Comment on Howie

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Pauline Howie's paper is both thoughtful research in an important area of child care and refreshing in its effort to build on previous studies and to follow up on others' suggestions for additional research. Specifically, she included a measure of anxiety in order to address the issue raised by the interview data of the Long and Long (1982) study. Similarly she sought to control for maternal employment, which was a compounding variable study of Vendell and Corasiniti (1988). She even went so far as to reclassify her data so as to be comparable to theirs. Such efforts to build on and integrate one's research with that of others are both much needed and laudable, given the inherent limitations of any single study, so that we may better advance our understanding of child and youth care. Her paper is also refreshing in the way she candidly examines the limitations of her data. As we all know, if you torture data long enough it will confess to anything!

The fact that research that does not yield statistically significant findings is less likely to be published increases the chance of Type I errors, that is, accepting the hypothesis when in fact it is not true. Some of the published studies report as statistically significant findings that are undoubtedly due to chance, which we find acceptable at either the five or one percent level of risk. This combined with the fact that relatively few studies are replicated makes Howie's paper all the more important. One must also be mindful of the possibility of Type II errors, that is, rejecting a hypothesis when it may in fact be true. The latter error may be relevant to this study.

Given that even the best studies are inherently and unavoidably limited, it is important to be mindful of some of their limitations. For example, only 87 in Howie's sample of 231, or 37.6% of the families contacted, responded. These families may be biased in terms of being more responsible (no pun intended), involved, concerned, and organ-
nized compared to the 144, or 62.4%, of the families that did not respond. Such a personal sense of responsibility and concern for their children might override the differential impact of the different types of after-school arrangements. In other words, the children of such "good" parents may do well irrespective of the type of their after-school child care arrangement as a result of the good parenting they receive.

In the discussion of the children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (MAS) it was mentioned that children scoring over 7 on the lie scale were eliminated from the analysis. One wonders how many "liars" there were and whether their data were compared to those from the remaining subjects. Thirty (34.6%) of the families were dropped from the sample of those 87 of 231 families who responded to the request to participate in the study because their children received "diverse" after-school care and thus could not be categorized into one of the three types of care used in the study. Given that the time, effort, and resources had already been expended to locate these subjects, it would have been beneficial to study this group. Diverse care, whatever that meant for this sample and in general, is a commonly used "type" of child care and thus worthy of examination *per se*. The lack of continuity and stability inherent in "diverse" care is itself important and worthy of examination.

The built-in comparability to the Vendell and Corasiniti (1988) study invites comparison of after-school arrangements in the United States and Australia which was fruitfully done by the author. Some additional comparisons might help further flush out the differences and similarities of these societies. For example, being on welfare or, as the Aussies' say, "the dole" in Australia, inadequate as it may be, is probably less demeaning, crushing, and pernicious than being on welfare in the U.S. Thus the comparison of "dole" children in Australia to more middle class children in the United States might enhance the comparability of the two studies. A comparison of American welfare families' after-school arrangements would have been more relevant and probably more revealing. The fact that center care in Sydney was at the children's school and staffed by more professional staff may further weaken any comparability to the American after-school care.

In Sydney, the staff was probably composed of more civil servants with long-term involvement in after-school care. They may well have been more satisfied as child care workers than those in the American center studied by Vendell and Corasiniti (1988), because all too many U.S. child care programs are driven by bottom-line profit considerations that often result in child care workers who are inappropriately motivated, overstressed, and grossly undervalued. This, in turn, often