

drugs and procedures considered necessary by the medical establishment showed Vincent that women could make their own decisions about what was best for their own labour and delivery.

Inspired by the sweeping changes wrought by the various social movements of the 1960s, Vincent set out to transform women's experiences of childbirth. In Berkeley, California in the early 1970s, Vincent began working as a labour and delivery nurse just as the Lamaze movement was gaining popularity. Her own labour and delivery, however, convinced her that women were empowered by neither a formulaic approach to natural childbirth nor the stuffy practices of traditional medicine. Over the years, she developed a childbirth education course centred on the notion that "every birth is different" (52).

As the women's health movement rapidly transformed the field of women's health, more women began seeking out alternative methods of childbirth and in 1974 Vincent had the opportunity to witness firsthand the work of a "lay" midwife. She found the woman's skill so impressive that she began contemplating a career in midwifery. In her work as a nursing coordinator at a local birthing centre, Vincent enjoyed a degree of autonomy unheard of in conventional medical settings, but she still faced "physicians who believe that normal childbirth is a retrospective diagnosis" (58). After 15 years as a nurse, Vincent began training as a midwife and she spent the next 15 years attending home births. While most of Vincent's narrative is inspirational, she sounds some cautionary notes. For example, that lay midwives in the United States have difficulty acquiring malpractice insurance and medical back-up from physicians and hospitals has severely curtailed the number of home births.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of *Baby Catcher* is Vincent's style. While Vincent has delivered more than 2,500 babies, every case she recounts reflects the joy and awe she feels at each birth. Deftly, she interweaves memoir and case studies with an overview of the transformations that have altered childbirth practices in the United States over the past 40 years. *Baby Catcher* is a valuable work for multiple audiences, including health care professionals, scholars of pregnancy and birth, and the general reader interested in issues of women's health and pregnancy.

Making Care Work: Employed Mothers in the New Childcare Market

Lynet Uttal
New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002

Reviewed by Heather E. Dillaway

Lynet Uttal begins by suggesting that her title, *Making Care Work*, can be

interpreted in two distinct ways. She explains, “This analysis is about both ‘making care (into paid) work’ and ‘making (paid) care work’—and work well—for the families who use it” (1). In describing the historical development of childcare as paid work, Uttal draws on interview data with 48 employed mothers with young children in various types of paid childcare in California and Tennessee. Her book also draws on 24 interviews with childcare providers. This study represents a first attempt to understand and define the kinds of issues and choices that employed parents (typically mothers) face as they make childcare decisions and maintain childcare arrangements over time.

This work succeeds for a number of reasons. First, Uttal’s sample is diverse by race, type of employment, residence, childcare choices, marital status, sexuality, and number of children. As she notes, a diverse sample helps in elucidating “the general process of making and maintaining childcare arrangements, rather than presenting case studies of individual experiences or issues specific to one type of care” (17) or one type of mother. By analyzing experiences of a diverse group of mothers in a diverse set of ongoing childcare arrangements, Uttal uncovers the differences and similarities in mothers’ concerns and experiences.

A second strength is Uttal’s ability to move deftly across analysis of social structure and individual feelings and behaviours. This multi-levelled analysis gives the reader a comprehensive understanding of the lack of regulations governing the quality of paid childcare and the process by which childcare is commodified.

A third strength of this book is its ability to speak to a broad audience. As she describes the concerns and constraints facing employed mothers, Uttal offers ways in which the paid childcare system might be improved. She writes purposefully, for a range of readers, to encourage positive social change for employed mothers, their families, as well as childcare workers.

Finally, a fourth strength of Uttal’s work is her analysis of the lack of media attention paid to “quality” childcare. As a result, we know little about the struggles of employed parents to secure “good” care for their children, or about the position of childcare providers within an unregulated, market-based system of care. Uttal centres her analysis on employed mothers, their “choices” and concerns. Throughout her study, mothers speak for themselves and readers learn that “making care work” is a daily negotiation and a daily concern for contemporary families. Uttal urges readers to understand that “making care work” is a long and continual process that deserves fuller study.

In fact, Uttal suggests that we know little about paid childcare of any kind. *Making Care Work* is one of the first studies to concentrate on employed parents’ concerns about the quality of paid childcare, their daily worries and/or feelings about their choices. Uttal’s next book might explore specific issues raised in *Making Care Work*, such as mothers’ and childcare providers’ respective definitions of “good” childcare; mothers’ interactions with childcare providers; tensions between parents and childcare providers; the social construction of

employed mothers as bearing ultimate responsibility for their children's well-being; "problems" associated with paid childcare; and contradictions between a market-based definition of "care" and the ideology of "care."

Life After Baby: From Professional Woman to Beginner Parent

Wynn McClenahan Burkett
Berkeley: Wildcat Canyon Press, 2000

Reviewed by Amanda Putnam

Wynn McClenahan Burkett's *Life After Baby: From Professional Woman to Beginner Parent* shares exploits and anecdotes of real mothers. No simplified version of motherhood, Burkett's text offers authentic stories of mothers who are "primarily over thirty, college educated, and had worked for several years before becoming mothers" (6). Burkett reveals the diversity within the sometimes seemingly static category of American motherhood.

Having experienced the rewards of a "mothers' group" which she founded, Burkett hopes to create through these narratives a mother's group in print to support all new mothers. As a new mother, Burkett remembers feeling "most comforted . . . by other mothers" and she soon realized that "sharing stories with other moms" helped her feel that she "was not alone" (5). Burkett seeks to expand the concept of motherhood through the varied experiences gathered in her book, and she intends that *Life After Baby* "will be a little like having a conversation with a group of trusted girlfriends" (5).

Chapters focus on a broad range of issues, including pregnancy; early motherhood; changes in relationships with one's partner and extended family members; family size; community support; differences in mothering sons and daughters; employment outside the home; and the spiritual side of mothering. Each chapter begins with a quotation from Erma Bombeck, followed by introductory comments by Burkett. The stories dominate, however, as mothers "speak" for themselves. Cohesion is supplied by Burkett's summaries and transitions that frame the stories. Burkett explains that she did not "set out to draw conclusions and wrap them up in a neat little package. Motherhood is messy in that way. We all experience things a little bit differently, and yet we have much to learn from each other" (6). Burkett reminds readers that mothers make important decisions that bear on their own lives and the lives of their children, and that they hold the credentials as well as the right and privilege to do so.