

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE FAMILY

The Consequences for Children and American Society

Patrick F. Fagan

THE ISSUES

The family is the most fundamental of society's institutions, for it is within the family setting that character, morality, responsibility, ability, and wisdom are nurtured best in children. This is not news; yet, in America today, the family institution is being steadily dismantled, even held in disdain by many leaders in the political, academic, and media elite. And the insidious erosion has serious consequences:

- In 1950, for every 100 children born, 12 entered a broken family. Today, for every 100 children born, 60 will enter a broken family. Each year, about one million children experience the divorce of their parents, 1.25 million are born out of wedlock, and another 1.4 million are aborted. Child abuse is growing steadily, and child sexual abuse is growing fastest of all.
- In short, Americans are literally turning against their children. But adults suffer as well from the breakdown of the family institution. Studies clearly show that those who divorce suffer shorter life expectancies, poorer physical and psychological health, and lowered standards of living.¹

The assault on the American family has not gone unnoticed. Conservative social scientists have begun to document the correlation between a family founded on a lifelong marriage and low incidences of crime, addiction, abuse, illness, and

Notes:

1. David B. Larson, James P. Swyers, and Susan S. Larson, "The Costly Consequences of Divorce: Assessing the Clinical, Economic and Public Health Impacts of Marital Disruption in the United States," National Institute for Healthcare Research, Rockville, Maryland, 1995, pp. 43–49.

EVEN THE BEST GOVERNMENT SERVICES MAKE NO DIFFERENCE

According to a report for the Department of Health and Human Services, "The Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP) was an innovative attempt by the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) to ensure the delivery of early and comprehensive services with the aim of enhancing child development and helping low-income families achieve economic self-sufficiency. CCDP grantees included universities, hospitals, public and private non-profit organizations, and school districts. The total cost of CCDP averaged \$15,768 per family per year (excluding the research costs), or about \$47,000 for each family over the five years of operation. Each local CCDP grantee was to

- intervene as early as possible in children's lives;
- involve the entire family;
- ensure the delivery of comprehensive social services to address the intellectual, social-emotional, and physical needs of infants and young children in the household;
- ensure the delivery of services to enhance parents' ability to contribute to the overall development of their children and achieve economic and social self-sufficiency; and
- ensure continuous services until children enter elementary school at the kindergarten or first grade level....

"Across the 21 projects, 4,410 families were included in the evaluation—2,213 families were assigned to CCDP and another 2,197 families were assigned to the control group (no special services given to them)... Exactly the same changes observed in CCDP families occurred in control group families....

"Five years after the program began, CCDP had no statistically significant impacts on the economic self-sufficiency of participating mothers, nor on their parenting skills. Mothers in the control group performed as well on these measures as CCDP mothers.... CCDP had no meaningful impacts on the cognitive or social-emotional development of participating children. Children in the control group performed as well on these measures as children in CCDP. Nor did CCDP have any impacts on children's health or on birth outcomes for children born subsequent to the focus children.... The length of time that a family was enrolled in CCDP was sometimes associated with a statistically significant difference in the outcomes achieved by that family, but those differences were not educationally or substantively meaningful."

Source: Robert G. St. Pierre *et al.*, "Executive Summary," *National Impact Evaluation of the Comprehensive Child Development Program*, Department of Health and Human Services, June 1997.

underachievement. But increasingly, they encounter a problem in tracking such trends: Official government statistics on marriage, divorce, and correlates in child outcomes are being gathered and reported less frequently. In fact, statistics on marriage and divorce are no longer tracked in at least half of the states today.² This paucity of reliable information will make it more difficult to

assess either the progress or the deterioration of the American family in the future.

Candidates have an opportunity in 1998 to focus national attention on problems whose roots lie in the breakdown of the family institution and marriage, as well as on the public policies that contribute to those problems. Specifically:

Notes:

2. According to officials at the National Center for Health Statistics, it is not possible to get accurate data on marriage and divorce statistics from 27 states.

- **Government policies over the past 35 years have been hostile to marriage and the family unit.** Not only have these policies played a direct role in weakening marriage and the family, but they imply that marriage and the family are no longer important.
- **Federally funded social programs have displaced the natural community structure of American society by taking on the roles of family, church, and voluntary associations.** Although federal programs have spent enormous amounts of money on social problems,

they have failed consistently to achieve their intended objectives, in addition to which they undermine the institutions that have sustained the American community through wars and depressions.

- **Government tax policies place an enormous financial burden on families.** Since the vision of a Great Society gave birth to the troubled entitlement programs and the welfare state over 30 years ago, American families with growing children have had to bear the greatest share of the cost.

THE FACTS

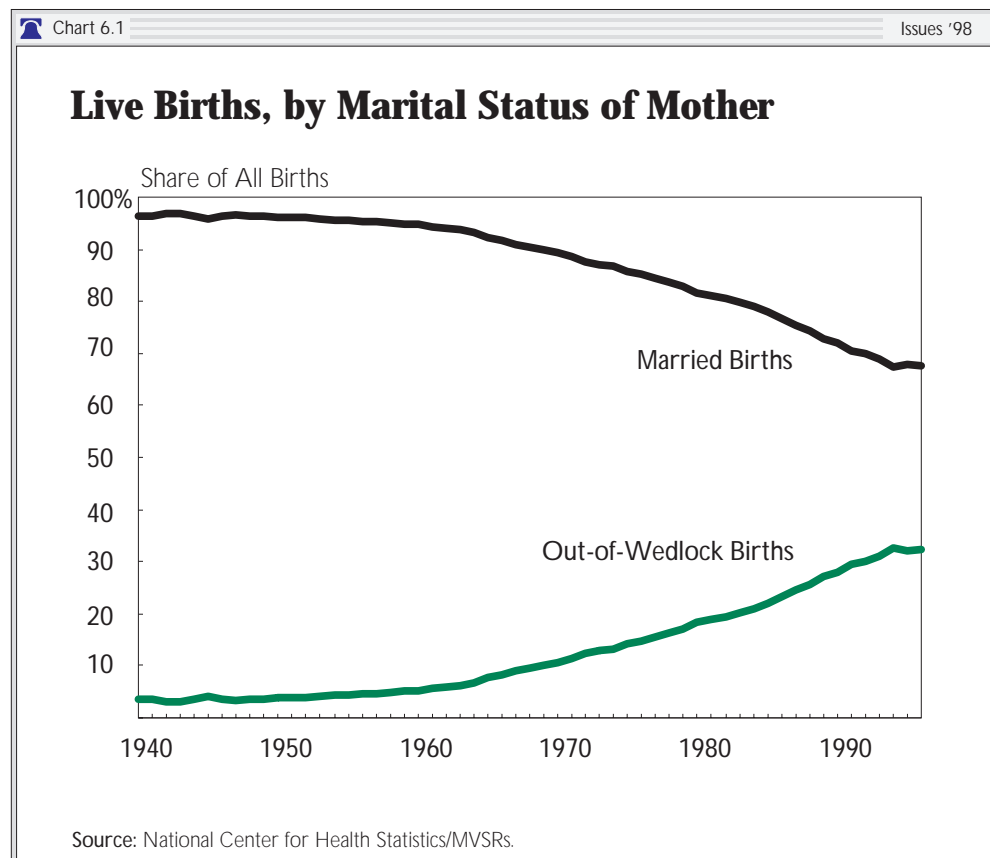
THE COMPONENTS OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN

The American family has been weakened by two widespread patterns undermining marriage: giving birth to children out of wedlock and divorce. Both entail a rejection of marriage, though in different ways. Having children out of wedlock is a rejection of any initial commitment to a partner in marriage, and divorce is a rejection of marriage after that initial commitment has been made.

Rising Rates of Out-of-Wedlock Birth

Among whites in 1995, 25.3 percent of births were out of wedlock, more than double the rate of 11 percent in 1980. Among blacks, 69.9 percent of births in 1995 were out of

wedlock, up from 58 percent in 1980. In certain parts of the country, the rates of out-of-wedlock births for blacks are alarmingly high: 82.8 percent



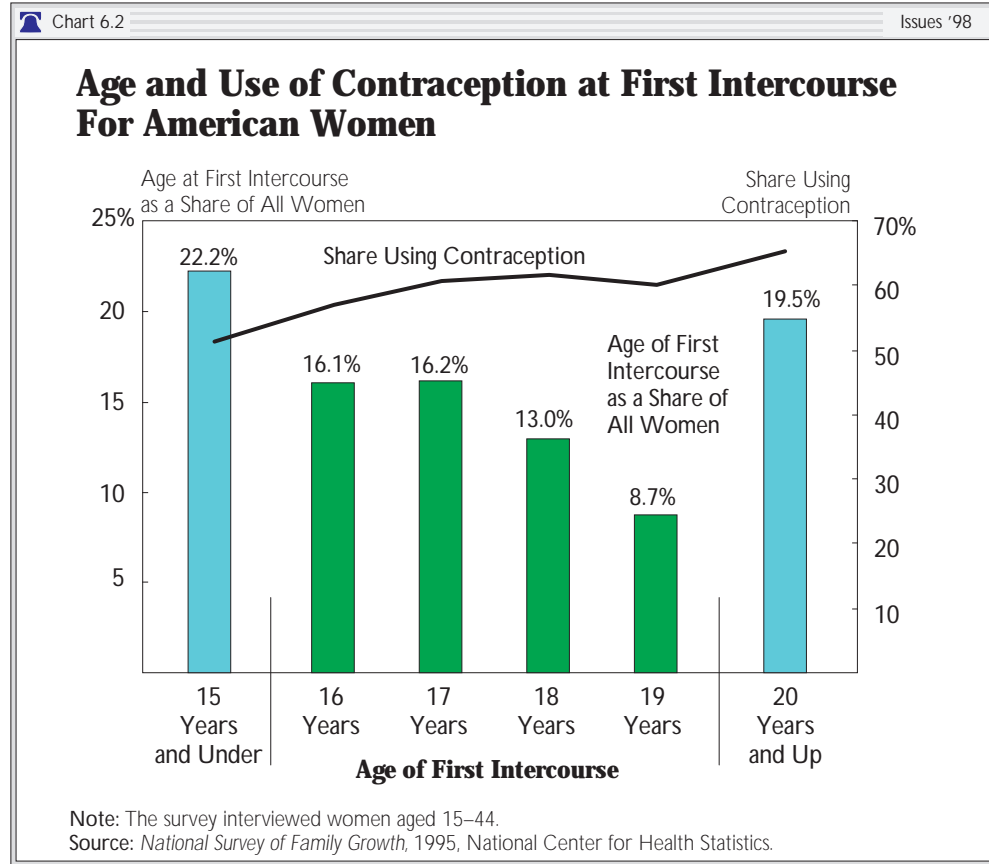
of births in Wisconsin in 1995 and almost 80 percent for blacks in most states surrounding the Great Lakes.³

For all demographic groups in all parts of the country, the trend in out-of-wedlock birth is the same: steadily upward. The changing demographics in Chart 6.1 are propelled by changes in three factors:

1. A decline in the portion of women of childbearing age who are married;
2. An increase in the birth or fertility rate among non-married women; and
3. A decline in the birth or fertility rate among married women.

Earlier Sexual Intercourse Outside of Marriage

As Chart 6.2 indicates, the increase in the birth rate among non-married women is propelled by the high levels of early sexual intercourse and the use of contraception among teenagers—even very young teenagers—in America.

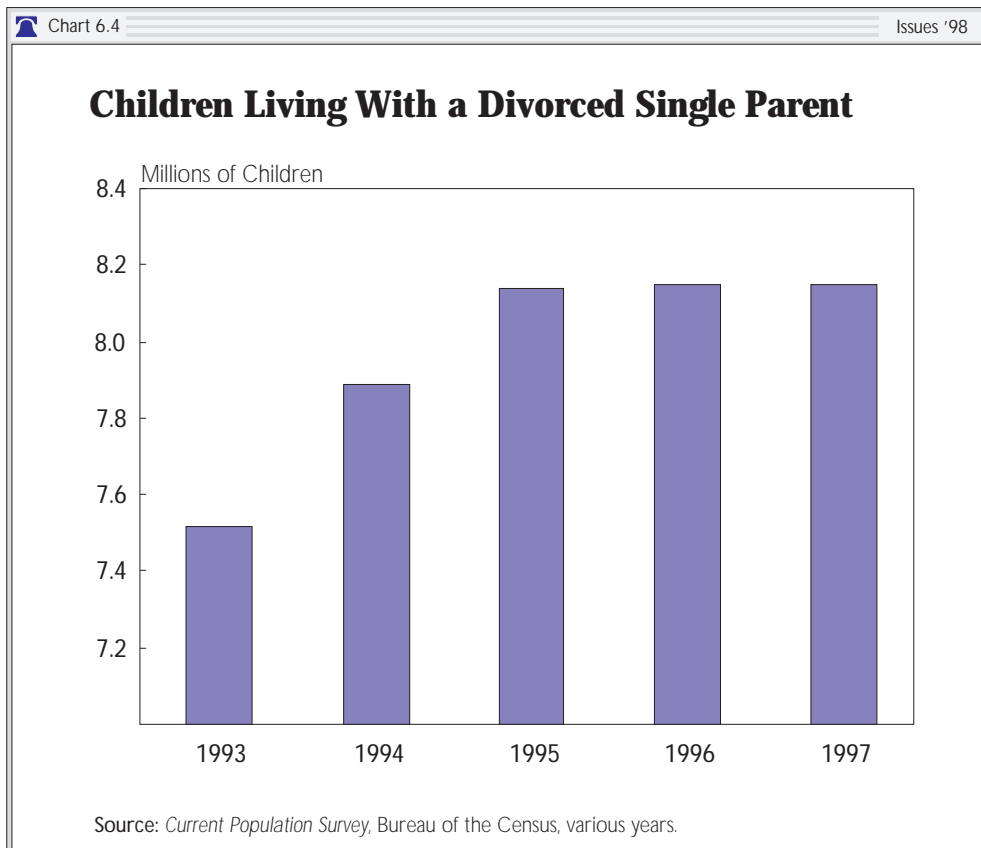
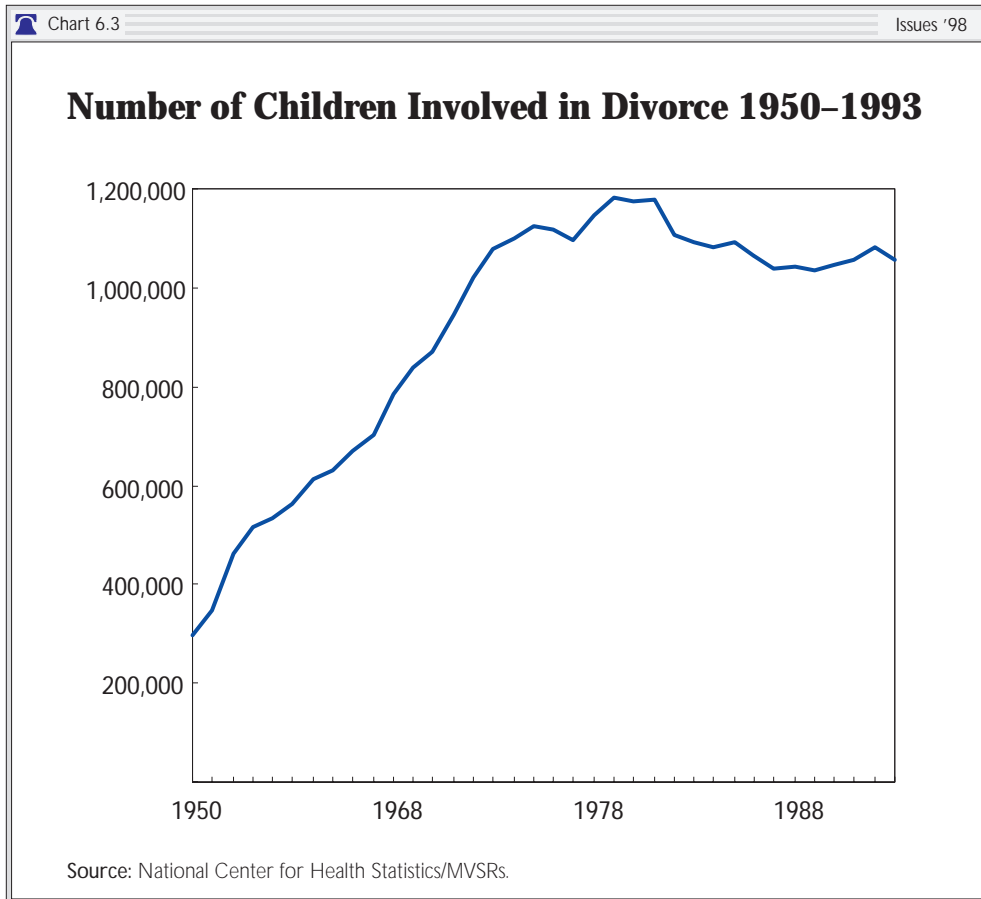


Rising Rates of Divorce

Divorce is the second major cause of single-parent families, and Americans divorce at the highest rate among all nations of the world.⁴ The number of children affected now seems to have leveled off at just over one million children per year. Though divorce reached its highest rate in 1978 (see Chart 6.3) and has dropped only slightly since then, the number of children living with single divorced parents continues to rise; in 1997, the number was 8.1 percent, up from 7.5 percent in 1993.⁵

Notes:

3. National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Report of Final Natality Statistics*, 1995, Vol. 45, No. 11 (June 10, 1997), and earlier editions.
4. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, *Children's Well Being: An International Comparison*, 1990, pp. 8, 9, 35.
5. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, *Current Population Survey*, 1993, 1997.



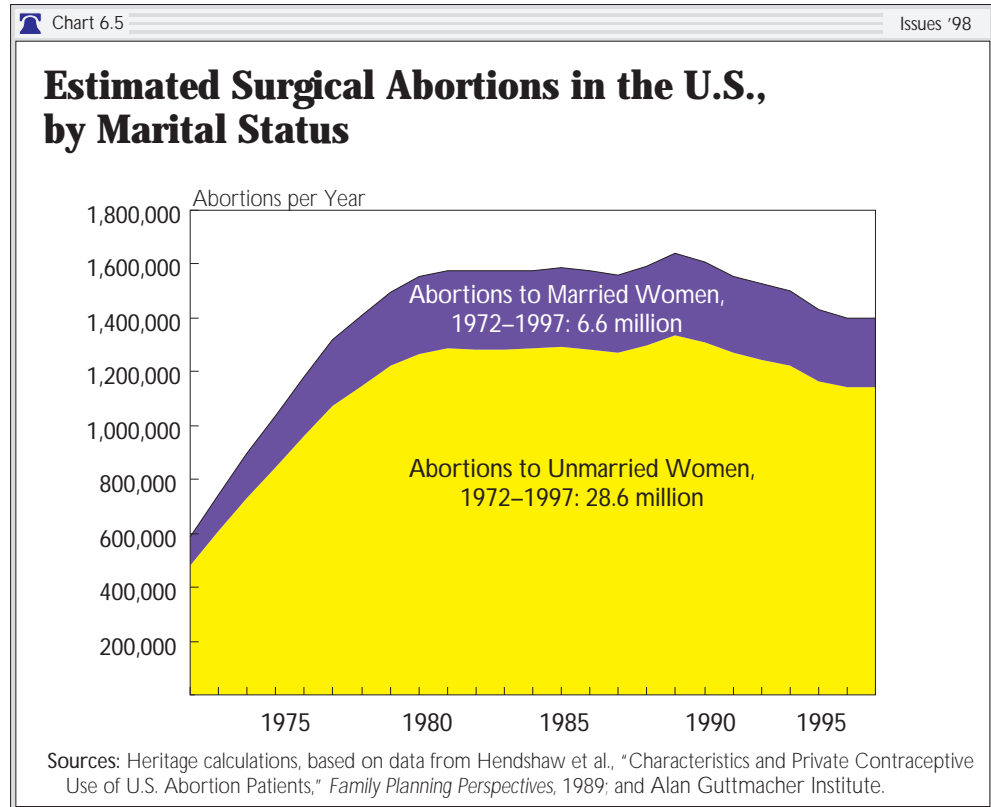
Abortions at Unacceptable Levels

Abortion is a sign of serious dysfunction in the sexual practices of the nation. So far, however, there has been only one large sample survey conducted to give a reliable snapshot of the rates of abortion within and outside of marriage. As reported in 1989 by the Alan Guttmacher Institute:⁶

- In 1988, women who were never married accounted for 63.3 percent of abortions; divorced women, 11.2 percent; women who were separated from their husbands, 6.4 percent; and married women whose husbands lived with them, 18.5 percent.

As the best approximation of abortion available from the research community, these same rates applied to the incidence of abortion since 1973 paint a grave picture of the number of surgical abortions of children:

- Of the 35.2 million surgical abortions of children performed since 1972, approximately 28.6 million (or 81 percent) occurred to women and teenagers who were committed neither to the child they had created nor to a spouse. (See Chart 6.5.)



If policymakers and social activists seriously wish to bring about a reduction in the number of abortions today, they must focus on ways to reduce sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Efforts to provide contraceptives to children have not worked, as the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy asserts.⁷ To change the deplorable statistics cited above, the country must experience a cultural shift. Government agencies, policymakers, community leaders, teachers, religious leaders, actors, sports personalities, and parents will have to join their voices in support of sex after marriage. As effective teachers, the family, churches, and schools need to be encouraged to promote abstinence. Government action alone cannot deliver the cultural shift, though it certainly can help or hinder it. Of all the institutions that should lead in this effort, it is the churches and synagogues that must be up front, for that is their role.

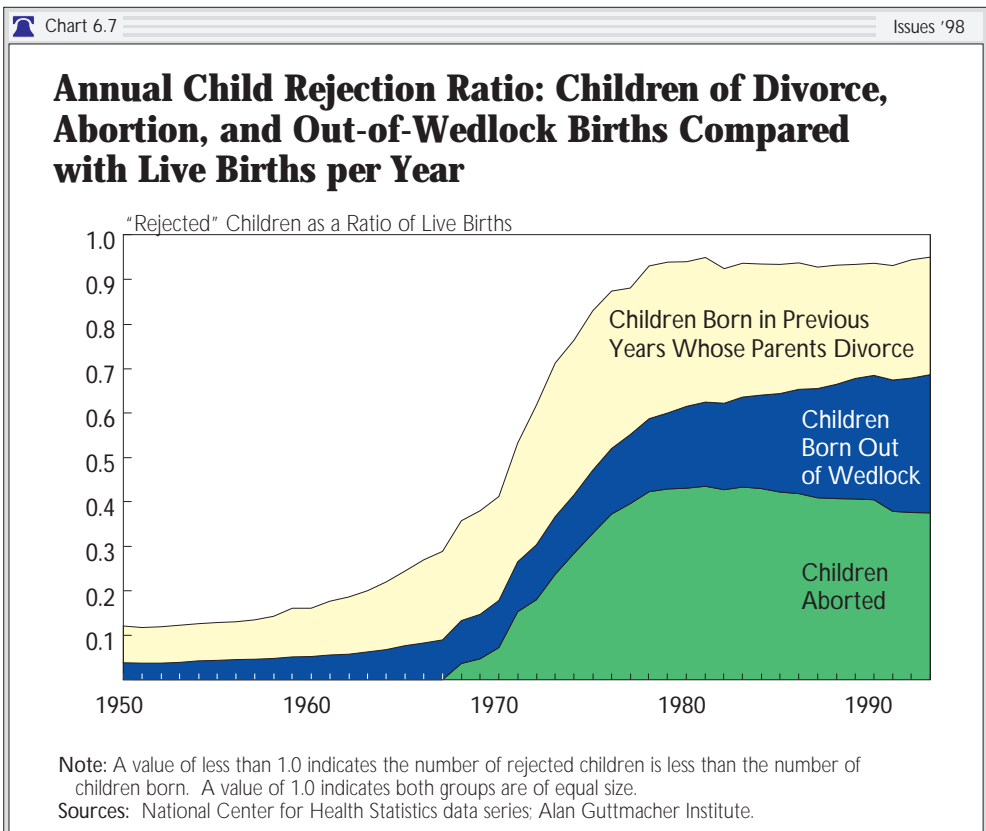
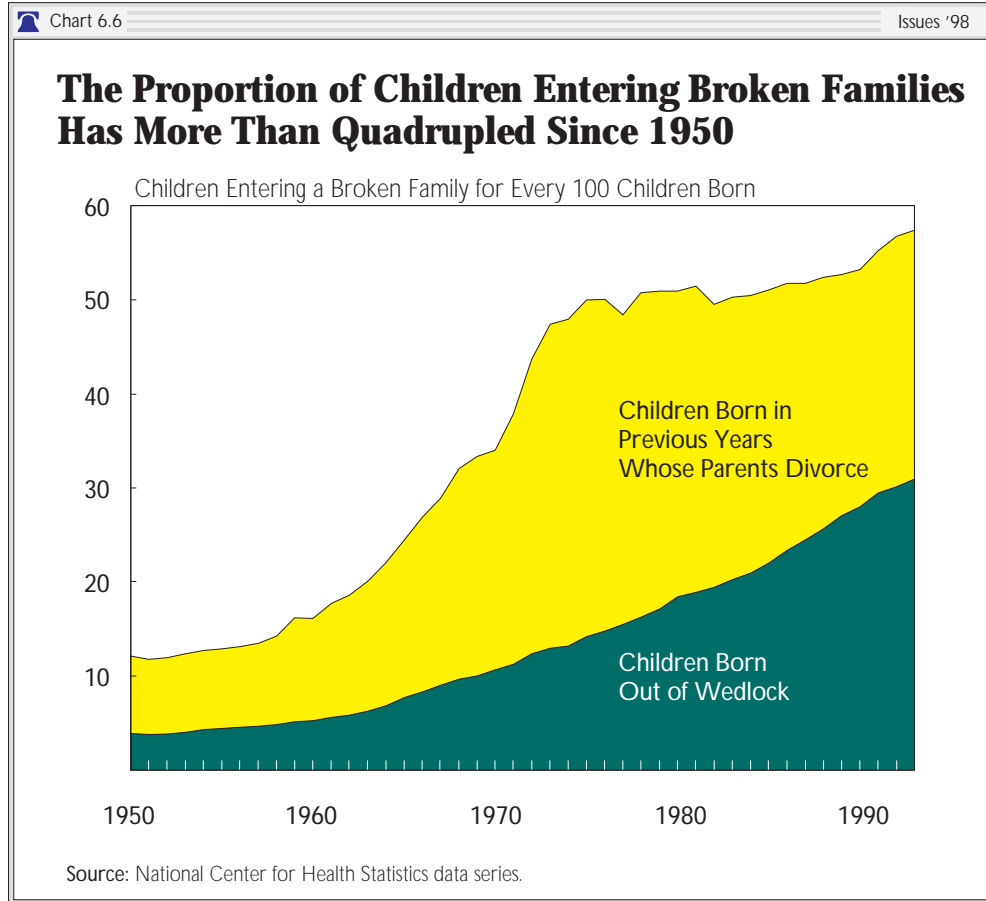
Notes:

6. Stanley K. Henshaw et al., "Characteristics and Private Contraceptive Use of U.S. Abortion Patients," *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (July/August 1989), p. 162.
7. Douglas Kirby, "No Easy Answer: Research Findings on Program to Reduce Teen Pregnancy," National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Washington, D.C., 1997.

The Rising U.S. "Rejection Ratio"

Combining the demographic statistics for out-of-wedlock births, divorce, and early sexual intercourse provides a disturbing picture of the fractured American family. As Chart 6.6 shows, the proportion of children who are being denied a nurturing and full family life by their parents is increasing. The ratio of children who suffer from such rejection has risen dramatically: from 12 out of every 100 children born in 1950 to over 58 for every 100 children born in 1992.

Sadly, it is possible to conclude that parents themselves have sharply diminished the strength of their families. In broken families, beneath the rejection of a child lies a fundamental rejection by the child's parents of each other. As a result, more and more Americans today are part of second, third, and even fourth generation broken families whose fathers



and mothers, having rejected their commitment to each other, are now alienated from each other. This alienation weakens both their children's ability to value commitment to the family and (even more so) their ability to commit themselves to others. And when the rates of abortion—the ultimate rejection of a child—are added to this equation, the picture becomes even more stark.

Family Time Famine

The amount of conversation and the level of interaction between parents and children has an enormous impact on a child's development. Even in intact families, however, children suffer from a lack of intimate time with their parents. One of the sad consequences of the breakdown of society today is that, to pay the bills or fulfill their higher expectations for material comforts, more mothers work outside the home. This fact, coupled with the numbers of single-parent families and the rising rate of divorce, means there has been a tragic reduction in "family time."

Adequate time with parents is critical for the development of every child, especially for self-esteem and confidence. The reduction of time between parents and children is cause for grave concern. It attenuates the most important relationship to a child and correspondingly deprives him of the strength he derives from his parents. As Harvard University child psychiatrist Robert Coles puts it, "The frenzied need of children to have possessions isn't only a function of the ads they see on TV. It's a function of their hunger for what they aren't getting—their parents' time."⁸

- By 1990, parents were, on average, available 10 hours less per week to their children than

they were in 1980 and 40 percent less than they were in 1965.⁹

- In a Massachusetts Mutual poll, 33 percent of parents said they did not spend enough time with their preschool children and 46 percent said they did not spend enough time with their teenagers.¹⁰
- A 1990 *Los Angeles Times* poll found that 57 percent of all fathers and 55 percent of all mothers felt guilty about spending too little time with their children. The poll also found that 73 percent of all married couples would have one parent stay home full-time with the children "if money were not an issue."¹¹
- A 1990 Yankelovich poll found that 57 percent of mothers would give up work indefinitely if they no longer needed the money.¹²
- Reflecting the concern about mothers' absence, a 1998 poll by Wirthlin Worldwide found that 86 percent of mothers believe their children would do best if they were cared for by their mothers rather than by day care providers. Similarly an increasing number of parents think too many children are being raised in child care.¹³

There are many side effects. For instance, one of the by-products of this attenuation of attention to children is juvenile delinquency. Dr. James Allen Fox, Dean of the College of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University in Boston, stated at a 1995 congressional hearing on juvenile delinquency that:

I think it's a matter of supervision...one of the important elements that we are

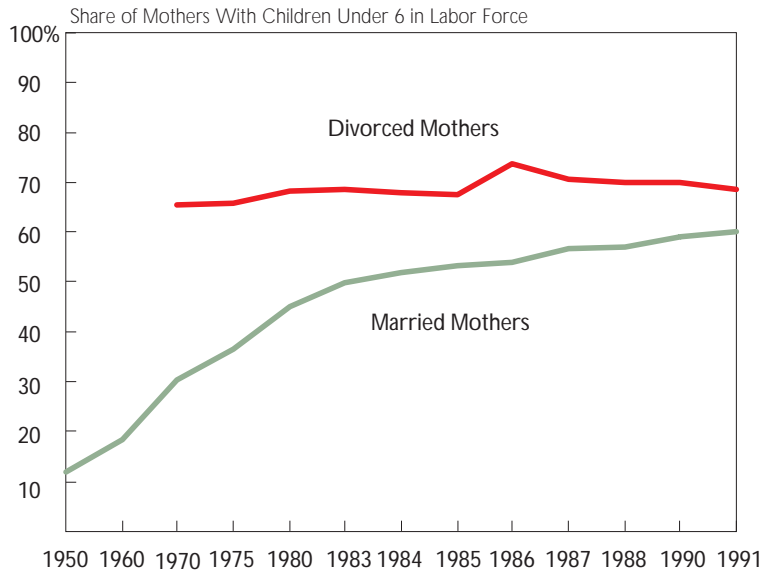
Notes:

8. Quoted by William R. Mattox, Jr., "The Parent Trap," *Policy Review*, No. 55 (Winter 1991), p. 10.
9. From research on personal time diaries by sociologist John Robinson of the University of Maryland. See Mattox, "The Parent Trap," pp. 6–13.
10. Family Research Council, "Family Time: What Americans Want," *In Focus*, December 1995.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. Family Research Council, "Americans Believe Mom Is Best Child Care Provider," *In Focus*, No. 1F98B2CC, 1998.

Chart 6.8

Issues '98

Working Mothers Absent from Their Under-6-Year-Old Children

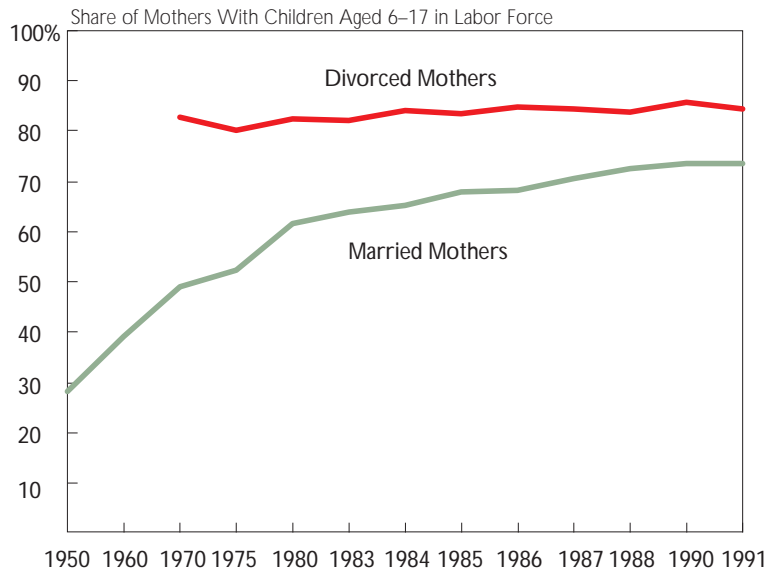


Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, various reports; *Vital Statistics of the United States*, various years; Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States to 1975*, Current Population Series P-20, *Household and Family Characteristics No. 349*; and *Marital Status and Living Arrangements*, No. 468.

Chart 6.9

Issues '98

Working Mothers Absent from Their 6 to 17-Year-Old Children



Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, various reports; *Vital Statistics of the United States*, various years; Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States to 1975*, Current Population Series P-20, *Household and Family Characteristics No. 349*; and *Marital Status and Living Arrangements*, No. 468.

not talking about.... For example at this point 57% of the children in this country do not have full time parental supervision.... Almost 45% of the juvenile violent crimes occur between 3:00 in the afternoon and dinnertime. [They] are unsupervised in the neighborhood.¹⁴

One of the biggest factors driving the dearth of family time is the growing absence of mothers. (See Charts 6.8 and 6.9.)

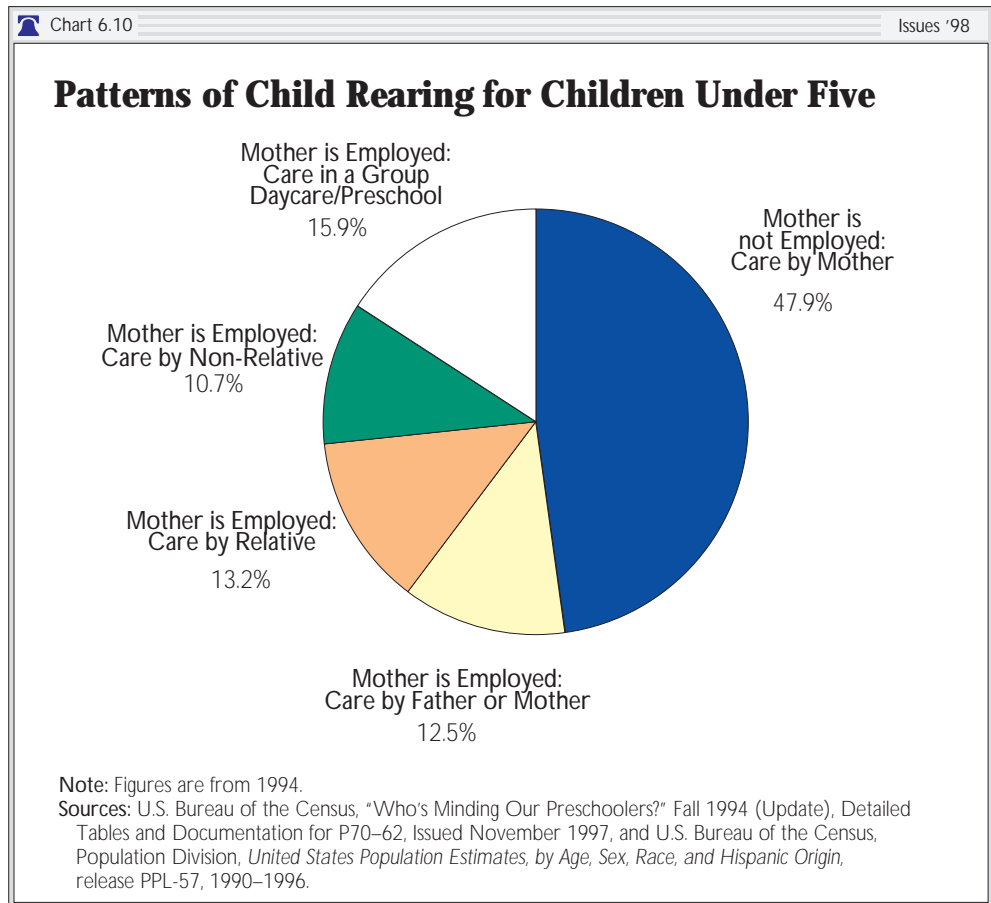
Day Care Not the Answer

When mothers are away from their infant children more than 20 hours each week, the effect is an increase in the risk of attenuation of early infant attachment, which in turn further increases the risk that the child will be unable to form close and satisfying intimate relationships in the teen years and adulthood.¹⁵ Day care is no substitute for time with mother.

Most Americans understand the importance a mother plays in a child's development. For example, polls commissioned by the Family Research Council and conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide found that Americans view

care by a child's own mother as the single most desirable form of child care. Furthermore, they consider care by a government-run day-care center as the least desirable. According to these polls, parents ranked the different options as follows, from most desirable to least desirable:

1. Care by a child's own mother.
2. Care by the child's own grandmother or other family member.
3. Care by the child's own parents who work split shifts.
4. Care by a church-run center.
5. Care by a trusted neighbor or family friend.



Notes:

14. Dr. James Allen Fox, testimony at hearing on juvenile drug use, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, December 20, 1995.
15. "Babies who start day care early in life and spend more than 20 hours per week in non-parental care develop avoidant attachments somewhat more often than other babies do." From Virginia Colin, *Infant Attachment: What We Know: A Literature Review*, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C., April 1991, p. 81.

6. Care by a day care provider in the home.
7. Care by a nanny or *au pair*.
8. Care by a commercial day-care center.
9. Care by a government-run day-care center.¹⁶

GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT WEAKEN FAMILIES

Rising Taxes

All families with children have suffered from an enormous increase in taxes over the past 50 years. For example:

- In 1948, the average family of four paid 3 percent of their annual income to the federal government in direct taxes; by 1997, the tax burden had risen to 24.7 percent. When state, local, and indirect taxes are included, the total tax bite rose to an average of 38 percent in 1997.
- As David Hartman, president of the Institute for Budget and Tax Limitation, has observed, “While social welfare expenditures of government mushroomed from 1970 to 1993, median after tax income of married families in constant dollars failed to grow at all, despite a 38% growth in productivity and a 50% increase in hours worked by wives. The whole benefit of the increase in the U.S. economy went to government and its beneficiaries....”¹⁷

Obtaining adequate after-tax family income has become disproportionately more difficult for married parents with children. Consequently, family time has suffered as work outside the home becomes more common for mothers of school-age children.

Notes:

16. Family Research Council, “Americans Believe Mom Is Best.”
17. David Hartman, “Ending the Marriage Penalty: Approaches to Family-Supportive Tax Reform,” Institute for Budget and Tax Limitation, Austin, Texas, February 4, 1998.
18. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Families, “AFDC FlashReports,” September 1995.
19. Patrick F. Fagan, “Rising Illegitimacy: America’s Social Catastrophe,” Heritage Foundation *F.Y.I.* No. 19/94, June 29, 1994.

Welfare and Marriage Among the Poor

As Chapter 7 will show, the welfare system has had damaging effects on the American family. Some 92 percent of children on welfare today are from broken families.¹⁸ Policies in the federal welfare program deliberately weaken the family life of the poor by making it prohibitive for fathers to stay in the home. This weakening of the family through welfare continues today in Title X family planning programs. Title X could be called the federal government’s domestic population control program: It is directed mainly at the poor, and while its effects on birth rates among the poor are not clear, it has been accompanied by a severe drop in the rate of marriage among the poor. Today, 75 percent of children in families with incomes below \$15,000 per year live in single-parent homes.

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Effects of Marriage Breakdown on Child Development

Children pay a high price for their parents’ inability to commit to each other. Among the principal effects are:¹⁹

- Lower newborn health and increased risk of early infant death;
- Retarded cognitive and verbal development;
- Lowered educational achievement;
- Lowered levels of job attainment;
- Increased behavioral problems;
- Lowered ability to control impulses;
- Warped social development;
- Increased dependency on welfare;

- Increased exposure to crime; and
- Increased risk of being physically or sexually abused.²⁰

Effects of Marriage Breakdown on Adults

Adults also suffer from the breakup of their marriages.²¹ Some of the effects include:

- **Shorter life expectancies.** Married people have consistently lower death rates from disease, suicide, and accident mortality.²² The death rate among nonsmoking divorced men is almost the same as it is for men who smoke at least two packs of cigarettes a day. Overall, the premature death rate is four times higher among divorced white men than among their married counterparts.²³
- **Poorer physical health.** Divorced and separated people experience acute conditions such as infectious and parasitic diseases, respiratory illnesses, digestive disorders, and severe injuries significantly more frequently than other marital status groups.²⁴
- **Poorer psychological health.** The divorced suffer from higher levels of stress and exhibit more psychiatric disorders like depression, which in turn have a profound impact on their physical well-being, including depressed immunological capacities.²⁵
- **Lower economic well-being.** Only women who are very poor and go on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), or who work longer hours after they are divorced than they did before they were divorced, experience

an increase in income after divorce.²⁶ The poverty rate for black female-headed families is five times the rate for married black Americans, at 53.9 percent.²⁷ By contrast, married black Americans are steadily moving above the poverty level; the poverty rate among married blacks, in 1994 figures, is at 11.4 percent and is closing in on the 8.3 percent rate found among white married Americans.

Broken Families and the Pathway to Crime

The breakdown of the family, added to the breakdown of the community, has a long-term effect on crime. The risk that a child will become a criminal increases as the child experiences the following:²⁸

1. **In early childhood,** the child experiences parental neglect or abandonment in different combinations of fatherlessness, the absence of a mother's love, parental fighting and domestic violence, lack of parental supervision and discipline, outright rejection, parental abuse and neglect, or parents who commit crimes.
2. **In the mid-childhood years,** the child is drawn to embryonic gangs of young aggressive children who are rejected by their peers and who seek out other alienated children; they fail in school, lose interest in education, and begin to run wild.
3. **In the early teenage years,** the embryonic gang of grade school changes into a gang of tough, exploitative teenagers who gradually become better at committing crimes.

Notes:

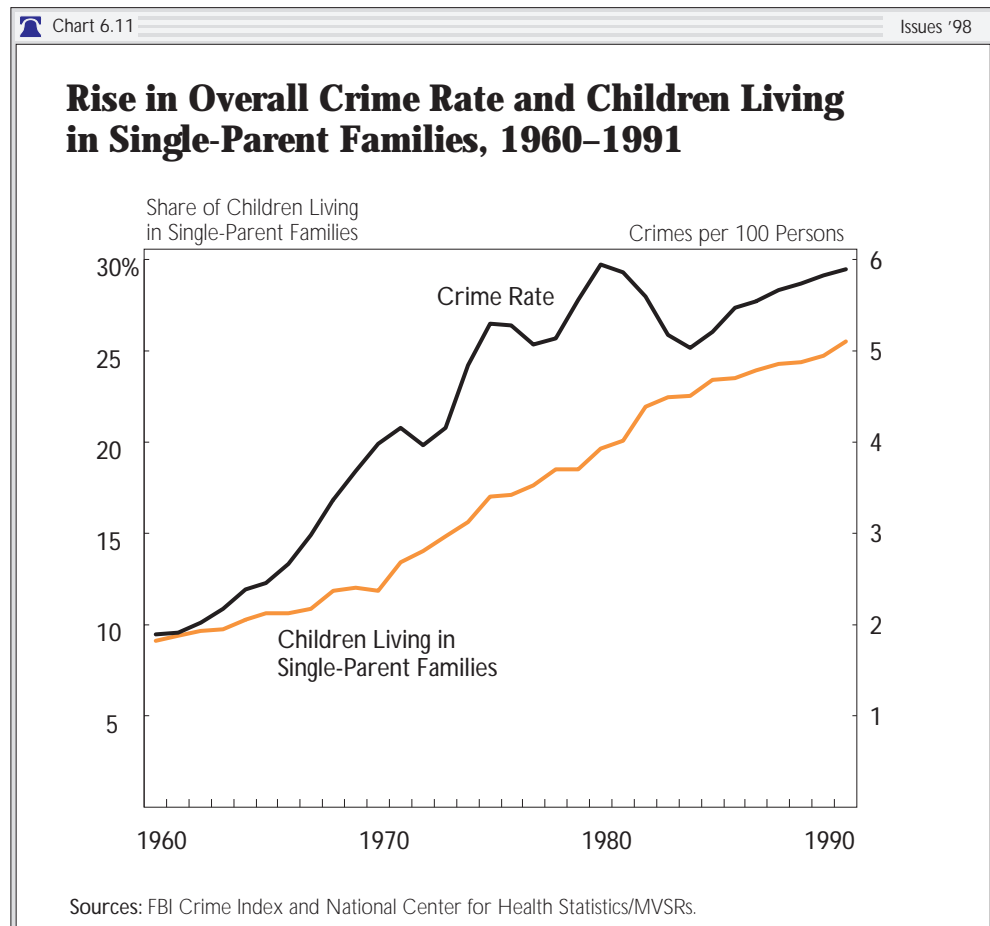
20. Patrick F. Fagan, "The Child Abuse Crisis: The Disintegration of Marriage, Family, and the American Community," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* No. 1115, June 3, 1997, pp. 9, 10.
21. Summarized from an overview of the divorce literature in Larson *et al.*, "The Costly Consequences of Divorce."
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 43–49.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–61.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 62–70.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–75.
27. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, "Income, Poverty, and Valuation of Noncash Benefits: 1994," No. P60189, Table B7.
28. Patrick F. Fagan, "The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family and Community," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* No. 1026, March 17, 1995.

4. **In the mid-teenage years,** violence emerges as a way of life within the gang as the teenagers become more expert and learn how to commit crimes without getting caught.

5. **In the late teenage years and early adulthood,** the former child—now a criminal—fathers his own child, stays with the mother for a while, but eventually abandons her and their child; the mother's background is similar to the young father's, and the child is raised not knowing any other existence.

The greater the number of single-parent families, the more likely it is that increasing numbers of children will experience this pathway to crime. (See Chart 6.11.)

- Overall, a 10 percent increase in illegitimacy is associated with a 17 percent increase in violent teenage crime. With the continued rise in illegitimacy, more and more violent teenage criminals will be walking America's streets in the future. And with the appearance of these criminals, Americans will be forced to give up more and more of their everyday freedom as their level of fear rises. In addition, they will be forced to pay for the growing social and economic costs of this explosion in juvenile delinquency and crime.



Broken Families and Child Abuse

Rising rates of serious child abuse follow the rising rates of marriage breakdown. Although national surveys on the relationship between marriage, cohabitation, and child abuse have not been conducted in the United States, serious studies in Britain indicate a startling relationship. Chart 6.12 illustrates that, compared with children in traditional intact, married families, children are:²⁹

- **Six times** more likely to be abused in blended (divorced and remarried) families;
- **Fourteen times** more likely to be abused in single mother/living alone families;

Notes:

29. Robert Whelan, "Broken Homes and Battered Children: A Study of the Relationship Between Child Abuse and Family Type," Family Education Trust, Oxford, United Kingdom, 1994.

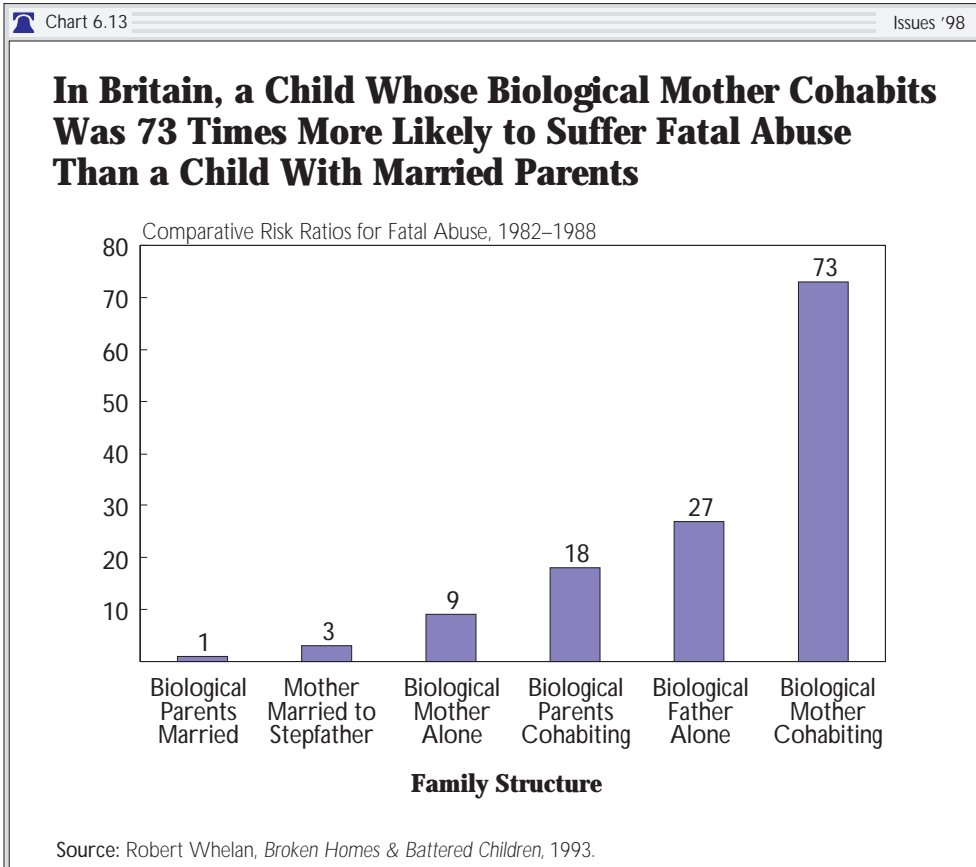
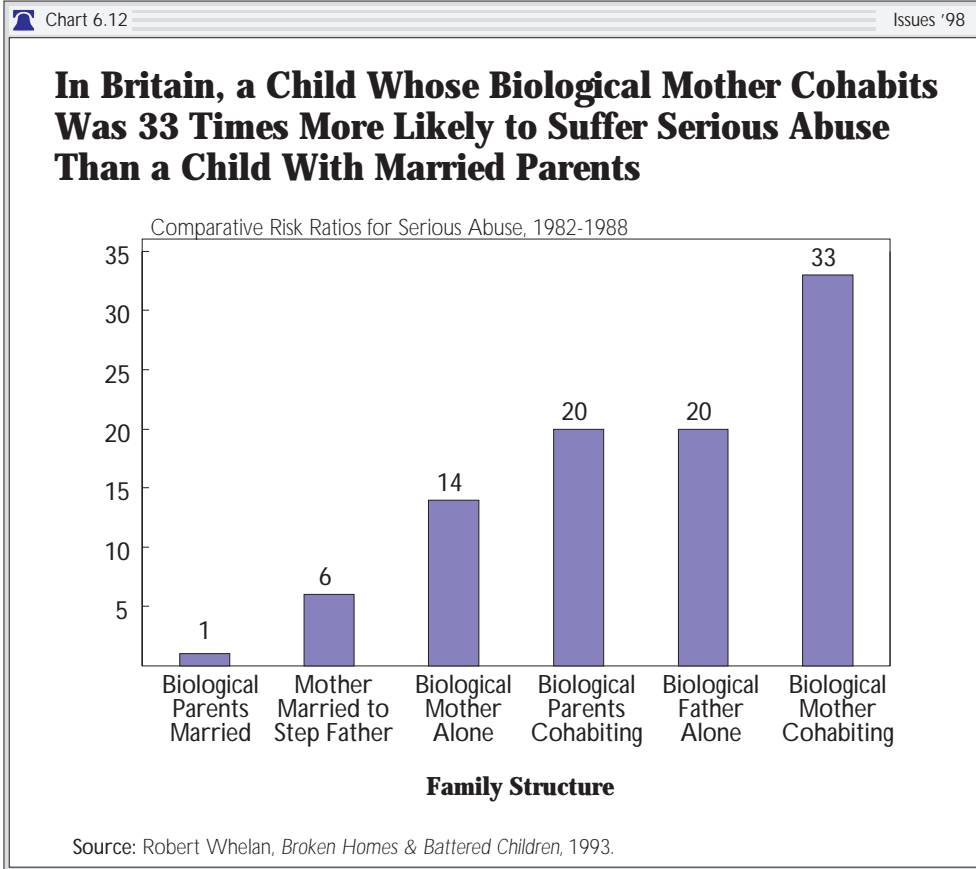
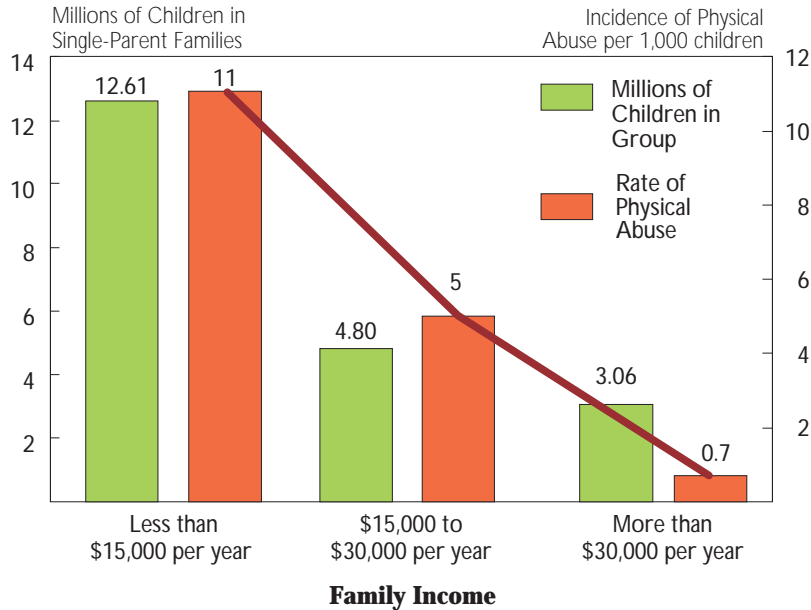


Chart 6.14

Issues '98

The Relationship Between Physical Abuse and Income for Single-Parent Families

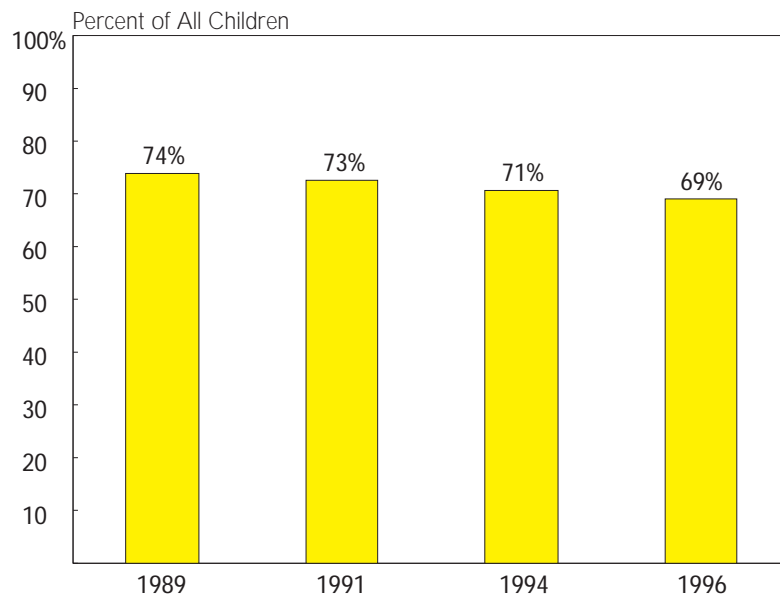


Sources: *The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, September 1996; *Current Population Survey*, Bureau of the Census.

Chart 6.15

Issues '98

Percent of U.S. Children Living in Married Families



Source: *Current Population Survey*, Bureau of the Census, various years.

- **Twenty times** more likely to be abused in families where the natural parents cohabit; and
- **Thirty-three times** more likely to be abused when the mother cohabits with a boyfriend.

In the United States, the absence of marriage is most pronounced in the lower income groups. Among the poor, marriage is virtually disappearing. Of the 20 million children living with single parents, 12.6 million live in the poorest families. Sadly, the rates of abuse follow the absence of marriage. The pattern is even more pronounced if one looks at the risk of fatal child abuse. (See Charts 6.13 and 6.14.)

Effects of Marriage Breakdown on the Community

When the number of single-parent families in a community reaches about 30 percent, the community begins to break down and the rate of crime begins to soar. The community changes from a supportive environment to one that jeopardizes the development of children.

The virtual extinction of two-parent families in poor inner-city neighborhoods has contributed greatly to the collapse of those neighborhoods. The absence of fathers means there is no adult male to give financial support, a guiding hand, or protection for children. The result is the prevalence of gangs of violent young men, young girls vulnerable to abuse, children having children, and mindless violent crime. A state-by-state analysis indicates that, in general, a 10 percent increase in the percentage of children living in single-parent homes (including divorces) is accompanied by a 17 percent increase in juvenile crime.³⁰

Researchers have noted for some time that violent crime, among both teenagers and adults, is concentrated most heavily in urban neighborhoods that are characterized by a very high proportion of single-parent families.³¹ Researchers

BOOT CAMP FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS WORKS

Straight talking about personal responsibility, physical discipline that reinforces basic life skills, and a caring but hard-as-nails authority figure: Could this be the formula for breaking the cycle of juvenile crime?

Early morning in Fayetteville, North Carolina, former Army Drill Sergeant Roger Redd teaches personal responsibility to young male criminals in the parking lot of the county courthouse. Many are repeat offenders for crimes ranging from breaking and entering to assault with a deadly weapon. He hopes to break the "I'm a victim" mentality. Until that happens, Redd says, he will not be able to shake them from their criminal behavior to keep them out of prison. But that is exactly where most of these young males, aged 16-21, are headed. Says Redd, "Most come to this program because they failed every other method to keep them out of the Department of Corrections. This is the last stop." But at 5:00 a.m. in the morning, three days a week, they are given private lessons on crime and punishment. "By the time you leave here," he tells them, "you should be remorseful for what you've done."

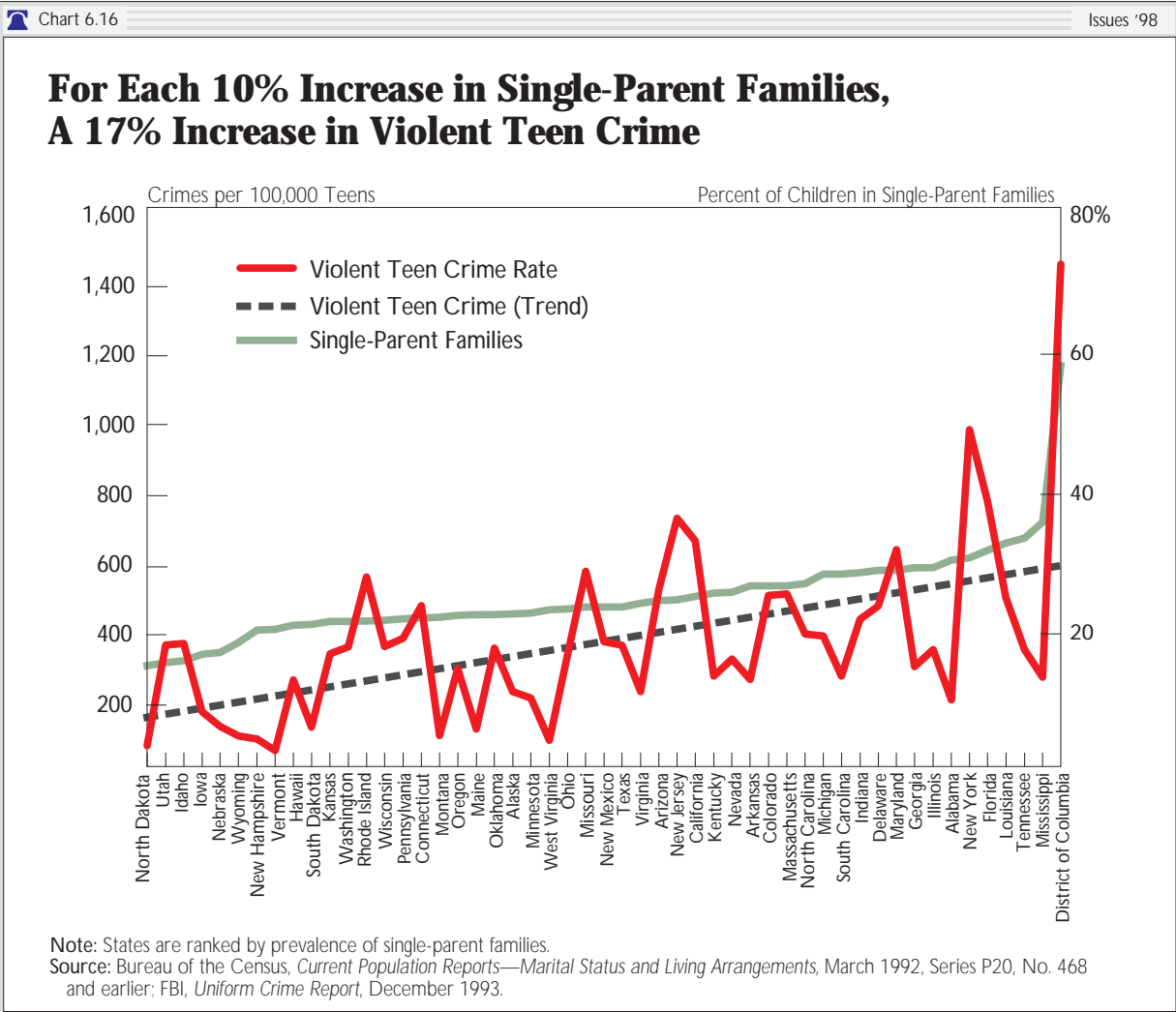
The military-style regimen of the program mixes physical discipline, mental toughness, and common sense counseling; it offers a carrot and a stick: Graduates avoid jail, and the courts might relax their probation requirements. Non-graduates head straight to jail. Redd decides who is fit to graduate—with no second chances, and no appeal. His program is regarded as one of the most successful efforts to steer youthful offenders away from a life of crime. Wesley, a recent graduate who volunteers as a squad leader, was arrested on drug charges but now works as a graphic artist. "It gave me a real hope that I could still make something of myself," he says, "regardless of the past."

Source: Joseph Loconte, "Redd Scare: A Drill Sergeant's Brilliant Assault on Juvenile Crime," *Policy Review*, November/December 1996, pp. 40-43.

Notes:

30. Fagan, "The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime," pp. 9-10.

31. Clifford Robert Shaw, *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1942); cited in Jeffrey Fagan and Sandra Wexler, "Family Origins of Violent Delinquents," *Criminology*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1987), pp. 643-669.



today find that a neighborhood comprised primarily of single-parent families invariably is a chaotic and crime-ridden community³² where gangs assume control.³³ Under such conditions, parental supervision of adolescent and pre-adolescent children is almost impossible.³⁴ Children raised in these neighborhoods are likely to learn, accept,

and use physical violence to satisfy their wants and needs.³⁵

In addition, institutions in poor neighborhoods that once provided help and guidance to those who may have lacked it at home have been crowded out by the burgeoning welfare state. Caring people in the community have been replaced

Notes:

- 32. Douglas Smith and G. Roger Jarjoura, "Social Structure and Criminal Victimization," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 25 (February 1988), pp. 2752; Anne Hill and June O'Neill, *Underclass Behavior in the United States: Measurement and Analysis of Determinants* (New York: City University of New York, Baruch College, March 1990).
- 33. Fagan and Wexler, "Family Origins of Violent Delinquents."
- 34. Albert J. Reis, Jr., "Why Are Communities Important in Understanding Crime?" in Albert J. Reis, Jr., and Michael Tonry, eds., *Communities and Crime* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986), p. 133.
- 35. Elton J. Jackson, Charles Tittle, and M. J. Burke, "Offense Specific Models of Differential Association," paper presented at annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, 1984; cited in Fagan and Wexler, "Family Origins of Violent Delinquents." See also Rodney Stark, "Deviant Places: A Theory of the Ecology of Crime," *Criminology*, Vol. 25 (1987), pp. 893-909.

by entitlement programs that emphasize rights and rules, not community and responsibility. Furthermore, even the best and most expensive of these programs have shown little effect. Effective faith-based solutions to educational and social problems are barred from receiving government funds to carry out their work; and if they do receive support, it is often only after they have given up their religious message.³⁶

DRUG USE ON THE RISE AGAIN

During the Reagan and Bush Administrations, there was a concerted effort to drive down the level of drug use and abuse. These efforts met with significant success. However, since the beginning of the Clinton Administration, this downward trend in drug use has been sharply reversed. (See Chart 6.17.)

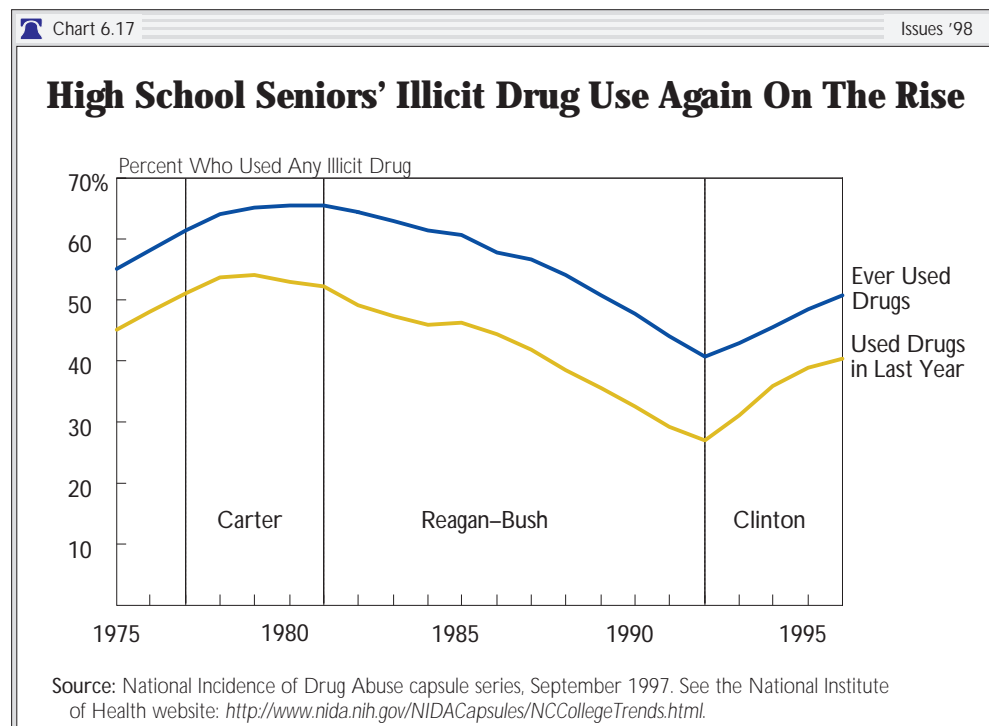
- The number of Americans using illicit drugs plunged from a high of 24.7 million in 1979 to 11.4 million in 1992. The so-called casual use of cocaine fell by 79 percent between 1985 and 1992, while monthly cocaine use fell 55 percent between 1988 and 1992 alone—from 2.9 million to 1.3 million users.

However, illicit drug use in high school once again is rising steadily. Drug use among college

students also shows an upward trend.³⁷ The drug situation is getting worse on all three major indicators among teenagers:³⁸

- Perception of harm or risk has decreased;
- Disapproval of drugs among teenage peers has decreased; and
- Availability of drugs has increased.

This is a grave development, since 12- to 17-year-olds who use marijuana are 85 more times more likely to graduate to cocaine than those who abstain from using marijuana.³⁹ Jim Burke, chair-



man of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, notes that roughly 1 in 13 of those who take drugs become addicts:

In 1962 less than 4 million Americans had ever tried an illegal drug in their lifetime. In 1992, one generation later, 80

Notes:

36. Joseph Loconte, *The Seduction of the Samaritan* (Boston, Mass.: Pioneer Institute, 1997).
37. National Institute for Drug and Alcohol Addiction, NIDA Capsule Series (C-86-06), revised September 1997; available at <http://www.nida.nih.gov/NIDACapsules/NCCollegeTrends.html>.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), testimony at hearing on juvenile drug use, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, December 20, 1995.

million had tried illegal drugs.... Of the 80 million we now have 6 million addicts.... If you go back to 1962 we only had 300,000 addicts. The numbers are very clear: twenty times more triers, twenty times more addicts.... We know what works. Children are just as rational as adults. If they believe that the risk goes up in using drugs, their usage goes down. Social disapproval and perception of risk are the two drivers.⁴⁰

According to Burke, "If you go back to the epidemic before [1978] when we normalized drugs, the average age of trial [first use] in that period was around 16. The average age of trial today is 13...and current marijuana is three to five times stronger."⁴¹ The implications are that in the future, America will see more hard-drug addicts who are younger than ever.

Guns and Drugs in Schools

Because the characteristics of the school a teenager attends rival the characteristics of a teenager's family as indicators of substance abuse risk, tracking what is happening at the school level offers a clearer picture:⁴²

- Nearly as common as smoking is the presence of weapons in secondary schools; 43 percent of teachers report that a student was caught with a knife or gun in school during the past year, and 21 percent of teachers separately report that a student was caught with a gun.
- Almost as common as weapons are drugs. Some 46 percent of high school teachers say their school is not drug free, which means that students keep, sell, or use illegal drugs on school grounds. Of course, teachers may not be fully aware of the extent of drugs in their school; 76 percent of high school students say their school is not drug free.
- Teens are more likely to encounter drugs on school grounds or in their schools than on

their neighborhood streets; 41 percent of high school students have witnessed drug sales at their school, and 25 percent have witnessed drug sales in their neighborhoods.

- Some 25 percent of teachers say students who appear to be drunk or high show up in their classes monthly or more frequently.
- Some 41 percent of middle school teachers and 51 percent of principals and high school teachers think a student can use marijuana every weekend and still do well in school.
- High school students estimate that, on average, 50 percent of their classmates are using drugs at least once a month. In contrast, high school teachers estimate that only 24 percent of their students are using drugs at least monthly, and principals estimate only 10 percent.
- Some 23 percent of teachers are less than fully confident that their school administration would back them up if they reported a student suspected of drinking or using drugs. And 56 percent of principals are less than fully confident that the parents of a student suspected of drinking or using drugs in school would back them if they disciplined that student.

Moreover, by the time teenagers reach the age of 17:

- 72 percent know someone who uses acid, cocaine, or heroin;
- 65 percent can buy marijuana within a day;
- 51 percent have personally seen drugs sold on their school grounds;
- 60 percent have attended a party in the last six months where marijuana was used; and
- 60 percent attend schools where students drink on school grounds.

Notes:

40. Jim Burke, testimony at hearing on juvenile drug use, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, December 20, 1995.
41. *Ibid.*
42. QEV Analytics, "The 1997 Casa Survey of Principals, Teachers, Parents, and Teenagers," at www.qev.com.

AMERICA'S STRENGTHS AS A NATION

The data on the effects of the breakdown of the family illustrate where the source of strong individuals, healthy families, and stable communities is most frequently to be found: in marriage and in religious worship—in other words, in close relationships with those with whom we live and with the Creator.

Marriage

Marriage, with all that makes it possible, has extraordinary relevance to such issues as crime, welfare dependency, joblessness, educational failure, drug addiction, and health. For instance, the differences in crime rates among blacks and whites virtually disappear when marriage is factored into the studies. Among married families, whether black or white, the crime rate is similar, and it is low. Among broken families, whether black or white, the crime rate is similar, but it is high.⁴³

Adoption

A close look at adoption also illustrates the benefits—indeed, the powerful effects—that an intact two-parent family has on children, even children who once were neglected, and sometimes seriously so. In the absence of an adopting family, children show a high incidence of the effects associated with broken family life. Adopted children, on the other hand, do as well as or better than the biological children of intact married parents.⁴⁴

- Adopted children score higher than even their middle-class, two-parent counterparts on indicators of school performance, social competency, optimism, and volunteerism.⁴⁵
- Adopted adolescents generally are less depressed than children of single parents and less involved in alcohol abuse, vandalism, group fighting, police trouble, weapon use, and theft.⁴⁶
- Adopted children have higher self-esteem, confidence in their own judgment, self-direction, positive views of others, and feelings of security within their families.⁴⁷
- On health measures, adopted children and intact families share similarly high scores, and both groups score significantly higher than do children who are raised by single parents.⁴⁸
- Adopted children do well in school. In 1988, only 7 percent of children adopted in infancy repeated a grade. By contrast, 33 percent of children whose mothers had never married repeated a grade.⁴⁹
- Adoptive parents are also less likely to divorce.⁵⁰

Religious Practice

Although marriage is critical to the health of the family and the nation, regular worship of God is critical to the health of marriage and has many other desirable outcomes. According to the professional literature, there is ample evidence that:⁵¹

Notes:

43. Fagan, "Rising Illegitimacy," pp. 7-8.
44. Peter L. Benson, Anu R. Shorma, and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, "Growing Up Adopted—A Portrait of Adolescents and Their Families," Search Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 1994.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. Kathleen S. Marquis and Richard A. Detweiler, "Does Adoption Mean Different? An Attributional Analysis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1985), pp. 1054-1066.
48. Nicholas Zill, "Behavior and Learning Problems Among Adopted Children: Findings from a U.S. National Survey of Child Health," Child Trends, Inc., Washington, D.C.; paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, April 27, 1985.
49. *Ibid.*
50. "Unmarried Parents Today," National Committee for Adoption, Washington, D.C., June 25, 1985.
51. Patrick F. Fagan: "Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1064, January 25, 1996.

The strength of the family unit is intertwined with the practice of religion. Churchgoers are more likely to be married, less likely to be divorced or single, and more likely to manifest high levels of satisfaction in marriage.

- Church attendance is the most important predictor of marital stability and happiness.
- The regular practice of religion is instrumental in helping poor persons move out of poverty. Regular church attendance helps young people in particular to escape the poverty of inner-city life.
- Religious beliefs and practices contribute substantially to the formation of personal moral criteria and sound moral judgment.
- Regular religious practice generally inoculates individuals against a host of social problems, including suicide, drug abuse, out-of-wedlock births, crime, and divorce.
- Regular religious practice has powerful mental health benefits, including lower rates of depression (a modern epidemic), more self-esteem, and greater family and marital happiness.
- Religious beliefs and practices are a major source of strength during recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction, and marital breakdown.
- Regular practice of religion is good for personal physical health. It is positively associated with longevity, recovery from illness, and lower incidence of serious diseases.

Summing up the findings, Professor Allan Bergin, a research psychologist who was honored by the American Psychological Association with its top award in 1990, said in accepting the award that “Some religious influences have a modest impact whereas another portion seem like the mental equivalent of nuclear energy.”⁵²

FAITH-BASED HELP FOR WELFARE RECIPIENTS

Community support centered around religious or faith-based groups has long helped the needy. The motivation for such commitment is derived from Scripture; people are moved to help others, and as a by-product the community is restored. The types of support vary as much as the people who are helping. For example:

- In Anne Arundel County, Maryland, the Community-Directed Assistance Program (C-DAP) connects welfare families with teams of church volunteers. The catalyst: Participating churches receive a year’s worth of the recipients’ AFDC benefits in a lump sum. With that money, the volunteers work closely for six months with the welfare families to help them find employment and live independently. Volunteers spend an average of 400 hours with their families over the six-month period—clearly more time than government social workers would be allowed to devote. The result: To date, two-thirds of C-DAP participants have left the welfare rolls.
- Charles Ballard, a convicted criminal who had fathered a child out of wedlock, founded the National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood, which helped about 2,000 absentee fathers in the mid-1980s find their way back to their children. Ballard credits his conversion to Christianity as his motivation.
- Freddie Garcia, a reformed heroin addict, has built an impressive one-by-one ministry over the past 30 years to serve drug addicts and prostitutes. His faith-based ministry is credited with turning about 70 percent of addicts into productive citizens, and with building vibrant congregations of faith that in turn reach out to help others.

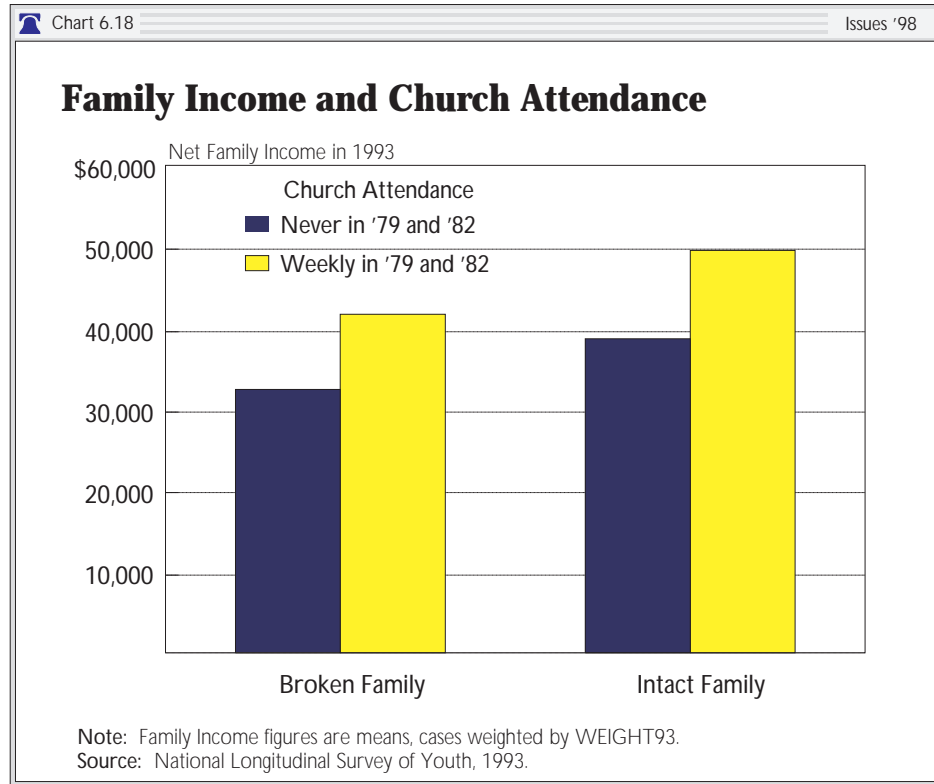
Notes:

52. Allen E. Bergin, “Values and Religious Issues in Psychotherapy and Mental Health,” *The American Psychologist*, Vol. 46 (1991), pp. 394-403.

One of the classic sociological research projects of the century studied the lives of inhabitants of a typical American town, "Middletown," first in the 1920s and for a third time in the 1980s. In 1985, based on their latest round of follow-up research, Howard Bahr and Bruce Chadwick, professors of sociology at Brigham Young University, concluded that:

There is a relationship between family solidarity—family health if you will—and church affiliation and activity. Middletown [church-going] members were more likely to be married, remain married and to be highly satisfied with their marriages and to have more children.... The great divide between marriage status, marriage satisfaction and family size is...between those who identify with a church or denomination and those who do not.⁵³

The strong intergenerational transmission of religious affiliation and practice found in the Middletown studies has been replicated by Arland Thornton of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. Professor Thornton con-



cluded in 1989 that "data indicate a strong intergenerational transmission of religious involvement. Attendance at religious services is also very stable within generations across time."⁵⁴

The combined effects of marriage and worship on income levels in a national sample of young adults tracked for 20 years by the U.S. Department of Labor is stunning. There is a 50 percent difference between the lowest and highest groups—between those who grew up in a broken, non-worshipping family and those who grew up in an intact, regularly worshipping family. (See Chart 6.18.)

Notes:

53. Howard M. Bahr and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Religion and Family in Middletown, USA," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 47 (May 1985), pp. 407-414.
54. Arland Thornton and Donald Camburn, "Religious Participation and Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Attitudes," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 51 (August 1989), pp. 641-653.

THE RECORD

THE ADMINISTRATION

Although the Clinton Administration talks extensively about its commitment to the family, its actions show a very different philosophy.

- **Rescinding the Executive Order on the family.**⁵⁵ President Clinton has emphasized repeatedly his desire to improve the status of America's children. However, he quietly rescinded an executive order on the family issued by President Ronald Reagan that protected families from Washington bureaucrats for almost a decade. Buried in Clinton's Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks," issued on April 21, 1997, is language that strips away a previous set of directives requiring federal agencies to protect American families from harm in the formulation and application of federal policies. Rather than improving on the directive and giving it more teeth, the President quietly took it off the books, confirming for all his bureaucracy the message that he repeatedly sends: Marriage, family, and family care of children make for fine rhetoric, but not fine policy.
- **Promoting institutional care over family care.**⁵⁶ President Clinton's 1998 proposal to subsidize formal day-care use and penalize parental care of children is irrational and unfair. Under Clinton's plan, middle-class parents who hire others to care for their children will receive tax cuts to subsidize day-care costs, but parents who make a great financial sacrifice so that one parent can remain at home to care for their young children will be denied tax relief. Indeed, families who care for their own children will be taxed to pay for the day care used by more affluent families. This

punitive plan discriminates against parental care of children in order to promote and subsidize paid non-parental child rearing.

- **Weakening foster care reform.**⁵⁷ During the 105th Congress, major foster care reform was achieved, but one serious flaw in policy was protected by the Clinton Administration: the reauthorization of Family Preservation Services for the next five years and the indiscriminate endorsement of "kinship care," the growing practice of placing foster children with members of their extended family. This practice is not always beneficial to the child and increases foster care costs by an average of 30 percent. It should have been scrutinized carefully in hearings before it was re-approved. In truth, kinship care would be a good option for many children but a bad one for others. It depends on the caregivers. In its current, loosely defined form, it should not have been given a new lease on life. Many children will suffer because of the Administration's defense of the state bureaucracies' vested interest in the continued money flow that comes with Family Preservation Services.

CONGRESS

The 105th Congress took several steps to strengthen American families:

- **\$500-per-Child Tax Credit.** The most important policy advance for the family is the \$500-per-child tax credit. The first installment of this comes into effect in 1998, with a tax credit of \$400 per child.
- **Adoption and Foster Care Reforms.** The major gains in this area were reforms in the practice of child welfare so that the child is

Notes:

55. Patrick F. Fagan, "How Clinton Is Killing a Family-Friendly Federal Policy," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 482, May 29, 1997.
56. Robert Rector and Patrick Fagan, "The Clinton Day Care Proposal: An Attack on Parents and Children," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 506, January 14, 1998.
57. Patrick Fagan, "Reforming Foster Care and Adoption: Why the Senate Version Is Flawed," Heritage Foundation *Issue Bulletin* No. 247, October 8, 1997.

given a permanent home quickly and not left revolving in the child welfare system year after year. States which increase the number of adoptions of foster children will receive bonuses. The reforms also included health coverage for adopted children with special needs.

- **Education Savings Accounts.** Tax-deductible education savings accounts became law, permitting parents to put aside \$500 per child per year for a child's higher education. The Senate Finance Committee approved a bill (S. 1133) to expand tax-favored education savings accounts to cover costs associated with primary, secondary, and home school education up to a total of \$2,000 per child. There is a strong chance that both the House and Senate

will pass this proposal during the 105th Congress.

- **Abstinence Education.** Abstinence education made significant gains during the 104th Congress in the form of a grant of \$50 million per year to the states to promote sexual abstinence until marriage. This decision caused a major outcry among members of the sex education industry and its allies. In response, the 105th Congress set aside \$6 million to evaluate the effectiveness of the abstinence programs. However, Congress for decades has funded sex education efforts (including birth control methods for teenagers who have sex outside of marriage) which have yet to receive congressional scrutiny despite recent reports that such education has no demonstrable good effects.⁵⁸

WHAT TO DO IN 1999

There are concrete incremental steps that Congress can take to re-establish the centrality of the family in American society. The general thrust of good social policy should be to free the family from government policies that fail to support the stability and importance of the two-parent American family, and in fact have displaced its functions in favor of big government programs.

1. **Level the playing field for all families who need child care.** The Clinton Administration is intent on subsidizing day care, the kind of child care that mothers want least even when they are forced by circumstances to use it. Instead, Congress should eliminate all special day care subsidies and give a tax refundable credit of \$1,000 to every family with children in the child care age groups. A tax credit would leave the choice of care to the parent and would not bias the market or the cost of labor.
2. **Remove the application of the alternative minimum tax (AMT) on dependent child tax credits and deductions.** With the enactment of the \$500-per-child tax credit, an increasing number of middle-income families must now pay the alternative minimum tax. Thus, what Congress has given families with one hand, the IRS takes back with the other. Congress needs to remove this penalty on families for having children. Having children is not a tax loophole that needs to be plugged; children are an investment in America's future.
3. **Increase the personal exemption and the dependent exemption.** Within the context of tax reform intended to achieve a flat tax, Congress can increase the personal and dependent exemptions. Both exemptions could be given the same value. For instance, in the flat tax proposals put forth by Representative Richard Armey (R-TX) and presidential candidate Steve Forbes, adult taxpayers would have a personal exemption of \$10,700 or \$13,000 each, respectively, and children would be given a \$5,000 exemption. An even more pro-family provision would be to flatten the exemptions for both adults and children—perhaps a \$10,000 exemption per family member.

Notes:

58. Kirby, "No Easy Answer," p. 13.

4. **Send federal education subsidies directly to parents, not states.** Children thrive in schools where parents and teachers cooperate. Therefore, in any discussion about putting more federal money into education, the close cooperation of parents and teachers should be promoted, not hindered. As in other cases where the federal government has tried to replace the functions of the family, the local church, the local community, or the local school system, there is no evidence that this expenditure would make a positive long-term difference. However, education is becoming more expensive. To make sure a federal role in education is family-friendly, school-friendly, and local community-friendly, Congress should voucherize every federal program and put the control of spending in the hands of parents. Funding streams that cannot be voucherized directly should be turned into block grants to the states to voucherize if they so choose.
5. **Enact a freedom of information act for parents.** Representative Todd Tiahrt (R-KS) has introduced legislation to protect the right of parents to have access to all instructional material that will be used to educate their children. This would ensure that parents control the message their children hear, for instance, about the importance of abstinence before marriage. Tiahrt's bill recommends that federal funds should be withheld from any state that does not grant parents such access or that does not require prior informed and written consent from parents for any medical, psychological, or psychiatric treatment or testing of their child.
6. **Reform Social Security.** Social Security gives a low—and sometimes negative—rate of return on payroll tax contributions. The return is particularly poor for minorities, depriving them of an enormous amount of money in their retirement years, and essentially ensures that asset formation for poor and minority families does not take place. Under the current system, a low-income single African-American male aged 25 years or younger will be deprived of \$160,000 in his old age when Social Security is compared with alternative investments. (See Chapter 4.) A system that allows Americans to place some of their Social Security taxes into an investment fund would yield significantly higher returns, and these private savings would give parents and grandparents more money to pass on to their children and grandchildren to help them have a better start in life.
7. **Collect data on programs that work.** Solid research is one of the most reliable of all tools in trying to create new programs and dismantle others. Repeatedly, for example, research is exposing the failings of the current welfare system and pointing out that two reliable alternatives exist that are much more effective in building communities and preventing dysfunction and social breakdown: lifelong marriage and regular religious worship. Nothing government has done has reaped better results, but much of what it does can undermine them.

Most national surveys (paid for with federal dollars) on social problems do not gather data on the impact of these two factors. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) provides most of the available data on marriage, divorce, and family structure. However, its data on marriage, out-of-wedlock births, divorce, and the number of children affected by divorce are increasingly sparse, released later, and less user-friendly. As other agencies are improving their ability to gather and present critical data in their fields quickly, in detail, and in depth, Congress should demand that the NCHS also improve its data. Further, Congress should require that a standard set of data on marriage and religious practice is gathered for all federal social surveys.
8. **Investigate Title X's impact on family structure among the poor.** Marriage is virtually nonexistent among the poorest Americans. Title X, the federal government's controversial program that helped to change American sexual mores, has had a devastating impact on sexuality among the young and has given these changes the sanction of government support. The first stage in bringing about a much-needed debate is to procure extensive data on recipients of the Title X program, as well as the program's effects on sex and marriage.

9. **Enact a ban on cloning.** The possible advent of technologies that may permit human cloning will have untold consequences for marriage and parenting. Congress must act now to preserve in law both the importance of two parents to the health and well-being of children and the importance of a nurturing family environment.
10. **Commission a panel to evaluate the effectiveness of federal social programs.** The Great Society experiments begun under President Lyndon Johnson initiated a host of well-meaning social programs. However, after more than 30 years, the mounting evidence shows that these programs do not work. To build the case for reform, Congress should commission a panel of experts to collect, summarize, and evaluate the data on all federal social programs. Programs that are ineffective or failing should be targeted for reform or elimination. A listing of all ineffective programs should be presented to Congress by June 2000.
11. **Reform state marriage registries.** According to personnel at the National Center for Health Statistics, it is not possible to obtain accurate data on marriage and divorce statistics from more than half the states. However, states have many important reasons to record marriages and divorces. One reason is to prevent bigamy. The tracking of marriages and divorces through state registries should be much easier and less costly today, with computer technology; yet many states are no longer collecting these data. Because the state of marriage is critical to the social health of the nation, the federal government should encourage states to maintain accurate marriage and divorce data.

Q & A

- Q. How can government support faith-based operations when we have a constitutional separation of church and state?**
- A.** The radical liberal view of the separation of church and state is losing ground in the courts. The conservative view permits cooperation between government and faith-based operations on works of charity, mercy, and social support while banning outright any government funding or support of evangelization, prayer, or worship. Involving faith-based operations, of all or any faiths, in the delivery of social services allows the recipients to gain from the greater commitment to this relationship that comes with such involvement. For example, in Maryland's Anne Arundel County, church volunteers spend an average of 400 hours with needy families over a six-month period—clearly more time than government social workers would be allowed to devote to the task.
- Q. Why are we losing the war on drugs with our children?**
- A.** Congress passes the laws and appropriates the money, and the nation and Congress in turn rely on the executive branch to follow through. During the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, there was an effective drug reduction strategy that resulted in a massive cut in drug consumption at the high school level. However, the ambivalence of President Clinton has had a direct impact on usage: There has been a sharp upturn since the very time he took office, and usage continues to rise. The country needs a return to the aggressive strategies that brought good results in the Reagan-Bush years.
- Q. Your child care proposal to increase the tax credit per child does not take care of the welfare mother who has returned to work and must put her children in day care. What will you do for this mother you have forced to obtain day care for her children?**
- A.** The new welfare reforms take very good care of the mother who goes out to work. In the past, when she moved off the welfare rolls out to the workplace, the state no longer received

the AFDC money from the federal government. Now, with the block grant (which rises every year, faster than inflation combined with population growth), the money stays with the state. States can easily pay for day care from this expanding pool of now-“unused” welfare money. There is more money available for this purpose than the states have been able to use.

Q. What can Congress do to make the culture more family-friendly?

- A.** First, it can stop funding family-unfriendly operations and sharply reduce the tax burden on child-raising families by returning the tax status of these families to where it was when they were thriving, in the 1950s.

Second, Congress can influence the culture debate by ensuring that government agencies collect, analyze, and disseminate findings on the data on how American families (and particularly American marriage and church attendance) are faring. This is the most potent way to strengthen the debate on the social fabric of the nation.

Third, Congress can remove impediments facing employers trying to create a family-friendly workplace. For example, it can change federal labor laws to permit wider use of “flex-time” so that parents can adjust their hours of

work without losing pay. Federal workers currently have this right.

Q. What can Congress do to strengthen the family?

- A.** In pursuing two of its most important functions—establishing a just and peaceful order of law and calibrating the tax code to ensure the robust operation of the marketplace—Congress can pay particular attention to marriage and the family. Congress should sanction delinquent states that no longer monitor the licensing of marriage and the recording of divorces. This is one area in which government protects marriage and family.

Congress also can reform the tax code, by which government has massively distorted the domestic economy of the home, especially by raising the tax burden on child-raising families over the past 30 years while leaving the proportional tax burden of others unchanged. This system forces many mothers to work outside the home, but the average income of America’s working mothers just pays for the average increase in the tax burden on child-raising families. These families have every reason to ask what has been gained for the extra money over the years. The answer is: nothing of tangible benefit to America’s parents or children.

EXPERTS

David Brenner

Associate Director
Institute for American Values
1841 Broadway, Suite 211
New York, NY 10023
Phone: (212) 246-3942
E-mail: iav@worldnet.att.net

Allan Carlson

President
The Howard Center
934 North Main Street
Rockford, IL 61103
Phone: (815) 964-5819

Patrick Fagan

William H. G. FitzGerald Fellow in
Family and Cultural Issues
The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 546-4400
Fax: (202) 544-5421
E-mail: faganp@heritage.org

Lt. Col. Robert L. Maginnis

Senior Policy Analyst
Family Research Council
801 G Street, NW

Washington DC 20001
Phone: (202) 393-2100

William R. Mattox, Jr.
Senior Policy Analyst
Family Research Council
801 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 393-2100

David Murray
Statistical Assessment Service
2100 L Street NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 223-2942

Robert Rector
Senior Policy Analyst
The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 546-4400
Fax: (202) 544-5421
E-mail: rectorr@heritage.org

SELECTED HERITAGE FOUNDATION STUDIES

Fagan, Patrick F., "Promoting Adoption Reform: Congress Can Give Children Another Chance," *Backgrounder* No. 1080, May 6, 1996.

Fagan, Patrick F., "Reforming Foster Care and Adoption: Why the Senate Version Is Flawed," *Issue Bulletin* No. 247, October 8, 1997.

Fagan, Patrick F., "Rising Illegitimacy: America's Social Catastrophe," *FY.I.* No. 19, June 29, 1994.

Fagan, Patrick F., "The Child Abuse Crisis: The Disintegration of Marriage, Family, and the American Community," *Backgrounder* No. 1115, May 15, 1997.

Fagan, Patrick F., "The Real Root Causes of Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family and Community," *Backgrounder* No. 1026, March 17, 1995.

Fagan, Patrick F., "Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Belief on Social Stability," *Backgrounder* No. 1064, January 25, 1996.

Meyerson, Adam, "Empowering Families and Communities," in Stuart M. Butler and Kim R. Holmes, eds., *Mandate for Leadership IV: Turning Ideas Into Action*, 1996.

Rector, Robert, "Facts About American Families and Day Care," *FY.I.* No. 170, January 23, 1998.

To access The Heritage Foundation's policy papers in their entirety, please visit Heritage's Web site at www.heritage.org. Publications are available in both HTML and portable document formats.