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**Emlen, A. C. (1998). From a parent's point of view: Flexibility, income, and quality of child care. Paper presented at the SEED 2000 meeting "Child Care in the New Policy Context", NIH Campus. Bethesda, Maryland.**

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In studies of quality from a parent's point of view:

- Parents were able to make specific judgements that reliably distinguish conceptually distinct facets of quality of care.
- Parents were predominantly positive about their child care, with 21% reporting care as being Perfect, 48% as Excellent, 24% as Good, 6% as Fair, and 1% as Poor, Bad, or Awful.
- Parents tended to have a more favorable assessment of child care quality than trained observers.
- Reported quality of care had no relationship to household income.
- Household income was significantly positively associated with family flexibility and inversely with caregiver flexibility.
- Quality of care had no relationship to the type of child care utilized, to the gender of the child, or to the length of time the child has been in the arrangement.
- 56% of the variance of quality of care can be attributed to having a flexible caregiver and lack of problems balancing work and family.
- Work, family, and caregiver flexibility was consistently associated with reported quality of care, accounting for 18% of the variance of quality of care.
- Highest reported quality of care was associated with flexibility from work, family, and caregivers, and lowest reported quality of care was associated with low scores on all three variables.
- Parents who used center-based care reported lower caregiver flexibility compared to parents who used relatives, family day care, and unrelated in-home providers for care.
- Parents compensated for lack of flexibility in family resources by finding flexibility from work or from a caregiver.
- Flight attendants had severely low work flexibility, but found caregivers they could rely on for flexibility.
- Recipients of child care assistance, who were primarily single parents, reported low

family flexibility, but they compensated for this fact by using flexible caregivers.

■ Accessibility, perceived affordability, and percent of income spent on child care were marginally associated with quality of care.