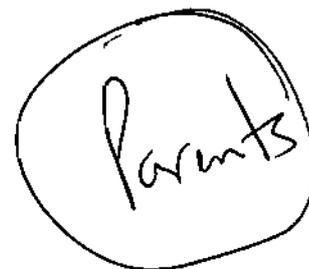


June 14, 2000



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Mr. Bruce Reed  
Domestic Policy Advisor  
2nd floor, West Wing  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Bruce Reed,

When the curtains close on the voting booths this fall, the deciding levers may well be in the hands of one of the nation's largest groups of voters: parents. America's 63 million parents make up 38 percent of registered and likely voters. While they may not be organized yet, the potential is clearly there. Parents are a group with a powerful common interest: the well-being of their kids. There's lots of agreement among them, with strong across-the-board support for a host of practical measures to keep guns away from kids, improve public schools, ease the time crunch and the economic burdens on young, low-income parents.

These are among the findings of a new survey by the National Parenting Association, conducted by Charney Research. The survey, *What Will Parents Vote For? Update 2000*, probed parents' concerns about work and family, violence, education, values and taxes. We're enclosing a copy of our report by Nancy Rankin which summarizes our key findings.

The survey has already gotten amazing attention. It was cited by the **White House**, featured in *Time* magazine, and is the subject of an **Associated Press** story that's now being picked up in newspapers around the country. We're enclosing some clips.

In addition, we've enclosed Sylvia Hewlett's recent articles from the *New York Times* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* which address the newest backlash against parents. We're gratified by the reception these articles have received.

You can find the full survey report and findings online at our web site [parentsunite.org](http://parentsunite.org) as well as other new information. We hope you'll take a look and register to receive our periodic e-mail alerts.

Very best wishes for an enjoyable summer.

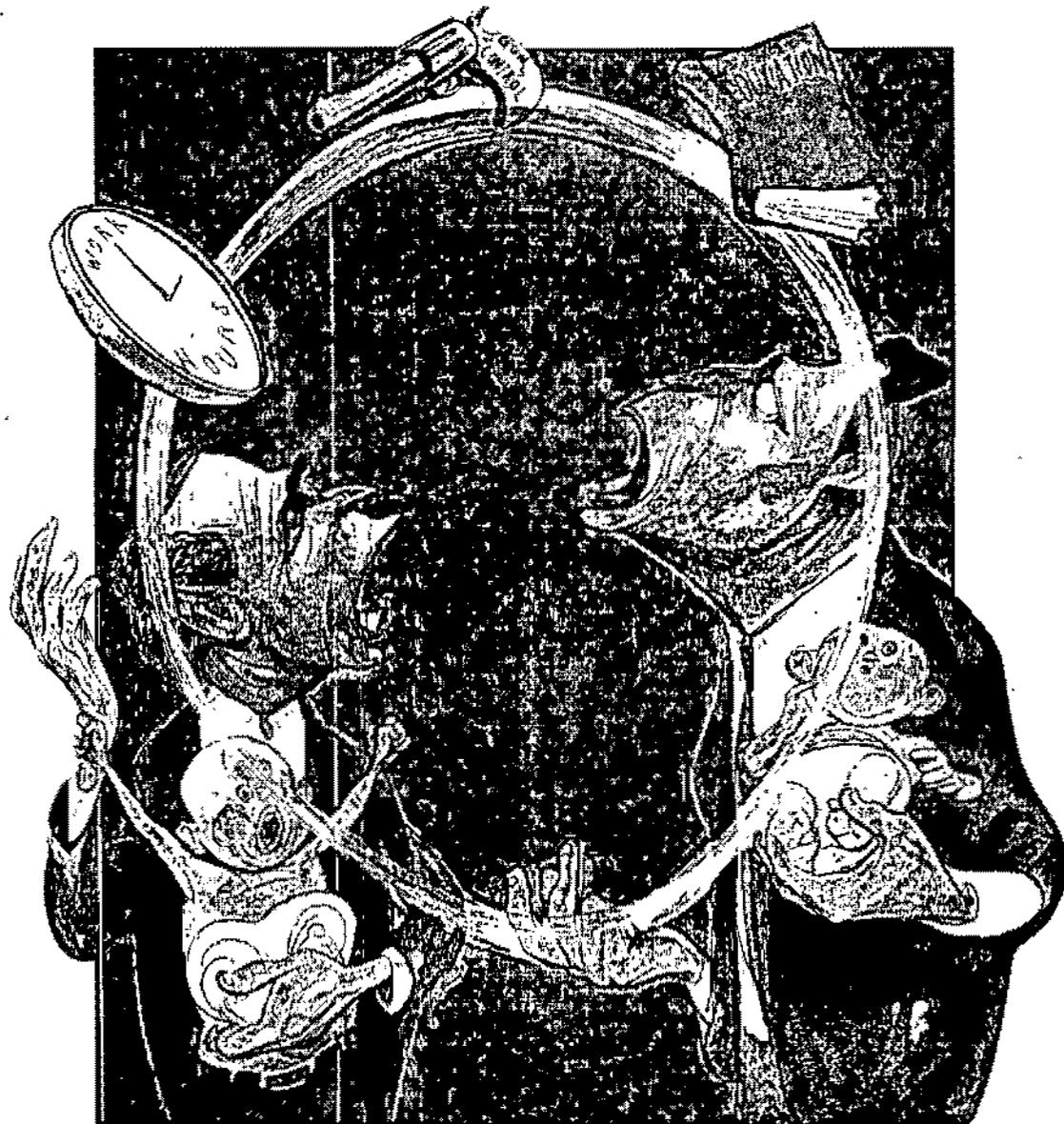
Best regards,

Ruth A. Wooden  
President

Sylvia Ann Hewlett  
Chairman of the Board

# What Will Parents Vote For?

## UPDATE 2000



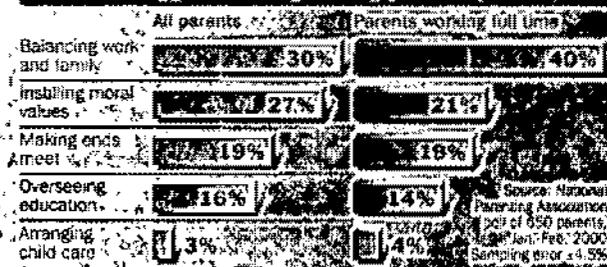
national  
parenting  
association

A Survey by the  
National Parenting Association  
and Offspring Magazine

offspring  
THE MAGAZINE OF  
SMART PARENTING

**IN BRIEF**

**What's the biggest challenge facing you as a parent?**



Source: National Parenting Association, poll of 650 parents, Jan.-Feb. 2000. Sampling error ±4.5%.

**WHAT PARENTS**

**WANT** It's no secret that being a parent today is a juggling act. According to a National Parenting Association survey of 650 parents, the biggest challenge moms and dads face is balancing work and family. The good news: employers are responding. Sixty-

seven percent of parents say they can adjust their work hours to accommodate family needs. Still, parents with lower incomes—who can least afford extra child care to accommodate last-minute schedule changes and emergencies—tend to work for firms that don't have

much family-friendly flexibility. More parents cite crime and violence as their biggest worry—40% this year, compared with 30% in 1996. More than half trace recent school shootings to parents' failure to teach and watch their kids. —By Alice Park

### WHAT PARENTS CARE ABOUT

The National Parenting Association and Offspring magazine interviewed 650 U.S. parents on what issues matter to them:

#### Workplace issues:

**65%** say it would not hurt their careers if their boss heard they needed more time for their children.

**69%** of working parents say they can work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it.

**84%** favor a law to ensure 24 hours' or three days' paid leave annually for family needs, such as parent-teacher conferences or taking children to the doctor.

**67%** say they can work flexible hours — for example, starting earlier or later than normal working hours — and nearly half of working parents are currently doing so.

**54%** favor proposed regulations that would allow states to use the unemployment system to offer paid leave to working parents after the birth or adoption of a child.

**78%** of parents favor letting workers take off time rather than extra pay for overtime.

**90%** of parents surveyed favor tax incentives to encourage family-friendly policies by employers, such as benefits for part-time workers and flexible working hours.

**30%** (equally split between mothers and fathers) said balancing work and family was their greatest challenge. Four-fifths of working mothers responded that they do not have enough time for themselves, and almost half say they lack enough time for their children.

**6%** of lower-income parents vs. 30% of higher-income parents work for firms that rate high on family friendliness.

#### Economic means:

**89%** of parents surveyed favor increasing tax deductions or credits to help more families pay for higher education.

**87%** favor eliminating state and local sales taxes on children's necessities such as diapers, school materials and car seats.

**86%** favor raising the minimum wage so that all full-time workers are above the poverty level.

**88%** favor health insurance for every child, with a full or partial government subsidy to parents who can't afford it.



JUNE 08, 17:06 EDT

## Poll: Fathers Care About Policies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Political candidates should recognize that fathers — not just mothers — also care deeply about school violence, education and the difficulties of balancing work and family, says a poll released Thursday by a parents organization.

“Politicians are focusing on soccer moms, working moms and mothers, while they ought to be looking at parents,” said Nancy Rankin, a researcher for the National Parenting Association.

The group says the more than 60 million parents of children under age 18 could be a potent political force if candidates target issues they care about.

“Parents as a group have a number of common concerns, above all the work-family time crunch and the concern about violence and their children,” said Craig Charney, who conducted the poll. “They’re also particularly focused on practical priorities like education, health care and gun control.”

He noted overwhelming support in the poll for such policies as trigger locks for guns, education funding, tax incentives to encourage “family friendly” policies and health insurance for children that cuts across lines of gender, race, income and party affiliation.

More than 80 percent of fathers and 90 percent of mothers surveyed favor requiring trigger locks or safety devices with guns, tax breaks for higher education, tax incentives to encourage family friendly policies and health insurance for every child, the poll found.

“The most compelling thing was that fathers felt as strongly as mothers on many of these issues,” said Ruth Wooden, the association’s president.

The survey of 650 parents was taken Jan. 26 to Feb. 8 and had an error margin of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

The presidential campaigns of Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore talk of themes aimed at families, but will miss an opportunity if they target their pitches toward women instead of parents in general, Charney said.

Some recent polls suggest Bush has been stronger among parents than Gore.

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# ADWEEK

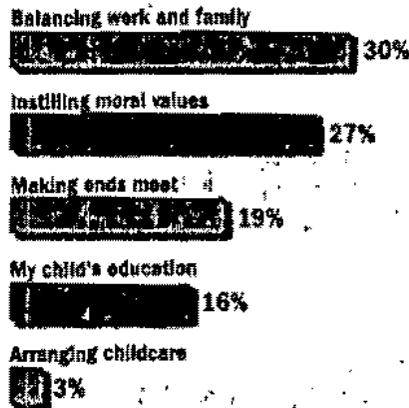
May 29, 2000

## KIDS vs. SELVES

### The Parental Time Crunch

Parents feel short of time, but not necessarily because they want to spend more with their kids. In a survey by *Offspring* magazine and the National Parenting Association, 79 percent of mothers who work full-time said they don't have enough time for themselves; 48 percent don't have enough for their kids. The pattern was similar among fathers who work full-time, with 53 percent short of time for themselves and 36 percent lacking time with their kids. What if parents had an extra hour in the day? Forty-eight percent of mothers would use it for themselves, while 39 percent would spend it with family; 24 percent of fathers would use it for themselves, while 59 percent would spend it with family. As you can see from the chart, the work-and-family balancing act is parents' paramount daily concern, though the task of instilling moral values isn't far behind. And compared to a 1996 survey, "declining family/moral values" has moved past "quality of schooling" when parents are asked to cite their "biggest concerns or worries."

Which of the following is the biggest daily challenge you face as a parent?





**June 10, 2000**

**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES ACTIONS TO OFFER PAID LEAVE TO AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 10, 2000

**PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES ACTIONS TO OFFER PAID LEAVE TO AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES**

Today, in his weekly radio address, the President will announce new steps to support America's working families, many of whom increasingly feel the pressure of balancing work and family responsibilities and find it difficult to take family leave without pay. President Clinton will announce measures that enable states to help parents afford to take leave after the birth or adoption of a child and to enable federal employees to take paid leave to care for a seriously ill family member.

**PARENTAL LEAVE NEEDS TO BE AFFORDABLE.** Parents need more support to help balance their responsibilities at home and at work, and a recent poll released by the National Parenting Association found that low-income parents and parents of very young children are least likely to be able to take family leave due to the loss of income. In addition, a 1996 study by the Commission on Family and Medical Leave revealed that nearly 65 percent of new parents cite the most significant reason why they do not take advantage of unpaid leave after the birth or adoption of a child is the expected loss of income.

**ENCOURAGING STATES TO CREATE MORE OPTIONS FOR PARENTS.** Today the President will announce new steps that the Department of Labor (DOL) is taking to allow parents to take paid leave after the birth or adoption of a child. The Department is issuing a final regulation, which offers states the option to amend their unemployment compensation laws to provide paid leave for new parents. States implementing this option are encouraged, and will be offered assistance by the Department of Labor, to assess the effect of this change on the long-term fiscal stability of their unemployment compensation system. In May 1999, the President issued an Executive Memorandum directing the Secretary of Labor to offer states this opportunity, and since then, state interest has increased significantly. When the President issued the directive, four state legislatures had paid parental leave proposals pending; today, 15 states do, including Massachusetts, where such legislation is being considered this session. Today, the President will urge states to take advantage of this final regulation to provide new parents with greater access to parental leave to care for a new born or newly adopted child. A pre-publication copy of the final regulation can be found at the U.S. Department of Labor's web site: [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).

**ALLOWING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TO USE EARNED SICK LEAVE TO CARE FOR SERIOUSLY**

ILL FAMILY MEMBERS. Today, the President also will announce a final regulation, effective June 20th, allowing federal employees to use up to twelve weeks of earned sick leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. This benefit will broaden the options available for employees to meet their family responsibilities and is another example of the federal government leading the nation in offering greater support for America's working families.

BUILDING ON A STRONG RECORD OF SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES. Throughout his Administration, President Clinton has fought to provide families with the tools they need to meet their responsibilities both at home and at work. In 1993, the President signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, providing workers with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave, which has benefited more than 20 million Americans. Today, the President will continue to set forth an agenda for working families and call on Congress to enact his proposals to expand FMLA to cover more workers and allow leave for more parental activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and routine doctor's appointments. The President's FY 2001 budget will give American families the tools they need to meet their responsibilities at home and at work -- by doubling funding for after-school programs, investing an additional \$1 billion in Head Start, providing expanded tax credits and more subsidies for child care, and tripling the proposed tax credit for long-term care costs.

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[Back to summary page](#)

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# offspring

## POLITICS **What Will Parents Vote For?**

*An exclusive poll shows that family issues could swing the election.*

Percentage of parents who are worried that a Columbine-type school shooting could happen in a nearby school:

**69**

Percentage of parents who blame parents who "fail to teach and watch their kids" for school violence:

**53**

Percentage of parents in favor of legislation requiring gunmakers to install trigger locks:

**88**

Percentage of parents who say one of their top concerns is crime, violence, guns or safety:

**40**

Percentage of parents who say one of their top concerns is AIDS, pollution, child abuse, peer pressure or the environment:

**0**

Percentage of parents who say improving public schools should be the next president's top priority:

**29**

**F**ORGET ABOUT defense, foreign policy, the environment. Vice President Al Gore and Governor George W. Bush are stumping at schools around the country for good reason. They are perhaps the first White House hopefuls to find their future in the hands of one of the largest special-interest groups ever: 63 million parents. And no matter what their party affiliation, these parents are united when it comes to campaign issues that affect the well-being of their children.

That's the message from an exclusive poll of 650 parents sponsored by the National Parenting Association, a nonprofit advocacy group based in New York, and conducted by Charney Research. In a campaign that is focused primarily on domestic social issues, parents are truly in the driver's seat.

So what do parents want?

Gun control, stupid. With Columbine fresh in their minds, it's easy to see why 69 percent of parents are worried that a shooting could happen in a neighborhood school. This despite the fact that the chances of school violence happening anywhere are remote. (See "Gun Violence: Behind the Numbers" on page 27.) "Swing voters"—parents who don't identify strongly with either party—are most concerned. Almost half listed violence as one of their biggest worries, notes NPA President Ruth Wooden, compared with 33 and 36 percent, respectively, of loyal Democrats and Republicans. Parents overwhelmingly favor restricting the use of guns—even the 32 percent of polled parents who own guns—and want to mandate certain requirements, such as trigger locks and gun registration.

In fact, parents want almost any initiative that will help keep guns out of the hands of children. Eighty-two percent favor raising the age of possession for handguns and assault weapons to twenty-one. Over half would ban handguns altogether.

Balancing work and family is another issue that parents believe the next president should address. Thirty percent—equal parts men and women—said it was the biggest daily challenge they face. Parents acknowledge that corporate America is making some

welcome changes: Of the working parents surveyed, 69 percent say they can work fewer hours regularly if needed, and 67 percent say their employers will let them work flexible hours if they choose. Nonetheless, parents want more, and they think the government should do something to help out. Nine parents out of ten favor corporate tax incentives that encourage family-friendly benefits.

But flexible work schedules don't solve the whole time crunch. That's why 66 percent of parents polled

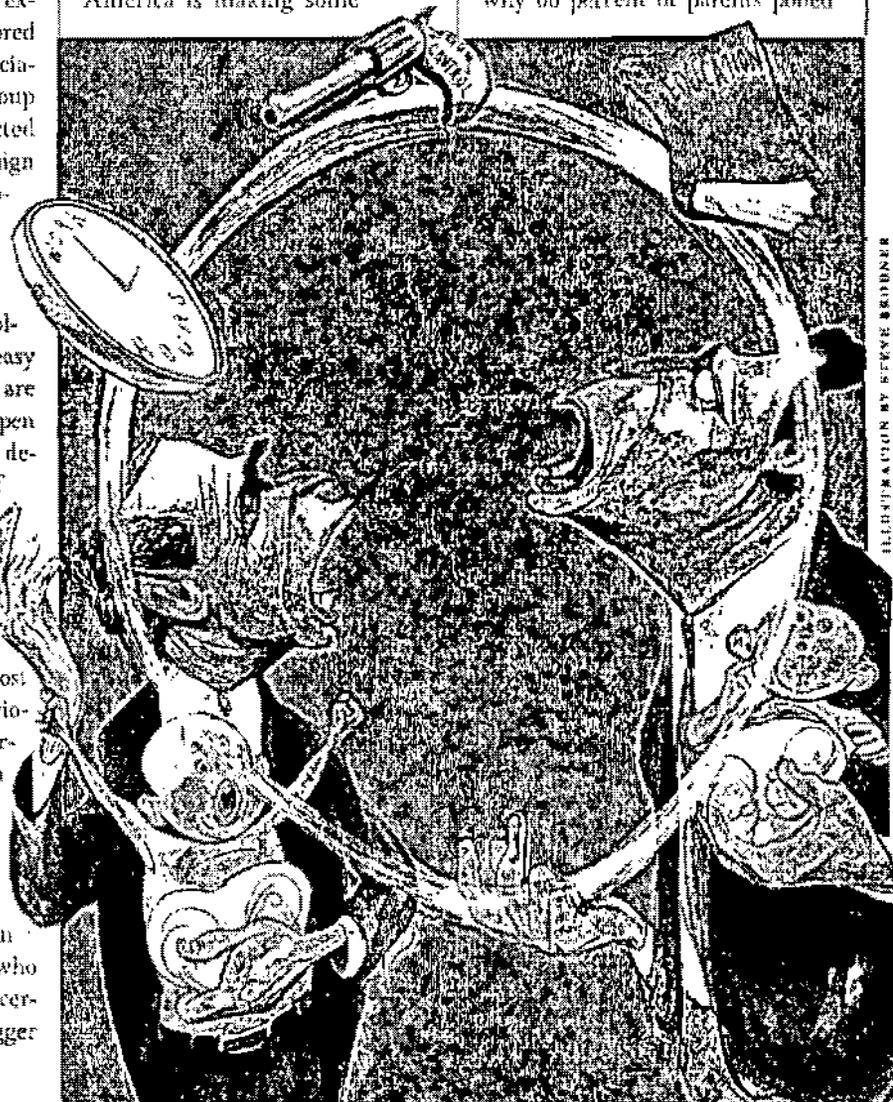


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE KRIDER

want schools to stay open all day—for extra classes, homework or clubs—to better match their typical workday and ease the need for full-time or part-time child care.

Interestingly, the poll results contain a statistic that obliterates the popular theory that parents like to go to work to avoid the stresses of parenthood: 63 percent of respondents said work was more stressful than home. Take that, Arlie Hochschild.

Finally, parents want the federal government to step up to the plate when it comes to educating the next generation. Almost a third of the respondents think improving public schools should be the next president's top priority, ahead of health insurance for all (17 percent) and tax cuts (16 percent). A whopping 85 percent are in favor of allocating federal funds to build new schools and renovate old ones.

This push for better schools is not just for the sake of their own children. Despite the fact that most of the polled parents have school-age kids, 81 percent are in favor of extending public education to include prekindergarten or early-childhood education for all children. —Walecia Konrad

For a complete report of the poll results or to e-mail the candidates directly, visit the National Parenting Association's Web site at [www.parentsunite.org](http://www.parentsunite.org). To take the poll, go to [www.offspringmag.com](http://www.offspringmag.com).

## THE CANDIDATES TALK BACK

### AL GORE



#### GUN CONTROL

Gore takes a page from Bradley and proposes a radical new platform to appease parents.

**Advantage...** Gore. Influenced by Bill Bradley's very radical gun control platform, the vice president has proposed the photo licensing of all handgun purchases. That goes far beyond the background checks of the Brady plan and is pure anathema to Bush and the NRA. Gore would also push for child safety locks on all handguns and would work to strengthen existing laws that limit the carrying of concealed weapons. This is a perfect Gore issue as it blends the nuts and bolts of policy with the opportunity to go live and feel people's pain.

### GEORGE W. BUSH

This is Bush's Achilles' heel. If the feminization of politics is indeed happening, as the polls suggest, then Bush's pro-NRA stance could neutralize the strong gains that he has made with mothers through his education record. In Texas, Bush signed laws that allow the carrying of concealed weapons, in line with NRA policy, he supports only stronger enforcement of existing gun laws. He does, however, favor background checks at gun shows.

### EDUCATION

Now it's Bush who wants something new: vouchers. And he's got the record to run on.

When it comes to education, Al Gore thinks big. Spend \$115 billion over ten years on public schools, and hire 100,000 new teachers. Twenty-four-hour stopovers at public schools in the heartland. Support from the country's largest teachers unions (over 3.5 million strong). The upshot: Expect Gore to continue to label school vouchers a scourge while pounding the table for more federal money for public schools. And don't forget accountability—he wants to raise standards for teachers across the country.

Unlike Gore, George W. Bush has an education record to run on. Under his watch, Texas students passing state skills tests increased by 47 percent—with minority students logging even higher returns. Accountability, vouchers and local control are his buzzwords. Good Republican that he is, Bush has proposed a spare \$2.9 billion plan that focuses on teacher training (including legal protection); he wants teachers to wield the ruler more freely) and tax incentives. Also on offer: a \$5 billion literacy program that promises full literacy for all children.

### WORK AND FAMILY

Gore has a slew of ideas. Bush, well, doesn't.

Here's where the past eight years pay off. With President Clinton, Gore sponsored the groundbreaking Family and Medical Leave Act. The Clinton-Gore administration is also proposing that new parents on leave get state unemployment funds. Gore supports policies allowing time off for parent-teacher conferences and doctors' visits. Unlike Bush, Gore has specifically addressed time and work issues: He supports allowing workers to take more time off to be with their families in place of extra compensation.

While Bush has forayed deep into Democratic territory with regard to education and health care, he has yet to formalize a platform that specifically addresses work and family issues. Too touchy-feely perhaps: You won't hear Bush talking about bike trails. Predictably, he falls back on tax cuts—calling for a reduction in the marriage penalty and proposing to double the child tax credits to \$1,000.

—Landon Thomas Jr.

Percentage of parents who favor allocating federal funds for school construction and renovation:

85

Percentage of parents who favor extending public education to include prekindergarten:

81

Percentage of parents who say they don't have enough time for themselves:

56

Percentage of parents who say they don't have enough time for their children:

32

Percentage of parents who say that work is more stressful than home life:

63

Percentage of parents who favor corporate tax incentives for family-friendly policies:

90

Percentage of parents who say it would not hurt their careers if their boss heard they needed more time for their children:

65

## Gun Violence: Behind the Numbers

*How concerned should you be about your kid?*

Following the tragic shooting death of six-year-old Kayla Rolland (right), who was killed by a fellow first-grade classmate, President Clinton expressed the nation's anguish by telling *Newsweek* that "a dozen children a day are killed by guns" and that something had to be done about it. (A few days later, Clinton cited the same statistic during an appearance on the *Today* show but by then had upped the number to thirteen.)

Though no one disputes the horror of young Kayla's death, or the problems of guns in our society, should parents be as concerned as Clinton



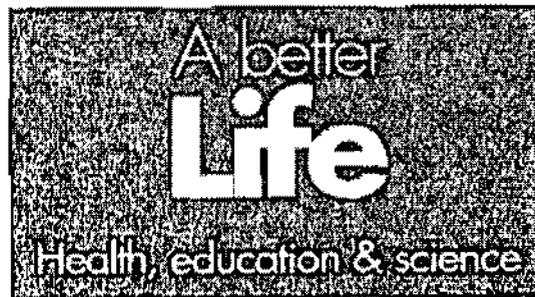
seems about their own child becoming the victim of schoolyard gunfire? Here's what the numbers tell us: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, twelve youngsters are killed each day by a gun. Ten of them are between the ages of fifteen and nineteen; many of these are suicides. Younger children's deaths are largely attributed to homes where a loaded gun is kept unlocked. As a report from the Justice Policy Institute recently stated, "The likelihood of becoming a victim of a school-associated violent death is one in a million." —Lori Leibavich

THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER

**USA  
TODAY**

NO. 1 IN THE USA

10¢ THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2000 · USA TODAY



### Relief improving for working parents

Companies are paying attention to workers' pleas for more family time, according to a survey sponsored by the National Parenting Association and *Offspring* magazine. A majority of working parents surveyed say they have some flexibility on the job. Sixty-nine percent of working parents can work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it; 67% can work flexible hours, starting earlier or later than usual. And 65% say that it would not hurt their careers if they told the boss they needed more time for their children. The bad news: 30% still say balancing work and family is their greatest challenge; it was the most cited problem. The overall survey of 650 parents included a sample of 348 who work.

# The New York Times

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2000

## Have a Child, and Experience the Wage Gap

By Sylvia Ann Hewlett

**P**rogress for working parents, it seems, can only come drip by drop. The latest in incremental improvements came earlier this month, when President Clinton signed an executive order banning discrimination against parents in the federal workplace; it is now illegal to deny jobs or promotions to people because they have obligations to children at home. Bruce Reed, the president's chief domestic policy adviser, said the White House wanted to "send a clear signal to employers that there is nothing wrong with being a parent."

*Sylvia Ann Hewlett, a fellow at Harvard's Center for the Study of Values in Public Life, is chairman of the National Parenting Association.*

Nothing wrong with being a parent! The statement is a powerful reminder of how far this country has to go in understanding the value of parents. And it ignores how much parents, particularly mothers, sacrifice to raise children.

In the United States, a two-parent household earning \$36,800 to \$61,900 a year will spend \$160,140 to feed, clothe and shelter a child until age 18, according to the latest government figures. This figure doesn't even include college tuition.

Of course, parents won't be surprised by these numbers, but there is another hidden cost: reduced earnings, especially for mothers. The government and employers do such a poor job of supporting working mothers — providing little in the way of paid leave, flextime or affordable child care — that women routinely become downwardly mobile in the labor market once they have chil-

dren. A Rand Corporation study shows that a first child lowers a woman's lifetime earnings by 13 percent, while a second child lowers earnings by 19 percent. The high price of motherhood shows up clearly in recent analyses of the wage gap.

### The workplace fee for motherhood.

A substantial gap between men's and women's earnings has been a stubborn feature of the American labor market. In 1998, the gap between the earnings of men and women who worked full time stood at 27

percent, according to the latest census figures.

It now seems that this gap has little to do with gender and everything to do with children. In a recent study, Jane Waldfogel, an economist at Columbia University, showed how childbearing exerts enormous downward pressure on women's wages. Using data from the National Longitudinal Surveys, she compared the earning power of mothers and non-mothers across occupations — controlling for age, education and experience — and found that childless women now earn 90 percent of what their male counterparts earn, while mothers earn only 73 percent.

The costs of child rearing are overwhelmingly private, while the returns are overwhelmingly social. Not only are three-bedroom homes and college tuitions extremely expensive these days, but today's parents are also expected to pay for day care,

preschool, braces, therapy, summer camp, computer equipment and so on. Who benefits from these expensively raised children, who will grow up to pay their taxes and Social Security and otherwise contribute to society? Well, parents gets hugs and kisses and other intangible rewards, but the big payoff goes to the nation.

These facts of life should create a much more generous attitude toward mothers and fathers — but unfortunately, they rarely do. President Clinton deserves praise for his new initiative. But it is very narrow, applying only to federal employees. Legislation protecting parents from discrimination by private employers is stalled in Congress because of opposition from business groups.

Employers and legislators need to absorb one simple fact: We are all stakeholders in the well-being of American parents. □

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2000

MONDAY, MAY 22, 2000

# Do Working Parents Merit Help?

To the Editor:

Sylvia Ann Hewlett ("Have a Child, and Experience the Wage Gap," Op-Ed, May 16) is wrong when she argues that parents should get additional assistance, like paid leave, to ease the costs of raising a family. The government already rewards parents with tax credits.

Ms. Hewlett should remember that having children is a choice; adults who choose to have children should bear the costs of their choice.

JAMES WHITING  
Brooklyn, May 17, 2000

To the Editor:

Sylvia Ann Hewlett (Op-Ed, May 16) is right to point out the scandalous and ignored inequities resulting from the lack of social support for mothers in the United States. Americans generally view raising a child as a private endeavor rather than as the execution of an implicit contract with society (as the French tend to see it).

As a result, the United States is the country that provides the least support to parents in the entire industrial world. American parents would look with amazement and envy at France, the country at the opposite end of the spectrum, with its generous array of subsidies, tax deductions, paid leaves, subsidized child care and free preschool education.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS BRIÈRE  
Albany, May 17, 2000

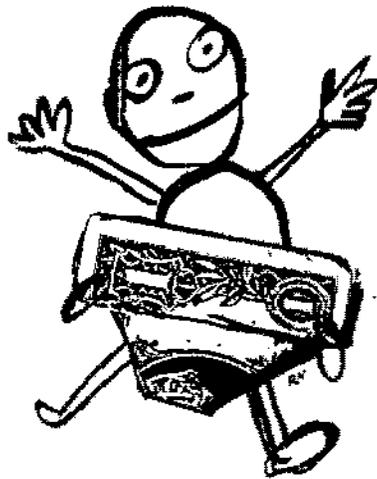
The writer is an associate professor of French studies at SUNY-Albany.

To the Editor:

Sylvia Ann Hewlett (Op-Ed, May 16) overlooks an obvious reason why

mothers earn less than women who are not mothers: by virtue of their responsibilities at home, mothers are in general less committed to their careers. This is not a bad thing; it's just life.

When deciding whom to promote, employers evaluate many qualities, one of which is the time and effort



Robert Neubecker

and commitment that someone is able to apply to the job. If two women have similar jobs in the same company, and one chooses not to have children so she can focus on her career, shouldn't the company reward her for that choice?

This is not discrimination against mothers, but recognition that people make choices and that there are consequences.

SETH CHASIN  
Oak Park, Calif., May 17, 2000

# America's Children

To the Editor:

Sylvia Ann Hewlett (Op-Ed, May 16) correctly points out that society gets "the big payoff" from working parents' "expensively raised children." On the flip side, this country's reluctance to provide the socializing influence and early problem-detection abilities of free, quality day care for all children results in losses to society many times greater than the cost of such care.

In addition to lost wages and taxes, we pay dearly in dollars and quality of life for excesses of delinquency, criminal behavior, substance abuse, mental illness, teenage pregnancy, disabilities and dysfunction that could have been prevented or addressed more effectively in early childhood by a quality universal day care system for the country's most important resource: its children.

JUDITH GREEN  
Teaneck, N.J., May 17, 2000  
The writer is a professor of psychology at William Paterson University.

## PERSPECTIVE

## COUNTERPOINT: Parents bear costs of society's future

By Sylvia Ann Hewlett

**M**others are under new attack in our society. Over the past year, adults without children have begun to speak out, accusing parents — and particularly mothers — of taking advantage of massive government subsidies, of "wanting a child and a Lexus, too." In a new book,



Sylvia Ann Hewlett is the founder and chairman of the National Parenting Association.

herself as spearheading a "simmering backlash against perks for parents."

"This new onslaught on parents is not only remarkably misinformed, it is also extremely dangerous to the well-being of the nation.

First, let's get our facts straight.

Overall, Uncle Sam does not intervene to boost the income of families with children. According to economist Edward Wolff, the relative well-being of parents in relation with childless households has been continuously eroded over the past 30 or 40 years, "with government policy being the powerful driving force." In 1959, 20 percent of families with children were poor, compared with 16 percent of families without

children. By the late 1990s, the poverty rate among families with children stood at 19 percent, barely changed from its 1959 level, whereas the poverty rate among childless families had fallen to 5 percent, a reduction of more than two-thirds.

Indeed, across the board, families with children have seen their incomes slip relative to that of the childless. Between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, for example, the median income of families with children fell by 2 percent in real terms, whereas the median income of childless families increased by 16 percent.

**Moms downwardly mobile**

The lion's share of the cost of raising the next generation is borne by individual parents — particularly mothers. Not only do moms and dads shell out large sums of money in child-related expenses (according to the Department of Agriculture, a two-parent household earning between \$35,800 and \$61,900 a year will spend \$180,140 to feed, clothe and shelter a child up to age 18), but mothers incur additional costs in the form of reduced earnings. The fact is, the government and employers do such a poor job supporting working mothers — providing little in the way of paid parenting leave, flex time or affordable child care — that women routinely become downwardly mobile in the labor market once they have children.

A study by the Rand Corp. shows that a first child lowers a woman's lifetime earnings by 13 percent, while a second child lowers earnings by 19 percent. The high "price" of motherhood shows up particularly clearly in recent analyses of the wage gap.

A substantial gap between men's and women's earnings has been a stubborn feature of the

► Continued from Q1

American labor market. According to the latest census figures, the wage gap now stands at 23 percent. It now seems that this wage gap has more to do with children than gender. In a recent study Columbia University economist Jane Waldfogel shows how child-bearing exerts enormous downward pressure on women's wages. Using data from the National Longitudinal Surveys, she compares the earning power of mothers with nonmothers across occupation — controlling for age, education and experience — and finds that childless women now earn close to the male wage (90 percent) while mothers are stuck at the 73 percent level.

Thus, the massive redistribution of wealth from nonparents to parents described by Burkett seems to be a figment of her imagination. In reality, the costs of child bearing in America are increasingly private, while the returns are increasingly social. For if a mom or dad cobbles together the loving attention and

the financial resources necessary to be a "good" parent, and ensures that a child becomes a well-adjusted kid who succeeds in school and graduates from college, who benefits?

Well, a parents gets hugs and kisses, but the big payoff goes to the nation. These children will become productive workers (who will boost GNP and pay their taxes) and responsible citizens (who will vote and otherwise contribute to community life).

Adults without children need to understand that they are stakeholders in the welfare of other people's children. Childlessness may be a choice for an individual man or woman — and in some cases it can be a highly responsible choice. But childlessness is not a choice for society. We need grown-ups to bear and raise children, and, we need them to do it well.

*Sylvia Ann Hewlett is founder and chairman of the National Parenting Association. She is a fellow at the Center for the Study of Values in Public Life at Harvard University.*

► Please see PARENTS, Q2

**PARENTS AGREEMENT ON ISSUES CROSSES ALL BOUNDARIES:  
GENDER, RACE, PARTY AND INCOME**

Percent Strongly favor/ Somewhat favor

	All Parents %	Gender		Race			Party			Family Income			Own Gun	
		Men %	Women %	White %	Black %	Hispanic %	Dem. %	Ind. %	Rep %	Under \$20,000 %	\$20,000-\$60,000 %	Over \$60,000 %	Yes %	No %
<b>GUNS</b>														
Require trigger locks or safety devices	88	85	92	87	99	89	93	89	83	95	91	84	82	92
License/register all gun owners	84	80	88	83	88	86	83	86	81	89	84	80	68	93
Raise age of possession.	82	79	85	82	88	83	82	86	80	86	81	82	75	87
<b>EDUCATION</b>														
Tax breaks for higher education	89	86	91	89	87	91	86	91	88	89	90	86		
Federal funds for school construction and repair	85	81	88	84	88	88	84	87	81	92	86	80		
Universal early childhood education	81	81	81	80	90	85	89	85	69	89	83	74		
<b>WORK-FAMILY</b>														
Tax incentives to encourage family-friendly policies	90	88	91	91	85	88	92	89	89	92	90	90		
Law to ensure 24 hours paid leave	84	80	87	83	94	88	89	86	77	93	86	81		
<b>HEALTH INSURANCE</b>														
Health insurance for every child	88	83	93	88	90	93	90	90	82	94	93	78		

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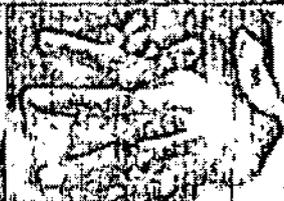


# What Will Parents Vote For?

A survey by the National Parenting Association  
and Offspring Magazine — MAY 2000

**national  
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association**

**offspring**



# offspring

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## NATIONAL PARENTING ASSOCIATION AND OFFSPRING MAGAZINE RELEASE RESULTS OF WHAT WILL PARENTS VOTE FOR? UPDATE 2000 SURVEY

### *Violence Is Number One Concern Among U.S. Parents In Spite of Drop in Crime Rate; Cutting Taxes is Of Least Concern*

NEW YORK, May 11, 2000 – Despite an unprecedented span of prosperity and a dramatic drop in crime, parents are more worried than they were four years ago about violence. This is among the findings of an election year survey of U.S. parents by the National Parenting Association co-sponsored by *Offspring* magazine. The *What Will Parents Vote For? Update 2000 Survey*, conducted by Charney Research, sampled 650 U.S. parents in late January and early February, 2000. In addition to the pervasive concerns about violence, the survey found parents feel that employers have become more sensitive and flexible to the needs of working parents. Despite these changes, parents still most frequently cite balancing work and family as their biggest challenge.

"Parenting is a powerful common denominator," said Ruth A. Wooden, President of the National Parenting Association. "In our research to produce *What Will Parents Vote For?*, we found a striking and far-reaching agreement among parents on what we need to do to improve the outcomes for their children. These similarities of opinion cut across political and socio-economic lines, indicating that American parents are speaking with one voice, a voice our public officials cannot afford to ignore."

"*Offspring* magazine is proud to have partnered with the National Parenting Association to produce this important survey," said Steve Swartz, editor-in-chief of *Offspring* magazine. "Tackling the substantive issues facing today's parents, beyond the standard diaper rash and teething ring fare, is the mission under which *Offspring* was launched. Bringing the opinions of American parents to the forefront of public debate in this election year is in keeping with that mission."

### *What Will Parents Vote For? Update 2000 Survey Highlights*

#### Violence

- Forty percent of parents cite crime and violence as a major worry, up from 30% in 1996.
- Seven out of ten parents (69%) are worried that a school shooting, like the one at Columbine High School in Colorado, could happen at a school near them.

- Over half (53%) put most of the blame for school violence on "parents' failure to teach and watch their kids."
- One in five think violent TV, movies and computers are the most to blame.
- Fourteen percent blame violence on children's access to guns.

### Gun Control

- Eighty-eight percent of parents surveyed favor legislation requiring gun makers and sellers to install trigger locks or safety devices to make it harder for children to fire them (this, even though 32% of parents in our survey owned guns).
- Eighty-four percent of parents favor the registration of all guns and licensing all owners, as is done with cars.
- Fifty-one percent of parents favor banning handguns altogether.

### Government

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of parents now believe that public officials "do not care about what parents like me think"—up seven points from in 1996.
- Barely half (51%) regard raising their children to become regular voters as very important.

### Workplace

- Sixty-nine percent of working parents say they can work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it.
- Sixty-seven percent say they can work flexible hours, for example starting earlier or later than normal working hours—and nearly half of working parents are currently doing so.
- Sixty-five percent say it would not hurt their careers if their boss heard they needed more time for their children.
- Thirty percent (equally split between mothers and fathers) said balancing work and family was their greatest challenge.
- Four-fifths of working mothers responded that they do not have enough time for themselves, and almost half say they lack enough time for their children.
- Six percent of lower income parents vs. 30% of higher income parents work for firms that rate high on family friendliness.
- Ninety percent of parents surveyed favor tax incentives to encourage family-friendly policies by employers such as benefits for part-time workers and flexible working hours.
- Eighty-four percent favor a law to ensure 24 hours or three days paid leave annually for family needs, like parent-teacher conferences or taking children to the doctor.
- Fifty-four percent favor proposed regulations that would allow states to use the unemployment system to offer paid leave to working parents following the birth or adoption of a child.
- Three out of four parents (78%) favor letting workers take off time rather than extra pay for overtime.

### Better Schools

- Eighty-five percent of parents surveyed favor using federal funds for school construction and renovation.
- Eighty-one percent favor extending public education to include pre-kindergarten or early childhood education for all children.
- Two-thirds of parents surveyed indicated that they would like to see the school day extended to better match the work day.

### Economic Means

- Eighty-nine percent of parents surveyed favor increasing tax deductions or credits to help more families pay for higher education.
- Eighty-eight percent favor health insurance for every child, with a full or partial government subsidy to parents who can't afford it.
- Eighty-seven percent favor eliminating state and local sales taxes on children's necessities like diapers, school materials, and car seats.
- Eighty-six percent favor raising the minimum wage so that all full-time workers are above the poverty level.

### Swing Voters

- Swing voters, or respondents who described themselves as either "weak" Republicans or "weak" Democrats comprised 58% of the sample.
- Swing voters are even more concerned about violence than those squarely in either the Democratic or Republican camps (43% of swing voters vs. 33% of strong Democrats and 36% of strong Republicans).
- Swing voters are significantly more likely to say that improving public schools should be the next President's top priority (33% of swing voters vs. 24% of strong Democrats and 22% of strong Republicans).
- Swing voters are less likely to say that cutting taxes should be the next President's top priority than strong Democrats or strong Republicans (15% vs. 20% of strong Democrat respondents and 20% of strong Republican respondents).

The National Parenting Association is working to make parenting a higher priority in the lives of Americans and on the public agenda. In addition to surveying parents and related research, the group advocates ideas that would help parents as a means to improving outcomes for children. It plans to launch a national communications campaign to promote valuing, supporting and strengthening parenting. Begun in 1993 by author Sylvia Ann Hewlett, the nonprofit, nonpartisan parenting organization was founded with the idea of sparking a new social movement to give parents a greater voice in the public arena. The *What Will Parents Vote For?* survey was funded, in part, by a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

*Offspring* magazine, The Magazine of Smart Parenting, is a joint venture between The Hearst Corporation and Dow Jones & Company. Produced by the editors of *SmartMoney* magazine, *Offspring* debuted on newsstands March 14, 2000 bringing to the parenting category of magazines the in-depth, award-winning service journalism that *SmartMoney* itself has established in the personal finance field over the course of its seven-year existence.

Hearst Magazines, a unit of The Hearst Corporation, is the world's largest publisher of monthly magazines, with 16 U.S. titles and 98 international editions distributed in more than 100 countries.

Dow Jones & Company is the world's leading provider of business and financial information as well as being publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*.

## PARENT DATA AT A GLANCE

### Demographics

- There are 63 million parents of children under age 18<sup>1</sup>
  - 25,709 million two-parent families
  - 11,948 single-parent families
    - 2,120 million fathers
    - 9,828 million mothers

(For comparison, there were 34 million seniors, ages 65 and over in 1998).
- In 1996, 28 percent of children lived in one-parent families. This is significantly more than in 1970 when only 12 percent were in such families.<sup>2</sup>
- The proportion of children under 18 years living with two parents declined from 85 percent in 1970 to 69 percent in 1995.<sup>3</sup>

### Voting

- Parents are 38% of registered and likely voters. (By contrast, union members are 30%, seniors are 17%, and African Americans are 9%. College graduates are 38% of registered and likely voters.)<sup>4</sup>
- 57.6% of citizens in the prime parenting years, ages 25 to 54, voted in the 1996 presidential election (59.6% for ages 35-44).<sup>5</sup>
- 70.49% of citizens ages 25-54 were registered to vote in the 1996 presidential election (72.2% for ages 35-44).<sup>6</sup>
- More than one in five of the 21.3 million people who were registered reported that they did not vote because they could not get time off work or were too busy.<sup>7</sup>
- 69% of parents say they're interested in politics.<sup>8</sup>
- 58% of parents are "swing voters," defined as people who call themselves either independents, "weak" Democrats, or "weak" Republicans. (For comparison, 54% of the population at large, and 51.5% of non-parents, are swing voters).<sup>9</sup>

### Time for Children

- From 1969 to 1996, families, on average, have experienced a decrease of 22 hours a week (14 percent) in time available outside of work to spend with their children. This is a result of the increase in hours mothers spend in paid work combined with the shift toward more single-parent families.<sup>10</sup>

- The typical married couple family worked 247 more hours (over six weeks) per year in 1996 than in 1989.<sup>11</sup>
- Out of 145 nations, the U.S. is one of only 6 that fail to provide *paid* maternity leave by law.<sup>12</sup>
- 65 percent of mothers with children under age 6, and 78 percent of mothers with children ages 6-13 are in the labor force.<sup>13</sup>
- 21 percent of mothers hold jobs that offer no paid leave whatsoever for sickness or vacation.<sup>14</sup>
- In 1976, 69 percent of mothers who had given birth the preceding year were at home; in 1998, only 41 percent were.<sup>15</sup>
- A Gallup poll found that one-third of respondents would prefer that they or their spouse reduce hours and income to gain more time for family.<sup>16</sup>
- Almost 41 million Americans are not covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act because they work for companies too small to be covered by the law (less than 50 employees). This amounts to more than 40 percent of the private sector labor force.<sup>17</sup>
- In the early 1980s, when the first *100 Best Companies to Work for in America* book was published, only two of those companies offered flextime to employees. In the 1999 annual survey, there were 70 offering flexible schedules.<sup>18</sup>

### **Economic Security**

- It will cost a middle income family nearly \$1.5 million in direct expenses and foregone income to raise a child to age 21.<sup>19</sup>
- A national study found that 55 percent of working women provide half or more of the income for their families.<sup>20</sup>

### **Parent Education**

- "There are more than 300 known parenting curricula. At least 1,000 books on parenting, and probably in excess of 7,500 designs being used in 50,000 programs."<sup>21</sup>
- An estimated \$700 million is being spent on parenting education programs by local, state and federal agencies.<sup>22</sup>
- \$100-\$150 million private funding from foundations and corporations for parenting education programs.<sup>23</sup>

### **Miscellaneous**

- Yahoo lists over 2 million web pages for "parents."

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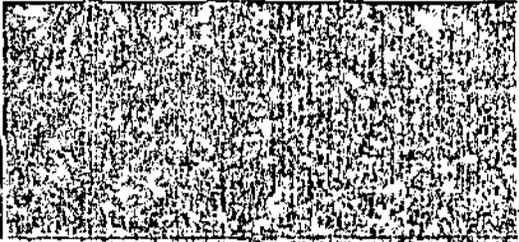
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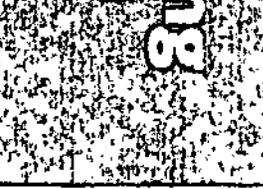
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# Parents matter.

The National Parenting Association  
is working to make parenting  
a higher priority in our private  
lives and on the public agenda. . .

If we really care about helping kids,  
we need to do more to value,  
support and strengthen parenting.

. . . with a message that unites  
Americans and a national  
campaign to value, support, and  
strengthen parenting. We're  
adding parents' voices to the  
national debate and finding new  
solutions to the problems facing  
today's parents — in how we  
organize our work lives, our  
schools and our communities.

8 out of 10 Americans say  
it's much harder to be  
a parent these days.

*"Kids These Days" Public Agenda 1997 Report*



It's not just a matter of helping parents with  
the economic burdens of raising kids. We're  
talking about giving the important work of  
parenting a new measure of status and respect.

*Ruth A. Wooden, NPA President, former head of the Ad Council*

Americans now work the longest hours in the  
industrialized world — even more than in Japan.\*  
Mothers and fathers are caught in a time crunch,  
struggling to support their families without  
neglecting them.

Out of 145 nations, the US is one of only six that  
fail to provide paid maternity leave by law.\*  
This is just one example of how we talk family  
values but fail to value families.

The report card on our schools is dismal. Only  
about one-quarter of American students can write  
at a proficient level according to the 1999 National  
Assessment of Educational Progress.

Violence, drugs, disturbing images in pop culture  
and other threats make the essential tasks of  
parenting — instilling values and protecting our  
kids — even harder.

\*International Labour Office, Geneva 1997 maternity protection  
and 1999 labor market indicators reports



We're laying the groundwork to spark and sustain a new social movement with solid research and fresh thinking, expertise in communications to reach parents, opinion-leaders, and the American public, and partnerships with others who care about parents, kids and America's future.

Our common struggles as parents unite us. The National Parenting Association's landmark research *What All Parents Want* (2011) reveals commonalities and unexpected unity transcending class, race, and gender.

David A. Harris, M.D., M.P.H.



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Author of *What All Parents Want*



Co-authors of the well-thumbed book *The Mom Against Parental-Based and the Work of the NPA*

Carol Pines  
 Executive Director  
 National Parenting Association

Hewlett and West are on a mission to give parents a voice. Given full expression, that voice could one day prove the loudest and most powerful in the nation."

-Business Week 2/27/98

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