

close to half of Illinois parents  
work outside a traditional  
Monday–Friday daytime schedule

42%

# working later in illinois: work schedules, incomes and parents' access to child care



Illinois

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# Purpose



To help working Illinois families gain access to affordable, quality child care, public policy makers need to know when parents are working, why they work when they do, and how their work schedules affect their decisions about child care.

While it has long been assumed that more and more parents are working non-traditional schedules—nighttime, overnight, weekend and varying hours—no comprehensive data existed on parent work schedules in Illinois. This summary highlights the findings of a new report: *Working Later in Illinois: Work Schedules, Incomes and Parents' Access to Child Care* ([www.actforchildren.org/reports](http://www.actforchildren.org/reports)) that provides the best available information on the relationship between parent work schedules and child care, including:

- The percentage of parents who work non-traditional hours.
- How the lack of available or affordable child care may influence a parent to work non-traditional hours.
- The availability of child care during non-traditional work times.
- The relationship between non-traditional work and low-income status.
- Why parents may stagger work schedules to meet child care needs.
- The likelihood of continued growth of non-traditional employment.

<sup>1</sup> The term “traditional” refers to a traditional cultural norm of working daytime hours, Monday through Friday. It remains the cultural norm for most Illinoisans.

This summary provides policy and law makers with critical information on Illinois’ families and the hard choices they often make regarding their work schedules and child care. Illinois Action for Children also outlines policy alternatives to help the State of Illinois successfully meet the evolving child care needs of its working families.

# About the Data

The primary source of information for the report was the May 2004 U.S. Census Bureau special supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provided employment, work schedules, and other demographic information on approximately 57,000 U.S. households, including 4,721 Illinois residents. Of the Illinois residents, 2,213 were employed adults age 18 and older, of whom 1,940 reported their work schedule information. Despite some data limitations, the sample was large enough and representative enough to provide an accurate picture of parent work schedules and gives us the best integrated view we have of families, work, and child care. The CPS data was combined with relevant State of Illinois employment and child care statistics for the report.

# Introduction

In the State of Illinois, four out of ten working parents (42 percent) with children under age 14 work non-traditional hours and/or days according to the 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS). They work predominately evening shifts, night shifts, rotating shifts, split shifts or variable shifts, and/or weekend hours, but not the traditional daytime Monday through Friday work week.

While initially researchers attributed the growth of non-traditional schedules to employers seeking to lower business costs by operating facilities more hours each week, recent observers find that employers who compete in a global economy want to do business 24 hours a day. In turn, the customer service, retail and food service fields extend their hours to serve these global businesses and their employees. With continued growth expected in such occupations, the non-traditional work schedule is increasing its foothold. In the ten occupations projected to have the greatest job growth by 2012, two thirds of new jobs created will have non-traditional schedules.

This employment shift has far-reaching implications for the way employees live their lives, relate to their families, friends and communities and arrange for their children's care. When a parent works at night or on weekends, it can reduce opportunities for ordinary interactions with friends and family. At work, a non-traditional schedule can reduce an employee's opportunities to participate in workplace programs. With diminished capacity to interact freely with family, friends and community, moreover, a non-traditional work schedule undercuts some social bases of one's self-respect.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, non-traditional work schedules force parents to make difficult decisions about bearing and caring for children. These choices are exacerbated by the fact that most non-standard work schedule jobs pay less than jobs with traditional schedules. Many parents (most often women) will choose an alternative work schedule to secure child care with a spouse, family member or neighbor. However, there are other parents—many with limited job opportunities—who are forced to leave their children with family, friends or neighbors because they have few formal child care options during non-standard hours.

*Working Later in Illinois: Work Schedules, Income and Parents' Access to Child Care* looks at the relationship between parent work schedules and child care—how a families' work schedule influences its child care choices, and vice versa. The report also considers how family income, the cost of child care, and family structure affect these choices.

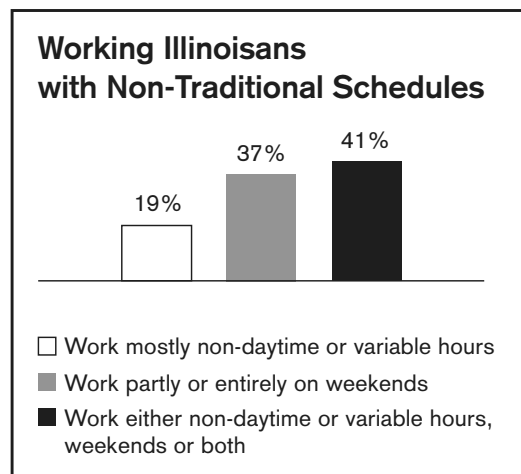
<sup>1</sup> Other major effects include the health effects, notably those of working nights and rotating shifts, including sleep deprivation. For a summary, see Harriet B. Presser, *Working in a 24/7 Economy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003), pp 9-10. Presser's excellent analysis of the 1997 Current Population Survey national sample served as a model for this study of the 2004 Illinois sample.

# Who Works Nonstandard Schedules?

**2.5 million** Illinois employees regularly work non-traditional schedules.

They work predominately evening shifts, night shifts, rotating shifts, split shifts or variable shifts, and/or weekend hours—not the traditional daytime workweek from Monday through Friday. Many work in retail, health care and restaurants (see page 8).

Employees working non-traditional schedules make up **41 percent** of working adults in Illinois.



The larger portion, **2.3 million** employees (37 percent), works weekends, but about **1.2 million** employees work mostly non-daytime or variable hours (19 percent).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Of this 19 percent, about 49 percent reported working rotating shifts, split shifts or variable shifts, and the other 51 percent worked evening or night shifts. Throughout this report all percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent. Note that in this survey even those who consider themselves daytime workers might work some hours outside of, say, 6 am and 6 pm. In this respect, this report undercounts the number who work any non-day hours.

## Some Definitions of Employees' Shifts

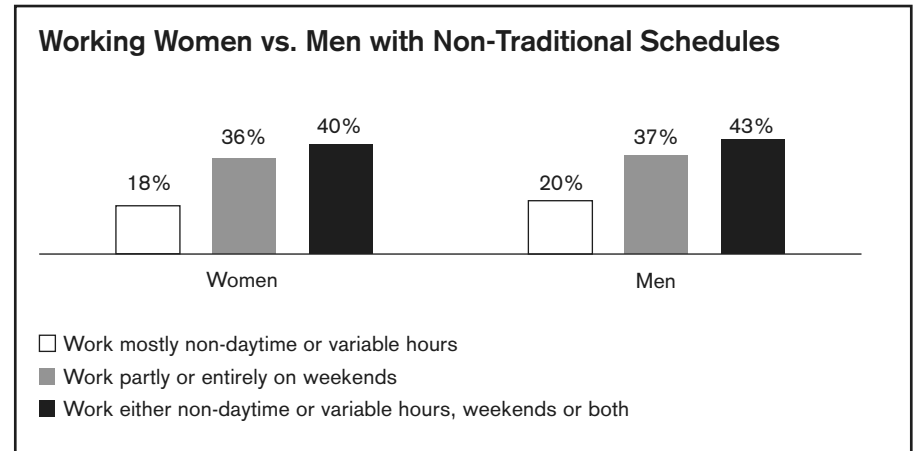
**Evening or overnight shift:**  
predominately between 6 pm and 6 am

**Rotating shift:**  
e.g. Employees work evenings this week and nights next week, and then rotate back to evenings.

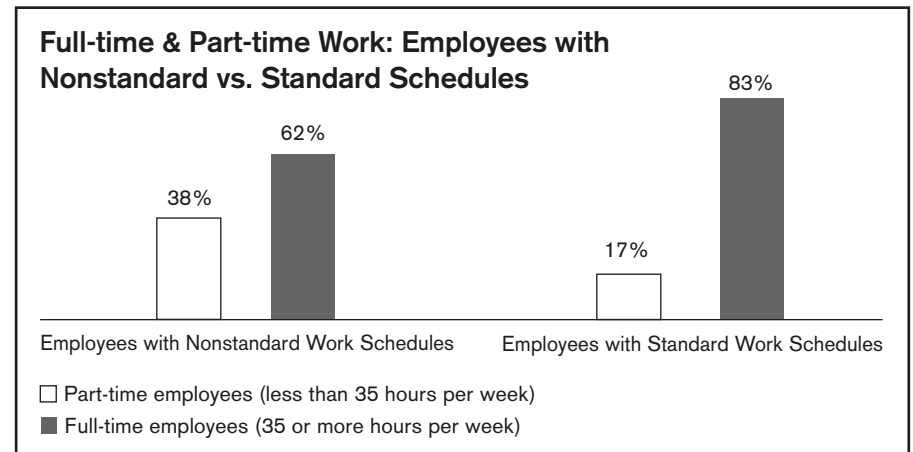
**Split shifts:**  
e.g. They work both breakfast and dinner shifts in a restaurant.

**Variable shifts:**  
Employees work irregular schedules.

Men and women work non-traditional schedules in similar proportions.



While the majority of Illinoisans with nonstandard schedules work full-time (**62 percent**), they are more likely to work part-time than Illinoisans with standard schedules (38 vs. 17 percent).



# Parents Work Nonstandard Schedules

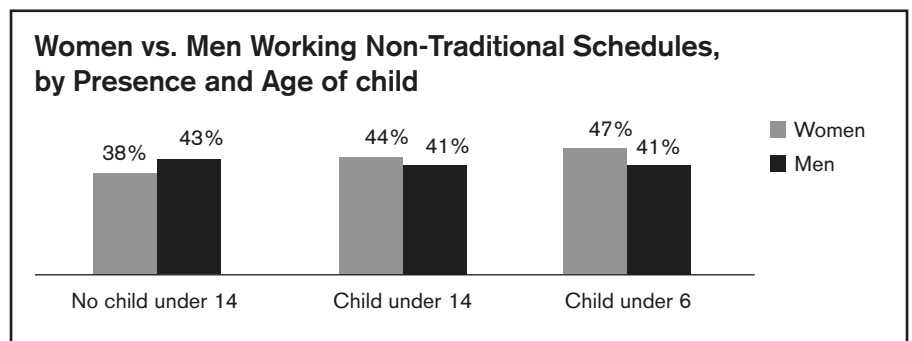
**42 percent** of working parents with children under age 14 in Illinois regularly work non-traditional schedules.

This has far-reaching implications for the way they live their lives, relate to their families and friends and arrange for their children's care.

## Having a child under age 14

...makes **women** more likely to take on non-traditional work schedules than women without children, particularly if the child is under 6

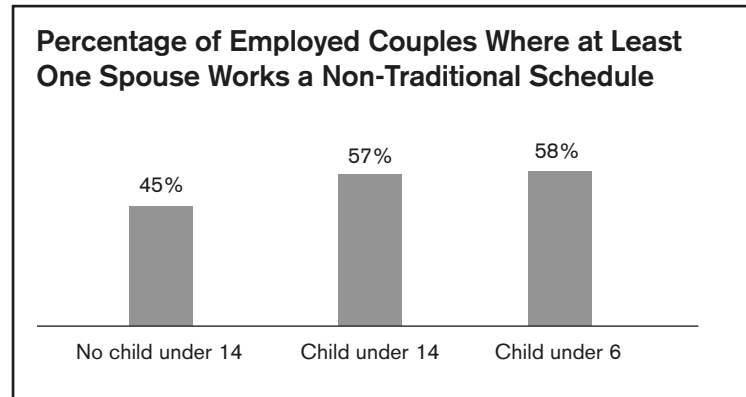
...makes **men** slightly less likely to work non-traditional schedules than men who do not have children, regardless of the child's age.



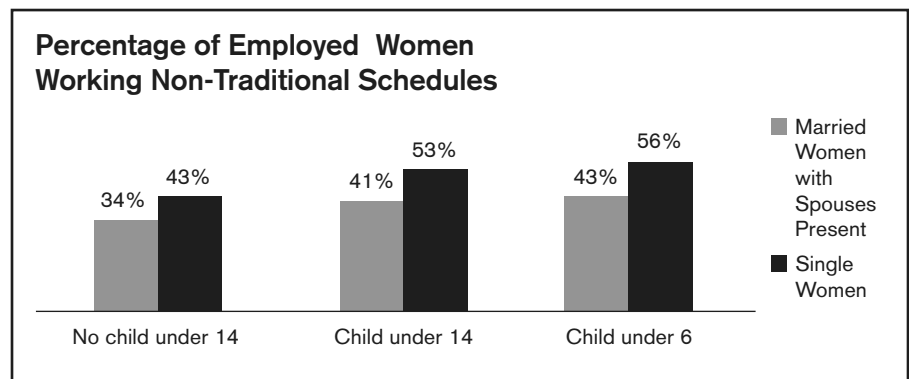


### Having a child under age 14

...makes employed Illinois couples more likely to have at least one spouse work a nonstandard schedule.



...makes both married and single women more likely to work nonstandard schedules, especially if they have a child under 6. Single mothers, however, are more likely to work nonstandard schedules than married mothers.



# Where They Work and What They Earn

Working a nonstandard schedule and earning low income often go hand in hand and will likely continue to do so in the future.

Nonstandard work schedules are more common in occupations that pay below the typical Illinois income. Of the twelve occupations with the most employees working nonstandard schedules:

- only **1** has typical income above the 2004 Illinois median family income of \$60,387.<sup>4</sup>
- while **9** pay less than \$30,000—about half of the median family income.

These twelve occupations employ **34 percent** of nonstandard workers.

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## Top Twelve Occupations with the Most Employees Who Work Nonstandard Schedules

	Rank	Occupation	2004 Median Income*
	1	Driver/sales workers & truck drivers	\$24,717 **
	2	Cashiers	\$16,119
	3	Retail salespersons	\$18,624
	4	Waiters & waitresses	\$13,738
	5	First-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers	\$30,433
	6	Registered nurses	\$48,954
	7	Cooks	\$24,104 ***
	8	Nursing, psychiatric & home health aides	\$21,383 †
	9	Managers, all other	\$67,992
	10	Stock clerks & order fillers	\$19,666
	11	Janitors & building cleaners	\$20,346
	12	Security guards & gaming surveillance officers	\$21,148 †
		Median Family Income	\$60,387

\* Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2nd Qtr 2004, <http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/projections/employproj.htm>, downloaded 3/22/05.

\*\* Driver/Sales Workers only.

\*\*\* This is the upper point of range of four types of cooks: \$14,691–\$24,104.

† This is the upper point of range of each type of health aide: \$18,104–\$21,383.

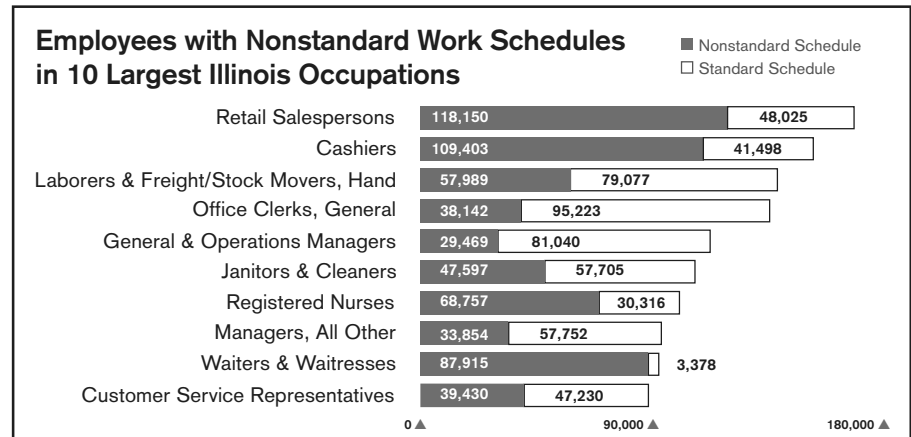
‡ Security Guards only

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, the 2004 American Community Survey.

Of the ten occupations employing the largest number of people:

- a total of **54 percent** of employees work nonstandard schedules.
- **only 2 of these occupations pay typical incomes at or above the Illinois median family income, while 7 pay less than half of the median family income.**

The following chart shows these ten occupations individually.



**More people are likely to work non-traditional schedules in the coming years.** In the ten occupations expected to grow the most new jobs between 2002 and 2012 (24 percent of Illinois' job growth), **59 percent** of these new jobs, or over 87,000 new jobs, will have nonstandard schedules.

**Top Ten Occupations with the Highest Projected Job Growth in Illinois, 2002–2012**

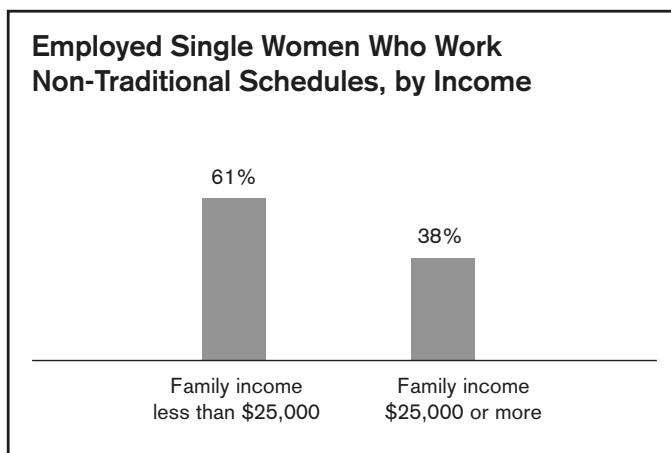
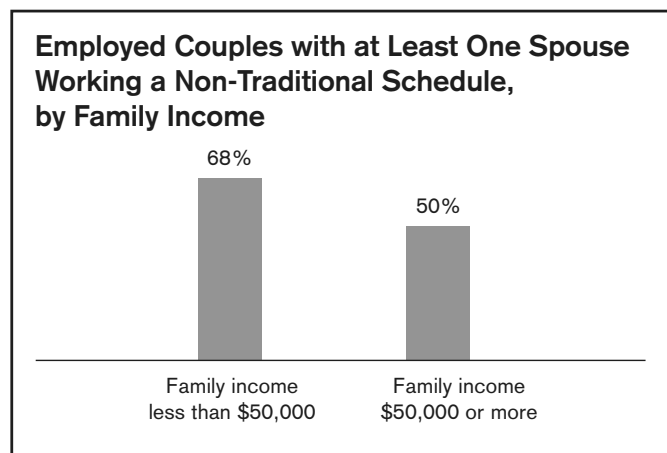
Rank	Occupation	2004 Median Wage*	% with Nonstandard Schedules
1	Registered Nurses	\$ 48,954	69%
2	Retail Salespersons	\$ 18,624	71%
3	Business Operations Specialists, all other	\$ 50,359	0%
4	Janitors & Cleaners	\$ 20,346	45%
5	Customer Service Representatives	\$ 28,510	45%
6	Waiters and Waitresses	\$ 13,738	96%
7	Food Prep & Service Workers, Fast Food	\$ 13,863	100%*
8	General and Operations Managers	\$ 69,377	27%
9	Cashiers	\$ 16,119	73%
10	Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor Trailer	\$ 36,704	67%
	Median Family Income	\$ 60,387	

\*Fast Food Preparation & Service Workers were clearly under-represented in the Illinois sample of the Current Population Survey. The median income covers the wider group of food service workers.

Sources: Illinois Department of Employment Security & Current Population Survey, 2004, May supplement, Illinois sample

Only one of the fastest growing jobs pays a typical income above the 2004 median family income in Illinois.

Employed couples with low incomes are more likely to have at least one spouse work a non-traditional schedule than couples with higher incomes, regardless of whether they have children.



Similarly, single women are more likely to work non-traditional schedules if they earn low incomes.

In general, families working non-traditional schedules will have more difficulty paying for their family expenses including child care.

# Finding Child Care: The Impact of Nonstandard Schedules



Many parents arrange child care around their work schedules while others arrange their work schedules around their child care. In either case, income plays a decisive role in these choices.

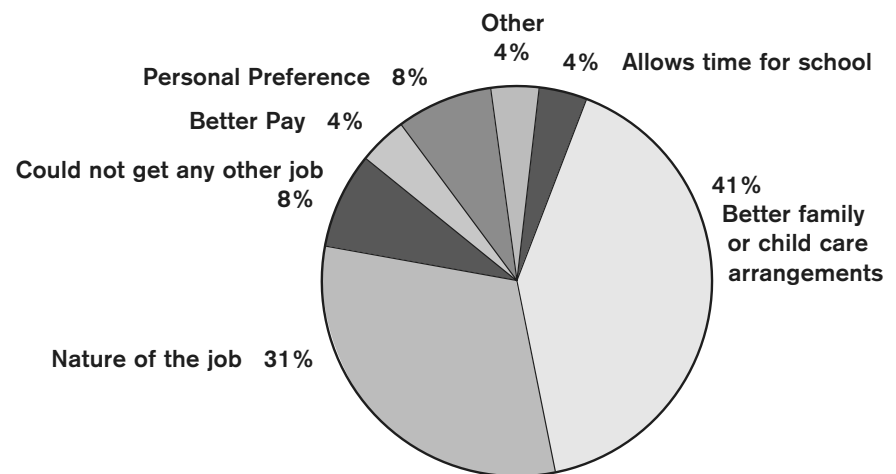
Some parents work nonstandard schedules so they can stagger their schedule with their spouse or partner so one parent can always be home with the children. Of working couples with children, **57 percent** have at least one spouse working a non-traditional schedule.

Parents might also stagger schedules with another family member, friend or neighbor who will care for their children. If the child's caregiver has a regular daytime job, a parent will need to work when the caregiver is available: evenings or weekends.

**41 percent** of mothers who work non-traditional schedules say the main reason they work the schedule they do is to obtain better child care or family care arrangements. This is the top reason cited.<sup>4</sup>

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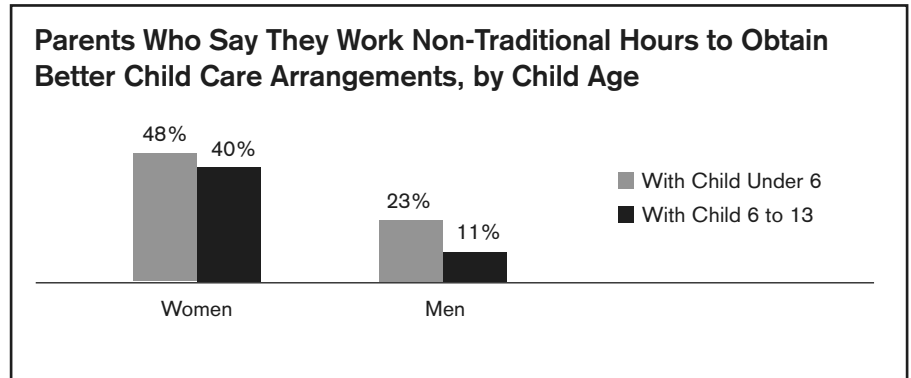
## Main Reasons for Their Work Schedules Reported by Women with Children Under 14, Working Non-Day Shifts



<sup>4</sup> Only adults who work predominately evenings or nights were asked this question. People who work weekends were not asked why they work weekend schedules. The 11 percent of Illinoisans is almost twice as high as the national percentage of adults who cited child care as a reason four years earlier in 1997, Presser, *ibid.*

For fathers, **16 percent** cite better child care or family care arrangements as the reason for their non-traditional work schedules.

Both men and women are more likely to say they work non-traditional hours in order to obtain better family or child care arrangements if their children are under 6.



## How Available is Child Care During Non-traditional Times?

Parents who work nonstandard schedules for other reasons, such as for better pay or because they couldn't find another job, will find few formal child care options.

Formal child care arrangements such as child care centers and licensed child care homes typically operate Monday through Friday during day-time hours. Very few offer evening, overnight or weekend care.

Of full-time child care centers and homes:<sup>5</sup>

...only **16 percent** offered child care during evening hours,

...**11 percent** offered **night hours** and

...**8 percent** offered care during **weekend hours**.

The majority of formal child care offered during nonstandard hours is provided by licensed homes rather than child care centers.

<sup>5</sup> Here standard hours are defined as 6 am to 6 pm; evenings, 6:01–9:59 pm; and overnight care, 10 pm–5:59 am.

## Illinois Child Care Providers Offering Care During Non-Traditional Schedules

Type of Child Care	Total	% of All Listed Centers or Homes
<b>Total Listed Child Care Centers</b>	<b>5,376</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Centers with Non-Traditional Care</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>15%</b>
Evenings	85	2%
Overnights	22	0%
Weekends	39	1%
Rotating Shifts	705	13%
<b>Total Listed Family Child Care Homes*</b>	<b>10,524</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Homes with Non-Traditional Care</b>	<b>6,231</b>	<b>59%</b>
Evenings	2,715	26%
Overnights	1,722	16%
Weekends	1,085	10%
Rotating Shifts	4,715	45%

\*Almost all listed homes are licensed but a small percentage are license-exempt.

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Child Care Report FY 2004

## How Affordable is Center and Licensed Home Child Care?

**Most Illinois parents face a dilemma of affordability in child care. They need child care so they can work; yet they have few affordable child care options. This is particularly true for parents working nonstandard schedules because they tend to be in low-paying jobs.**

In Illinois in 2004, the average cost for full-time care for an infant in a child care center was **\$9,086**. This is comparable to the cost of rent for a typical Chicago family. The average cost for a preschooler in center care was **\$6,544**. For licensed home child care, the average annual cost for a child was over **\$5,000**.<sup>6</sup>

The cost of child care can constitute a significant portion of a family's income. The median family income in Illinois in 2004 was \$60,387.<sup>7</sup> This means that average-priced infant center care would cost a family **15 percent** of its income. One infant and one 4-year-old costs over **25 percent** of a family's income.

<sup>6</sup> Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, the 2004 American Community Survey.

## Summary

This report highlights the powerful connection between a parent’s work schedule and the likelihood that they will need to rely on family, friends or neighbors for child care. There are two common scenarios: Either the parent chooses a work schedule that allows a trusted friend or family member to care for their child, or the parent is forced to rely on friends and family for care because they cannot find available, affordable child care during the night or weekend hours when they work.

While such decisions may be the best parents can make under the circumstances, they place tremendous stress on working parents.





# Supporting Families: Public Policy Alternatives

Innovative public policy efforts can play a role in reducing the conflict between parent work schedules and child care opportunities. The following policy options could improve access to quality child care and help create more family-friendly workplaces:

- **Developing Programs During Non-Traditional Hours.** The public and non-profit sectors can work together to develop successful child care programs during non-traditional hours. One possibility is for large employers of parents with non-traditional schedules to offer on-site or near-site, subsidized child care. State-sponsored pilot programs have revealed some challenges associated with such after-hours child care (see full report), which must be addressed before implementing additional programs.
- **Providing Higher Levels of Child Care Assistance.** If child care is more affordable and accessible during traditional working hours, parents may be less likely to accept positions requiring evening and weekend work. To do this, the State could expand the Illinois Child Care Assistance Program by either offering a higher level of assistance to reduce family costs (through higher reimbursement to child care providers or lower co-payments required of parents), and/or offer assistance to families with higher income levels to increase the number of eligible families.
- **Improving Family, Friend and Neighbor Care.** Most parents in Illinois rely on family, friends or neighbors to care for their children. While this type of care may be convenient and flexible, it may not provide the educational and developmental opportunities that many child care centers and licensed family home settings provide. Possible ways to enhance family, friend and neighbor care include tailoring formal early education opportunities specifically for these children, and bringing educational services directly to children and their care providers. Illinois Action for Children offers several successful programs to assist children in family, friend or neighbor care.
  - The License Exempt Quality Enhancement (LEQE) initiative (funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services) provides information and assistance on safety, child development, literacy, nutrition and other issues during home visits to non-licensed care providers.
  - Illinois Action for Children also sponsors the Child Care Healthy Food program, a federally funded initiative to reimburse non-licensed care providers for some food costs.
  - Finally, Illinois Action for Children will soon launch a new privately funded program to provide intensive literacy support to license-exempt providers in the Austin neighborhood.

## Establishing Supportive Work and Family Practices

Over the past 30 years, federal and state governments have tended to decrease rather than increase employer regulations. However, important regulations could be restored to discourage employers from using non-traditional shifts. For example, employers could be required to pay higher wage premiums to night and weekend employees to reflect the high social costs of such schedules on family and work life.

Some nations support research and education that helps boost productivity for employers while improving work and family life for employees. For example, government-funded research could clarify whether non-standard work shifts are truly cost effective and if any cost savings outweigh the tremendous cost to employees and their families. Sound public policy might build on those findings.

Third, many nations also support employee associations such as professional groups or unions that conduct similar research while negotiating with employers for more family-friendly employment policies.

Finally, minimum or living wage increases can help offset child care costs.

As an alternative to or supplement for business regulation, many European nations have successfully legislated work-family policies to help low-income families. The highlights of these policies include:

- **Paid family leave** for bearing and raising children and right of return to job.
- **Full benefits for part-time employees**, including health insurance and pension accruals, if the employee cares for a child or elderly relative.
- **Very low-cost or free child care.** The research-driven movement for universal pre-kindergarten in the U.S., for example, would establish part-day programs for all three- and four-year-olds. Free full-day programs might also be offered as they are in France.
- **Family wages for parents with children**, including monetary or in-kind payments for child, medical and/or other care. Refundable negative income tax or tax credits targeted to families with children in child care are other options, although evidently the benefit levels of such programs should be higher.



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