

1967

## EC67-1194 Mothers at Work

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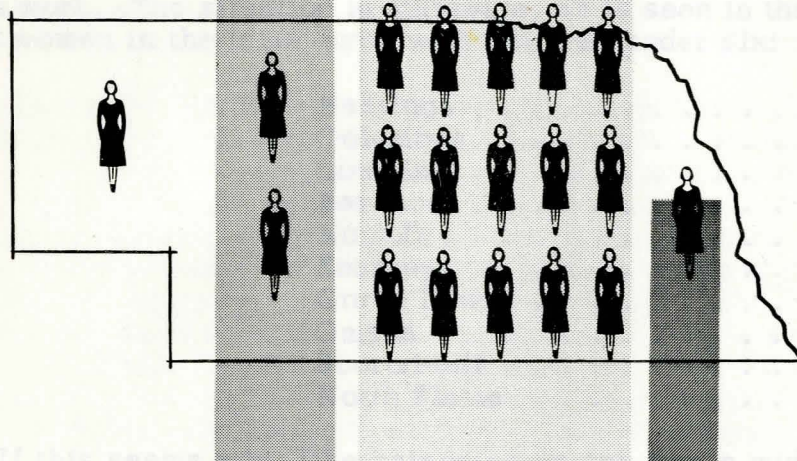
E.C. 67-1194

# Mothers at Work

By Miss Clara N. Leopold  
Agricultural Extension Home Management Specialist

Much has been said about the variety of roles performed by today's homemaker as she goes about her daily chores. But did you know that in addition to their child-bearing and home-making duties, well over 23 million women also work at jobs outside the home? And what of these working wives whose busy schedules leave them with little time for their own needs?

Each day, over 23 million women are faced with the problem of how to balance their home and work responsibilities. The following percentages\* of various types of working women are shown:



29.5%  
25.5%  
23.7%  
22.7%  
22.6%  
21.5%  
21.3%  
19.4%  
18.2%  
16.7%

If this seems like a tall order, it is. In a mid-western government agency who have studied working women's problems, they found that it is less difficult to combine a career with a family than it was 10 years ago. For one thing, a lot of modern-looking tools have been developed to make technical efficiency; and for another, daily living is far more convenient and easier to be.

Many working mothers find that more than half the number of part-time workers have been added since the last 10 years than has the number of full-time workers. In fact, the number of women who work only part of the year is about a third of the total number of women workers—those who work full time.

## MOTHERS at WORK

There are probably a number of reasons for this trend toward part-time work, according to the President of the Life Insurance Institute. Among these are:

Part-time work often can be tailored to fit home-making and family schedules. And many women take advantage of this opportunity to enlarge their bit of service as well as to add the family treasury.

Moreover, women at home often don't receive a second full-time salary.

Part-time work is also attractive because it allows women to keep many women in school, while at the same time, it helps them to pay for their own education. In fact, many women who work part-time are able to pay for their own education. The Labor Dept. points out that many women who work part-time because they can't find a full-time job.

EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING  
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN J. L. ADAMS, DIRECTOR



# Mothers at Work

By Mrs. Clara N. Leopold  
Agricultural Extension Home Management Specialist

Much has been said about the variety of roles performed by today's homemaker as she goes about her daily chores. But did you know that in addition to their child-bearing and housekeeping duties, well over 20 million wives also work at jobs outside the home? And that recent statistics disclose that 7.5 million of these working wives have children under eighteen?

Each day, one-third of Nebraska mothers with children under eighteen go off to full-time work. The situation is statewide, as is seen in the following percentages\* of married women in the labor force with children under six:

Hastings . . . . .	29.8%
Columbus . . . . .	26.5%
Lincoln . . . . .	25.7%
Beatrice . . . . .	22.7%
Norfolk . . . . .	22.6%
Kearney . . . . .	21.5%
Grand Island . . . . .	21.3%
Omaha . . . . .	19.4%
Scottsbluff . . . . .	18.2%
North Platte . . . . .	16.7%

If this seems a bit like balancing on one toe in mid-air, government agencies who have studied working mothers reassuringly note that it is less difficult to combine a career with a family today than it was, say, 30 years ago. For one thing, a lot of time-consuming tasks have been simplified by modern technical efficiency; and for another, daily living is far more informal than it used to be.

Many working mothers prefer part-time hours. The U.S. Department of Labor points out that more than half the part-time workers in the country are women. Moreover, the number of part-time women workers has increased more rapidly over the last 10 years than has the number of full-time women workers. And as the number of women who work only part of the year is added to those who work full time, the total amounts to a majority of women workers--three out of five.

There are probably a number of reasons for this trend toward part-time work, according to the President of the Life Insurance Institute. Among them are:

...Part-time hours often can be tailored to fit homemaking and family schedules, and many women take advantage of this opportunity to enlarge their orbit of activities as well as to aid the family treasury.

...Money needs at home often don't require a second full-time salary.

...Demands for increased educational attainment keep many women in school, while at the same time requiring them to make increased educational outlays. About one in five women working part-time is a student, according to the Labor Department. Most women work part-time, or part of the year, because they prefer not to take a full-time job. The Labor Department found that fewer than one in six women worked only part-time because they couldn't find a full-time job.

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\*U.S. Census 1960



## Why Do Women Want Jobs Outside the Home?

The reasons are many and may include one or more of these:

1. Economic necessity--the husband, for various reasons, is unable to support the family.

2. Sense of accomplishment and self-realization -- some homemakers find themselves bored, particularly when the children are older and no longer depend completely upon their parents. This results from the trend of earlier marriage and childbearing in the post war years. Half of all women marry shortly after 20, have the last child before 26, and are ready to look for work in their early 30's when children are off to school. Since time-saving appliances now give a woman 40 extra days a year, compared with her counterpart of 1890, she has more free time. Many women want to invest this time so as to feel needed and to make a contribution to society.

3. Provide extras--advantages and things which might not be possible with the husband's income alone, such as a home or a larger home, a second car, better clothes, college fund for the children, to pay medical bills, and the like.

4. Everybody's doing it--since three out of five of all women are employed outside the home it is very likely that some of her friends are employed and she feels left out.

5. To assert independence--she feels her husband pulls the purse strings too tightly so she gets a job to prove she is not as dependent on him as he thinks she is!

6. Service motivation--special desire to serve the sick, the aged, the homeless, the handicapped, the disadvantaged.

## A Working Mother's Problems

The biggest problem the 7.5 million working mothers face is providing for care of their children during their absence.

## Who Cares for the Children When Mother Works?

To find the answer to this question, a research study was conducted by Mrs. Sally Van Zandt, instructor in Human Development & the Family at the University of Nebraska.

"Many people assumed that in Nebraska there were plenty of relatives to take care of children, and that there was no need for day care services or centers," notes Mrs. Van Zandt.

But her study found that non-relatives are in charge of about half of the children who must be cared for regularly during the day by someone other than their mothers. Nationally, this figure is only 20%. Neighbor care is typical in Nebraska, she found.

Group care by non-relatives (commonly called day care centers) account for some 2% of the children, while relatives took care of one-fourth of the children.

Supervision by neighbors is not necessarily bad if the child can get individual care. However, Mrs. Van Zandt emphasizes, it is the responsibility of the parents to check closely into the kind of attention given their children and the qualification of the people in whose care they are left.



The State Board of Welfare licenses the building where children of two or more families are kept, but has no specifications for training of the personnel.

The large number of Nebraska mothers working full-time versus part-time (92% compared with the national average of 75%) indicated a need for more group care centers or some other way to face the problem of providing proper care.

Mrs. Van Zandt also suggests that each Nebraska community needs to examine how its children are cared for more closely, as this is a community problem which each must solve. For example, if young girls regularly care for children, a community could see that the high school offered child care courses.

In the state as a whole, 11% of the children are in the care of under eighteen year-old brothers and sisters, but Mrs. Van Zandt thinks the number may be even higher as some mothers may have been reluctant to say children were caring for children.

Youths who are forced to give up outside activities because they must watch younger brothers and sisters may develop negative attitudes toward them, she cautions.

Employers also become involved because studies show that mothers are more successful on the job if they can leave their children in the hands of competent non-relatives. However, few employers are willing to take responsibility for helping mothers make adequate arrangements. Some even judge a mother's ability to find proper care for her child as a measure of her ability on the job.

More adequate child care arrangements would make it possible for mothers to take jobs for which they are better qualified, the study suggests.

While only a small number of children are in day care centers, all Nebraska facilities are filled to capacity.

Due to the shortage of trained nurses, two hospitals in Lincoln established their own day care facilities to encourage former nurses to re-enter the profession.

The problems for both communities and mothers will increase, Mrs. Van Zandt feels, if the projected rise in the number of working mothers materializes.

Providing adequate child care will be even more crucial in the future for out-state cities, where the percentage of mothers in the work force is higher than in Lincoln and Omaha. Two communities, Scottsbluff and Omaha, have already taken steps in this direction by establishing day care centers.

Mrs. Van Zandt makes the following recommendations for Nebraska day care:

- That existing state licensing laws and standards be re-evaluated and changed, as is now being done.

- That educational requirements be established for day care operators which would lead to formal certifications of operators to help ensure that qualified people were caring for children.

- And that a state consultant be hired to assist day care operators and to give them research information to help make them more effective. This person could also work with individuals throughout the state who care for children.



## Does the Working Mother Slight her Children in their Training and Affection?

One of the most familiar arguments against a mother taking a job is that she will have less time to be with her child of pre-school or any age, and thus impair the mother-child relationship. This is not necessarily true; in fact, results of research concerning working mothers would suggest that this is a false assumption. It is the quality of the relationship which makes the difference. If parents use available guidance principles, one hour of planned companionship may be worth more than a much longer haphazard period.

## How Does her Husband Feel about her Working?

Some men resent a wife's employment, considering it a blow to their pride. This can also be cause of disagreements over how the wife's income is to be spent.

## The Family May Increase Its Standard of Living

Sometimes the wife works to give the family more income. This can lead to difficulties of adjustment if she later has to quit work because of illness or pregnancy. This is a common mistake of newly marrieds who quickly feel the loss of income when the first baby arrives and the mother can no longer work.

## Her Job Outside the Home May Raise Family Relations Problems.

Because she is physically and emotionally exhausted from her work the mother may find that her job raises family relations problems. How will this effect her role as a wife and mother?

## 6. Working Wives May Find it Actually Costs Them in Dollars and Cents

Taxes and job related expenses eat up a third to a half of the average woman's paycheck. There are income taxes and Social Security to pay. Her salary, added to her husband's, may throw the family's income into a higher tax bracket. Then add union dues, transportation, uniforms and/or extra clothes, and beauty aids, household help, sitters or day care fees, more ready-to-serve and convenience foods, and frequent meals out. All this should be carefully worked out ahead of time to determine whether or not it really pays for mother to work. (See Worksheet on page 10.)

## Plan A System of Short Cuts

A woman who is employed outside her home has to learn to do a lot of managing of family, finances, time, and activities. Lack of time is a working wife's biggest problem. For the working woman, the outside job usually takes 9 to 12 hours of her day. Then if she sleeps eight hours there are four to seven hours a day left in which to do the things at home that are required of her. She finds herself responsible (although she may not be doing all of the actual work) for:

- Meal planning and preparation, plus grocery buying.
- Laundry sorting, washing, hanging, starching and ironing.
- Clothing purchases, repair; maybe construction or making over.
- Household maintenance - scrubbing, dusting, cleaning, pick-up.
- Proper care of out-of-season clothing and bedding.
- Guests and entertaining.

Housekeeping and home work must be simplified. To get everything done without pressure, confusion and frustration the working wife needs to build up a system of short-cuts for regular household routines. Here are some tips to help turn the trick:



## Simplify Housekeeping

... Don't put off jobs you dislike. Worry takes the same amount of time and energy as work. Get the task done and out of the way. You'll feel better.

... Analyze your house for its convenience and inconvenience points. Get it organized so that there are no recurring emergencies to consume time just when you have none to spare.

... If your clothes are hard to find in your closet, install a light; divide the space for different length garments; sort, box and label hats, shoes, gloves. (See Storage Improvement - E.C. 11-26-2.\*)

... Replace hard-to-iron ruffles and materials with plain or "no-iron" ones. (See Make Short Work of Ironing - E.C. 66-1193.\*) You might even consider sending the bulk of the household laundry to a commercial laundry.

... Have a place for everything. From cellar to garret try to have a place for everything and then put it there as soon as you are through with it. The habit of being orderly is good for your morale. It eliminates those terrific bouts of straightening and clearing. Just be neat!

... Take time to pursue new shortcuts. Be on the alert for new ideas. (See Nebraska Extension Circular 65-1176, Corner Cutters for Busy Homemakers.\*)

... Put away dustcatchers and bric-a-brac.

... Protect floors, woodwork and furniture with wax or lacquer.

... Slipcover light-colored upholstery.

... When you redecorate or buy, consider washable wallpapers, plastic coverings, dual purpose furniture.

... Develop a flexible work schedule.

... Take advantage of modern labor-saving devices for those boring routine jobs. Instead of scrubbing the kitchen floor, select a wax that cleans and waxes in one swoop. You'll save 20 to 30 minutes. For large floors rent an electric washer-dryer that cleans and sucks up surplus water. Or try an electric polisher-scrubber.

## Simplify Meals

... Plan menus that do not require endless peeling, slicing and fussing over. (See Do Ahead Meals - E.C. 63-930\*.) Prepare tonight's dessert as you get breakfast; tomorrow's stew as you get dinner.

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\*Available from any Nebraska County Extension Office



... Invest in a cookbook or two designed especially to save time and energy.

... Stock your cupboards so you need not go to the store for emergency shortages. Have a handy shopping list on which to jot down your needs as they arise. Buy staple supplies in quantity enough so that you are not forever running out -- flour, sugar, canned goods, cleansers, soap, toilet and bath tissues.

... Use stove-to-table dishes -- casseroles, applicances at the table.

... Omit separate plates and extras, without sacrificing elements of gracious living.

... Use plastic and paper covers; disposable place mats and napkins.

... Use paper liners to muffin tins for cupcakes to eliminate cutting cake and to keep cake moist.

... Use ready-mix sauces, biscuits, cakes.

### Efficient Equipment

... A one-hour timer costs very little, is portable and aids in timing jobs, taking a ten-minute snooze (and it is worth it!) or let the children know when they have played long enough. Or set the alarm clock and place it where it can be heard.

... Sharp knives are less dangerous than dull ones. A good electric sharpener is easy to use.

... A combination chalk-cork board as a bulletin board. On the cork side tack up family schedule, special reading materials you want to share, newest pictures of friends or for children, mail from an absent member of the family. The chalk side serves as a place to write messages to one another, list jobs to be done that day, and to be erased when they are completed.

... Pressure sauce pans save time.

... Electric mixer and/or blender saves energy and time.

... Have a good eggbeater, rotary peeler, standard measuring cups and spoons.

... An automatic clothes dryer saves 40 miles of walking per year--to say nothing of the lifting, carrying and hanging.

... An automatic waste disposer eliminates messy garbage and garbage cans.

... You would be justified to add some labor saving equipment that will save you time and energy. A dishwasher, for example, can save 30 to 40 minutes a day--to say nothing of sanitation, and the difficulty of getting the youngsters to get to the dishwashing before going to play!

### Get the Family to Help Share Responsibility

... Divide the work: Use a work schedule that is posted so each member of the family knows what his job is and when it is to be done.

... Have a family counsel for planning and decision making.

... Do things together for training and strength.



## One Last Word

"Once you take a job, avoid rough spots in your marriage by obeying these hints: Agree in advance on the division of home responsibilities--but don't make a butler out of your husband; reassure him that his happiness comes first; continue to show an interest in your husband's job; retain your old friends, while making new social contacts on the job; decide how your income will fit into the family budget; and don't let your standard of living climb so high that it would be a serious jolt if you had to stop working."\* Above all preserve your own and your family's health and well being. No monetary return from a job can take the place of health and happiness.

## Resources and Suggested Reading

"Working Women--who are they?" - Institute of Life Insurance, Women's Division, 277 Park Avenue, New York 10017.

"The Case Against Full-time Motherhood," - Redbook Magazine, March 1965.

"Where Are the Children - while mother is at work?" - Farm, Ranch & Home Quarterly, Spring 1966. Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agriculture & Home Economics, Lincoln, Nebraska 68503.

So You Want to Be a Working Mother, by Lois Benjamin, McGraw-Hill 1966.

"The Working Wife & Mother," Kiplinger's Changing Times, July 1965.

"Mother's at Work," - Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.

"Should Mothers Work?" by Benjamin Spock, M.D., Ladies Home Journal.

Sixpence in Her Shoe, by Phyllis McGinley (Paperback) Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 750 Third Ave., New York 10017. (Dell No. 8007 - 75¢).

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedman (paperback) Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 750 Third Avenue, New York 10017. (Dell No. 2498 - 75¢)

How to Manage Your Money by Robert J. Hastings, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee 1965. (\$1.50)

"Estimating Net Income of Working Wives," Family Economics Review, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. March 1962.

"The Family Today," 1960. White House Conference on Children & Youth.

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\*How to Manage Money, by Robert J. Hastings, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn.



WORKSHEET FOR ESTIMATING WIFE'S NET INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

GROSS INCOME . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSES:

1. Income taxes (Federal, State and local) . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Social Security tax . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Contributions to other retirement plans . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
4. Meals and snacks at work . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. Transportation to and from work . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Care of children . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
7. Transportation on job (not reimbursed) . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
8. Special work clothing (including care). . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
9. Dues to unions, professional and business  
organizations, employee clubs, etc. . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
10. Professional and business publications . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
11. Professional and business meetings, conventions . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
12. Educational expense related to employment . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
13. Tools and licenses required for the job . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
14. Gifts and flowers for fellow employees . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
15. Parties, special meals with fellow employees . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
16. Extra spent for general-wear clothing (including  
care). . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
17. Extra spent for personal care . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
18. Extra spent for paid help for household tasks . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_
19. Other expenses for specific jobs . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NET INCOME (gross income minus total expenses) . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_