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Abstract

Using multivariate analysis techniques to examine results of a survey of 309 single mothers on welfare in Los Angeles County, we find that a mother's stage of welfare to work and proximity to nearby licensed care impact her usage and choice of child care for her infant or preschool-age child. The probability of using licensed care increases with age, higher earnings and a higher number of nearby licensed care slots. Having less than a high school education, having an infant in the household, being a Latina who primarily speaks English, and being involved in job search activities decrease the likelihood of using licensed care.

Introduction

Securing reliable child care remains a major challenge for single mothers who must transition from welfare to work. Job search activities often require women to negotiate regular care for their children as they complete daily contact quotas and travel to unfamiliar areas to look for work. Once employed, single mothers must weigh the quality, cost and convenience of child care with the daily demands of employment and work-related travel. Little is known about how welfare-to-work activities and proximity to child care influence child care choice and usage. This research draws from a survey of 309 single women on welfare in Los Angeles County to investigate factors related to the type of care a mother chooses for her infant or preschool-age children.

Child Care and Welfare to Work

With the implementation of welfare reform, recipients face increased pressure to arrange care for their children as they search for work and transition from welfare into employment. The goals of welfare reform, as embodied in the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), include ending welfare dependency and promoting economic self-sufficiency. New regulations under Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, the post-1996 welfare program) limit cash support, place a time limit on benefits, mandate work requirements, and delegate implementation to the states and local agencies.

The dominant strategy has shifted from basic education and training to placing individuals in a job as quickly as possible, an approach known as work-first. These requirements have forced hundreds of thousands of recipients into the labor market and their children into child care. Those remaining on public assistance face numerous barriers to employment including limited work history and job skills, lack of transportation access and limited experience arranging regular child care (Blumenberg 2001). Some research suggests that welfare reform is pushing children into substandard care (Fuller et al. 2000).

Child care arrangements can present a particular challenge as single mothers negotiate welfare-to-work requirements. Many must arrange regular child care for the first time and make choices between informal child care provided by friends or relatives or licensed care in a home or center (Meyers 1993; Ong et al. 2001). Mothers actively involved in official welfare-to-work activities are eligible for child care subsidies.[2] Unfortunately, the take-up rate is low indicating that mothers face difficulties in securing paid care.[3] Although they receive child care placement assistance, they are responsible for selecting an acceptable child care arrangement within a reasonable travel distance and for completing paperwork and logistics so that the provider receives subsidy reimbursements (Mensing et al. 2000).

Single mothers on welfare evaluate potential child care arrangements based on a number of criteria and must often compromise between quality and convenience (Meyers 1995). Mothers in welfare-to-work activities place a high priority on whether they feel they can trust the provider and whether the provider offers learning activities for their child (Mensing et al. 2000). Although many mothers prefer to have their infant cared for in home-like environments, some value the structure and opportunities to socialize that center-based programs can offer their preschoolers (Jacobson 2000). Mothers also weigh logistical considerations such as a provider's flexibility in providing care outside standard work hours and whether the location of care is convenient (Mensing et al. 2000). These later two criteria seem especially important given that women in welfare-to-work activities often work at night and on weekends and travel substantial distances to and from work using public transit or unreliable cars (Ong et. al 2001). Child care choices are limited by the lack of nearby licensed care, which tends to be located in wealthier communities. Care for infants and children with special needs is especially in short supply, relative to care for pre-school age children (Ball Cuthbertson 2000; Ball Cuthbertson, et al. 2000).

Research Questions

Previous research provides insights into the criteria that welfare mothers use when selecting child care and into the supply-side barriers that limit choices. These

studies, though, do not directly measure the impact that the availability of nearby licensed care has on child care. Such analysis is especially important given the considerable variation in the supply of nearby care among recipients. This paper addresses this gap in the literature by analyzing results from a recent survey of welfare recipients in Los Angeles County.

The remainder of this paper is organized into four parts. The next section describes the conceptual models, survey data, and multivariate methods used for the analysis. The third section presents our major findings. Results indicate that single mothers on welfare increase their usage of licensed care as they move into employment and that the availability of nearby licensed care increases the odds that they will place their children in licensed home or center care even after controlling for personal and household factors. The final section discusses results and suggests implications for social service agencies and public policy.

Conceptual Model, Data and Methods

Conceptual Model

We use a probabilistic choice model to examine the influence of nearby licensed child care on utilization. This approach assumes that choice for child care is an expression of preferences, and that the choice can be predicted if all of the

relevant variables are known. We use a multinomial logistic analysis to model three outcomes: P_1 (the probability that a mother chooses no care), P_2 (the probability that a mother chooses unlicensed care), and P_3 (the probability that a mother chooses licensed care). By definition, the three probabilities sum to unity:

$$P_1 + P_2 + P_3 = 1$$

The fitted regression model is given by two equations:

$$\log\left(\frac{P_1}{P_3}\right) = a_a + b_{1a}x_1 + b_{2a}x_2 + b_{3a}x_3 + \ldots + b_{ia}x_i \qquad \text{(Equation A)}$$

$$\log\left(\frac{P_2}{P_3}\right) = a_b + b_{1b}x_1 + b_{2a}x_2 + b_{3a}x_3 + \ldots + b_{ia}x_i \qquad \text{(Equation B)}$$

In these equations, x_i (i = 1, 2, 3 .... n) denotes the explanatory variables, α_a and α_b are the intercepts, and ß$_a$ and ß$_b$ are the coefficients of equations a and b. The vector x includes variables for recipient personal and household factors, stage of welfare-to-work activities, transportation resources, and proximity to nearby licensed child care.

Research suggests that a mother's education level, age of children, and race/ethnicity influence her child care choice. We expect that mothers who have less than a high school education or have an infant will be less likely to use

licensed care (Becerra and Chi, 1992; Meyers, 1995; Ball Cutherbertson, 2000). We expect Black single mothers to be more likely to use formal care, whether that be in a home or center (Jacobson 2000). Buriel and Hurtado-Ortiz (2000) found that native-born Latina mothers in Southern California were more likely to use relatives available to provide childcare. Based on these findings, we expect that English-speaking Latina mothers will be less likely to use licensed care. We expect that Spanish-speaking Latina mothers may likely be immigrants and may tend to have a higher rate of using licensed care.[4]

We expect that a mother's use of child care varies by her stage of welfare to work. By "stage of welfare to work," we mean a woman's status in a series of welfare-to-work activities that could include initial processing, job training, job search activities and/or employment. The use of substitute care and organized child care arrangements increases as women enter welfare-to-work programs (Meyers 1993). Welfare-to-work requirements may increase the number of hours per day that child care is needed.

The job-search phase often requires mothers to spend large amounts of their time making phone calls, arranging interviews and traveling to unfamiliar areas for job opportunities. Searching for work can require multiple, chained trips and can make scheduling household duties and regular child care difficult. For this

reason, we suspect that mother in the job search phase may opt for informal care with friends, relatives or neighbors since this arrangement offers greater flexibility and likely costs less than formal care. Mothers may also be more willing to ask for informal assistance if they view their child care arrangements needs as short-term until they find an acceptable home or center provider in their neighborhood and are able to finalize subsidy reimbursement for the provider they choose. Given the long waiting lists of many licensed providers in Los Angeles County (Ball Cutherbertson, 2000), some mothers may wait some time after beginning welfare-to-work activities before they can place their child with their preferred provider.

Employed mothers may have more regular travel and work schedules and may be able to arrange for more formal types of child care. Although some research suggests that a mother's labor force participation does not increase demand for preschool care (Fuller et al. 1997 as cited in Ball Cutherbertson et al. 2000), the level of employment could influence a single mother's child care choices. Research suggests that recipients who work more hours per week are more likely to use licensed center care versus exempt care (Ball Cutherbertson 2000). Becerra and Chi (1992) found that although low-income mothers prefer that their infants and toddlers be cared for by relatives, friends, or neighbors, mothers who work full-time often feel more comfortable relying on a paid provider rather than

on informal networks. Mothers tend to rely on informal care for short-term child care and formal care for long-term child care. Mothers with job experience may also have more knowledge of available child care centers in their neighborhood and may be more likely to have finalized subsidy arrangements. Full-time employment may help mothers pay for care, especially for the large majority of mothers who do not receive subsidies. Therefore, we expect that working mothers will have a higher likelihood of using paid forms of child care; this likelihood should be higher for mothers who work full-time.

We believe that mothers with access to a household car will be more likely to use licensed care. Recipients travel farther for licensed child care than for other forms of care (Meyers 1995; Ong et al. 2001). Since fewer licensed care facilities are located in low-income neighborhoods where many welfare recipients live (Ball Cuthbertson 2000; Ball Cuthbertson, et al. 2000), mothers with access to a car may be able to travel a greater distance to care thereby increasing the child care options available to them.

Finally, we expect that a mother's proximity to licensed care will increase her likelihood of using licensed care. Proximity may be especially important for single mothers who face the daily travel demands of welfare-to-work activities and household obligations. Also, the more licensed child care slots nearby a

mother's home may increase her likelihood of locating a provider that meets her criteria and has an available slot.

Data

This paper uses data from a survey of TANF recipients in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.[5] Although the survey was primarily concerned with assessing the transportation needs of welfare recipients, questions regarding their child care travel and transportation needs provide information on the type of child care and the mode and ease of travel for child care trips. The sample for this analysis is restricted to cases headed by a single female,[6] who was White, Latina or Black,[7] and who answered questions concerning an infant or preschool-aged child.[8] A total of 309 observations meet these criteria and are used in the analysis of child care choice. The majority of the sample was Latina or Black and about half was between 18 and 24.

The survey provides limited, but useful information on child care usage. Respondents were asked whether they "currently use some kind of child care" for the selected child and, if so, "What type of child care do you use most?" About 36 percent used no child care, while about 39 percent used unlicensed care (unpaid

and paid relative, friend or neighbor care) and about 22 percent used licensed care (day care center or home).

We derived each mother's stage of welfare to work from a number of questions. We broadly use the phrase "stage of welfare to work" to refer to a woman's status in welfare-to-work activities based on whether she is (1) unemployed and not searching for work, (2) searching for work, or (3) employed. We classify women in the sample as searching for work or employed based on whether they reported they were currently employed ("Are you currently working?") or were searching for work ("Are you currently looking for a job?"). About half of the sample was employed, while about a quarter was looking for a job. We classified respondents who did not indicate that they were employed or engaged in job search activities as "unemployed, not searching." Although survey results reveal very little about the activities of these individuals, they may be involved in the assessment or job training stage of welfare to work. We supplemented self-reported employment information with quarterly earnings as a proxy for a mother's level of employment during the quarter she was interviewed.[9] This information allows us to measure the impact that a mother's level of employment has on her usage and choice of child care.

Personal and household characteristics were also derived from both survey and administrative data. Educational attainment is captured by a dichotomous variable capturing whether a mother indicated while interviewed that she had completed at least 12 years of schooling. We identified the number of infants on a woman's welfare case using welfare administrative records since mothers with infants may choose different types of care than women with toddlers or preschool children. Also, women with an infant may be exempt from welfare-to-work requirements. A mother's age is represented by a continuous variable. Since previous research suggests that native-born and foreign-born Latinas may prefer different types of child care (Buriel and Hurtado-Ortiz 2000), we distinguish between Latinas who were interviewed in English and those who were interviewed in Spanish. We use this distinction as a proxy for a Latina's nativity and/or acculturation. Therefore, we use four separate dichotomous variables to capture the combined influence of race, ethnicity and primary language: Black, White, Latina/English, and Latina/Spanish.[10]

A primary question of the analysis concerns the availability of nearby licensed care. Each mother's proximity to licensed child care is captured by a variable that represents the number of licensed child care slots within walking distance, or one-fourth mile, of her residence. Respondent home addresses were verified during the interview and were subsequently assigned a latitude-longitude coordinate.

The number of licensed child care slots within a quarter mile of each mother's residence was counted.[11] Although this measure does not indicate nearby child care openings, it does provide a relative measure of the presence of nearby care, regardless of availability, cost or quality of care. While previous research has measured the influence of child care supply when aggregated by large geographic areas such as the zip code level (Ball Cuthbertson 2000; Ball Cuthbertson, et al. 2000), the measure used in this paper captures a mother's proximity to child care on a much smaller scale. Table 1 provides the means of the variables used in the multivariate analysis of recipient child care usage and choice.

<Insert Table 1>

Results

This section presents our major findings on the determinants of the child care usage and choice of single mothers on welfare. In particular, it examines the influence that a woman's welfare-to-work activities and her proximity to licensed care have on her choice of not using child care, using informal, unlicensed care with friends or relatives and using licensed care in a home or center.

Over half (63%) of all mothers in the sample use some form of child care for their infant or preschool child. Most mothers rely on unlicensed care with a relative, friend or neighbor (14% unpaid, 26% paid). Others use licensed child care arrangements in the form of day care centers (16%) or day care homes (7%).

Welfare-to-work requirements impact the type of child care that single mothers use. As mothers move into employment, they become more likely to use some form of child care, especially licensed care (Table 2). This may reflect that they are required to be away from home on a more regular basis and that their travel and work schedule becomes more predictable and regularized as they move from welfare to work. Mothers may feel more comfortable asking friends or relatives for child care while they are unemployed and looking for work. As they find work and their child care needs become more long-term, they may not want to rely on child care favors from friends, relatives and neighbors on a permanent basis and may seek a more formal, paid care arrangement. Mothers who are not receiving child care subsidies may be able to better afford licensed child care with their increased earnings.

<Insert Table 2>

Unemployed mothers use child care at about the same rate regardless of whether they are currently searching for a job, although women currently looking for work are slightly more likely to have a relative, friend or neighbor care for their children. These informal child care arrangements may provide greater flexibility to mothers whose schedule is less predictable as they make job-related phone calls, arrange interviews and travel to unfamiliar areas for job opportunities. Also women who are in the early stages of welfare to work may be in the early stages of arranging for child care subsidies, may be searching for an acceptable provider, or may be on the waiting list for a nearby licensed care provider.

A mother's proximity to licensed care seems to impact the type of care she chooses for her child (Table 3). The number of nearby slots[12] within walking distance appears related to a mother's choice between whether she uses licensed or unlicensed care. Nearby slots do not appear related to a mother's choice between using or not using child care. Mothers who live within walking distance of 15 or more licensed slots are more likely to use licensed care than mothers who live near fewer than 15 slots. These differences, though, are not statistically significant.

<Insert Table 3>

A mother's child care choice may be influenced by a number of factors besides her stage of welfare to work or whether she lives near licensed care. For instance, mothers who are employed may also be more likely to have a higher level of education or have a household car than unemployed mothers. Therefore, we use multivariate techniques in order to control for other factors that we believe may influence a woman's choice of child care.

Table 4 presents the results of the multinomial analysis of the child care choice of single welfare mothers in Los Angeles County. As described above, we use a probabilistic choice model to compare the three probabilities: the probability that a mother chooses no child care (P_1), the probability that a mother chooses unlicensed child care (P_2), and the probability that a mother chooses licensed child care (P_3). We use two primary models to describe the influence of personal and household factors, stage of welfare to work, transportation resources, and proximity to nearby licensed child care on child care choice.

Equation A compares P_1 to P_3; that is, it compares the probability that a mother will choose no child care versus the probability that she will choose licensed care. Equation B compares P_2 to P_3; that is, it compares the probability that a mother

will choose unlicensed care versus the probability that she will choose licensed care.

Personal and household characteristics impact a mother's child care choice. The older a mother is, the more likely she is to used licensed care, although the influence of age on her choice decreases as she grows older. A mother's level of education seems to impact her choice between no care versus licensed care (Equation A), while it does significantly influence whether a mother with child care chooses unlicensed versus licensed care (Equation B). Women with less than a high school education are more likely to choose no child care over licensed care. Conversely, the number of infants on a mother's welfare case influences her choice between unlicensed care and licensed care, but not her choice between no care and licensed care. Mothers with an infant are more likely to choose informal, unlicensed care with friends or relatives for their child. Contrary to expectations, the presence of a car in a mother's household does not make a significant contribution to the type of child care a she chooses. A household car, though, could influence her probability of being employed, and may thereby indirectly influence a mother's need for child care.

<Insert Table 4>

Latinas who were interviewed in English appear to make different child care choices than Latinas who were interviewed in Spanish. Latinas who spoke English were more likely to choose no care over licensed care and unlicensed care over licensed care. If speaking English during the interview is an indicator that these women are native-born, then this finding is consistent with previous findings that native-born Latinos are more likely to choose care with friends, relatives or neighbors. The choices of Latinas who spoke Spanish are not statistically different than those of Whites and Blacks (the excluded category). This indicates that neither race nor English language ability plays a role in choice. However, this finding may be due to the problem of not having a large enough sample size to separate out the effects.

A mother's stage of welfare to work influences her child care choice somewhat even after controlling for other factors. The Current Searching dichotomous variable captures whether a mother reported that she was currently looking for work. We use variables for a woman's current earnings during the quarter she was interviewed in order to capture her employment activities. These earnings variables allow us to control for her level of employment rather than merely whether she was employed or wasn't.[13] Results suggest that a woman's stage of welfare to work makes a significant contribution to a mother's choice between no care versus licensed care, while it does not significantly influence whether a

mother with child care chooses unlicensed versus licensed care. Women who are actively job searching were more likely to choose no care over licensed care. Conversely, women who were employed were more likely to choose licensed care over no care. In this way, model results suggest that a mother's stage of welfare to work influences her choice between no care and licensed care, but not her choice between unlicensed and licensed care.

As mothers become more connected to the labor market and increase their earnings, their likelihood of using any form of child care increases. Figure 1 simulates the influence of quarterly earnings on a mother's child care usage and choice while holding other factors constant.

<Insert Figure 1>

The availability of licensed child care slots within walking distance increases the probability that a mother will choose licensed care over no care or unlicensed care. Figure 2 simulates the influence of nearby slots on a mother's choice while holding other factors constant. As the number of licensed slots within walking distance increases, a mother's probability of choosing licensed care increases and her probability of choosing no care decreases. For every additional 10 slots

within walking distance, the probability of using licensed care increased by about .8 percent.

<Insert Figure 2>

Discussion

Results confirm expectations that a woman's welfare-to-work activities and the supply of nearby licensed child care significantly impact her child care choices. Although this analysis does not measure the influence of important factors such as the quality and cost of nearby providers and the extent of a mother's social networks, the results suggest patterns underlying the choices of welfare mothers and have policy implications.

Mothers in job search activities are much less likely to use licensed care than employed mothers. While this could reflect that job-searching mothers prefer the flexibility of using friends, relatives and neighbors for more short-term care, this result may mean that these mothers have problems locating an acceptable licensed provider with an available slot near their homes. While the selection of child care can be time consuming for any parent or guardian, mothers facing welfare-to-work requirements may benefit from additional child care placement assistance early in the job-search stage, especially since many of these mothers may have no

experience with formal child care. Many mothers may not choose formal care because of the cost and unfamiliarity with existing child care subsidies available to them. Social service agencies should continue their efforts to increase the subsidy take-up rate, especially early in the welfare-to-work process. Providing expanded child care placement services early in the process may be essential as the welfare caseload becomes increasingly comprised of mothers with less experience balancing the daily demands of work and child care.

Ideally, welfare mothers should have as many child care options as possible so that they can choose a provider that best meets their personal preferences, schedules and the needs of their children. Social service agencies and policy makers should strengthen current efforts to overcome barriers that limit the child care options of mothers, including disparities in the supply of licensed care. Few mothers will be able to meet all of their criteria in a provider, but with more options available more mothers will be able to secure satisfactory child care arrangements and will be more likely to move closer to self-sufficiency.

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Table 1. Variable Means by Type of Child Care.

Characteristic	No Child Care	Unlicensed Child Care	Licensed Child Care	Total
Age	26.76	25.43	27.96	26.50
Less than High School	0.49	0.34	0.17	0.36
Latina/English	0.44	0.39	0.20	0.37
Latina/Spanish	0.11	0.12	0.08	0.11
White	0.06	0.14	0.10	0.10
Infant	0.51	0.56	0.34	0.49
Current Searching	0.42	0.22	0.14	0.28
Current Earnings[†]	0.41	1.56	1.84	1.2
Nearby Licensed Slots	46.88	47.79	71.08	52.81
Household Car	0.37	0.50	0.56	0.47
N	113	125	71	309

[†] Current Earnings is divided by 1000.

Table 2. Type of Care by Stage of Welfare to Work

Type of Child Care	Unemployed, Not Actively Searching	Unemployed, Actively Searching	Employed
Licensed	17%	12%	33%
Unlicensed	27%	33%	53%
No Care	56%	56%	13%
Total Responses	82	86	141

Note: Statistically significant. Chi-Square < .0001.

Table 3. Type of Care by Availability of Nearby Licensed Care

Type of Child Care	Number of Licensed Slots within ¼ Mile		
	0-15	16-50	51+
Licensed	14%	26%	27%
Unlicensed	48%	37%	37%
No Care	38%	36%	36%
Total Responses	93	102	114

Note: Not statistically significant based on a Chi-Square test.

Table 4. Estimated Multinomial Logit Model of Child Care Choice

	$\left(\frac{NoCare}{LicensedCare}\right)$	$\left(\frac{UnlicensedCare}{LicensedCare}\right)$
Characteristic	Equation A	Equation B
Constant	10.3685***	8.9837**
Age	-0.6969***	-0.5871**
Age Squared†	1.1751***	0.8886**
Less than High School	1.2957***	0.6557
Latina/English	1.2092***	1.1252***
Latina/Spanish	-0.5180	0.7807
White	-0.4444	0.8187
Infant	0.3742	0.6654**
Current Searching	1.0375**	0.6097
Current Earnings†	-0.8779***	-0.0911
Current Earnings Squared†	0.000070**	0.000019
Nearby Licensed Slots	-0.00728**	-0.00532*
Household Car	-0.5750	-0.3234
	N=309, DF=592, prob=0.9309	

† Age Squared is divided by 100. Current Earnings and Current Earnings Squared are divided by 1000.

Coefficients: * p < .1. ** p < .05. *** p < .01.

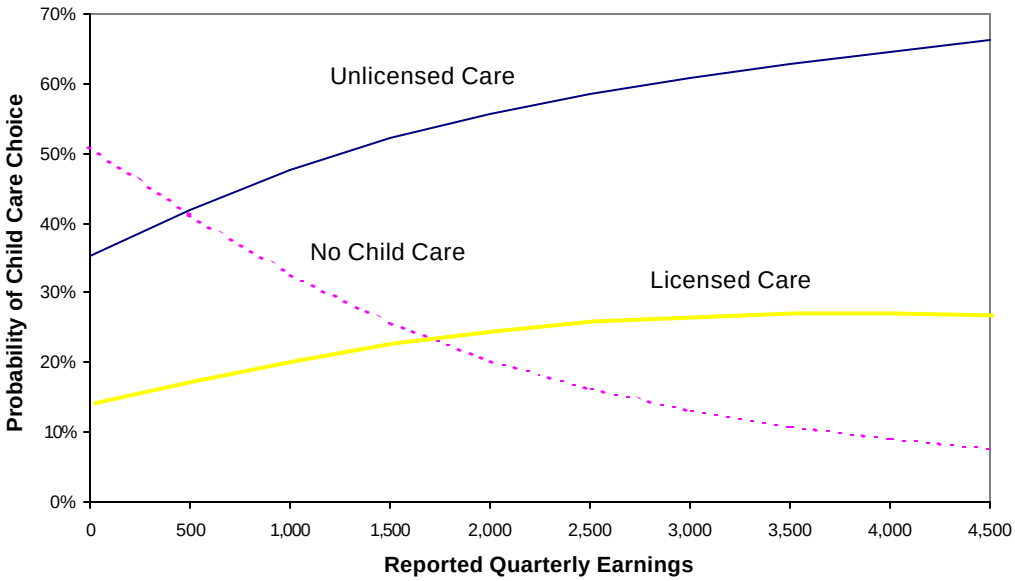

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities of Child Care Choice by Current Reported Earnings.

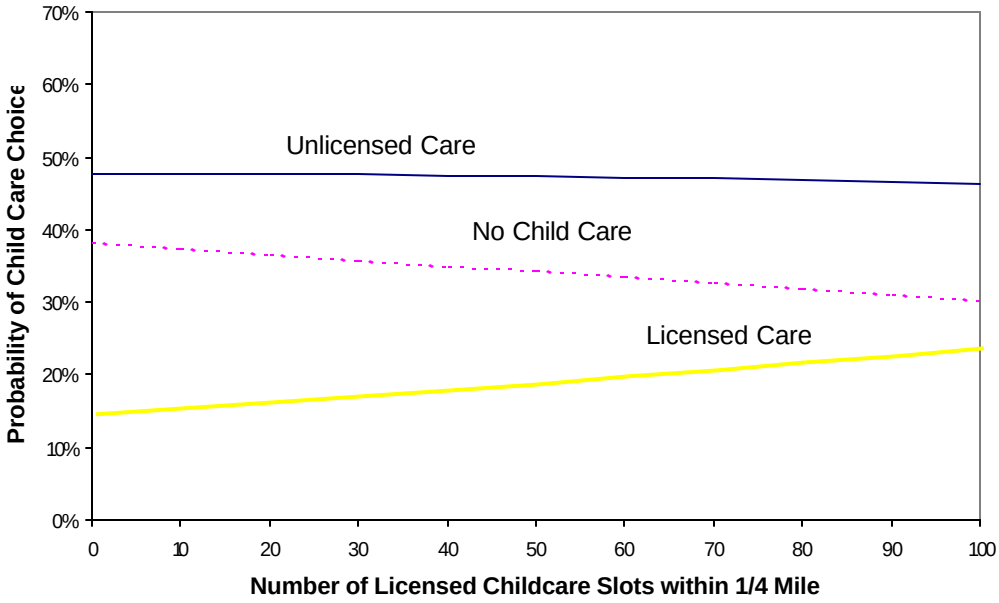

Figure 2. Simulation of the Influence of Nearby Child Care Slots on Child Care Choice.

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[2] CalWORKs recipients in Los Angeles County qualify for child care subsidies from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for up to six months or until child care is stable. Recipients then qualify for child care subsidies from the Department of Education for two years, and may continue to receive subsidies after that if they earn less than 75 percent of the state's median income. A wait list currently exists for this third stage of subsidies. Transition between these types of subsidies is coordinated by a recipient's local child care Resource and Referral Agency (R&R) and should be invisible to the recipient (Ball Cuthbertson, 2000). Research suggests that families who receive supports, such as assistance with child care costs, have improvements in family well-being (Children's Defense Fund, 2000).

[3] Many recipients who are eligible for child care supports do not receive them and/or were not informed about child care services by their welfare worker (HSALA, 2000; Children's Defense Fund, 2000; Fuller et al., 2000). In June 1999, only about 21 percent of families in a welfare-to-work activity in Los Angeles County utilized child care subsidies (Jacobson, 2000).

[4] The child care usage patterns of low-income Latina mothers remains largely unclear. Low-income Latino communities have markedly fewer licensed child care center slots than low-income black or white communities in Los Angeles County (Fuller et al., 2000; Healy, 1998). Also, Latinas, especially those who speak primarily Spanish, have a lower take-up rate of child care subsidies in Kern County, California (Jacobson, 2000).[4]

[5] The metropolitan area is coterminous with Los Angeles County. The survey was sponsored by the Department of Public Social Services of Los Angeles County, designed by the Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies at University of California, Los Angeles, and conducted by the Survey Research Center at the California State University, Fullerton. The sample was drawn from administrative files for those in the GAIN welfare-to-work program in late 1999, almost two years after the implementation of welfare reform in Los Angeles County. Administrative files also provide limited information on work and welfare history. The survey is based on stratified samples for each of the five

districts for the County Board of Supervisors. The questionnaire was automated in a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) system and administered over the telephone in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Armenian. The survey, which was conducted by telephone between late November 1999 and February 2000, contains over fifteen hundred respondents.

[6] The sample used for this analysis includes only female recipients with a single-parent welfare aid type since single female-headed households are the most common type of welfare household. Women in a single-parent household are more likely to use licensed care than parents in a two-parent household. We base household type and gender on welfare and gender codes of the respondent in the MEDS (Medi-Cal Eligibility Determination System) database provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

[7] Recipients of other racial groups were excluded from this analysis since they represented only a very small number of respondents.

[8] Respondents were asked questions about their child care usage and travel for one of their children. Each was asked to select their child with the next birthday and was asked the age of the child and whether the chosen child was in school. Women with children under four and women with five-year old children not in school were included in the sample.

[9] Information on earnings was provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) from the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Base Wage database, which contains quarterly records of all workers in the unemployment insurance (UI) program. The UI program covers approximately 95 percent of all paid workers in the private sector. The data do not include self-employment, employment in firms not in the Unemployment Insurance Program, and some governmental agencies. Given the lack of continuous employment for welfare recipients, this study does not use the calculated potential years of labor market experience, which is commonly used in most empirical studies of labor-market outcomes.

[10] Personal and household characteristics from administrative data were obtained from the MEDS (Medi-Cal Eligibility Determination System) database provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

[11] The locations of home and center licensed providers in Los Angeles County as of December 1999 were based on the Licensing Information System File obtained from the Community Care Licensing Division of the Califorina Department of Social Services via the Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services (LADPSS).

[12] The number of nearby licensed slots does not differentiate the number of nearby vacancies, but it does provide a relative measure of the proximity of

licensed care. Previous research suggests that licensed providers in Los Angeles County prefer to fill only 88-96 percent of their licensed slots on average (Ball Cuthbertson et al., 2000a)

[13] We tested the model using a dichotomous variable for whether women reported being employed during the interview. Like the variables in Table 4 that capture current earnings, this dichotomous variable for Current Employment was negative and significant in Equation A confirming our results that the stage of welfare to work is significant in a mother's choice between no care and licensed care.