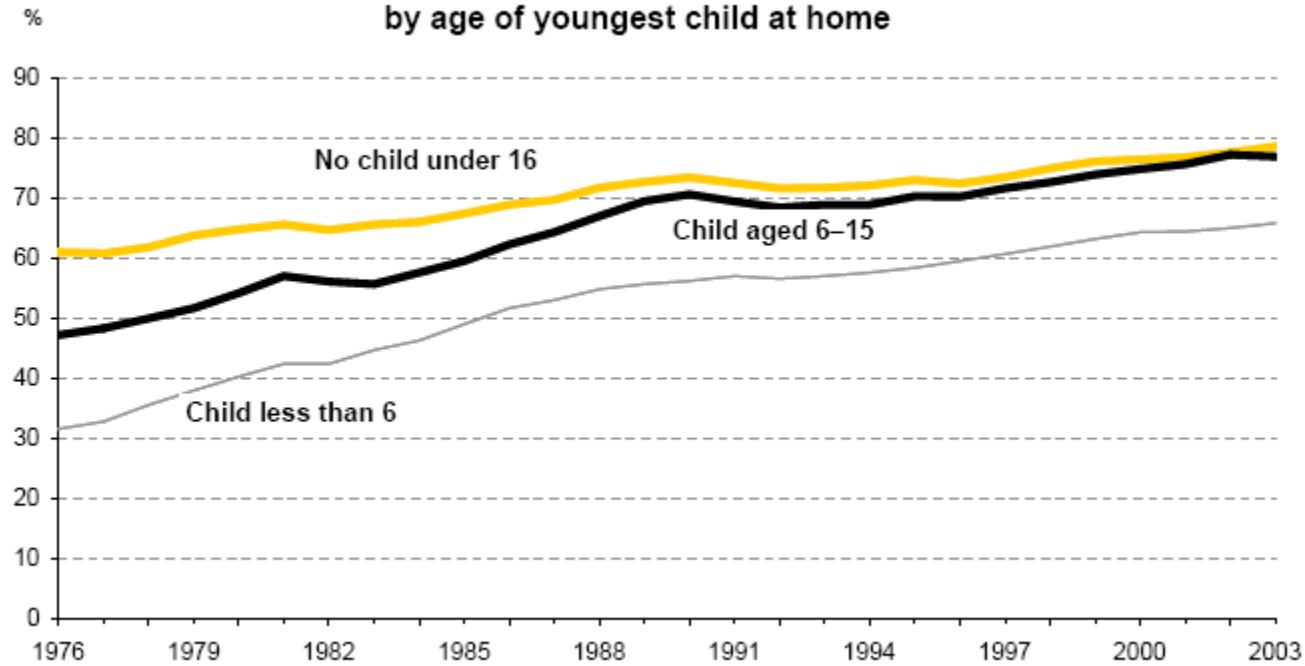


Overview

- Family life has changed, and most children today don't have a parent home full-time
- In Canada,
 - 1/5 children live with a lone mother (Statistics Canada, 2002)
 - more mothers are working (68% of lone mothers, 72% of married mothers (Statistics Canada, 2003))



**Chart 10: Employment rates of women aged 15 to 54,
by age of youngest child at home**



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.



Overview (continued)

- Until recently, most work-family research focused on adults, but policies may also affect children, by influencing:
 - Parental employment
 - Children's care arrangements
- Research is starting to examine the effects of parental employment and care arrangements on outcomes for children, but there are still large gaps in knowledge.



What outcomes do we care about?

Child well-being

- a. cognitive development
- b. social and emotional development
- c. health

Adult and family well-being:

- Parental employment
- Parental choice

Gender equity

Social inclusion & poverty reduction



Contextual and mediating factors

- How work-family policies, and parental work, affect child outcomes will depend on a host of contextual factors:
 - Age and other characteristics of the child
 - Timing, quality, & intensity of employment
- Effects of parental work will work through changes in:
 - Income
 - Parenting and home environment
 - Child care and after school care



What we know about parental work and child outcomes in pregnancy & first year

- Parental leave is associated with better maternal and child health
 - lower maternal depression (Chatterji & Markowitz, 2004)
 - lower infant mortality; extending leave 10 weeks reduces post-neonatal mortality 4%, child mortality 3% (Ruhm, 2000; Tanaka, 2005)
 - fewer low birth-weight babies (Tanaka, 2005)
 - more breast-feeding (Berger, Hill, & Waldfogel, 2005)
 - more use of preventive health care (Berger et al., 2005).

Unpaid leave does not have the same protective effects (Ruhm, 2000; Tanaka, 2005).



What we know about work and child outcomes in pregnancy & first year (continued)

- We know less about fathers, but it appears that when father take leave
 - mothers are more likely to breast-feed (Tanaka, 2004)
 - fathers are more involved in infant care (changing diapers, waking up with the baby at night, etc.) (Tanaka & Waldfogel, 2005).



What we know about parental work and child outcomes in first year (cont.)

- Quality of care – in particular, sensitivity and responsiveness to the child – is crucial.
- Maternal employment in the first year, particularly if early and full-time, is associated with poorer cognitive development and behavior problems, for some children
- Effects vary by type and quality of child care, the quality of parental care, and family income.

(Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Smolensky & Gootman, 2003; see also Lefebvre & Merrigan, 2000)



What we know about parental work and outcomes for children age 1 & 2

- Quality matters (Blau, 2001; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Smolensky & Gootman, 2003; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000).
- No adverse effects of maternal employment on cognitive development, but may be effects on behavior problems if children are in poor quality child care for long hours (Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002; NICHD ECCRN, 2003).
- High-quality child care produces cognitive gains, with no adverse effects on behaviors (Currie, 2002; Karoly et al., 1998; Waldfogel, 2002).
- Largest gains for the most disadvantaged: IHDP boosted IQ at 3 by 20 pts for children of < high-school, 10 for high school grads, and 0 for college grads.



What we know about parental work and outcomes for children age 1 and 2 (cont.)

- Children in group child care have more illnesses (Meyers, Rosenbaum, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004).
- Safety is a concern in low-quality care, but rates of injury and abuse lower in child care than in children's own homes (Currie & Hotz, in press; Waldfogel, in press).
- Child care may be protective (Love et al., 2002).



What we know about parental work and outcomes for children age 3 to 5

- No overall effects of maternal employment
- May be adverse cognitive effects if mothers work non-standard and children do not attend center care (Han, 2005)
- May be adverse behavioral effects if children are in poor quality care long hours (Brooks-Gunn et al., 2002; NICHD ECCRN, 2003)
- Effects may vary by mother's level of education (Gagne, 2003).



What we know about parental work and outcomes for children age 3 to 5 (continued)

- High-quality preschool programs produce substantial cognitive gains, particularly for disadvantaged (Currie, 2002; Karoly et al., 1998; Waldfogel, 2002), and reduce later problems such as crime (Carneiro and Heckman, 2003).
- More typical school- or center-based care programs also produce cognitive gains (e.g., evidence from ECLS-K in Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004; Magnuson, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004; see also evidence from NLSCY in Kohen & Hertzman, 1998; Lefebvre & Merrigan, 2000; Lipps & Yiptong-Avila, 1999; but see also Pagani et al., 2003 & in press).



What we know about parental work and outcomes for children age 3 to 5 (cont.)

- Effects of maternal employment on child health depend on income (Morris et al., 2001).
- Maternal employment may lead to increased risk of child obesity (Anderson, Butcher, & Levine, 2003; Ruhm, 2003).
- Some adverse effects of child care on health, and some safety problems in low-quality care (Meyers et al., 2004).
- Child care may be protective, reducing physical discipline and domestic violence (Magnuson & Waldfogel, in press).



What we know about parental work and outcomes for school-age children and teens


- Child and family factors matter more than parental work (Smolensky & Gootman, 2003; see also Lefebvre & Merrigan, 1998a and b)
- Effects of parents' work depend on age and attributes of child, as well as timing, quality, and intensity of work.
 - The same welfare-to-work programs that had positive effects on young children had no effects on children 6-9, and adverse effects on older children (Gennetian et al., 2002).
 - Maternal employment may have less positive effects for boys than girls (Smolensky & Gootman, 2003; Ruhm, 2003).
 - Adolescents whose mothers work evenings are less likely to eat meals together and report more depression; adolescents whose fathers work rotating or irregular shifts get into more trouble at school (Han & Waldfogel, 2005).



What we know about parental work and outcomes for school-age children and teens

(continued)

- Effects of parental employment may work through income, parenting, and care arrangements:
 - Adolescents whose mothers moved from welfare to work in the Three City Study reported improved mental health; these families made substantial income gains, without reducing time together (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2003).
 - In contrast, adolescents whose mothers were assigned to welfare-to-work reforms in the MDRC studies did less well in school; these effects were strongest in families where the adolescents had younger siblings (Gennetian et al, 2002).



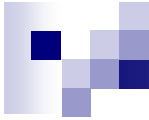
What don't we know?

- Single biggest gap in knowledge is about fathers.
- There are also gaps in our knowledge about:
 - Issue of causality/selection
 - How effects differ by child and family characteristics
 - How effects differ by job characteristics



What don't we know? (continued)

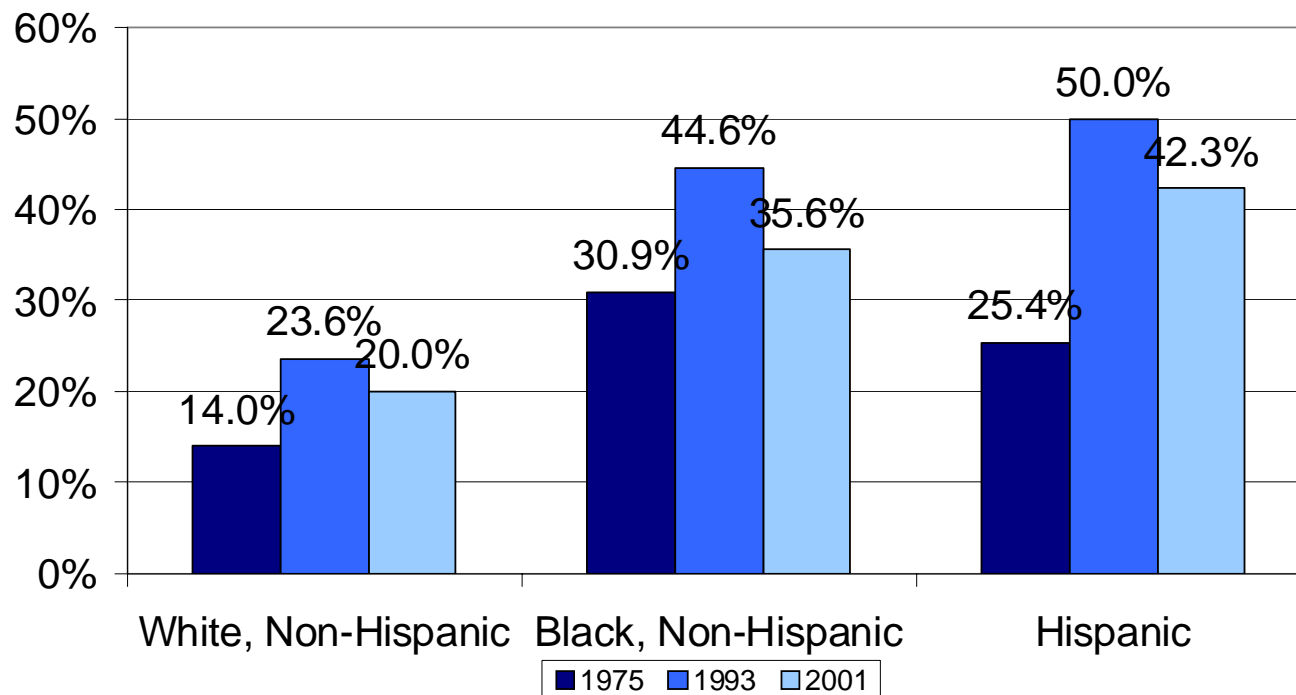
- We also have much more to learn about policies:
 - Descriptive research on who is covered, and not covered.
 - Empirical research that identifies the effects of policies on parents' decisions about work and child care arrangements, *and* child outcomes.



Who is covered, and not covered?

- Earnings of low-wage workers have declined, relative to the cost of supporting a family
- And low wage-jobs often come with poor benefits

Share of men with HS education or less who do not earn enough to support a family of 4 above the poverty line in the US



Source: Danziger, 2004.



Inequality in parental leave coverage

Share of US workers covered and eligible under FMLA:

<High school education	44.2%
High school graduate	57.1
Some college	62.2
College graduate	65.3
Graduate school	73.8

Cantor et al., 2001, Table A2-3.4.



Inequality in paid leave

Share of US workers with no paid leave, ≤ 1 week, or > 1 week paid leave

	none	≤ 1	> 1 wk
$<$ poverty	54%	16%	30%
100-200%	39%	18%	43%
$> 200\%$ pov.	16%	8%	76%

Source: Urban Institute, 2004.



Inequality in health-related benefits

Share of US parents without family health insurance, or paid leave for a sick child

	Insurance	Leave
<\$28K	31%	64%
\$28-\$72K	14%	52%
>\$72K	7%	34%

Galinsky & Bond, 2000.



How do policies affect parents' work, care arrangements, and child outcomes?

- We have a good deal of evidence about how policies affect parents' work and children's care arrangements.
- In Canada, for instance,
 - the extension of paid leave increased the time that mothers with benefits stay home (from 6 months in 2000 to 10 months in 2001), and the share of fathers claiming benefits (from 3% in 2000 to 10% in 2001) (Marshall, 2003)
 - Quebec's \$5/day child care policy increased mothers' labor supply and children's enrollment (Lefebvre & Merrigan, 2005a and b)



How do policies affect parents' work, care arrangements, and child outcomes? (continued)

- We need to extend this research to examine the effect of policies on child outcomes.
- Such research will
 - tell us more about how policies affect child outcomes
 - provide further causal evidence as to the effects of parental work and children's care arrangements on child outcomes.



Conclusions

- Work-family research is starting to look at child outcomes
- We know a good deal about the effects of mothers' work and child care arrangements on child outcomes
- We don't know as much about fathers, selection, and variation by child, family, and job characteristics.
- We also have much more to learn about the effects of policies – in Canada as well as the US.