

C.S. Lewis & Co. Publicists

Editor/Producer,

Fifty-five percent of mothers with children under the age of one work outside the home. Many of these working moms hire substitute care for their babies, yet only one in ten American children in substitute care receives quality care. After work, these women come home to perform 70 to 100 percent of the household and parenting duties. What's missing from this picture? Fathers sharing childcare and housework.

In a landmark new book, ***How to Avoid the Mommy Trap: A Roadmap for Sharing Parenting and Making It Work*** (Capital Books, Sept. 2003), author **JULIE SHIELDS** identifies a growing trend of stay-at-home dads and dads working part-time or flextime in order to share more of the parenting and household responsibilities. She draws from interviews with hundreds of couples who have bucked tradition and found ways to balance personal, professional, and family needs by making creative work and childcare arrangements. And she presents compelling evidence showing that shared parenting is the best possible situation for children, parents, and marriages.

A woman caught in the Mommy Trap is often involved in ongoing arguments with her partner about dividing up childcare and household labor. She has little or no personal time. She may resent her husband for not making the same schedule accommodations she has made, and is frequently cranky with or critical of him, even when he tries to help. And she is probably unhappy with her present childcare arrangements.

Shields gives women practical and realistic strategies for avoiding the Mommy Trap before they have children, and for extricating themselves from it once they are stuck.

She is available for an interview, and can discuss a number of topics, including:

- **Daycare Wars:** Analysis of a newly released federally funded study showing that full-time substitute childcare may not be the optimum solution
- **Mr. Mom, the Sexiest Man in America:** Why dads who share parenting enjoy more sex, happier marriages, less divorce, and better health
- **Policy Roadmap to Change:** Eight ways government could improve the lot of working parents and their children
- **How to Get Out of the Mommy Trap:** Real couples and their tried-and-true tips, strategies, and negotiation techniques for creating successful shared parenting situations

A happily married attorney and mother of two, Shields successfully lobbied her own employer for more flexible work arrangements and continues to be a leading advocate for shared parenting and better family-leave policies.

Please let me know if I can set up a time for you to speak with **JULIE SHIELDS** directly.

Sincerely,

Cathy Lewis

New Role for Dad: Equal Partner

Breakthrough book shows women how to reshape and improve their lives by dividing parenting with husbands.

A typical woman considers only two options when it comes to childcare: doing much of it herself or hiring substitute care. Most often, the wife is the one who either quits her job or cuts back on her hours. Because they are at home more, moms also end up doing more of the housework.

Parental leave activist **JULIE SHIELDS** says there is a smarter option, one that women, men, policy makers, and employers often fail to consider: fathers taking on more parenting responsibilities.

In the first book of its kind, ***How to Avoid the Mommy Trap: A Roadmap for Sharing Parenting and Making It Work*** (Capital Books, Sept. 2003), author Shields turns the parenting stereotype on its head by proving that men are equally capable of caring for newborn babies and young children. Families in which the husband shares childcare have better-adjusted, higher-performing children, happier marriages with more sex, less divorce, and two partners who describe themselves as personally and/or professionally fulfilled.

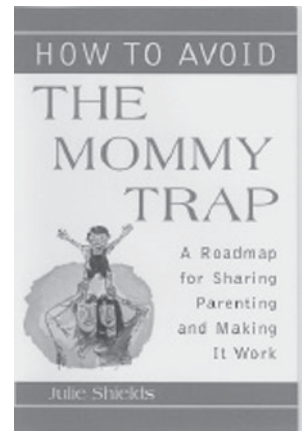
Why do so many men and women resist the notion that fathers can nurture too? Shields looks at how gender ideologies, social biases, and obsolete U.S. policies governing parental leave, flextime, and benefits make it difficult for couples to redefine their parenting roles.

The author interviewed hundreds of women with husbands who participate substantially in the daily upbringing of their children, and cites numerous studies to back up her claims that such arrangements create a more beneficial situation for children than either the stay-at-home-mom or conventional daycare option. Interestingly, husbands seem to benefit from their new sense of equality as much as their wives who are now freer to pursue personal and professional goals.

Readers will learn:

- Strategies for designing more equal parenting arrangements
- How to help husbands succeed in their newfound roles
- How to negotiate parent-friendly work schedules with employers
- How to navigate through the most common marriage and parenting minefields

This landmark book is the first to fully explore the shared parenting trend in America that is resulting in a win-win-win situation for fathers, mothers, and the children who are fortunate enough to be nurtured by two involved parents.



Among industrialized countries, the U.S. ranks second to last in terms of national maternity, paternity, and parental leave and childcare policies.

A third to a half of new parents experience as much marital distress as couples already in therapy for marital difficulties.

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About the Author

JULIE SHIELDS is an intellectual property attorney, freelance writer, and author of *How to Avoid the Mommy Trap: A Roadmap for Sharing Parenting and Making It Work* (Capital Books, Sept. 2003).

After earning her law degree from Duke University Law School, Shields admits that she proceeded to make almost every pre-baby planning mistake that exists when she became a mother. She fell in love with her daughter, took on more parenting and household responsibilities than she ever expected, cut back at work, and complained that her husband's life had not changed much at all.

After she quit her job as an attorney to stay home with her toddler, she began interviewing couples about their parenting arrangements. The happiest families, she discovered, were ones where the partners had customized their work and parenting arrangements to accommodate each other's needs, desires, and talents. These couples seemed to have it all.

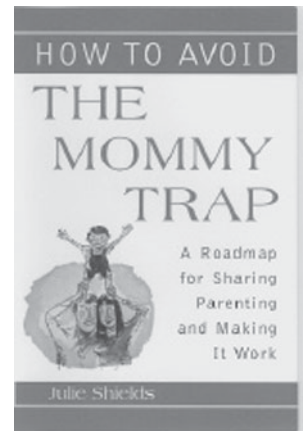
The realization that staying at home and hiring substitute childcare were not the only two options for moms was an epiphany for Shields and became the inspiration for her landmark book.

Shields successfully lobbied her employer for a more flexible work situation, and she and her husband worked out a new arrangement in their marriage so they could both work flexible hours and share the parenting and household responsibilities equally.

She is a busy freelance writer who has written numerous articles and essays that have appeared in such new media and publications as *Oxygen Media*, *Women's eNews*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Mothers First*, *Parents-Talk Magazine*, and *Duke Law Magazine*, and has penned two legal textbooks as well.

Shields frequently lectures on gender equality and modern motherhood before audiences at colleges and universities, women's groups, and professional associations across the country. Articulate and media-savvy, she has appeared on such national television shows as MSNBC's *Economy Watch* and been interviewed for a number of national radio shows, including NPR's *The Parents Journal* and the USA Today Radio Network.

Shields lives in McLean, Virginia, with her husband and their two daughters.



“I believe parents can design the lives they want. Marriages can thrive even after children arrive. Fathers can enjoy close relationships with their children. And children can get the best love possible at the same time that mothers enjoy fulfillment apart from house and family.”

—**JULIE SHIELDS**

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Interview Topics

WHY BABIES NEED MEN, AND VICE VERSA

When fathers nurture infants, everyone benefits.

Apart from producing milk, fathers can do everything for babies that mothers can do. Babies who receive substantial fathering from birth benefit in a number of ways, as do their dads. Shields discusses:

- Research showing emotional, physical, intellectual advantages of paternally parented children
- Studies revealing that involved fathers enjoy happier marriages, more sex, less divorce, more fulfillment

MORE TIME WITH MY FAMILY

Learn how to get bosses and business partners to accommodate your ideal work/parenting schedule.

Shields successfully lobbied her own employer for a more flexible work arrangement and convinced her husband to do the same at his job. Learn:

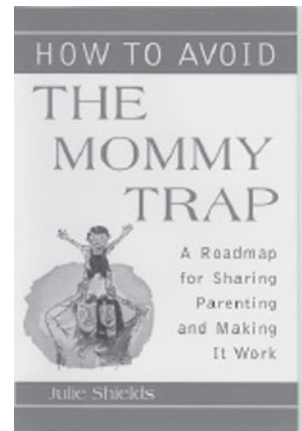
- How to make a compelling case for flextime, telecommuting, part-time, or extended parental leave
- How to stagger parental leave with your spouse during the baby's first three months
- How to divvy up housework, childcare, and professional responsibilities so both parents get a break

WHY MEN HAVE LEISURE TIME AND WOMEN DON'T

Discover how men get what they want, and how women can too.

When dads want to play golf or poker with buddies, they just do it. Shields says that's no accident; men expect breaks and leisure activities, and that's why they get them. She shows women:

- Why a woman's bargaining power is highest before marriage and lowest just after she gives birth
- How to be assertive while negotiating a fairer share of work
- Why you get more by asking for more
- Professional negotiator tips every mom or soon-to-be mom should learn



Dads who hold their infants develop protective feelings for and crave physical contact with them. From touching and smelling infants, men produce oxytocin, the "hormone of harmony and attachment," stimulating an urge in fathers to love, touch, kiss, and care for their child. Another hormone, vasopressin, leads men to fatherly behavior, nurturing, and cuddling.

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IS BETTER DAYCARE THE ANSWER?

It turns out that the best alternative to mommy care is daddy care.

Since 1991, the government has conducted an ongoing study of the effects of different childcare arrangements on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of children. Shields discusses:

- Daycare wars: why child-development experts are so conflicted about the study's findings
- The sorry state of American daycare
- Startling statistics about children who spend excessive amounts of time in daycare
- How to interpret the study's findings and come up with better solutions for America's kids

REAL-LIFE WORK/PARENTING ARRANGEMENTS

Get inspired by happy couples and their stories of success.

For her book, Shields interviewed hundreds of couples who worked out innovative shared-parenting arrangements. Learn:

- What successful co-parenting couples have in common
- Their most common errors and how you can avoid them
- Top tips, secrets, hints, and strategies from successful couples

NEW TREND: STAY-AT-HOME DADS

Why are Mr. Moms becoming more common, and how are they doing?

The latest U.S. Census figures reveal that there are nearly 2 million dads who take care of their children while their wives work, compared to 1 million in 1990. If this trend continues, says Shields, it is great news for everyone. She talks about:

- How this trend could help American children
- How stay-at-home dads are shaping a new work ethic
- Psychological ramifications for men who cut back on work
- Effects on marriages of husbands who are homemakers

MY WAY OR HIS WAY

If you want your husband to participate in childcare, learn to let go.

According to Shields, one of the most common traps women fall into is complaining that their husbands don't do their share of childcare, and then criticizing them when they do. She talks about:

- How to shut up and let him learn from his own mistakes
- The "If it won't kill our child, I'll look the other way" technique
- What dads do better than moms

A landmark study found that the best predictor of how a couple weathered the transition to parenthood was if they had learned how to resolve conflicts prior to their children's birth.

Almost 31% of married American women who work earn more than their husbands do.

It costs far less to support a paid maternity leave and unpaid parental leave than to replace the employee permanently. It costs 150% and 70% of annual salaries to replace managers and nonmanagers, respectively. But the average cost of supporting a maternity leave is only 32% of annual salary.

More Interview Topics

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT BABY BEFORE SHE ARRIVES

Learn to avoid the Mommy Trap by doing your homework in advance.

Shields says that most of us spend more time fixing up the nursery than learning about baby care and the radical lifestyle changes brought on by a new household member. She discusses:

- The benefits of “borrowing” a friend’s baby for a day and night
- Ten surprising things you might not have known about newborns
- Top ways parents-to-be can prepare for their new life with baby

RETHINKING MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

The U.S. is decades behind Europe, but you could change that.

Shields spearheaded an effort to improve federal employees’ parental leave options. But with Bush in office, are our current lawmakers listening to the needs of parents? Learn:

- The difference between U.S. and European policies
- How you and your partner can make the best use of our existing parental-leave laws
- How to be a parental activist: important reforms you can pressure your elected officials to enact

FATHERS AND THEIR NURTURING “INSTINCT”

Discover why “woman as nurturer, man as provider” is a myth.

Mothers seem to read their baby’s cues faster than fathers do. Why? According to Shields, this disparate expertise may look like biology, but it is nothing more than the result of childcare choices the couple made in the first three months of a baby’s life. Learn:

- How touching and smelling newborns stimulates the production of “nurturing” hormones in both genders
- The truth about which parent babies prefer, and why
- Baby-care advice from real men

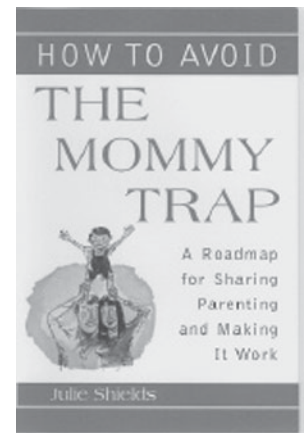
THE PARENT AND MARRIAGE TRAP

The seven most common traps couples fall into and how to avoid them.

Shields says she could have avoided many arguments, feelings of bitterness, and moments of self-doubt had she and her husband known what was in store for them before they had kids. Learn:

- How parenthood affects libido and romance
- Seven danger areas to plan for, from sick days to chauffeuring
- How to assign childcare chores according to each partner’s strengths, talents,

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The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows 12 weeks of job-protected, unpaid parental leave for new mothers and fathers who work for employers with 50 or more employees. FMLA covers just 55% of American workers, and just 6.5% of entitled employees make use of it.

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FATHER CARE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Wonder dads benefit kids in twelve ways.

Parents spend millions of dollars on Baby Genius videotapes, Bach and Mozart recordings for in-the-womb stimulation, Gymboree classes, and the like, says Shields. If they really wanted smarter, more popular, and more capable babies, they would simply arrange for Dad to spend more time at home. She explains:

- How fathering promotes weight gain and overall health in infants
- Beneficial effects of paternal parenting on children in the social, intellectual, and emotional realms
- The relationship between absent fathers and risky teenage behavior

THE PREMARRIAGE QUIZ

How to find out if your fiancé is good daddy/hubby material.

If you want to avoid the Mommy Trap, do not put that ring on before you find out a few basic things. Shields recommends:

- Key questions to ask him about his work aspirations and housework/childcare commitments
- How to find out if your assumptions and ideologies about gender are compatible with his
- Professional premarital counselors, programs, and guidebooks that can help

Most divorces occur within 7 years after the wedding. Not coincidentally, people usually have children in those first 7 years.

A Social Policy Research Centre study of families in 10 industrialized countries found that fathers spend a far greater proportion of their time playing than performing the work of childcare.

Before getting too serious:

- Know (or find out about) yourself.
 - Learn what your partner believes about parenting.
 - Communicate expectations as early as possible.
 - Identify and tentatively resolve potential conflicts before getting engaged.
-

Myths and Truths about Shared Parenting

Myth *Realistically, women need to choose between having a successful career and raising their children.*

Truth This misconception comes from a flawed assumption that women have to balance work and family. If one begins, instead, with the concept of a *family balancing*, a woman and her husband can both enjoy fulfilling careers while co-parenting their children. Family balancing means that men make career accommodations and time adjustments too.

Myth *Women instinctively know how to care for babies; men do not possess such an innate ability.*

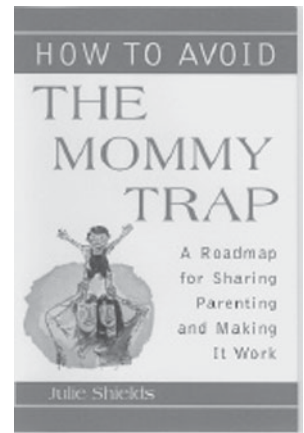
Truth Any mother will confess that skills such as changing a baby's diaper and figuring out how to make the tot stop crying did not come naturally at first. She had to learn them. Men can change babies' diapers, hold and feed them, bathe and entertain them as well as their wives. Women's perceived superiority in childrearing appears to be largely a matter of environment.

Myth *Fathers do not nurture or parent as well as mothers.*

Truth Fathers parent differently from mothers. Men tend to encourage babies' curiosity and urges to solve intellectual and physical challenges, and to foster children's sense of mastery of the outside world. Men also have a more physical style. In various studies, children whose fathers did a significant amount of childcare were more secure, handled stress better, had more emotional self-control, took more initiative, were more self-directed, and developed more advanced problem-solving, personal, and social skills than the norm.

Myth *If given the choice, children will always go to their mothers.*

Truth Studies show newborns show no consistent preference for one parent or the other. Rather, they make first attachments to the person who holds, feeds, and stimulates them.



Women make up more than 90 percent of American parents who work part-time.

In a nationwide study of 21,000 couples, parents with the greatest elasticity with respect to work and the greatest commitment to sharing family responsibilities were the most content. Parents with the least flexibility at work and the smallest commitment to sharing responsibilities had the most conflicted marriages.

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Myth *Men who take on substantial parenting responsibilities feel less fulfilled than men who are fully involved in the world of breadwinning, business, competition, and career.*

Truth In study after study, fathers who scaled back on their work to share parenting formed deep reciprocal attachments with their children, and most continued to stay home or share in their children's care once they were given the option to go back to their former work arrangement. Husbands who share parenting also enjoy more sex with, and less nagging from, their wives.

Myth *Babies and toddlers in daycare do as well as those who are cared for by mothers.*

Truth Statistically, children raised by full-time, stay-at-home mothers do not fare as well as children who have good-quality childcare a few hours a week. The reality is that moms need a break from time to time to be the best caregivers. However, numerous peer-reviewed studies provide evidence that both too much substitute childcare during the first three years of life or using childcare that is of poor quality can be detrimental to a child's development. After age three, the effects appear to become less dramatic. The best alternative to parenting by the mother in the first three years of a child's life is parenting by the father.

Children who have experienced substitute care, even high-quality care, for more than 30 hours a week starting in their first year of life, have less harmonious relationships with their mothers. Even in high-quality care, more time in substitute care is related to more behavior problems such as disobedience, noncompliance, and aggression.

40% of infant and toddler care is of poor quality, rated less than minimal, with poor hygiene, safety problems, babies not being held, and an absence of age-appropriate books and toys required for physical and intellectual growth. Just over 8% of daycare centers provide quality care for infants.
