

cape outlook

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CHILD CARE IN THE 101st CONGRESS

Near the top of the list of priorities for the 101st Congress beginning on January 3 is, once again, child care. *Outlook* has been reporting on the various pieces of federal legislation introduced in the last session, addressing this monumental societal problem. The private school community has a large stake in child care and the government's role in it. Because legislative approaches are unusually disparate and their supporters often fractious, *Outlook* is presenting a summary of the major child care questions raised during the 100th Congress, and certain to be raised in the 101st.

1. Should the federal government be involved in child care at all?

Much research supports the view that young children are placed at risk by institutional care. Many conservatives perceive a federal child care program to be a threat to family life by making it easier and acceptable for mothers to enter the work force and not stay home to raise young children. On the other hand for millions of working parents carefully balancing home and work responsibilities, institutional child care is a necessity. Half of all mothers with pre-school children are in the work force.

Thus, the practical exigencies of family life require that the nation provide massive amounts of institutional child care.

2. What have been the major legislative approaches to child care to date?

Child care has proved to be a difficult issue to successfully encompass legislatively. In large part this is because the public is so divided about it. A respected pollster complained that "we have not been able to find a way to word a child care questionnaire that doesn't produce a positive response of over 60%." There have been two strikingly different federal legislative approaches to date.

One approach is through the federal tax code. Many such bills were introduced, particularly at the end of the session, and they can be grouped into three categories. The "Stay-At-Home Spouse Bills" give tax subsidies to families with pre-school children even if they do not pay for child care. "Targeting" would reduce tax credits for upper income families with employment-related child care expenses to partially pay for other aspects of child care programs. And the "Infant Bill" is a one-year tax break given to moderate income families with newborn babies if one parent stays home for six months.

The other approach requires federal expenditures of varying amounts, and is either very comprehensive as in the case of the "ABC Bill," or targeted to more specific populations.

The Act for Better Child Services addresses child care in all its forms, from infant care in family settings to after-school care for young teenagers. Seventy-five percent of its funds helps low income families pay for child care on a sliding scale. The remaining twenty-five percent is used to make allocations to states to start new programs, train and adequately pay workers, enforce standards and develop referral services to help parents find quality care. The states are given broad latitude in the use of their funds. They would be distributed by way of grants or contracts to eligible providers or by child care certificates to parents. ABC's major contribution is that it focuses the nation's limited funds on those most in need and helps eligible families pay the full price of child care service.

The Family Support Center Act of 1988 makes grants to a wide range of approved state and local organizations, including private and religious, which offer a variety of social services including pre-natal and post-natal care, nutri-

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NEW PRESIDENT, NEW CONGRESS; OLD DEBT

No matter what the question posed to a panel of Congressmen, former Cabinet members and Presidential advisors, the answer centers on tackling the U.S. deficit and foreign debt.

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a Washington conservative think tank housing such luminaries as Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Robert Bork, Richard Perle, Ben Wattenberg and Herbert Stein, recently convened its annual policy conference. CAPE attended, and reports here on the December 8 "The New Congress and the New President."

AEI's Norman Ornstein, a frequent contributor to the McNeil/Lehrer News-Hour, served as the moderator. His first question was who has the mandate, what is the mandate and is it important.

There exists a "schizophrenic" mandate, according to Stuart Eisenstat, former Domestic Policy advisor to President Carter—a Republican/Democratic, Bush/Congress, "no new taxes"/"kinder, gentler nation" mandate. Yes, it is important. It is the public's permission to the government to act. This bifurcated mandate tells the Bush administration and the 101st Congress that Americans will and have proven to be most resistant to new taxes, yet reluctant to cut social spending. Thus Congress should continue to legislate a higher minimum wage, child care and environmental bills, but not at taxpayers' expense.

Senator Alan Simpson (R-Wyo) said "I don't think a mandate is anything," but really backed Eisenstat and his colleagues on the panel with his illustration of the schizophrenia. He noted that 25 percent of the same Ohioans who voted for Bush also voted for the liberal Democrat, Senator Howard Metzenbaum. Simpson also reminded us of the \$2.8 trillion projected debt that won't go away with Bush's "flexible freeze" unless Bush quickly defines it and convinces Con-

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CHILD CARE (continued from p.1)

tional lunches, family, drop-in, particularly, Head Start, family based child care and after school care for children under 13. Priority is given to services in high risk areas.

The Prekindergarten Early Dropout Intervention Act of 1988 authorizes grants to be made to state and local education agencies and appropriate community-based and non-profit private organizations. It would fund model programs through the Department of Education to identify children between the ages of three and five who may be at risk of dropping out of school and fund model prekindergarten early dropout prevention programs. Such programs would "assist those children to acquire cognitive and language development skills necessary to succeed in school," and accomplish other goals subject to the approval of the Department.

Smart Start: The Community Collaborative for Early Childhood Development Act of 1988 makes "widely available to prekindergarten children, especially low-income, a high quality, child-centered, developmentally appropriate early childhood education program" through the Department of Education in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services. Services would be available for the full workday and full calendar year. Grants would fund collaborations between federal, state and local childhood resources for child care, early childhood education, health, nutrition, mental health and other social services to all prekindergarten students and especially to those in low income areas. State and local governments would assist in improving, expanding or establishing early childhood development or child care programs using existing facilities in public schools and other nonsectarian community facilities meeting state and local safety code requirements. Family support for prenatal and parenting training would be included.

These widely differing efforts to address the problem reflect the national

ambivalence about how the government should get into child care delivery. With ABC and Smart Start for example, child care joins health and education as another federal responsibility in the area of human services. Proponents of these bills believe that the tax route provides no new child care facilities or people to staff them and that a tax credit is almost worthless for child care to a poor or even a middle income family.

By way of contrast, the use of the tax code reflects a far more modest, indirect federal role. It derives from the view that child care is uniquely a family matter, that entrepreneurial approaches should be maximized and that the federal government has had mixed success addressing major human service problems with direct and massive outlays.

What appears obvious from legislation introduced in 1987-88 is that child care is new territory for Congress, and that Congress is groping to find the best answers. Bill writing has been influenced by ideology and sentiment and the fact that child care is a powerfully energetic player on the national scene now. There are thousands of different providers—public, private, church, industry, community and others—all with somewhat different claims on legislative attention. Therefore it is likely that child care legislation will be patchworked for perhaps the next five years.

3. What about regulations?

Under the ABC bill a National Advisory Committee on Child Care Standards would establish minimum standards for facilities including size and ratio limits, qualifications of personnel, health and safety requirements and parental involvement rules. States could set their own standards but they could be no less stringent than those of the government. Proponents say standards are necessary, that they vary enormously from state to state and that in many states they are inadequate.

Tax credit plans assume the market will control quality as in private education. They cite evidence that the exist-

ence of standards does not prevent abuses.

4. Where do church-related providers fit into the legislation?

Nearly one-third of all child care is provided by church-related entities. The extent to which they should receive federal benefits stalled progress of the ABC bill in the last session of Congress.

That bill permits funding of sectarian child care facilities. Proponents point out that most of these will go to the renovation of mainly old, inner-city church day care facilities which are typically run down and serve primarily minority families. Opponents say this kind of funding violates the Constitution.

The ABC bill also permits states to issue certificates to parents to be spent at the child care providers of their choice. A further provision stipulates that a sectarian provider can not discriminate in admissions but can reflect religious preference in hiring.

Supporters of using the tax code say their approach eliminates all knotty church-state questions, that the tax code is neutral as to the claims of either side and that child care is simply another consumer item and should be subject to market forces.

Summary of Issues and How They Might Be Addressed

It is likely that the private school community will find the ABC approach more realistic and useful than the tax credit approach because of the importance of sectarian daycare providers in the lives of minority children and families. For these a tax credit for child care has little meaning. Financial support for facilities and direct help to families to pay for them appear to be necessary ingredients of a good child care bill.

Child care standards developed by the proposed National Advisory Committee may be a cause for concern. Do they anticipate federal intrusion into private school operations or curriculum? Will they require large unexpected outlays

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A coalition of 14 national organizations serving private schools (K-12)

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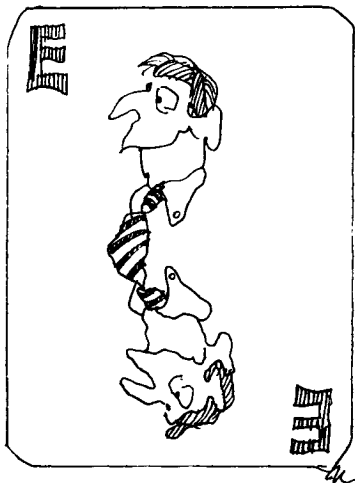
for equipment, staffing, facilities? Will they force a change in program or emphasis? Although it is axiomatic that federal money will bring with it federal interest and some forms of control, the private school community should watch over and hopefully participate in the work of this projected Advisory Board.

Giving certificates to low income parents to enable them to choose and pay for their child care is an intelligent approach to maintaining a diversity of providers. It allows for parental involvement in the success of their children and their child care facility. The complaint that this is a sneaky way to pave the way for vouchers later on in elementary and secondary schools is far-fetched.

For some, a major question is who controls any new federal system of child care, the Education or the Health Department. It seems clear from knowledgeable observers in the private school community that Health is the preferred agency.

The final overarching questions are these: Should there be a national system of child care funded and regulated by state and federal government and operating from public school facilities? Should we continue to enjoy the benefits of a wide range of providers reflecting the ideals, hopes and taste of millions of parents?

The private school community overwhelmingly supports the view that in child care, as in schools, a broad diversity is best. For them the trick in child care will be to support federal intervention to improve and enlarge the system while keeping it free, flexible, responsive and eclectic. Whether that is too big an order for the new Congress will be known during the next six months. It clearly is an order which calls for the help, interest and vigilance of its supporters in the CAPE community.



OLD DEBT (continued from p.1)
gress, to back the necessary measures to enact it.

Bush must draw up a good budget which is credible to Congress, to the public, and to financial markets. If he does not do so in the first six months of his presidency, says Eisenstat, he is doomed. This budget has to meet the demands of the Gramm-Rudmann-Hollings Deficit Control Act by cutting \$35 billion in each of the next four years. This, says Eisenstat, will freeze all discretionary spending at 1989 levels (like education and social security), freeze federal wages and benefits, and cut by 20 percent both Medicare and Medicaid.

The panel showed great respect and seemed to hold high hopes for the nine month old National Economic Commission to furnish solutions— Senator Simpson in particular, who kidded his House Colleague William Gray (D-PA) in naming him “his excellency.” Gray is a member of the Commission, and claimed a diminished optimism. The Commission needs strong bipartisan support from Congressional leadership, something he found lacking in the 100th Congress. Congressman Robert Matsui (D-CA) was the only dissenter of the group, holding less confidence in the NEC and claiming that unless there is a revenue increase, there won't be real deficit reduction. Many a Congressman has been attacked and even defeated for his mention of the need to raise taxes of any sort, said Matzui.

Former Senator William Brock, Reagan's Secretary of Labor, identified himself as one of those defeated senators. He and House Majority Leader Thomas Foley (D-WA) stressed that Americans need an education on the budget and the deficit problem. It is both the job of the press and, said Eisenstat, that of the President. David Gergen, editor of U.S. News and World Report agreed. Foley quoted Senator Patrick Moynihan, “the public likes getting its dollar's worth of government for about 80 cents.” Foley wants the public to know that the largest part of the budget is not spent on federal government operations.

A final question from the audience concerned entitlements to middle- and upper-class federal assistance recipients. Foley decried the notion many of us have that we earn social security benefits and therefore are entitled to them. This is not entirely true, and the very sort of idea that needs dispelling by the press and the President.

TEACHERS TOUT TALENTS

The Private School Facilitator Project is frequently asked to recommend programs from among the approximately 400 available through the National Diffusion Network (NDN). Much like a good waiter we try to avoid simply saying that everything on the “menu” is excellent. We, like the NDN State Facilitators, can and do make recommendations as we become familiar with the interests, goals, educational philosophy and teaching style of the school or group of schools who ask.

We can also pass along the comments of other “customers”, and will do so from time to time in *Outlook*. A case in point is *Talents Unlimited*, a program for grades one through six designed to help teachers recognize and nurture multiple talents in all children across curriculum lines and ability levels. Such talents complement academic development, and include productive thinking, communication, forecasting, decision-making and planning.

Teachers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Florida had the following comments after a recent two-day *Talents* training workshop: “The most beneficial knowledge I gained from the seminar is that talents programs can enrich all students and give everyone a chance to shine. It makes the classroom come alive and I look forward to using it in my school.”

“Although this was a tiring two days, it will be very rewarding for my class. I will actually be able to use this *Talents* immediately in the classroom in all subject areas.”

“I learned new ways to make students feel good about themselves by being successful and to realize and appreciate their own talents—especially the students who weren't aware they had any. Great workshop! Dr. Hobbs (director of *Talents Unlimited*) is a terrific teacher.”

“Deborah Hobbes was great! I would recommend her without reservation. The model she presents is a logical approach to helping children learn and think, and apply the framework they learn to real life situations. In the process they improve their self-esteem and experience success in academic areas.” So concludes Daniel Seim, pastor of Trinity Lutheran School in Wahiawa, Hawaii, who coordinated a training workshop last summer for a consortium of Lutheran, Catholic and Independent schools.

Talents has proven extremely popular with private schools. Private schools fre-

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quently lack the capacity (or the inclination) to sort children according to ability—the gifted here, the unmotivated there. They need and want something that can apply to all students in the classroom. *Talents* provides that something.

Deborah Hobbs is a great teacher of teachers. She transmits her own excitement, enthusiasm and knowledge to participants in her workshops. Of course not all *Talents* workshops are led by Dr. Hobbs. But she selects and instructs her Certified Trainers to match the same standard of competence.

Finally Dr. Hobbs and *Talents* stress methodology and teacher creativity over materials (although *Talents* has excellent curriculum materials available for those who don't want to do their own *Talents* lesson plans.) This makes it a relatively inexpensive program to implement, a major consideration for most private schools.

The enthusiasm for *Talents* signals a growing popularity of NDN programs with private schools. Training in NDN programs offers teachers not only new ideas, new methods and new curriculum content; it offers them a kind of revitalization that carries over into the classroom. NDN programs respect, tap and renew the creativity inherent in all good teachers. They stimulate fresh insights and approaches. They make good teachers better teachers.

Teachers give give give day after day. *Talents* and other NDN programs give them something back. For more information on *Talents Unlimited* and other NDN programs and how you can implement them in your school or classroom, contact your NDN State Facilitator or the Private School Facilitator Project of CAPE at (202) 659-0177.

CAPENOTES

*Deadline for application to the 1989 Asbestos Loan and Grant Program is January 16. All schools should have gotten their application forms from EPA. Competition for these awards is very keen, and only schools showing presence of extensive friable asbestos exhibiting some damage and severe financial need will qualify. Private schools with per pupil operating expenses averaging under \$1,700 might qualify. Awards average about 88% of total project costs. Contact your governor's asbestos designee or the EPA regional asbestos coordinator for more information.

*Certified junior and senior high school science teachers may apply for an eight-week summer program, "Science Teachers Research Involvement for Vital Education." Teachers work in laboratories at major science and engineering facilities with scientists on existing research projects and are paid a stipend of \$400-500 a week. Contact University Programs Division, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, P.O. Box 117, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831-0117; (615) 576-2310. Deadline for application is January 15, but partial applications will meet the deadline requirement.

*The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science and Math Teaching awards one science and one math teacher from each state a \$7,5000 grant from the NSF for the teacher's school and a presidential citation. Contact PAESMT, National Science Teachers Assoc., 5112 Berwyn Rd., College Park, MD 20140; (301) 220-0870.

*The National Endowment for the Humanities with Reader's Digest offers teachers one-year sabbaticals for independent study in history, literature, languages and other humanities disciplines. One teacher is chosen from each state and receives up to \$27,500. Applicants must submit a planned course of study focusing on important primary and secondary texts. The proposals will be judged on their intellectual quality, topic significance, appropriateness to teaching responsibilities and relevance of materials to be studied. Contact NEH Reader's Digest Teacher-Scholar Program, Division of Education Programs, Room 302-MR, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0377.

*Free lead testing of school drinking water is available. WaterTest Corp., approved by EPA, will test up to 10 drinking water sources in any school. To order a test kit send \$4.95 for shipping and handling to WaterTest Corp., 33 S. Commercial St., Manchester, NH 03103; (603) 623-7400.

*The National Science Foundation (NSF) announces its Teacher Enhancement Grants, funding projects to improve teachers' knowledge of science or math. Elementary, middle and high school teachers will participate in intensive summer workshops and follow-up activities. For their directory of summer teacher enhancement programs contact Program Director, Division of Teacher Preparation and Enhancement, room 635, Science and Engineering Education, NSF, Washington, DC 20550; (202)357-7073.

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