

research in brief

After-School Child Care

Child care is most often provided for preschool children, but many elementary school students leave for school and return after school to an empty house. Sometimes a parent or older sibling may be at home and/or substitute child care is provided.

Data were obtained in this study of after-school child care from 52 third graders at Clifton Elementary School at Clifton, Colorado, through interviews with the children by volunteer mothers. This population was demographically parallel to the U.S. population in relation to the number of employed mothers.

Major Findings

1. Children of working and nonworking mothers were involved in the same kinds of unstructured play or recreation after school. Children of working mothers with no child care provided were most likely to work on individual hobbies or activities and not participate in group programs.
2. Children of working mothers and children receiving no child care after school were most likely to talk to *no one* about their day. (Significant at the .01 level).
3. Children of nonworking mothers or those who received care after school were most likely to talk to their parents about their day.
4. Children of working mothers and children without child care after school weren't the problem they are often presumed to be.
5. Children of nonworking mothers were more likely to participate in the care of younger siblings after school than were children of working mothers. (Significant at .05 level).
6. All the children in the study of working as well as nonworking mothers watched some television after school or in the evenings.
7. Children with no child care after school were most likely to select their own television programs.
8. One-half of the children in this study reported a parent was home when they arrive home from school.
9. Male children in this study were twice as likely to receive *no* child care after school than were female children.
10. Children receiving no care after school were more likely to perform chores between dinner and bedtime, while those with arranged-for care after school were least likely to have chores to perform.

"Child Care and Its Relationship to Activities of Third Graders."
Jo McTiver Cornforth. Master's thesis, Colorado State University,
Fort Collins, 1976.

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