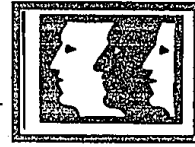


Suburban Life

Loraine McClish editor/477-5450



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(F18)

Making decisions - making choices



child care

By Marcia Walker
staff writer

ONE OF THE most difficult decisions that working parents of an infant or preschooler must face is in whose care to place their child during the work day. There are several child-care options to consider:

- A professional nanny
- A full-time baby sitter
- A family or group home
- Day-care center
- Nursery school (in cases where a parent works part time)

After deciding upon the type of care desired, the next problem is the selection process. Public, non-profit and commercial agencies are available to help in the process. These include:

- The Department of Social Services, For Oakland County, call 858-1612. For Wayne County, call 256-3814. Specify the type of care (family home, group home, day-care center or nursery school) and the communities in which you are looking, and they will send you a computer printout of licensed caregivers at no cost.

- The Wayne or Oakland County Child Care Coordinating (4C) Council. For Oakland County, call 858-1440; for Wayne, call 578-2777. The 4C's referral services are also free of charge.

- Nanny Agencies. The Nanny Network and Nanny of America are two commercial agencies that will match you with a nanny. Delta College, in Bay City, has a free matching service, but they also have a long waiting list.

- Baby-sitting Agencies. Check the Yellow Pages. There are several agencies that will arrange short or long-term baby sitters.

- Want ads. Those operating family or group homes often advertise in the newspaper. If responding to an ad, make sure that they are licensed by the DSS. Baby sitters who will come to your home also advertise. The DSS does not require licensing for these caregivers.

Preparing Your Child for Day Care

The first day of leaving your infant with a caregiver is usually harder on the parent than the child. But an older infant or toddler will

need more comfort and reassurance. While it will always be difficult on the parent and child in the beginning, there are some steps that parents can take to make the transition a little less stressful:

- If using a family or group home, visit with your child beforehand to make sure that the caregiver is familiar with his routine. Show him around, so that he becomes used to the toys, other children, the yard, bathroom, etc.

- A sitter or nanny should come to your home before you return to work, so that your infant or toddler will become used to her and she will learn your child's routine.

- If using a day-care center or nursery school, talk to the teacher and director beforehand. If possible, arrange to visit the center once or twice with your child for an hour or two before you return to work.

Most children will adjust to their new routine within a few days. Perhaps the most important factor for any child-care situation is to make sure that your child will be in a loving environment. During that first week, he will probably need extra comfort — if the center or home cannot give your child the extra attention he needs, you may want to consider a different option.

Sick Child Care

When your child becomes ill, a parent will inevitably have to take occasional days off from work. A new type of child care, called sick-child care, is gradually emerging in the metro area. These are options to consider if your child is only mildly ill or has to stay in bed for one or two more days before returning to school. Or, perhaps you absolutely have to be at work for one reason or another.

Pontiac General Hospital and Botsford General Hospital, in Farmington Hills, have both set up sick-child care centers for the children of their employees.

Two options are available in the metro area for the general public:

- Oakland General Hospital, in Madison Heights, has opened their Kids' Clinic. For a \$20 fee, sick children can be cared for during the work day. Parents must call (967-

Please turn to Page 2

Day care: Who has my baby?

By Shirlee Ross Iden
staff writer

Who will care for my child?

Grandma works as a grocery checker or may be off on a cruise. Relatives are in far away cities. Dad walked out when the kids were tiny babies, so mommy has to work. Who will care for her child?

With the sun's light at morning, more than half of American mothers are off to the job, facing the challenges of the work place only after having deposited their preschool children in some type of day care.

According to agencies involved in child care services, as many as two-thirds of preschool children in the country will have working mothers by 1995.

Doctors, lawyers, educators, engineers, clerks, waitresses and office cleaners all ponder the child care question. They are mothers and fathers who ask: "How can we insure the care, cuddling, feeding, socialization of the children we must work to support?"

For many mothers, child care choices boil down to bringing a relative or helper into the home or seeking a care center or family day care elsewhere.

RESEARCH on the social development of young children in non-maternal care is just beginning. Moreover, even the early researchers don't always agree.

One study, by psychologist Deborah Phillips of Yale University and colleagues, indicates that the kind of day care received is of key importance to children's social growth, perhaps as important as family background.

Another study, flashing caution signs for parents, suggests that daily separation from mother during the first year of life, even with the child at home, is a risk factor which could lead to a disturbed mother-infant relationship.

Rosalind Gilson, preschool educator, is an educational observer for Head Start and the Merrill-Palmer Institute and was director of the Beth Haydel Nursery of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield.

On home day care, she commented: "There are two types of child care in homes, first, group care for up to 12 children requiring a license, and secondly, family care, for up to six children requiring registration."

"The advantage of family care for the child is that the staff won't pick up and leave. Frequent changes in staff is a big problem in day care."

Gilson, and others involved, indicate that the only discernable difference between children in day care and kids at home with mother is that the day care kids are "more outgoing and adjustable."

Dr. Betty T. Brazelton, a nationally known child expert, is alarmed because he sees a society of families and parents "not seeming to care about kids."

"Teens are acting out all over the country and no one relates them to the parenting of little kids," he said recently. "A working parent coming home has to save some energy, stride in, and grab all the kids in a warm hug, then maybe move to a rocking chair and just rock and rock."

"There are too many children in overcrowded rooms with a TV as the teacher," he said. "Money spent on child care does pay off, if its quality child care."

LINDA BOLTON, a Birmingham pediatrician on the staff of Providence Hospital in Southfield, has many tools to play her trade. But beside the stethoscope and blood pressure machine, she stocks booklets such as "Breast-feeding Guide for Working Mothers" circulated by a company involved in infant nutrition.

"It has instruction for breast-feeding mothers whose babies are in day care while they work," Dr. Bolton said. "Mothers don't have to wean because they are returning to work."

Bolton, a social worker before going to medical school, is well versed in the problems of child care. "I know every permutation of the child raising situation," she said.

"Some women need to be home with their babies. Other can't. I know bankers, doctors and a pediatrician who stayed home and others who couldn't cope with being at home."

"Some have the luxury of choice, others don't. People who have the most stress are those who don't have to work but have a good job. The major question in this country today is career vs. child raising."

"Remember, almost no pregnancies are accidents now."

BOLTON SAID studies about child care do not confirm parental guilt. "The 3- and 4-year-olds love day care centers and many in this area have excellent equipment, even music facilities."

"But, checking out day care is just plain tough. Mothers should talk to other parents, check licensing, look the place over, and make sure its clean, neat, and flexible where you're always welcome."

Married to attorney Michael Bolton, she decided to go to medical school at Michigan State University partly because she was unable to get pregnant herself. "I thought medicine would fulfill me, but I got pregnant in med school. As a social worker, I thought I should stay home and care for my child, but there were pressures on me to stay in medicine."

"It was very hard to work out satisfactory child care for Jordan, my first son, and then I got pregnant again. Ian was born right after graduation. I thought I would just have to delay my internship, but my mom came to the rescue."

Please turn to Page 2

Bonding

The emotional link between mother and baby

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

SETON DAY CARE Center, one of the first in the state to offer extended hours to aid the working mother 20 years ago, now leads the field with another first.

That first is in the person of Denise Tardiff, an infant

mental health specialist who is now on the staff at Seton, part of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center complex in Farmington Hills.

What is commonly known as bonding, the emotional connection that makes a healthy relationship between mother and child, is the focus of Tardiff's duties. Bonding becomes ever more important for the mother and child who spend up to 10 hours a day away from one another.

"The mother instinct just does not kick in the minute you give birth," Tardiff said. "That applies to all mothers and that applies to the so-called 'good' mothers."

"In the case of the stressed-out mother — for whatever reason — it is all the more important that we learn as soon as possible what is going on between that mother and her baby."

There is not yet a degree in infant mental health, though there is talk of one being developed (at Wayne State University) as studies are proving that infants can spell out their feelings very early on when one knows how to interpret them.

Tardiff and her counterparts have certificates, earned only after obtaining a masters degree. She is the first such certificate holder in the state hired by an agency.

THE DAY CARE staff at the Sarah Fisher Center saw the need for extended day care hours when the single mother, who gave birth to her child while living in Merillie Hall, needed to work. When the youngsters in residence were put into foster homes 20 years ago making a building on the grounds available, Seton Day Care Center opened for the convenience of the surrounding community.

"The goal was the same then as it is now: The strengthening of the family unit," said Ann Coyle, who directs year-round operations in the center, which includes care activities of about 65 youngsters from eight-week-old infants to five-year olds in the pre-school classrooms.

"We're at a point now where we have to take a hard look at the generation raised in the day care centers because this is an integral part of our whole mental health system," Coyle said. "Any work that has been done on toddlers and preschoolers is totally separate from the work that is now being done with infants and their relationship to their parents."

"We can't afford to wait another 20 years to see what happens — particularly when we are seeing right now the value of early intervention," she said.

ACCORDING TO Tardiff, "Early intervention can be 100 percent effective, while a real problem at five years could be totally irreversible. It's my job to identify those things that will bring on the problems."

Tardiff said a mother who thinks she is having a problem relationship with her child is not a "bad" mother.

"Some can handle the stress and some can't," Tardiff said. "It's that simple. The superwoman is a myth."



RANDY BOST/retail photographer

Denise Tardiff, the first infant mental health specialist in the state to be hired by an agency, is superintendent of the infant program at

Seton Day Care Center. She is with 4-month-old Julia Robinson.