

Tekst 5

Editorial

Nanny doesn't know best

- 1 **I**n the age of the working woman, guilt goes with motherhood as surely as apple pie. Two thirds of women are back at work within a year of giving birth, and it is a safe bet that most of them have felt a pang when the moment came to leave the infant in the care of others. It does not take much to reactivate these guilty feelings. However mothers juggle work and children, they are 5.
- 2 Maternal agony will scarcely be abated by a government-funded study on the effects of work patterns and childcare on 12,000 children. *Working Mums* claims to show that the children of mothers who returned to full-time work within 18 months of birth, and who relied solely on unpaid care (for example, a grandparent, friend or neighbour), were likely to suffer “significant detrimental effects”. Children who attended a day nursery, by contrast, had “better cognitive outcomes” than those whose mothers stayed at home. The authors recommend “inexpensive and high quality childcare”, but that is easier said than done. Leaving the baby with granny is for many women a cheap and reliable solution. The type of childcare the authors rate most highly – the nursery – is certainly stimulating, but by no means inexpensive.
- 3 The authors do not explain why the bad effects of relying solely on grandparents are more marked higher up the social scale. Such grandparents expect to exercise more choice than their predecessors. Could it be that these affluent grandparents resent being left in charge of the baby, but acquiesce in childcare out of a sense of duty?
- 4 What this research suggests is that each family finds a combination of work and childcare to suit its particular circumstances. The state should interfere in this process as little as possible. It is good policy, for instance, to let parents keep most of what they earn, so that mothers can choose whether or when to resume full-time work, and can afford good childcare. It is bad policy to confiscate a third or more of quite modest family incomes, while devising ever more complicated, means-tested subsidies for state-approved forms of childcare. The government, of course, prefers the latter policy. So much the worse for families.

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- 1p 5 Which of the following fits the gap at the end of paragraph 1?
A bound to make mistakes
B not spared from judgement
C their own harshest critics
- 1p 6 Which of the following conclusions is in line with the contents of paragraph 2?
The report *Working Mums*
A favours in actual fact the more costly type of childcare.
B illustrates the favourable effects of children being looked after by relatives.
C shows the positive cognitive development of children in their mother's care.
D suggests a number of possibilities to ease the working mother's burden.
- 1p 7 "Could it ... of duty?" (einde alinea 3)
Welke uitkomst van het onderzoek probeert de schrijver met deze zin te verklaren?
- 1p 8 What, according to paragraph 4, do the writer's recommendations amount to?
1 Allowing parents to set up their own childcare centres.
2 Creating more part-time jobs for mothers.
3 Reconsidering the tax system.
4 Revising government support for childcare.
A Only 1.
B Only 2.
C Only 1, 2 and 3.
D Only 2 and 3.
E Only 3 and 4.
F Only 2, 3 and 4.