

cape outlook

COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION

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CHILD CARE SURVEY

In early April the results of a Harris poll commissioned by the Phillip Morris ~~Companies on national child care needs~~ was released. The poll surveyed 4,050 adults, about half of whom have children under the age of six. The sample was representative of the general U.S. population in terms of age, sex, race and education. As the child care debate is still going strong on Capitol Hill and legislation addressing the issue is constantly evolving, it is useful to consider what the poll tells us Americans want.

Most feel that children today are not treated well. Only 47 percent say most children have loving parents, fewer feel they get adequate medical treatment, live in safe neighborhoods and are basically happy. Only 25 percent feel that most children receive quality child care while their parents are at work.

The poll found that the average parent uses between two and three support services for his or her children during working hours. Given the choice, 75 percent of parents would opt to have their children cared for by relatives, yet more than one out of three say that they regularly rely on a non-relative.

On cost and availability, 45 percent say they are "very satisfied." Half say they are very satisfied with quality, and 54 percent with reliability.

The mean total cost of child care per child is \$190 per month or \$2,280 per year. The disparity in cost between affluent and poor parents is not that great. Single mothers, for example, pay \$211 a month while business executives (two groups not mutually exclusive) average \$244.

Eighty-nine percent of those polled feel that employers should provide flex-time, part-time and job sharing options for mothers of new children. Eighty-five percent answered that the federal government should establish minimum standards for child care. Sixty-six percent

CHILD CARE

contend that the federal government should establish and pay for programs to set up child care centers to provide quality day care for children. The majority is willing to pay higher taxes to that end.

CHILD CARE LEGISLATION

Congress appears to expect a child care bill to pass this year. The Budget Resolution, approved in mid-May, included \$1.4 billion on the House side for child care to be appropriated for an as yet unnamed piece of legislation. (The Senate Budget Committee does not specify its spending categories in the same way.) Both the Senate and the House are looking at a number of child care bills with a variety of approaches primarily for making child care available to low-income parents.

Some of these bills amend the tax code to award refundable credits to very low-income parents for a percentage of their child care costs. Some would expand the child care component of state block grants under Title XX of the Social Security Act. The President's bill, sponsored by Senator Dole, would provide a refundable tax credit to parents of young children but would not require that the money be spent for child care.

Two bills continue to serve as the vehicles for the on-going debate on what is the best plan for providing accessible, affordable high quality child care to the greatest number of parents who need it. The Act for Better Child Care Services of 1989 (S. 5), the ABC bill, was reported out of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee on March 15 and could be scheduled for Senate debate and floor vote at any time. The bill has not been marked up on the House side.

The Child Development and Education Act of 1989 is scheduled for markup in the House Education and Labor Committee on May 23. Although there is no Senate companion to this bill, it now includes provisions very similar to ABC.

The Child Development and Education Act of 1989 (H.R. 3), sponsored by Congressman Hawkins, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, was re-drafted in mid-May. The bill would expand Head Start by extending eligibility, increasing the number of hours and length of school year to accommodate needs of working parents. It would increase current appropriations for Head Start. H.R. 3 would also make grants available to states for other early childhood development programs for low-income four-year olds, and for three-year olds at the discretion of the local education agency. The local education agency would provide for the inclusion of private school students in both early childhood and before- and after-school care "in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 1, Title I, relating to the participation of children enrolled in private schools." The LEA may provide for before- and after-school care through grants and contracts to other public entities and "eligible non-profit community-based organizations" which are defined as "representative of the community or significant segments of the community." Low-income infants, toddlers and preschoolers would also be provided for in centers, group homes and family homes under the same arrangements as the ABC bill, under nearly identical health and safety standards. Markup of the new version of H.R. 3 should help begin to determine the role of the private sectarian and non-sectarian providers. The subsequent committee report will ultimately define their roles.

The Senate's ABC bill (S. 5) is sponsored by Senator Dodd, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcohol, and has several cosponsors. The 1989 version of

ABC was revised to reduce the federal role and increase state flexibility. It is the only child care bill to have been marked up in either chamber at this writing. Like H.R. 3, S. 5, or the **Act for Better Child Care Services** is not a tax bill. Congress would authorize funds for states to provide direct assistance to mostly low-income families to help pay for child care. Seventy percent of the funds would be used for direct assistance. The remainder would be used to expand availability and improve quality through training and licensing programs, referral services, technical assistance and grants and loans to child care providers. These last components are also contained in H.R. 3. Only eight percent of the funds could be used for administrative purposes. ABC would establish no new major federal child care infrastructure. The states would contract for matching grants and their share would be 20 percent.

The ABC bill has spurred debate and sometimes misinformed debate in two major areas. One is federal standards. Federal standards would apply *only* to those providers receiving federal funds and would not take effect until four years after their promulgation. A national advisory committee with representatives of state and local government; child care providers, regulators and employees; child development specialists; medical professionals; business; insurance; religious institutions and parents would set minimal federal standards. The committee would then disband. Child care centers would be regulated on group size, child-staff ratios, staff qualifications and background, health and safety requirements and parental involvement. Both group size and ratios would be determined by taking the median of existing state standards. Family and group home providers would not be regulated on background and qualifications or on parental involvement. From all accounts the health and safety and background and qualifications standards would be the minimum acceptable to the advisory committee and in

many cases would be less rigorous than some existing state requirements. Both the Senate and House heard testimony from the widest possible range of experts, providers, government officials and parents and on that basis decided upon the standards issue. This issue remains unresolved, and Congress may finally leave required standards to the states and set only model standards.

The second area of debate is the inclusion or exclusion of sectarian providers of child care. Until the Senate Labor and Human Services Committee issued its report in April after passing the bill in March, S. 5 appeared to include sectarian providers in the pool of those eligible to receive children of parents receiving funds under this bill. However, the committee report states that "an entity receiving any form of financial assistance under this Act shall not include any sectarian activities, worship or instruction...."

As a result of the committee report the U.S. Catholic Conference has been working with two Senators who have agreed to sponsor the **Parental Choice Amendment to S. 5**. Under this amendment parents would be allowed to send their children to sectarian providers of child care. Sectarian providers would have to qualify under the other requirements of the bill just as non-sectarian.

CAPE supports the Parental Choice Amendment. The majority of CAPE sectarian associations and the American Montessori Society, which houses much of its child care in religious centers, come together in favor. CAPE believes in the quality of the child care its associations provide and that religiously-sponsored child care should continue to play a major role.

RADON

EPA recently completed the preliminary school radon study as mandated by the Indoor Radon Abatement Act passed in October of 1988. A larger survey is currently underway. The results of the preliminary study startled EPA officials, prompting two meetings with education associations including CAPE and a press conference with EPA Administrator William Reilly. Although schools were thought to be safer than homes, EPA now speculates that they are more contaminated because of the nature of their construction. "Based on measurements taken in 3,000 school-rooms in 16 states, it appears that elevated levels of radon gas can be found in schools throughout the United States," said Reilly. He and the EPA Office of Radiation strongly recommend that schools prepare now to test for radon this coming winter.

The colorless, odorless gas enters buildings by seeping through the foundation. Radon is a known carcinogen, second only to cigarettes in causing lung cancer. In fact, a Senate committee report cites a figure estimating as many as 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year attributable to radon. Children are more vulnerable to the effects of radon than adults just as they are more vulnerable to other environmental hazards.

Schools tested for the study were chosen based on geologic data, data on radon levels in homes and physical characteristics of the schools, which together indicated a high probability of radon contamination. The 3,000 rooms of 130 schools were only a sample of those schools.



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EPA also issued its guidance document, *Radon Measurements in Schools*, which describes the problem, testing procedure and remediation and lists state radiation control offices and EPA regional radiation offices. CAPE reviewed the draft document for EPA and found it helpful, thorough and easy to understand. The Office of Radiation reminded us that this is an interim document. It seeks comments from schools which have used it as to how they can make it more useful. Please send your suggestions to CAPE and we will pass them on.

States vary widely in their radon programs. Schools should not wait to receive *Radon Measurements in Schools* from their state, but should request it by inquiring at the EPA regional or state radiation control office. CAPE can supply you with those telephone numbers if necessary.

Testing and remediation are considerably cheaper and simpler for radon than for asbestos. They are also voluntary. Cold weather testing is recommended because closed doors and windows produce higher concentrations. All below-ground and ground level rooms frequently used should be tested. Radon levels should be reduced as much as possible. EPA considers radon a hazard far more serious than asbestos.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

S. 345 and H.R. 770—The Family and Medical Leave Act passed the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee on April 19. The Senate bill would require businesses with 20 or more employees to provide unpaid, job-protected parental and medical leave. The House bill would require employers with 50 or more employees to grant the same. The House committee passed its bill in March.

S. 4 and H.R. 2—The bills raising minimum wage over three years from \$3.35 to \$4.55 an hour await one final stage before being sent to the President, who is expected to veto. First the Senate must adopt the conference report. Businesses grossing less than \$500,000 annually would be exempted.

H.R. 2004—Congressman Bart Gordon (D-TN) introduced a bill on April 17 to fund the Indoor Radon Abatement Act, which passed last year.

***H.R. 2210—**Congressman Gordon also introduced the Radon Testing for Safe Schools Act on May 5. It would require EPA to conduct sample radon tests in schools in every state to determine high concentration areas. Schools in those areas would then be required to test. A loan and grant assistance program would be established to help needy schools pay for testing.

***H.R. 7—**The bill reauthorizing the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act through 1995 passed the House on May 10. The new act will be named the Carl D. Perkins Applied Technology Education Act. This measure would change the current requirement that 57 percent of the funds be set aside for programs serving special populations determined at the federal level. The new funding formula would gradually give more flexibility to the states but would require that programs be awarded grants based 90 percent on the number of Chapter 1 and handicapped students and 10 percent on overall enrollment. The term "applied technology education" is meant to clarify that job training funds would be used only for up-to-date job training. The Tech-Prep program is included and would encourage agreements between secondary vocational schools and local colleges, providing 11th graders with avenues to an associate's degree. Action on the Perkins Act is expected to begin in the Senate in September.

S. 3 and H.R. 660—The Citizenship and National Service Act, known as McCurdy-Nunn for its sponsors, is predicted to die. Many witnesses including Congressmen have testified against the bill claiming that tying student aid to national service is unfair. Several other voluntary national service proposals have been introduced.

CAPENOTES

**Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools* was published by the Bradley Commission composed of historians and history teachers, including Paul Gagnon, who worked together for a year. It provides a very intelligent and responsible "blueprint for developing a sequence of programs that will improve the teaching and learning of history in elementary and secondary schools." For a copy contact the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, 26915 Westwood Rd., suite A2 Westlake, OH 44145; (216) 835-1776.

CAPENOTES

*Awards totaling \$45 million for the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act (ASHAA) for FY 1989 were made on April 27. EPA received 1,110 applications. Three hundred and twenty-seven schools received \$19.6 million in grants and \$25.4 million in loans. (Projects awarded were Hazard Category One, meaning they have friable asbestos-containing building material which is exposed in an air plenum and is identified by an accredited person as damaged thermal insulation, surfacing or other significantly damaged material.)

Thirty-five private schools and dioceses were awarded \$4.4 million, or 10 percent of the total. CAPE congratulates those private school administrators who worked so many hours for those funds. We encourage schools to apply for next year's loans and grants and will inform you when to do so. CAPE continues to talk to Congress on the need for higher appropriations for ASHAA. The more schools which apply for funding, the better our argument.

*CAPE congratulates the eight private school winners of the Drug-Free Schools Recognition program. Forty-seven public and private schools participated. The winners are the MacArthur School in Washington, DC; Aquinas High School in David City, Neb.; St. Gregory The Great School in Hamilton Square, NJ; St. John The Baptist in Brooklyn, NY; Trinity Catholic School in Massena, NY; Toledo Central Catholic High School in Ohio; Monte Cassino Middle School in Tulsa, Okla and Acillae-Assumpta Academy in Wyncote, PA. A White House ceremony is scheduled for late May. Winning programs include community involvement, staff training and school policies and enforcement procedures. CAPE helps administer this program for private schools for the Department of Education.

*CAPE's *Outlook* subscription: In response to recent inquiries, there are three subscription rates. Individual subscriptions are available to members and non-members at \$10 per year. Quantity subscriptions are available to organizations which send CAPE a list of subscribers. Each listing costs \$6 for members and \$8 for non-members. Bulk subscriptions are sent to organizations for their own distribution at \$3.50 per subscriber for members and \$5.50 for non-members. Contact Heidi Shiver at CAPE at (202) 659-0016.

*The Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics published its early estimates of "key statistics for private elementary and secondary education" for the 1988-89 school year. They estimate that 5.24 million students are enrolled in private schools including 363,000 students in pre-kindergartens and nursery school programs and 4.87 million in elementary and secondary programs in those schools. Catholic schools enroll 2.79 million; other religious schools, 1.47 million and non-sectarian private schools, 620,000. Private schools employ 344,659 K-12 teachers; public schools, 2.3 million. The mean number of pupils to teacher is 18:1 in Catholic schools; 12.3:1 in other religious schools and in non-sectarian schools.

*According to a fact sheet gathered by the Monsanto Corporation in conjunction with a science education program they are funding in St. Louis, Missouri, science education in this country is lamentably inadequate. They cite a 1987 National Science Teachers Association survey: of the nation's 16,000 high schools, more than 7,000 offer no physics courses, 4,200 offer no chemistry, and 1,900 no biology. Only about 20 percent of students take math and science beyond 10th grade. In Massachusetts, only one in five elementary teachers has had any college math or science course. The number of undergraduate science majors has fallen by half since 1960. And a 1987 National Research Institute study showed that 90 percent of adults in the U.S. have no background in physics, chemistry, biology or even middle-level math.

*The Department of Education announces grants to train education personnel for drug abuse prevention and education programs. Call (202) 732-3463.

*The National Bicentennial Competition on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights announces its state winners. Over 1,000 high school students from 44 states competed in Washington in early May by delivering prepared testimonies and responding to questions before a panel of constitutional scholars, lawyers and government leaders. Six private schools won their state contests. They are: Stanton College Preparatory in Jacksonville, Fla.; Notre Dame Academy in Covington, KY; St. Mary's High in New England, ND; Cardinal O'Hara High in Springfield, PA and Northland Lutheran High in Wausau, Wis.

*The Private School Facilitator Project announces a free five-day Survival Strategies training session at the Bronx Zoo for 35 teachers this summer from August 7-11. This is an NDN curriculum called "Project W.I.Z.E." designed primarily for junior high students which includes lessons taught during field trips. To apply write Mr. Donald Lisowy, Project W.I.Z.E., Bronx Zoo Education Department, 185th St. & Southern Blvd., Bronx, NY 10460 or contact Dr. Nunley at CAPE at (202) 659-0177.

*The Department of Education will award nearly \$6 million in grants to help educators try their ideas for improving schools and encouraging parental involvement in education. The Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools (FIRST) was authorized in last year's major education bill. One priority is for teachers of disadvantaged students. Call the Department at (202) 357-6496. Deadline for completed application is June 16.

*CAPE makes every attempt to keep these announcements of opportunities timely. We regret that we find out about them so late, and we try to make sponsors aware of the problem.

**Reducing the Risk: A School Leaders' Guide to AIDS Education* was issued by the National Association of School Boards and funded through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control. For a copy send \$2.25 to AIDS Education Dept., NSBA Lockbox Operations, P.O. Box 17316, Baltimore, MD 21203.

*The President's Environmental Youth Awards program recognizes students, schools, camps and youth organizations which promote local environmental awareness through their activities. Write President's Environmental Youth Awards, EPA, Office of Public Affairs, (A-107), Washington, DC 20460.

*Robert C. Byrd Scholarships of \$1,500 are now available to outstanding high school seniors for the first year of undergraduate study. Byrd Scholars will be chosen solely on the basis of academic achievement, academic promise and the consideration that all states be represented. Congress has appropriated \$8.2 million to the Department of Education for states to participate. Contact your state education agency or, to find the contact person at your state education agency, contact the State Student Incentive Grant Section of the Office of Student Financial Assistance at the Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, room 4018, Washington, DC 20202-5447; (202) 732-4507.

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