CHILDREARING PRACTICES

Robert G. Myers and Judith L. Evans
The Consultative Group on
Early Childhood Care and Development

An article prepared for the section
"Marriage and the Family" of the
Encyclopedia of Third World Women
Nelly P. Stromquist (Editor)
May, 1995

Introduction

Based on a review of literature dealing with childrearing practices, the following can be argued:

Children, in whatever setting, have general physical, social and emotional needs that require responses from others.

The specific ways in which these general needs manifest themselves and the childrearing practices adopted to meet these needs differ widely from place to place and from caregiver to

caregiver, influenced by physical and social contexts, by beliefs, values and norms, by available technologies, and by the characteristics and knowledge of particular caregivers.

In a rapidly changing world, it is difficult for cultures to adjust their norms and practices to fluctuating conditions. This results, more frequently than in the past, in beliefs, values, norms and practices that do not fit well with actual conditions. These can work against the sound rearing and development of children.

Rapid change has produced both a move away from so-called traditional and family-centered practices and toward placing greater responsibility for childrearing in institutional settings outside the family. As these trends and specific changes in practices associated with them are judged, it is important not to equate "modern" with "good" and "traditional" with "outmoded" or "bad," or vice versa. Rather, if we are to retain the good practices from traditional systems and to develop quality child care in response to the major changes thrust upon us by industrialization and so-called modernization, we will need to be much more systematic in our assessments and much more open to potential advantages of both the new and the old than we have been in the past.

Before entering directly into the review that substantiates this line of argument, and in a desire to avoid perpetuating stereotypes or promoting outmoded concepts, it is important to clarify three points. First, although the childrearing topic is set here within the general theme of "marriage and family," it is important to recognize that a great deal of childrearing has always occurred outside the home and family in both formal and informal arrangements. It is common, for instance, for the larger community of which families are a part to play a significant role in raising children. (Ki-Zerbo 1990) This is not only the case for so-called " traditional" cultures but is increasingly common today as more and more children are being cared for during long periods of the day in specialized centers that are not family-run and have nothing to do with marriage ties. (Olmsted and Weikart 1994) In brief, while marital and family status certainly affect childrearing (and sometimes vice versa), so do many other factors. Thus, to consider childrearing only within the context of marriage and the family would be to limit both description and understanding of the process.

Second, because marriage and family activities tend to be associated with the *reproductive* role of women in society, it is important to stress that childrearing is an economically *productive* activity as well.[1] Ironically, when "childrearing" is redefined as "child care" because it occurs outside the home and/or is paid, it is recognized as an economically productive activity and is included in national accounts. However, when childrearing occurs in the home and is unpaid, it is not. But whether or not children are raised primarily in the home and whether or not a caregiver is paid, childrearing constitutes a productive as well as reproductive activity because it affects the ability of a child to make a productive contribution to the family and increases the child's chance of becoming productive in later life. Those who are involved in rearing children are performing a service to society that has economic as well as social value. Today's children are tomorrow's citizens and workers who will determine the general course of society.

Third, childrearing is not, nor should it be seen as, an activity restricted to women.[2] A growing literature shows fathering as well as mothering is important to the childrearing process (Engle

2

1994; Lamb 1987), and that the absence of fathers can leave important areas of a child's development unattended. (Zoller and Booth 1995) We will return to this point when discussing who participates in childrearing.

Having cautioned the reader against a narrow and stereotyped view of childrearing as a reproductive role to be carried out exclusively by women in the context of the family, we will now proceed to discuss childrearing, what it means, who it involves, how it is changing, and what is required in terms of programming and policies to provide a healthy environment for all children.

The Childrearing Process[3]

An Overview. Childrearing, or the process of bringing up children, can be described in terms of practices and activities that reflect a society's response to the survival and developmental needs of both children and the society. Individual practices are influenced by cultural norms or patterns that have evolved over time and which, in turn, are grounded in cultural beliefs and values. They are influenced by the physical, social and economic context as well as by the types of technology available to and associated with childrearing. The choice among possible childrearing practices, the manner in which they are carried out, and the results seen in children will also depend on the character and knowledge of the individual(s) who are responsible for childrearing.[4] To understand the process of childrearing, then, it is necessary to understand: the basic needs of children and the general practices required to meet them; who is responsible for childrearing; differences among, and changes in physical, social, economic and technological characteristics of the environments in which childrearing occur; the cultural beliefs, values and norms that have grown up to guide and ground choices among the available options in the form and content of childrearing, and changes in them.

It is necessary also to identify how these various dimensions of childrearing are interwoven and how changes in any one dimension can produce changes in others, sometimes to the benefit and sometimes to the detriment of the child, the family, or the culture.

Children's Needs and Common General Practices. Children everywhere have certain basic needs that must be met if they are to survive, grow and develop. For this reason it is possible to specify general areas of childrearing practices that will be common to all societies. For example:

■   In order to meet needs that will guarantee the child's physical well-being, childrearing must include provision of proper attention to mothers during pregnancy and at birth, provision for the child of an adequate environment for sleeping, protection from harm, provision of shelter and clothing, feeding, bathing, provision of safe places to play and explore, and prevention of and attention to illness.

■   In order to promote the child's psychosocial well-being, childrearing must include affection and nurturing activities that allow a child to form attachments, to develop emotional security, to develop a sense of mastery and confidence, and to seek some independence.

3

■   In order to promote the child's mental development, childrearing must include interaction, stimulation (things to look at, touch, hear, smell, and taste), opportunities to explore the world, appropriate language stimulation, and play.

■   In order to facilitate the child's social development, childrearing must provide opportunities to acquire values, exposure to the wisdom of the culture, and the chance to practice socially-and-culturally-related skills. In most cultures this will include opportunities to learn to cooperate and to share by participating in group activities with members of the family and community.

Although these four general areas have been separated conceptually, in practice, they come together. Attention to a mother during pregnancy affects mental and social development as well as physical development. Providing affection and nurturing influences physical as well as psychosocial development. (Lester and Brazelton 1982; Zeitlin, Ghassemi and Mansour 1990)

Specific Practices. At a very general level, children's needs are similar across all cultures and will require common areas of activity, as indicated above. But the specific ways in which these needs are manifested and the specific practices developed to meet these needs will vary widely from place to place. Contrasting examples of specific practices could be provided for each one of the general categories and areas of activity mentioned above, but with space limitations, we focus on practices in two areas, *feeding* and *protecting from harm,* in order to illustrate variation.

Feeding is a common practice to all cultures, but the age-old practice of breastfeeding contrasts with the recent practice of bottle-feeding. Feeding on demand, which is still characteristic of most rural cultures, contrasts with the scheduled feeding brought on by adjustments to city life. Active feeding contrasts (favorably, according to Zeitlin et al. n.d.) with letting young children feed as they wish or with "bottle-propping" (allowing an infant to hold a bottle by herself), shown to be a prevalent and detrimental practice followed, for instance, among low-income urban Mexican women. (Perez-Excamilla et al. 1993) Weaning at three months, or nine, contrasts with weaning at two years.

The practice of protecting a child from harm occurs in many cultures through constant carrying, either by parents or by siblings or others who help mothers (Hewlett 1987; Tronick, Winn and Morelli 1990; Paolisso, Baksh and Thomas 1989). In other cultures, children are placed in a crib, cradle, hammock or playpen for long periods of time. (Kotchabhakdi 1987)

As we discuss the various dimensions that influence childrearing and as we look at changes along these dimensions, we will return to these examples.

Who Cares for Children?

The activities chosen to meet children's needs are dependent in part on who cares for the child, which, in turn, is influenced by context, cultural beliefs and by the realities of daily life. The selection (or assignment by circumstance) of the person (or people) who take responsibility for raising a child is important because people differ with respect to their knowledge about

childrearing, their experience, and their beliefs and their level of self-confidence. These differences will affect the choice of practices and affect the development of children.

As indicated at the outset, childrearing does not always fall to parents and may occur outside the circle of immediate family members. In Zambia, for instance, a study which included an extremely diverse sample from throughout the country found that 16 percent of the children were being cared for by someone other than their own parents. (Chibuye, Mwenda and Osborne 1986) Still, in most societies and in most cases, the family, however defined, remains the primary unit given responsibility for raising children. Notable exceptions to this pattern include the collectivized childrearing of Israeli Kibbutzim or Chinese communes. And, although legal and social responsibility may remain with the immediate family, in some cultures it has always been common to assign responsibility for daily childrearing activities to non-family members—wet nurses, servants, or neighbors, for instance. In a sense, the growth of childcare centers has formalized what were previously informal patterns of childrearing outside the home. Because non-family individuals sometimes bring to the childrearing task a very different knowledge base, set of beliefs and cultural background than those of family members, their practices can be very different from those that are, or would be, applied by family members. These discontinuities can foster cultural disruption or can help to integrate children into changing cultures, or both, depending on the particular circumstances.

Even when childrearing is held closely within the family, there is considerable variation in who takes responsibility for childrearing, depending in part on who is present in the family, but also on cultural norms for assigning childrearing roles, on the degree to which other family responsibilities compete with childrearing given the particular economic and social conditions in which the family lives, and on the psychological make-up of the available caregivers. Only rarely is childrearing assigned exclusively to the mother, although that may be the case during the first months of life. In parts of Andean Peru, for instance, a child is considered to be part of the mother until it is baptized—usually during the first weeks after birth. During that period, the mother provides exclusive care. Until weaning, others may only be allowed to see or talk to the baby for brief periods, but even then they are not to be effusive. (Ortiz and Souffez 1989)

In many cultures, grandmothers or mothers-in-law play a major role in upbringing (e.g., in Nepal-Acharya and Bennett 1982; in Mexico's Yucatan-Howrigan 1984). This is particularly true for the first child. The mother is not yet considered capable of providing proper upbringing on her own. This arrangement provides informal parental education. But care by grandmothers or mothers-in-laws is also linked to maintaining kinship ties and power relationships within the broader family and society, and to the necessity for young women to work while older women are available to provide child care. It may even be linked to a sense of obligation to grandparents to whom a child is "fostered". (Dare and Adejomo 1983)

Siblings have played an important role in upbringing (Werner 1983; Weisner and Gallimore 1977; Whiting and Whiting 1967), particularly when mothers must farm or work outside the home (e.g., in Malawi, Kalemba 1993). In some cases, the necessity of placing major responsibility on siblings has been shown to have a negative effect on a young child's welfare Shah, Walimbe and Dhole (1979) report such an effect for rural Maharastra in India. In other

instances the presence of older siblings to help out is seen as an important aid to child development and/or as a deterrent to illness. Paolisso, Baksh and Thomas (1989) describe increased diarrhea among young children during periods when siblings must be in school and are not available for caring.

The role that fathers play in childrearing differs across cultures.[5] At one extreme, one can cite the increase in male one-parent families in the United States or the case of fathers in the Aka group of pygmies in West Africa who have been observed to spend as much as 20 percent of their time holding and interacting with their infant children. (Hewlett 1987) At the other extreme are cases in which a high percentage of fathers are absent from the home during most of the pre-school life of a child, either because they have migrated to work—as in rural Swaziland (Zoller Booth 1995) or in rural Ecuador (Roloff, Nunez and Vasconez 1995)—or because of an increasing divorce rate.

Even when fathers are present in nuclear or extended family arrangements, however, it is common to find that "fathers and under-five children have very rare contacts..." (Kalemba 1993, 26.) This statement is borne out by such diverse sources as an 11-country study of 4-year olds which showed fathers in all countries averaged less than one hour per day alone with the child, vs. more than five hours for mothers (Olmsted and Weikart 1994),[6] by a study of Indian families which concluded that "... the Indian father has abrogated his responsibility of parenting" (Anadalakshmy 1994, 66), and by a study of Lao childrearing practices revealing that fathers do not get involved in any child care until the child is 3 to 4 years of age. (Phanjaruniti 1994) When fathers are present, it is common for them to be assigned the role of disciplinarian and to serve as a role model for their sons as they approach and enter school age. (Evans 1994) Fathers also influence the childrearing process indirectly by assuming (or not) the role of economic provider and by providing (or not) emotional support to mothers.

Research, mostly carried out in the North, suggests that when fathers are a significant part of a child's life from birth, the children score higher on intelligence tests and do better in school than children whose fathers are less involved. (Engle and Breaux 1994) This result must, however, be treated with care because it may be more the presence of "another person" than presence of a "father" that produces the effect. According to Lamb (1987), level and type of a father's involvement seem to be more important in determining positive effects on child development than the amount of time that a father spends interacting directly with the child. Further, that involvement seems to be determined not only by the time available to fathers outside their work routines, but also by their motivation (influenced in part by norms related to masculinity), by levels of confidence related to knowledge and skills (often low because fathers do not have prior experience or time alone with young children), and by the degree of support provided within the family. (In a majority of families, women do not want husbands to be more involved in childrearing because it further undercuts their own status.) The results of studies of father absence vary from "no effects" to detrimental effects, related variously to length of absence, to the age of children at absence, to whether or not economic support continues during absence, to the degree of extended family support provided, and to cultural limitations on women as they try to fill the gap left by absence.

6

The Influence of Environment on Childrearing Practices

The wide variation in the physical, social, economic and cultural settings in which childrearing occurs will obviously have a major influence on who brings up children and on the practices they follow.

The Physical Environment. The climate and geography of an area will help to define both children's specific needs and the practices adopted to meet those needs. In a review of literature on this subject, John Whiting (1981) states that ". . . the manner in which infants are cared for during their waking and sleeping hours is to a considerable extent constrained by the physical environment, the temperature of the coldest month of the year being the most important factor." He also concludes that there is not sufficient evidence to indicate whether or not these variations in methods of infant care have any enduring effects.

Continuing the focus on feeding and protection, consider the following contrasting examples of how specific childrearing practices and techniques used must be adapted to varied physical settings, even though the needs they are designed to meet and the ends they serve are similar across them. Both an Eskimo(Canada) and Yoruba (Nigeria) mother may carry their babies and breastfeed on demand. But for the Eskimo mother to do so requires wearing a heavy, warm, very large and loose garment that allows the baby to be carried on her back and swung around, inside the garment, at the time of feeding. A hood on the garment channels air to the baby while it is on the mother's back at the same time that it helps to keep the mother and baby warm. The Yoruba mother, faced with a tropical climate, needs only to sling the baby on her back, open to the elements. In both cases, the baby is in direct touch with the mother. In the Eskimo case, however, the baby cannot benefit from the sight of other people and of the world in general while being carried. Other means are required for providing that kind of stimulation and social interaction.

The Social and Economic Environment. The physical environment helps to determine settlement patterns which will also affect childrearing choices and patterns. The conditions for childrearing in a nomadic society differ from those in a settled society. And among those who are settled, conditions for those who live in dispersed settlements will differ dramatically from those who live in concentrated areas. Further, small concentrations in rural towns provide different conditions from large concentrations in major cities.

Childrearing practices will also be influenced by variations in forms of economic livelihood and the division of labor. In some societies, when both parents directly share work obligations, as among the Aka (cited above) it improves the possibility that both will share childrearing tasks. However, this sharing of childrearing tasks is not usually the case. Studies from Jamaica, India and the United States (cited in Engle and Breaux 1994), indicate that when a woman works outside the home this usually does not relieve her of childrearing responsibility nor lead to greater involvement in childrearing by men. Particularly in urban areas, when women work outside the home, the demand for and use of institutional care increases.

Practices are also influenced by social organization at the level of family, community and larger society. Factors such as: divisions by caste and class; whether a culture is patrilineal or matrilineal; the social definition of men's and women's roles; the degree of solidarity and hierarchy in communities; family size and composition; and organization into extended, polygamous, nuclear or single-parent families all have an effect on childrearing. For instance, extended and polygamous families, in which the kinship groupings are large, patterned and complicated will provide a wider range of potential caregivers than either a nuclear or a single-parent family where there is isolation from other kin. At the same time, polygamy can bring jealousies among women and conditions which negatively affect childrearing practices (Akinware and Ojomo 1993, 30), and in-laws are not always supportive. (Sempebwa Nagawa 1994)

Beliefs and Values, Norms and Practices

Beliefs help to rationalize, justify and explain particular practices that have grown up over the ages or that are carried out by individuals. Beliefs merge with values in helping to give meaning to practices by defining the kind of child (and adult) a particular society seeks to produce. Beliefs and values also provide the backdrop against which cultural norms are established, representing how particular cultures define the way in which their children should be reared.

Beliefs, Values and Childrearing Goals. Cultures are guided, and distinguished by, their beliefs about what happens both in this world and in an after life. These beliefs may arise from long and practical experience in particular conditions that daily life presents or they may represent attempts to deal with the unknown (e.g., a belief in the power of the evil eye).

In Ethiopia, for instance, a belief, derived from concrete experience, that a baby should be small at birth, has persisted in rural areas. Accordingly, food taboos keeping weight increases down during pregnancy commonly lead to the birth of what the World Health Organization would define as "low birthweight" babies. The origin of this apparently irrational belief lies in the fact that at one stage rickets was prevalent among teenage girls in Ethiopia, affecting pelvic growth and making it dangerous to give birth to a large child. With a change in conditions, however, the belief, originally well-grounded, and related to a value placed on the life of the mother so that another child could be born, had not changed as recently as the late 1980s. (Negussie 1988) The belief and the associated practice persists despite the fact that low birthweight babies tend to be low in their level of activity and attentiveness, and are relatively irritable (Brazelton 1982), and despite a demonstrated relationship to infant mortality and to delayed or debilitated development.

In a less tangible vein, newborns are considered to have different relationships to the spiritworld. In many cultures a newborn is considered to be a gift from god. (Evans 1995) This means that children are to be treated with the utmost respect and indulgence in the early years. "The newborn are treated as celestial creatures entering a more humdrum existence and, at the moment of birth, are addressed with high sounding honorific phrases for gods, the souls of ancestors, princes and people of a higher caste." (Mead 1955, Bali, Indonesia) By way of contrast, in Northeast Thailand, "Newborn infants are usually wrapped and placed in a basket lined with a

blanket, close to the mother for a few days. Parents, relatives and neighbors usually do not openly express their enjoyment or admiration of the baby for fear that the spirits might take the baby away. Relatives usually say aloud, 'What an ugly baby he is,' in order to deceive the spirit". (Kotchabhakdi 1987) In societies in which a high level of infant mortality was, or is, common, beliefs have arisen that help to explain and accept a young child's death. For instance, the newborn is believed to remain in a pure state for some period. If the child dies during the early period, it returns to the spirit world, having avoided the trials and tribulations of a temporary stay on earth. (Scheper-Hughes 1985) When children are looked upon as a human creation and responsibility is assigned to people, "letting go" is more difficult.

Most cultures have a set of beliefs about how children develop physically, mentally and socially. In some cultures a child is believed to be fragile, in others the child is perceived to be hardy. Therefore, handling practices differ. In some, children are believed capable of learning in their early years, but not of being taught. This affects the practice of direct instruction, as contrasted with learning by observation and imitation. In some it is believed necessary to take an active role in helping a child learn to sit and walk; in others this is not seen as necessary. (Evans and Myers 1994)

Beliefs merge with values to define the kind of child (and adult) a particular society seeks to produce. Some cultures want children to be obedient, others foster a questioning child. Some tolerate aggressiveness; others value a quiet submissive child. Some strengthen individualism, others have a collective orientation and promote strong social responsibility. As an example, a study of Thai ways of childrearing (Sumon Amornvivat et al. 1989) identified the following key values: obedience and respect for seniority; diligence and responsibility; being economical; generosity; honesty; gratitude; and self-reliance.

Cultural Norms. Derived from experience, tied to beliefs and values, and influencing the choice of how to respond to children's needs are cultural norms or patterns. These represent the generally-accepted styles and types of care expected of caregivers in responding to the needs of children in their early months and years. Normative patterns represent a culture's way of trying to assure behaviors that will maximize the survival, maintenance and development of the group or culture as well as of the child. Norms apply to behaviors expected at various points in a child's life. For example, societies differ in expectations for parental and community behavior with respect to such activities as birthing practices, how a child should be named, how an infant's death is handled, when to stop breastfeeding, what games to play, how a child should be punished, etc.

As a perverse example of how beliefs, values and norms may operate, we refer to a study of an Ecuadorian community where a belief that women should not be aggressive and where value was placed on women's submissiveness led to differential norms guiding the length of time that boys and girls should be breastfed. Girls were weaned earlier than boys. This had an impact on differential growth and development. The shorter time to weaning for girls was related to a higher mortality rate for girls prior to age five. (McKee 1980).

9

To balance this example, one could point to many norms, embodied in traditional wisdom, that seem to have a salutary effect on the survival and development of young children. For instance, a norm that young children should participate at an early age in work and ritual activity (as well as play and formal education) has many positive consequences. It provides learning that occurs in context and in naturally occurring sequences. Children are required to take on tasks that are increasingly complex and they are provided with direct and repeated monitoring. This process builds confidence and competence and inculcates social responsibility. (UNESCO 1988)

While general agreement about what should be done in bringing up children may exist for the culture as a whole, these norms may or may not be followed by individuals who are affected also by their particular circumstances and who bring different beliefs and knowledge to the task. Sometimes within a culture deviation from the norm leads to ostracism. In other instances, there is considerable latitude in terms of adherence to cultural patterns. In times of rapid change, norms often blur and they are hard to define.

Changes in Childrearing

Changes in the Environment. Perhaps more important than the fact that contexts within which childrearing occurs are different is the fact that contexts are changing continuously, sometimes slowly and almost imperceptibly, allowing adjustments to occur along the way, sometimes rapidly and with potentially disastrous consequences because adjustment is difficult. A historical view helps one to understand the impact of changing contexts on childrearing practices. For instance, in the Western World, important changes in childrearing practices and patterns can be seen accompanying the Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century. In the predominantly agricultural and rural society that preceded industrialization, children were usually found within an intact, extended family. These children were socialized to a relatively limited and unchanging world with agreed upon community values. The rural setting provided space to explore and a stimulating environment. The responsibility for childrearing lay clearly with women whose work usually permitted them to breastfeed and to attend directly to the child in the early years. Families were often large and older children were expected to help with childcare tasks. Indeed, children quickly entered an adult world and, in a sense, did not have a separate *childhood* as they do today. (Aries 1962)

The rural conditions of the 18th and 19th centuries in the West, and in most parts of the developing world of today, should not be romanticized. Life was demanding and survival was continually threatened by disease, and occasionally by lack of food. But for those rural children who managed to survive their early months, their *development* was less problematic than it would be for many of their peers in new urban environments. The childrearing practices evolved over the years were suited to socialization in a rural environment; they were not suited to cities.

With industrialization and migration to the cities came changes in values, in living conditions, in family arrangements and in working patterns. The new conditions brought with them both a need to care for children of working mothers and a need to provide adequate stimulation for children within a restricted physical environment. They called for new parenting skills and a

10

different kind of socialization process. The older forms of child care and development were not always adequate guides for those living in these dramatically different contexts.

There is a striking parallel between the changes in values, living patterns, family structure, and work associated with the industrial revolution, and the changes occurring today in the rapidly urbanizing and sometimes industrializing nations of the so-called Third World. These shifts have affected childrearing. In addition, childrearing is being affected by population growth and changes in fertility patterns, in economic policies, geopolitical shifts, and the changes in technology that have occurred over the last 35 years. While population growth and the related pressure on land has helped to fuel migration to cities, exacerbating the changes noted above, declining fertility in recent years has meant smaller families, which means there are fewer children to care for, but also fewer siblings to help with childrearing. A declining infant and child mortality rate means that more attention needs to be paid to strategies of childrearing geared to improving child development rather than focussing on child survival. This basic shift in outlook does not come easily.

Economic shifts, including the longer term trends toward inclusion of all people in a monetary economy, toward cash cropping and toward industrialization, and the more recent changes associated with neo-liberal adjustment policies, have had profound effects on the form and content of childrearing. Economic adjustments in many countries, focussing on stabilization and production, have been accompanied by increases in unemployment, reductions in social expenditures, and the need for poorer families to turn toward self-generated employment in the informal sector, either as a supplement to formal sector earnings or as their sole source of support. These policies have helped to continue the trends toward a greater presence of women in the paid labor force, changing occupational distributions within households, and the growth of female-headed households. While women have entered the labor force in greater numbers, they have often done so in informal sector jobs that are too frequently insecure, require long hours of work, and carry with them no social benefits. These trends have posed painful dilemmas for women with childrearing responsibilities. They can lead to leaving children alone for longer or shorter periods of the day. (e.g., Acevedo et al. 1986)

Over the last two decades, the global cold war has given way to local hot wars and conflicts among and within nations. As a result, the displacement of families has become a problem of major proportions. An important part of that problem centers on how to rear children under such conditions.

Technology has brought new dimensions to everyone's lives. A communications revolution has helped to create the *global village.* Transistor radios now reach into most corners of the world, and even television is reaching rural areas to a degree not thought possible 25 years ago. The educational revolution, with its emphasis on literacy and schooling has dramatically altered socialization patterns and defined new childrearing needs. For instance, participation in schooling requires much greater emphasis on cognitive skills related to abstract reasoning. The arrival, perhaps intrusion, of schools into rural areas has brought competition with indigenous educational forms. And schooling competes with domestic work that has been such a central part

11

of children's lives over the centuries. Technology has also affected childrearing by making available such products as bottles and cribs and plastic toys.

Transportation and organizational revolutions have occurred as well. Buses not only help rural people visit cities and migrate to them; they also aid periodic or permanent return to villages where new ideas and modes of behavior can be displayed. Communication and transportation revolutions have facilitated the outreach of business and governmental organizations to villages. There is, then, not only a shift to the city with accompanying changes, but also a reach of the city into rural areas. With this urban influence bottle-feeding has arrived to compete with breast-feeding and plastic toys have arrived to compete with home-made toys. There is a changing sense of *community,* and confusion about responsibilities and loyalties. The changes bring uncertainty about old values and ways of doing things, including rearing children. The implication of all of this is that even children who remain in rural areas increasingly live simultaneously in national and global cultures, but they are rooted in a local culture sometimes unsure about its own roots and directions. This leads us to a discussion of beliefs, values and norms.

Changes in Beliefs, Values and Norms. With changes in the environment come changes in beliefs, values and norms, all of which evolve as the contexts and specific needs of people change. When societies were more or less isolated from one another and there were few outside influences, what one generation passed on was similar to the way the next generation raised its children and there was relative stability of values, beliefs and norms. Changes could be incorporated without losing the traditional. (LeVine 1977) However, few cultures have remained relatively isolated and intact. As suggested above, most are vulnerable to outside influences— schools, mass media, missionaries, returned migrants—that challenge established beliefs, values and norms. The juxtaposition of the old and the new can leave cultures disorganized and groups of people at a loss in terms of their values and beliefs. In the jargon of present-day psychology, these cultures might be classified as "dysfunctional". They cannot define norms and no longer provide children with the grounding, stability, and vision that was found within traditional belief systems.

In the struggle for identity and in the desire to be modern some cultures have completely cast off their traditions, or think they have. Yet both rural and urban, or indigenous and industrialized cultures are recognizing that adopting "modern" ways does not always offer the best means of providing what is desirable for children to grow and develop. As a result, people are seeking to identify and recapture traditional values. There is an increasing awareness that much of what existed within traditional cultures was positive and supportive of growth and development, for the individual and for the society. Likewise some traditional beliefs and practices that may have had a logical origin, are recognized today as harmful to a person's health and well-being (the Ethiopian example given above) and are being changed.

Changes in Childrearing Practices. As noted, the general needs of children do not change. For children to survive, grow and develop they still need to be nourished, to avoid disease and accidents, to be nurtured, and to learn the ways of the world. But, against the background presented of changing environments, and changing beliefs, values and norms, it is clear that childrearing practices must change and are changing. This is true for rural families who are asked

12

to assimilate new ways but resist changes that may indeed be necessary for their children to function in the transitional world, or multiple worlds, that surround them. It is true for young single-parent mothers who draw upon their memory of how they were brought up even though conditions have changed drastically. It is true for those who migrate to cities. They need to make adjustments to a new environment. For instance, to protect a child in an urban setting it may be necessary to keep the child indoors a large part of the time. If a child must be indoors in a confined space rather than in the open countryside, new ways of stimulating the child must be created. If a family cannot grow its own crops, it must rely on what is available in a market. Thus feeding practices change. If a mother must work and cannot take the child along, breastfeeding may not be possible. If a child is now expected to do well in school rather than do well tending animals, there is a need to be socialized to new ways.

In general, childrearing practices change slowly, despite pressures for change and despite increasing access to information that supports alternative practices. However, as new demands are made on families, changes do occur and in that process, sound and solid practices that worked well previously may be set aside. These include such practices as breastfeeding, massage, carrying, story-telling. These are now being replaced by new practices such as bottle feeding, bathing in a bathtub, putting children in playpens and watching television.

Childrearing practices do not stand alone. In general it is possible to identify a cluster of childrearing practices. This cluster is created as a result of the interrelatedness of children's developmental needs, environmental conditions, and the fact that practical choices made to satisfy one need may limit what it is possible to do to satisfy another. For instance, the choice of breastfeeding on demand requires a kind of physical proximity to the mother at all times that scheduled bottle-feeding does not. That requirement affects carrying and sleeping practices. The physical closeness of mother to child also permits, or reinforces, a kind of nurturing that is different from that employed when there is greater physical separation.

Figure 1 provides a rough approximation of two very distinct clusters of practices. Cluster 1 presents childrearing practices associated with a socially mobile, industrialized, and developmentally-oriented world dominated by technological change. Cluster 2 presents childrearing practices generally associated with a socially stable but survival-oriented world dominated by tradition.

FIGURE 1

ROUGH DESCRIPTIONS OF TWO CLUSTERS OF SELECTED CHILDREARING PRACTICES

PERIOD	CLUSTER 1	CLUSTER 2
Prenatal	Gain weight in order to have a healthy (large) baby	Adhere to food taboos in order to have a small baby
Birth	Concern for mother and child	Primary concern for mother

	Birth in hospital	Birth at home or in a special place
	Doctor attending	Traditional birth attendant
Perinatal	Baby given immediately to mother to hold	Delay in mother's contact with newborn
	Breastfeed within hours (colostrum given)	Wait 2/3 days to breastfeed (no colostrum given)
	Name given at birth	Naming delayed
Infant	Scheduled feeding	On-demand feeding
	Bottle-feeding	Breast feeding
	Early weaning	Late weaning
	Separate sleeping	Sleeping with mother
	Use crib/playpen	Hold/carry
	Light bathing	Vigorous bathing, massage
	Begin toilet training later	Begin toilet training earlier
	Emphasis on: independence individual	Emphasis on: obedience group

Changes in Who Cares for the Child. We have noted that with the decrease in the number of extended families, the childrearing role of grandparents and in-laws and near relatives is diminishing. We have noted that changes in context and family structures, more often than in the past, lead to the absence of fathers. In addition, both the need for children to attend school and the tendency toward smaller families make it less feasible for siblings to participate in childcare in a major way. Moreover, in urban areas the sense of community is often very weak and neighbors are often unfamiliar people. Leaving children with the neighbor becomes more difficult and the traditional tendency for childrearing to be a responsibility of all community members is lost.

A result of the above shifts is that women, who are under more pressure to work outside the home, but who, in most cultures, continue to be assigned the responsibility for childrearing, have fewer options than before for help with the childrearing task. It is not surprising, then, that the demand for institutionalized forms of childcare should be increasing in most parts of the world and that a major share of childrearing is being assigned to non-family members working in non-family institutions. One example of dependence on institutional care outside the home comes from Belgium where a recent study found that 4-year old children spent more of their waking hours with "other caregivers" in child care centers than they spent alone with their mothers and fathers. (Olmsted and Weikart 1995)

Indeed, institutionalized forms of childcare have grown by leaps and bounds in the last 25 years.[7] These include pre-schools, creches, centers for integrated attention to the child, nurseries, home day care, each with its own characteristics as well as name. Some of these institutions are *formal* governmental systems of care, often created as a worker's benefit. Others are considered to be

non-formal in the sense that the people who run the centers are not part of the government payroll, even though their center may receive some sort of subsidy from the government.

A review of literature dealing with women's work and child care (Myers and Indriso, 1987) suggests that for childcare centers, whether classified as formal or informal, to be judged adequate by women they should be: affordable, accessible, flexible (particularly with respect to hours), run by trusted and accountable persons, and meet minimum quality standards. Many centers do not meet such standards. This helps to explain why it is sometimes possible to encounter a supply of available places that are unused, but at the same time a demand for places that is unsatisfied.

Effects of Institutionalized Child Care on Children

Working women's expectations with respect to the need for adequate child care arrangements are backed by a literature regarding the actual and potential effects of institutionalized care on children. This literature shows that, if an institutional setting provides a warm, loving, safe place, child care outside the home can provide children with the types of experiences that foster healthy growth and development. (Evans and Shah 1993) This is particularly so if previously they were reared exclusively in a home environment that did not provide these conditions. If, however, centers are custodial places of poor quality, children may suffer developmentally and be worse off than peers who are cared for at home. (Kagitcibasi, in press) Thus the quality of a child's experiences in the child care setting and at home is more important than whether or not the child is involved in programs of care outside the home.

There is some evidence that various kinds of programs of child care and/or pre-schooling can be of particular benefit to children from impoverished or socially-disadvantaged homes and for girls living in conditions that put them at a disadvantage. Such children will be more likely to attend school and perform well than their peers who have not had a similar opportunity. They will also be less likely to repeat or leave school early. (Myers 1992) In the best of circumstances, one might expect that quality programs of early education will lead to social and economic benefits for the participating individual and society. (Schweinhart et al. 1993)

Implications for Policy and Programming

It is clear that the balance of responsibility for childrearing is shifting. Institutionalized forms of child care are becoming more prominent and family responsibility is being reduced. This has been true for many decades as government-run institutions called schools have taken over the educational function beginning at about age six. The shift to government responsibility for young children is now occurring for children during their preschool years and all signs point to this trend continuing.

As the care for young children continues to shift to preschools, creches, home daycare centers and other institutions, often under the auspices of the State, it is important to be sure that a process is in place that will provide for the development of the best possible childrearing

15

practices. To do this there are several steps in the process. These include an examination of the situation and action from the micro (child) to the macro (political) level.

Assess the Situation for Children. It is important to assess children's needs in a given context Are the children living in a relatively stable environment or is their world shifting on a daily basis? Do they have adequate nutrition? Are there gender differences in the way children are cared for?

Current Child Care. It is important to understand the current child care situation. Who is caring for the children? Has there been a shift in this as a result of recent economic and social changes? Where are children being cared for and under what conditions? Are mothers the only ones caring for children? To what extent are older siblings involved? If more and more girls are attending and remaining in school, what does that mean in terms of who is caring for the youngest children?

If children are being left at home alone when mothers are involved in income-generating activities outside the home, and older siblings are in school, then alternative child care systems need to be developed. This might involve the development of neighborhood daycare where care is provided in the home of someone nearby. If a greater number of children require care, then perhaps it is appropriate to create a child care center.

Supports for Caregivers. It is important to understand the caregiving environment. What kind of supports do the current caregivers require? Are these adequate? One place to begin is to look specifically at the situation of the caregiver, primarily mothers, in the community. What supports do they have and what do they need? What resources do they have available to them—human and financial? What kinds of stress are they under? What are the demands on their time?

Current Childrearing Practices. Another place to look is at the childrearing practices themselves. There is a need to make an assessment of whether or not current childrearing practices are adequate to support the child's growth and development. What other forms of childrearing are required to meet children's needs?

As socialization for parenthood through experience with younger siblings and under the strict supervision of parents has diminished (Howrigan 1984), an ever greater need appears for parental education programs. Parental education programs are one vehicle for focussing on the family. An understanding of childrearing practices and beliefs can provide the content for such programs. For example, in Chile, a study of childrearing practices was integrated into a program designed to educate and empower parents. (UNICEF 1994) Data from the study were used to identify specific areas that should be stressed in the program, and to develop positive parenting modules.

Parenting education can begin in the late years of primary school or in secondary school. Parental education can occur in health centers, in conjunction with monitoring during pregnancy and lactation. It can also be included in literacy courses. However, it is not only the content that is important. It is also critical to be aware of the process used to convey the information to parents. If the information builds on strengths parents already have, the new information will be

16

incorporated much more easily than if parents feel or are led to believe that they are inadequate. It is best to begin by asking, what are the local childrearing practices and beliefs that can be built upon to strengthen childrearing practices?

Child Care Outside the Home. If alternative forms of childrearing are required, a question to ask is, what resources are available within the community to create supports for caregivers and/or alternative child care? Are there untapped resources within the community that could be used in providing better support for children's development?

It is important for the community to understand the need for a focus on child care. Those to be involved in the programme (sponsors, community members and parents) must come to believe in the importance of childrearing and to understand the importance of their role in the process. Further, it can be argued that since parents are the policy makers in their children's lives, their involvement in the design and operation of alternative child care options is critical. The greater the level of parent and community involvement, the more likely it is that the program will meet family needs and become an integral part of community life.

In the development of alternative forms of childcare it is increasingly important to:

■ assure programs of quality and avoid sub-standard programs for the disadvantaged;

■ work against the tendency to expand programs so rapidly that the system cannot keep up, leading to poor quality programs for the poor;

■ see ways to decentralize programs so that a culturally and geographically appropriate response can be made to demands for institutionalized care and so that the possibility of real community participation will be increased;

■ assure that programs are accessible, affordable, and flexible; are run by trusted and accountable persons; and that they meet minimal quality standards.

The Development of Economic and Social Programs. Programs that have a positive impact on children do not necessarily need to have a child development or parent education focus. By uplifting the lives of family members, particularly mothers, and supporting the community, there are indirect benefits for children. Programs which give women additional income that is at their disposal have indirectly affected children in that women tend to use these new resources to benefit children's health and education. (Engle 1994) Thus a variety of social support system efforts can be put into place to improve and strengthen the context within which children live.

The Political Climate. Beyond the community there is a need to assess the broader political climate. There are certain pre-existing conditions that enhance or hinder the likelihood of success of any effort to support childrearing. What is the climate of support for childrearing concerns within the larger socio-political arena? Political commitment at all levels should include an appropriate supportive policy, adequate budget allocations, and a willingness to make structural reforms where necessary.

One question to ask is, what is required in terms of national policy and support in order to provide for children's healthy growth and development? Legal changes are called for in many

17

countries in order to enable working women to dedicate full time to the care of their children during the first year of life without fear of losing their jobs or benefits. Legal provisions that promote greater participation of men in childrearing are also needed.

There is an additional need to recognize childrearing and child care as productive. On the one hand this means that people (mostly women) who are entrusted with the care of children in institutions should be properly compensated. The tendency to exploit women in childcare positions by paying sub-standard wages and by withholding benefits, is directly related to the lingering belief that a woman's place is in the home and that it is natural for women to care for children, and anybody can do it. Therefore it is believed that a woman's services in helping to rear children should be voluntary. A step toward recognition of child care as a productive activity would be to include this work in national statistics related to economic productivity.

In conclusion, we are at a time of major change in childrearing beliefs, norms and practices. If we are to retain the good practices from traditional systems and to make needed shifts to respond to the major changes thrust upon us by industrialization and so-called modernization, we will need to be much more open than we have been in the past. We must recognize both the wisdom of experience and the necessity of change.

References

Acevedo, M.L., J.I. Aguilar, L.M. Brunt and M.S. Molinari. "Child Care in Mexico City," in M. Schmink, J. Bruce and M. Khan (eds.). **Learning about Women and Urban Services in Latin America and the Caribbean.** New York: The Population Council, 1986, pp. 273-76.

Acharya, M. and L. Bennett. "Women and the Subsistence Sector: Economic Participation and Household Decision-Making in Nepal," World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 526. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1982.

Akinware, M., and A.A. Ojomo. "Childrearing Practices and their Associated Beliefs in Nigeria." A paper based on the Baseline Studies Conducted in Five Local Government Areas in Nigeria. UNICEF (1987-1990). Lagos, Nigeria, UNICEF, 1993.

Anadalakshmy, S. (Comp). The Girl Child and the Family: An Action Research Study. Sponsored by the Department or Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, Madras, India, 1994.

Aries, P. **Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life.** New York: Vintage Books, 1962.

Blair, A., B. Maphathe, N. Makhetha, F. Rankhelepe and R. Thabane. "Off to a Good Start (A Study of 400 Basotho One-Year Olds)." Maseru: National University of Lesotho, Institute of Southern African Studies, 1986.

Brown, J., R. Bloomfield and O. Ellis, **Men and Their Families: Contributions of Caribbean Men to Family Life**. Kingston, Jamaica: The Caribbean Child Development Centre, School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies, 1994.

Chibuye, P.S., M. Mwenda and C. Osborne. "CRZ/UNICEF Study on Child Rearing Practices in Zambia," Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia Association for Research and Development, 1986.

Chavez, A. and C. Martinez. **Growing Up in a Developing Community**. Mexico: Instituto Nacional de la Nutricion, 1982.

Dare, G. and D. Adejomo, "Traditional Fostering and its Influence on School-Related Behaviours in Nigerian Primary School Children," **International Journal of Child Development,** Vol. 15, No. 1 (1983), pp. 16-19.

Engle, P. L. **Men in Families: Report of a Consultation on the Role of Men and Families in Achieving Gender Equity**. UNICEF, June 13-14, 1994.

Engle, P.L. and C. Breaux. "Is there a Father Instinct? Father's Responsibility for Children," a paper prepared for the Population Council. Washington: The International Center for Research on Women, 1994.

Evans, J.L. "Health Care: The Care Required to Survive and Thrive," **The Coordinators' Notebook,** No, 13 (1993), pp 1-18, publication of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development.

Evans, J.L. "Childrearing Practices in Subsaharan Africa: An Introduction to the Studies," **The Coordinators' Notebook,** No. 15, (1994) pp. 25-41.

Evans, J.L. "Men in the Lives of Children," **The Coordinators' Notebook**, No. 16 (1995), pp.1-15.

Evans, J.L. and R.G. Myers, "Childrearing Practices: Creating Programs where Traditions and Modern Practices Meet," **The Coordinators' Notebook**, No. 15 (1994), pp. 1-21.

Evans, J.L. and P.M. Shah, "Child-care Programmes for Health and Family Support," **World Health Statistics Quarterly,** Vol. 46, No. 4, 1993, pp. 214-221.

Hewlett, B. "Intimate Fathers. Patterns of Paternal Holding among Aka Pygmies," in M. Lamb (Ed.), **The Father's Role: Cross-Cultural Perspectives.** Hillsdale, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1987, pp. 295-330.

Howrigan, G. "Making Mothers from Adolescents: Context and Experience in Maternal Behavior in Yucatan," unpublished PhD. dissertation, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, 1984.

Kagitcibasi, C. **Family and Human Development and Human Development Across Cultures: A View from the Other Side**. (in press)

Kagitcibasi, C. "Family and Socialization in Cross-Cultural Perspective, A Model of Change," in J. Berman (ed.) **Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 1989.** Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 1990.

Kalemba, E. "Childrearing Practices and Beliefs in Malawi and Their Implications for Programming." Paper presented at the Workshop on Childrearing Practices and Beliefs, Windhoek, Namibia, October 26-29, 1993.

Ki-Zerbo, J. **Educate or Perish.** UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, 1990.

Kotchabhakdi, N.J. "The Integration of Psychosocial Components of Early Childhood Development in a Nutrition Education Programme of Northeast Thailand," a paper prepared for the Third Meeting of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Washington, D.C., January 12-14, 1987. New York: The Consultative Group on ECCD, 1987.

Lamb, M.E. (ed.). **The Father's Role. Cross-Cultural Perspectives.** Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1987.

Landers, C. "Creating Linkages: Women, Work and Child Care," **The Coordinators' Notebook,** No. 11 (July 1992), pp. 1-17.

Landers, C. "Childrearing Practices and Infant Development in South India," in N. Gunzenhauser (ed.) **Advances in Touch: New Implications in Human Development.** Skillman, N.J.:Johnson and Johnson, Inc. 1990, pp. 42-52.

Lester, B. and T. Berry Brazelton. "Cross-cultural Assessment of Neonatal Behavior," in D. Wagner and H,. Stevenson (eds.), **Cultural Perspectives on Child Development,** San Francisco: Freeman and Co., 1982, Chapter 2.

LeVine, R. "Child Rearing as Cultural Adaption," in Leiderman, Tulkin, and A. Rosenfeld (eds.), **Culture and Infancy.** New York: Academic Press, 1977, pp. 15-27.

McKee, L. "Ideals and Actualities: The Socialization of Gender-Appropriate Behavior in an Ecuadorian Village." unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ithaca, N.Y.:Cornell University, 1980.

Mead, M. and M. Wolfenstein (eds.) **Childhood in Contemporary Cultures.** Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Myers, R.G. **The Twelve Who Survive**. London: Routledge, 1992, Myers and C. Indriso. "Women's Work and Childcare," a paper prepared for a workshop on 'Issues Related to Gender, Technology and Development,' February 26-27, 1987, New York, The Rockefeller Foundation, 1987. Mimeo.

Negussie, B. **Traditional Wisdom and Modern Development, A Case Study of Traditional Peri-Natal Knowledge among Elderly Women in Southern Shewa, Ethiopia. Stockholm;** University of Stockholm, Institute of International Education, 1988.

Negussie, B. "Mother and Child Care, Child Development and Child-Rearing: an East African Perspective." A paper produced for the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Stockholm, Sweden, (mimeo.), 1990.

Olmsted, P.P. and D.P. Weikart (eds.). **Families Speak: Early Childhood Care and Education in 11 Countries.** Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Press, 1994.

Ortiz, A. and M.F. Souffez. "Patrones de Crianza Infantil en el Area Rural Andina," Lima: Centro Latinoamericano de Estudios Educativos, 1989.

Paolisso, M., M. Baksh and J.C. Thomas. "Women's Agricultural Work, Child Care and Infant Diarrhea in Rural Kenya", in J. Leslie and M. Paolisso (eds.), **Women, Work and Child Welfare in the Third World**. Boulder, Colorado:Westview Press, Inc., 1989, pp.487-496.

Perez-Excamilla, R., S. Segura-Millan, E. Pollitt and K.G. Dewey. "Determinants of Lactation Performance Across Time in an Urban Population from Mexico," **Social Science and Medicine,** 1993.

Phanjaruniti, S. "Traditional Child Rearing Practices among Different Ethnic Groups in Houphan Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic," Vientiane: UNICEF, 1994.

Roloff, G., P. Nunez and J. Vasconez. Los Ninos del Ecuador. Practicas de Crianza en ZonasRurales y Urbano Marginales. Santafe de Bogota , Colombia: Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), Enero de 1995. Coleccion, Practicas de Crianza, No. 3.

Scheper-Hughes, N. "Culture, Scarcity and Maternal Thinking: Maternal Detachment and Infant Survival in a Brazilian Shanty Town," **Ethos,** Vol. 13, No. 4 (1985), pp. 291-317.

Schweinhart, L.J., H.V. Barnes, D.P. Weikart, W.S. Barnett, and A. S. Epstein. **Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27.** Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. 1993.

Sempebwa Nagawa. "Absent Husbands, Unsupportive In Laws and Rural African Mothers, "**Reproductive Health Matters,** No. 4 (November 1994), pp. 46-54.

Shah, P.M., S.R. Walimbe, and V.C. Dhole, "Wage-Earning Mothers, Mother Substitutes and Care of Young Children in Rural Maharashtra," **Indian Pediatrics,** 16 (1979), pp. 167-173.

Sumon Amornvivat, et al. **Thai Ways of Child Rearing Practices. An Ethnographic Study**. Bangkok: Chullalongkorn University, Faculty of Education, 1989.

Super, C. and S. Harkness. "The Developmental Niche: A Conceptualization at the Interface of Child and Culture," **International Journal of Behavioural Development**, Vol. 9 (1986), pp. 545-569.

Tronick, E.Z., S.W. Winn and G. Morelli, "The Child-Holding Patterns of Efe (Pygmies) of Zaire," in N. Gunzenhauser (ed.) **Advances in Touch: New Implications in Human Development.** Skillman, N.J.: Johnson and Johnson, Inc., 1990.

UNESCO, **The Learning Environments of Early Childhood in Asia. Resarch Persepctives and Changing Programmes**. Bangkok, UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 1988.

UNICEF. "Educating and Empowering Parents to Enhance Early Childhood Development: An Integrated Strategy at the Municipal Level in Chile," UNICEF, Santiago, Chile, 1994.

Wagner, D.A., and H.W. Stevenson (eds.). **Cultural Perspectives on Child Development**. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1979.

Weisner, T. and R. Gallimore, "My Brother's Keeper: Child and Sibling Caretaking," **Current Anthropology,** Vol.18, No. 2 (1977), pp. 169-90.

Whiting, J.W.M. "Environmental Constraints on Infant Care Practices," in R.H. Monroe, R.L. Monroe and B.B. Whiting (Eds.). **Handbook of Cross-Cultural Human Development.** New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1981, 155-79.

Whiting, B.B. and J.W.M. Whiting. **Children of Six Cultures: A Psycho-cultural Analysis.** Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Whiting, B.B., and C.P. Edwards. **Children of Different Worlds.** Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Zeitlin, M., F.C. Johnson and R. Houser. "Active Maternal Feeding and Nutritional Status of 8-20 month old Low Income Mexican Children." Boston: Tufts University, Department of Nutrition. Mimeo, n.d.

Zeitlin, M., H. Ghassemi and M. Mansour. **Positive Deviance in Child Nutrition, with Emphasis on Psychosocial and Behavioural Aspects and Implications for Development.** Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1990.

Zimba, R. F., and B. Otaala. "Child Care and Development in Uukwalundhi, Northern Namibia," Windhoek, Namibia, UNICEF, 1991.

Zoller Booth, M. "Children of Migrant Fathers: The Effects of Father Absence on Swazi Children's Preparedness for School, **Comparative Education Review,** Vol. 39, No. 2 (May 1995), pp. 195-210.

Endnotes

[1] Women's activities are often classified as productive or *reproductive*. This classification is unfortunate in our view because it does not adequately represent the complexity of women's lives. Rather than distinguish these two roles, assigning economic value to one and not to the other, it seems more useful to place women's activities on a continuum. At one end of the continuum is work outside the home that is paid. This work, normally classified as *productive*, also supports *reproductive* activity. The next point on the continuum would be reserved for work that women do at home for which they earn money. Next comes support that women provide to other family members who are earning income (e.g. provision of food to those working outside the home), and production for family consumption (caring for small agricultural plots). Toward the other end of the continuum are such tasks as maintenance of the household (gathering firewood, collecting water, cooking, etc.) **and childcare.** If these household chores, normally classified as

reproductive, were not performed by women as their duty to the family, they would have to be paid for, and if women did not care for children this service would also have to be bought, in which case the services would be classified as *productive* activities.

[2] One would hope, for instance, that there would be an article dealing with childrearing in an Encyclopedia of Third World Men.

[3] This section draws from reviews presented in Judith L. Evans and Robert G. Myers, "Childrearing Practices: Creating Programs Where Traditions and Modern Practice Meet," The **Coordinator's Notebook,** No. 15 (October 1994), pp. 1-21; and **The Twelve Who Survive,** Robert G. Myers. London: Routledge, 1992, Chapter 13, "Understanding Cultural Differences in Childrearing Practices and Beliefs.

[4] We have drawn here upon a useful "framework for studying the cultural regulation of the micro-environment of the child" labeled the "developmental niche" and developed by Super and Harkness (1987). The framework relates childrearing practices to changing settings, customs and beliefs. See also Whiting and Whiting, 1975.

[5] For a cross-cultural perspective on the role of fathers in up-bringing see reviews by: Lamb, 1987, Evans, 1995, and Engle and Breaux, 1994.

[6] This study, carried out by the High/Scope Foundation in conjunction with the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, surveyed families of 4-year-olds in Belgium, China, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Nigeria, Poland, Spain, Thailand and the United States.

[7] An exception to this seems to be found in many parts of the socialist world where the number of formal institutions of child care has dropped as economies have changed.