

**A** Nearly half of the children under 12 years of age at the time of the latest survey were cared for in their own homes. Only a small percentage received group care.

In February 1965, 47 percent of the children under 6 years of age were looked after in their own homes and 31 percent were cared for in someone else's home. Twenty-two percent were cared for by other arrangements, but only 6 percent received group care in child care centers or similar facilities. Of the children 6 to 11 years of age, 47 percent were looked after in their own homes, 11 percent received care in someone else's home, and about 42 percent were cared for by other arrangements. At least 8 percent of the older children looked after themselves, and only 1 percent received group care.

**Q** *Is a mother more inclined to seek employment if female relatives are members of her household?*

**A** Yes, particularly if she has young children and a female relative is available to look after them during the mother's absence from home.

In families with children under 6 years of age, 39 percent of the mothers with husband present worked in March 1971 when a female relative lived with the family. The proportion was only 30 percent for mothers who did not have such assistance.

#### MOTHERS WITH HUSBAND PRESENT IN THE HOME

**Q** *What proportion of working mothers are from homes in which the husband is present?*

**A** Eighty-three percent as of March 1971.

About 10.1 million working mothers were from homes where the husband was present. The other 2.1 million were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands for other reasons.

**Q** *Of all mothers from families in which the husband is present, what proportion work?*

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**A** Forty percent as of March 1971. The proportion was 60 percent among other mothers.

In homes where the husband was present, only 30 percent of the mothers with children under 6 years worked. Mothers who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely to work than other mothers. In March 1971, 48 percent of the mothers in these categories worked, even when there were young children in the family.

**Q** *How much does her husband's income influence a mother's decision to work?*

**A** Mothers are much more likely to work outside the home when their husbands' incomes are low than when they are high.

In families where the husbands' incomes were less than \$3,000 in 1970, the proportions of mothers in paid employment in March 1971 were 52 percent for those with children 6 to 17 years of age only and 36 percent for those with children under 6 years. When the husbands' incomes were \$10,000 or more, the proportions were 43 and 22 percent, respectively.

**Q** *How many working mothers have husbands with incomes below \$3,000?*

**A** Some 638,000, or about 1 out of every 16 working mothers with husband present in 1971. About 373,000 of these mothers had children 6 to 17 years of age only; the other 265,000 had children under 6 years of age.

#### EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

**Q** *Is a mother's decision to work part time or part year influenced by the ages of her children?*

**A** Yes. Among working mothers with husband present the proportion who work full time the year round is lowest among those with children under 3 years of age.

About 32 percent of working mothers with husband present worked 35 hours or more a week and 50 to 52 weeks during 1970. Forty percent of mothers with children 6 to 17 years of age only, but only 16 percent of those with

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children under 3 years of age, were full-time year-round workers.

**Q** *How do the occupations of working mothers compare with those of other women workers?*

**A** Occupations of working mothers are similar, in general, to those of all women workers.

Among every 100 working mothers with husband present, there are 32 clerical workers, 22 service workers, 15 factory operatives, 16 professional workers, 8 sales workers, and 7 in other occupations.

#### SUGGESTED REFERENCES

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\*\* Marital and Family Characteristics of Workers, March 1970. Special Labor Force Report No. 130. 1971.

\*\* Children of Working Mothers, March 1971. Summary, Special Labor Force Report. March 1972.

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\*\*\* Day Care: An Employer's Plus. March 1971.

\* Day Care Services: Industry's Involvement. Bull. 296. 1971. 25 cents.

\* Child Care Services Provided by Hospitals. Bull. 295. 1970. 25 cents.

\* 1969 Handbook on Women Workers. Bull. 294. 1969. \$1.50.

\* Available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

\*\* Available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20212.

\*\*\* Available from the Women's Bureau, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210.

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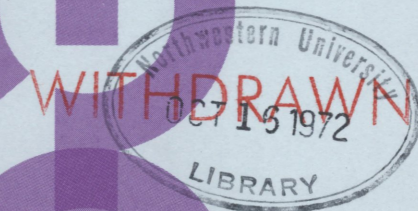
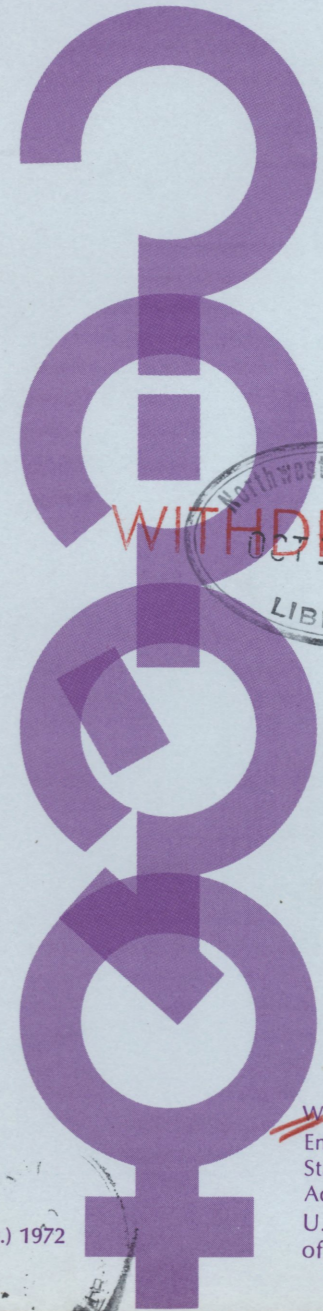
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# WHO ARE THE WORKING MOTHERS



Leaflet 37 (Rev.) 1972

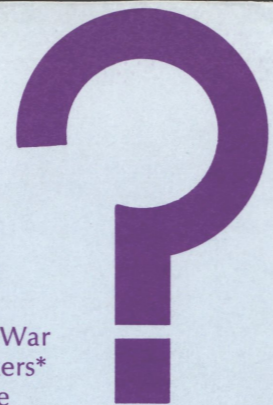
Women's Bureau  
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The increase in the employment of women with children under 18 years of age continues, although at a somewhat slower pace in 1971 than in 1970. Since the period immediately preceding World War II, the number of women workers\* has more than doubled, but the number of working mothers\*\* has increased eightfold. Four out of 10 mothers were in the labor force in March 1971 as compared with 3 out of 10 in 1960 and less than 1 out of 10 in 1940.

Among the 31.7 million women who were in the labor force in March 1971 were 12.2 million mothers. Nearly 7.9 million of these working mothers had children 6 to 17 years of age only (none under 6), 2 million had children 3 to 5 years of age (none under 3), and 2.3 million had children under 3 years of age. These mothers had a total of 25.7 million children, of whom 5.6 million were under 6.

About one-sixth of the working mothers were raising children in homes left fatherless by death, divorce, or separation. Among such mothers, the compulsion to seek work is obviously great. Their earnings are essential to the maintenance of their families. In 1970, 33 percent of all families headed by a woman lived in poverty; many other such families had incomes barely above the poverty line.

Recent Federal legislation may have marked effects on the number of working mothers in the future. The amendment to the Social Security Act which requires welfare mothers with school-age children to take training and employment (mothers with children under school age may volunteer) may increase those in gainful employment. And the income tax deduction for child care available under the Revenue Act of 1971 to full-time working parents; with children under 15 years of age, may make it economically feasible for additional mothers to utilize their skills and talents in the labor market. Deduction is



allowed for "employment-related" expenses up to \$400 a month for services in the household and outside child care expenses. The full deduction may be available for joint or single parent annual incomes up to \$18,000, after which the allowable deduction decreases; it phases out at \$27,600.

As background material for those engaged in studies or discussions pertaining to working mothers, the following questions and answers provide information on the status of working mothers and on the factors that motivate them to seek paid employment.

#### NUMBER AND PROPORTION

**Q** *Of all women workers, what proportion have children under 18 years of age?*

**A** Almost two-fifths (39 percent) at the time of the most recent survey in March 1971.

Mothers constituted more than one-third of the total woman labor force in 1960. Their proportion of the total was only a tenth in 1940.

**Q** *How does the present number of working mothers compare with earlier years?*

**A** The 12.2 million working mothers in March 1971 was the highest number ever recorded.

Only 8 million mothers were in the Nation's labor force in 1960; only 1.5 million, in 1940.

**Q** *Of all mothers in the population, what proportion work outside the home?*

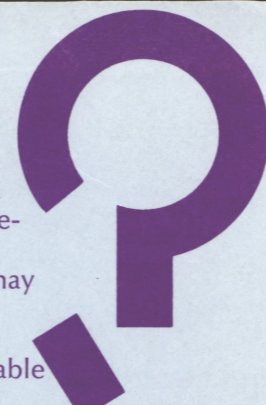
**A** More than two-fifths (42 percent).

By comparison, only three-tenths were in the labor force in 1960; only a tenth, in 1940.

#### AGE

**Q** *What is the median age of working mothers?*

**A** Thirty-seven years, only slightly below the 39-year median age for all women workers.



Nearly one-third of all working mothers are 25 to 34 years old, and slightly more than one-third are 35 to 44 years old.

#### MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

**Q** *How many working mothers have children under 6 years of age?*

**A** More than 1 out of 3.

In March 1971, 4.3 million working mothers had children under 6 years of age, and about half of these workers had children under 3 years of age.

**Q** *Does the presence of young children in the family affect a mother's decision whether to seek employment outside the home?*

**A** Yes. The percentage of mothers who work is relatively low in families with young children.

Among families with children under 3 years of age, only 27 percent of the mothers were in the labor force in March 1971. For mothers with children between 3 and 5 years of age (none under 3 years), the proportion was 38 percent. For those with children 6 to 17 years of age only, it was 52 percent.

**Q** *Why do some mothers with young children work outside the home?*

**A** Usually because they need the money.

Many families cannot manage without the mother's earnings. Of all working mothers with children under 6 years of age in March 1971, about half were either widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands or had husbands whose incomes in 1970 were below \$7,000.

#### MOTHERS OF MINORITY RACES \*

**Q** *How many working mothers are there of minority races?*

**A** About 1.7 million as of March 1971.

Some 968,000 working mothers of minority races had children 6 to 17 years of age only, and 773,000 had children under 6 years of age.

\* Includes all races other than white.



**Q** *How does the labor force participation rate of minority mothers compare with that of white mothers?*

**A** It is considerably higher, especially when there are young children in the family.

Sixty-one percent of minority mothers with children 6 to 17 years of age only and 47 percent of those with children under 6 years of age were in the labor force in March 1971. The comparable proportions for white mothers were 51 and 29 percent, respectively.

#### CHILDREN OF WORKING MOTHERS

**Q** *How many children have working mothers?*

**A** In March 1971, 25.7 million.

About 5.6 million, or 22 percent, of these children were under 6 years of age; the remaining 20 million were between the ages of 6 and 17.

**Q** *How many children of working mothers are in fatherless homes?*

**A** About 4.1 million in March 1971, or 16 percent of all children with working mothers.

Among families headed by women workers, there were 824,000 children under the age of 6 and 3.3 million 6 to 17 years of age. In families where the father was present and the mother was in the labor force, there were 4.8 million children under 6 years and 16.8 million 6 to 17 years.

**Q** *What proportion of children of working mothers are in families with very low incomes?*

**A** One out of twenty in March 1971.

Children of working mothers in families with 1970 incomes below \$3,000 numbered 1.3 million; 394,000 were under the age of 6, and 881,000 were 6 to 17 years old.

#### CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

**Q** *What arrangements do working mothers make for the care of their children?*



\* Beginning January 1967, "workers" or "labor force" refers to persons 16 years of age and over who are either employed or seeking work. Previously it referred to persons 14 years of age and over.  
\*\* "Mothers," as used in this leaflet, refers to women with children under 18 years of age, unless otherwise designated.