

The Third Exodus

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Introduction

More than 3,500 years ago, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to free them from the oppressive, brutal rule of Pharaoh. This was the first Exodus. The second occurred during World War II when women left their homes to work in jobs that had traditionally been held by men. After the war, women continued to create careers for themselves, although once they had children they often left their occupation to care for the little ones. Slowly, as the years went by, more and more women simply chose to have their babies and then hand them over to someone else to care for as they continued in their careers. Being a homemaker became the epitome of female oppression and bondage. And now, more than 60 years later, women and men are beginning the third Exodus back to the home and family.

Our society has promoted the idea that “You have a job. You have a baby. After your parental leave is up, you find daycare for your baby so you can go back to your job” (Berggren). However, more mothers and fathers are no longer ascribing to this attitude. As my research has shown, more families are now making the decision to have one parent stay at home with the children. These are also people who are well-educated. Catalyst did a study that found 1 in 3 women with M.B.A.’s are not working full time with the intention of staying at home with their children (Wallis et al 2) and a survey taken of 200 stay-at-home dads found that 72% had a bachelor’s degree or higher (Rochlen).

Breaking out of the mold is not easy. With the economy such as it is, there are fears about living on one income, or losing seniority, or leaving behind a successful career knowing that this job will not be waiting for you when you may want to come back. Ann Crittenden, author of The Price of Motherhood, wrote, “Raising children may be the most important job in the world, but you can’t put it on a resume” (qtd. in Robo).

The purpose of my project was to show that not only is a career as a full-time parent satisfying, but also that there are benefits both to the children and the pocketbook. I began with three focus points. The first asked if it would be more economical to stay at home with the children. The second posited the position that a parent could feel personal satisfaction as their child's primary caregiver. My third question evolved into what are the dangers of daycare and could a parent compete with the kind of care given by a professional. It was important to me that each project remains non-confrontational, but educational and inspiring. My hope was that after seeing one or all of my pieces that any parent would feel competent in providing care for their children, confident they were not damaging their financial future, and content if they found that they still needed or wanted to work but more educated about stay-at-home parenting.

The view I took was that each project had to fit together, but also stand alone. As such, I chose to order my projects thus – Poster, Money Brochure, Daycare Flyer, and Poem. The poster introduces my overall thesis of a career in parenting. It could be placed anywhere as simply food-for-thought, but also coupled with the brochure and flyer. It features the title “The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love Isn’t the Peace Corp” and the subtitle “Parenthood – The Career of a Lifetime.” By combining parenting with a career decision right from the beginning, this sets up all the other genres so that the audience will always associate full-time parenting as a chosen occupation.

Whether they are wealthy or poor, every family has money concerns. Dealing with this subject is a bit touchy. However, the money brochure helped outline some of the true costs and risks of a two-income family. By demonstrating that it is possible to live on one income and where the money often goes when a family has to take into consideration daycare, gas and car maintenance, and taxes of the second income, I appeal to the logos of my audience. I also outline some questions for parents to ask themselves so that they may feel more empowered to make an educated decision about the possibility of staying at home without feeling guilty if they find that they simply can't. I also reinforced on the brochure that full-time parenting is a career choice, thus further emphasizing my general thesis. This brochure could be placed in hospitals, churches, schools, anywhere that families gather.

Choosing between the money brochure and the daycare flyer as second and third place was difficult, as they could truly be interchangeable. However, the daycare flyer had the only truly provoking information in it, so I thought it best to have it follow the brochure. It is mostly geared to new parents or parents with very young children as they are the ones who spend the most average daily time in daycare centers. The flyer provides on the front side encouragement to parents as to what is necessary when caring for children and the other outlines some of the dangers found in daycare centers. I would like to see it handed out at Lamaze classes and MOP's meetings so that the flyers would get into the hands of those who have not, perhaps, made a final decision as to who their children's long term care provider will be.

The last piece is a poem, "Job Satisfaction," which compares the daily life of a stay-at-home parent to that of corporate life. By concluding with this piece, I wrap up all the emotional and logical implications of the career choice to parent into one final, positive position. It illustrates some of the basic pleasures that can be found when being with the children all the time, to what was left behind at the office. It could be used in different ways, such as being published in a women's magazine, printed on one of the other projects, or, like I included here, as an inspirational poster like the kind many stores carry.

I believe the ideal situation would be to offer a workshop to expecting, new, or in-transition parents who are considering being the primary caregiver to their children when taking into account how all the different genres could be utilized. The photo poster and poem made into a poster would be very appealing visually and the brochure and flyer would both be available to take home as support materials. Otherwise the poster and poem could also be made into flyers and simply be available along with the other information at churches, schools, or other places where families may gather. The goal is to educate parents on their options and risks when making decisions about their children's future and welfare. By providing them with some basic tools, I would hope that a family that maybe didn't believe that they could choose a career in parenting or wouldn't want to would take second look at their, and their children's, future.

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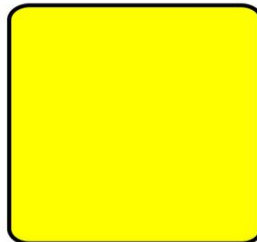
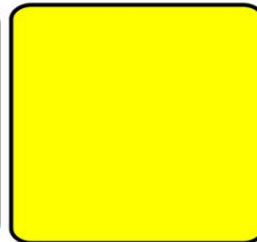
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September 2009.

The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love

One dad simply stated, "I find it weird when people go, 'My God, who's going to care for our kid?' It's your kid - I would start there first." (Rochlen)

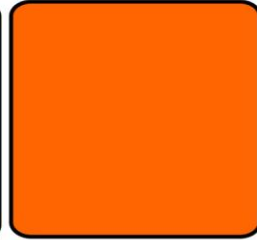
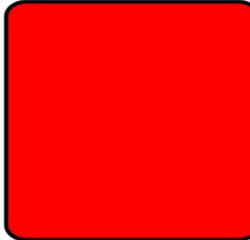
ISN'T THE
PEACE CORP



"This is definitely a case of 'if you want the job done right, you have to do it yourself,'" says Monica Jones, stay-at-home mother of two who has a masters degree in mathematics. (Cortright)



Sociologist, Arlie Hochschild states about the new generation of stay-at-home parents, "What this group is staying home from is the 80-hour-a-week job. [...] They want a work-family balance." (Wallis)



Parenthood - The Career of a Lifetime

Genre That Tells a Story End Notes

Posters are used in many ways – they tell us about new movies that are “coming soon,” advertise sales, and provide affordable artwork for homes. When creating my final poster for my genre that tells a story, I wanted to avoid visual chaos, yet still capture the bedlam that is usually present in family life. I organized the poster so that there is a visual logic in the main title, “The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love,” resting on the base graphic reminiscent of building blocks. The secondary title “Isn’t the Peace Corp” is made subordinate by printing it in smaller, different type. All of this is held up by my foundational point – “Parenthood – The Career of a Lifetime.” Within the primary story is the subplot of pictures and quotes taken from studies and parents’ thoughts on stay-at-home parenting. This structure creates a hierarchy of information that draws the eye and still emphasizes the main point that full-time parenting is a career option.

The U.S. Census Bureau stated in 2002 that there were 189,000 stay-at-home dads and 11 million stay-at-home moms for the 41 million children under 15 living with two parents (qtd. in Robo). As I stated before, these are people with educations, often having degrees higher than a bachelor’s who are choosing to stay home full- or part-time for the purpose of raising their children. As such, I wanted to fashion a poster that is slick, bright, yet still depicts the silliness that encapsulates childhood. When the casual observer first notices the poster, they will see several pictures of goofy looking children in a variety of age groups. The photos illustrate the pathos that children of all ages need a parent active in their lives.

The titling also creates a certain logos by associating the Peace Corp with parenting by drawing the allusion that they are both noble vocations. They may not usually pay well, but those who choose to follow that path love what they do. It implies that a career in parenting is not for the cowardly or faint of heart or anyone lacking a sense of humor. The quotes also create ethos by relating thoughts and opinions of parents who have already chosen this occupation, which are then supported with the citation by an expert explaining why they want this new balance of work and family life.

I chose the visual genre to best illustrate the idea that family life is rarely a pretty portrait taken in an idyllic field with everyone wearing a matching outfit. It is lip piercings and long hair, sleepless nights and sweet baby smiles, brothers and sisters living together and even occasionally getting along. The photographs that are showcased are my own children who are, in many ways, products of multiple lifestyles. We have been a single-parent family, a two-career family, and a stay-at-home parent family. When they have been asked which they prefer, they all liked it more when I was home with them since they felt I had more time to attend to their needs and lives. This is by no means a scientific study; however, I believe that it addresses how a child feels about their quality of life with a stay-at-home parent.

I anticipate children being drawn to the poster first since it is bright, colorful, and has pictures of other children. The squares remind parents and children of building blocks while the titling is bold and childlike. Parents will be curious as well, as it has some of the trendy, geometric appearance that is so in vogue today and is evocative of the help wanted or army signs of old with its titles.

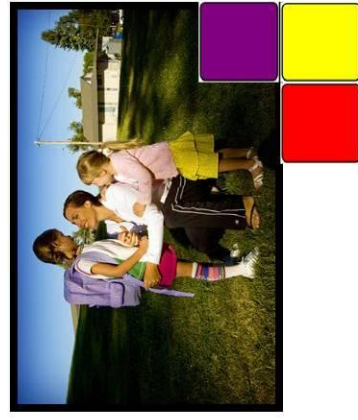
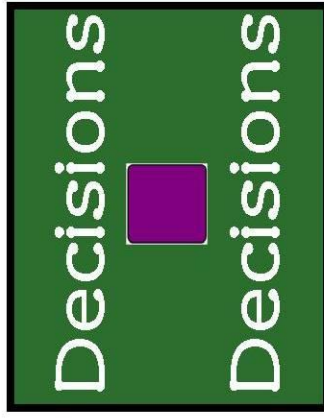
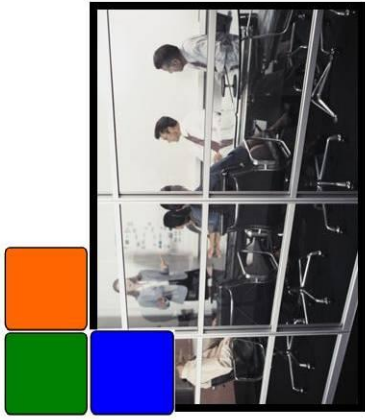
Ultimately, choosing to be a stay-at-home parent is a career choice and my hope is that the poster will advocate this premise. One will never be paid for the long hours and sick days, and the time spent being a parent is work with a job description that changes hourly. The personal reward, however, can be as great. One mother, Elizabeth Lockyear, said this about stay-at-home parenting:

I love staying home because I feel that I am a more integrated person, not as scattered as I once was. I feel as if I value myself far more as an individual and no longer define myself by outside parameters. I'm not my job, my degree, or even my kids' parent – I am Elizabeth and I am all of those things. I like supporting my husband and kids – and I enjoy the support I get in return. (qtd. in SheKnows.com)

A career chosen because of passion is often the most successful. A career chosen because of personal satisfaction often lasts the longest. A career chosen because of the challenge it brings is often the most rewarding. A career in parenting could be the occupation that fulfills all of these criteria.

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What Do I Want To Be When I Grow Up

When most people are asked this question, the first thing to come to mind is usually not "a stay-at-home parent," "a homemaker," or "Mommy/Daddy." Being a parent is a tough job, but often the decision as to who will raise your children is even tougher.

There are many conflicting reports as to what is best for the family. To say that there is only one "right" decision, does not do the conversation justice. To see what others are saying, please take the opportunity to read these articles:

- [Dream Job: Stay-at-Home Mom at www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)
- [Stay-at-Home Parenting: A Smart Financial Move? at www.uivemotlearn.com](http://www.uivemotlearn.com)
- [Staying at home: Pros and cons at www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com)
- [Health alert for working mothers at http://news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)



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Do I Stay or Should I Go

There are many factors families think about when making the decision to pursue a career as a stay-at-home parent or working outside the home. Money, time, relationships, job satisfaction, personal fulfillment. These questions and more often are asked by parents who are thinking about either choice.

Studies have been done to argue for and against staying at home with your children. Two were published in 2003 found that children who spend all day, every day in child-care outside the home had higher levels of stress and aggression than children who stayed at home. These findings by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Institute of Child Development of the University of Minnesota touch on one concern that parents have.



However, is child stress alone enough when faced with the loneliness that parents often feel when constant adult interaction is taken away? When surveyed, this was the top reason most parents chose to go back to work. The blow to the self-esteem that comes when there is no one around to tell them "job well done" can be devastating.

The real debate comes when talking about money. That great green giant that is at the forefront of everyone's mind in today's economy. Can a family make it on one income? Does it cost less for one parent to stay at home and not pay for daycare? We'll talk about that in our next section.

Money Money Money

CPA Maeda Pallas states "There are childcare costs, commuter costs, clothing, car maintenance, food, and then there's the tax bill. Unless you're making more than \$35,000 or so it doesn't pay, financially, to work."

She breaks it down this way for someone making \$2,000 a month with two children:

- FICA, Medicare, SDI and income tax withholdings - \$400
- Childcare - \$800
- Gas - \$100
- Lunches (unless they brown bag it) - \$50



Clothing if they work in a professional office, more time eating out due to less time at home, college and retirement savings - she says all these things soon make the money that is being made nothing more than a number on the deposit slip.

Got Wealth?

According to the BBC reporting on a study done by the University of North Carolina, if you are a working woman among the wealthiest families you are at greater risk for your child's academic performance to be 6% less and for you child to be obese by 5% more than children whose mothers stayed at home.

Counting the Cost

Being without a salary is not mutually exclusive to staying-at-home and raising your children. Many parents who chose to be the primary care-giver also freelance from home, or work part-time when the other parent is home to care for the children. They also pursue hobbies they might not have indulged in be-

fore and turn these endeavors into cottage industries.

If you are now thinking you want to stay at home, you should also consider which parent not only makes more, but who has the better health benefits and retirement plan. Staying-at-home is not just a career for mothers - fathers are now considering it as a viable option for themselves because their wives have the better income and benefits packages.



So Now What?

Money isn't everything. Take some time to ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I prepared to change what I believed about what a career, and career satisfaction, really is?
2. Am I prepared to rethink my expectations about money and what is important?
3. Can I, or my spouse, stay home without putting our family in financial jeopardy?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be ready for the career of a lifetime.



Genre That Provides Information End Notes

In today's world of choices, it is often difficult to decide where to go and what to do. I chose to use a brochure to discuss, primarily, the financial concerns facing families who are considering staying at home with their children. I determined to use this genre based on the fact that I could cover multiple subjects within my theme by following the conventions of the genre. By doing this, I was able to not only address my main subject, but also issue a "call-to-action" more typical of an advertising brochure. My goal in the overall use of the different genres is to touch on each one of my main questions as stated in my proposal with this one covering "Is it more economical to stay at home with the children?"

I approached creating the brochure in the same way I would approach an advertising campaign. I kept the block design that I created in the poster and followed through with my color palette to provide continuity. I then focused on the most consistent misconception of stay-at-home parenting, which is its financial viability. In my opening statement, I touch on one reason why parents should not send their children to daycare using studies by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Institute of Child Development of the University of Minnesota published in 2003 that discovered "kids who spend all day in daycare had higher levels of stress and more aggression than kids cared for at home" (1). Page two of the same article addresses the loneliness that comes from being at home all day with no one to keep the adult company but the children ("Staying at Home: Pros and Cons"). By opening up with a list of basic concerns, I engaged my reader sympathetically using the pathos that we have all faced these questions at one time or another as parents.

The meat of my thesis, however, is money and the bulk of the brochure speaks on that topic. I quoted Maeda Palius about what a real person could expect to spend every month with children in daycare and other job-related expenses. Based upon her calculations, a person making \$2,000 a month will not actually bring home any real disposable income or increase their family's quality of life. Her argument is that unless the earner is making a minimum of \$35,000 a year then it is probably not

financially worth the trouble of having a job (Estrada). These numbers are also assuming that there are two potential wage earners and not a single-parent home.

The next article simply touches on the perils of being a wealthy family in a two-income home. This report by the University of North Carolina tackles the effects on children in the upper income brackets whose mothers choose to continue working outside the home. These children are at a greater risk for not only obesity, but also for lower educational development (“Wealth Alert for Working Mothers”). While I am not convinced that any one thing will ever be solely the mother’s fault, any more than it will be only the father’s fault, I believe that it is important to question the motivation of a two-income family if the secondary income is not truly needed. Is the revenue really necessary, or would the children be better served if an alternative was explored such as a cottage industry, hobbies, etc.? Contributing to this idea of alternatives, but not directly quoted, was an article from Salary.com called “Dream Jobs | Stay-at-Home Mom” (Robo).

Since the project was to be informative in nature, I primarily utilized logos in the creation of the brochure. By listing numbers and percentages, I allow the reader to compare that information with their own budget and lifestyle. Additionally, I used direct quotes to allow the facts to speak for themselves as much as possible. I also created a certain amount of pathos with the pictures of children, family, and money – things that tend to be near and dear to everyone’s heart. I appealed to the reader’s emotions and logic by asking them to re-evaluate their life choices with the questions at the end to consider an alternative. It was important to word these questions in such a way that if anyone responded with a “no” they wouldn’t feel judged, but would just see that the stay-at-home option was not right for their family.

My intended audience is really any parent who is considering a career as the primary caregiver to their children. These people tend to be overworked and overrun with responsibilities and don’t want to spend hours and hours getting basic information. I believe that by making the piece age-neutral that it would appeal to anyone trying to make this decision and I chose my clip-art with this in mind. The images show families in all stages of life, from in utero to older teenagers and is placed in such a way to

enhance the portion of the brochure they are in. For instance, the adult hand holding the toddler hand is in the opening statement where the question is posed “Do I Stay or Should I Go?” The underlining statement is that the child needs you, the decision is yours, but the child needs an adult to hold their hand, will you be that adult? The clip-art with the money built into a house helps clue in my reader that this is also a question of money and that is what we will be talking about in relation to family life. The cover is non-committal with clip-art of an empty office and an empty dining room with simple text stating “Decisions, Decisions” above each photo. I decided to go this direction because it was non-confrontational but still a call-to-action to choose work or home.

The flip-out portion provided an opportunity to not only posit the idea that we all want to be something when we grow up, but also that that something could be a mom or dad who chooses to care for their own children. It is also a way to include the article titles that I used to provide the information for the brochure. In this way, I could encourage my reader to investigate further and feel like they were in control of that study. Parents do not like feeling as if they may be doing the wrong things or even not providing the best things for their children, so it was important that the logos and pathos were informative without being judgmental. By putting the articles at the parent’s fingertips, the flip-out provides an opportunity to become more educated on the subject on their own timeline.

The purpose of the brochure is to inform and inspire. To show, through the facts, someone who wants to be the primary caregiver of their children that it could be within their reach. To demonstrate that choices are available, but that there isn’t necessarily one right decision, just the right decision, one way or another, for their family.

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Your Child's Future



You are the Expert

have become a society that has depended so much on the experts, we no longer feel confident that we can do things for ourselves. However, this does not have to be the case. As your child's creative director, gymnastics instructor, and personal tutor, you have the ability to teach your child to read, write, paint, sculpt, turn somersaults, do yoga, and whatever else a daycare center does.

Young children and babies are easy. They are happy if you talk to them, dance to The Beatles, and knock down block towers. One does not need a masters degree in early childhood development to finger paint, squish Play-Doh, and bake cookies. School aged children just need a parent willing to sit down and read with them, to help them with their multiplication tables.

A career as a stay-at-home parent is an opportunity to become your - and your child's - expert on what is best for your family!

As you consider your child's future, you are, in essence, deciding your fate as well. Choosing a career as a stay-at-home parent is also choosing to create an environment where you can nurture your child's nature. The rewards are often a happier, better-tempered child who, once school begins, is ready to learn.

Proponents of daycare raised children often bring up the statistics that their kids have better vocabularies and are already reading. We



Siblings as Playmates

Older and younger children benefit from the opportunity to play with their own siblings. Tawny Sanabria, a marriage and family counselor, says, "Younger siblings learn a lot from older siblings and model older sibling's behaviors. When they are able to play together... the learning process of the younger siblings is just greatly enhanced."
(qtd. in Ditto)



Daycare...

Your Child's Health and Happiness At Risk

20% of all SIDS occurrences happen in daycare centers. Only 1/3 of providers surveyed routinely put babies on their backs to sleep. (Parenting.com)



Anyone who has ever spent any amount of time with children recognize that they are just little bundles of germs. Thumb sucking, nose picking, coughing on whoever is handy, it's kind of gross under the best of circumstances. Now multiply one child doing those things into a room of twenty and it becomes a regular Petri-dish. Daycare centers geared toward infants and toddlers are more inclined to have a new viral infection every three to four weeks and exhibit symptoms of illness about every two months (DukeHealth.org).



K B T X
television station recently did an exposé on the hidden dangers of daycare centers in

Children, especially the very young, are more susceptible to virus's as a rule. Their little immune systems aren't as mature as an adults. As such, even with terrific sanitation measures, the sheer volume of germs found in daycare centers make it almost impossible to stay well.

Texas. Among the most disturbing incidents: an escaped toddler found alone next to a busy street, an unsecured shelf falling and injuring a child, and crib death. A parent has to ask: Is it worth the risk to send your child to daycare?

"The real trouble with daycare is twofold... It increases the likelihood that kids will be unhappy, and the chronic rationalization of that unhappiness renders adults less sensitive to children's needs," says Mary Eberstadt, author of Home-Along America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Wonder Drugs, and Other Parent Substitutes.

Genre That Persuades End Notes

Do children benefit more or less by being at home with a parent? This was the third question I posited in my research proposal, but I decided to change direction a little bit within my persuasive genre. In the flyer, I demonstrated, on one side, the necessary requirements that a parent needs to fill in order to compete with what a daycare center offers and how siblings playing together is a benefit to the younger child. On the opposite side, I dealt specifically with some of the hazards found in daycare centers. By addressing these subjects, I am also illustrating how a child could benefit by being cared for by a parent rather than a professional.

The design of the flyer is trendy, eclectic, and carries my visual presentation through. It has vivid coloring coupled with appropriate clip-art pictures, which help to convey the message that this project is all about what is best for the children. When I envisioned how it would be distributed, I pictured it being available at churches, MOP's meetings, Lamaze classes, and other family-friendly events. These are all areas that people of all economic and social classes may be in during any stage within the family life. As such, my readership goal was to reach parents of all ages of children, but most specifically families with infants and toddlers, as they are the children who often spend the most time in daycare centers. I believe that the mix of traditional and non-traditional appearance would appeal to a wide audience. The two-sided layout was also very conducive to handling positive and negative information.

On the front page I address parental confidence. One subject that has come up in my own conversations with new parents and working mothers, specifically, is that they do not feel equipped to raise their own children. They have become intimidated by everything they have read in books, magazines, and on the web about brain stimulation, creative development, physical activity, and socialization. Unfortunately, too often this research has parents handing their children over to self-proclaimed experts to bring up rather than believing themselves capable of providing a nurturing environment for their infant, toddler, or child.

The main article addresses the premise that any parent can do what a daycare center does and that it does not take an expert to do what they do in the classroom. One thing that is often touted as a good reason to send your children to daycare is the increased vocabulary and reading capabilities that these children have (Belsky). However, a parent who is involved and engaged is more than capable of teaching a young child their letters, numbers, beginning reading, arts and crafts, and physical play. This is not homeschooling, but instead doing what parents have done since time immemorial and providing their children with the foundational skills they need to succeed in the world: I am working under the assumption that the children will go on to outside education. This section is very much “cheerleading,” providing encouragement so that any parent reading it will feel competent.

Mary Eberstadt, author of Home-Along America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Wonder Drugs, and Other Parent Substitutes, said the reason she wrote this book was to “put children and adolescents front and center [and] to ask what the empirical and extra-empirical record shows so far about this relatively new and unknown world in which many parents, children, and siblings spend many or most of their waking hours apart” (qtd. in Blyth). This is what I wanted to illustrate on the insert on the first page. I believe adding a small quote by Tawny Sanabria about how younger children can benefit from playing with their older siblings (qtd. in Ditto) also supported the idea of having the family at home during the day rather than split up into different locations. This insert, with the clip-art featuring an adorable toddler kissing a pregnant mama’s belly, illustrates that family togetherness can be sweet, loving, and also socially beneficial. The rhetorical message within the insert is that younger children learn from older siblings and siblings who play together are more likely to get along.

I viewed the flipside of the flyer as my one big argument against a daycare nation. Up until now I have been very careful to avoid any confrontational or guilt-ridden content. However, I felt it necessary to bring up some of the bad things that can happen in daycare. This is not to say that children at home don’t get sick, have accidents, or fall victim to poor parental supervision and disciplinary actions, but when parents drop their kids off at a professional care facility, they are anticipating better results than they often

receive. In my first insert, I bullet point two disturbing facts. In an article by *Parenting* titled “Avoiding Daycare Dangers,” they address a study done among a certain number of daycare centers that claims that “20% of SIDS deaths occur in daycare” and “only a third [of daycare centers surveyed] had providers who routinely put babies to sleep on their backs” (Tusa). Considering the fact that the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Back to Sleep Campaign has been going on for years, these were very alarming statistics.

The primary article deals specifically with some of the health issues and accidents that have occurred in daycare centers. The wording I chose is sympathetic while still confronting the supposed safety of daycare centers. Using some basic information from DukeHealth.org, I explain the frequency in which infants and toddlers in daycare not only contract a viral infection, but also exhibit symptoms of being ill. Small children do not have the kind of immune systems that adults, or even older children, have and are therefore more predisposed to sicknesses. The likelihood of getting sick in a daycare center is much higher than if a child is only exposed to their immediate family and friends (Clements). I also touch on an exposé done by KBTX, a television station in Texas, which covered some of the dangers lurking in daycare centers. While not listing everything they found, including outright abuse cases, I illustrated some of the most egregious accidents and cases of neglect such as a toddler escaping from the center only to be found next to a busy street five minutes later and an unsecured shelf falling and injuring a child (Galny).

“The real trouble with daycare is twofold... It increases the likelihood that kids will be unhappy, and the chronic rationalization of the unhappiness renders adults less sensitive to children’s needs,” states Mary Eberstadt (qtd. in Ditto). The footer is my wake-up call to all parents who have read my flyer. There are good daycare centers out there, but sending our children to them isn’t just a matter of safety, it is a matter of the kind of society we are building. Eberstadt makes an excellent point about how adults have become calloused to what children really need. This disconnect is only now being studied with any depth and the jury is still out, but two studies that have been done about children in daycare regularly from an early age has shown that they tend to have more aggressive behavior and higher levels of stress (“Staying at Home: Pros and Cons”).

In concentrating on direct quotes and facts, I utilize logos almost exclusively for my reader appeal. This flyer is for all the left-brain types who want hard data for choosing where to go and what to do. By lining up the expectations of children and parents can cope, I am encouraging them to logically measure their abilities against their misconceptions. When I discuss the dangers and risks, I am demonstrating what parents can expect as possibilities if they choose to put their child or children in daycare.

Whether they have made the career choice to stay at home with their children or not, my hope is that when a parent reads my flyer they come away feeling confident and have conviction; confident that they are capable of raising intelligent, creative, healthy children, and with the conviction that they are the best expert when it comes to the emotional and physical well-being of their child. My aspiration is to also educate parents about some of the risks involved in leaving their children in a professional daycare facility. By including some direct quotes from my resources, I allowed facts to speak for themselves and thus lending extra credence to my flyer while packaging it in an attractive manner. In this way, I expect my flyer to leave a positive impression with those who choose to read it and hopefully provide a call-to-action to any who are dissatisfied with their caregiver situation enough to consider a career as a stay-at-home parent.

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Job Satisfaction



Genre That Expresses an Idea End Notes

“There is not a day that it feels like I go to work. I still feel like I’m getting away with something. There’s such sweetness to that...these are very pleasant days.” These words as quoted by an anonymous stay-at-home dad when surveyed by Dr. Aaron Rochlen in his research “Honey, I’m Home: Study Investigates Psychological Well-Being Being of Stay-at-Home Dads,” and it is one of the opinions that I used as inspiration for my poem “Job Satisfaction.” The other inspiration was voiced by Wendy Schuyler when she said, “I get to see everything, the first step, the first word. We have a lot of fun, we laugh and giggle. I know that we would still have that if I was working, but I don’t know if I would have been the one clapping my hands, telling them ‘You can do it!’” (qtd. in Robo). Mrs. Schuyler makes an excellent distinction that many parents face about the time spent with their children. She points out that while she would still be there and enjoy her children if she were working, there was a good possibility that someone else would be marking her children’s milestones while she was away.

“Job Satisfaction” was created to answer my supposition that a parent could feel the same kind of personal satisfaction as their child’s primary caregiver as they might have felt when they worked outside the home. The message is specific to parenting and does not particularly address those who may also choose to work from home or out of the home when their spouse could take over care of the children. These are still people who made the active choice to have their children be their principal career and the paycheck possibilities are secondary.

My reader goal, then, is any parent with children of any age. Homebound parents will relate to the ethos and pathos of the poem while working parents may connect more to the pathos. Stay-at-home parents will understand that it speaks from experience, someone who has “been there, done that” feels good about their decision to stay home. The poem focuses on familiarity with the day-to-day existence that a stay-at-home parent could relate to while educating working parents on how a successful home parent can feel. Working parents will experience the joy a stay-at-home parent can feel about choosing a career as caregiver and the fulfillment that those parents can find. Mothers and fathers will feel that it

speaks in their voice since it is gender-neutral. Parents with babies or toddlers or school-aged children or any combination thereof will relate to or look forward to the different stages in life as described in the poem.

The poem itself is visually and audibly appealing. It attracts the eye because the first three lines of each stanza begin with the same letter. These lines specifically focus on the direct advantages and joys of being home with one's own children. The fourth line in the first five stanzas then compares that life to the working one left behind. I signal this difference with a letter change at the beginning of the line. I chose to do this because it created visual drama in a medium that can either be read silently or aloud and provided some audiological interest. I also subverted my pattern by changing the psychology in the fifth stanza and addressing the items that a stay-at-home parent may miss out on and in the final line, I express the satisfaction that the parent still feels in their job.

In addition to the first letters, I used an alternating rhyming pattern for the first five stanzas by matching the sounds of the second and fourth lines to create a relationship and comparison between stay-at-home parenting and working outside the home. In the sixth, and final, stanza I changed tactics by using couplets to indicate that this was not only the end, but also the main point. While keeping with my pattern of first letters, the couplets created greater verbal impact. The imagery in the final stanza shows a parent who truly enjoys being their child's caregiver. Ultimately, the poem communicates joy – joy in a chosen vocation and that is a common goal among any adult.

The poem also battles some of the stereotypes that stay-at-home parents still face. Heidi Brennen, a stay-at-home mom, public policy advisor, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Family and Home Network, states, “Mothers who are at home are not 50's throwbacks. We tend to portray at home mothers as unmotivated, depressed, uneducated and all wealthy. It's not true” (McGraw). Men face even worse criticism than women when they choose to be the primary caregivers. Stay-at-home parents still often encounter the “bon-bon and soap operas” image for mothers and “unemployed and un-masculine” for fathers (Worford), or even the worst stereotype for moms and dads – they are just lazy. The poem,

then, addresses some of the reasons why a parent enjoys being home with their children, some of the work involved, and the fact that they don't miss the office, store, or place of business.

The message is that someone, anyone, could enjoy being a full-time parent and make their kids their career. It remains non-confrontational in that it doesn't pass judgment on those to choose to work, but offers, instead, a peek into an attitude that perhaps a working parent has never glimpsed about an alternative life choice. And, if there are parents or soon-to-be parents who are undecided as to whether they should work or care for their children, it provides food for thought about the 'day-in-the-life' of a stay-at-home parent. It expresses the kind of fulfillment that comes from doing something that they love and that this is not dependent on a paycheck or accolades. What is important is that a career is chosen based on passion, not duty.

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