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Home Economics FORUM

PUBLIC POLICY INVOLVEMENT

THE NEED FOR INVOLVEMENT

CHOICES FOR INVOLVEMENT

PREPARING FOR INVOLVEMENT

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

The Twenty-Ninth
Kappa Omicron Phi Conclave
The Westin William Penn, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
August 11-14, 1988
"Leadership Through Communication"

The Kappa Omicron Phi National Council extends an invitation to all Kappa Omicron Phi members to attend the 1988 Conclave in Pittsburgh. The theme of the Twenty-ninth Conclave encompasses the priority issue, Commitment to Writing, identified by the Kappa Omicron Phi/Omicron Nu Administrative Merger for collaborative effort. Based on the premise that Home Economics scholars require skills in communicating to attain professional competence, the Conclave program will offer opportunities for students to present papers and participate in workshops designed to improve scholarly writing and presentation skills. Chapter sponsors will explore approaches to facilitating communication skills through chapter programming. Alumni members will conduct business meetings to promote the work of alumni in accomplishing the purpose of Kappa Omicron Phi.

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Theme: Public Policy Involvement

This issue of *Home Economics FORUM* is a celebration of a turning point. In it, home economists express their views on becoming involved in public policy decisions. Five years ago it would have been impossible to generate the number of articles we received on this topic. The profession, it seems, is entering a new era. Home economists are thinking and talking about their roles as public policy educators, influencers, and decision makers. Some are already involved in the public arena and are inviting others to join them. They claim that by doing so the profession can survive, grow, and take on new meaning in our society.

This *FORUM* is designed to look at several aspects of involvement. In Section 1, Karen Craig urges home economists to take the initiative, and Jennifer Martin and Kim Lotz-Kamin discuss the necessity of involvement. In Section 2, Elizabeth Moore points out the three directions public policy involvement can take and the consequences of each. Katey Walker describes a public policy education program, while Kay Ehlers Park provides an advocate's viewpoint. Alberta Dobry, a seasoned champion for home economics funding, expresses her views on maintaining the organization through public involvement.

Section 3 puts forth preparation and curriculum ideas. Bonnie Johnson's survey suggests that many home economists feel unprepared for public policy work. Patsy Alexander Elmore gives curriculum rationale and ideas for incorporating public policy preparation in existing courses. Nina Collins promotes critical thinking theory as an essential part of the curriculum. Diana Carroll presents a worksheet approach to preparing home economists for involvement. I throw in some ideas about the need for skill development, using power, and developing a forum approach to dealing with issues.

Because no document on public policy involvement is quite complete without a look at some issues, Section 4 does iust that. The concern about adolescent pregnancy was brought to Congress by AHEA last Spring. Part of the testimony is printed here. An examination of the issues in child care and public assistance is made by Kathy Thornburg and Carol Mertensmeyer.

As you read these articles, I challenge you to see yourself as the author of a future article. In it, describe the efforts, accomplishments, and challenges you have experienced as you become more involved in public policy. I know it will be good reading!

Ardis Armstrong Young
Guest Editor

Making The Difference in Public Policy: The Home Economics Initiative

Karen E. Craig

Home Economics can be described as a profession which helps families do the best they can with the resources and constraints they have. Coping or reacting is no longer enough. Therefore, it is critical that professional home economists and families alike assume responsibility for creating the environment or world in which families live. If we are to help individuals and families in the coming decades have a more satisfactory quality of living, it is essential that they become involved, as leaders, in the public issues which affect their well-being.

Dr. Craig is Dean, College of Home Economics, University of Nebraska, and Vice President for Public Affairs, American Home Economics Association.

Prominent forecasters say that "human capital has replaced dollar capital as the strategic resource" (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1985). Families are key to provision of the human capital necessary for a strong society. Much as farmers prepare land for planting, so families provide an environment conducive to optimal development for families.

How Does Public Policy Affect Families?

Public policy guides governmental functions. Nearly all of these functions have an impact on family well-being. General governmental functions (Fitzsimmons and Williams, 1973) include *enabling* activities such as credit and property laws, federal reserve activities, and intervention in labor-management disputes; *protection* activities as in tariffs, immigration, and trade laws; and governmental regulation activities which focus on business-consumer relations such as the Food and Drug Act, the

Consumer Protection Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Acts.

Direct services are governmental functions which have a very visible impact on family quality of life. Credit, crop control, and marketing programs have affected rural families for a long time. Protection activities carried out by the Armed Forces, FBI, police, and fire departments are direct governmental services closely linked to the needs of families throughout society. Education programs, health provisions, low-income housing, and food stamps are just a few of the direct human services provided by government. They are all guided by public policy.

Why Should Home Economists Be Involved?

Home economists must present themselves as resources to individuals, families, and decision makers by helping them to make satisfactory public policies. In each case of governmental activity, public policy is intended to assure an improved level of consumer well-being. There is seldom an effort to deliberately hurt a segment of the population. However, many public policies have had a negative impact on parts of society. Those of us who know of the effect of public actions must be involved in the establishment and implementation of public policy if we are to assure the availability of human capital for business management, governmental service, and family well-being.

We have to convey to the public that we have research-based knowledge which can provide an assessment of the impact, positive and negative, of public actions on people. As professionals we must be more alert to the potential impact of public actions. The framework of family functions — economic, physical, and psychosocial well-being — has potential for helping us to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of public policies. Home Economics can be in the right place at the right time, but we must help people get involved in the development of public policies which are conducive to the development of strong human beings.

What Does Involvement Require?

Naisbitt & Aburdene (1985) indicated that the skills necessary to the information society were (T)hinking, (L)earning, and (C)reating. Home economists have had training in all these areas as well as in the process of transferring these skills to family members, so they can evaluate the effect of public programs. More emphasis on this process is needed. Home Economics programs in the public schools, universities, and adult education are ready for the inclusion of public policy education in the curriculum. . . and ready for reinforcing TLC skills (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1985).

Thinking is defined as the abilities to synthesize and make generalizations, to draw inferences, to put facts in order for analyzing problems, making decisions, and proposing solutions, among others. Thinking is demonstrated in clear writing and speaking. Thinking logically and coherently is essential for expressing values and views on issues.

Learning, or knowing how to learn, makes it possible to adapt and change no matter what the technological, social, or economic conditions may be. Knowing how to learn is the necessary tool for designing adjustments in public policy to meet new needs.

Creativity helps one to see alternative ways of doing things, pinpoint the real problem, and reorganize ideas for solving or preventing problems. Creativity helps us, as a society, to anticipate and plan for the future.

For Home Economics professionals to be resources in the governmental process, we must be objective and provide a holistic evaluation of the merits and problems of legislation. To fulfill the resource role effectively, we must promote a broadly-based common concern that acknowledges the economic, physical, and psychological needs of a variety of family types in society. The temptation may be for the civic-minded professional to see the issue in terms of a single group or from a single perspective (Bellah et al, 1985). Thus, a narrow advocacy position is assumed. It is easy to be strongly for or against a given public issue. It is less easy to look at the whole picture before determining the best route for resolving it. Home economists can make a significant contribution to the development of public policy which strengthens families. There is no professional group that has such a variety of public issues in which to become involved. We have an excellent information and knowledge base for improving the quality of public policies. We can learn to watch for pending public decisions and take the initiative to provide the necessary expert knowledge relative to the real impact of the program on people. By doing so, a better world can be created for individuals and families, a world that will foster the development of the strong human capital necessary to a rapidly changing world.

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Continued From Page 5

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Public Policy Involvement: A Necessary Role for Home Economists

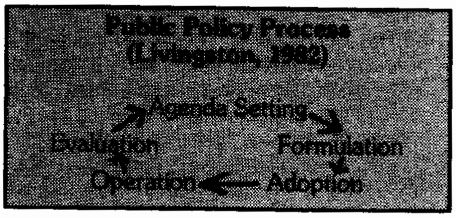
Jennifer Martin and Kim Lotz-Kamin

From its earliest roots, Home Economics has been characterized as a reformist field with the mission of helping families to function in their own strength (Vincenti, 1982; Brown & Paolucci, 1978). Even before the Lake Placid years, home economists were interested in public policy as a method to combat social ills. Child health and welfare, food and nutrition, textiles and clothing, housing, health and welfare, and consumer issues are some of the public policy areas in which home economists have been active (Meszaros & Cummings, 1983).

Public policy can be explained as any decision made by an institution of government which affects a large part of society (Livingston, 1982). In the realm of public policy involvement, two tactics often used by home economists are education and advocacy. Education leads to knowledge, information, or skill. A natural companion to education should be advocacy: speaking or writing in support of a position on an issue. An informed position should develop parallel with knowledge and experience. Many home economists have been comfortable and effective in the role of educator in classroom settings but, unfortunately, they have avoided the task of educating policy decision-makers (Chenoweth, 1982).

Through the years, Home Economics seems to have taken a micro approach in solving family-related problems. Emphasis has been placed on individuals and individual families, and education has become the primary mode for reaching clients. Education is a very effective tool for aiding individuals and families in micro situations, but many of the larger issues affecting families require advocacy or speaking out. Home economists are uniquely equipped to advocate for families from a broad scientific knowledge base and from an integrative, holistic perspective. The 1985-1990 AHEA Plan of Work includes public policy as one of its four broad areas of emphasis. Choosing to focus on public policy acknowledges the profession's recognition of the home economist's important role in public policy.

The policy process described by Livingston (1982) should guide efforts to develop the public policy commitment.



- **Agenda Setting** involves identifying the issue to be addressed. Home economists who are cognizant of numerous family policy issues need to focus on those they consider most important and on those for which their impact will be greatest. In addition, home economists must be aware that, if they neglect advocacy, some issues may not be included on public policy agendas.
- **Policy formulation** is designing a method for resolving the issue. The knowledge and decision-making skills of home economists can provide the foundation for effective policy formation.
- **Policy adoption** is enactment of public policies. Expert advice offered by home economists from practical and theoretical bases can positively affect decisions on adoptions.
- **Policy operation** is implementation of policy. Home economists comprise a well-trained human resource pool for implementing programs that operationalize public policies.
- **Policy evaluation** is the formative and summative analysis of the policy and its impact. Home economists can be actively involved in research to determine the effectiveness of public policy. A research base provides valid information for recommendations to continue, revise, or abolish programs mandated by public policy.

As the model indicates, public policy development is a circular, never-ending process. Home economists have the opportunity to assume many roles within the process from instigator to evaluator. The process of policy formation is similar to the widely-used decision-making process. Use of the decision-making process on the micro level should easily transfer to public policy development on the macro level.

The interest of the general population in public policy ranges from apathy to leadership. As professionals, home economists must use their knowledge and influence to become active participants in the public policy arena. Some home economists may be fearful of participating in public policy or doubtful of their impact on government. The reality is, however, that home economists have been participants in this process, on a micro level, since the profession began. Those skills can easily be transferred to the larger or public arena. Home economists can develop relationships with influential community and government leaders. They can also take leadership for public policy formation.

Home economists can assume leadership in public policy development by the following actions:

- **Become active in the political process.**
- **Testify and write letters advocating desirable public policy.**
- **Develop liaisons with other groups supporting similar goals.**

Leaders in the Home Economics profession claim that public policy involvement has benefits for the individual, the profession of Home Economics, and for society (Meszaros and Cummings, 1983). However, many home economists do not become involved. Those in educational roles must broaden their audiences to include decision makers. Advocacy should be seen as a viable and essential activity for important issues. To help families function in their own strength, home economists must be willing to undertake both roles — educator and advocate — at the appropriate times.

References, Page 4

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Three Directions For Public Policy Involvement

Elizabeth Moore and Ardis Armstrong Young

- **Public policy education** is a process aimed at helping citizens to clarify public issues, to explore the alternatives and consequences of various policy choices, and to develop the skills to transmit their opinions and to effect change.
- **Advocacy** means working for a particular solution to a public problem.
- **Organizational maintenance** is the process of generating support and retaining funding for Home Economics programs.

As you can see, these three directions have very different goals. However, they are often thrown together and labeled generically as public policy involvement. This paper outlines why each of these directions is important ... to whom... on what occasions ... and what potential problem each may have. It is hoped that in knowing the differences in these three directions you will not inadvertently weave in and out of these modes, thinking they all lead to the same place. But being able to distinguish among them, you can apply each one when the appropriate occasion arises.

Public Policy Education

This is the provision of information, process training, and certain kinds of leadership skill development to help students, advocates, and decision makers become more thoughtful and skilled as they deal with public issues. Although there are a variety of components and a range of models mentioned in the literature about public policy education, the basic thrust is to help people define and understand the issue, to explore alternatives and consequences of various solutions, to describe the process for making decisions, and to enhance skills for effecting change.

Public policy education is most consistent with the democratic process. It requires a strong intellectual commitment to that process — and perhaps, less commitment to a particular issue. For example, after conducting programs to help citizens better understand the legislative process, or the methods of effective citizen involvement, participants may proudly report that they are using that information to effect the changes they want made. This can cause some personal concern to the educator if citizen action is in support of an issue where the educator has a strong, opposing personal commitment. It is unrealistic to think that one can be neutral on an issue, but it is the responsibility of a public policy educator to try to present the information in an objective manner, allowing for differing viewpoints to emerge and to be examined.

Advocacy

Advocacy means personally working for a particular solution to a problem. An advocate strongly proposes one position, or supports one group, in the policy debate. Many professionals feel they have a responsibility to advocate for their recommendations if they are the results of study and research. Because strong views usually develop regarding *right* and *wrong* ways to deal with problems, professionals can be effective as advocates for certain viewpoints. For example, a food and nutrition expert has strong views regarding monitoring or regulating weight loss clinics. Most family life specialists have definite views on prevention of child abuse and provision of day care. As citizens, they have the right to fight for policies they view as *the best way*.

The decision to become an advocate is an important one. It has several implications. Each persons' advocacy stance incorporates personal values because the same values are seldom universally held throughout a profession. A home economist advocating on one side of an issue may not be joined by other home economists whose values are different. This may create concern or discomfort regarding one's professional standing.

Another consideration to be made before becoming an advocate is to determine the effect on one's credibility as an educator. Educators have a mandate to present all sides of an issue, to be neutral, and to challenge clients to take their own *stands* in light of the best information possible. Becoming a strong advocate for a certain view or cause over time may lessen an educator's ability to be seen as a neutral purveyor of information on other issues.

Despite the risks, democracy is based on advocacy and the compromise of diverse views — views based on thoughtful study and honest loyalty to personal values. Leaders in Home Economics, through the years, have taken this risk by becoming involved as advocates. The new emphasis on AHEA's priority issues challenges home economists to study, build coalitions, and act as advocates when that advocacy will result in more relevant human policy for families and individuals.

Organizational Maintenance

This is a direction that garners very little debate over "Should we or shouldn't we?" Maintaining support for Home Economics related organizations has always called for policy involvement. At times, organizational maintenance activities have been the only public policy issues in which home economists were visibly involved. This focus presents a dilemma.

Convincing the public that Home Economics is important and worthy of support requires data that justify it. This data base would be most effective if it contained facts, figures, and ancedotes describing the impacts of home economists on issues affecting families. To get this information, home economists must be involved in public issues as deliberate educators or thoughtful advocates. That realization is just now coming into play.

Clarity of purpose poses a second dilemma regarding organizational maintenance as a direction for public policy involvement. When home economists are working as policy educators or advocates, they are also interacting with people and issues tied to the funding of their organizations. Although neither public policy education nor advocacy are synonomous with maintaining support for Home Economics organizations, these purposes often become entangled. Conflict of interests can arise between roles. For example:

- Programming dealing with child care policies may cause concern from legislators whose definition of family precludes the need for such services.

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- Proposals to significantly lower taxes may adversely affect, or in fact imperil, the very existence of Home Economics programs. Ironically, it is often the case that some of the strongest Home Economics supporters are the proponents of such proposals.
- A local ballot question to levy a tax to support Home Economics programs presents a potentially awkward position for policy educators who need to remain as neutral as possible.
- Questions may be raised about the wisdom of using the financial support of an organization that lobbies on specific issues (commodity group, interest group, business) to present information on policy concerns for educational meetings.

Some General Observations

As mentioned above, it is not unusual for the three directions for public policy programming to overlap in various ways. Here are a few principles regarding this relationship:

- Public policy educators must establish and maintain a reputation as credible sources of objective educational information, to which all citizens may have access.
- When choosing to become an advocate, professionals must understand which views reflect their personal values, not those of professionals as a whole, and act accordingly.
- The boundary between the policy education program and the organizational maintenance role must be recognized and acknowledged. Usually it is an administrator or association leader who is responsible for budget-related influencing and an educator-member who conducts programs. When one professional wears both hats, concerted efforts must be made to clarify to the public which role is being played.
- There *can* be a clear delineation between personal opinion and an educational presentation. Professionals making a presentation on a tax proposal would be strictly doing policy education ... but if, in another setting, clientele asked for their personal views, they wouldn't hesitate to express their own concerns about the potential impacts on higher education.
- Participants in leadership development and policy education programs may, indeed, become active supporters for Home Economics, but that outcome is not the goal of the program and it should be clear from the outset.

The central theme of this discussion has been to define the three directions policy programming in Home Economics has taken in the past. It suggests that there are times when all three directions are legitimate — for providing information and process education, for exercising one's rights as a private citizen or for keeping Home Economics organizations fiscally healthy. These three directions may also overlap at times. The key is to understand which direction you are selecting and why. The ability to discriminantly use all three will increase our credibility when we choose to ›e involved in public policy.

Public Policy Education: A Consumer Issues Approach

Katey Walker

Public policy education is based on the assumption that (a) a well-informed citizenry is crucial to the democratic process and (b) the democratic process is the best way we know for making decisions which affect many people in different ways. The democratic system is strengthened when citizens develop opinions based on knowledge and understanding of the issues and when they express their opinions effectively.

The classic quotation by Thomas Jefferson expresses the basis for policy education programs. In a September 28, 1820 letter to William Charles Jarvis, he said:

> *I know [of] no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but inform their discretion by education (Quoted in House, 1981, p. viii).*

It is even more important now than in Jefferson's time that democracy provides orderly processes by which the people can shape public policies and the education to enable them to do this. This belief is basic to policy education programs where the emphasis is on objective information rather than advocacy of a particular course of action.

What is Public Policy Education?

Public policy education is a planned process which provides clients/learners with:

- Information-technical information about the topic of controversy and about existing policy or assistance in analyzing alternatives and consequences of possible action.
- Training in public policy processes - explanations of how public decisions are made and how systems are influenced, ways citizens can participate in policy formulation.
- Development of leadership skills which lead to involvement in public decisions (Armstrong Young, 1987).

A human affair becomes a public affair when the consequences of an act by an individual or group of people go beyond the person or persons directly involved and when there is an effort by others to influence those consequences. The resolution of a public affair is usually a public policy — a settled course of action adopted and followed by the public to achieve certain goals. Public policy is implemented by means of public laws, programs, or institutions or less formally by customs and traditions.

Educational programs become public affairs or public policy programs when they provide information or teach concepts or skills about existing policies or about proposed decisions and actions which affect persons other than the individual or family making the choice. They may also go a step further by helping individuals develop confidence and skill to become a public decision maker. In this country, democracy is the ideal on which we base our public decisions. Study, discussion, debate, and negotiation are important parts of the decision-making process. Citizens need encouragement, motivation, knowledge, and skills in order to participate effectively in influencing public choices.

Why DO Public Policy Education?

The need for policy education is greater today than in the past. Advances in communication technology make people more aware of situations beyond their local areas. People realize they are affected by changes in state, national, or international conditions as well as by local conditions. They are also becoming more aware of the interrelationships of personal actions and the economy. Governments at all levels have assumed a much greater role in economic, social, and family matters than in earlier times. Even the definition of *family* varies with different governmental rules.

As home economists we are concerned with helping families to improve the quality of their lives and to create a family environment, based on family values, which contributes to the optimal growth and development of all family members. Decisions and actions made in the family affect both the family itself and the broader society in which the family lives. We help our students identify their needs and goals and decide how to obtain money and other resources. Today, we have to go beyond that and look to the larger community, sharing and making group decisions about things which affect all of us. Home economists today have the opportunity to take the initiative in providing policy education, and it's time for action.

Approaches to Policy Education

Policy education programs, like other educational programs, range from the basic awareness as to what policies are in effect at the present time, to an analysis of proposed policies, then on to proposing new alternatives.

A public policy education model used by the Cooperative Extension Service, whether as a separate program or as part of another, is the issues/alternatives/ consequences model for decision making. This model includes:

- Recognition of an issue
- Identification of the problem (and statement in neutral terms, often posed as a question)
- Development of alternative solutions
- Analysis of the consequence of each of the alternatives

Several new programs are adding to that model by teaching processes for influencing policy decisions or coming up with new alternatives.

In an educational program, the decision and further actions are left up to the people involved. The educator does not advocate any particular solution. The objectives are for program participants to (a) increase knowledge of the policy making process, (b) use the issues/alternatives/consequences model, (c) identify public policy issues of importance to them, and (d) express their choices to appropriate policy makers in an effective way. This fourth objective often includes training which helps strengthen leadership and organizational skills.

Getting Started

One way to get started in *doing* public policy education is to incorporate policy perspectives into existing lessons or programs. For example, there are many policy issues in consumer information and protection. Historically, most nations followed the doctrine of *caveat emptor* (let the buyer beware). This practice worked out reasonably well when most of the buying, selling, and trading was done within a local community where everyone knew each other and when choosing goods and services was much less complicated than it is today. The marketplace has become over time more complex and more impersonal. Businesses in general are now larger and more powerful than the individual consumer. Government — state, local, and national — expanded its role in consumer protection as a result.

Public policy education related to consumer protection would explore the basic question: What is — and what should be —the role of government in protecting consumers from problems, deceptions, fraud? Related questions include:

- How much regulation?
- What types of regulations?
- Who should regulate?
- How should regulations be enforced?
- Who should pay for all this?

Consumer Issues

There are on-going questions or issues about how much *protection* should be provided for consumers and how much can or should consumers protect themselves. For consumers to be their own protection, they must have access to accurate and objective information at an affordable cost. Decisions must be made about: How much? How reliable? How to evaluate? How to use? How to compare costs with benefits? Consumers don't have the expertise to evaluate all goods and services, so government generally gets involved in some forms of consumer protection. Questions then arise about: What is affordable? and Who should bear the cost?

Many practical examples of consumer laws and regulations are sources of lessons in policy education. A trip to the grocery store can be a good beginning. Examples of open dating, unit pricing, ingredient labeling, and other information on labels, on packages, and in advertising can be studied from a policy education perspective. One can trace the history behind this information and raise questions about its adequacy, its cost, and its usefulness. Use and care labels on clothing and fabrics are still another everyday example of policies in action. Laws and procedures for dealing with consumer problems, deceptions, frauds, and credit are other examples of topics combining subject matter and policy considerations.

Some of the new policy concerns center around the issue: How fast can/should government move to keep up with new types of marketing? For example: Should there be a *cooling off* period for telephone sales similar to the three-day cancellation period which applies to door-to-door sales? Should there be a time limit for shipment similar to the one for mail orders? Is there a need for regulations for health spa contracts and possible provisions for cancellation for refunds on *lifetime* contracts or if promised facilities are not provided? Are there more effective ways to prevent work-at-home and investment frauds? Questions on rules for new food/drug products are also potential policy issues.

Education, Not Advocacy

There is growing recognition that *the consumer interest* isn't really the same for all consumers. As Home Economics educators, we need to help our students become aware of problems and gaps in consumer information and protection and help them *make their voices count* without advocating any one position ourselves.

It's easy to see that it's impossible for anyone to be an expert in all of these topics. Policy education lends itself well to team teaching or to presentations by guest speakers or to public forums. The appropriate role for the home economist may be to serve as a facilitator. In this case it's important to arrange for objective information and representation for varying viewpoints.

Continued On Page 11

Advocating for Child Support To Eliminate Financial Child Abuse

Kay Ehlers Park

Home economists in the past have solved problems of food, shelter, and clothing for families. But the current frightening problem that affects so many families is non-payment of child support to meet the basic needs of families of single parents.

The Situation

A 1986 White House report on the American family stated that "The divorce epidemic not only has devastated childhood, it has brought financial ruin to millions of women. Divorce reform was supposed to be a panacea for women trapped in bad marriages. It has trapped many of them in poverty" (1986).

Weitzman took an in-depth look at divorce effects in all fifty states. She concluded, in her 1985 book entitled *The Divorce Revolution,* that women and children experience a 73 percent decline in standard of living the first year after divorce. Men experience a 42 percent increase.

The most recent U.S. Census Bureau survey showed that 53 percent of our children will live in a female-headed single-parent family before their sixteenth birthday. Less than half of these children were receiving support from their fathers. This group accounted for 69 percent of the children who were living in poverty in the United States from 1970 until 1982 (U.S. Census Report, 1980).

Hewlett, in *A Lesser Life* (1986), noted that women who are awarded custody of children often fail to get child support. Women in need of child support are a distressed group. These women and children need clothes; their mortgages and utility bills need to be paid; their bills go on and on. These are not only welfare cases but working, middle-class women who live in fear. It is frightening to think about becoming one of the new poor. Single women with children often slide into poverty when they cannot collect child support.

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Single parents tend to be more open with their children concerning money problems, and this knowledge causes the children to become upset and worried (Pleck, 1977). So, non-payment of child support is not only financial abuse but mental abuse.

Home economists have a professional obligation to be on the cutting edge of implementing reforms for financially abused children so that they are not permanently damaged from lack of monetary resources. Society would benefit if both parents were financially responsible. If it were to become legally and socially correct to pay child support, the non-custodial parent would he more likely to pay the child support and to accept the financial obligations both parents have to their children. Since most mothers cannot legally and financially afford to enforce the court ruling, children must have someone else to stand up for their financial rights.

Working Toward A Solution

A group of single parent homemakers in Houston, Texas, who once drove car pools; ran the PTA; taught school; did fund raising or worked; did housework; and mentally, physically, and financially helped their husbands have now organized and are getting involved in public policy decision making. One of their goals is to get child support for financially abused children. The group is called CODES (Citizens Organized for Divorce Ethics and Solutions), and it is dedicated to combating the adverse impact of divorce on the family. These members are researching problems related to divorce, visiting judges, backing candidates, lobbying, and putting pressure on a system that has left them frustrated and usually much poorer.

In this research CODES found that some states have Child Support Enforcement Offices but that they are chronically overworked and understaffed and cannot handle all cases. The custodial parent has the alternative to hire a private attorney to get some help, but attorney fees are usually higher than income from child support would be. Because child support is court ordered, it should be the responsibility of the court to enforce it.

CODES discovered that Judge Bob O'Donnell in Dallas, Texas, had a 94 percent success rate for collection of child support. His collection system was based on the following hypotheses:

1. To increase the level of compliance a child support collection system must have a self-starting mechanism which automatically responds to the deviant behavior of non-payment.
2. The implementation of such a program must become a matter of policy with the Court and must be announced publicly.
3. A system which incorporates a self-starting mechanism capped with a strong policy of incarceration will increase the incidence of compliance by at least 60 percent to a level of 78 percent compliance (1987).

O'Donnell described the system: "The Court will not tolerate non-compliance with its support orders beyond a 30-day period without a motion filed in the court which seeks to bring the non-custodial parent into compliance" (1987). Should the custodial parent fail to file an appropriate response to the non-payment, the Court on its own motion will appoint a guardian ad-litem for the child with authority to collect and disburse funds; file any appropriate action to compel compliance; file any motions to increase or decrease support; and employ accountants and/or attorneys to assist in the discharge of duties. The guardian will be compensated at the rate of $10 per month per case and will report to the Court monthly, in writing, regarding all cases and annually to the custodian and the non-custodial parents regarding each child's account. The Court appoints attorneys to advise and represent each custodial parent regarding arrearage and admonishes the attorneys that if current support orders are contemptuously disobeyed, contempt proceedings will be instituted against the nonpaying parent. Judge O'Donnell stated that his system is computerized and inexpensive to operate. He noted that there is federal money available for grants to government agencies to use for projects such as this (1987).

CODES president Joleen Reynolds and

Continued On Page 11

Organizational Maintenance: Assuring Support And Funding For Home Economics Programs

Alberta M. Dobry

Acquiring public funding for Home Economics programs is becoming more difficult as economic resources become more scarce and competing special interest groups grow in number. Each time legislative issues or funding threats come forth, home economists have to intensify their efforts to convince members of congress of the value and benefits of funding Home Economics programs. By marshaling forces of home economists within professional organizations across the country, funding for Home Economics programs has been retained in significant legislative acts. For the most part, home economists have met each legislative challenge through collective efforts from within their own ranks, but it has not been easy. With increasing competition for scarce funding, can we afford to continue to limit our energies to closed-rank efforts?

No matter how successful we have been in the past, if we continue to rely on ourselves as the major spokespersons for our programs, members of congress may begin to view us as a minority with vested interests. If this were to happen, our position would be weakened. A more effective strategy is to increase the network of power in support of our programs from those outside our ranks (LeMay, 1985). Many national professional associations are now working to pool resources with groups having common interests through the formation of coalitions and partnerships, but approaches at this level alone may not be sufficient. Added local efforts could enhance our position significantly.

Acquiring Advocates for Our Programs

Although there has been success in the past at acquiring testimony from selected advocates (primarily students) on behalf of our programs, future trends indicate that our base of advocates needs to be broadened. We need more students, parents, clients, employers, community leaders, other educators, and public officials well enough acquainted with our programs and sufficiently impressed with them that they will articulate the benefits to others, especially legislators. Advocates can serve as an effective force with legislators by validating that the benefits from Home Economics programs outweigh the costs of funding the programs.

One way to cultivate advocates is to diversify our own involvements. We have been so strongly committed to professional organizations and groups directly related to Home Economics that we have seldom taken time for involvement with other groups. Many of us belong to broad-based, professional associations that include members from other fields. Some of us also belong to groups like the Parent Teachers Association or the League of Women Voters. Beyond paying dues, how actively involved are most of us in these organizations and with the people in them? In what civic organizations do we become involved? How often do we volunteer to provide presentations or programs for meetings of such groups? They are all potential advocates of Home Economics.

Other sources for advocates are related agencies in the community. Partnering with such groups provides an opportunity for outsiders to experience success with us and our programs. In becoming involved with other agencies, it is essential to convey the idea that there is mutual benefit from cooperative ventures. We cannot afford to wait to be recognized. We need to take the initiative in helping others more clearly understand the advantages gained from collaborative efforts. With positive results, such efforts can increase our credibility, expand our exposure with others, and ultimately strengthen our base of advocates.

Promoting Programs

One of the key factors in acquiring advocates or establishing collaborative efforts is to focus on what the audience will gain from the program. Taxpayers and legislators are primarily interested in program benefits or results. Thus, illustrating the outcomes or successes produced by our efforts is a far more effective promotional approach than explaining how hard we have worked on them.

Another factor to consider is that people's conceptions are more frequently based on observation than experience. We observe things and we generalize about them (Gianos, 1982). Because the observations are not necessarily comprehensive or systematic, the generalizations may or may not be complete or accurate. Thus, it is to our advantage to be aware of the fact that everything about us and our programs send observable messages. Our facilities, equipment, stationery, newsletters, news articles, bulletin boards, showcases, signs, posters, business cards, and even the way we dress—all send messages which contribute to the generalizations about us and our programs. It may be helpful to review these communication vehicles with an objective eye to what conceptions others may be forming from them in order to make necessary changes.

Changing Attitudes

Most people do an effective job of protecting and defending their own beliefs. If we are to change the minds of people who have negative or stereotyped ideas about Home Economics, we are required to pay special attention to them, especially if they hold key positions related to program funding.

The most effective way to bring about an attitude change is to know our critics and tell them *our story* on a regular basis. Interacting directly with persons or programs against whom the person is biased has the effect of rapidly breaking down unfounded assumptions. The more active, the more likely the attitude change (Gianos, 1982). The objective is to provide the biased party with first-hand experience and evidence which disconfirms the preexisting attitudes.

Another strategy of attitude change is through persuasive communications. Although this is a common form for trying to change attitudes, there is a major problem with this approach. Media sources are typically involved in transmitting the information to persons whose minds we want to change. The predictability of these means makes it easier for the person to take for granted, disregard, or ignore the information. To have an impact, strong evidence provided repeatedly in novel ways is needed to validate our persuasive communication attempts with those whose biases are not in favor of Home Economics.

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The concern about attitudes and attitude change is centered on the assumption that what people believe affects what they do. If we want people to support Home Economics programs, then it is essential that they believe in the purposes and effectiveness of the programs. To believe in them, they have to know what we really are offering.

Becoming Involved

On the reverse side, the attitude of home economists toward involvement in public policy is equally important for the continued support of Home Economics programs. In response to a survey by Vickers (1985), 77 percent of the American Home Economics Association membership indicated they were typically inactive or merely observers in political activity. Assuming that the random selection used by Vickers yielded a representative sample as expected, in this context the majority could be described as *leaners*. That is, they are leaning on the work carried out by 23 percent of their colleagues. Why is this? Insight into this behavior could be approached from an analysis of the costs and benefits of political involvement (Gianos, 1982).

Costs. One of the costs of involvement is time expended. The time spent on political activity is time lost to other things. One must, therefore, decide if the time spent on acquiring support for program funding is worth more or less than the time spent on other things.

Another cost relates to barriers present in the political environment such as opponents or competitors. The presence of opponents or competitors means much more effort and skill are required to succeed—hence, more cost in time. A simple fact of the matter is that individual costs could be reduced if more people were involved to share those costs.

Benefits. Added insight into understanding involvement, or the lack thereof, may be gained by exploring the idea of benefits. The first point about benefits is that there are different degrees of probability associated with receiving a benefit. Some benefits are certain to be gained once the cost to achieve them has been expended. But, with respect to political action, probabilities are difficult to calculate, and outcomes tend to be unpredictable. Some view becoming involved with political action as similar to entering a lottery. Without assurances of benefits, they are not willing to undergo the costs involved. People with this view tend to operate on the hope that someone else will undergo the costs for them.

One way to combat the lottery viewpoint is to instill a shift in focus from efforts of the individual to organized efforts of a group. In relating benefits to probabilities, the probability of success is greater with an organized collective than with either an individual or an unorganized group.

The Last Word

As champions of the profession, home economists can employ effective methods for ensuring that our programs are fully funded. Home economists who are actively involved in community groups and who initiate collaborative efforts between Home Economics programs and other human service agencies are able to maintain broad-based support for their programs. They become nurturing advocates. Negative attitudes toward Home Economics can be changed by regularly telling our opponents what we are doing and why it is important. Modeling our professionalism and leadership through the personal image we project, our actions, and our accomplishments is still the most powerful way to ensure support for our important work.

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Continued From Page 8

Successful policy education requires that the program and the information must be as objective and as neutral as possible. The educator should try to present the information pertinent to an issue in an unbiased and objective manner. This means that the educator does not become an advocate of any one position or choice in the policy debate. Why? Because public policy education involves issues on which everyone does not agree. People have varied views on the best course of action, because they have different values, attitudes, and beliefs and because their own interests are at stake in the decision. If the educator advocates a particular opinion, credibility will be lost with those who oppose that alternative. In the long run, this will hamper the educator's effectiveness.

For the democratic system to function effectively, informed citizens need to participate in the policy-making process at all levels of government. Many policy decisions which have implications for families or consumers are made without much consideration of their interests. Home economists who are concerned about the future well-being of people — as individuals, as family members, and as consumers — have an opportunity and a challenge to move into *doing* public policy education.

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Continued From Page 9

Home Economist Kay Ehlers Park are collaborating with Houston judges to implement Judge O'Donnell's collection system of non-payment of child support. Other CODES members are presently forming political action committees to educate the public and to influence the issue of financial child abuse.

What Home Economists Can Do

With so many financially abused children across our nation, other home economists are needed to help convince Domestic Relations Judges to implement this program, or one like it, in their areas. Because there is no nationwide trend for courts to take the initiative to enforce child support, home economists can make a difference by becoming advocates for financially abused children of single parents and for policies to alleviate this social malady.

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Three Essays For Thinking While Leaping

Ardis Armstrong Young

The Case for Skill Development

Most efforts to provide education and training for home economists wanting to get involved in public policy have been oriented toward the cognitive domain. In a few instances, experiential activities such as visiting the capitol or talking to decision makers have been included in public policy workshops. These efforts are helpful in creating an awareness and some understanding of what it means to be involved. However, there is evidence that the self-confidence arising from skill development is the real determinant as to whether one actually becomes involved in the public arena or not. A study of 153 middle class female participants in a leadership development program, which had as its major goal involvement in public policy decisions, gave evidence that skill development increased involvement dramatically (Armstrong Young, 1985).

Because of their participation in the program, respondents were taking on more leadership roles, understanding how *the system* works, and feeling able to do something about public problems. As a result, their behaviors changed significantly. They were testifying, studying issues, teaching about issues, talking with government officials, lobbying, participating on boards and commissions, campaigning, and running for office.

Respondents unanimously indicated that they had increased public involvement, because they felt confident about their skills (Flynn-MacPherson, 1985). They had developed the following skills: working with groups, handling conflict, planning public events, public speaking, working with individuals whose views differed from theirs, and teaching.

According to Johnson & Johnson (1975), skill development in a learner follows this sequence:

1. Believing that the skill is useful,
2. Understanding how the skill is done (behaviors, sequence, product),
3. Practicing,
4. Receiving immediate, specific feedback, on quality of performance,
5. More practicing,
6. Using the skill successfully,
7. Integrating the skill into daily behavior, and
8. Remaining in an environment that supports the skill.

In the case of education and training for home economists, the first step may already be completed. Those who attend policy workshops are usually motivated to attend by the belief that analyzing issues, influencing decisions, or carrying out public policy education programs is beneficial. The second step, understanding how the skill is done, has been partially addressed by the type of policy workshops now typically designed for home economists. Steps three through eight require innovative approaches to training. Practicing writing and presenting testimony with the feedback provided by a peer group and/or the video camera is extremely effective and changes behavior quickly. Opportunities for using the skill successfully in a simulated or real-life situation are critical to full skill development. Follow-up to ensure that additional opportunities to use the skill exist in each learner's environment and that they receive support for these activities must also become part of the curriculum.

Telling people to get involved in public policy decisions does not usually result in involvement. Education and training that lead to self-confidence in one's ability to be effective in that arena are needed. Self-confidence comes from developing skills in areas such as public communication, group work, issue analysis, coalition building, and conducting policy education programs. Innovative learning opportunities, designed to develop skills, are needed to ensure the involvement of home economists in public policy decisions.

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The Other Face of Power

Power is universally defined as energy—or the ability to get things done. Although power itself is neither good nor bad, the word is often used in our society to describe negative actions or to call up an image of tyranny and greed. The way in which most women are raised reinforces the stereotype of power being a negative thing. Believing that it is negative has long kept competent people away from power.

If the attitude that *power is bad* is closing off options for those in Home Economics leadership positions, it may be important to spend some time reframing that attitude. Without power (read energy), nothing gets done and, for organizations besieged by problems, this can be deadly.

When power is seen as good and the mental set which prevails in the profession assures that it will be a positive force, the following patterns can be observed:

- People in the profession see themselves as powerful and are motivated to work together to improve conditions. This happens when leaders invite participation and show how to begin.
- People talk to one another in a continuous and systematic way. Communication is not spelled out as a *should* but is seen as easy and necessary to getting the job done.

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- Work and power are shared. There is no power elite who fences itself off and makes the decisions—then wonders why nobody else participates. Accomplishments that are shared begin with thoughtful delegation. Delegating a job and delegating the authority and resources to do the job have to go together.
- Productivity is high. Talking and being nice to one another is important, but the action doesn't stop there. Things happen. New projects, new businesses, new activities are started. The profession envisions itself as *on the move*.
- Conflict is welcome and increases satisfaction with results. Whenever an organization or profession denies members the freedom to disagree or denies them the process to resolve disagreements, creativity is stifled and change is not satisfying. One of the major challenges of our democratic way of life is to encourage the expression of differences and to negotiate win-win solutions.

These are just a few of the characteristics of power-seen-as-good in a profession. When power is not used, nothing happens. When power is not seen as good, nothing good happens. Power is energy and it belongs to all of us.

Public Talk—The Stuff of Good Decisions*

The United States was formed by talking. It's true. Of course, there were other efforts as well. But basically, our country came into being because of the talk and debate that took place at town meetings—the first forums in the Americas.

On October 8, 1633, a colonist by the name of John Maverick conducted a town meeting in Dorchester, Massachusetts. It sprung out of a need to plan and solve some problems. (Does it sound familiar?) This meeting became a model for gatherings in other towns. It was seen as an efficient way to make, or influence, the policies that gave order to those tiny settlements. In fact, these forums became so popular that during the following 150 years the entire colonial institution was governed by *talking it out* in this way.

Americans still like to talk to one another and still spend much of their time talking about what they are going to do. However, *public talking*—the kind that addresses the public welfare—is quite different from other kinds of talk. It is different from talk about personal goals and needs. It is different from technical talk. Responsible public talk focuses on direction — Where are we going? Where should we be? It is reinvested with all the human values surrounding the issues, and it contains a genuine concern for the civic community.

Public talking results in making choices. Choices call for discrimination and judgment. Consequently, public talking is hard work. Goals often have to be negotiated or compromised, and choices involve the possiblity of loss. Information that has personal consequence takes a long time to work through.

For public talking to influence problems and issues in the most positive way, *public leadership* is needed to make it happen. Public leadership springs from the philosophy that *the public comes first* and *the public is expert in and of itself*. This is the basis of our democratic doctrine—giving the power to the people and ensuring that the people are educated.

Participating, gaining public leadership skills, and engaging in public talk—that's what citizenship is all about. Through "Issues Forum" training we are perpetuating our country's fine democratic tradition of public talk by learning how to conduct public forums and to plan educational programs to address local issues. We believe John Maverick knew what he was doing. Let's talk!

**Interpretation of a speech delivered by David Matthews, Director of the Kettering Foundation at the Kappa Omicron Phi Conclave, Louisville, Kentucky, August 1986 (Ardis Armstrong Young, interpreter).*

Applying Critical Thinking Theory to Public Policy Education

Nina Collins

Citizens in a democracy can expect government to be accountable for its stewardship. Citizens who have been taught the art of critical thinking and decision making are more likely to hold public policy decisions to high standards that will benefit the population as a whole. Family issues which come to the public policy foreground can benefit from input by home economists who have been taught the art of critical thinking.

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What is critical thinking? According to Glaser (1985):

> *Critical thinking involves three principle elements: (1) an attitude of being disposed to consider, in a thoughtful, perceptive manner the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experience; (2) knowledge of the method of locial inquiry and reasoning; and (3) skill in applying those methods* (p. 25).

These elements can be fused easily into the Home Economics curriculum.

Attitude

Home economists frequently deal with controversial subjects, and differing attitudes are often held by their clientele. From a critical thinking perspective it is important to promote open forums for the examination of all facets of controversial subjects in a nonthreatening way. Persons who learn the art of listening to others are more open and can understand more easily another point of view. Listening to and understanding others need to be an integral part of public policy education. That process can begin in the home, be expanded in the educational setting, and then be applied with skill in public debate. Experiences which will broaden one's point of view and deepen understanding of the breadth and depth of an issue will lead to more sensitive public policy formation.

Knowledge and Skill

Good public policy is more than just understanding other viewpoints; it must be based on facts and sound reasoning. Encouraging individuals to look at issues with open minds, sifting them through a broad knowledge base, is the responsibility of the home economist as public policy educator. Teaching about public policy at any level must go deeper than giving out legislative contacts and teaching letter-writing techniques. We must teach systems for analyzing issues, alternative solutions, and their consequences. We must encourage thoughtful problem solving by looking for unstated assumptions and values, examining language and using it with accuracy, examining the evidence and evaluating arguments, drawing inferences and testing them, and revising attitudes and judgments where the evidence demands it (Glaser, 1985). This requires a broad knowledge base approached with an open mind. Students do not naturally possess these abilities; they have to be taught — most importantly, modeled.

To ensure the transition from theory to practice we must provide ample opportunity for individuals to practice critical thinking and participate in public policy formulation. Some experiences for appying critical thinking skills include preparing and giving testimony on an issue, writing an article, lobbying a decision maker, or designing a policy education program.

Summary

Glaser (1985) could have been advocating for home economists involved in public policy education when he concluded that

> *. . . the development of critical-thinking ability is a crucial objective of the educational process not only because it contributes to the intellectual and social competence of the individual and helps that individual to meet more effectively the problems he/she encounters, but also because it helps the individual cooperate better with others. It helps the citizen to form intelligent judgments on public issues and thus contribute democratically to the solution of social problems. Perhaps at no time in history has wider realization of this educational objective been more urgently needed (p. 27).*

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Do Home Economists Feel Prepared For Political Involvement?

Bonnie Johnson

The focus of the Home Economics profession is on the well-being of individuals and the family unit. Thus, home economists have gained, as part of their training, research-based knowledge about the many aspects of human development and family life. If home economists are to fully utilize this knowledge to help individuals and families function in their own strength, they must also develop the skills necessary to influence public policy as it relates to the family.

Even though home economists have been encouraged to get involved in public policy (Armstrong Young, 1984; Vickers, 1985; Meszaros & Cummings, 1983; Cummings & Hirschlein, 1984; Hirschlein & Cummings 1985), the political participation is much lower than that thought to be effective.

This dilemma brings to mind the question: Do home economists have the skills necessary to conceptualize the future, to anticipate its consequences, and to implement a course of action which will result in public policy which ensures the well-being of individuals and families? To gain information about this question, a survey was conducted at the 1987 annual meeting of the Washington Home Economics Association. A short questionnaire was developed to determine if home economists felt they were prepared to help others cope with societal change and to influence public policy decisions that might result because of these societal changes.

The Study

A checklist of 33 items indicating preparation for meeting current societal needs (Hewes, 1984; Burgess, 1983; Blackwell et al, 1986; Horn, 1981; Wall, 1986) was developed (Table 1, 2 & 3). Those surveyed were asked to indicate how well prepared they felt to address current educational needs in these areas. The instrument used a three-option scale (1=not prepared; 2=somewhat prepared; 3=well prepared). Only a few minutes were required to complete it. Respondents were 52 professional home economists attending the annual meeting of the Washington Home Economics Association.

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Findings

The results, shown on Tables 1, 2 and 3, indicate that these home economists felt somewhat prepared to deal with issues relating to individual life (2.29), family (2.34), and technology (2.19); less well prepared on issues relating to work (1.93), living in a shrinking world (1.79), and public policy (1.88).

In the category of public policy, home economists felt somewhat prepared to select issues and then study them analytically. However, they felt less well prepared to work through policy-making systems, deal with skeptical attitudes about politics, think politically, form coalitions to effect change, and communicate their views publicly. An analysis of variance indicated that there were no significant differences between how prepared people felt and the degree held or years since last degree.

Discussion and Implications

The results indicate that home economists feel confident dealing with some issues based on societal trends. They can conceptualize the future and anticipate the consequences of trends emerging around individual life, family, and technology. As might be expected, they felt the most prepared to deal with issues dealing with the family. However, they were less well prepared when looking at the future of work and the shrinking world. They did not feel adequately prepared to get involved in public policy formation.

The potential of home economists to influence day-to-day policy decisions is not as great as it could be, because they do not have the skills necessary to be effective plitical participants. If the Home Economics profession is to have a part in shaping the public policy decisions that will have an impact on the individual and the family, then it appears that the professional training of home economists needs to include preparation for public policy involvement. Armstrong Young (1984) suggested that concepts developing political awareness be integrated into undergraduate courses. This approach would train future home economists in public decision-making practices. In addition, those who are presently employed as Home Economics professionals must develop the skills necessary for involvement in public policy formation. A series of workshops designed to develop practical political skills, followed by a self-directed practicum, would be one way to start building public decision-making skills.

Such a course of study should train home economists to be *futures* literate, to foresee the consequences of alternative futures, and to select and analyze issues sensitively. From that developmental level will evolve the willingness to take risks, to implement new and different approaches to the issues. Then, and only then, can we fulfill our potential in public policy formation.

TABLE 1
Weighted Mean Scores of Home Economists' Views on Their Preparedness to Address Current Social Needs to Ensure Individual or Family Self-reliance and Deal With Emerging Technologies

Categories and Areas of Competency	Category Weighted Mean	Issue Weighted Mean
INDIVIDUAL	2.29	
Assessing personal skills and interests		2.44
Pursuing lifelong learning		2.77
Planning and preparing nutritious diets for all		2.44
Exercising appropriately		2.18
Managing stress		2.02
Planning for aging (housing, clothing, estate)		2.15
Balancing work and play		2.06
FAMILY	2.34	
Appreciating varied family structures		2.50
Understanding various family crises		2.40
Balancing career and family		2.40
Working with agencies that help families		2.17
Communicating effectively		2.45
Managing conflict		2.10
Building personal relationships throughout the life cycle		2.33
Understanding human needs throughout life		2.43
Understanding effects of health on families		2.36
TECHNOLOGY	2.19	
Making decisions which are complex due to an abundance of information		2.21
Using technology to make life more convenient		2.17

TABLE 2
Weighted Mean Scores of Home Economists' Views on Their Preparedness to Address Current Social Needs in Areas of Work and Living in a Shrinking World

Categories and Areas of Competency	Category Weighted Mean	Issue Weighted Mean
WORK	1.93	
Retrained for changing job markets		1.90
Planning for extended periods of leisure		1.88
Volunteering		2.23
Managing volunteer services		1.94
Working with business to enable employees to interface personal and professional lives		1.70
LIVING IN A SHRINKING WORLD	1.79	
Speaking another language		1.48
Working with people from other cultures		1.98
Living in a global economy		1.92

TABLE 3
Weighted Mean Scores of Home Economists' Views of Their Preparedness to Address Current Social Needs Through Involvement in Public Policy

Categories and Areas of Competency	Category Weighted Mean	Issue Weighted Mean
PUBLIC POLICY	1.88	
Selecting issues		2.00
Studying issues analytically		2.04
Working through policy-making systems		1.83
Dealing with skeptical attitudes about politics		1.77
Thinking politically		1.87
Forming coalitions to effect change		1.79
Communicating your views publicly		1.88

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Educating Professional Home Economists For Public Policy Involvement

Patsy Alexander Elmore

Involvement in public policy issues has been a vital part of activities of the Home Economics profession since its inception. During the Fourth Annual Lake Placid Conference in 1902, C. R. Henderson's presentation, "Social Conditions Affecting the Law of Domestic Life," encouraged awareness of the impact of legislative decisions upon the family. The conditions of society affected the ability of homemakers to accomplish their tasks, and in 1907 Caroline Hunt endorsed political involvement in the passage of laws pertaining to pure food. After the founding of the American Home Economics Association in 1901, the organization through its leaders continued political involvement by adopting resolutions that indicated a position on legislative issues affecting families, especially in areas of child and family health and welfare, food and nutrition, textiles and clothing, housing, and consumer issues (Meszaros & Cummings, 1983).

Despite the increasing emphasis that the American Home Economics Association placed on political involvement through the years, the commitment of the membership to active participation in the issues appears less than impressive. The results of a survey in 1982 of college and university Home Economics faculty revealed tht only about one-half of the respondents reported participation in activities such as voting, working with groups on political issues, or attending social events supporting a political issue. Respondents gave several reasons for not participating in public affairs: personal beliefs in separating teaching and politics so as not to influence students inadvertently, commitment to teaching and/or research as one's primary responsibility or as activities that count most importantly toward tenure and promotion, institutional restrictions imposed on political activities, or fear of damaging results from supporting the *wrong* side (Hirschlein & Cummings, 1985).

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Traditionally the preponderance of political activities at most levels of involvement have been by men. Only in recent years have women begun to challenge the societal belief that politics should be handled only by men. Although in 1920 the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified giving women the right to vote, it was not until 1984 that the male-dominated Mississippi Legislature officially bestowed this right on its women citizens. Even though law school enrollments today reflect substantially higher percentages of female students than in the past, a disproportionately lower number of seats in local, state, and national governing bodies continue to be held by women. The general public still uses the ballot box to demonstrate a general lack of confidence in women politicians.

When the American Home Economics Association adopted public policy as an association goal for the current Program of Work (1985-1990), it emphasized the need for home economists to participate in public affairs, especially in the areas of pension reform, teenage pregnancy, abortion choice, future of farm families, inflation and the family, consumer education, food safety, nutrition education, housing for the poor, and many others (Hirschlein & Cummings, 1985). The AHEA Executive Director wrote that AHEA needs to be a conduit for legislative action, communicating the Association's positions on legislative issues to the Congress of the United States as well as informing members in the field of pending action in Congress (McFadden, 1986). Policy makers, perceiving home economists as professionals possessing intelligence, academic expertise, and the integrity to be objective, are seeking members out for opinions, to disseminate information to individuals and families, and to support their positions. Among the frontiers for home economists are opportunities to testify in Congress, at the state legislature, or before local boards (McFadden, 1987). Home economists must begin *now* to influence public policy by determining what is needed to favorably influence public policy-making, devising creative and innovative strategies to achieve these goals, and committing to implementation of the public policy aspect of their AHEA Program of Work (Simmons, 1982).

"Home economics is the only profession and body of knowledge which focuses on the family as its core and nucleus and works predominantly in a preventive, educational, and developmental mode rather than through remediation, therapy, or crises intervention" (Green, 1982, p. 40). If home economists are to rightfully assume roles as effective advocates of public policy affecting families, their educational experiences must be designed to enable them to develop the intellectual and communication skills that such a leadership role requires. The 75th AHEA Anniversary heralded our "Proud Past...Promising Future," but the future belongs to those who prepare for it. The effectiveness of the profession as policy spokesman for families from now into the twenty-first century requires adequate preparation of professionals and dedication of time, energy, and expertise by all home economists. This is a challenge to all aspects of the profession that influence the education of home economists for leadership roles in public policy decisions.

Some Educational Goals

One of the challenges for AHEA is to educate leaders to be politically astute (Green, 1983). Leadership development includes teaching skills that leaders tend to use, realizing that the most effective leaders educate their followers (Cole, 1985). Home economists must become politically competent if the profession is to move successfully into the twenty-first century. The curriculum for preparing professionals needs to include the integrative teaching of political thought as a connecting thread throughout the education process, because effective political skills are the result of developing a particular way of thinking and then acting from that premise on a daily basis. Concepts basic to developing personal political skills include (a) learning to think politically, (b) learning how to listen and give testimony, (c) learning how to build coalitions, (d) learning how organizational systems work, (e) learning how to select the issues carefully, and (f) developing an attitude of persistence (Armstrong Young, 1984).

Educational Strategies

Several effective strategies for educating home economists in public policy involvement are described below.

Role Models — Individuals whose behaviors, personal styles, and specific attributes are emulated by others are often referred to as role models (Baugher and Kellett, 1983). In recent years several national politicians have appeared as speakers at American Home Economics Association meetings. They have discussed issues concerning the family from a non-Home Economics perspective, while demonstrating communication skills and political acumen required to be effective activists. Included among these were Bella Abzug, former Congresswoman from New York; Shirley Chisholm, former senior Democratic woman in the United States House of Representatives; Geraldine Ferraro, former Democratic Candidate for Vice President of the United States; and Nancy Kassebaum, Senator from Kansas.

Research — Although the role of Home Economics in affecting public policy has received increased attention in recent years, one area not often addressed is the role of Home Economics in public policy research. Public policy uses knowledge in the rational development of public activity. When it focuses on the family, public policy uses what is known about families to develop that body of law and regulation that most affects their welfare. The focus of family policy research is the generation of information in some area of social concern to enable policy makers to make informed decisions. Using the expertise of home economists to conduct family-related applied research and to interpret their findings to legislators may be one of the most important ways the profession is able to contribute to the resolution of problems and policies affecting the American family (McHenry & Rudd, 1981).

The undergraduate curriculum may be a rich source for research. When research projects are included as a part of regular classes, learning experiences should focus on problem solving rather than simply memorizing facts. Upper level courses might be organized around readings that expose students to the latest research techniques and findings as well as problems or issues that would stimulate their interests. They might become involved in actual projects that are ongoing or implement their own research projects (Breen, 1983).

The Coordinating Council of Home Economics Honor Societies sponsored Research Reporting Sessions at recent Annual Meetings of the American Home Economics Association to encourage undergraduate students to become actively involved in reporting original research. Such acivities enable preprofessional home economists to develop skills in critical thinking, research, and communication. These skills are essential for involvement in public policy formulation.

Undergraduate research has been a part of the junior textiles curriculum at The University of Mississippi. A recent class project involved the Textile and Apparel Trade Enforcement Act of 1985, which had passed Congress and was threatened by a veto by the President. Sometimes referred to as the protectionist bill, it required that an import tax be placed on textile products, especially shoes, that were manufactured in foreign countries for retail in the United States. When the class began, the students had not heard of the bill and had no opinion regarding it. But as class discussions and reading assignments focused on advantages and disadvantages of protectionist legislation, they began to form opinions. Mini-research projects included questionnaires to collect data from local residents and students regarding awareness of and attitudes toward the pending legislation. Questioners asked how local retailers viewed the situation and then conducted personal interviews to obtain this information. When one student learned that a shoe manufacturing plant located near her home was being closed because of the competition from imports, she interviewed local residents and employees of the plant who had lost their jobs. A journalism professor instructed students on techniques of newspaper reporting so they could write news articles. The last class activity was to sponsor a public symposium where members presented brief reports on the issues involved in the legislation and implications for consumers should it be signed or vetoed by the president. This gave students the opportunity to organize their thoughts into succinct statements. All points of view were presented. The final examination required the students to write a letter to the President urging him to either sign or veto the bill, justifying their positions with facts. This experience showed that skills needed for public policy involvement can be successfully incorporated into the learning experiences of courses already in the curriculum and do not require the development of special ones.

Presenting Programs — One of the components of the Kappa Omicron Phi National Program Theme, "Enabling Families," was the annual required program for 1986-1987 which focused on "Enabling Families to Affect Public Policy." Kappa Omicron Phi members who were participants in the previously described textiles class presented a chapter program on the research conducted as class projects. Articles by Magrabi (1980) and Meszaros & Cummings (1983) were reviewed, and a short questionnaire was administered before the program to determine certain consumer practices and perceptions of the audience. Results given at the end of the meeting indicated the degree to which respondents associated the following practices with public policy involvement: (a) making consumer choices, 65%; (b) keeping informed about public policy issues, 64%; (c) belonging to professional organizations that participate in shaping public policy, 50%; (d) attending public forums, 45%; (e) communicating your opinions to public officials, 47%; (f) and writing letters to the editor of newspapers, 34%. The eighty-nine students in attendance indicated they had become more aware of the need for learning about public policy involvement.

Summary

The purposes of this article were to articulate the rationale for education in public policy involvement and to describe several strategies that may be used to educate home economists to assume leadership roles in economic and social policy. Surely we have the creativity and expertise to educate for public policy involvement. We have plenty of social issues to motivate us. The commitment has been made. So, let's release the full potential of our power to educate for leadership roles in the public policy arena.

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Continued On Page 23

Self-Directed Worksheets: A New Approach To Public Policy Education

Diana D. Carroll

How do you prepare to teach a course in public policy when you have not been trained in public policy? What knowledge and skills are needed by students to be effective in public policy involvement? What is the relationship between one's personal values and public policy positions? What has been the role of home economists in public policy formation? These questions raced through my mind as I prepared to teach a three-week workshop on public policy to college students. Answers to these questions eventually presented themselves in the form of worksheets which became the basis of a new curriculum.

I started with two familiar publications: the *Journal of Home Economics* and *The Distaff* of Kappa Omicron Phi. I read or reread over 50 articles related to "Home Economics: A Definition" and public policy and the home economist from these two publications, then asked: "Why not have students read the same articles and answer questions related to them?" With this idea in mind I developed the framework of the course, course objectives, and worksheets and other instructional activities to implement the objectives.

Conceptual Framework

Public policy: What is it? What can I do about it? Where do I start? These questions seemed overwhelming when considering the brevity of a course. However, I used this questioning approach to formulate a framework for understanding the home economist's role in public policy and issues that affect families.

1. Know where you are coming from: Clarifying beliefs. Religious perspective, personal perspective, perspective as a future home economist.
2. Know where you are: Becoming informed. Public policy issues, organizations which address public policy issues, positions taken by home economics organizations on public policy issues.
3. Know where you are going: Initiating action. Public policy process, policy-making bodies, ways to influence policy-making bodies.

This conceptual framework reflects the following assumptions:

- There is a relationship between one's personal values and ethical behavior and one's perspective on public policy issues. Students need to know their own personal perspective.
- Home Economics students should be able to articulate publicly what it means to be a home economist.
- Students should know the history and present involvement of Home Economics professionals in public policy issues.
- Students need an understanding of the three branches of government.

The Worksheets

Worksheets 1-3 related to the first aim of the conceptual framework, Clarifying beliefs; worksheets 4-10 related to the second aim, Becoming informed; and worksheets 11-13 related to the third aim, Initiating action.

Worksheet 1 addressed the question of religious and secular perspectives on issues confronting our society.

Worksheet 2 required students to read at least 15 articles from the *Journal of Home Economics* and *The Distaff* and develop a position paper on "A home economist is. . ." The bibliography listed 24 articles from the *Journal of Home Economics* and 40 articles from *The Distaff* for use in the development of the position paper.

Worksheet 3 required the students to read approximately 20 articles from the *Journal of Home Economics* related to the past and present involvement of home economists in public policy and to answer questions developed from the readings.

Worksheet 4 explored how to be a proactive citizen and required activities such as attending a meeting of a local or state policy-making group and writing a letter to a legislator or a federal agency. One class attended a school board meeting and completed a handout, "Observing the System" from the *J.C. Penney Forum* (Ley, 1982). Observing the policy-making session provided many insights into the behaviors of those who influence policy and the policy process. The *Public Affairs Handbook* (Drews, 1984), published by the American Home Economics Association for use by State Public Affairs Committees, provided extensive information on how to analyze legislation, to communicate with decision makers, and to use instruments of influence such as bill tracking networks to influence public policy.

Worksheet 5 asked students to complete a list of public policy issues, conduct in-depth research on an issue of their choice, and collect newspaper and magazine articles dealing with public policy concerns.

Worksheet 6 encouraged students to start a resource file of the names and addresses of organizations and agencies involved with public policy issues.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to

- Define public policy.
- Identify public policy issues.
- Develop a personal perspective on public policy issues.
- Examine an issue, analyze its implications, and formulate a position.
- Identify agencies and organizations that are concerned with public policy issues.
- Analyze past and present involvement of Home Economics organizations in public policy.
- Formulate a personal philosophy as a home economist.
- Identify local policy-making bodies and local public policy issues.
- Demonstrate knowledge of state and national legislative processes.
- Name key people involved in local, state, and national government.
- Use appropriate methods of contacting or writing officials.
- Identify resources for keeping informed on public policy issues.
- Analyze position papers, resolutions, and testimonies.
- Describe specific actions for making an impact on policy-making bodies.

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Worksheet 7 required students to read at least 6 publications of professional organizations to identify public policy issues addressed by organizations. The students answered three questions for each publication: What are the public policy issues addressed? What action, if any, did the organization recommend? How was the particular position on an issue justified? The regular *Journal of Home Economics* section, "At Issue: Home Economics Leadership Guide to Public Policy Questions," was helpful for this assignment.

Worksheet 8 assigned reading of *The Consumer Resource Handbook* (U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs, 1982) to become familiar with the functions, services, and information available from federal offices.

Worksheet 9 explored various Home Economics communication channels for keeping informed about public policy issues: *Washington Dateline, COFO Memo,* annual meetings, state meetings, workshops, legislative newsletters.

Worksheet 10 addressed the questions: What channels do home economists use to voice public policy concerns to policy-making bodies? and What positions have Home Economics organizations taken on some issues? Students read and compared testimonies on Consumer and Homemaking Education from congressional hearings. Several resolutions and position papers were read and compared. Students wrote their own resolutions on an issue of their choice.

Worksheet 11 consisted of questions analyzing the pamphlet, *Tell it to Washington: A Guide for Citizen Action,* published by the League of Women Voters (1985).

Worksheet 12 introduced students to state government. Questions from the League of Women Voters of Nashville, *On the Hill: A Guide to Tennessee State Legislature* (1985), and *Lobbying and the Tennessee General Assembly* (1981) guided student learning.

Worksheet 13 introduced students to the congressional committees that have an impact on Consumer and Homemaking Education.

Advantages of Using Worksheets

Students were exposed to extensive writings by professionals in the field of Home Economics. They knew what was expected of them from the first day of class when they received the syllabus and the 13 worksheets. Because of the tremendous amount of reading and written work, in-class work time was assigned in addition to lectures, group discussions, class presentations, and field trips. A checklist identifying the specific assignments and projects was given to each student with the due dates and grade points for each. The worksheets made it possible to cover the subject in more depth than could have been covered in lectures, projects, and discussions. The students sharpened their critical thinking skills and writing skills. The public policy notebook assembled throughout the course was evidence of a personal odyssey into public policy.

A Word of Caution

Too much time in class was used to work on some worksheets and not enough on others. The students felt *pushed* at the end of the semester. Although due dates were spaced, some of the more involved assignments, such as analyzing an issue, were not due until the last week of the semester. Class discussion may have been inadequate; perhaps students missed opportunities for learning from each other. Some students felt that the expectations were too great. In fact, one commented, "I took this course as an elective; yet I worked harder in this course than in any of my major classes." As the instructor, I discovered that it took much longer to read, grade, and return assignments than I had anticipated. Because of this, the flow of learning was interrupted. Changes that I plan to implement include reduction of worksheets and adjustments to the assignment schedule to maintain current feedback, facilitate class discussion, discuss areas for improvement, clarify, and praise.

Summary

I agree with Armstrong Young (1984) who stated that "modeling political awareness is essential for change. Setting up a self-directed course of study to build personal political skills may be the most efficient way to begin the movement" (p. 50). The worksheets require students to assume responsibility for their own learning, and they are one means of building personal political skills.

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Continued From Page 22

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Child Care And Public Assistance: Home Economics Must Confront The Issue

Kathy R. Thornburg and Carol Mertensmeyer

Ensuring availability of quality child care for American families can be an insurmountable problem without the collaborative support of parents, providers, employers, schools, and government. Home economists recognize the magnitude of the child care dilemma and understand the impact absent or poor-quality care can have on society. They can begin to tackle the crisis by actively advocating for continuous, accessible, affordable, quality care for all American families needing child care services.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) recognized child care services' effect on children and families. He suggested that, from an ecological viewpoint, the impact of day care and preschool on the nation's families and on society at large may have more profound consequences than any other impact on the development of humans in modern industrialized societies.

The need for child care services has increased rapidly over the past decade as a result of social, economic, and political changes. Rising divorce rates and attitudinal changes have led to increased numbers of employed mothers (Friedman, 1983). Economic changes provide additional reasons why mothers, even those in two-parent families, are forced to seek employment (American Association of University Women, 1987). These changes create the need for many families to transfer child care responsibilities to others.

Almost 63 percent of all women with children under 18 years of age work outside the home. Close to 60 percent of mothers with children ages three to five are employed (National Commission on Working Women, 1986). The proportion of children living in female-headed families has more than doubled between 1960 and 1984, from 9 percent to 19.7 percent. One child in five lives in a single-parent family. It is anticipated that by 1990, this ratio will increase to one in four (Children's Defense fund, 1985). Obviously there is an increasing need for child care to accommodate children of working mothers.

With the changing structure and functions of the American family, home economists are faced with the awesome task of helping families maintain and improve their quality of life. Ensuring the existence and access of quality child care services for all American families is a priority task.

Many families do not have access to child care, particularly quality services. Women identify the need for quality, affordable child care as the single most important problem they face (Kamerman, 1985). A 1982 Census Bureau survey found that 45 percent of all single mothers not then in the labor force would work if child care were available at a reasonable cost (Children's Defense Fund, 1986a).

Securing child care is extremely problematic for low-income families. Sixty-one percent of parents receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1983 had children younger than six, and 38 percent had children younger than three. For these mothers to work, adequate child care must be provided (Children's Defense Fund, 1986a). Even if the mother is working and earning a wage she cannot usually afford child care. A single mother with two children, working forty hours per week for 50 weeks per year at minimum wage, is still approximately 22 percent below the 1985 poverty level. Child care experts estimate that mid-income families pay no more than 10 percent of their income for child care. The poor pay 20-40 percent of their income. It is evident that low-income families are most in need of affordable child care.

Without financial assistance low-income families' quality of life will be adversely affected. Mothers are unable to obtain gainful employment and to become financially independent, and they are forced to stay on welfare. Low self-esteem and low status often accompany the mother's financial dependence (Strong & Devault, 1986).

If the mother is employed and the child care is of poor quality, a child's development is jeopardized (Scarr, Weinberg, & Levine, 1986). Even more detrimental is the fact that some families must ask their children to take care of themselves. Four percent of children three to six years old care for themselves while the mothers work (Children's Defense Fund, 1982). By conservative estimates, there are seven million children aged 13 and under who care for themselves for at least part of every day while their parents work (National Commission for Working Women, 1985). Schools could be an important partner in caring for these children, but only slightly more than 100 of the 15,000 public school systems nationwide presently provide some sort of child care before and after school (Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, 1985).

Legislative Developments

It is imperative that government assist in providing child care to our nation's children, particularly children living in poverty. Historically, government's role in supporting child care has been piecemeal. During World War II when women were needed in the workforce, child care was made available through the Lanham Act of 1942. By this act the federal government set up and supported child care centers. When the war ended, so did child care programs. More than 129,000 young children were enrolled at its peak and child care programs were tailored to meet the needs of working mothers. Women who fought to resume state aid for day care were considered communistic by some governmental officials. In 1969 a bill that would have provided comprehensive child care was passed by the House and Senate and was endorsed by the 1970 White House Conference on Children, but ended in a veto by President Nixon who feared child care would create a "break-

The balance of a family system can be greatly disrupted by inadequate child care services. For example Sally, a young single mother of a [illegible]-month old baby, cannot work because she cannot obtain affordable child care. She depends on AFDC and remains financially dependent. She is unable to live her accustomed lifestyle and feels inadequate as a mother and member of society. Sally's distress and financial insecurity appear to be related to her lack of responsiveness to her baby. Sally is unable to meet even the child's basic needs. While this situation is hard to accept, it is important to remember that a child and family's well-being is a product of environmental factors, external as well as internal, relative to the family. Negative effects such as unaffordable, inaccessible, or unavailable child care can disrupt the family system.

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down of families." Because of national politics and ongoing controversy, child care legislation failed to overcome a presidential veto in 1971 and again in 1975 (Auerbach, 1979). This historical presentation represents the national ambivalence about the legitimacy of nonmaternal care. The political debate has been about whether mother should work and what harm may come to her child if she does. The fact remains that quality child care is a critical need for American families today, and government is needed to play a viable role in meeting this need.

A breakthrough for children resulted from the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, amending Title XX of the Social Security Act, which established block grants to states for social services. In part, this federal funding was authorized to enable individuals to achieve or maintain economic self-support to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency (Chambers, 1986). Many states continue to provide child care today to low-income parents in an attempt to meet stated goals. States are relatively free to choose type of service, clientele, and delivery system (Chambers, 1986), and the programs vary from state to state. The federal government issues Title XX monies to states. Other than having to meet the few abstract goals, the states have the discretion to allocate and freedom to administer the money as they perceive appropriate. In most states a portion is tagged for subsidized child care for low-income families. Some states supplement federal assistance with state monies to meet their state's low-income families' child care needs. States' progress in meeting child care needs has been slow and uneven (Children's Defense Fund, 1986b).

Although government subsidized child care programs are available in most states, many fail to serve all needy families, are often ineffective programs, and result in children receiving low-quality child care. Although inadequate, Title XX is the major source of federal funding used by states to assist low-income families to pay for child care (Children's Defense Fund, 1986b).

Public Policy Implications

Subsidized child care should be made available to all low-income families. It should be subsidized at a rate that provides affordable quality care. Programs should be provided on a continuing basis to (a) maximize children's development, (b) give stability to families, and (c) enable parents to continue working or to change their working patterns.

Continuity

To date, funding has not been available to ensure continual services. The need for child care assistance has grown in recent years, but in 1986 the federal government and a majority of states financially assisted fewer low-income families than in 1981 (Children's Defense Fund, 1986b). In 1982, federal funds for Title XX were cut by 20 percent and were not restored. Title XX funding in 1986 was only at 72 percent of 1981 levels (Children's Defense Fund, 1986b). As a result of the federal cuts, 24 states are serving fewer children than in 1981. When funds are cut, programs lose continuity and families are left in precarious predicaments.

Administrative boondoggles or short-sighted state policies limit child care provisions and prevent parents from receiving ongoing child care assistance. For example, child care assistance for mothers enrolled in school may be limited to one year, creating an obstacle in obtaining a college degree. Some states provide child care during educational training but do not extend it past that time, leaving parents without child care during their job-hunting pursuit. When work is found (often at entry level), they are not immediately eligible for child care subsidies because of the long waiting list (Children's Defense Fund, 1986b). The options a mother has at that point are unsatisfactory: turning down the job and being dependent on AFDC or leaving a child home alone until a day-care opening becomes available. This service incontinuity causes havoc for the child and the family.

Accessibility

Accessibility of quality child care is another major concern. Florida has a waiting list of 21,000 youngsters needing child care. Pennsylvania reported that only 20,000 of the 300,000 children in need of subsidized child care in the state receive it (Children's Defense Fund, 1986b). In Missouri, 67,000 of Missouri's children under the age of six were living in poverty in 1980 and only an estimated 2,500 to 3,900 (Missouri Department of Social Services, 1986) were served during any month of the 1986 fiscal year. These figures represent conditions reflecting too few resources for too many needy children.

Administrative practices may prevent eligible recipients from receiving services. A state requiring use of licensed facilities for payment of child care subsidies may make placement for rural children impossible where licensed facilities are absent. Distribution of child care subsidies throughout the state may be based on past requests, and if the region has no history of needing child care subsidies then none may be made available. Inflexible eligibility rules may penalize many poor parents for wage increases. Several states do not use sliding-fee scales. Thus, modest wage increases prevent access to services (Children's Defense Fund, 1986a).

Equal access to quality programs is essential. A high-quality program for children includes: a safe environment, proper nutrition, adequate space, ample materials and equipment for learning, staff trained in child development and teaching methods, good planning and organization, and strong links to parents (National Commission on Working Women, 1986). Without equal access, a two-tier child care system may emerge: quality programs for those who can afford it and poorer quality for those without adequate resources (Kamerman, 1985).

Affordability

Quality programs are inaccessible to the poor for a number of reasons. Child care must be affordable. If child care is subsidized at only 50 percent, parents must pay the remaining 50 percent. This means child care services cannot be obtained or lower-priced services (perhaps poorer quality) must be obtained. In some cases vendors of quality programs reject eligible children, because they fear the inconsistencies of the subsidy program. If a child becomes ineligible because mother quits work, is fired, or receives a salary increase, there is no assurance that funds will be available for a next child. Vendors do not care to risk having a vacant child care slot. Although many vendors contend with the problem of losing and having to replace clientele, the turnover rate of lower-income children tends to be high because mother's employment and family life may be relatively unstable. The instability of the child care subsidy program only adds to the family's instability and decreases the chances of low-income children attending high quality child care programs.

Child care subsidies are available to only a few low-income families and most assuredly are not assisting all families in need of child care. In many cases subsidy payments are too low and child care remains unaffordable. When it is available it is often poor quality, inconsistently provided, and inaccessible.

Some Solutions

There are a few major identifiable solutions to the child care subsidy dilemma. Appropriations for subsidy payments must be increased to make it possible to serve a greater number of children and to increase subsidy rates. Improvements in administering the program are also needed. Currently many quality day-care programs have little incentive to serve children on subsidy, especially when they normally operate at full capacity. Annual government contracts with child care providers would give vendors a greater guarantee of income.

Other administrative changes are required to make this an accessible and equitable program. A sliding-fee scale taking into consideration one's residence, the corresponding cost of day care, and the level of income is necessary. A statewide resource/referral network would provide all participants equal information related to available child care. To inform clients that child care subsidies exist, a public awareness campaign or other formal mechanism should be used.

A Call to Advocacy

How can you make a difference? *Assess and monitor child care assistance programs in your state.* Ask yourself: Are child care needs being met through the child care subsidy program? Does the program seek to secure quality child care services for recipients? Is the program accessible to those in need, and does it have continuity over time? Is the program affordable for all families in need of child care? If you identify needed changes, there are several important steps you should take.

Provide information and advocacy by personally contacting your legislator and/or policymakers. This contact can be through a letter, phone call, or personal meeting.

Establish linkages with other child care advocacy groups and discuss your concerns with them. Perhaps you will want to join with them and become a member of their telephone advocacy tree or attend meetings discussing legislative issues related to child care.

When you advocate *know what you are up against.* There are many people out there—legislators, policymakers, and bureaucrats included—who still believe that a woman's place is in the home and that child care is her responsibility. Many believe that child care is not an employment or a family issue but a women's issue. As an advocate, child care should be defined as a *practical* rather than a *moral* issue (Kamerman, 1985).

Have your facts ready. Don't let opponents stump you with misleading and unintelligible statements: "Poverty is inevitable, child care subsidies won't and can't make a difference; additional money for child care subsidies will only take additional money from other children's programs." "How do you define poverty? I don't believe there are that many children in poverty!" Watch out for this one . . . "Taxpayers give and give, we can't ask them for any more!" Let them know day care saves dollars and share the following examples (Morgan, 1982):

A California study analyzed the impact of child care in a community over a two and a half year period. Welfare costs among participants were reduced by almost half. Income- and sales-tax revenues from participating employed families were increased by 63 percent. Families increased the fees they paid by 65 percent over time.

Studies in Colorado indicate that those AFDC recipients using day care were on welfare 14.8 months, as compared with 38.1 months for those without. Colorado was paying about $92,000 per month for income-eligible child day care. It would cost the state $232,000 per month if it made AFDC payments to those families.

A study in Florida found Social Security and federal income taxes paid by individuals working as a direct result of child care exceeded the cost of child care to the federal government; and for every tax dollar spent on child care, $1.25 was spent in sales taxes by people not previously employed.

Summary

The United States trails far behind other countries in the public provision of child care services including those countries with lower female labor-force participation rates (Kamerman, 1985). By 1990, the number of children under ten will reach 38 million, yet the United States is one of the few industrialized countries that does not have comprehensive national day-care policy (Watson et al., 1984). In 1985, out of 6 million United States businesses only 2,500 gave support to employee child care needs (National Commission of Working Women, 1986). The quantity and quality of child care is more important today than ever before. The impact on children and families is overwhelming. If we're concerned about breaking the cycle of poverty and if we're concerned about our children, families, and society, we will do everything possible to establish quality programs that are continuously accessible to families, especially to those families in poverty.

References On Page 19

Babies Don't Come With Directions

Ardis Armstrong Young

On March 10, 1987, thanks to the efforts of Millie Riley, AHEA Communications Section Chairperson, a congressional briefing was held in the United States Capitol Building. The briefing was co-sponsored by Senator Jay Rockefeller and Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder. The following statement was made to open the session and introduce testimony from home economists representing 11 different programs being conducted throughout the country to address the problems surrounding adolescent pregnancy.

As your invitation to this briefing stated, "Babies don't come with directions" — and because they don't, our society is involved in a complex and increasingly dangerous dilemma. Today, more than ever before, teenage pregnancy is threatening our children and, consequently, our own hopes for the future.

The facts are appalling:

- Four out of every ten young American women will be pregnant at least once in their teenage years - that's 40 percent.
- More than half of these births are to adolescents who do not have the support of a mate.
- The suicide rate for pregnant teens is estimated to be ten times that of teenagers in general.
- Lack of support for child care and transportation often keeps teen parents from attending school.
- Pregnant teens generally receive no prenatal health care — or receive it too late to prevent infant mortality or permanent disability.
- Two-thirds of all teenage mothers will receive public assistance during the first five years of their children's lives.
- Families started by teenagers now cost the American public 16.5 billion dollars per year!

These facts are not new nor are they going unnoticed. Because of the impact this problem has had on education and human services in every state, the nation's governors saw fit to discuss it at length at their national meeting last month. Mayors attending the National League of Cities conference here recently heard Seattle's Mayor Royer strongly support education to

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prevent teen pregnancies. Bill Moyer and Daniel Moynihan have also drawn a good deal of attention to the problem through skillful use of the mass media. Yes, many fine citizens are concerned and are creating an awareness of this problem.

There is a very large gap, however, between awareness and prevention. Education can bridge that gap, but funding and support at all governmental levels are needed. Through education home economists are taking the lead in helping young people make sound decisions regarding their sexuality and their future. At the same time, they are helping families and society avoid the costly, heartbreaking aftermath of teen pregnancy. But they cannot continue to do this alone — they need your help.

Why are home economists involved in the prevention of teenage pregnancy? Home economists are trained in the sciences: physics, chemistry, economics, psychology, and sociology. They are also students of the humanities: literature, history, and the arts. Home Economics is the only discipline that prepares a person to combine knowledge from all these fields in such a way that it can be applied to the family. Home economists are in the business of empowering families. Historically, they have worked with young people in ways that support family life. Home economists believe in preventing problems and value thoughtful rehabilitation; but because they don't deal in miracle cures, they don't often make the headlines. Theirs are, however, the values and behaviors that make our society work.

The professional organization that represents home economists is the American Home Economics Association, the sponsor of this briefing. It is a network of 26,000 dedicated professionals in teaching, Extension, homemaking, and business. They are actively involved in solving social problems through education.

The American Home Economics Association, acknowledging the serious — and growing — problems generated by teenage pregnancy, has recommitted its membership to the prevention of teenage pregnancy. It is with this renewed commitment that we are here today to share with you the programs being implemented and initiatives being taken by home economists on behalf of us all and to urge your support for our efforts.

Omicron Nu Endows Graduate Study & Research

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Thank You

Continued From Page 17

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