



***A day in the life of a 4-year old: the effect of parental employment***

**Jennifer Baxter and Michael Alexander**, *Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne*

Numerous studies, Australian and international, have explored the relationship between parental employment and time parents spend on childcare. This analysis adds to this body of research by exploring the relationship between parental employment and the child's (instead of the parents') time spent on different activities. First, we explore what are the activities that 4 (to 5) year old children do, as collected in the time-diary component of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) in 2004. Aggregating these data to a broad classification of sleep, personal care, play, achievement-oriented and other, we compare how the time children spend on activities varies according to parental employment. We then use data collected in these time-diaries on who else was present, to measure differences in maternal and paternal presence while children were undertaking different activities, and again, examine such differences according to parental employment. By using multivariate techniques, we can control for those characteristics generally found to be associated with time spent on child care (for example, sex of the child, number of older or younger siblings, relationship quality) to determine whether these same relationships are found in this different perspective of the data.