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INTRODUCTION

This revision of CWLA's *Standards of Excellence for Child Day Care Services* reflects a concern for all children receiving care outside of their own homes for some part of the 24-hour day. These standards extend to child day care services provided in the community as a service for children and their families, whether provided by public agencies, voluntary social service and child day care agencies, or private organizations and individuals.

All child day care programs, regardless of their auspices, purposes, or service recipients, should have the same essential components. All children have the same basic developmental needs; they should all have the opportunity to benefit from advances in knowledge and professional skills in the fields of child development, early childhood education, health care, nutrition, and social work. Regardless of the emphasis of a given child day care program, the reasons parents use it, or the number of hours children attend it, the children should have developmentally appropriate experiences. Any child day care service designed to help parents carry out their child-rearing responsibilities should support and enhance their parental role. The child day care service should be appropriate to the individual needs of each child it serves.

0.1 Assumptions and values

It is the responsibility of every nation to afford access to affordable, quality child day care for each child within its states, provinces, and territories. The survival of a nation depends on the ability of adults to rear their children to cope with and manage their lives and to move forward into the future. The child day care service is an essential support for families in carrying out these tasks.

Key to the survival of any civilization is how it cares for its young. Parents are the primary caregivers. In an industrial and highly technological society, they often can benefit from support services to better enable them to fulfill their parenting role. Child day care is a core support service to parents.

Child day care has become a recognized social institution. The need for child day care evolved, in part, out of the demands of a service industry economy. In today's industrial/technological society, child day care has become a major North American "industry." It must have standards against which it can measure itself and its mission.

Adherence to quality standards is inescapable for organizations that support parents in the preparation of their children for adulthood. Child day care has a pivotal opportunity to help prevent or reduce the incidence of school failure, school dropouts, youthful offenders, alcohol and substance abuse, crime, family disintegration, children having children, and child abuse and neglect. The child day care setting also offers unique opportunities for children to learn tolerance of others and to become comfortable with cultural and ethnic diversity.

Regardless of the auspices of the day care provider or the form in which day care is delivered, CWLA's standards of excellence represent the best thinking of the professional child day care field about how children should be cared for by supplemental caregivers for some portion of the day.

0.2 Goals we have for our children

Standards of child-rearing and education are profoundly affected by the aspirations we have for our children, our ideals, the kind of

society we want, and the kind of people we value. Child day care, like other child welfare services, should help children develop as individuals who can enjoy and contribute to a democratic society.

In a democracy, we believe in:

- The individuality of each person;
- The unique contribution all individuals can make if given the opportunity;
- The right of individuals to seek their own answers, to hold their own opinions, and to express what they believe to be true; and
- The right of individuals to seek happiness in their own way, as long as they do not jeopardize the welfare of others.

To achieve these values, we must provide our children with settings and opportunities that:

- Encourage discovery and support and safeguard inquiry, whether in the form of questions or experiments with reality;
- Promote a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem through sincere appreciation by friendly adults or peers;
- Provide adult role models who can help them along the road to responsibility;
- Help them participate actively with peers in small groups, as well as with understanding adults, so that they can develop a positive outlook and attitude toward life and themselves; and
- Teach them to understand cultural and ethnic diversity and to respect those who are different from themselves.

0.3 The community's responsibility for its children

The community should have a stake in the well-being of its children. The future of any society depends on the healthy physical, mental, and emotional development of its children.

Because of the value to children of their families, the community has an obligation to support parents in the performance of their child-rearing role and to help strengthen family life. As a society we have placed too little value on the role of parents. Today, many parents (including guardians and biological, custodial, foster, and adoptive parents) can benefit from support in caring for their children.

The care of children by nonfamily members involves certain potential hazards. The community should create and enforce appropriate safeguards to ensure the well-being of those children who are cared for outside of their own homes by nonfamily members, in other groups, under public or voluntary auspices, or in proprietary facilities, many for a major part of the day.

0.4 Value of child's own family

All children need and have the right to their own parents; they should not unnecessarily be deprived of their care.

In our society and under our law, parents have the legal right to custody and control of the children born to them and, along with it, the responsibility for their support, care, and upbringing. Although they may delegate responsibility for various aspects of their children's care, they retain the responsibility to make sure that the care they obtain is safe. The community should help parents (including guardians and biological, custodial, foster, and adoptive parents) to fulfill their child-rearing responsibilities by providing resources and services that supplement and facilitate the functions of the family, keep children safe from harm, and assure that care offered in the community is developmentally appropriate.

0.5 Child's need for parental support

All children should be able to have the security and affection of their own family and a sustained relationship with their parents or other significant adults.

Children require someone on whom they can depend to make certain that their needs are met. All children require consistent love, guidance, and protection. Children, particularly those under two years of age, need a stable, secure, immediately responsive relationship with a primary caregiver.

0.6 Value of child's own culture

All children should be able to learn about and appreciate their own cultural heritage.

Child day care offers an opportunity for children and their parents to share their cultural heritage with others. In so doing, an appreciation of cultural diversity can be gained.

0.7 Child day care defined

Child day care is a service for children provided in support of their family that is directed to their healthy growth and development and supplements the care provided within the family.

0.8 Child day care as a service for children and their families

Child day care services should be child-centered and family focused. Child day care programs are designed and staffed to offer group or family care in child day care centers, group day care homes, or family day care homes, to supplement the child-rearing practices and responsibilities of parents.

Day care of children outside their homes for some part of the day is provided in many forms, under various auspices, and for different purposes. It is used by biological parents, by guardians, or by custodial, foster, or adoptive parents, for a variety of reasons.

Child day care standards help ensure that those children entrusted to the care of providers receive the supplemental care required for their healthy growth and development.

0.9 Purposes of child day care

The purpose of child day care is to supplement the care, attention to developmental needs, and protection that children receive from their parents.

Regardless of the form in which it is delivered, child day care should be designed as a developmental and formative service. Developmental child day care supplies a nurturing environment that cultivates the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and cultural potential of the child. It also helps all family members pursue their own individual and collective goals.

Child day care is a preventive service. It supports child-rearing, helps manage family stress, and strengthens families and children to avoid family breakdown.

Child day care can be designed as a therapeutic service that seeks to heal psychological damage caused by deprivation, discontinuity of care, substance abuse, poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, violence, lawlessness, or tension in the home. Child day care can also be used as part of the treatment plan for those children with developmental delays, physical disabilities, and emotional disturbances, as well as for medically fragile children and those suffering from abuse and neglect. When children with special needs are served, they should be incorporated into the regular program to allow them to achieve at their maximum capacity.

0.10 Goals for the child day care service

The goals for the child day care service should be:

- To meet the basic needs of children in a safe and nurturing setting that can support healthy growth and development;
- To provide a partner to support parents in the care of their children;
- To be an integral contribution to the community's human service network;
- To provide or facilitate access to an array of child and family support services;

- To recognize differences and foster the individualization of all children;
- To establish a developmentally and culturally appropriate plan for services for each child and to conduct periodic evaluations of service effectiveness;
- To promote children's self-confidence, curiosity, creativity, and self-discipline;
- To provide a wholesome environment that encourages children to solve problems, master self-help and learning skills, make decisions, engage in activities, ask questions, explore, and experiment with their environment;
- To promote the self-worth of each child through healthy social relationships and an awareness of ethnicity and individuation; and
- To foster cooperation and social relationships among children and between children and adults.

0.11 Child day care components

The essential components of a child day care service include:

- Safe and adequate facilities and equipment designed for children in the group day care setting or family day care home;
- A definitive, developmental program curriculum, including recreational and other age-appropriate programming for school-age children;
- A service plan with objectives for each child, developed in conjunction with the family;
- Competent and culturally sensitive staff members trained to help children broaden their awareness, knowledge, and skills (Staff members' wages and working conditions should be appropriate to their education, experience, and the value of the jobs they perform.);
- Cooperation among parents, child care providers, and the entire human services system;
- Parent-participation activities, parent education and support services (including program planning assignments and volunteer services), and membership on advisory and policy boards;

- Program diversity, to allow for appropriate service for children of different ethnic, economic, social, and cultural backgrounds;
- Sound health practices and activities to develop physical abilities;
- Nutritious food to meet the needs of the child while in care;
- Social service support provided by the agency or obtained from the community to assist parents and children, as needed;
- Administrative planning and coordination within the framework of the purpose, policies, and goals of the agency board of directors; and
- Coordination with other relevant community services.

0.12 Range of child care programs

A wide range of resources and facilities, including informal arrangements and programs organized under a variety of auspices, can be used for the care of children outside their own homes during some part of the day. Programs should differ according to the needs of the children served, and the varying responsibilities of providers for the care, protection, development, education, recreation, or treatment of the children.

Child day care includes programs and services whose primary purpose may be child development, education, treatment, or recreation (preschools, child development centers, nursery schools, before-school and after-school programs, parent cooperatives, Head Start, and play schools).

Today in the U.S., child day care services are provided by nonprofit organizations, social agencies, government agencies, religious groups, hospitals, private entrepreneurs, independent family day care providers, employers, labor unions, corporate for-profit chains, schools, and non-social welfare government agencies (such as the military; the U.S. Congress; federal, state, and local executive departments; and public housing authorities). In addition to the traditional social service agencies, community-based organizations, nonprofit voluntary agencies, and religious organizations, some high schools now offer child day care to enable teen mothers to complete their education. Courts are beginning to provide child day care for families having business with the court.

In Canada, child day care services are provided by nonprofit agencies, by commercial operators, and, in the provinces, by municipal governments or school boards.

Child day care programs are promoted and offered for purposes in which the interests of the child may appear to be a secondary consideration, such as enabling single parents to work or complete schooling or training; or to provide parents with needed respite.

When child day care is offered by private individuals or by corporations as a for-profit enterprise, it is necessary to ensure that the service given is in the best interests of the individual children, and that the daily experiences they receive are of benefit to them.

0.13 Range of child day care settings

Child day care can be provided in family day care homes, group child day care homes, or child day care centers.

Family child day care homes are settings in which one individual adult, sometimes with assistance, provides child care services in her or his private residence for fewer than 24 hours a day, for six or fewer children;

Group child day care homes are settings in which two or more adults jointly provide child care services in a private residence for fewer than 24 hours a day, for a group of seven to 12 children; and

Child day care centers are settings in which part-day or full-day group programs are provided in a nonresidential facility (e.g., day care center building, social agency, recreational agency, place of worship, school, workplace, public housing, hospital) for seven or more children.

0.14 Types of children served

The age range of children served today in child day care includes infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; school children of all ages who would otherwise be unsupervised during, before, and after school

hours, on school holidays, and over summer vacations when their parents or foster parents are working; children with special needs, including those with disabilities; those requiring a therapeutic setting; sick children, including HIV-infected children and those prenatally exposed to drugs; homeless children; and children of at-risk families whose parents need a respite and the opportunity to obtain family support services.

Developments Affecting Child Day Care Programs

0.15 Changing family demographics

Families with children comprise only 36% of all households in the United States, compared to 45% in 1980. The total number of children as a share of the entire population continues to decrease, although the number of preschool children increased by nearly 11% between 1980 and 1986. Children of minority families are an increasing proportion of the child population, and will comprise nearly one in four American children by the year 2010.

Throughout the 1980s, the most profound influence on American families was mounting economic pressure, which diminished their resources and made their children more vulnerable. In 1990, the most recent year for which information is available, the national poverty rate was 13.5%; 33.6 million American people were poor. The poverty rate for children was 20.6% in 1990.

In the United States, the number of one-parent families with children increased by 155.3% between 1970 and 1990, growing from 3.8 million to 9.7 million. This trend is largely the result of higher divorce rates (nearly one-half of all marriages now end in divorce), and an increase in the number of never-married mothers. At the same time, the number of two-parent families with children has declined by 4.7%, from 25.8 million to 24.6 million, due partly to overall lower marriage rates, and partly to more individuals choosing not to marry, or choosing to postpone marriage.

The changing composition of families directly affects the living arrangements of their children. Although the total

number of children under age 18 in the United States declined from 69 million to 63 million between 1960 and 1989, the number of children living in one-parent families grew by 166%, from 5.8 million to 15.5 million. Over 24% of all children in the United States lived in one-parent families in 1989. It is estimated that by the year 2000, one-third of the children in the United States will be living in single-parent families.

Citing an unprecedented increase in the labor force of mothers of young children, the 1990 National Academy of Sciences report, *Who Cares for America's Children? Child Care Policy for the 1990s*, conservatively estimated that 16.5 million children under age six, including 6.6 million infants and toddlers under the age of three years, and another 18 million children age six to 13 years, had mothers in the labor force. The report projects that, by the year 2000, 80% of school-age children and 70% of preschoolers will have mothers in the labor force.

Similarly, one of the most significant changes in the Canadian labor force in the twentieth century has been the continuing increase in the number of mothers with young children who work in paid employment outside of their own homes. This phenomenon has been the key impetus for the demand for increased access to publicly funded, high-quality, not-for-profit child day care for all families that characterizes the child care issue in Canada. The women's movement, together with trade unionists and other groups with an interest in child day care, actively sought to make child care a national policy issue in the 1980s.

In Canada, as in the United States, the supply of child care services has never met the need. The supply of regulated child care increased during the 1980s, but so did the labor force participation rate of mothers of young children. By 1990, more than 300,000 mothers who had children younger than 18 months worked outside the home, but only 5.43% of those children could be accommodated in regulated child care. Similarly, only 9.65% of the toddlers (18 to 36 months), 27.7% of the children age three to six years, and 5.56% of school-aged children from six to 12 years were served in regulated child care.

More than 50% of Canadian mothers now work outside the home; this figure is expected to rise to 75% in the early 1990s. Unemployment insurance benefits currently include 16 weeks of paid maternity leave, and most mothers return to their jobs at the end of the benefit period. The fastest growing segment of working mothers is those with children under two years of age.

0.16 Number of children receiving supplemental child day care

The number of children requiring nonparental care for some hours of the day is increasing.

The 1989 report of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families estimates that in that year there were nearly 38 million children under the age of 18 with mothers in the labor force.* Since some parents work split shifts and an unknown number of latchkey children are left at home unsupervised, a precise figure cannot be determined.

0.17 Number of facilities offering child day care

A report by the National Academy of Sciences concludes that "Existing child care services in the United States are inadequate to meet current and likely future needs of children, parents, and society as a whole." The same may be said of the situation in Canada.

There are no comprehensive data on the number, types, or quality of child day care facilities in the United States. A Children's Defense Fund survey of regulated child care centers in the states found a total of 71,645 centers with an estimated capacity of 3.8 million slots as of June 1990. Estimates of the number of family day care homes vary. The National Association for the Education of Young Children identified 105,417 regulated family day care homes operating

* The National Academy of Science places the number at 34.5 million.

in 1986. A 1990 survey by the Children's Foundation identified 223,351 regulated family day care home providers. The comprehensive U.S. Department of Education report, *A Profile of Child Care Settings*, found that at the beginning of 1990, there were approximately 80,000 centers with a potential to serve five million children and approximately 118,000 regulated family day care providers with the capacity to serve 860,000 children. It is generally assumed that the number of regulated family day care providers represents a small percentage of the total number of such providers (some estimates place it at less than 10%). It is estimated that each family day care provider serves an average of four children.

In 1966, the Canada Assistance Plan stimulated the growth of licensed child day care facilities by providing federal funding to the provinces for child day care fee subsidies to low-income families. Through the 1970s and 1980s the supply of licensed child day care facilities increased in most parts of Canada, as the number of children requiring care increased. At no time, however, has the supply of child day care spaces come close to matching the number of children who require care. It is estimated that only 11% of the two million children in need of child day care can be accommodated in licensed facilities in Canada. The remainder are being cared for in unlicensed or informal arrangements. Where licensed spaces do exist, they are in short supply, particularly in rural areas, for infants and school-aged children, for Native children, and for children with special social or developmental needs. In addition, few programs offer care for children of parents who work evening or night shifts, split shifts, or weekends.

0.18 Changing attitudes about community responsibilities and child day care

Historically, child day care has provided three streams of support: for working parents; for the education of young children; and for the remediation of family deficits. Because of the needs of today's children and their families, these three streams are coming together and can often be found in the same child day care program.

Although the majority of children who receive child day care are in a family day care home independent of any organized program, public attitudes are changing about the responsibility of the community to provide child day care services for families who turn to outside resources for child care support. The lack of adequate child day care facilities has become more salient as the number of working mothers with young children has steadily risen. It is generally recognized that child day care can be used for more than custodial care and protection, that is, it can provide the experiences children need for the development of their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social potential.

Early childhood educational programs have grown both in number and in the length of time for which they provide care. Although not replacing part-day, part-year nursery schools, or the school, kindergarten, or Head Start programs, they make up a large proportion of all early learning programs offered to children today.

Community concern is rising for those children who are not properly supervised during the day, as well as for those who are living in families who do not offer the stimulation necessary for proper cognitive development.

Child day care offers opportunities for reaching children early in life, and for giving support to families in times of strain and crisis, thus strengthening families and preventing difficulties. Many advocate that child day care should be a publicly supported service or social utility that any parent would be entitled to use by choice, and that would offer enriching developmental experiences to benefit all children. Programs such as these, born out of necessity, are common in developed countries all over the world. Opinions differ, however, about the degree of responsibility for the rearing of children that the community should assume or share with parents.

Funding Trends

0.19 Financing child day care in the United States

Except for the early 1940s, when the federal government estab-

lished child day care centers in the interest of national security so that women could work in defense plants and factories during World War II, the financing of child care has been largely left to parents and charitable organizations. Government agencies, however, have increased child day care funding for welfare recipients in job training programs, and for disadvantaged preschool children from low-income families.

Although the perception still exists that child care is exclusively a private family responsibility, a movement in the United States is encouraging new initiatives for a much broader range of financial supports for child day care resources. The major factors in this shift toward a shared community responsibility for assisting parents with their child day care needs include:

- A growing realization of the importance and the economies of providing positive educational and preventive services to strengthen and preserve families;
- The economic plight of many two-earner families who clearly recognize that the “free” child care provided by stay-at-home mothers is not really free, because it represents critically needed wages foregone;
- Concern in the business and educational community that far too many children are ill-prepared for basic school achievement, unsupervised in their out-of-school hours, and dropping out of the education system in alarming numbers;
- Projections by the corporate community that there will be a significant shortage of qualified workers in the labor force by the year 2000, particularly with the emergence of increasing technologies requiring more complex skills;
- Concomitant projections that, because of the already rapid increase of women in the labor force, the largest potential source for recruiting new workers in this decade is nonemployed women caring for children at home;
- The continuing escalation in child abuse reports and the need for preventive services that give communities the

opportunity to support families and prevent unnecessary family disintegration; and

- The substance abuse and AIDS epidemics that are driving many shattered communities to turn to child day care as a positive prevention and early intervention opportunity, as well as a remedial and rehabilitative service.

Fortunately, the base of financial support for child day care is expanding rapidly. An important consideration in this expansion, however, is the extent to which some of the new financing mechanisms are creating and reinforcing economically and culturally segregated systems of care. The JOBS and Transitional Child Care programs created by the Family Support Act of 1988, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant and At-Risk Child Care programs enacted in 1990, target very low-income populations, and implementing regulations establish reimbursement rates at levels that do not allow these low-income families a wide range of choices among community child day care providers.

0.20 Parent funding

Although many child day care programs provide sliding fee scales in relation to parents' income, the cost of quality child day care continues to rise.

Child day care costs vary across the nation. A 1990 Department of Labor study estimated the average costs of child day care in the United States at \$60 a week or \$3,000 annually. Other surveys place the cost considerably higher, especially in urban areas, or for the care of infants or children with special needs. Low-income working families may spend as much as 22% of their income on day care. The National Academy of Sciences report concludes that the lack of affordable child day care is a major public concern for low- and moderate-income families and is especially significant for single parents, young families with infants, and families of children with disabilities.

In Canada, as in the United States, parents pay most of the cost

of child care. A 1986 study estimated that the cost of regulated infant center care ranged (in Canadian dollars) from about \$3,000 a year in the Maritime Provinces to about \$5,000 a year in Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia. Annual unregulated care for an infant was estimated to range from about \$3,000 to \$4,000 (Canadian). In 1990, parent fees for care for an infant in a high-quality nonprofit center in Ottawa or metropolitan Toronto were as high as \$12,000 a year (Canadian).

0.21 U.S. government funding

The U.S. government currently provides financial support for child day care from a variety of sources.

The largest U.S. government program for child day care funding is the Dependent Care Tax Credit, a credit against federal income tax liability for up to 30% of a limited amount of employment-related dependent care expenses. This credit was estimated to cover \$4.2 billion in claims in 1990. Since it applies to employment-related care expenses for physically or mentally incapacitated adults as well, it is not clear how much of the tax credit is being used for child care. Additionally, the current tax credit is not refundable, and is therefore not available to the neediest families. A number of states also provide dependent care tax credits, usually as a percentage of the federal credit. Section 129 of the Internal Revenue Code allows employees with children under age 15 or with disabled dependents or spouses to exclude from their gross income employment-related dependent care assistance paid for or provided by their employers. The federal government and a number of the states also offer tax credits, exemptions, or deductions to employers who provide child day care assistance to their employees, but research by the Child Care Action Campaign indicates that very few employers have responded to the tax credit incentives.

The Family Support Act of 1988 provides funding for child day care and requires that states guarantee child day care as necessary for employment for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, both while they are in JOBS training programs and for one transitional year.

Title XX of the Social Security Act (Social Services Block Grant) funds a wide range of social services, including child day care. The General Accounting Office has determined that Title XX funds, in combination with state-funded programs, provide more subsidies to low-income families than do tax credits, which cover no more than 30% of the cost of care. Federal Title XX funds were severely reduced over the 1980s, however, causing substantial decreases in subsidized care available to low-income families.

Head Start, the popular early childhood education program for the most severely disadvantaged preschoolers, provides part-day care for some families. Presently slated for funding increases to allow for expansion, the program has generated considerable controversy over whether it should expand to serve more children, or whether it should expand to full-day, full-year services to meet the needs of working parents.

Two new federal child day care programs were enacted in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. The Child Care and Development Block Grant provides funds to states to subsidize child care for families with incomes at or below 75% of the state's median income. A new At-Risk Child Care Amendment to Title IV-A of the Social Security Act provides for a capped entitlement (up to \$300 million a year for five years) for subsidizing child day care for families at risk of going on welfare.

Other federal programs in the United States include the Child Care Food Program, which provides nutrition assistance to child day care providers serving needy children; the Dependent Care Planning and Development Block Grant program, which provides revenues for establishing and operating dependent care resource and referral services and school-age child care programs; the Temporary Child Care for Handicapped Children and Crisis Nurseries program; and several special-education programs for handicapped and disadvantaged preschoolers. Federal, state, and local governments also support a growing number of child day care benefits for government employees, including child day care centers in the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and a number of federal executive branch agencies.

0.22 Canadian government funding

In Canada, community-sponsored services provide child day care for only a small number of the children requiring care outside their homes. All provincial and territorial child day care programs include a mechanism for subsidizing child day care fees in behalf of low-income parents under the auspices of the Canada Assistance Plan.

Historically, the Canadian federal government has taken a leading role in social programming regarding pensions, health care, and social services, although the constitutional responsibility for these services is assigned to the provinces. The Canadian federal government's role in child day care is largely one of financial contribution rather than social policy direction. Although Canada has no child care policy, the Canadian federal government has traditionally helped parents pay for child day care in two ways: the cost-sharing fee subsidy mechanism of the Canada Assistance Plan, and the Child Care Expense Deduction under the Income Tax Act, which allows for a maximum tax deduction of \$2,000 per year to lower-income earning parents. This deduction is claimed by between one-quarter and one-half of the families whose children are cared for by others.

During the 1970s, successive Liberal and Conservative federal governments commissioned special reports that examined the inadequacies of the Canadian child day care system. The 1971 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women made specific recommendations to all levels of government. The same problems were addressed in the 1980 report commemorating the International Year of the Child, and the 1984 Report of the Royal Commission on Equity in Employment. Two additional reports on child day care were commissioned—one by the federal Liberal government and a second by the Conservative government.

The objective of these reports was the development of a national social policy initiative concerning the disparity between the need and demand for child day care services and their limited availability. The National Strategy on Child Care, introduced in December 1987, was subsequently with-

drawn because it fell short of the expectations of parents, child care professionals, and child advocates. Since that time the government has made no new efforts to develop an alternative.

In 1990, the Canadian federal government limited the cost-sharing funds available to the provinces through the Canada Assistance Plan for the first time, eroding the ability of the provinces to provide subsidies for low- and moderate-income parents.

0.23 Employer funding

Less than 2% of the private businesses in the United States with ten or more employees sponsor day care centers for their workers' children.

Dependent-care assistance programs, in which employers establish benefit plans that allow their employees to reduce their taxable income by using a fixed portion of their income for child day care expenses, are the most rapidly growing form of employer support. This benefit costs the employer little beyond administrative expenses and is financed by federal and state tax revenues foregone.

Other employer assistance for child day care includes flexible spending accounts, financial assistance for purchasing child day care in the marketplace, resource and referral programs, flexible schedules, and parental leave programs.

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