Child Care's Journey to the Decision Agenda:
A Case Study

by

Kirsten M. Lindquist

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Approved:

[Signatures]

Karen M. Hult

Stephen K. White

Deborah J. Milly

May 1994

Blacksburg, Virginia
CHILD CARE’S JOURNEY TO THE DECISION AGENDA:
A CASE STUDY

by

Kirsten M. Lindquist

Committee Chair: Karen M. Hult
Political Science

(ABSTRACT)

The United States did not have a federal policy on child care until 1990 when portions of two bills (H.R.3 and S.7) were incorporated in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. The lack of a policy was not due to neglect; child care advocates made several attempts during the 1970s to pass legislation. In an effort to understand why child care succeeded in 1990, this thesis examines how child care got on the decision agenda, the "short list" of the government agenda. Using John Kingdon’s framework (1984) I analyze the process by which child care legislation was able to make the successful transition from the committee forum to the floors of Congress for a vote, and thus becoming a part of the decision agenda.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As anyone who has undertaken a thesis knows, the process of writing and researching (with emphasis upon the process) is frustrating, arduous, enlightening, and inspiring. These feelings are created and shared with a number of people besides the writer. I am deeply indebted to several groups of people, a gratitude I wished to express here.

First, I must express my gratitude to my professors who had faith in my abilities and potential. Most importantly, I want to thank my advisor, Karen Hult, for her tremendous intellectual and emotional support that sustained me during this endeavor. Stephen White’s faith in my work and my potential gave me impetus to continue with my academic career. My discussions with Deborah Milly greatly enhanced my knowledge of family policy. In addition, Timothy Luke and Charles Walcott challenged and inspired me to reflect upon the discipline as a whole.

The field work portion of the project was generously funded by the Graduate Development and Research Fund of the Graduate Student Association. I thank Doug Bager, Helen Blank, Patti Cole, Jerry Klepner, Donna Lenhov, Robert Rector, and Susan Wilhelm for allowing me to interview them.

My friends gave me joy and laughter when I felt insanity beckoning. They gave me peace and love when I most needed it, especially Ajay Tandon and Karl Kalckstein. Meg Farrar gave
me hours of great conversation and comfort over endless cups of coffee and countless pitchers of beer. The love and generosity of my true life-support during this year, Marjukka Ollilainen, gave me the strength and courage to continue with this project.

My infinite love and gratitude go to my mother and two sisters for their undying support even when they did not understand my work. My mother’s unexpected political connections secured my first interview contact, which set the ball in motion.

Finally, I want to dedicate this thesis to the parents and children whose daily lives testify to the struggles of securing child care.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Introduction** 1

**A Brief History of the Act for Better Child Care Services** 6

**Theoretical Framework and Research Design** 21

**Joining the Streams: Child Care’s Journey to the Decision Agenda** 43

**The 1990 Experience and the Future of Child Care Policy** 68

**Bibliography** 79

**Curriculum Vita** 95
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1  CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS: SUPPORTERS, OPPONENTS, AND THEIR AFFILIATIONS  86

TABLE 2  BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS BY GENDER AND HEARING  92

TABLE 3  TIME LINE OF ABL'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS  94
Chapter I

Introduction

Research Question

I became interested in the issue of child care through personal experience as a day care provider. Working for a two-income household, I was a firsthand witness to the stressful juggling act that these working parents performed in order to coordinate their personal schedules, those of their children, and mine. As the mother said to me during a week when the family was moving to another home, "I know that I'm going to drop one of these balls. I just hope that it's not one of the kids."

As a political scientist, I immediately wondered if any federal government policy to provide child care services existed. I discovered that, unlike almost all other advanced industrialized countries, the U.S. does not have a national policy that provides child care services to those citizens who desire them. Only three times in the history of the U.S. has the federal government enacted child care legislation. The Works Progress Act sponsored a network of nursery schools during the Great Depression, and during World War II the Lanham Act authorized the opening of child care facilities.

---

1 For discussion of other advanced industrialized countries' policies see Bock and Thane, 1991; Ramerman et. al., 1983.
However, in both cases, the policies were created in response to "crises": the need to create jobs during the Depression and the necessity of mothers in the workforce during World War II (Joffe 1983:170). The next time the federal government addressed child care was the Head Start program, one of many policies created by President Lyndon Johnson in the War On Poverty. Head Start, however, was more of an educational initiative rather than a "child care" program. Moreover, it only benefitted lower income families, and minority families in particular (ibid:170). In 1971 both houses of Congress passed the Child Development Act, which would have authorized $2 billion for the creation and establishment of new child care facilities. President Richard Nixon, however, vetoed the bill, and the two subsequent attempts to pass smaller and less comprehensive child care bills in 1975 and 1978-9 also failed (ibid:171).

The next child care proposal to receive serious consideration at the federal level was eventually enacted in 1990. This proposal, originally titled the Act for Better Child Care Services (ABC), addressed lower income families' need for child care services. It also proposed to provide funds to states to increase the number of child care facilities and improve the quality of the services. Eventually ABC was dropped for another child care proposal, H.R. 3, which was incorporated into the Omnibus Budget
Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1990. But ABC's central focus on improving the affordability and quality of services and increasing their availability remained a part of the child care measures in the OBRA.

In view of the history of federal child care policy in the U.S., I narrowed my interest to focus on why advocates of a child care policy were successful in 1990 after failing throughout the 1970s. Part of the "why" of this question may be found by examining how government agendas are created, although an answer to this question goes beyond government since other social and cultural elements are involved. In Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, John Kingdon distinguishes between governmental and decision agendas: the governmental agenda comprises problems that policy makers are considering but that are not of immediate concern; in contrast, items on the decision agenda are "being moved into position for legislative enactment" (1984:174). Using this view of how agendas are created, I wanted to examine the process of how and why a child care proposal was able to make the transition from the governmental agenda to the decision agenda during the 1987-90 attempt.

Why Examine A Federal Child Care Initiative

One reason why child care has become a growing concern for policy makers is the growth of women's, and therefore,
mothers' participation in the paid workforce. As a result parents have been forced to seek alternative means of child care. Since the 1970s, women's participation in the workforce in general and mothers' more specifically has increased dramatically. For example, the proportion of women in the paid workforce rose from approximately 40 percent in 1970 to 56 percent by 1982 (Kamerman et al., 1983:7). A 1985 Bureau Census report stated that two out of every three women in the workforce with dependents were either the sole providers for their children or had husbands who earned less than $15,000 (3/15/88:2). And, during the hearings held for ABC, Dr. George Sterne of the American Academy of Pediatrics claimed that the nuclear family of male wage-earner/female homemaker represented less than 10 percent of American families (2/25/88:66).

Secondly, to the extent that mothers are traditionally the primary caregivers, and child care has traditionally occurred inside the home, the support of adequate child care facilities is necessary to insuring equal employment opportunities for women who are mothers and who either choose to work or do so in order to support their families. An

---

2 During the congressional hearings held for ABC, supporters cited the 1985 Census Bureau report claiming that this figure had risen to 65 percent. It should be noted, however, that this report referred to "wives" and "women," yet never stated if these statistics took into account whether these women were mothers or not.
examination of the federal government's child care policy reflects its view and commitment to providing equal opportunities for mothers who work outside the home.

Outline of Chapters

Since the purpose of the thesis is to examine the process of how child care made the transition to the decision agenda, a brief history of the initial child care proposal (ABC) is given in Chapter Two. The history traces the various child care bills that emerged and evolved during the deliberation process. In Chapter Three, I discuss the theoretical framework used to analyze child care's transition to the decision agenda and the associated research design. I also detail the data sources I used and the limitations of the study in general. In Chapter Four, I apply Kingdon's framework to the case and examine how child care made the transition to the decision agenda. Chapter Five summarizes the analysis and discusses why child care succeeded in reaching the decision agenda in 1990 when it had failed during the 1970s. Finally, I give suggestions for further research.
Chapter II
A Brief History of the
Act for Better Child Care Services

This chapter traces the campaign for, deliberation on, and passage of the child care proposal that George Bush signed into law in early November 1990. Initially, the Children's Defense Fund began work on a child care proposal that developed into the Act for Better Child Care Services of 1987. This proposal underwent several changes and compromises during congressional debate over the bill. Ultimately, a child care proposal was incorporated into the 1990 Budget Reconciliation Act.

Initial Child Care Proposal: ABC

Helen Blank of the Children's Defense Fund was the first to start the ball rolling in creating a child care proposal during the early months of 1987. Blank and Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, organized over seventy interest groups (child care advocates, women's organizations, labor organizations, business groups and academics) and individuals into the Alliance for Better Child Care specifically to campaign for federal child care legislation. Blank and other members of the Alliance wrote
the Act for Better Child Care (ABC), which became the vehicle for child care legislation. Utilizing the vast grassroots network available to them through member groups, the Alliance directed a nationwide publicity campaign to increase public and members of Congress' awareness of the inadequacy of existing child care services.

The Alliance selected Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Congressman Dale Kildee (D-Mich) to introduce the bill. Senator Dodd was chosen to introduce the bill in the Senate since he had a long history of interest in child care issues. The fact that he chaired the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources was also important. Congressman Kildee was asked to introduce the bill in the House for similar reasons. Along with his interest in social issues like child care, Kildee was the chair of a relevant subcommittee and had a very strong relationship with labor organizations, one of the three major groups represented in the Alliance.\(^3\)

ABC proposed to set up a new block grant specifically to provide lower-income families (households whose income did not

---

\(^3\) The other two groups were children's advocates and women's organizations. According to Susan Wilhelm of the House Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Education and Labor, labor organizations had great influence since they were able to make substantial financial contributions to congressional and legislative campaigns (4/1/93).
exceed 100 per cent of the median income of a state) with grants for direct child care services. The bill authorized $2.5 billion to be distributed over fiscal years 1990-93 to states that applied for the grant. The funds were to be used as follows: 75 per cent to provide funds to families; 15 per cent to improve compliance with national licensing requirements and to provide training and scholarship assistance to child care providers; and 10 per cent for administrative costs incurred by the state. Another provision directed the creation of a national advisory committee that would establish minimum health and safety standards for all facilities (Senate Report 100-484: 54).

On June 11, 1987, Senator Dodd held a hearing prior to ABC's introduction, entitled "Examining initiatives needed to meet the demand of quality and affordable child care in the United States." This hearing was also part of the Alliance's campaign to publicize its cause on the Hill. It was an attempt to establish the need for the legislation. Proponents of a child care proposal (similar to the future ABC) argued that there was a national crisis in child care services, due to the dearth of affordable, available, and high quality child care.

The official debate over ABC began in November of 1987 when Senator Dodd and Congressman Kildee introduced the Act for Better Child Care Services of 1987 in the Senate and House
respectively.
Ten hearings were held on the Hill in the House and Senate: four hearings by the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism of the Committee on Human Resources and Labor; three by the House Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Education and Labor; and three by the full House Committee on Education and Labor; (Appendix C lists all of the hearings in chronological order). During the Senate hearings, 39 out of the 43 panelists testified in favor of ABC,\(^4\) reiterating the previous theme of the "crisis" of existing child care services. Of the four who testified against ABC, three were from conservative think tanks (Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, and William Mattox and Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council). The proportion of opponents was slightly higher in the hearings held by the House Subcommittee on Human Resources, where seven out of 42 panelists testified against ABC, two of whom were members of the House and two from conservative think tanks.

Only two hearings were held in the Senate Subcommittee on Family, Children, Drugs and Alcoholism before the bill was accepted by the full Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass), chair of the

\(^4\) See Appendix A for the names and organizational affiliations of testifiers; see Appendix B for a breakdown of supporters and opponents in terms of their gender.
Committee on Labor and Human Resources brought ABC before the full committee on March 15, 1989. By a vote of 11–5, the committee accepted ABC with virtually no amendments to the original bill (Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1990: 547). Dissenting votes were cast by Republican Senators Dan Coats, Strom Thurmond, David Durenberger, Thad Cochran, and Nancy Kassebaum (Y1.1/5:101-17); the bill was passed by the Senate on June 23, 1989 by a voice vote (Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1990: 548).

Since the bulk of conflictual debate occurred in the House, the rest of the chapter focuses on what happened there.

Competing Proposals and a Jurisdictional Struggle

In the House conservative opponents of ABC attempted to counter the bill by redefining the child care problem and then proposing an alternative that fit their conception of the problem. In the Spring of 1988, members of several conservative groups and think tanks -- Free Congress, the Eagle Forum, Concerned Women of America, The Heritage Foundation, and The Family Research Council -- formed a coalition to oppose ABC and produced an alternative proposal. This coalition defined the "child care crisis" as the over-taxation of families, a situation that had driven both parents into the workforce. They argued that government needed to
increase household incomes instead of creating a new child care program that would increase taxes. The alternative generated by this coalition was based on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) that (at the time) provided for a tax deduction for every dependent child within a household. Congressman Clyde Holloway (R-La) supported the coalition's approach to the child care crisis and introduced the Dependent Tax Credit Reform bill (H.R. 3944) in the House in March 1988.

Supporters of the EITC proposal promoted their bill using several different arguments. They claimed that ABC discriminated against households in which one parent stayed at home to care for their children. Under the EITC proposal, on the other hand, all households with dependent children could benefit from the tax credit. EITC supporters, such as Secretary of Education William Bennett, claimed that government should not be in the business of biasing families' choices of how to care for their children (4/21/88:38).

In addition to the accusation that ABC discriminated against households that did not use outside child care facilities, opponents of ABC pointed out that the bill did not permit families to utilize the estimated one-third of existing child care centers that had some type of religious affiliation. The architects of ABC had purposely left out facilities with religious affiliations for fear of violating the constitutional separation of church and state. Many
supporters of ABC, however, wanted to include these facilities in the bill. In an attempt to reach a compromise among ABC supporters, Congressman Kildee proposed the addition of a voucher system that would permit parents to obtain a voucher from the government and redeem it at any facility, including those with religious affiliations.

Kildee, however, was unable to secure a majority vote within the subcommittee. Both Republicans, such as Clyde Holloway (R-La) and Thomas Tauke (R-Iowa), and Democrats supported the EITC proposal over ABC. Kildee's frustrated efforts to get the Subcommittee's approval coupled with the end of the congressional year prompted Congressman Augustus Hawkins (D-Ca), chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor, to take control of the committee debate on child care. Thus, Hawkins introduced a new child care bill, one that, in effect, ousted ABC as the Democrats' child care bill in the House.

Debate on H.R.3 and the Church/State Issue

Hawkins's approach to the church/state issue was embodied in the bill he generated, the Child Development and Education Act (H.R. 3). H.R.3 proposed using the public school system as the structural foundation of the program. In this way, H.R.3 was able to avoid the constitutional dilemma produced by the church/state question. Furthermore, if the full committee
accepted H.R.3, the Democrats would have a stronger chance of fighting the EITC alternative advocated by some Republicans.

The testimonies in the last three hearings, held on H.R. 3 in the House Committee on Education and Labor, differed from the earlier House hearings. Whereas the testimonies given in support of ABC in the subcommittee focused on gathering support for federally funded child care services, the debate on H.R. 3 shifted to a discussion of how the program would be structured, who would have control over the allocation of resources, and who would direct the implementation of the program. Part of this shift was due to the pervasive belief that child care had become a "hot" issue and, as several people expressed, a child care bill of some kind would probably make it to the House floor for a vote. As Hawkins put it:

I think that we have a broad agreement that the time is right for a Federal response to [child care]...On January 3, I introduced the proposed Child Development and Education Act of 1989, H.R. 3, with the intention of using it as a vehicle for crafting legislation with bipartisan support and incorporating the best thinking of the experts in the field (1/29/89:1-2).

Thus the debate centered on whether child care legislation should be structured in a custodial or educational manner. An emphasis on educational care would have been similar to Head Start, with a focus on increasing young children's learning abilities; custodial care places less
emphasis on learning development. H.R. 3 proposed creating child care facilities within the public school system, a proposal that Hawkins argued would provide child care services that emphasized the educational development of children, rather than simply providing adult supervision as custodial services do.

Compromise: Incorporation in OBRA

H.R. 3 was passed by the Committee on Education and Labor on June 26, 1989 by a vote of 23-11, virtually a strict party-line vote. The House then passed H.R. 3 on March 29, 1990 in a vote of 265-145. Even though the child care bill technically accepted by the House was H.R. 3, the fundamental structure of the bill was based upon the basic concept of forming new block grants (as ABC proposed), but with the inclusion of a voucher system. The only remnants of the original H.R. 3 bill were a few minor provisions that would set up after-school day care facilities within public schools for parents with school age children. Once the bill passed the House, it was added into the discussion on all other spending and revenue bills for 1990 during the OBRA conference committee.

Since the House and Senate had passed different versions of a child care bill, members of the conference committee had to construct a compromise between the two bills. At this
point Downey generated another child care proposal, one that attempted to use an existing entitlement, Title XX of the Social Security Act, as the fiscal structure of a child care bill. The final child care proposal produced by the conference which both the House and Senate accepted, was based upon this proposal.

Senate and House supporters of ABC were forced to compromise, dropping the new block grants of the original ABC bill and using both of the approaches advocated by Downey, channeling the funding through the entitlement provision in the Social Security Act and incorporating the EITC to benefit parents of infants up to three years old. Yet, the final obstacle to producing a bill acceptable to both chambers was controversy over the use of a voucher system. Once the Senate gave in and accepted the proposal in H.R.3, the conference committee produced a proposal acceptable to both the House and Senate.

The conference committee voted to recommend that this revised child care proposal be incorporated into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Bill of 1990. On October 26, 1990, the House voted in favor of the conference’s recommendation in a vote of 224 to 200 (Congressional Record 10/26/90:D1431). The Senate followed suit on October 27, 1990 in a vote of 54 to 45 (ibid 10/27/90:S17568).
Description of Omnibus Reconciliation Budget Act of 1990

Four parts of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (Public Law 101-508) dealt with child care services. First of all, the amount set aside for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) was increased, and these tax credits were made available to low-income families in which one parent cared for children under three years old at home in lieu of outside child care. Funding also was increased for the Aid to Families for Dependent Children (AFDC) program as well as for Head Start.

The largest fiscal allocation for child care in OBRA was set aside for grants available through Title XX of the Social Security Act. States were eligible to apply for up to a total of $2.5 billion available for fiscal year 1991-1993. According to the guidelines set forth in the Act, the state must use 75 per cent of the funds to provide services to eligible families (those with household incomes at or below 75 per cent of the state median income level) on a sliding-fee scale. These funds also were to be used to create new facilities. The remaining 25 per cent was to be used to

---

5 In an interview, Jerry Klepner of AFSCME claimed that labor's support for a child care bill was heavily predicated on the middle class benefiting. However, Klepner noted that this idea was struck out in order to avoid opponents' charge of creating another "middle class entitlement." The change, then, from 100 to 75 per cent of the median income was part of this compromise.
improve the quality of the services and the availability of before and after school child care services. Some of this money had to be reserved for resource and referral programs, training programs for child care providers, increases in the salaries of providers and low interest loans to enable providers to comply with regulations and standards.

In the third section, states were required to provide parents with the option of using non public child care centers through a system of vouchers. The child care voucher system was created to permit parents to use sectarian child care services. Finally, one section of the law dealt with the contentious issue of whether the states or the federal government would create a set of quality standards. No national commission was set up to create a national set of either recommendations or regulations to which states had to adhere, as both Dodd and Kildee had advocated in their original versions of ABC. However, any state that did not require providers to be licensed in order to operate were only permitted to allocate funds to or reimburse vouchers from providers that were registered with the state (National Research Council 1991:8-10).

Although the Child Development and Education Act of 1989 that Hawkins introduced (H.R.3) was the bill that was passed by a majority vote in the House and not Kildee’s ABC bill, H.R. 3 was only responsible for adding two secondary
provisions to ABC: the increase in funding for EITC and the allocation of an unspecified amount for before and after school child care services. The additional funding for EITC was a bow to Republican demands (most notably those of President Bush) for some funding to go to those families who opted to care for their own children at home. Republicans also claimed the use of religious vouchers as a victory; however, Helen Blank claimed that the Alliance (with the exception of labor groups) did not oppose the vouchers, since their use only increased the number of children and parents who could take advantage of the benefits.

Conclusion

The initial child care proposal generated by the Alliance for Better Child Care underwent several changes before it was finally accepted by Congress. It began as a block grant set up to aid states in subsidizing child care costs for parents and improving the quality of existing care. But, when the House began to deliberate on the bill, conservative Republicans, who opposed ABC, attempted to redefine the child care problem and proposed a different alternative, based upon the EITC. They claimed that it discriminated against parents who did not use child care services and families who chose to use religiously affiliated facilities. By using the EITC, they argued that these biases could be avoided.
At the same time that opposition arose from conservatives, child care supporters in the House were divided over the church/state issue, a conflict that stalled proceedings on any child care legislation during 1987 and 1988. This conflict occurred on two levels: 1) whether to include religiously affiliated facilities, and 2) how to structure a plan that included those facilities without violating the constitutional separation of church and state. Three different solutions competed for support among child care advocates. Congressman Kildee wanted to include these facilities and proposed a voucher system whereby state governments would issue coupons to families who could redeem them at any facility, including religiously affiliated ones. In this manner, the government would not be directly funding religious institutions and therefore would not violate the separation of church and state.

Congressman Hawkins was strongly opposed to including the religious facilities and proposed a different approach to solving this problem. He introduced a whole new bill, H.R. 3, that would use the public school system as the structural base of a new child care system.

This obstacle forced child care advocates into a standoff that was finally solved when Congressman Hawkins was able to muster enough support for H.R.3, with the addition of the voucher system, to bring it to the floor for a vote. It was
Hawkins' bill that came out of the Committee on Education and Labor and was accepted by the House.

Once H.R.3 passed the House, it was added to the budget conference convened to debate the other revenue and spending bills passed by both chambers. Since the Senate had previously accepted the ABC bill, hammering out a child care bill became the job of the conference members. During the conference debate, the new grant structure that ABC had provided for was dropped in favor of channeling the funding through an existing entitlement provision in Title XX of the Social Security Act. In addition, the vouchers for religiously affiliated services were included in the bill, and the EITC was increased to aid parents who chose to remain at home to care for infants and toddlers up to three years old.

The next chapter describes the theoretical framework used to analyze the bill, the research design for the project, and the limitations of the design and the research.
Chapter III
Theoretical Framework and Research Design

This thesis originated as an effort to explore how U.S. government has responded to the issue of child care. Ultimately, I chose to analyze the national child care bill introduced in 1987 as the Act for Better Child Care Services (ABC) that later was incorporated into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. The previous chapter briefly detailed ABC's legislative history.

As Chapter One stated, my main interest in ABC stemmed from the question of how and why a federal child care initiative was able to successfully make the transition from the "governmental" agenda to the "decision" agenda in the late 1980s when it had been thwarted throughout the 1970s. This chapter first explains the theoretical framework I used to analyze this case. Then, I discuss why I chose to study ABC and why I decided to use a single case study. Finally, the chapter turns to the details of the research, concluding with a discussion of the project's limitations.

A Theory of How Issues Make the Transition to the Decision
In *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy*, John Kingdon examines both how issues rise on the governmental agenda (the sets of issues and problems that members of Congress consider for legislative action) and how some issues make the transition to the "short list" of the governmental agenda, which he terms the "decision agenda." The decision agenda is comprised of items that are very prominent on the governmental agenda and are being moved into position for enactment or rejection. Since Kingdon does not explicitly state how to tell when an issue makes the transition to the decision agenda, I define this transition as occurring when a bill is brought out of committee to the floor for a vote.

Using the "Garbage Can Model" of decision making, Kingdon creates a framework for understanding how an item makes the transition to the decision agenda. The garbage can model identifies four separate streams that circulate within the decision making arena: problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities. This theory recognizes that the mix of the four streams does not produce a conventionally rational decision process, with first the recognition of a problem, a ranking of the values or goals to be pursued in responding to

---

the problem, the search for solutions, an evaluation of the solutions in terms of those values or goals, and finally a selection of the "best" solution (i.e., the one that maximizes value attainment). For instance, in the garbage can model participants often generate solutions in which they have a personal interest (that, for example, increase their power, fall in their area of jurisdiction, or are congruent with their policy values), and then search for a problem or a choice opportunity to which to attach their solution. Alternatively, an opportunity to make a decision may present itself, and participants will push a solution already coupled to a particular "pet" problem.

Drawing on these ideas, Kingdon's model of agenda creation identifies three streams that circulate within the legislative decision arena: problems, policy, and politics. The problem stream is the mix of different conditions and problems in society. Conditions, however, do not become "problems" until they are identified as problems. This occurs when actors within the relevant policy community, [[which can include congressional staffers, bureaucrats, lobbyists, and academics] people who concentrate or specialize in particular issues], identify different types of indicators and use them to try and bring attention to a condition. Problems also come to people's attention in the form of a "focusing event" or a crisis that highlights an existing condition that is perceived
as problematic. "Feedback," the information received by monitoring existing programs, is another important factor that brings conditions to people's attention. Using indicators and other factors to define a condition as a problem or to bring attention to a problem is a major part of the problem stream. As Kingdon observed, "getting people to see new problems, or to see old problems in one way rather than another is a major conceptual and political accomplishment" (ibid:121).

The policy stream is most important in creating alternatives to existing problems. Once they have been suggested, alternatives must meet certain criteria if they are to survive. Kingdon identifies three sets of criteria: technical feasibility, value acceptability, and anticipated future constraints. Issues of technical feasibility involve questions of whether the proposal can be implemented. Questions of value acceptability deal with issues of equity and efficiency as well as with notions of the acceptable role of government within a specific realm of policy. When an alternative is first generated, it must have value acceptability from the policy community; otherwise it will not survive the initial stages of advocates' lobbying efforts. Moreover, the proposal must retain acceptability once debate on it begins in Congress, or it will not survive. The third criterion for survival is the anticipation of future constraints. Once a proposal begins to receive serious
consideration, one of the first concerns is budgetary. The proposal's cost must be tolerable relation to the other demands in the federal budget. Secondly, the solution that the proposal offers must have "public acquiescence." If the solution is not acceptable to the target population who will benefit from the program, members of Congress will be reluctant to endorse the proposal. Even if an alternative meets these criteria, its transition to the decision agenda is not guaranteed since elements from the other streams are important to the transition.

It is also within the policy stream that advocates of specific issues, or "policy entrepreneurs," work to "soften up" the public and policy community. According to Kingdon, softening up is a process of preconditioning that tries to accustom and familiarize the public and the policy community to particular problems and solutions. This process is used to create a climate that will be receptive to future proposals.

The political stream is composed of four elements: the national mood, organized political forces, events in government, and the individualistic politics among members of the policy community in their struggles to gain power and retain their positions. The national mood does not reflect the "mass public opinion" demonstrated in opinion polls, but rather those opinions of organized interests, political elite
opinions, and specialized media (156). Organized political forces are a major element in the political stream, including a wide range of groups from interest groups to PACs to political parties (ibid:157). Thirdly, events in government, such as shifts in the physical makeup of legislative bodies and administrative departments as well as the expansion and reduction of departments and jurisdictions are also key elements in the political stream. Advocates gauge the political stream to test public opinion and the narrower policy community’s receptivity to an issue. As Kingdon noted, if the values that a proposal promotes are not acceptable to the general public, "the potential of retribution at the polls is likely to torpedo the idea in Congress" (1984:171). Likewise, if the ideas embodied in an alternative do not satisfy the community’s values in terms of equity, efficiency, or the appropriateness of governmental involvement, most likely the proposal will not survive. On the other hand, when support grows for a bill, there can be a snowballing phenomenon that Kingdon terms the "bandwagon effect." The bandwagon effect may develop when a bill is first introduced in Congress when a groundswell of support may initially raise support for the bill. Bandwagons also form once the bill is fully worked out, and legislators try to "get a piece of the action" by riding the coattails of a popular bill for which they hope to receive credit for during reelection campaigns.
Reaching a political consensus through compromise is one of the final events in the political stream that contributes to the joining of the streams. Once a bill has been "fine tuned" and fully worked out, legislators, lobbyists and other governmental proponents bargain to construct a winning coalition for the bill.

Kingdon argues that when these three streams converge, the probability of an issue making the transition to the decision agenda increases dramatically (1984:187). A convergence of the streams occurs when a viable solution is attached to a problem and the political climate is receptive to this coupling. However, this coupling is ineffective unless there are actors prepared to take advantage of the coupling. This opportunity is called a "policy window" (ibid:174). When a policy window opens and there is a convergence of the streams, there is an increased probability that action on a bill will occur.

According to Kingdon's observations, windows open for many reasons: a change in presidential administration, a shift in the composition of Congress, national mood swings, and perceptions of a national crisis. The openings produced by these events can create windows in either the policy stream or the political stream. For instance, a change in administration or congressional personnel may produce an opening in the policy stream as new individuals with different
policy ideas become involved in the decision making process, but the necessary political support at the national level may not be present. Likewise, shifts in the national mood or the occurrence of a crisis may produce a window in the political stream. But, if there are no policy entrepreneurs standing by waiting to pounce on the open window, it may shut without any action transpiring. Since windows do not remain open long, promoters must act quickly to take advantage of them.

Policy entrepreneurs are active in all three streams. In the policy stream, they generate policy alternatives or solutions for "pet" problems. Entrepreneurs are important in identifying and defining problems, which then contribute to the circulation of issues in the problem stream. In the political stream, entrepreneurs try to persuade the various actors of the political stream of the importance of their project and the necessity to act upon it. It is the policy entrepreneurs who most often are responsible for seizing an opportunity produced by a policy or political window opening. They attempt to pull the streams together and direct them at the opening window to produce the policy outcome they desire.

The analysis is based upon this framework which is applied to the case study in Chapter Four. The next section details the case study.
The Case Study

My initial interest in child care arose from the fact that it appeared that the United States government was one of the only advanced industrialized countries that did not have a national child care policy (Kamerman et.al.,1984:4), and I wanted to examine why this was true. After some research, however, I discovered that there had been legislation enacted in the past on a temporary basis. The Works Progress Act sponsored a network of nursery schools during the Great Depression in order to create jobs. During World War II, when a number of women, many of whom were mothers, temporarily joined the depleted workforce, the Lanham Act authorized the opening of child care facilities.

More recently, several attempts were made to pass comprehensive bills in the 1970s. As noted in Chapter One, child care advocates tried several times during the decade to pass child care legislation. In 1971 the Comprehensive Preschool Education and Child Day Care Act was passed by both houses of Congress, but was vetoed by President Nixon, who called it "the most radical piece of legislation to emerge from the 92nd Congress" (Bowman, 1975:2639). After sponsors disputed this and other charges, the Senate repassed similar legislation in 1972, but it died in the House (ibid:2639). This failure may be attributable to the fact that key promoters perceived that there was a lack of sufficient public
support for a comprehensive federal child care bill, a feeling that may have been intensified in an election year. Specifically, this lack may have reflected the influence of a particular "organized force," conservatives for whom Nixon aide Patrick Buchanan -- author of the veto message -- was a White House advocate.

In other attempts during the 1970s to pass child care legislation, the proposals pushed by supporters failed to meet several criteria necessary to survive the transition to the decision agenda, much less to be signed into law. The greatest obstacle seemed to be one of fiscal feasibility. During this period, there were many pressures to curtail social spending due to faltering economic conditions (e.g. the oil crises, stagflation). The 1975 bill, sponsored by Senator Walter Mondale (D-Minn) and Congressman John Brademas (D-Ind), ran into trouble because of the amount of increased new spending it called for. The Ford administration opposed the bill because of the new spending, and President Ford repeatedly threatened to veto the bill if it passed. In addition, some Administration officials argued that the country's mood did not favor federal spending on new social programs.

An overall problem was the lack of strong public support for child care legislation in addition to the presence of intense opposition, elements in the political stream that
manifested in organized interests and the national mood. The "organized force" that had opposed the 1971 bill had grown into the "pro-family" movement which continued to campaign against child care legislation. When the 1975 bill was introduced, conservative opponents claimed, as they had in 1972, that a child care bill would undermine the influence of the "traditional" nuclear family on child development (ibid:2635). In addition, the 1975 bill had been targeted by an anonymous mail campaign that charged it with "sovietizing" the supervision of children (ibid:2635, 2638-9). Even though supporters of the 1975 bill believed that the bill would pass Congress, they decided not to push it. As William Pierce of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. noted, the national and congressional "climate [was] very bad" at the time (ibid:2638). As noted earlier, President Ford's threatened veto of the bill remained a deterrent (ibid:2639).

Since the forces against the bill outweighed the positive ones, the bill's sponsors, Senator Mondale and Congressman Brademas, decided not to push for further action on the bill, and it died in committee. The 1979 proposal was abandoned when its chief sponsor, Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif), abruptly cancelled hearings on it due to Congress's lack of interest in the issue (Joffe, 1983:172).

I decided to study the 1990 bill because it had succeeded in moving to the decision agenda when most of the others had
not. I hoped to understand the process of why and how it had succeeded in making the transition. The circumstances of the previous bills' defeats makes the 1990 bill interesting for several reasons. Even though resources seemed to be a major problem for the 1975 and 1979 attempts, the question of fiscal feasibility arguably should have been even more serious in 1987 due to the tremendous national debt that had accumulated during the 1980s. In addition, during the 1987-1990 experience there was a Republican president and a Democratic Congress, just as there had been in 1971 and 1975.

I decided to use the case study method since it is an appropriate way to examine a process. A case study allowed me to examine the process of how child care made the transition to the decision agenda in a more holistic manner, one that permitted fine-grained observation and analysis of the complexity of the deliberation process that unfolded over a period of three years (Feagin et.al., 1991:8). I was able to note the rise and fall of important actors and arguments and how they affected child care's movement out of the committee forum (ibid:9).

I used a single case study for several reasons. As expanded upon below, I felt that interview data would significantly contribute to my ability to analyze the process since it could provide informal judgements and observations on the part of actors involved in the deliberation that could not
be found in available documents. The decision to use interview data almost required the use of a recent legislative experience since it would be exceedingly difficult to locate participants who were involved in legislative experiences that occurred 10 to 15 years ago. Additionally, since I wanted the research to illustrate the complexity of the process, a comparative case approach would probably have been too large of a project at the master's level, due to resource constraints of time and funding.

Description of Data Collection

Since many different people were involved in the production and promotion of and the deliberation on ABC, there was bound to be a variety of diverse perceptions and explanations of how and why child care made the transition to the decision agenda. In order to obtain a relatively accurate description of this process, the analysis relied on three sources of data: transcripts of congressional hearings, written news coverage, and personal interviews. All of the congressional hearings held on ABC were examined as were the one Senate subcommittee hearing held before ABC's introduction and the three hearings held on H.R.3, the Child Development and Education Act of 1989 by the House Committee on Education and Labor. (For listings of all hearings and the participants see Appendix A.) I examined various national newspapers'

For the interviews, I had hoped to speak to one person from each of the sponsors’ offices (Senator Dodd and Congressman Kildee), someone working for a member who had opposed the bill (such as Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah), someone from a group that had testified in favor of the bill and someone representing an opponent, and an observer who did not have a personal or organizational stake in the specific outcome of the bill, such as a journalist. I wanted to get the perspective of members of Congress who supported and opposed the bill. I felt that information from supporters and opponents who were not members of Congress would also contribute to the picture. I wanted to speak with someone who had reported on the events in order to get an "outside" perspective of the process.

I sent initial queries to the offices of Dodd, Kildee and Hatch that were later followed up with telephone calls. I was unable to secure an interview with anyone in either Senator Dodd’s or Senator Hatch’s offices. However, Senator Hatch’s office referred me to Doug Bager of the Republican Policy Committee as someone who had worked on ABC. Bager in turn referred me to Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, one of the leading lobbyists who opposed ABC. Through a
personal contact with Congressman Kildee's office, I secured an interview with Susan Wilhelm, the Head Committee Staffer of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the House Committee on Education and Labor. The same contact provided me with an interview with Jerry Klepner (AFSCME), one of the three main lobbyists for the Alliance. Both Klepner and Wilhelm directed me to Helen Blank of the Children's Defense Fund. I also contacted Julie Rovner of the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, and she had agreed to meet with me. However, when I attempted to set up an interview with her in Washington, she was out of town and I was unable to reach her.

All together, I interviewed seven people who were involved in the deliberation on ABC. During my visit to Washington, D.C., I interviewed three people, one in person and the other two via telephone. I personally spoke to Doug Bager of the Republican Policy Committee at his office in the Russell Senate Office Building on March 22, 1993. In telephone interviews on March 23, 1993, I spoke with Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation and Donna Lenhov of the Women's Legal Defense Fund. On April 11, 1993, I also interviewed both Jerry Klepner, formerly of AFSCME, and Helen Blank of the Children's Defense Fund over the phone. In addition, I interviewed two congressional staff members. On March 16, 1993, I spoke with Patti Cole of the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism of the
Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; on April 1, 1993, I interviewed Susan Wilhelm. The interviews lasted from ten to twenty minutes depending upon the respondent's degree of cooperation, their schedule and the number of questions asked.

The respondents were questioned about their roles in the deliberation process and their perceptions of why a child care bill was acceptable at this time.

Limitations

As previously stated, a case study provides an in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon, in this instance the process of how child care became a priority on the decision agenda by passing out of the committee hearing phase and coming to the floor in the House and Senate for a full vote. There are, however, some disadvantages to using this type of research design. As is true for most case studies, the findings of this research are not necessarily generalizable to other bills' legislative experiences, particularly since this study was a single case study. Since there is no comparison with another case, any insight or observations produced by the study are almost only applicable to this case. Consequently, the study is limited in additional general knowledge about the agenda create process since I can only understand the why the 1990 bill succeeded, and not why not the other attempts in the
1970s failed.

Additionally, there are limits to the extent that the findings in this case are even generalizable to those of other child care bills. The deliberation on ABC was different from other bills' experience in a few ways. When ABC was introduced to Congress, it was considered by both members of Congress and congressional staffers to be a viable proposal, i.e. it was seen as being fiscally and technically feasible, thus eliminating a long period of "hammering out the details" of a child care proposal. Also, it was backed by a very strong organizational base (the Children's Defense Fund and the Alliance). ABC also differed substantially from some other child care bills since there are several dimensions to the issue of child care. For instance, how is "child care" defined? Who is considered a provider? Who should be regulated? And to what extent should government at various levels - national, state, municipal - be involved in these debates. The basic question ABC revolved around was the extent and nature of governmental involvement in providing child care, a different focus than the one examined, for example, during the Spring 1993 session of the Virginia legislature regarding how to regulate child care services.

Although this thesis analyzes how one issue made the transition to the decision agenda, a successful transition does not insure that a bill will be enacted. As the history
of this case illustrated, even if a bill is brought out of committee to the floor for a vote and is passed, that does not necessarily insure that the bill will be signed into law. This possibility limits what can be concluded about the successful enactment of a bill that has made the transition to the decision agenda. In this instance, the fact that the Senate and House had each passed a different child care bill created the possibility that the bill may not have become law. Furthermore, even if Congress passes a bill, the president may still veto it, as Nixon did with the Child Development Act of 1971.

Other limitations to the study concern the information obtained from the congressional hearing transcripts. Generally, when the sponsor of a bill is the chair of the committee or subcommittee it is assigned to, the hearings are biased towards the bill, as was the case with ABC. Since both Congressman Dale Kildee and Senator Christopher Dodd were the primary sponsors and the chairs of the subcommittees in which the majority of hearings were held on ABC, the testimonies were supportive for the most part. In this case, almost all of the panelists who opposed the bill were placed on the final panel of the hearing and testified last. The testimonies may then have provided an inaccurate perception of overwhelming support for ABC. Due to this imbalance, I took these circumstances into account when evaluating the hearing
testimony.

I also have some reservations regarding the information procured from the interviews. First, the CDF laid the initial groundwork for a child care bill in the summer of 1987; its efforts culminated in the fall of 1990 when both houses of Congress voted on the same bill. So, information provided from interviews was susceptible to lapses in memory and incomplete recall. In some instances, I was aware of more details of the process than the participants were and often had to fill in details to help jog their memories. Thus, the respondents' selective and incomplete memories are a limitation.

Secondly, although I was able to speak with several of the key opponents and supporters of the bill, the success of each interview varied. Four of the respondents were either extremely or relatively cooperative; the remaining three were nearly hostile or coldly reserved. The interviews with Susan Wilhelm (a supporter of the legislation) and Robert Rector (an opponent) were the most successful in terms of length of time (both twenty minutes long) and the extent to which they spoke freely about the formal and informal politics of the process; both also expressed willingness to aid me in the future. Doug Bager of the Republican Policy Committee willingly spoke to me for fifteen minutes, but did not seem to put much effort into recalling more than basic facts about the
bill.

Patti Cole, a staffer of the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism of the Committee on Human Resources and Labor, spoke briefly with me on the phone about the general process of constructing hearings on an issue, but declined to discuss ABC in detail due to her minimal contact with the bill. Upon the recommendation of Robert Rector, I spoke to Donna Lenkov of the Women’s Legal Defense Fund. She spoke to me on the phone for less than ten minutes and was guarded in her responses to my questions concerning the political implications of defining child care as a "family" or a "woman’s" issue. However, her guardedness may have been due to the fact that I told her that Rector, an analyst for a conservative think tank, had recommended that I speak to her.

I was able to interview two out of the three key lobbyists for the Alliance, Helen Blank of the CDF and Jerry Klepner of AFSCME. Klepner was very willing to speak with me since he is a business acquaintance of my family. Due to his recent nomination as an assistant secretary for the Department of Health and Human Services, however, it was difficult for us to speak owing to extreme time constraints. Thus, when I finally did speak with him, we only spoke for ten minutes and the interview was rushed. On the other hand, I was able to speak with Blank only after a month and a half long stream of
phone calls and letters requesting an interview. When she finally agreed, the interview, at her request, lasted five minutes, and she was clearly only cooperating since I had been "so persistent." Although she did answer my questions (see Appendix D), she did not volunteer any new information.

A final concern that should be noted is my own ideological bias. I became interested in child care from personal experiences as a child care provider for working parents. From this perspective I believed that the issue of making child care affordable and available was a "women's" issue and therefore a "feminist" one. In that respect I do not consider myself an objective researcher. It is possible that this bias affected my initial reading of the congressional hearings and how I structured my interview questions, since I was overly sensitive to comments made about working women or mothers. In the beginning of my research, I gave undue importance to the portion of testimonies that focused on women's and mothers' stakes in ABC. But, my interviews with Wilhelm and especially Klepner and Blank demonstrated how incomplete this perspective was in analyzing the legislative process for this specific case.

Chapter Summary

This chapter explained why I chose to do a single case study of the federal child care proposal that passed in 1990.
It also detailed the data sources and theoretical framework that I use in Chapter Four to explain how this bill made the transition from the governmental to the decision agenda. The next chapter applies Kingdon's theory of how issues make this transition. The analysis examines the deliberation process on the child care bill that began as ABC, focusing on how the events portrayed in the congressional hearing transcripts and participants' observations describe the convergence of the "streams" and child care's consequent transition to the decision agenda.
Chapter IV
Joining the Streams:
Child Care’s Journey to the Decision Agenda

In this chapter, I use Kingdon’s framework to identify how and why the three streams converged and child care made the transition to the decision agenda. In this particular case, the story of how the issue of child care made the transition to the decision agenda revolves around the processes that occurred in the streams and policy entrepreneurs’ efforts to join the streams and direct them towards an opening policy window.

Advocates for child care observed several signs in the broader context of the political stream that led them to believe that with some maneuvering of the problem and policy streams, the time might be right to push a child care bill. This belief generated a series of events that set the stage for child care’s rise to prominence on the governmental agenda. Entrepreneurs plucked the issue of child care out of the problem stream, defined it as a "problem" by constructing a "crisis" in child care services, and prepared a policy alternative that provided a solution to the crisis. Meanwhile, advocates also worked to "soften up" members of the relevant policy communities, specialists concerned with child
care -- academics, congressional staffers, policy analysts, child care providers, business executives, and lobbyists -- so that they would be receptive to and accepting of this definition of the problem and its coupling to the particular proposal.

At the same time that advocates were lobbying within the policy community and struggling to combat alternative proposals, they were faced with problems in the policy stream. As noted in Chapter Two, ABC was accepted by the Senate Subcommittee relatively quickly, encountering virtually no opposition. The most serious obstacles arose in the House, which will receive the bulk of attention in this chapter.

In the policy stream, a coalition of conservative think tank analysts and Republican members of Congress redefined the problem of child care and coupled it with an alternative solution. This opposition to ABC in the form of a competing Republican alternative was compounded by a value debate within the policy stream that arose over the issue of church/state relations. The church/state issue effectively divided Democratic ABC supporters and added fuel to Republican opposition to ABC. At the same time that ABC supporters attempted to fight the EITC proposal, they had to produce a solution to the church/state issue that was technically feasible while maintaining its value acceptability, factors critically important in the policy stream.
The effort that finally pushed child care onto the decision agenda came from events that occurred in the political stream. The value debate created by conflict over the church/state issue proved to be a positive force for child care for two reasons. First, it ensured that the issue remained high on the short list of the government agenda, and secondly, it contributed to a bandwagon effect. These two factors provided the necessary thrust that forced the convergence of the streams and directed them through the opening policy window. This action signaled child care's transition to the decision agenda.

Gauging the Mood of the Political Stream

During the mid-1980s child care advocates perceived a growing receptivity to government-subsidized child care services in the political stream, both within the federal government and in the national mood since the problems of working mothers with young children were coming to the attention of the public. This perception of a receptive national mood led to the emergence of an organized force to push for child care legislation. In 1987 Helen Blank and Marian Wright Edelman, director of child care and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) respectively, brought together over 70 groups to form a coalition of labor, children, and women's advocacy groups, and called it the
Alliance for Better Child Care. Its mission was to promote and to try to pass child care legislation.

According to a telephone interview, Blank's perception of a receptive climate for child care legislation was based upon a shift in the policy stream regarding child care's value acceptability within the relevant policy communities. She cited the growing receptivity among key decision makers to social policies such as the welfare reform and family leave bills as indicators in the policy stream that the "national mood" would also be more receptive to a child care proposal. In addition, she noted that the conservative opposition in Congress that earlier child care attempts of the 1970s had experienced had decreased dramatically, another reflection of the changing "national mood" in regards to child care legislation. Blank attributed this decline in opposition in part to the increase in mothers' participation in the paid workforce. On the national level, Blank claimed that since the proportion of women in the paid workforce had increased significantly, from approximately 40 percent in 1970 to 60 percent by 1985, the idea of using child care services had gained more acceptability due to greater demand and need for it. She also argued that the favorable coverage that the popular media were giving to the plight of single working parents and those on welfare contributed to this feeling on the broader social level of receptivity to a child care
Joining the Streams: Linking the Child Care "Crisis" to ABC

Once the CDF formed the Alliance, work began on joining the problem and policy streams. This process entailed three steps. First, the issue of child care was defined as a "problem" that would fit the alternative that the Alliance generated. The Alliance then wrote a bill, entitled the Act for Better Child Care Services (better known as ABC) that became the alternative that the Alliance promoted as the solution to the child care problem. Secondly, member groups of the Alliance lobbied the general public, Congress, and other organized groups that had an interest in child care legislation so that they were receptive to both the way in which the problem of child care was defined and the solution that the Alliance had attached to it. Lastly, once ABC was introduced in Congress, policy entrepreneurs from the Alliance -- Blank, Klepner, and Campbell -- as well as in Congress, lobbied for support.

The three Alliance entrepreneurs were joined by several other congressional actors who were instrumental in joining the streams. Both sponsors of the bill, Senator Dodd and Congressman Kildee, were strong advocates of ABC. A long time champion of child care issues, Dodd was fortunate enough to get ABC accepted by the Senate Subcommittee on Children,
Family, Drugs and Alcoholism relatively quickly, both in 1987 and 1988. According to Klepner, the strong reception that ABC received in the Senate stemmed from extensive softening up by Dodd. Even though Kildee was also a strong advocate of child care, he had not had as much prior experience with the issue as Dodd had had. In addition, Hawkins's experience with child care was limited as well. Although Congressman Downey also facilitated the passage of the child care proposal during the conference committee, thus serving as policy entrepreneurs, their participation did not contribute to the problem of child care making the transition to the decision agenda.

The Alliance attempted to problematize the current condition of child care services as being in a state of "crisis." They claimed that this crisis stemmed from the lack of affordable, available and high quality child care services for lower and middle income families. The Alliance campaigned to persuade the general public and other organized groups interested in child care to accept this definition of the child care issue. To bring the general public's attention to the child care "crisis," the Alliance used the already established grass roots networks of the member groups. Advocates lobbied at the local and state level for favorable media coverage of their perspective on the issue of child care. In addition, local groups sponsored educational gatherings to raise communities' awareness that the condition
of services had reached "crisis" proportions (Jerry Klepner, telephone interview, 4/10/93).

This publicity campaign illustrated how policy entrepreneurs work to change a condition into a problem and generate support for a particular "solution" to the problem. Consequently, when the Alliance handed ABC to Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn) and Congressman Dale Kildee (D-Mich) to introduce to the Senate and House respectively, there was already a strong sense of public support for a child care bill. Two congressional actors remarked on this feeling that the issue of child care was becoming a prominent one on Capitol Hill. Susan Wilhelm, head staffer for the House Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Education and Labor Committee, stated that the Alliance’s grass roots work had "helped create a climate [in Congress] to move forward" (telephone interview, 4/1/93). Doug Bager, analyst for the congressional Republican Policy Committee, also noted that "it was apparent that a child care bill of some sort was going to be passed" (personal interview, 3/22/93).

The Alliance generated the ABC bill, which provided for the creation of a new block grant that could be used to increase the number of child care facilities in states and to expand the supply of "slots" in existing centers. A portion of the funds were set aside to subsidize low income households that were unable to afford child care services. The bill also
had additional provisions for the establishment of national standards to insure high quality care throughout the country.

After the grass roots campaign, advocates moved into the next stage, that of persuading members of Congress and their staffers to support ABC. Advocates lobbied members of Congress and testified before congressional committees. The flow of support for ABC as the solution to the child care crisis illustrated how the Alliance worked to couple the problem and policy streams, linking the child care "crisis" with ABC. In both of the first hearings held in the Senate and the House, all of the panelists supported the Alliance's definition of the issue of child care as being in "crisis." Parents, child care providers, academics, business executives, and lobbyists from children's, women's, and labor groups reiterated the growing number of working women,\(^7\) the high cost of quality child care ($3,000 to $4,000 per year) where it was even available, and the urgent public demand for governmental action.

Analysts, parents, and providers stressed the financial burden that child care costs placed upon low to moderate

\(^7\) Both during the hearings and in interviews, participants interchanged "women" and "wives" when they referred to statistics to support arguments for child care. These statistics did not appear to make a distinction between wives and mothers or women and mothers, or women and wives, thus (falsely) assuming that all women are both wives and mothers.
income families as well as the psychological stress and physical damage that the uneven quality of existing services caused both parents and children. During the Senate subcommittee hearing held prior to ABC's introduction to Congress (which can be viewed as part of the final stages of the softening up process), Helen Blank of the CDF quoted a national survey of 600 American families conducted by AFSCME (the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) that found that 40 percent of the respondents claimed that they could not afford the service they used or were precluded from using other, more desirable services due to prohibitive costs (6/11/87:128). Fran Hayes, a parent, spoke of her difficulties of trying to hold a job and find affordable child care.

The stress that I was under trying to find child care and affordable child care had almost made me think about quitting work and going on welfare (3/15/88:18).

Other parents recounted tragic stories of disastrous and even fatal accidents that occurred in situations where providers were not required to meet basic levels of health and safety codes, or were not properly trained to care for children. One such story was told by Debra Brooks, who related how she "became painfully aware of the dangers of unregulated child care when Eric [her first son] was murdered by his unlicensed home care provider" (3/15/88:16).
This stream of support for ABC illustrated how the Alliance and other supporters of ABC were able to couple the problem with a solution. ABC, however, still faced difficulties in making the transition to the decision agenda as obstacles arose once deliberation began in the House.

Opposition to ABC: The EITC Proposal

The Alliance had to work with others within the relevant policy community to combat opposition and to insure that their proposal met the criteria necessary to survive in Congress. Three lobbyists from the Alliance -- Helen Blank of the CDF, Jerry Klepner of AFSCME, and Nancy "Duffy" Campbell of the National Women’s Law Center -- emerged as the primary policy entrepreneurs for ABC. They faced several obstacles that arose out of both the policy and the political streams.

Redefining the Child Care Problem

Kingdon argues that the coupling of a problem to viable alternative greatly increases the problem’s chances of rising on the governmental agenda (150). Therefore, the reverse can be inferred, that a successful attempt to redirect and redefine a problem and link it to another alternative in the policy stream can result in the first alternative’s failure to make the transition to the decision agenda. The first obstacle ABC encountered came from the policy and problem
streams in the form of a conservative Republican alternative that tried to redefine the child care problem and attach a different alternative.

During the Spring of 1988 analysts from conservative think tanks -- Free Congress, Eagle Forum, Concerned Women of America, The Heritage Foundation, and The Family Research Council -- met specifically to discuss how to oppose ABC. The coalition members were joined by conservative Republican members of Congress, another set of actor in the child care policy community, and together they decided to counter support for ABC.

The coalition framed the child care problem in terms of the over-taxation of families and argued for the use of a tax credit approach as the solution to this problem. According to Robert Rector, the policy analyst for the Heritage Foundation, the group redefined the child care problem and created an alternative proposal.

[We] decided that the real question/issue was not a shortage of child care but lack of sufficient funds available to working parents to sufficiently care for their children (telephone interview, 3/23/93).

Since conservatives defined the child care problem in terms of the over-taxation of families, their proposal advocated giving funds directly to families through an increase in the dollar amount of the tax deduction per child (ibid). Congressman Clyde Holloway (R-La) supported this approach and introduced
the Dependent Tax Credit Reform bill (H.R. 3944) that called for an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), an existing tax deduction allowed for families with dependent children whose income was below a certain level.

Essentially, Holloway's EITC bill was the conservative Republican alternative to ABC. This was evident in both the subcommittee and committee in which the votes on each child care bill (ABC and H.R.3) were divided almost along strict party lines.

During the congressional hearings, conservatives attempted to derail support for ABC in two ways. First, they challenged ABC on value acceptability grounds, raising questions about its equity and the proper role of government in child care. Secondly, they redefined the problem of child care and coupled it with the EITC proposal.

EITC supporters challenged ABC on grounds that it was inequitable. They claimed that ABC discriminated against the traditional nuclear family since it was economically biased in favor of child care arrangements other than those provided primarily by the children's parents. In the opening statement of her testimony, Phyllis Schlafly, president of Eagle Forum, stated:

We oppose H.R. 3660 [ABC], the Federal baby-sitting Bill, because it massively discriminates first against mothers who take care of their own children, second against mothers who choose alternative child care by relatives, friends or
neighbors, without regard to whether they are Government licensed, and third against families who choose religiously affiliated day care (4/21/88:164).

Schlafly reiterated throughout her testimony that ABC was discriminatory.

This bill is so discriminatory that I don't understand how any Congressman running for office this year could possibly support it. Sections 19 and 20 are among the most bigoted, anti-religious sections ever proposed in any legislation (2/21/88:175-176).

Rector also argued that ABC was discriminatory. He urged congress to use the EITC approach as a more equitable way of aiding families with child care costs.

The Toddler Tax Credit would treat all families equally, the ABC bill would discriminate against traditional families where the mother is not employed (4/21/88:302).

ABC also was challenged in terms of the governmental role that it advocated for child care. Schlafly attacked ABC on these grounds, claiming that the "real" purpose of ABC was "to induce middle class American parents to put their children in secular, custodial care from a very early age" (4/21/88:164). William Bennet, Secretary of Education, also argued that the government role that ABC proposed was inappropriate.

It seems to me that if all families with small children, young children, were helped by way of a tax credit, an increased deduction, whatever, they could make their own choices and decisions, and we [the federal government] would not be in the business - this is a very important point - of the government prejudicing that position, or leading
that decision to stay home or go to the workplace by its policy (4/21/28:54).

Alongside of the challenges to the value acceptability of ABC, conservatives promoted their redefinition of the child care problem, coupling it with the EITC proposal. For instance, William Ball of the Association of Christian Schools International, a proponent of the EITC proposal, debated Senator Dodd on the need for child care services outside the home.

(Ball) Your objective, we feel, should not be to increase dependency on child care outside the home, but to make child care outside the home unnecessary...we feel that the way to now give meaningful help to American parents is not by providing more tax money for government, but providing less taxation of parents. Here, there needs to be definite improvement in the tax relief which parents may have.

(Dodd) Thank you, Mr. Ball. Believe me, if I could achieve the latter objective somehow, I am sure I would be applauded wildly. As I mentioned earlier, I think most statistics prove that both men and women - particularly a vast increase in the number of women of late - are in the work force out of economic necessity (ibid:186).

In another effort to redefine the problem of child care, William Mattox of the Family Research Council challenged the claim that there was a national shortage of child care slots for parents who needed them. In his testimony before the Senate subcommittee, he stated "contrary to popular belief, there are quite a few employed mothers [sic] who do not use, desire, or need some type of substitute child care

56
arrangement" (6/28/88:360). He cited the various ways in which parents juggled their careers and child rearing responsibilities.

According to a recent Census Bureau study, 7 percent of all preschool children have what I call "Tag team parents," who work different shifts and share child-rearing responsibilities. Another 4 percent have what I call "double-time mothers"—women who care for their own child while they baby-sit other children or earn income in some other way. Thus, when you add these children to the 54 percent who have full-time stay-at-home mothers, the primary child care arrangement for 65 percent of all preschool children is care by one or both parents (ibid:360).

Following his arguments against ABC's definition of the child care problem, Mattox tried to persuade the group of the benefits of using the tax credit approach to avoid the pitfalls of the ABC approach.

Several current legislative proposals...offer parents a significant tax credit. Importantly, these bills do not discriminate against any child care arrangement....In other words, these bills establish a nondiscriminatory level playing field on which parents can freely choose how to best care for their children (6/28/88:361).

Responding to EITC Supporters

Supporters of ABC responded to the accusations of inequity and discrimination leveled at ABC by supporters of the EITC proposal. According to ABC supporters, providing government-subsidized child care services was not an attempt to "warehouse" America's children, as Schlafly claimed, but
rather an effort to aid parents already working or trying to retain jobs who could not afford any form of child care. Dodd, in his opening statement at the June 28 hearing, pointed out that ABC did not "discriminate against mothers who stay at home, but simply attempt[ed] to address the pressing reality of millions of children whose parents are already in the labor force to stay" (6/28/88: 210). Even though Dodd acknowledged that ABC was not intended to financially aid traditional families since none of the plan was directed towards them, this fact was almost irrelevant because ABC was not constructed as a proposal to aid all families but rather those in which the parent(s) worked.

Some of the hearing panelists who supported ABC also managed to respond to arguments that ABC was inequitable. Rebuttals from other panelists were more substantive in refuting opponents' arguments than rebuttals from the subcommittee chairs. In one case, Heidi Hartman, Director of the Women's Policy Research Institute and the Women's Studies program at Rutgers University, challenged Rector's arguments during the second House hearing. Rector stated that he opposed ABC

...because it economically discriminates against traditional families where the mother is making an economic sacrifice to remain at home and raise her own children, and perform [sic] thereby a vital social function (4/21/88:299).

It was the choice of being able to make this "economic
sacrifice" that conservatives claimed ABC undermined. Hartman pointed out how flawed and inaccurate this definition of discrimination was given the history of public policies and their relationship to the traditional nuclear family in the United States.

Basically the arguments that we've heard about how discriminatory the income tax system is against the traditional family is kind of like fighting battles of some time ago. They [the traditional nuclear family] gained a lot in the Tax Reform Act [of 1986] and it's been the working couples that have felt discriminated against in these last 10 to 20 years (ibid:355).

Congressman Kildee allowed Hartman and Rector to argue back and forth without intervening, possibly because Hartman might have had more leeway in expressing a more ideological position than Kildee due to his "neutral" position as chair of the hearings. Hartman's final comment to Rector put into a nutshell how Kildee might have defended ABC.

You [Rector] look at the same set of statistics and say, "Well, maybe a lot went out, but look how many have stayed home and look how hard they are trying to do that." I think in general our social policy has supported that choice [to stay at home], and I think here is a group of Congressmen and women who want to support those that have made the choice to work or feel they have had to, and the children need some help with that choice, so I applaud them for their efforts. I think that it kind of redresses a historical imbalance the other way...(ibid: 359).

In several instances, supporters presented arguments against replacing ABC with the EITC proposal. During one hearing held by the House Subcommittee on Human Resources,
panelist Kahn pointed out that the tax credit idea was essentially what is known as a child allowance in other Western industrialized countries, and that it was not a substitute for child care facilities but a supplement. According to his analysis of EITC,

A good number of Western industrial democratic societies have [child allowance] policies, at least until children are 2 or 3 years old. In the cases of Norway and England, it's 10 and 16 years old, if it's a single parent family or in poverty. I think the committee should know that is not a way to lower costs. Indeed, if you went in that direction, you'd be multiplying 10, 20 or 30 times the cost that you're talking about in this bill. [T]ax credits are not a substitute, because...it will not solve the problem of low income people. It's just not a way of targeting low income people who are not adequately within the tax system" (4/21/88:94,7).

He added, "it seems to me that talk about offering protection for families as an alternative to child care has to be regarded as a debate which is really attacking child care" (ibid:94).

In another instance, Senator Dodd and Congressman Kildee asked panelists to specifically comment upon why ABC was needed over and beyond an increase in the EITC. At the end of the third Senate hearing, Dodd questioned Dr. Deborah Phillips, professor of psychology at the University of Virginia:

(Dodd) Let me ask one last question...and that is about the myths that we are driving people, women particularly, out of the home, into the workplace, that if we really wanted to do something here, we
ought to be talking about - as I said, I think one [bill] has a $750 tax credit to stay at home, to encourage mothers particularly to stay at home and raise the children rather than going out into the work force - that if we really wanted to improve child care, that's where we ought to be....What is your answer to them?

(Phillips) I am certainly a proponent of parent choice....on the other hand, as you noted, most mothers who work out of necessity. They do not have a choice. And if all we are going to do is give them $750 million around the country, or whatever it is, to stay home, we're going to force many families into poverty, and poverty is not good for children. That's really the choice we're dealing with here (6/28/88:336).

Congressman Kildee, using the same technique to lead a witness, asked Nancy Duffy Campbell of the National Women's Law Center\(^8\) to state for the record her opposition to the tax credit approach.

(Kildee)...there are some who would argue that the simplest way to address the child care problem would be to expand the dependent care tax credit and make it refundable to low-income families. Would you care to comment on that?

(Campbell) Yes....by and large [low income families] will not get benefit from the credit because they won't have tax liability in the first place and, therefore, can't get any help in meeting their child care costs....[It] doesn't help improve the quality of care. It doesn't improve the accessibility. It doesn't help with supply in any direct way (2/28/88:290).

In addition to competition from the Republican

---

\(^8\) Campbell was the third major lobbyist for the Alliance, along with Jerry Klepner of AFSCME and Helen Blank of the CDF. Klepner was the only one of the three who didn't testify, although president of AFSCME, Gerald McEntee, did testify on AFSCME's behalf.
alternative, support for ABC was thwarted by the development of a value debate among Democrats that focused on church/state relations.

The Value Debate Among House Democrats

During the deliberation on ABC in the House, another issue of feasibility arose in the policy stream. The architects of ABC had made a major mistake when they excluded religiously affiliated child care facilities from the proposal. Since these centers comprise approximately one-third of existing services, some congressional supporters of ABC demanded that these services be incorporated into the bill. The debate over whether to integrate these facilities as well as how this should be done stalled the child care bill in the House. ABC supporters were forced to broaden the definition of the child care issue.

Two solutions to the church/state dilemma competed for support. Congressman Kildee proposed the use of a voucher system in which parents could obtain a voucher coupon from the state that would then be redeemable at religiously affiliated facilities, therefore avoiding a direct government subsidy to these centers. The other proposal, however, attempted to skirt the issue entirely since its creator was vehemently opposed to government funding for any type of educational or developmental facilities that had some religious affiliation.
Kildee's proposed voucher system won some support from Republicans who had favored the EITC approach since it made ABC more inclusive of religiously affiliated child care services. At the same time, however, it alienated some steadfast Democrat ABC supporters who opposed the use of governmental monies for any religiously affiliated facility. Because Kildee was unable to muster a majority vote in favor of amending ABC to include the voucher system, he did not bring the bill to a vote in subcommittee. The lack of support for the voucher system and the dearth of alternatives served to paralyze progress on any child care bill. This paralysis was one of the major reasons why Congressman Augustus Hawkins (D-Calif.), chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor, ended the subcommittee's debate on ABC. In an attempt to rekindle interest and thus forward motion for a child care bill, Hawkins introduced a new Democrat child care bill.

As Chapter Two described, Hawkins introduced the Child Development and Education Act in 1989 (H.R.3) as an alternative to ABC. He intended H.R.3 "as a vehicle for crafting legislation with bipartisan support and incorporating the best thinking of the experts in the field" (1/29/89:1-2). Since he refused to sanction the voucher system, fearing that it would still violate the separation of church and state, he set up H.R.3 to avoid the situation entirely. The bill was constructed with the logic of utilizing the existing
facilities and resources of the public school system, thereby avoiding the church/state dilemma. By using the framework of the public school system, H.R.3 also would increase the supply and accessibility of child care services since any child enrolled in public school could benefit.

During the deliberation on H.R.3, as Chapter Two noted, the testimonies focused less on the need for child care and more on the form it would take, educational or custodial. Consequently, only one out of fourteen panelists opposed the idea of a federally funded child care bill. Michael Schwartz, an analyst for the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, supported the Republican EITC alternative. He cited the free market approach in his arguments for using the EITC bill as the solution to the child care problem.

In my opinion, the best means of addressing the child care problem in our society would be to make families capable of exercising market choices. In others words, those families who make more money should have more money. Once they have it, the child care providers will rise and the parents will be able to enforce the standards of reliability which they consider of primary importance to their own families (3/6/89:273).

By using the EITC to boost household incomes, the child care problem could be solved through market mechanisms; supply would increase, thus reducing costs and improving quality.

The lack of opposition to H.R.3, however, may have reflected several factors. First, the arguments for and against federally funded child care were well established
during the subcommittee hearings. And, as several members of Congress noted -- Hawkins, Kildee, Goodling -- there seemed to be a general consensus that the federal government had to have a role in child care (2/9/89:1-3). In addition, the struggle between ABC/H.R.3 and EITC was divided primarily on party lines.

Conclusion

The work of joining the streams, begun by the Alliance, carried on by their three policy entrepreneurs (Blank, Klepner, and Campbell) and those in Congress (Dodd, Kildee, and Hawkins) finally came to fruition when H.R. 3 was accepted by the Committee on Education and Labor. Hawkins's decision to call a committee vote signaled that he and other supporters believed that the streams were converging, signifying that H.R.3 would be accepted, thus making the transition to the decision agenda, and indeed it did.

The process of joining the streams entailed a careful and skillful manipulation of all three streams. Drawing upon a perception in the political stream of a growing receptivity to child care legislation in both the national mood and the policy community, the CDF decided to organize a group to push child care. They created the Alliance for Better Child Care, a coalition of over 70 groups, that defined the condition of child care services as being in a state of crisis, and
therefore problematic. The alternative that the Alliance generated, the Act for Better Child Care Services (ABC), was attached to the problem and promoted in the policy community. This coupling of the policy and problem streams was the first step in promoting a specific child care bill.

Once the campaign for ABC moved to Congress, the policy stream swelled with other actors and competing proposals. Conservative Republican opponents of ABC tried to redefine the child care issue and attach their own alternative, the Dependent Tax Credit Reform bill (H.R. 3944) which called for an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). To justify the redefinition of the child care problem, conservative Republicans attacked ABC on grounds of value acceptability. They claimed that ABC was inequitable, discriminating against families in which one parent remained at home to care for the children. Some EITC supporters also claimed that the economic bias ABC created in favor of both parents working put the federal government in the inappropriate position of encouraging parents to abandon their full-time role of caring for their children.

Another question of value acceptability arose in the House over the issue of whether the child care bill should include religiously affiliated facilities as beneficiaries. Two proposals were offered to solve the problem. Congressman Kildee’s voucher system, which would indirectly fund the
facilities, was initially rejected by Congressman Hawkins on the grounds that it would still violate the separation of church and state. Hawkins proposed using the public school system, thereby skirting the issue altogether. Ultimately, child care did make the transition to the decision agenda when Congressman Hawkins brought it out of committee to the floor for a vote.
Chapter V

The 1990 Experience and the Future of Child Care Policy

This chapter first summarizes the analysis of child care’s transition to the decision agenda, highlighting the obstacles it met and the arguments used to surmount them. Secondly, I discuss why the 1990 bill was successful in contrast to the attempts made during the 1970s. Finally, I offer suggestions for how an initial evaluation of the implementation of the policy should proceed.

Summary of the Analysis

Child care’s journey to the decision agenda began when proponents of federally funded child care decided that the time was right to push for legislation. Prompted by positive observations of certain indicators in the political stream that pointed to a growing receptivity to child care legislation in the national mood, a group of specialists from the child care policy community organized and began the process of joining the political, problem, and policy streams in hopes of finding an opening policy window.

The first step was defining the problem of child care.
The Alliance defined child care as being in a state of "crisis," due to the lack of available, affordable, high quality care. They coupled this definition of the problem to a specific policy alternative, the Act for Better Child Care. In the first step of trying to join the problem and policy streams, the Alliance ran short and intensive local and state lobbying campaigns to raise the awareness of the child care problem. These campaigns were part of the final phases of "softening up" the policy community. The Alliance built support for its definition of the issue, coupling it with ABC as the alternative. Its lobbying efforts then moved to Congress when Senator Dodd and Congressman Kildee introduced the bill to the respective chambers.

Initially, the bill faced little opposition. The Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources accepted it with very little opposition, and the focus of the deliberation moved to the House. In the House, however, ABC did meet considerable opposition. Many problems arose: in the policy stream in the form of a competing Republican alternative, in the problem stream from the conservatives' redefinition of the problem, and in the political stream from an issue generated by questions of value acceptability.

Conservative House Republicans, along with other policy specialists from conservative think tanks, vehemently opposed ABC, challenging it on the grounds that it discriminated
against "traditional" families since they would not benefit from legislation that was based solely on child care outside of the home. The conservative Republicans redefined the child care crisis as a problem caused by the over-taxation of households that had forced women into the workforce; these members proposed an alternative based upon the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

In addition to the competing Republican alternative, a question of value acceptability arose among Democratic supporters of federally funded child care. Since ABC did not provide for the participation of child care centers that had any religious affiliation, an estimated one-third of existing facilities were excluded. Kildee attempted to incorporate these facilities by amending the bill to include a voucher system that would enable families to redeem a coupon at any registered facility. Initially, his proposal met with opposition. Some other Democratic supporters of ABC opposed Kildee's plan or any other one that would include these facilities on the grounds that it would violate the separation of church and state. The conflict over the church/state issue was so divisive that it effectively paralyzed the progress of the bill. Since Kildee was unable to forge a compromise by the time the 100th Congress came to a close, Congressman Hawkins introduced a new child care bill, H.R.3, as the Democratic alternative to the EITC proposal at the beginning
of the 101st session.

After very brief deliberation, the committee accepted H.R.3 in a vote of 23-11. Kildee's voucher system was incorporated into H.R.3 as a concession to the Republicans and a means of attaining the majority needed to vote the bill out of committee.

Why the Successful Transition to the Decision Agenda in 1990?

Mothers' participation in the workforce increased dramatically between 1970 and the mid-1980s, from approximately 40 percent in 1970 to 60 percent by 1985. This increase was the major driving force behind child care's transition to the decision agenda in 1990. This change, however, cannot by itself account for child care's successful transition to the decision agenda. Also important were several other factors. In the broader social context, two factors worked against the successful transition of child care to the decision agenda during the 1970s: a national mood unreceptive to federal involvement in child care and a perception that the federal government was incapable of solving social welfare problems. In the child care policy community, three factors absent in the failed attempts during the 1970s stemmed from child care advocates' inability to build cohesion and coordinate the problem and policy streams: (1) a failure to couple the problem to a viable alternative,
(2) an absence of skillful entrepreneurs supported by a strong organizational base, and (3) insufficient softening-up of the policy community. Comparing the success of 1990 to the earlier failures of the 1970s it is evident that the absence or presence of these factors assisted or hindered child care's attempt to make the transition to the decision agenda. Thus, even though the increase in the number of working mothers was an element crucial to child care's transition to the decision agenda, without the existence of these other factors child care might well have failed again in 1990.

The national mood's receptivity to federally-funded child care services differed greatly between the two periods. In the 1970s, ambivalence towards federally-funded child care stemmed from a concern that it would "break up" the traditional nuclear family and an uncertainty about the practical necessity of such a policy. A lack of public support for child care legislation based upon a concern that it would "break up" the family may have been fueled by President Nixon's strong rejection of the 1971 Child Development Act (Joffe 1984:172; Marshner 1988:29). The

9 Nixon clearly defined government funding of child care services as potentially detrimental to the family structure.

...our response to this challenge [child development] must...be consciously designed to cement the family in its rightful position as the keystone of our civilization....Good public policy

72
practical necessity for child care was much stronger by the late 1980s due to the increased participation of mothers in the paid workforce. As witnesses testified during hearings, by the mid-1980s public opinion was more receptive to and even demanded a government response to families’ needs for child care services, as one survey demonstrated (Snowe 6/28/88:211). Ambivalence towards federally-funded child care persisted during 1987-90, as opposition from conservatives illustrated. But, the growing work/family conflicts arising from mothers’ increased participation in the workforce, coupled with the lack of sufficient child cares services, served to override this ambivalence.

In addition to ambivalent feelings towards government-funded child care, the 1970s was a time of a growing distrust of the federal government’s ability to solve social problems, fueled by the great financial expense and little statistical success of the War on Poverty programs of the 1960s. Coupled with the economic crises of the decade - stagflation, the oil and energy crises - this perception created a general

requires that we enhance rather than diminish both parental authority and parental involvement with children.......for the Federal government to plunge headlong financially into supporting child development would commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to the side of communal approaches to childrearing over and against the family-centered approach (Congressional Record, 10 December 1971, pp.S21129-30; cited in Joffe 1984:171).
antagonism toward federal spending on social programs. Paradoxically, similar feelings regarding reducing government spending on social programs and concerns with balancing the budget were widespread during 1987-90. Yet, the recent passage of the Family Support Act of 1988 and the argument that its "success" was heavily dependent upon the availability of child care services may have shifted policy makers’ perception of funding child care legislation from one of unnecessary to essential spending. As Marian Wright Edelman said, "we cannot afford not to pass this bill" (2/21/88:14).

Notwithstanding the broader social context’s receptivity to federal child care legislation, members of the child care policy community failed during the 1970s to secure several elements critical to the problem’s successful transition to the decision agenda. Public reservations about government involvement with child care services and increased federal spending on social programs contributed to the lack of cohesion and consensus among members of the child care policy community regarding government’s appropriate role in child care policy. As Joffe notes (1984:171), during the 1970s feminist, social welfare, and children’s advocacy groups were unable to present a unified front on the issue to the decision makers of policy community. This obviously was not the case in 1987-90 when the Alliance was able to secure the support of the vast majority of the child care policy community for ABC.
Moreover, overwhelming congressional support, as evidenced by the 225 co-sponsors, demonstrated legislators' perception that the public was receptive to federal spending on child care legislation (telephone interview with Susan Wilhelm, 4/1/93).

During the attempts of the 1970s, advocates failed to successfully join the policy and problem streams. As noted above, the lack of agreement within the policy community on how to define the child care problem or on a viable solution for it inhibited internal support for the two proposals initiated in 1976 and 1977-78. In contrast, the definition of the problem as a lack of available, affordable, high quality care gained widespread acceptance within the community during 1987-90. Furthermore, the coupling of this definition of the problem with ABC, a "well worked-up" bill, increased support for the issue within the child care policy community. Here was a proposal that appeared to be "going places."

The creation and promotion of this coupling was made possible by several skillful and dedicated policy entrepreneurs, backed by the extensive resources of the Alliance. Without these actors, it is dubious whether the coupling of problem and solution would have been as successful as it was. Although the two attempts to pass child care legislation in the late 1970s were sponsored by influential members of Congress - Senator Walter Mondale (D-Minn) and John
Brademias (D-Ind) in 1976; Senator Cranston (D-Calif) in 1977-78 - they lacked the unified backing that the Alliance provided during 1987-90.

A final element was the degree of softening-up of the policy community that preceded congressional consideration of child care legislation. Arguably, the failures of the late 1970s were necessary for paving the way for the success of 1987-90. The failures of the 1976 and 1977-78 attempts acted as "trial balloons," floated in the policy community to accustom its members to the different approaches to federal government involvement with child care services. Thus, the latter success may not have been possible without the earlier failures.

It was the combination of the above factors and their interactions that enabled child care to make the successful transition to the decision agenda in 1990 when it had failed in the 1970s.

Next Steps in the Analysis

The successful transition of child care legislation to the decision agenda and its subsequent enactment was the first step in providing lower-income families with child care services. Yet a policy means little until it is interpreted and implemented. Since the bill will be considered for re-authorization in 1994, policy makers will be interested in evaluating the legislation's effectiveness to date. Thus, at
this stage a variety of questions arise regarding the bill's "success." Two important questions pertinent to decisions regarding re-authorization concern the costs and benefits of the legislation: to what extent have states taken advantage of the policy, and to what extent have the policy's objectives of increasing the affordability, availability, and quality of existing care been achieved?

First, since states have to apply for funds to improve child care services, it is important to examine how many states have applied for the funds. The interest in taking advantage of the policy has important implications for judging its worth and effectiveness. If demand has been low, leaving a surplus of appropriated funds, members of Congress may perceive the policy to be unnecessary and may be reluctant to re-appropriate for it or even re-authorize it. On the other hand, high demand may prompt Congress to increase the amounts authorized when the Act comes up for re-authorization. That the authorized levels may not be appropriated, of course, is always a possibility. The fact that these two activities are performed by different committees increases the potential conflicts that may arise during the consideration for re-authorization.

Along with assessing costs of implemented legislation, decision makers examine the effectiveness of the policy. One way to evaluate the effectiveness of legislation is to examine
the extent to which its objectives were fulfilled. Since funds were earmarked for different purposes - 75 percent for distribution of coupons to families and increasing slots in existing centers; 15 percent for aiding existing centers comply with state set quality standards - the structure of the legislation can be evaluated by examining the extent to which both types of funds were spent. How were child care coupons distributed to recipient families? Was it necessary to create a new bureaucracy or was it possible to utilize an existing structure? What was the cost of creating a distributive apparatus? Did its cost inhibit or encourage a distribution to a greater number of families? How many families were able to benefit? Helping existing facilities comply with quality standards first entails the identification of centers that are in violation of standards. Secondly, an important concern is how facilities qualify for assistance. Do centers volunteer an application for assistance, or are they singled out by government inspectors? Depending upon the coercive or voluntary nature of this portion of the policy may determine the extent to which it is effective.

It is important to seek the answers to these questions since the "success" of a policy generally is indicated by its ability to survive the formal evaluation process, in this case a consideration for re-authorization. The future impact of this policy is still unknown.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Barrett, Michele and Mary McIntosh (1982), *The Anti-Social Family*, Verso Editions/NLB


Christian Scientist Monitor, The, (1990), "Child-Care Progress," editorial, April 5; p.20


Foucault, Michel (1972), "History, Discourse and Discontinuity," *Salmagundi*, no. 20, Summer/fall 1972; pp.223-235


Press, Chapel Hill and London; pp.244-268


Ms. Magazine, (editorial) "Do It, Ron!" Ms. Magazine, v. 16, no.8, February; p.18


National Research Council (1991), Caring for America's Children, National Academy Press


Legislative Exchange Council, Washington, D.C.; 17–24


Rich, Adrienne Cecile, (1976) Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution, Norton, New York,


Sargent, Lydia, ed. 1981, Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, South End Press

Scanzoni, John, (1991) "Balancing the Policy Interests of Children and Adults," The Reconstruction of Family Policy, Elaine A. Anderson and Richard C. Hula,


Williams, Christine L. (1991) "Case Studies and the Sociology


Young, Iris Marion, (1990) Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis


GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

DOC L11.S.hrg.100-882
DOCS L11.S.hrg.101-135
DOCS Y4.Ed.8/1.100-74
DOCS Y4.Ed.8/1.100-90
DOCS Y4.Ed.8/1.100-91
DOCS Y4.Ed.8/1.101-63
DOCS Y4.Ed.8/1.101-18

85
TABLE 1
CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS:
SUPPORTERS, OPPONENTS, AND THEIR AFFILIATIONS

SENATE HEARINGS TESTIMONIES PRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING
6/11/1987

(ALL PROPONENTS OF ABC)
Marva Preston, Detective, City of Miami Police Department, Miami FL
Judy Griesse and Alyce Chessmore, Family Day Care Providers, Fairfax County, VA
Gary Goldberg, Ex. Producer of "Family Ties," UBU Productions, Los Angeles, CA
Dr. Ed Zigler, Dir. Yale Bush Center On Child Development and Social Policy, New Haven CT
Toni Porter, Dir. of Research and Program Development, CHILDicare, INC.
Nancy Travis, Dir. of the Southern States Prgm, Save the Children, Atlanta, GA
Caro Pemberton, Child Care Employee Project, Oakland, CA
Helen Blank, Dir. of Child Care, Children's Defense Fund, Washington, D.C.
Doug Baird, Chair of Child Care Task Force, Child Welfare League and Ex. Dir., Associated Day Care Services of Metropolitan Boston, Boston MA
Arnold Fege, Dir. of the Office of Governmental Relations, National PTA, Washington, D.C.
Wendy Sherman, Special Sec. for Children and Youth, State of Maryland, Baltimore, MD

3/15/88

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
Parents
Jimmy White, Lexington, KY
Joy Majied, Washington, D.C.
Debra and Michael Brooks, Gunnison, CO
Fran Hayes, New York, NY

Marlene Johnson, Lt Gov. D-Minnesota
Carrie Saxon Perry, Mayor of Hartford, CT, representative of United States Conference of Mayors
Harry L. Freeman, American Express, New York, NY
Sandra Salyer, Vice President, Mervyn's of Dayton Hudson Corp., Hayward, CA
Cheryl Smith, Corporate Kids, Olathe, KS
Margaret Fitzgerald, Vice President of Hill, Holliday, Connors and Cosmopulos, Boston, MA
Dr. Dana Friedman, Sr. Research Associate, Conference Board, New York, NY
Ellen Galinsky, Project Dir. of Work and Family Life Studies, Bank Street College, New York, NY
Lynn Lyss, Vice President, National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis, MO

(OPPONENT OF ABC)
William Bentley Ball, Association of Christian Schools International, Harrisburg, PA

6/28/88

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
Thomas H. Kean, Governor, R-NJ
Bill Clinton, Governor, D-AK
Thomas J. Downey, Congressman, D-NY

Parents
Carolyn Henricques, New York, NY
Myra Hogan, Greenfield, MA
Michaelene Michaels, Lansing, MI
Philip W. Johnston, Sec of Ex. Office of Human Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Dr. Deborah Phillips, Assistant Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
Roger D. Hall, Pres. Corporate Realty International, Belair, TX
Sandy Gellert, Pres. National Association For Family Day Care, Clifton Heights, PA
Elliot Ginsberg, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Hartford, CT

(OPPONENTS OF ABC)

Robert Rector, Policy Analyst, Heritage Foundation
William Mattox Jr., Dir. of Public Policy, Family Research Council of America, Inc., Washington D.C.

1/24/89

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
Parents
Linda Hartshorn, Seward Nebraska
Cheri Robertson, Temecula, CA
Deanne Dixon, Montgomery County, MD

87
William Donald Schaefer, Governor, D-MD
Madeleine Kunin, Governor, D-CT
Scott McCallum, Lt. Governor, D-WI
Dr. Richard Clifford, Professor of Sociology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC
Dr. Lawrence Schweinhar, Director of Voices for Children, High/Scope Foundation, Ypsilanti, Michigan
M.A. Lucas, Chief, Child Development Services, US Army
Marilyn King, Manager, Equal Opportunity Program, Hallmark Cards, Inc., Kansas City, MO
Arthur Nielsen, Sr. Vice President, Cigna Corp., Philadelphia, PA

(OPPONENT OF ABC)

HOUSE HEARINGS TESTIMONIES PRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING

Hearings Held by Subcommittee on Human Resources of Committee on Education and Labor
2/25/88

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
James J. Florio, Congressman, D-NJ
Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children’s Defense Fund
Helen Blank, Director of Child Care, Children’s Defense Fund
Thomas R. Donahue, Secretary and Treasurer, AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations)
Audrey Russell, Child Advocacy Working Group, National Council of Churches of Christ in USA,
Dr. George Sterne, American Academy of Pediatrics, Chairman, Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption and Dependent Care
Gerald W. McEntee, Pres., American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Evelyn Moore, Executive Director, National Black Child Development Institute
Virginia Austin, President of the Association of Junior Leagues
Charles Hayward, Secretary of Delaware’s Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, and Chairman, National Council of State Human Service Administrators’ Task Force on Day Care
Morton Bahr, President, Communication Workers of America
Nan Rich, National Council of Jewish Women
Bishop C. Dale White, New York City Area, United Methodist
Church

**Dr. Gwendolyn Calvert Baker**, National Executive Director, Young Women's Christian Association of the USA

**Mary Hatwood Futrell**, President, National Education Association

**Wilhelmina D. Goff**, Director of Program and Development, National Council of Negro Women, Inc.

**Dr. James Jones**, Executive Director for Public Interest, American Psychological Association

**Joyce Strom**, Deputy Director, Child Welfare League of America

**Nancy Duff Campbell**, Managing Attorney, National Women's Law Center

**Beth Wray**, President, National Association of Business and Professional Women's Clubs

**Sarah Harder**, President, American Association of University Women

**Barbara Reisman**, Executive Director, Child Care Action Campaign

**E. Robert Goodkind**, Chairman, Family Policy Task Force, American Jewish Committee

**James Scheibel**, President of St. Paul, Minnesota City Council, and Immediate Chair of the Human Development Committee, National League of Cities

4/21/88

**(Supporters of ABC)**

**Olympia Snowe**, Congresswoman, R-ME

**Cleo Terry**, Child Protection Manager, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

**Nick A. Theodore**, Lieutenant Governor, D-SC

**Dr. Alfred J. Kahn**, Columbia University School of Social Work

**Cass Ballenger**, Member, NC Day Care Commission

**Dr. Richard M. Clifford**, University of NC at Chapel Hill

**Ruth Mankin**, Vice President of DE Chamber of Commerce

**Douglas Basharrov**, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

**Dr. Heidi Hartman**, Dir. of Women Studies, Dir. of Institute for Women's Policy Research and Professor of Sociology, Rutgers University

**Mark L. Rosenberg**, National Child Care Association

**(Opponents of ABC)**

**Nancy Johnson**, Congresswoman D-CT

**Clyde Holloway**, Congressman, R-LA

**Robert Rector**, Policy Analyst, Heritage Foundation

**Inez Hollowman**, Owner/Operator Holloman Child Development and
Education

Phyllis Schlafly, President, Eagle Forum
William Bennett, Secretary of Department of Education
Arlene Zielke, Legislative Program Committee's Vice-Chair, National Congress of Parents and Teachers
Karl Zinsmeister, Adjunct Research Associate, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

4/23/88 (Louisville, KY)

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
Jerry E. Abramson, Mayor of Louisville, KY
Melissa Mershon, Board of Aldermen, Louisville, KY
Paul C. Bather, Board of Aldermen, Louisville, KY
Darryl T. Owens, Commissioner, Louisville, KY
Sharon Wilber, representing County Judge Harvey I. Sloane, Louisville, KY
Elizabeth Grever, Community Coordinated Child Care, Louisville, KY
Walter Blevins, Jr., KY State Representative (R)
Linda Locke, Advocacy Dir., Community Coordinated Child Care
Frances Diana Fleming, Public Affairs Dir. Jefferson County Attorney’s Office, and Dir., The Caring Connection
Mavis Higgs, Dir. St Alban’s Episcopal Church Child Care Center
Cleda Lawson, Dir. Floyd County Developmental Child Care, Prestonburg, KY
Edward M. Schottland, Sr. Vice President, NKC Hospitals, Louisville, KY
Nelle Horlander, KY Vice President, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Margaret Brodley, Louisville, KY
Lizzie Wallace, Bracken County, KY
Maria Billingslea, Louisville, KY
Carolyn Johnson, Coalition for Freedom of Choice in Child Care
Joy Atteberry, Kiddy Campus Day Care, Louisville, KY

Hearings Held by Full Committee on Education and Labor

2/9/89

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)

Edward F. Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology, Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University
Norton W. Grubb, School of Education, UC Berkeley
Deborah Phillips, University of VA, Department of Psychology
Nancy Travis, Save the Children
Lynn Kagan, Bush Center
Sandra Hofferth, Senior Research associate, Urban Institute

3/6/93

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
Gordon Ambach, Chief State School officers
Lauren Chom, Flint Community Schools Child care Centers
Eugenia Boggus, National Head Start Association
Nancy Spears, National Head Start Association
Alfred Kahn, Columbia University School of Social Work
Michael Schwartz, Free Congress Research and Education
Foundation

4/5/89

(SUPPORTERS OF ABC)
Ken Melley, Director of Government Relations, National
Education Association
Millie Waterman, Vice Pres. for Legislative Activity, National
PTA
Helen Taylor, National Child Day Care Association
Ann Mitchell, Bank Street College of Education
Mark Sullivan, Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care
Barry Lynn, American Civil Liberties Union
Nick Craft, National Child Care Association
Don Edwards, Congressman, D-CA
TABLE 2
BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS
BY GENDER AND HEARING

Senate Hearings held by the Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drug and Alcoholism of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/11/87</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15/88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/28/88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/28/89</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House hearings held by Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Education and Labor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/25/88</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/21/88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/23/88</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/09/89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/06/89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/05/89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House Hearings held by Committee on Education and Labor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 1987</td>
<td>Dodd holds pre-hearing on child care in Senate subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27, 1987</td>
<td>Dodd introduces ABC in Senate; bill sent to subcommittee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 9, 1988</td>
<td>Kildee introduces ABC in House; bill sent to subcommittee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25, 1988</td>
<td>First House hearing held by subcommittee on Human Resources; no opponents present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15, 1988</td>
<td>First Senate hearing held by subcommittee on Children, Families, Drugs and Alcoholism; one opponent present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21, 1988</td>
<td>Second House subcommittee hearing; split 50/50 between supporters and opponents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23, 1988</td>
<td>Third House subcommittee hearing held in Louisville, Kentucky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 1988</td>
<td>Second Senate subcommittee hearing; two opponents present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 24, 1989</td>
<td>Third Senate subcommittee hearing; one opponent present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 9, 1989</td>
<td>First hearing held by House Committee on Education and Labor on Hawkins’ alternative child care proposal, H.R.3 Child Development and Education Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6, 1989</td>
<td>Second hearing held by full House committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5, 1989</td>
<td>Third Hearing held by full House committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26, 1990</td>
<td>House in a vote of 224-200 accepts conference’s recommendation to incorporate child care bill into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27, 1990</td>
<td>Senate in a vote of 54-45 accepts conference’s recommendation to incorporate child care bill into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CURRICULUM VITA

Kirsten Marie Lindquist was born August 13, 1968 in Morristown, New Jersey. She received her Bachelor of Arts in both Political Science and History from Emory University of Atlanta, Georgia in May of 1990. In the Spring of 1994 she received her Master of Arts in Political Science from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

[Signature]

95