

## **Overview of Dissertation Research**

### **BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY: THE POLICY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF CHILD CARE AND NONSTANDARD WORK SCHEDULES**

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For millions of workers participating in the U.S. economy, their regular or secondary work shifts largely take place outside of traditional hours, including evening, night, rotating, irregular, and/or weekend shifts. Nonstandard and unpredictable schedules may have important implications for maternal well-being, work-family balance, and child care arrangements. However, knowledge on the association between nonstandard work schedules and indicators of maternal well-being is not consistent or comprehensive, more knowledge is needed on how nonstandard work schedules complicate the child care decision making processes of low-income mothers, and little is known about the supply of child care at nontraditional times. The research approach of the three papers in this dissertation aim to address these gaps in the literature and are described below.

#### Nonstandard Work Schedules, Maternal Parenting Stress, and the Moderating Role of Child Care

This paper explores the association between nonstandard work schedules and maternal parenting stress, with particular attention to variation by: type of work schedule, mother's relationship status, and family income. This paper also explores the moderating role of child care arrangements between nonstandard work schedules and maternal parenting stress.

#### Child Care Preferences and Choices for Mothers Working Nonstandard Schedules

This paper seeks to better understand the role and importance of social, economic, and structural factors driving child care decisions for low-income mothers working nonstandard schedules. This paper will focus on two subpopulations of low-income mothers working nonstandard schedules: (1) mothers with irregular schedules and (2) mothers not living with a romantic partner. In addition, this paper explores what factors would make center-based child care during nontraditional hours more accessible and appealing to mothers working nonstandard schedules.

#### Availability of Center-Based Child Care at Nontraditional Times in Texas: Supply Over Time

This paper will explore the availability of licensed, center-based child care at nontraditional times for children preschool age and younger in Texas over time, describing trends on the timing of nontraditional hours of care, as well as availability by age group, accreditation/Texas Rising Star status of the provider, and the provider's acceptance of child care subsidies. To begin to explore the mismatch between supply and demand, this paper also compares trends in the supply of care at nontraditional hours to several relevant labor force trends.

To address these questions, this dissertation takes a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Child Care Market Rate Survey in Texas, and Bureau of Labor Statistics will be integrated with qualitative data from focus groups with mothers in Austin, Texas. Analytical techniques will include ordinary least squares, difference-in-difference, and multinomial logistic regression models. Qualitative data will be analyzed using themes from existing literature as well as identifying new emerging themes.