

A double burden or the best of both worlds? A research note on simultaneous paid work and childcare in New Zealand

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Introduction

In pre-industrial society, for most people the home and the workplace were one and the same. Children were cared for and, when old enough, worked in this home environment. Industrialisation took parents, as well as many children, outside of the home to work. Paid work and childcare became increasingly incompatible activities. However, several trends in the post-industrial age point to the possibility that engaging in paid work and childcare simultaneously may be an adaptive strategy used by an increasing number of parents. More parents are engaging in paid work and working long hours; flexible work arrangements, including telecommuting from home, are increasingly common; and the '24-hour economy' presents additional challenges to working parents. Combining paid work and childcare might come about through parental choice, because childcare is not available at certain times of the day or week, or because a parent cannot afford alternative forms of childcare. In some situations this may represent an unsatisfactory double burden or "intensification" of work for parents and poor quality care for children, while in other situations it may represent an ideal way of combining paid work and spending time with children.

In this research note we undertake an initial exploration of the amount of simultaneous childcare and paid work being carried out by parents in New Zealand. In doing so, we explore differences between active and passive childcare and endeavour to gain some insight into where, when and by whom such simultaneous work is undertaken. We also discuss the role of time use data in helping us to understand the adaptive strategies parents use to combine paid work and childcare. The data used for this study is the Time Use Survey (TUS) that was carried out in New Zealand between July 1998 and June 1999.

Background

Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2003) note that although in most OECD countries the average working week is around 40 hours, this average disguises much diversity in labour market activity. In particular, they highlight a recent trend toward polarisation in weekly hours of work: One segment of the population works very long hours while another has a short working day or week (Figart and Golden, 1998; Jacobs and Gerson, 2001; OECD, 1992). This polarisation of hours, along with an increasing participation of mothers in paid work, has also been identified in New Zealand (Grimmond, 2003).

While the international research literature does not support the idea that in recent decades in industrialised countries there has been a dramatic shift to a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week

society (e.g., for the United States see Hamermesh 1999; for the Netherlands see Breedveld 1998), there are studies that show a small growth in the 1990s of aspects of non-standard hours such as working in weekends or evenings (e.g. for Britain, Harkness 1999). Using a number of Canadian time use surveys, Harvey (1996) also shows a growing dispersion of start times with work starting both earlier and later in the day. New Zealand time use data indicates that most paid work (74 percent) was undertaken during Monday to Friday between 8 am and 6 pm (Callister and Dixon, 2001). Yet, more than one quarter of workers undertook some of their paid work outside these times. In fact more than 60 percent of working diary days from Monday to Friday involved some work outside the core period. Some work at non-standard times is likely to present challenges to parents in terms of providing childcare. However, in the U.S. some childrearing couples use non-overlapping shifts, which generally involve the female partner working non-standard hours, as a strategy to combine paid work and parental care of children (Hamermesh, 2000; Presser, 1995).

There has been much debate as to why some groups, including parents, are working longer hours of paid work, hours that often take them outside of standard working times. Some focus on supply side theories. Schor (1998), for example, has argued that increasing hours of work have been driven by a culture of consumption. This continually requires additional financial resources, which many Americans try to acquire by increasing the number of hours they work for pay. Other researchers suggest that employers are putting new demands on employees, and, if given more choice, many employees (across a wide range of countries) would reduce their hours of paid work (Stier and Lewin-Epstein, 2003). In any case, it is well established that having an adequate household income is important for personal and family well-being. This particularly holds for families with dependent children (Carlson and Corcoran, 2001). For many people long hours of work are a prerequisite to earning an adequate income (Rones, Gardner and Ilg, 2001). In addition, as Bell and Freeman (2001) demonstrate, in countries with a high level of wage inequality, such as the United States, Britain and New Zealand, working long hours is potentially rewarded through career advancement, while a lack of perceived effort can attract a major earnings penalty.

Simultaneous paid work and childcare

Long hours of paid work, particularly in single parent or dual-income couple households, would seem to increase the likelihood that various aspects of paid work will “spillover” into family and personal life. One possible outcome of long hours -- or hours worked at times when out-of-home childcare is not readily available -- is that children will have spells unsupervised at home (Vandivere *et al*, 2003). Simultaneously engaging in childcare and paid work activities might be one way that parents can minimize the amount of time children spend home alone. For parents this kind of multi-tasking could represent an “intensification” of work, adding a further dimension to the concept of “overwork,” or a positive adaptive strategy that maximises the benefits that individuals and families glean from both their work and family lives.

Working from home appears to offer the main strategy for combining paid work and family life. Presser and Bamberger (1993), using US labour force data to study patterns of home work found that an important group within those who undertook all their work at home were women who looked after other people's children at home. This group potentially were also looking after their own children so would have been undertaking simultaneous paid and unpaid work. In relation to older children, including teenagers, working at home in the evenings and weekends can provide an opportunity for parents to have a "presence" in order to guide and monitor behaviour. Lareau (2000) suggests that the "presence" of fathers at home in the evening can be important for the wellbeing of children. She provides examples of fathers initiating homework, or initiating laughter. At times these parents may be undertaking paid work that has "spilled over" from their daytime jobs, yet still having a presence in their children's lives. In such cases, undertaking simultaneous paid work and childcare could represent a positive way to balance the demands of both kinds of work.

Using New Zealand time use data, Callister (2002) found a particularly high level of home-based evening and weekend work amongst managers and professionals.¹ While this level of home based work did not seem to be directly associated with having dependent children, nevertheless such work patterns do provide an opportunity for some parents to work in the evening and weekends yet still retain a presence in family life.

In addition, there are some workplaces outside of the home where it may be possible for simultaneous childcare and paid work to take place. For example, a child might come to a workplace after school. A childcare survey undertaken in New Zealand in 1998 asked whether a parent had a child at work with them as one of the care arrangements in the previous week (Department of Labour, 1999).² For employees a total of 6 percent recorded this response (for mothers 9 percent and for fathers 3 percent). This arrangement was, however, much more common for self-employed parents. Amongst this group 29 percent had used this arrangement (for mothers this was 44 percent and fathers 21 percent). However, these data give no idea of when the simultaneous work was carried out and the time spent in such an arrangement.

While undertaking simultaneous activities may have some benefits, such as increased productivity for an individual, it can also represent an unwanted intensification of work and, in the case of overlap between work and leisure activities, lead to a lack of discretionary or 'pure' leisure time. Floro and Miles (2001) cite studies on home working and the informal sector in Bangladesh, Mexico, the United States, Germany and Spain which demonstrate that women workers in this sector often must combine paid market work and domestic activities such as cleaning, cooking and childcare (Khandker, 1988; Skoufias, 1993; Floro, 1995). In discussing a wide range of multiple activities, Floro and Miles suggest that "women, in particular, have been acculturated into, compelled to,

¹ This study did not try to assess whether parents who were working at home in the evening were also recording childcare as a simultaneous activity.

² From the wording of the question it is not clear whether respondents would have included situations where the paid work was carried out at home.

and/or have consciously developed the ability to perform multiple activities simultaneously” (p. 19).

In addition, studies that have focused on people who work in an external workplace and then bring work home in the evening, suggest that such home work is not primarily seen as a means of balancing paid work and family life. A British study asked employees why they took work home (Hogarth *et al*, 2001). The most frequently cited reasons were “the demands of the job” (35 percent) and “to get more work done/it is more efficient” (38 percent). Few employees cited factors related to caring for family members as reasons for working from home. A “work at home” supplement to the United States Current Population Survey undertaken in May 2001 also provides a list of reasons for home work for people who worked at home at least once a week (BLS, 2002). For both men and women the single largest response was “finish or catch up on work” (38.2% and 36.3% respectively). The option “co-ordinate work schedule with personal or family needs” was only chosen by 3.3 percent of men and 7.8 percent of women. These results suggest that any simultaneous paid work and childcare that might have been associated with this evening home work would likely represent a “double burden” rather than a positive strategy for balancing work and home life.

Time Use Data

Time use researchers have for a long time been aware that individuals may be undertaking two tasks simultaneously. This is reflected in the design of most time use surveys where two activities can be recorded in each time slot. Various names have been used for these overlapping activities including ‘multi-tasking’, ‘polychronic time use’, ‘primary and secondary activities’, ‘concurrent activities’ and ‘joint production’ (Floro and Miles, 2001). Like most time use surveys, the New Zealand TUS provided respondents with the opportunity to record two activities in each time slot. As people often do more than one activity at once, for example listening to the radio while cooking dinner, recording secondary activities should give a more accurate picture of time use. However, despite secondary activities usually being collected, Kitterød (2001) points out that these data are rarely analysed. When secondary activities are considered it is often in order to provide better estimates of total paid and unpaid work time for men and women (e.g. Bittman and Matheson, 1996) rather than as a specific analysis of time spent in particular types of simultaneous work.

In New Zealand, like many other countries, when only primary activities are counted then, on average, men undertake more paid work and women more unpaid work per day, but the total daily work hours of men and women are very similar (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2002). This holds for men and women regardless of whether they are parents of young children or do not have dependent children (Stevens, 2002). However, when the time in both primary and secondary activities (i.e. simultaneous paid and unpaid work) is combined, women undertake a greater amount of total work than men (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2002).

Measurement Issues

The idea that parents might be working but also caring for their children raises some important debates about the childcare measures used in time use surveys. Budig and Folbre (2002) argue that measures that focus on the time parents spend actively engaged in activities with children, or require children to be present in the same room as the parent, can potentially understate the important role of parental availability. Lamb (1987) breaks childcare work into three categories: engagement (or interaction); accessibility; and responsibility. In some time use studies a parent can claim to be undertaking childcare while sleeping at night, or while the child is playing at a neighbour's house because the parent is still ultimately responsible for the child (Schwartz and Fricker, 2000; Schwartz, 2002).

Budig and Folbre also suggest that it is often difficult to establish whether one, two, or more children are being cared for at the same time. In addition, some other unpaid work activities could be seen as part of caring for children but not included in childcare time. For example, preparation of a child's meal will be counted usually as part of meal preparation rather than as childcare. Equally, it could be argued that some paid work is undertaken for the sole purpose of caring for children in that the money earned will be used to pay for children's activities, such as music lessons. In this context "providing" can be seen as a parental time investment in children (Christiansen and Palkovitz, 2001).

It is also possible that some professionals work at home during the day to have a "presence" in their children's lives but with their children being looked after in the home by a paid childcare worker. The parent may not be recorded as undertaking childcare while at home but may still be monitoring both the child and the childcare worker. This would be an unrecorded example of simultaneous childcare and paid work.

A further complication when measuring childcare time is that active and passive childcare can occur at the same time. An example is reading to a child while being responsible for another child who is doing school work. These activities might be combined and simply recorded as a primary activity, or could be recorded separately as primary and secondary activities. It is likely that most simultaneous childcare and paid work will involve passive childcare possibly interspersed with short periods of active care. It may be that these short periods of active care will involve a break in paid work and the childcare will become a primary activity. This will be influenced by the unit of time recorded in the survey. In addition, a parent might be looking after an older child, with this child in turn engaging in active care of a younger child.

Despite the problems with time use data, it is nevertheless the best available data source to allow an examination of simultaneous paid work and childcare. Such data give us a first glance at what may be an important – and potentially *increasingly* important – facet of modern family life.³ The current study is very much exploratory in nature, and endeavours to answer the following questions in relation to parents.

³ The issue of whether or not simultaneous childcare and paid work is increasing would need to be investigated in those countries where more than one time use survey has been carried out.

1. How much time can be classified as simultaneous childcare and paid work?
2. How much simultaneous childcare/paid work time involves passive childcare versus active childcare?
3. Are there demographic / socio-economic variations in the amount of simultaneous work carried out?
4. Where was this simultaneous activity carried out?

Data source and measures

The New Zealand Time Use Survey (TUS) was conducted by Statistics New Zealand under contract to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The data collection was conducted in 1998/1999. The survey population is defined as the civilian, usually resident, non-institutionalised population aged 12 years and over residing in private households. The survey instruments comprised a 48-hour diary, a personal questionnaire and a household questionnaire.

Diary respondents were asked to record their activities over a 48-hour period, using paper schedules that were divided into five-minute time slots. This included information on what activities were being carried out (primary and secondary) and where they were taking place. Interviewers then asked respondents some questions to gather further information about the activities undertaken. Each diary day was from 4am in one day to 4am of the next day.

The sample was allocated evenly across the 12 months of the survey period to minimise the seasonal effects, and was also balanced across days of the week. The survey had a response rate of 72 percent and an achieved sample size of 8,522 respondents.⁴

In the New Zealand TUS labour force activities were coded to five subcategories. These were work for pay or profit, education or training in work time, job search activities, travel associated with labour force activity, and other labour force activity not elsewhere classified. We included the first two subcategories, 'work for pay or profit' and 'education or training in work time' in our definition of paid work for this study, and excluded the other subcategories.

Only care for household members was included. The codes physical care, playing, teaching, helping with educational activities and other caring and helping were all counted as active care. The data coded as being available for care was classified as passive care.

This study is based on counts of diary days rather than on individual parents. That is, for people who have two recorded diary days, both days are counted in our tabulations.⁵ Any over/under representation is then accounted for by the weighting in the tables shown. However, for this reason it is not appropriate to do any individual-level analyses, like regression, because observations are not independent.

⁴ For further information on the sample and coding issues see Callister and Dixon (2001).

⁵ Not all people have two diary days.

Results

Table 1 shows overall paid work and childcare involvement of parents by gender and whether the diaries were completed during the weekday or weekend. It indicates a number of patterns. Fathers were much more likely than mothers to have undertaken some paid work on either weekends or weekdays. However, as New Zealand research has already shown, weekday work was much more likely than weekend work for both women and men (Callister and Dixon, 2001). As also already well demonstrated in the time use literature, overall the proportion of parents who undertook some childcare, active or passive, was higher for women than for men. In contrast to paid work, a slightly higher proportion of both men and women recorded some childcare time during the weekend than during weekdays. This is not surprising given that most children are not at school or in formal childcare in weekends. Finally, fathers were more likely than mothers to record a period of simultaneous childcare and paid work. While this primarily reflects the greater likelihood of fathers being employed, it provides some challenge to the idea that it is primarily mothers who are “multi-tasking” in relation to childcare and paid work. Overall, the data showed that 12.7 percent of parents undertook simultaneous childcare and work.

Table 1: All parents– Percentage undertaking paid work and percentage who cared for children

		% who worked	% who cared	% who cared and worked simultaneously	Weighted Frequency
Men	Weekend	43.8	88.2	14.9	221,655
	Weekday	82.4	82.2	16.7	615,656
Women	Weekend	23.2	94.1	8.2	283,174
	Weekday	43.9	89.8	10.5	781,932

Table 2, and subsequent tables, narrows the focus down to those parents who recorded that they undertook paid work on their diary day(s). The data show that a smaller proportion of these parents indicated that they undertook any childcare. This is primarily because the full-time caregivers have been removed. Not surprisingly, removing parents not in paid work substantially lifts the proportion of parents who stated that they undertook simultaneous childcare and paid work. A third of parents recorded such simultaneous work on weekends and just over a fifth on weekdays. Overall, 23.9 percent of working parents undertook such simultaneous work. When actual minutes of simultaneous work are calculated across the sample of working parents, the average time is relatively small: three-quarters of an hour per day on weekends and just under half an hour on weekdays. However, when only those parents who recorded undertaking simultaneous paid work and childcare are considered, the average time spent in these simultaneous activities is considerably higher – over two hours worth for both weekends and weekdays. These data suggest that while relatively few parents undertake such simultaneous work, for those who do the spells are relatively long.

Table 2: All parents who were in paid work

	% who cared	% who cared and worked simultaneously	Average minutes care	Average minutes paid work	Average minutes simultaneous work and care – All parents	Average minutes for those undertaking simultaneous work and care	Weighted frequency
Weekend	73.8	34.5	305	743	46	132	162,945
Weekday	77.8	21.8	463	647	28	127	850,796

Table 3 explores how much of this care is seen to be active care. A substantially lower proportion of parents recorded undertaking active care rather than passive care in either the weekend or weekday. The proportion of parents who stated that they undertook simultaneous active childcare and paid work falls by an even greater amount, with only just over 2 percent recording such time in the weekend and 1 percent during the weekdays. The average minutes spent on this combined work was negligible. When considered by a range of demographic and socio-economic variables the proportion of parents undertaking such simultaneous work was always lower than five percent. The highest recording was for agricultural workers during the week, with a figure of 4.4 percent. This demonstrates that it is primarily passive childcare that is undertaken at the same time as paid work. This should not be surprising as it is difficult to see how active care and paid work could be combined. Exceptions could include situations where a parent was paid to care for additional children and was actively caring for them alongside his or her own children. For the subsequent analysis active and passive childcare are combined.

Table 3: All parents who worked by day of week – Active care only

	% who cared (active)	% who cared and worked	Average minutes work	Average minutes care	Average minutes simultaneous work and care – all parents	Average minutes for those undertaking simultaneous work and care	Weighted frequency
Weekend	54.7	2.2	305	51	1	23	162,945
Weekday	57.7	1.2	463	45	0	34	850,796

Table 4 breaks down patterns of simultaneous work by gender of parent and weekend and weekday work. It shows some complex patterns. A similar proportion of mothers and fathers undertook simultaneous paid work and childcare in the weekend, whereas a slightly higher proportion of mothers undertook such work on weekdays. In terms of actual average minutes of simultaneous work among those who undertook such work, fathers in the weekend spent the longest time at 148 minutes but the lowest time in weekdays at 125 minutes. These data again challenge the idea that it is primarily mothers who have to juggle childcare and paid work.

Table 4: All parents who worked by day of week and gender– Active and passive care

		% who cared	% who cared and worked simultaneous	Average minutes work	Average minutes care	Average minutes simultaneous	Average minutes for those undertaking simultaneous work and care	Weighted frequency
Men	Weekend	73.1	34.0	319	717	50	148	97,157
	Weekday	78.4	20.3	523	586	25	125	507,387
Women	Weekend	74.8	35.2	284	782	39	110	65,788
	Weekday	76.8	24.0	374	737	31	130	343,409

Given that most paid work is carried out during the week (in part because there are more days Monday to Friday than in the weekend and partly because there is still, on average, less paid work undertaken on weekend days than on weekdays) most of the remainder of the paper focuses only on weekday work.⁶ Table 5 shows these patterns by a range of socio-economic and demographic characteristics for weekday workers. Sole fathers are not included in the analysis due to a small sample size. The group of workers classified as “unpaid family members” are excluded for the same reason.

There is not much variation in the proportion of parents who undertook some childcare when socio-economic and demographic factors are considered. In contrast, there is some marked variation in the proportion of parents who undertook a period of simultaneous childcare and paid work as well as a variation in the average minutes spent in this type of work. Employers, the self-employed and, connected with this, people in agricultural occupations, stand out as being more likely to undertake such work. They also stand out in terms of average minutes worked per diary day.⁷

⁶ Data on weekend work is available from the authors.

⁷ The rates of employed and self-employed parents undertaking simultaneous childcare are higher in these time use data than reported in the New Zealand childcare survey. The reasons for this difference are not clear.

Table 5: All parents who worked by main socio-economic and demographic variables– Active and passive care, Weekdays only

	% who cared	% who cared and worked simultaneously	Average minutes work	Average minutes care	Average minutes simultaneous work and care – All parents	Average minutes for those undertaking simultaneous work and care	Weighted frequency
Male - Joint parent	78.9	20.2	525	589	25	123	490,390
Female - joint parent	76.7	24.9	382	733	33	132	292,199
Female - sole parent	77.7	18.7	332	757	22	120	51,211
No Qualification	77.5	15.5	460	613	28	180	147,650
School qualification	80.0	20.3	445	672	25	121	219,224
Post-school Qualification	77.0	24.6	472	648	29	119	476,282
Employee	77.9	14.9	457	640	16	110	615,005
Employer	73.4	37.0	540	573	47	127	97,630
Self-employed	79.0	37.8	454	697	59	156	124,478
\$1-25,000	81.7	23.7	373	766	33	137	273,952
\$25-40,000	75.5	16.6	497	580	21	125	279,694
\$40,000+	76.7	23.8	522	595	29	121	275,885
Managerial	80.4	25.9	493	648	35	134	135,616
Professional	72.4	25.2	473	619	30	119	137,233
Technical	77.4	20.1	424	670	28	139	110,510
Clerical	78.4	16.2	364	733	12	75	82,483
Service & Sales	80.0	17.9	407	721	30	165	83,494
Agricultural	77.2	36.5	482	661	57	157	83,786
Trades	82.8	17.0	532	580	12	71	97,049
Operatives	72.0	11.0	523	535	10	89	71,323
Elementary	81.4	21.5	447	683	32	148	47,635

Tables 6 and 7 explore the time of the day simultaneous paid work and childcare is carried out. Table 6 indicates that such work is most common in the period 8 pm to midnight for both mothers and fathers, while for fathers the second most common time is 6 pm to 8 pm. For mothers, there is a relatively high rate of such work from midnight to 8 am, and from 4 pm to 6 pm. In this latter situation, it is likely that much of the care is for children who have completed school for the day. Earlier research suggests that much of the evening work is part of an extended working day, where people have already worked in the 8 am to 6 pm time period (Callister and Dixon, 2001). Table 7 shows distinct gender differences, with mothers spending a greater number of minutes in the 12

midnight to 4 am slot compared to men (140 vs. 27), and men spending a greater number of minutes in the 8 am to 12 noon slot.

Table 6: All parents who worked by gender– % of working time in each time band which involved simultaneous work – Weekdays only

	4-6 am	6-8 am	8am - 12 noon	12 noon- 4pm	4 - 6 pm	6 - 8 pm	8pm - 12 midnight	12 midnight - 4 am	Weighted frequency
Men	9.2	4.8	2.9	2.9	5.7	16.7	24.9	3.3	507,387
Women	11.2	16.2	3.8	6.2	18.0	14.9	28.3	13.6	343,409

Table 7: All parents who did simultaneous work by gender– Average minutes of simultaneous work – Weekdays only

	4-6 am	6-8 am	8am - 12 noon	12 noon- 4pm	4 - 6 pm	6 - 8 pm	8pm - 12 midnight	12 midnight - 4 am	Weighted frequency
Men	62	40	102	83	56	38	65	27	507,387
Women	38	48	72	72	59	39	70	140	343,409

Table 8 recombines men and women but explores the effect of occupational group on when simultaneous childcare and paid work was undertaken. When both occupation and time slot are considered, it is people working between 8pm and midnight in managerial, professional and agricultural occupations that were most likely to report such work.

Table 8: All parents who worked- % of working time in each time slot that involved simultaneous work– Weekdays only

	4-6 am	6-8 am	8am – 12 noon	12 noon- 4pm	4 - 6 pm	6 - 8 pm	8pm - 12 midnight	12 midnight - 4 am	Weighted frequency
Managerial	15.3	7.5	3.0	4.3	9.6	26.4	44.4	27.7	135,616
Professional	18.4	10.9	2.1	3.1	8.3	22.4	41.8	5.8	137,233
Technical	5.9	14.0	4.4	5.1	9.0	10.8	24.5	16.3	110,510
Clerical	0.0	2.5	2.8	1.9	7.2	6.8	17.5	0.0	82,483
Service & Sales	4.2	2.4	5.4	4.9	8.1	12.6	14.8	19.9	83,494
Agricultural	17.4	15.5	7.9	9.3	17.7	21.6	45.9	0.0	83,786
Trades	8.1	4.2	0.1	1.3	3.9	13.2	23.5	2.2	97,049
Operatives	0.0	0.7	0.9	1.7	5.6	10.5	3.2	0.0	71,323
Elementary	16.3	4.5	6.6	6.4	9.1	10.0	10.9	1.1	47,635

Time use data also allows an assessment of where the work was carried out. Table 9 restricts the analysis to those parents who recorded simultaneous childcare and paid work. It shows the average minutes of such combined work and where this work was carried out.

Table 9: All parents who recorded simultaneous childcare and paid work: Location of such work

	Total	Weekend	Weekday	Men weekday	Women weekday
Weighted frequency	241,575	56,210	185,547	103,104	82,443
Avg. min. doing simultaneous childcare/paid work	128	132	127	125	130
Average minutes at home	99	116	93	89	99
Average minutes at work	23	14	25	24	27
Average minutes at other location	7	3	8	12	4
Proportion of simultaneous work done at home	76.8	87.4	73.5	71.5	75.8
Proportion of simultaneous work done at work	17.7	10.4	19.9	19.1	20.9
Proportion of simultaneous work done at other location	5.5	2.2	6.6	9.4	3.3

The highest proportion of simultaneous work was carried out at home, particularly in the weekend. However, a significant amount of simultaneous work was carried out in workplaces. While Table 9 shows little variation by gender, Table 10 shows a much greater variation when occupation is considered. In particular, people in service/sales and trades occupations were most likely to combine paid work and childcare at the workplace, while elementary occupations stand out in terms of the amount of simultaneous childcare and paid work carried out in another location.

Table 10: All parents who recorded simultaneous childcare and paid work: Location of such work by occupational group

	Weighted frequency	Avg. min. simultaneous childcare /paid work	Proportion at home	Proportion at work	Proportion at other location
Managerial	43,113	125	75.2	23.5	1.3
Professional	50,614	133	83.3	14.3	2.4
Technical	26,309	140	83.3	12.2	4.5
Clerical	17,716	80	85.7	5.8	8.5
Service/Sales	16,851	153	65.1	32.1	2.9
Agricultural	42,593	158	84.1	11.6	4.2
Trades	20,293	73	59.6	32.8	7.6
Operatives	10,202	102	75.5	23.7	0.9
Elementary	14,064	139	44.4	19.0	36.7

Table 11 shows the proportion of simultaneous childcare and paid work undertaken at home by time of day. Home-based simultaneous work is most common in the late evening, with almost all such work undertaken in the home. The lowest rate of home-based simultaneous work was between midday and 4 pm.

Table 11: All parents who recorded simultaneous childcare and paid work: Proportion undertaken at home by time of the day

	All	Weekend	Weekday	Men	Women
4-6 am	84.7	93.9	82.5	90.0	77.1
6-8 am	87.1	84.0	87.8	85.9	88.6
8am - 12 noon	78.5	88.9	72.4	80.7	75.8
12 noon- 4pm	73.6	79.6	71.2	73.5	73.8
4 - 6 pm	76.2	96.9	70.8	70.8	81.2
6 - 8 pm	87.6	97.1	85.4	87.5	87.7
8pm - 12 midnight	97.8	99.1	97.5	96.8	99.6
12 midnight - 4 am	91.4	89.3	91.7	90.1	94.7

Finally, we restricted the analysis to those parents who recorded working during a weekday at a workplace and then undertaking some further work at home in the evening (data not shown). A total of 14 percent of fathers and 11 percent of mothers fitted this model. This suggests a relatively low level of “spillover” of paid work into home life in the evenings. However, of those parents who did bring work home, a significant proportion did combine a spell of childcare and paid work. Of the fathers, 36 percent recorded some simultaneous paid work and childcare. For mothers, the figure was 29 percent.

Summary and Conclusions

The New Zealand time use data show that a small but significant proportion of parents recorded undertaking simultaneous paid work and childcare. Almost all of the simultaneous childcare is passive rather than active care. This should not be surprising as in most situations it is difficult to see how the two activities could be (actively)

combined. Given some of the times of the day in which simultaneous childcare and paid work is undertaken, children will often be sleeping while paid work is being undertaken by parents.

When both passive and active childcare are considered, overall fathers were more likely than mothers to record a period of simultaneous care and paid work. While this primarily reflects the greater likelihood of fathers being employed it is, however, a finding that undermines the idea that it is mainly mothers who are “juggling” paid work and childcare responsibilities by multi-tasking. When only those parents who were in paid work are considered, the differences between men and women were found to be minor. The data show that just over a third of employed mothers and fathers undertook a spell of simultaneous work in weekends, while during the week the figures were a fifth for fathers and a quarter for mothers.

When averaged across all parents in paid work, the spells of simultaneous childcare and paid work were relatively short. However, a closer examination indicates that for those who do undertake such work, the spells are relatively long. Employers, the self-employed and, connected with this, people in agricultural occupations, stand out as being most likely to undertake such simultaneous work. Some of this may reflect active employment choices made by parents. For example, some parents may choose to be self-employed so they can combine spending time with their children with paid work.

In terms of when simultaneous paid work and childcare is undertaken, the most important times are in the weekends, evenings and, for some groups, the early morning. Again this is not surprising given that these are also the times children are most likely to be at home. While the home was found to be the most likely place where simultaneous childcare and paid work was carried out, a quarter of all such work was carried out in other locations, the most important being workplaces, and this was particularly true for people in service/sales and trade occupations.

Overall, these data indicate that for some groups of parents simultaneous childcare and paid work is important. Further research is needed to assess how much of such multi-tasking represents an unsatisfactory double burden or “intensification” of work for parents as well as being poor quality care for children, or represents an ideal strategy for combining paid work and spending time with children. One possible way to examine this would be follow-up interviews with families who recorded episodes of simultaneous paid work and childcare. Alternatively, a subset of respondents to the standard time use survey (such as that carried out in New Zealand) could be probed for more in-depth information on their work and family lives. Such data would provide us with a more comprehensive understanding of the temporal dimensions of families’ work-family adaptive strategies.

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