



**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services**

**Inquiry into
Balancing Work and Family**

Paper prepared by the
Australian Bureau of Statistics
in support of a Committee Hearing on 14 June 2006

Overview of ABS activities relevant to the inquiry

Attachments

Attachment 1: List of ABS collections most relevant to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family.

Attachment 2: List of articles to do with family, work arrangements and other matters relevant to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family. These products are all generally available from the ABS website free of charge.

Attachment 3: A copy of the 'Work and Family Balance' article presented in *Australian Social Trends, 2003*

Attachment 4: List of some research articles relevant to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family in which researchers have made use of ABS data to support their studies.

Overview of ABS Activities Relevant to the Inquiry

1 Data sources

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) collects a wide range of information about the working patterns and preferences of employees and about family circumstances that can be used in analysing issues around work and family/life balance. Important sources of information include the national Census of Population and Housing, a range of national household surveys including surveys on working arrangements, child care, and time use to name a few (all of which have been developed with input from user advisory groups) and data from administrative sources. These sources complement those of other agencies and research organisations who have also developed collections to provide data relevant to this field.

Attachment 1 provides details of ABS collections most relevant to this inquiry. It also includes details of publication releases from each data source.

A general feature of these ABS collections is that they provide a range of standard demographic and labour force characteristics, which support analysis for geographic areas and population groups of interest. These characteristics include: State and Territory of usual residence, capital city /balance of state, sex, age, marital status, relationship in household, country of birth and period of arrival for overseas born, labour force status and full-time and part-time employment status.

2 Statistical outputs

Data from ABS collections are disseminated in:

- . survey based publications associated with the release of new data;
- . tables prepared in response to user specifications;
- . confidentialised unit record files (CURFs) which enable researchers to analyse the data according to their specific research interests; and
- . thematic reports and articles on topical issues;

Publications and other products that are generally available can be obtained from the ABS website free of charge.

Attachment 2 provides a list of recent ABS articles to do with family, work arrangements and other matters referred to in the Committee's terms of reference.

Attachment 3 illustrates the nature of ABS work in this area, by providing a copy of the Work and Family Balance article presented in *Australian Social Trends, 2003*. It is expected that similar articles will be issued in future as new data

becomes available from the various ABS collections referred to in this document.

Attachment 4 provides a further reference list of articles in which researchers have made use of ABS data to support their studies in this field.

3 Recent activities and developments

There have been a number of recent ABS data developments that will help to inform questions concerning work and family balance.

- Inclusion of questions relating to unpaid work (domestic work, child care, care for others, and voluntary work) in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing to be held in August this year. These particular questions are new to the census. A question on numbers of children ever born to mothers to support the analysis of fertility patterns and trends, has also been included again (so updating the data collected in the 1996 census). Together with data on family composition and labour force participation the data will provide a snapshot of family work arrangements in 2006 that may be compared over time. First results from the census will become available from mid 2007.
- Recent publication of the total number of births for 2005 provided an early indication of increases in the annual number of births. More detailed analysis of 2005 births and fertility statistics will be published in November 2006.
- Recent release of data from the 2005 Child Care Survey updating data collected in 2002 and earlier years, showing a continued increase in the use of formal childcare services, as well as information on usage patterns and childcare costs. The next survey will be in 2008. The changes in the cost of childcare obtained from this collection can be monitored against broader price changes as measured by the Consumer Price Index.
- Completion of the Pregnancy and Work Transitions Survey in November 2005, with results expected to be released in August this year. Described further in the Attachment 1, this survey will provide information about work and leave arrangements for mothers (and to some extent fathers) before and after childbirth. It is expected that this survey will be repeated in 2011.
- The conduct of the 2006 Time Use Survey (currently in the field) to provide a contemporary view of how families juggle their time to meet life commitments and responsibilities and to support the analysis of trends from similar surveys conducted in 1992 and 1997. Results from the 2006 Survey are expected to be available in August 2007.
- The conduct of regular surveys of household income (ie the Survey of Income and Housing, conducted every 2 years and currently in the field for 2005-06) and household expenditure (ie the Household Expenditure Survey, conducted every six years and last conducted in 2003-04). These surveys provide detailed information about household finances in the context of particular family circumstances and cover both earned income and government pensions and benefits, including family support payments of various types.

The ABS uses the household expenditure data to analyse the net effect of the tax/transfer system on household incomes, including not only the direct benefits such as family payments, but the indirect benefits from government funded expenditures on education, health, housing and other services by household type (eg lone parent household, couple family with dependent children).

4 New initiatives

Several new ABS initiatives will further enhance the information available in this field.

- The commencement of user consultations and associated development work towards the conduct of a national Work and Family Balance Survey to be conducted in 2007-08. It aims to collect data about people's use of flexible work arrangements to balance their work and caring responsibilities.
- There has been a recent review of working arrangements statistics i.e. those that describe the nature of the employment relationship (e.g. employee, owner manager, contract or labour hire work) as well as the person's conditions of work (e.g. job duration, working time arrangements, location of work). The aim of the review was the development of new strategies to achieve a set of statistics on working arrangements which is consistent, timely and relevant, and reflects the highest priority needs of users. The new measures of employment arrangements are being incorporated in the 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Superannuation and Retirement. The survey will identify the employment arrangements of all persons aged 15 years and over in the selected households so that comparisons can be made between households with differing composition (eg lone persons, sole parents, males and females, families with dependent children etc).
- Associated with the 2006 Census is a data development project (known as the 'Census Data Enhancement Project') which, for a five per cent sample of the population, will enable the records of individuals to be 'statistically matched' with those at the next census in 2011, and following censuses, to develop a Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset. This dataset is will provide information to better understand patterns of change over time in people's circumstances. Records of the sample group will be brought together by matching characteristics such as date of birth, gender and place of birth. To protect the confidentiality of individuals, names and addresses will not be used to link records included in the dataset.

5 ABS support for other developments in this area

While the collections in the ABS work program provide important data to support the analysis of work and family life issues, there are a number of other government funded data collection initiatives that are relevant and for which ABS provides technical advice and assistance.

Notable among these are two longitudinal surveys funded by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA): the Living in Australia study (Household Income and Labour Dynamics, or HILDA); and the Growing up in Australia Study (Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, or LSAC).

The ABS has been providing active support to the conduct of these two collections through participation in survey steering committees and technical groups and through outposting specialist methodological support to the surveys. ABS is also undertaking the development and collection activities for LSAC under a Memorandum of Understanding with FaCSIA and the Australian Institute of Family Studies which provides a strategic framework for the three parties to work together on this initiative.

Australian Bureau of Statistics
June 2006

Attachment 1: List of ABS collections most relevant to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family.

**Work and Family Life Balance
Relevant ABS Collections**

NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation Survey (biennial)

Most recent: 2004-05 (first conducted)

Next: 2006-07

Published in: Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation (ABS cat. no. 6239.0)

Information on people aged 18 years and over who are not employed or who work 15 hours a week or less in all jobs, and the issues that are preventing these people finding or taking up more work. Information also on hours worked, reason for ceasing last job, unpaid activities when not working, reasons for not looking for work or more hours of work, preferred extra hours of work, difficulties finding work or more hours of work, duration of unemployment, availability to start work and main childcare reason not available for work.

Birth Registrations (annual)

Most recent: 2004

Next: 2005

Published in: Births, Australia (ABS cat. no. 3301.0)

Annual statistics and analytical commentary on births and fertility based on birth registration information from the State and Territory Government Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Long time series of statistics on births and fertility indicators by age and other characteristics of the mother and characteristics of the father where available. Quarterly counts by State and Territory of the number of births used for compiling population estimates are also published in *Australian Demographic Statistics* (ABS cat. no 3101.0) in March, June, September and December each year. Financial year total fertility rates are updated in the June issue of 3101.0 (released in December each year).

Career Experience Survey (irregular, discontinued)

Most recent: November 2002

Published in: Career Experience (ABS cat. no. 6254.0)

First conducted in February 1993, provides information on the career experiences of wage and salary earners, including details of current job, changes in job, training opportunities, breaks from work (of more than 6 months duration), reason for breaks from work, types of leave taken, numbers of dependent children and child care arrangements. The main populations of interest are employees (excluding those aged 15-20 years who are still attending school), and employees with children under 12 years of age. Data collected in this survey are used in the formulation and monitoring of policy relating to workplace flexibility, barriers to career development, and workers with family responsibilities.

Census of Population and Housing (5 yearly)

Most recent: 2001

Next: 2006 (8 August)

Provides a "snapshot" of the social, economic and housing characteristics of individuals, families and households at small area level. Information includes family composition,

family income, social and registered marital status, relationship in household, household mobility, labour force status, hours worked, industry and occupation. Can be used to look at issues ranging from jobless families to families with young children with parent(s) working long hours.

Child Care Survey (3 yearly)

Most recent: June 2005

Next: June 2008

Published in: Child Care, Australia (ABS cat. no. 4402.0)

Information in relation to children aged 0-12 years, and their families, about: the use of formal and informal child care; requirements for additional child care; patterns of attendance; child care costs; use of the Child Care Benefit; parental income; and working arrangements used by parents to help care for their children.

Community Services Survey (irregular)

Most recent: 1999-2000

Next: 2008-09

Published in: Community Services, Australia (ABS cat. no. 8696.0)

Operational (including financial) information of businesses/organisations in the child care services industry. Includes: the structure, levels of activity and services provided by these businesses/organisations; sources of income; items of expenditure; characteristics of employment, number of volunteers and hours worked, selected statistics by organisation size.

Disability Ageing and Carers Survey (6 yearly)

Most recent: 2003

Next: 2009

Published in: Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003 (ABS cat. no. 4430.0)

Information from people with a disability about: the types of disabilities they have; the amount of assistance needed and received; and their employment restrictions. Information from carers about: the amount of time they spend caring; and their relationship to the person they care for.

Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership Survey (annual)

Most recent: August 2005

Next: August 2006

Published in: Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership (ABS cat. no. 6310.0)

Information about: employee's weekly earnings; leave entitlements, including maternity and paternity leave entitlements; and employment benefits.

Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation Survey (6 yearly)

Most recent: 2000 (first conducted)

Next: 2007

Published in: Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, Australia, June 2000 (ABS cat. no. 6361.0)

Information on: employment type; job duration; and working time arrangements (including extra hours worked, job stability, patterns of work, leave entitlements, preferred working arrangements and home based work). Also information on people's

retirement intentions and superannuation coverage.

Family Characteristics Survey (Core items 3 yearly, full survey 6 yearly)

Most recent: June 2003

Next: 2006-07

Published in: Family Characteristics, Australia (ABS cat. no. 4442.0)

Details on household and family composition, including demographic, labour force, and family structure information. Additional information collected for families with children aged 0-17 years includes: specific details about relationships between parents or guardians and their children; whether any child has a natural parent living elsewhere; visiting arrangements; and amount and main source of parental income.

Family Transitions and History Survey (6 yearly, with core family characteristics survey)

First survey: 2006-07, data to be released in mid-2008.

Information about: family formation and dissolution; individuals' experiences of family and relationship changes; and fertility expectations. Includes: current and previous registered marriage details; current and previous de facto marriage details; children ever born; fertility expectations; leaving home; and experience of parental separation as a child.

Forms of Employment Survey (annual)

Most recent: November 2004

Next: November 2006

Published in: Forms of Employment, Australia (ABS cat. no. 6359.0)

Information on the structure and incidence of different employment arrangements, including aspects of job tenure and job security. Also collects information on whether people identified themselves as casual.

General Social Survey (4 yearly)

Most recent: 2002

Next: 2006, data to be released in 2007

Published in: General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia (ABS cat. no. 4159.0)

Includes core topics on: housing, health and disability; labour force participation; income, wealth and financial stress; sports participation and attendance at culture leisure venues; and family and community items. The 2006 survey also includes information on: visas; and more detailed aspects of social capital such as voluntary work and giving, other forms of social and civic participation, social relationships and the expectation of giving of support.

Household and Family Projections (irregular)

Most recent: June 2004

Household and family projections of future numbers of households and families to illustrate changes in numbers of households and families, and in the distribution of living arrangement types.

Household Expenditure Survey (6 yearly)

Most recent: 2003-04

Next: 2009-10

Published in: Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results (ABS cat. no. 6530.0)

Information about the income, wealth and household characteristics of Australian households and their levels and patterns of expenditure on a large range of goods and services.

Income and Housing Survey

Most recent: 2003-2004

Next: 2005-2006, results to be released in first half of 2008

Published in: Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia (ABS cat. no. 6523.0)

Information on: sources of income; amounts received; housing characteristics; household characteristics such as household composition; and personal characteristics such as country of birth, marital status, labour force status, hours worked, educational qualifications and relationship in household information .

Labour Force Experience Survey (biennial)

Most recent: February 2005

Next: February 2007

Published in: Labour Force Experience (ABS cat. no. 6206.0)

Information on the labour force experience of persons aged 15-69 years during the year prior to the survey, including: time spent in labour force activities (including episodes of working or looking for work); and time spent out of the labour force. Complements gross flows estimate from the monthly Labour Force Survey in the analysis of labour market dynamics.

Labour Force Status and other Characteristics of Families Datacubes (annual)

Most recent: June 2005

Next: June 2006, annual

Published in: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families (datacubes) (ABS cat. no. 6224.0.55.001)

Annual product with detailed families data not contained in the monthly Labour Force , Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). Includes: the labour force status of usual residents of private dwellings; the types of families to which they belong; and the number and age of children in the household.

Locations of Work Survey (6 yearly)

Most recent: November 2005

Next: November 2008

Published in: Locations of Work, Australia (6275.0)

Information on the types of locations where people work, job characteristics and the working arrangements of people who work at home. Includes hours worked, leave entitlements, the main reason they worked at home and whether they have children under 15 years.

Persons Not in the Labour Force Survey (annual)

Most recent: September 2005

Next: September 2006

Published in: Persons Not in the Labour Force (ABS cat. no. 6220.0)

Information on people aged 15 years and over who are not in the labour force and includes: whether people wanted to work; reasons why they were not actively looking for work; availability for work; and the main activity while not in the labour force.

Pregnancy and Work Transitions Survey (6 yearly)

Most recent: November 2005 (first conducted) (to be published in September 2006)

Next: 2011

Published in: Pregnancy and Work Transitions, Australia (ABS cat. no 4913.0)

Information on women's labour force characteristics and work experiences during pregnancy and after returning to paid work following the birth of a child. Includes: the types and duration of leave taken by women and their partners for the birth of a child; and data on experiences of work-related discrimination associated with pregnancy.

Time Use Survey (ten yearly, but options to increase frequency under review)

Most recent: 1997

Next: 2006 (to be published in August 2007)

Published in: How Australians Use Their Time (ABS cat. no 4153.0)

Information on the daily activity patterns of people in Australia. Unpaid work includes: domestic activities (housework, home maintenance and household management); care for children and for people who are frail or have a disability; household shopping; and voluntary work in the community. Information includes: paid and unpaid work by men and women; time spent on family interactions within and across households; parenting; a range of other types of activities from sleeping and eating to sport and outdoor activities, watching television and playing computer games; information about the context in which the activities took place (where, for whom they were done and who else was present or within their area of responsibility).

Underemployed Workers Survey (annual)

Most recent: September 2005

Next: September 2006

Published in: Underemployed Workers (ABS cat. no. 6265.0)

Information on people aged 15 years and over who: worked less than 35 hours in the reference week and preferred to work more hours; hours worked; preferred hours sought; availability to work; steps taken to find work; difficulties finding work with more hours; and the duration of the current period of insufficient work.

Work and Family Balance Survey (3 yearly)

Most recent: Yet to be conducted (NEW)

Next: 2007-08

Currently under development. Information expected to be on people aged 15 years and over who have provided unpaid care for someone in the week prior to the survey. Employed people are the primary focus of the survey. Proposed items include: hours worked; duration of current job; status in employment type; leave entitlements; preferred working arrangements; job flexibility; care provided (including recipient of care, frequency and duration of care); caring for own child (including child care); and working arrangements used to care.

Working Time Arrangements (3 yearly)

Most recent: November 2003

Next: November 2006

Published in: (previously) Working Arrangements (ABS cat. no. 6342.0)

Information about working time arrangements of employees, including: patterns of work; job flexibility (including flexible hours); and job stability.

STATE COLLECTIONS

The following state specific surveys were conducted by ABS on behalf of the relevant State authorities.

Managing Care and Work Survey (NSW) (irregular)

Most recent: October 2005 (published on 5 April 2006)

Published in: Managing Care and Work, New South Wales (ABS cat. no. 4912.1)

Information on the relationship between people's unpaid caring responsibilities and their work situation during the six months prior to the survey. Includes: frequency of care; selected characteristics of the care recipient; type of work arrangements used and wanted to use to care for someone; reasons could not use desired working arrangements; and changes made to work arrangements in order to care for someone.

Managing Caring Responsibilities and Paid Employment Survey (NSW) (irregular)

Most recent: October 2000 (published on 25 May 2001)

Published in: Managing Care and Work, New South Wales (ABS cat. no. 4912.1)

Information on different working arrangements use in order to manage their caring responsibilities and paid employment, including: the different working arrangements they would have liked to have used more and the reasons why they could not; whether people have changed jobs, left their job or permanently changed other working arrangements in order to care for someone; become self employed to make it easier to meet their caring responsibilities; and whether caring responsibilities have prevented people from seeking employment.

Balancing Work and Caring Responsibilities Survey (Tasmania) (irregular)

Most recent: October 1999 (published on 2 June 2000)

Published in: Balancing Work and Caring Responsibilities, Tasmania (ABS cat. no. 4903.6)

Includes the nature of employment of usual residents (aged 15 and over) in selected private dwellings and their caring responsibilities, including what arrangements are made with their employer. For those who took time off work in the 3 months prior to the survey to care for another person, data covers: managing responsibilities and what steps are taken to achieve this; self-employed persons and what effects caring responsibilities have upon work decisions; and includes those seeking employment and what factors are considered in the selection of employment.

Attachment 2: List of articles to do with family, work arrangements and other matters relevant to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family. These products are all generally available from the ABS website free of charge.

Work and family life balance
ABS feature articles related to fertility trends and work and family balance issues

Articles published in Australian Social Trends (ABS cat. no. 4102.0)

General

Balancing family and work (2003)

Examines trends in the way Australian families balance the responsibilities of paid work and care of children, discussing the use of arrangements such as maternity/paternity leave, flexible working hours and child care.

Families and work (1997)

Looks at employment patterns of couple families with children, over the period 1981 and 1996.

Paid employment

Paid Work: Longer working hours (2003)

Information on the trend of longer working hours. In particular, it examines how the working hours of many families have increased during this period, as growth in women's labour force participation has resulted in more couple families with both partners engaged in paid employment.

Trends in employment population ratios (2001)

Looks at changes between full and part time employment rates and employment population ratios for both younger and older men and women, and in families with children, between 1980 and 2000 and discusses the major societal changes happening around the time of these changes. Uses data from the ABS Working Arrangements Survey 1997 and ABS Labour Force Surveys July 1979 to June 2000.

Unpaid work

How couples share domestic work (1999)

Looks at couples working similar hours and their share of the unpaid work about the house, excluding most child care and shopping. It also looks at the types of domestic work done by men and women in the couple families as well as the life stage of the family. Data is drawn from the ABS 1997 Time Use Survey.

Time spent on unpaid household work (2001)

Looks at participation and the average time spent by males and females on unpaid household work (domestic, child care and purchasing activities) their living arrangements and labour force status. Data is drawn from the ABS 1997 Time Use Survey.

Child care

Formal child care (2004)

Looks at children aged under 12 years in formal child care, changes in formal child care since the early 1990s, and parents' preferences for additional care.

Child Care Arrangements (2001)

Looks at the changes in the use, type, hours, cost and reason for using both formal and informal child care between 1984 and 1999. It also looks at the changes in working

arrangements used by parents to care for their children between 1993 and 1999. Using data from the ABS Child Care Survey, 1984 and 1999.

Family support

Carers (2005)

Looks at caring over the lifecycle, characteristics of primary carers and support for carers.

Family support (1995)

Examines the time spent by women and men interacting with family members, the time men and women spend on providing child care for their children, and the types of financial support families provide to their older children who either live at home or who have left home. It also looks at the support both men and women give to elderly relatives and grandparents as child carers. Uses data from the ABS Time Use Survey and the ABS Survey of Families in Australia.

Fertility trends

Recent fertility trends (2005)

Looks at Australian fertility trends over the ten years 1993-2003.

Earnings

Income Distribution: Female/male earnings (2000)

Provides information on the earning rates between women and men. In particular, it examines different rates of pay in relation to age, occupation and industry.

Income Distribution: Trends in earnings distribution (2000)

Provides information on earning distribution of full-time adult employees and measures inequality by this distribution. It examines the differences in gender as well as the private and public sector.

Articles published in Year Book Australia (ABS cat. no. 1301.0)

Working arrangements (2003)

This article draws on data from the Working Arrangements Survey, November 2003. It looks at the working patterns of men and women, the proportion and characteristics of employees who worked overtime, the proportion of employees who worked extra hours for time off and the proportion of employees who had flexible start and finish times.

Trends in Child Care (2002)

This article summarises the results of the ABS Child Care Survey, a household survey conducted most recently in 1999. It looks at trends in child care; types of care; cost of child care to parents; and balancing work and family.

Labour: Level of earnings (2003)

Provides information on the gross weekly earnings paid to employees. In particular it examines industry, occupation and gender issues.

Labour: Non-wage benefits (2003)

Provides information on non-wage benefits received by employees such as superannuation, holiday leave, sick leave and long-service leave.

Articles published in Australian Labour Market Statistics (ABS cat. no. 6105.0)

Spotlight on Parental Leave (April 2003)

This article draws on data collected in the 1998 ABS Career Experience Survey (cat. no. 6254.0). It looks at the duration and types of leave taken by employees (male and female) with children aged under 6 years when their youngest child was born. The article also looks at entitlements to paid maternity/paternity leave collected from the 2002 Survey of Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership.

Technical report: Proposals from the review of working arrangements statistics (October 2005)

The review of working arrangements statistics identified a range of information for inclusion in the survey program to provide a comprehensive picture of the work arrangements of employed people. This information includes: detailed employment type which complements the status in employment classification and identifies those employees who have no paid leave entitlements; current and expected job duration which are important indicators of job stability and job security; working time arrangements such as job flexibility, stability of hours and types of job scheduling; locations of work and characteristics of people working from home; labour mobility (within and between employers); and work and family balance (impact of work on commitments outside of work, caring responsibilities, use of flexible working arrangements to balance work and life).

Other articles

Chapter 4: A Closer look at fertility rates *In Births, Australia, 2004 (ABS cat. no. 3301.0)*

This article examines recent trends in births and fertility rates.

Attachment 3: A copy of the 'Work and Family Balance' article presented in *Australian Social Trends, 2003*

Balancing family and work

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

In 2001, around 43% (867,700) of all families with children aged less than 15 years were couple families where both parents were employed.

With the increase in women's participation in the labour force, a growing proportion of Australian families face new challenges combining family and paid work responsibilities. The proportion of traditional 'sole breadwinner' families, where the husband works full-time and earns money for the family and the wife undertakes unpaid household work and child care, is decreasing in Australian society.¹ While some couples still choose this arrangement, in many families both parents continue working after the birth of children, either out of choice or necessity. In addition, one-parent families have become more common over the last 20 years (see *Australian Social Trends 2003*, Changing families, pp. 35–39). Many lone parents face the challenge of earning sufficient income and finding child care without the support of a resident partner.

Balancing family and paid work is a challenge for both men and women. Despite men and women sharing domestic tasks more equitably than in previous generations, men still spend longer hours in paid employment than women, while women continue to take on a greater proportion of child care than men.² Women aged 25–34 years are in their main childbearing years, but it is also during this period that employed women are likely to be gaining promotions and taking on greater responsibilities at work.³ Competing

Paid work and families

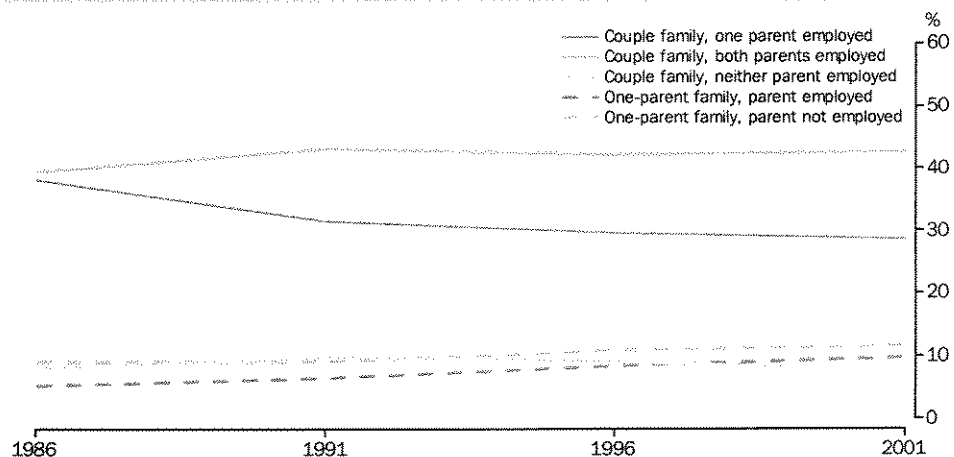
This article draws on the Census of Population and Housing, the ABS June 2002 Labour Force Survey, the ABS 2000 Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, and the ABS 1999 Child Care Survey.

Couple families are those containing two persons in a registered or de facto marriage who are usually resident in the same household. They may or may not contain children. *One-parent families* are those containing a lone parent and at least one child. Both of these family types may also include other related individuals (e.g. a grandparent or cousin) who reside in the same household. Because of different populations in the surveys used, the families discussed are those with at least one child aged less than 15 years or at least one child aged less than 12 years.

Employed people are those aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week, worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission, or payment in kind in a job or business or farm, or who worked without pay in a family business, or who had a job, business or farm but were not at work.

An *employee* is a person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages or salary, or is paid a retainer fee by his or her employer and works on a commission basis, or works for an employer for tips, piece-rates or payment in kind; or, is a person who operates his or her own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees.

Families(a) and parents' labour force status(b)



(a) With children aged less than 15 years.

(b) Excludes families where one parent was temporarily absent on census night, and families where a parent did not state his or her labour force status.

Source: ABS 1986–2001 Censuses of Population and Housing.

aspirations for family and career may result in women delaying having children until later in life (see *Australian Social Trends 2001*, Older mothers, pp. 55–58) or not having children at all (see *Australian Social Trends 2002*, Trends in childlessness, pp. 37–40). 'Family friendly' arrangements are available in an increasing number of workplaces to support families either for a set period of time (e.g. maternity/paternity leave) or in an ongoing way (e.g. flexible working hours). While some parents (usually mothers) leave the labour force for an extended period of time to raise children, many continue to work, using 'family friendly' provisions where possible. This article discusses how families where at least one parent is employed negotiate the claims of work and caring for children.

Families over time

The 2001 Census showed that couple families where both parents were employed were the most common of all families with children aged less than 15 years (43%). Couple families where only one parent was employed were the next most common (28%), followed by one-parent families where the parent was not employed (11%), one-parent families where the parent was employed (10%) and couple families where neither parent was employed (8%). Since 1986, the proportion of couple families with children aged less than 15 years where only one parent is employed has declined, while the proportion of couple families where neither parent is employed has remained stable. Families with other working arrangements have increased over the same time period.

This changing distribution of families partly reflects a growing dependence among couples on two incomes, for various economic and lifestyle reasons. Women with children aged less than five years are more likely to be in the labour force than in the past (see *Australian Social Trends 2003*,

Work: national summary table, pp. 28–29), suggesting that mothers may be returning to work sooner after the birth of children.

The changing distribution of families is also associated with the increase in divorce. This has led to a greater proportion of lone parents, many of whom face the challenge of balancing family and work in the absence of a resident partner. The increase in the proportion of couple families where both parents work, and in the proportion of one-parent families, has led to a corresponding decline in the proportion of couple families where only one parent works.

Associated with these changes in families and parents' working arrangements, between 1986 and 2001, the proportion of women aged 15–24 years who were studying increased from 36% to 56%. At the same time, women's participation in the labour force across the years when they are most likely to have children (i.e. 25–34 years) increased from 61% to 70%. These changes in education and work participation have gone hand-in-hand with women's greater aspirations to have a challenging, rewarding career and to be financially independent.⁴

Families and employment

The June 2002 Labour Force Survey showed that more than half (57%) of all couple families with children aged less than 15 years were those where both parents were employed. It was more common for families to have a father employed full-time and a mother employed part-time than for both parents to be employed full-time (34% compared with 19%). Men are therefore more likely to be the primary earners even when their partners work.

The working hours of parents within families are also influenced by the age of children. Children aged less than 5 years generally require more parental care and supervision

Couple families(a): labour force status of parents — 2002

Mother's labour force status	Father's labour force status			
	Employed full-time	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Not in the labour force
	%	%	%	%
Employed full-time	19.2	1.7	0.4	1.2
Employed part-time	33.9	2.2	0.6	1.1
Unemployed	1.8	*0.2	0.5	*0.2
Not in the labour force	28.1	2.2	2.0	4.5

(a) With children aged under 15 years.

Source: ABS June 2002 Labour Force Survey.

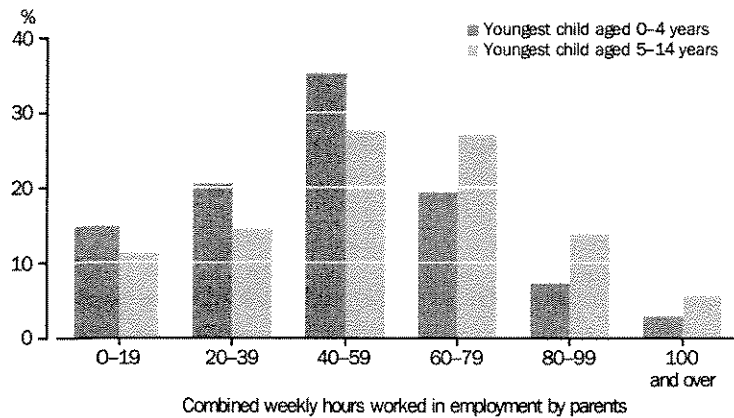
One-parent families(a): labour force status of parent — 2002

	Father	Mother
	%	%
Employed full-time	48.6	16.8
Employed part-time	13.3	27.2
Unemployed	8.3	8.9
Not in the labour force	29.8	47.0
Total	100.0	100.0

(a) With children aged under 15 years.

Source: ABS June 2002 Labour Force Survey.

Combined weekly hours worked(a) in employment by parents in couple families(b) — 2002



(a) Hours worked refers to hours actually worked during the reference week, where one, both or neither parent was employed.
 (b) With children aged less than 15 years.

Source: ABS June 2002 Labour Force Survey.

than children who are school-aged. Reflecting this, in couple families where the youngest child was aged less than 5 years, 71% of couples worked under 60 hours per week, compared with 53% of couples where the youngest child was aged 5–14 years.

Employed lone parents tend to work fewer hours than employed parents who have partners to share domestic responsibilities. In 2002, around 38% of employed lone parents worked less than 20 hours per week, and a similar proportion (42%) worked 20–39 hours per week. However, lone parents were less likely to be in the labour force than parents in couple families. Close to a third of lone fathers (30%) and almost half of lone mothers (47%) were not in the labour force.

Maternity/paternity leave

Under Australia's current system, male and female permanent employees are entitled to 52 weeks of unpaid maternity/paternity leave after 12 months with the same employer.⁵ Paid maternity/paternity leave is additionally available to some employees. In 2000, 44% of male employees and 45% of female employees had access to this type of leave in their main job. Full-time employees were more likely to have access than part-time employees (50% of men and 64% of women working full-time had entitlements, compared with 7% of men and 25% of women working part-time). Public sector employees were around twice as likely to have access as private sector employees (73% of men and 71% of women in the public sector, compared with 37% of men and 36% of women in the private sector).

International comparison



In June 2000, the International Labour Organisation introduced a new Maternity Protection Convention (ILO 183) and Recommendation (Recommendation 191). The convention supports 14 weeks of paid leave and applies to all employed women.⁵ Many countries provide other leave to parents surrounding the birth of a child, such as paternity leave for fathers. The current statutory childbirth-related leave provisions for selected countries are outlined below.

Childbirth-related leave provisions — 1998–2002

	Duration of unpaid leave weeks	Paid leave	
		Duration weeks	Proportion of wages paid %
Australia	(a)52	0	..
Canada	(b)	52	55
Ireland	14	18	70
Japan	52	14	60
Korea, Republic of	8	0	..
New Zealand	(b)	12	(c)100
Spain	156	(d)16	100
Sweden	(b)	(d)90	(e)80
United Kingdom	13	(f)18	(g)90
USA	12	0	..

- (a) Only available for employees with 12 months of continuous employment with the same employer.
- (b) Unpaid leave available but duration not specified.
- (c) 100% or a flat rate is paid, whichever is less. May opt for parental tax credit instead of paid leave.
- (d) Additional paid leave is available for multiple births.
- (e) 80% is paid for the first 78 weeks; thereafter a flat rate is paid.
- (f) Additional paid leave of 11 weeks is available for women who have worked with their employer for one year or more, paid at a rate which varies by employment.
- (g) Six weeks are paid at 90%; the remaining 12 weeks are paid at a flat rate.

Source: The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University, *Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leaves in the OECD Countries, 1998–2002* <<http://www.childpolicyintl.org/issuebrief/issuebrief5table1.pdf>>, accessed 17 February 2003.

Entitlement to paid maternity/paternity leave is also associated with the length of time employees have spent in their current job. In 2000, employees who had been in their current job for 5 years or more were more likely to have entitlement to paid maternity/paternity leave (53% of male employees and 58% of female employees)

than employees who had been in their current job for less than 2 years (32% of male employees and 33% of female employees). In 1998, around a fifth (19%) of employees who had children aged less than 6 years indicated that they had taken leave of 6 weeks or more (either paid or unpaid) when their youngest child was born.³

Flexible working arrangements

In 1999, just over half (53%) of all families with at least one parent employed and with children aged less than 12 years reported using some form of flexible working arrangement to care for children. In general, flexible working hours were the most commonly used arrangement (33% of all families with an employed parent used this arrangement), followed by permanent part-time work (23%).

Couple families with only one employed parent were predominantly made up of a father who was employed and a mother who was not employed. Compared with other families, their use of working arrangements to care for children was relatively low (19%). In contrast, couple families where both parents were employed were more likely to use working arrangements to care for children,

Families with at least one parent employed(a): working arrangements used to care for children — 1999

	Couple families				Total(c)
	Both parents employed(b)			One-parent families	
	One parent employed	Fathers' use	Mothers' use		
	%	%	%	%	%
Used working arrangements(d)	18.6	33.1	69.8	60.2	52.9
Flexible working hours	10.9	22.7	37.7	36.9	32.5
Permanent part-time work	2.5	2.1	34.3	31.8	23.0
Work at home	4.1	9.6	16.9	10.1	13.5
Other	6.0	7.9	15.9	10.8	14.3
Did not use working arrangements	81.4	66.9	30.2	39.8	47.1
Total(e)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total(f)	553.0	759.4	759.4	150.2	1 462.6

(a) With children aged under 12 years.
 (b) Data for couple families where both parents are employed give figures for fathers' use and then mothers' use of working arrangements for the same families.
 (c) Data are for either parent.
 (d) Families could report using more than one working arrangement.
 (e) Families where a parent did not state whether he or she used working arrangements have been excluded from these calculations.
 (f) Includes families where a parent did not state whether he or she used working arrangements.

Source: ABS 1999 Child Care Survey.

Employees(a): paid maternity/ paternity leave entitlements — 2000

	Entitled to paid maternity/paternity leave	
	Males	Females
	%	%
Working		
Full-time	50.4	64.3
Part-time	7.0	24.5
Sector		
Public	73.0	71.3
Private	36.8	36.0
Length of time in current job		
Less than two years	31.5	32.6
2-5 years	42.1	44.5
5 years and over	52.7	57.5
Total	43.5	45.1

(a) Employees in their main job.

Source: ABS 2000 Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation.

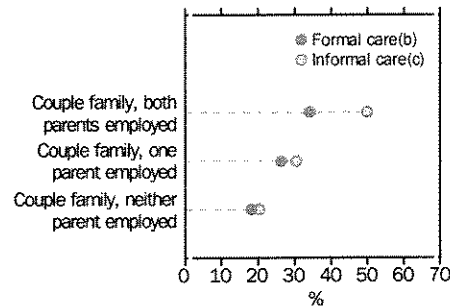
although there were notable differences in their use of mothers' and fathers' working arrangements. Over two-thirds (70%) of these families used mothers' working arrangements to care for children, and a third (33%) used fathers' working arrangements. This suggests that even when both parents are working, women still tend to be the primary givers of care, and are more likely than their partners to organise their work around child care responsibilities.

One-parent families were also likely to use working arrangements to care for children (60%). The difference between mothers and fathers in their use of working arrangements was less marked for lone parents than for parents in couple families. Around 62% of employed lone mothers used working arrangements to care for children, compared with 44% of employed lone fathers.

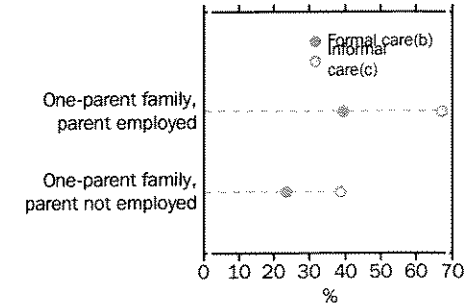
Child care

In 1999, one-parent families where the parent was employed were the most likely to make use of formal care (regulated child care away from the child's home) and/or informal care arrangements (non-regulated child care). Around 40% of these families used formal care and 67% used informal care. Couple families where both parents were employed were the next highest users of child care — 34% of these families used formal care while 50% used informal care. Couple families

Couple families(a): use of child care — 1999



One-parent families(a): use of child care — 1999



- (a) With children aged under 12 years.
- (b) Formal care is regulated child care away from the child's home, including preschool, long day care, before and after school care, occasional care and family day care.
- (c) Informal care is non-regulated child care, including care given by family members (such as the child's siblings, grandparents or other relatives), friends or neighbours, and babysitters or nannies.

Source: ABS 1999 Child Care Survey.

where neither parent was employed were the least likely to use child care, but some of these families still used formal (18%) and informal care (20%).

Reflecting these patterns, in 1999, work was most commonly cited as the main reason for using child care. It was given as the main reason by parents of 46% of children receiving formal care and parents of 45% of children receiving informal care. However, parents may use child care for reasons other than to balance family and work. Personal reasons, such as to undertake study, to go shopping, or to give parents a break or time alone, were also commonly given as the main reason for using child care, especially for children receiving informal care. Personal reasons were given by parents of 12% of children receiving formal care and 42% of children receiving informal care.

Endnotes

- 1 Murphy, J. 2002, 'Breadwinning: Accounts of work and family life in the 1950s', *Labour and Industry*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 59-75.
- 2 Bittman, M. 1999, 'Parenthood without penalty: Time use and public policy in Australia and Finland', *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 27-42.
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998, *Career Experience, Australia, 1998*, cat. no. 6254.0, ABS, Canberra.
- 4 Lesthaeghe, R. 2001, 'Postponement and recuperation: Recent fertility trends and forecasts in six Western European countries', paper presented at the IUSSP Seminar, Tokyo, 21-23 March 2001.
- 5 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) 2002, *Valuing Parenthood: Options for Paid Maternity Leave: Interim Paper*, HREOC, Sydney.

Other family care

Balancing family and work is not only a challenge for parents of young children. Labour force participation can also be affected by the need to care for family members who are elderly, sick, or have a disability. In 1998, carers had lower labour force participation rates than non-carers. Around half (51%) of primary carers were in the labour force (i.e. either employed or unemployed), compared with over three-quarters (77%) of non-carers.

Primary carers(a) aged 15-64 years: labour force characteristics — 1998

	Primary carers
	%
Employed	45.0
Full-time	21.5
Often needs time off work because of caring role(b)	5.3
Part-time	23.5
Often needs time off work because of caring role(b)	5.5
Unemployed	6.0
Not in the labour force	49.0
Total	100.0
	'000
Total	351.3

- (a) A carer is a person who provides help or supervision with everyday activities to any person with a disability or long-term health condition, or to any person aged 60 years or over. The help or supervision must be ongoing or likely to be ongoing, for at least six months.
- (b) At least once a week or more on average.

Source: *Caring in the Community, Australia, 1998* (ABS cat. no. 4436.0).

Attachment 4: List of some research articles relevant to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family in which researchers have made use of ABS data to support their studies.

Work and Family Life Balance
Non-ABS articles and reports which have made use of ABS data sources

- Alexander, M. (2005), *The determinants of employment for Australian mothers - a further analysis of lone and coupled mothers*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Dempster, F. (2003), *Work and family: issues and risks across the life course*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Gray, M., Qu, L., Renda, J. and de Vaus, D. (2003), *Changes in the labour force status of lone and couple Australian mothers, 1983-2002*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 24p. (Research paper no.33)
- Gray, M., Qu, L. and de Vaus, D. and Millward, C. (2002), *Determinants of Australian mother's employment: an analysis of lone and couple mothers*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 40p. (Research paper no.26)
- Gray, M. and Stanton, D. (2002), *Work and family life: our workplaces, families and futures*, Family Matters no. 61 Autumn: 4-11.
- Higgins, S. and Morse, C. (2000), *Combining parenting and paid work: sharing child care in dual income families*, Sydney, NSW, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Kruesmann, M. (2003), *Balancing parenting and work: Understanding women's work orientations and working realities, and pressures of balancing parenting and work*, Department of Family and Community Services.
- Lymer, S., Percival, R. and Harding, A. (2006), *The Cost of Caring in Australia 2002 to 2005*, AMP: NATSEM Income & Wealth Report, Issue 13, May 2006,
- Martin, J. (2003), *Economic growth and fertility trends in Australia, 1976-2000: does macroeconomics belong in the fertility debate?* Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- McDonald, P. (2005), *Has the Australian fertility rate stopped falling?* People and Place Vol 13 No.3: p1.
- Millward, C. (2002), *Work rich, family poor? Non-standard working hours and family life*, Family Matters no. 61 Autumn: 40-47.
- Morehead, A. (2005), *Beyond preference and choice: how mothers allocate time to work and family*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Renda, J. (2003), *Polarisation of families according to work status. Where does part-time employment fit in?* Family Matters no. 64 Autumn: 16-21.
- Smyth, C., Rawsthorne, M. and Siminski, P. (2005), *Women's lifework: labour market transition experiences of women, Final report*, Report prepared for the Commonwealth, State, Territories & New Zealand Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women (MINCO), Department of Family and Community Services : Canberra



Some ABS Statistics relating to Balancing Work and Family

14 June 2006

Balancing work and family selected topics

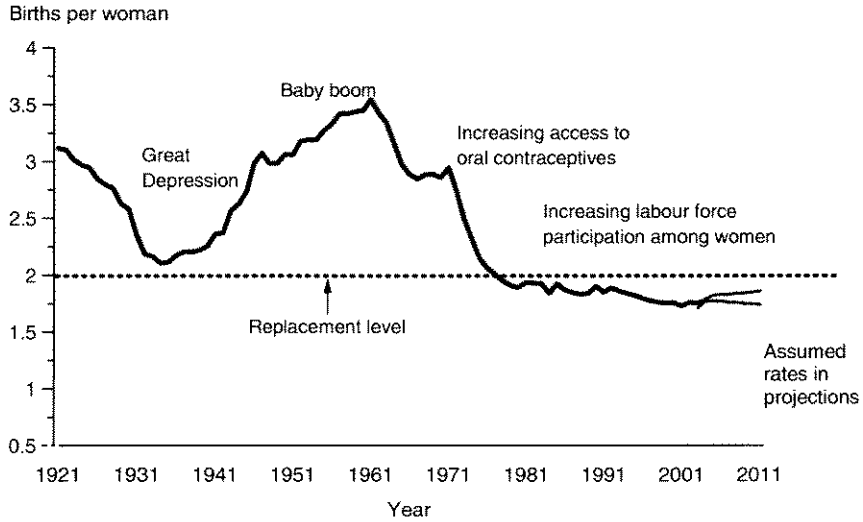


- Changes in fertility
- Employment patterns
- Child care and work arrangements
- Balancing time (paid and unpaid work)

Our fertility rate is below replacement level and has, until very recently, been declining



Total fertility rate and projection assumptions — 1921–2011

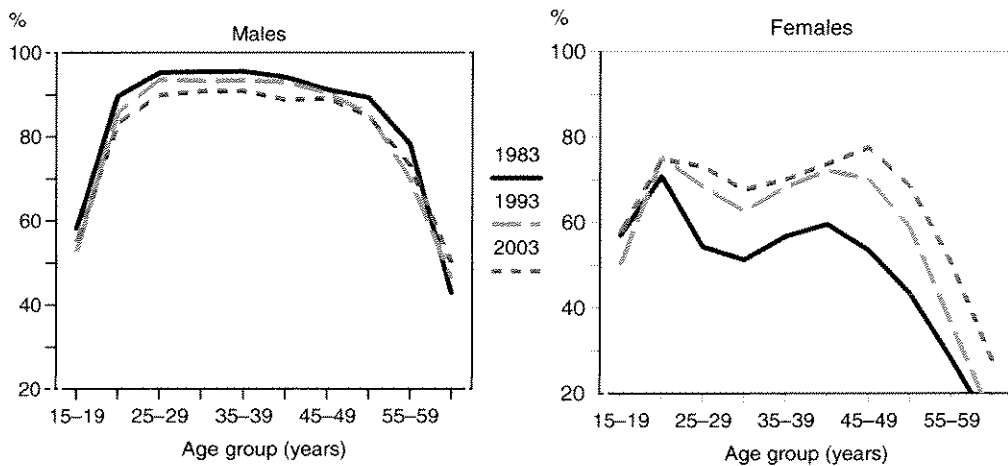


Source: *Births, Australia 2004*, ABS cat. no. 3301.0; *Population Projections, 2004 to 2101*, ABS cat. no. 3222.0, Series A and B assumptions.

Women's employment patterns are more varied than men's across the life cycle



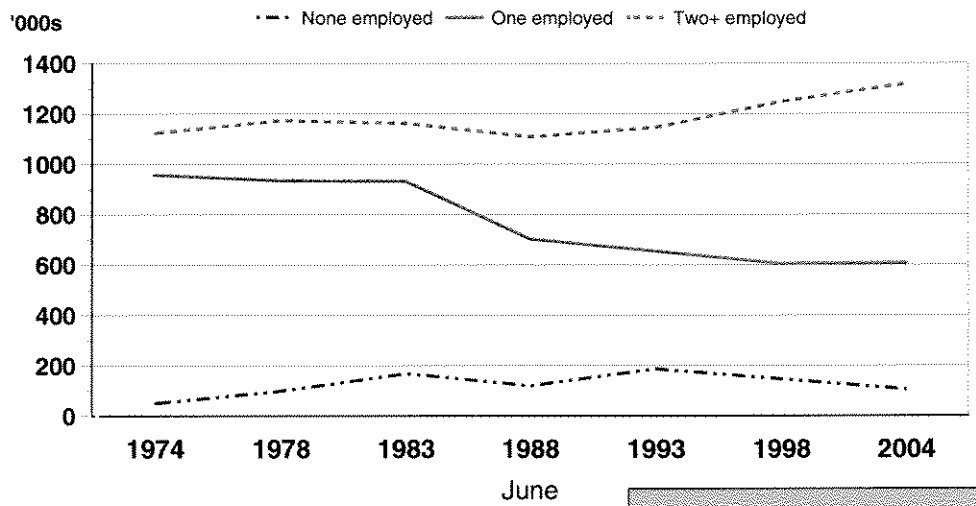
Labour force participation rates



Source: ABS Labour Force Surveys.

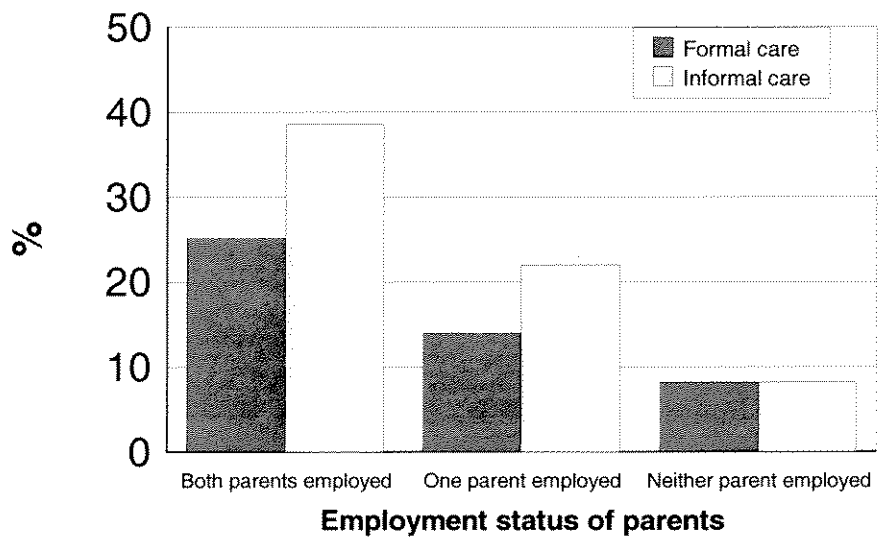
Families and the Labour Force

Couple families with dependants, numbers employed



Reference:
 Labour Force, Australia, Labour Force Status and other Characteristics of Families (cat. no. 6224.0.55.001 - FA1)

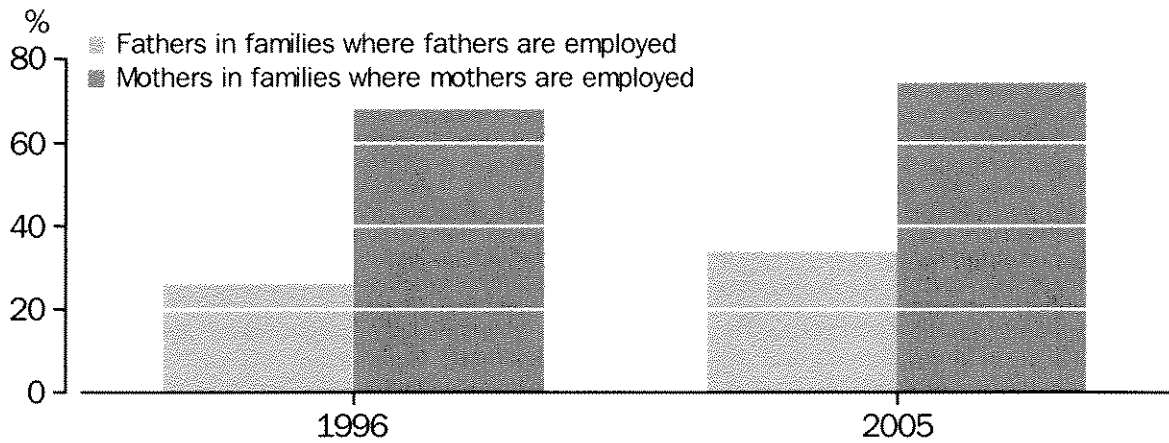
Children in couple families (a): Use of child care - 2005



(a) Children aged 0 to 12 years.
 (b) Formal care is regulated care away from the child's home. The main types of formal care are before and/or after school care, long day care, family day care and occasional care.
 (c) Informal care is non-regulated care, arranged by a child's parent/guardian, either in the child's home or elsewhere. It comprises care by (step) brothers or sisters, care by grandparents, care by other relatives (including a parent living elsewhere), and care by other (unrelated) people such as friends, neighbours, nannies or babysitters. It may be paid or unpaid.

12.5

WORK ARRANGEMENTS(a) USED FOR CHILD CARE, Families with children aged 0-11 years



(a) Working arrangements include flexible working hours, permanent part-time work, shiftwork, work at home, job sharing and other arrangements.

Source: Child Care Survey, Australia, 2005

Families with at least one parent employed (a)(b): Working arrangements used to care for children, 2005



	Couple family - One parent employed	Couple family - Both parents employed	Couple family - Both parents employed	One-parent family	Total (c)
		Father's use	Mother's use		
	%	%	%	%	%
Used working arrangements (c)	27	38	74	71	61
Flexible working hours	19	28	44	44	41
Permanant part-time work	4	3	36	34	25
Work at home	6	10	19	10	16
Other	7	9	14	13	15
Did not use working arrangements	73	62	25	29	39
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total ('000)	608.9	1014.7	1014.7	193.7	1817.3

(a) Children aged 0-12 years.

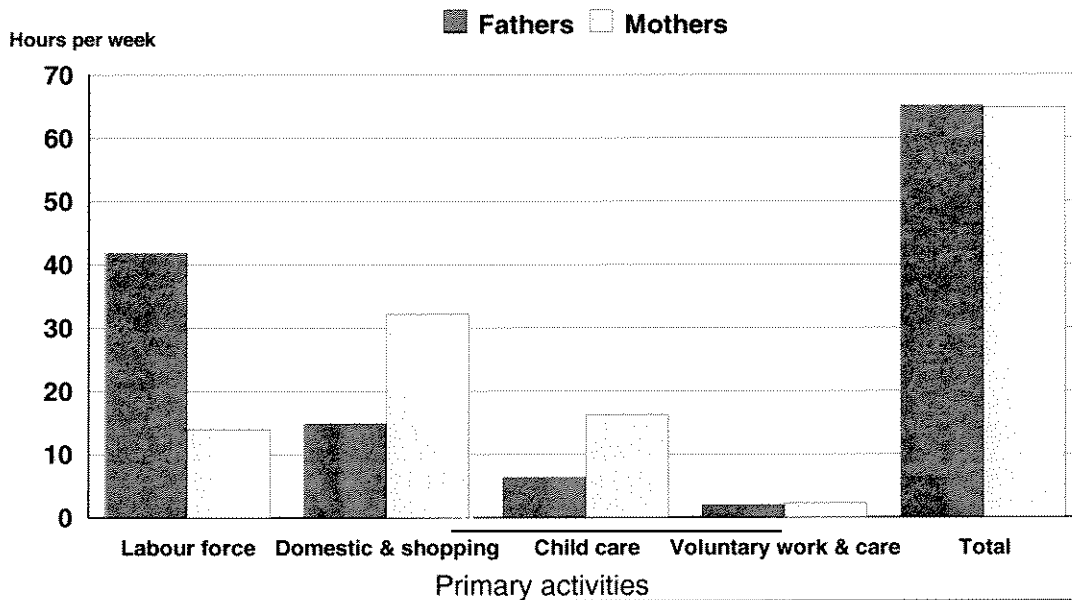
(b) Excludes same sex couples and families where one member was out of scope of the labour force survey

(c) Components do not add to total as parents could use more than one type of work arrangement

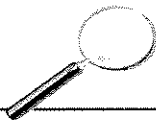
Source: Child Care, Australia 2005 (cat. no 4402.0)

Time spent on paid and unpaid work, 1997

Parents of children aged 0-14 years



Source: Time Use Survey 1997



Where to find more information...



Publications:

Australian Social Trends

- Presenting information on contemporary social issues and areas of public policy concern.
- Describes Australian society and how it is changing over time.
- Includes a set of over 300 key social indicators.

Year Book

- Comprehensive and detailed statistical overview of various aspects of the economy and social conditions in Australia together with administrative and legislative background.

Australian Economic Indicators

- A monthly overview of major economic indicators and of current and emerging economic issues in Australia.

Measuring Australia's Progress

- This publication is intended to help Australians address the question, "Has life in Australia improved, especially during the past decade".

Other publications

- Regular publications released by the ABS concerning a wide range of economic and social indicators.

Web site info:

<http://www.abs.gov.au>

