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The Time Squeeze: Parental Statuses and Feelings About Time With Children

Policy makers, parents, and the public are concerned with perceived declines in parents' time with children. Data from two national surveys (N = 1,159 and N = 821) used in this study show that nearly half of parents report feeling too little time with children. Work hours are strongly related to these feelings, even controlling for time spent with children, and explain why fathers more than mothers feel time strain. For fathers, those whose youngest child is an adolescent feel more strain than similarly situated mothers. Controlling for work hours, single parents are not more likely than married parents to feel that they spend insufficient time with children.

Time with children is a precious commodity to parents, who rate talking with, caring for, taking trips with, and playing games with their children as their four most enjoyable activities—higher

than paid work, talking with friends, and many leisure activities (Juster & Stafford, 1985). Parents also see family time as an important experience that produces long-lasting and happy memories for children (Daly, 2001; Shaw, 1992). Moreover, parents may increasingly view spending time with children as necessary for children's proper growth and development; that is, cultural standards for what constitutes "enough" time with children may be very high today (Bianchi, 2000; Daly).

Although research indicates that, on average, parents today spend as much or more time with children as in the past (Bianchi, 2000; Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998; Bryant & Zick, 1996b; Sandberg & Hofferth, 2001), anecdotal evidence suggests that today's parents face great challenges in getting enough time with children as they adopt various strategies to juggle family life with paid work and other obligations. Yet, despite the concerns of policy makers, scholars, and parents and children themselves of parents' spending time with children, there is little systematic research on how American parents actually *feel* about the amount of time they spend with their children, and what factors are associated with these feelings.

In this study, we first examine the factors that are associated with feelings of time deficits with

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children. We focus on four characteristics of parents and families: parent's gender, child's age, parental employment, and family structure. First, differential expectations of mothers and fathers, despite changing ideologies about gender, still place a higher premium on mothers' time with children. Numerous articles in the popular press underscore the notion that mothers should be ever available and endlessly enriching their children with time, energy, and quality activities (Hays, 1996). Second, parents might feel quite differently about the amount of time they spend with preschoolers, elementary school-age children, and adolescents. As children grow, their needs and desires change, and parents' beliefs about how much they should be involved in their children's lives may also change (Galinsky, 1981). Third, a time squeeze among working parents has been widely documented. The *Second Shift* (Hochschild, 1989) chronicles the speed-up of family life, where constant demands, in conjunction with little support from workplaces or the government, make employed parents' time with children seem stretched to the limit. Last, there has been a dramatic rise in parents who are unmarried or in dual-earner families—that is, parents without a “wife” at home to help balance time demands (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Jacobs & Gerson, 1998). Daly's (2001) qualitative work on parents in these time-poor families emphasizes the chronic undersupply of family time, and a desperate yearning for togetherness.

The second question we address is how parental and family statuses are associated with feelings once we controlled for the actual amount of time that parents spend with children. For example, to what extent do single parents feel more time deficits compared with their married counterparts, simply because they spend fewer hours with children or engage in fewer focused activities with children? Thus, we assess whether the total quantity of time spent with children and the amount of focused time with children help us better understand how parents' and families' status and role characteristics relate to feelings about time spent with children.

This study takes advantage of two nationally representative data sets that ask parents to evaluate the adequacy of the time they spend with their children. For most analyses, we rely on the 2000 National Survey of Parents conducted at the University of Maryland. This survey not only assessed parents' feelings about whether they spent enough or too little time with their children

but also included a parental time diary to gauge the quantity of time spent with children, and asked questions about the amount of time in focused activities, such as one-on-one time and eating meals together. In addition, to expand our data on parents' subjective assessments about time with children, we replicate these questions in the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS).

WHO FEELS A TIME DEFICIT WITH THEIR CHILDREN?

Parents with different social statuses and in different role contexts likely vary in their feelings about whether they spend enough time with children. We focus on how parent's gender, child's age, parental work hours, and family structure relate to subjective feelings about time with children, with attention to how these relationships may differ once we controlled for the objective amount of time spent with children. More specifically, some of the variation in feelings experienced by parents with different statuses and roles may be accounted for by the amounts or kinds of time spent with their children.

Gender

Gender may be the most important factor for understanding parents' feelings about time spent with their children. There are two contrasting perspectives on gender and feeling time deficits with children. On the one hand, fathers may be more likely than mothers to feel that the time they have with their children is inadequate, largely because of their longer work hours and fewer hours spent with children (Nock & Kingston, 1988; Zick & Bryant, 1996). Several studies show that fathers feel at least as much time strain as mothers, though analyses do not examine how work hours may account for this (Galinsky, 1999; Reeves & Szafran 1996).

On the other hand, the gender perspective focuses on how cultural meanings of parenthood shape the emotional life of mothers and fathers (Ferree, 1990; Milkie, Bianchi, Mattingly, & Robinson, 2002). According to this perspective, mothers more than fathers should feel greater time inadequacy with their children, because mothers are held accountable to cultural expectations for motherhood that they be ever-present or all-giving to their children. This is true regardless of whether mothers are employed (Hays, 1996). Although mothers' roles have expanded to include breadwinning responsibilities, and

fathers' to include nurturance and involvement with children, each gender remains most accountable for traditional parenting roles (Lamb, 2000; Riggs, 1997). In accordance with the gender perspective, we expect that mothers more than fathers will feel time strain with their children, once we controlled for work hours, time with children, and other factors.

Parenting Preschoolers, Elementary School-Aged Children, and Adolescents

Life course and developmental perspectives suggest that parents' feelings about whether they spend enough time with their children should vary by the stage of children's lives, because as children grow, their needs change, and their own time commitments to schooling and friends increase. Young children demand the most time-intensive caregiving and are thought to be in particular need of parental attention (Hays, 1996). Thus, we expect that parents may feel more time strain when they have young children compared with elementary school-aged children.

Adolescents have different needs for parental involvement. Many parents think that they should be available and accessible to their adolescent children to protect them from making unwise choices such as engaging in risky behaviors (Kurz, 2002; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Further, because adolescents tend to pull away from parents and toward their peers and their own activities, parents may feel time strain with adolescents more so than with elementary school-aged children.

There may be gender differences in the relationship of children's age with parental feelings about time spent with children. When children are young, mothers may be particularly concerned about how much they are doing for their children, because young children are said to need intensive, direct care from their mothers (Hays, 1996; Townsend, 2002). Feelings of time deficits with adolescent children may be particularly strong for fathers—a sort of anticipatory tension—because fathers more than mothers tend to lose close contact with their children after children leave home (Kurz, 2002).

Parental Employment

Work hours should closely relate to parents' feelings of strain with their children. A main reason is that longer work hours typically mean that

parents spend less time with children (Bryant & Zick, 1996a, 1996b; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Robinson & Godbey, 1999; Zick & Bryant, 1996), although mothers especially may reduce time for other activities such as housework or leisure, and may arrange their work to coincide with times that children are in school (see Bianchi, 2000). Long work hours may also relate to feelings by interfering with high-quality activities with children. For example, focused activities and eating together are important for making intimate connections with family members (DeVault, 1991; Galinsky, 1999; Garey, 1999). Although Nock and Kingston (1984, 1988) note that intense or focused interactions could be accomplished even by parents working many hours, it is unclear whether certain one-on-one activities or family rituals are as common among employed parents (but see Bryant & Zick, 1996a).

Long work hours may relate to parents' feelings of time inadequacy with children, however, regardless of the number of hours spent or the kinds of activities engaged in with children, because of intense conflict or spillover between worker and parent roles. Employment makes parents less able to be spontaneously available should children need them, and may make them miss certain events that are scheduled during work times (Milkie & Peltola, 1999). Moreover, children may notice when parents bring work conflicts home, and may feel that parents' preoccupation with work makes them less psychologically accessible (Galinsky, 1999). These situations may make parents feel inadequate about the time they allocate to childrearing.

Further, given gender differences in cultural meanings of "good" parents, the relationship of work hours to parental feelings about time deficits with children may be different for mothers versus fathers. Mothers may be more vulnerable than fathers to time strain with children when in the same work situation because of cultural expectations of intensive motherhood (Hays, 1996). Thus, we expect that there may be interaction effects between gender of the parent and work hours.

Family Structure

Feelings about time with one's children may depend in part upon the structure of the household—for example, whether there is another parent and whether this parent has a large time obligation to an employer. Parents in single-parent

families may feel more time inadequacy than married parents. In these families, there is usually no other adult to shoulder domestic responsibilities and to help balance a parent's work and home lives (Waite, 2000), or to substitute when it seems as if a child needs extra attention or supervision (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Because some demands from children are unpredictable or difficult to address, such as illness or school problems, single parents may feel as if they cannot give enough time to a child.

The feelings of parents in two-parent households may be influenced by their spouses' labor force commitments, particularly if the spouse is not regularly available to interact with children. The other parent, similar to the situation in a single-parent family, is less able to balance out a mother's or father's own time commitments. The familiar lament of dual-earner parents, that there is no "wife" at home, may be particularly troublesome for fathers, whose children are not receiving the time from their mothers that is deemed culturally ideal. Townsend's (2002) study of fathers showed that they felt involved with their children *through* their wives' activities with children. Most fathers felt strongly that wives' working was not ideal because it held *them* back from raising their own children. Thus, we expect that fathers whose spouses work long hours may feel especially strained.

Other Factors

There are several other factors that may relate to parental feelings about time with children: race, age of the parent, family size, socioeconomic status, and time of the week and year. In our analysis, we use these variables as controls.

Studies suggest that there are some cultural variations in parenting and children's time use by race and ethnicity. Black families tend to emphasize the importance of involvement in church activities and achievement at school (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994; Rashid, 1985), and indeed Black children spend more time than White children at church and school (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). Hispanic families tend to value children highly and integrate them into their daily lives (Slonim, 1991); hence, compared with White children, Hispanic children spend more time on housework (Hofferth & Sandberg), especially with fathers (Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001).

Given such variations, there may be differences in parents' feelings about time with children depending upon race and ethnicity.

A parent's age may matter for feelings about time spent with children. Though there is little research about the age of parents and family well-being, parents have strong feelings about the proper timing of children in their lives (Townsend, 2002). On the one hand, older parents who delayed their entry into parenthood may be more confident about the way they allocate time to work, leisure, and children because they integrate children into already established adult lives (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992). On the other hand, older parents may have less energy and may feel more intensely the competing demands of work and family.

Family size may have a curvilinear relationship with parental feelings about time spent with children. Compared with parents with two children, parents with only one child have more opportunities to spend time with their child one-on-one, and hence they may feel that they spend enough time with that child. Although they may be less likely to spend time with each child alone, parents with three or more children may feel that they spend enough time with children because the total time they spend with any of their children is likely to be large.

Parents' socioeconomic status may relate to feelings about time with children, because parents' expectations of how involved they should be in children's lives may vary by their levels of education or income. Time diary studies have suggested that mothers and fathers with higher levels of education spend more time with their children in direct interactions (Bianchi, Cohen, Raley, & Nomaguchi, 2004), especially educational and leisure activities (Bryant & Zick, 1996a, 1996b; Yeung et al., 2001). Controlling for education, fathers with higher income spend more time with their children in play or educational activities (Nock & Kingston, 1998; Yeung et al.).

Parents' time and activities with children tend to differ on weekends versus weekdays, which may be related to their feelings about time spent with children. Parents who work during weekdays may try to catch up with their children during weekends by spending time with them in social or leisure activities (Yeung et al., 2001). Because of scheduling issues, some families may be able to have a meal together as a family only during weekends. The way that parents spend

time with children differs depending on the time of year. During summer, children are more available because they have neither school nor homework, so parents may feel less time strain. Similarly, many parents may spend holiday seasons visiting relatives and friends with their children and playing and eating together.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this article, we address three research questions: (a) How do gender, age of the child, employment, and family structure relate to whether parents feel that they spend enough time with their children? (b) How do gender, age of the child, employment, and family structure relate to the total quantity of time and the amount of focused time spent with children? (c) Once we control for the quantity and/or quality of time that parents spend with children, do gender, age of the child, employment, and family structure continue to be associated with feelings?

Data used in our analyses are cross-sectional. Hence, the goal of our analyses is to examine current associations among background characteristics, objective measures of time that parents spend with their children, and parents' subjective assessment about their time spent with children. Although we were not able to examine the causal mechanisms by which these factors are linked, our unique data allow us to examine who, among today's U.S. parents, feels time deficits with their children.

METHOD

Data and Sample

We use two nationally representative samples of U.S. parents to examine the dynamics of mothers' and fathers' feelings about time spent with children. The main data set is the National Survey of Parents, designed and collected at the University of Maryland in 1999–2000 with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Working Families Program. Using random digit dialing and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) procedures, a total of 1,200 interviews were conducted, with a national probability sample of parents age 18 and over currently living with at least one of their children under age 18. Within each household, the mother or father was randomly selected. The overall response rate was 64%.

A unique feature of the survey was the combination of the parental time diary, along with reports of parental involvement from standard survey questions. Interviews were conducted from late June 1999 through May 2000, with approximately the same number of completed interviews on each day of the week. The interviews included questions on how parents felt about the amount of time they spent with their youngest and oldest child, and asked parents to report on an array of activities that they did with their children. Each respondent was led through a one-day "yesterday" time diary in order to get an additional, objective measure of parental time with children, as well as reports on other activities in which the parent engaged on the diary day. The reliability and validity of one-day time diary data have been extensively tested and are found to be reliable at aggregate levels and highly valid, more so than estimate data (Juster & Stafford, 1985; Robinson & Godbey, 1999).

In the present analysis, we include all single parents who did not have missing values for employment hours, and married parents who reported that at least one parent in the household worked 1 hour or more per week. Cases were dropped in which the respondent was married but reported 0 hours of employment for self and spouse. Additionally, cases were dropped if they had missing values on age of the youngest child. This results in a sample size of 1,159 for bivariate analyses, and a somewhat smaller sample size for models in which respondents had missing values for a dependent variable or key independent variable.

The questions on parental feelings about the adequacy of time with children have not been widely used in previous surveys. Hence, to extend the generalizability of the reports of parental time strain, we added questions on subjective time with children to the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS), conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. The GSS data were collected through face-to-face interviews, with a national probability sample of 2,817 adults aged 18 and older. The response rate was 70%. Interviews took place between February and mid-June of 2000. The questions regarding subjective perceptions of time with children were asked of all respondents who were living with children under age 18, regardless of the kind of relationship between the respondent and the focal child(ren) ($N = 1,083$). The question was asked for

up to four children in the household, and 955 respondents have values for at least one of the four variables. One hundred and four respondents were excluded because they answered questions about time spent with children who were not their own (i.e., biological and adopted children and stepchildren), but instead were grandchildren, nieces or nephews, or children for whom the relationship with the respondent could not be determined. An additional 17 cases were excluded because of missing values on age of the youngest child, 11 cases were excluded because respondents were married and neither spouse was employed, and 2 cases were excluded because respondents were not married and had missing values on work hours. The sample size for the GSS analyses is 821.

Dependent Measures

Feelings about time with children. In the National Survey of Parents, respondents were asked, "Do you think you spend about the right amount of time with your (youngest) child in a typical week, too much, or too little?" and "Do you think you spend about the right amount of time with your oldest child in a typical week, too much, or too little?" The responses were recoded, with those answering *too little* = 1, and those reporting that the time is *about right* or *too much* = 0. For those with only one child under 18 in the household, the respondent was only asked the question about the *youngest* child, and the word *youngest* was dropped from the question. One dependent measure is "too little time with (youngest) child." An additional measure, "too little time with all children," was constructed using both survey questions. It was coded as "1" if the respondent reported *too little time* with both the youngest and the oldest child (for those with two or more children in the household) or with their only child (if only one child was in the household), and 0 otherwise.

In the GSS, parents responded to the question, "Would you say that the amount of time you spend with (name of child from household roster) is too much, about the right amount, or too little?" for up to four children in the household. The youngest and oldest child were identified through household rosters, and variables measuring feelings of having too little time with the youngest child and too little time with all children (both the youngest and oldest child in

homes with two or more children, the only child in one-child homes) were created to parallel the other data.

We used a measure of too little time with *all children*, rather than too little time with at least one child because it seems a better estimate of concern about time with children. The *all children* measure is more conservative, requiring that a parent feel too little time with both the oldest and youngest to fall into the *too little* category. Further, although the *all children* measure is technically about the oldest and youngest child in families with one or more middle children, the GSS data show that parents with more than two children who reported too little time with their youngest and oldest child almost always report too little time with middle children.

Independent Variables

Gender is a dichotomous variable with *fathers* = 1.

The age of the youngest child is coded into three dummy variables, including *preschoolers* (ages 0 to 5), *elementary school-aged children* (ages 6 to 12), and *adolescents* (ages 13 to 17). Elementary school-aged children are used as the comparison group.

Hours in the paid work force per week is measured by the self-reported number of hours per week that respondents usually spend working for pay. Those not employed, about 25% of mothers and 5% of fathers, were coded as 0 hours. Those with missing values (for married only) were assigned mean values by gender, and extreme values at the upper end of the distribution were coded to the 95th percentile by gender. Note that results were replicated using work status rather than hours (coded in four categories: nonemployed, employed part time (1–34 hours per week), employed full time (35–45 hours per week), and extended time (46 or more hours per week), with no notable differences from results presented here. We present some bivariate results using a simple categorization of not employed, employed part time, and employed full time or more in Tables 1 and 2, with *not employed* used as the reference category.

Family structure is measured by two indicators. *Marital status* of the parent is a dichotomous variable where *nonmarried parents* = 1 and *married parents* = 0. *Spouse's hours in paid work per week* is measured and presented in the same way

Table 1. Percent of Respondents Reporting Too Little Time With Their Children

	National Survey of Parents		General Social Survey	
	Youngest Child	All Children ^a	Youngest Child	All Children ^a
All parents	47.7	43.0	42.2	40.3
Gender				
Mothers	41.9	37.7	34.1	31.4
Fathers	55.0***	49.6***	52.7***	51.8***
Age of youngest child				
Preschool (ages 0–5)	46.8 ns	42.3 ns	40.7 ns	38.5 ns
School age (ages 6–12)	46.1	39.7	43.4	41.6
Adolescent (ages 13–17)	52.1 ns	49.5*	43.2 ns	41.6 ns
Employment status				
Not employed	23.2	17.5	15.6	12.1
Part time (1–34 hours)	34.4*	29.8**	27.0*	24.5**
Full time (≥35 hours)	56.0***	51.4***	53.0***	51.7***
Family structure				
Marital status				
Married parent	46.0	40.8	43.0	41.2
Single parent	53.2*	50.0**	40.0 ns	37.6 ns
Spouse's work hours				
Married, spouse not employed	58.7	52.6	57.0	55.9
Married, spouse employed part time (1–34 hours)	58.8 ns	54.6 ns	48.8 ns	48.8 ns
Married, spouse employed full time (≥ 35 hours)	40.5***	35.3***	38.5**	36.3***
N	1,159	1,159	821	821

Note: The reference groups are mothers, youngest child is school age, not employed, married, spouse not employed, respectively. Mothers and fathers are from different households.

^aReporting *too little time* with all children is technically a report of too little time with the only child in one-child families, or with both the oldest and youngest child in families with two or more children. We examined the GSS data and found that those in families with three or more children who report too little time with both their oldest and youngest children typically also report too little time with their middle children. The Sloan data do not include responses to this question for middle children.

† $p \leq .10$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

as respondent's hours in paid work per week. In multivariate analyses, nonmarried respondents are assigned 0 hours.

Control Variables

Objective time with children variables. The National Survey of Parents contains items measuring two dimensions of time with children—quantity time and quality or focused time—that we use as control variables. The first dimension, quantity time, or weekly hours with children, is a measure created with the time diary data. Respondents were led through a 1-day time diary. The diary portion of the interview was introduced by saying, “Next, I would like to ask you about the things you did yesterday. I want to know only the specific things you did yesterday,

not the things you usually do. Let's start at midnight [name of day] that is, the night before last. What were you doing [name of day] at midnight?” Additionally, for each activity, the respondent was asked “Where were you?,” “What time did you finish?,” “At anytime while you were [repeat activity] did you do anything else (like talking, reading, watching TV, listening to the radio, eating, or caring for children)?,” “While you were [repeat activity] who was with you?,” and “What did you do next?” In this way, respondents were led sequentially through their activities during the previous 24-hour day.

Each activity was coded into one of the categories listed in Appendix A. A set of nine codes captures minutes of parent-child time directly. For each activity a respondent reported as a

Table 2. Quantity and Focused Time With Children: The National Survey of Parents, 2000

	Focused Time		
	Quantity Time (Hours per Week)	One-on-One Time With Youngest/Only Child (Hours per Week)	Eating Meals Together (Days per Week)
All parents	42.7	14.3	4.6
Gender			
Mothers	50.2	16.4	4.5
Fathers	33.4***	11.7***	4.8*
Age of youngest child			
Preschool (ages 0–5)	50.8***	18.7***	4.7 ns
School age (ages 6–12)	38.2	10.2	4.7
Adolescent (ages 13–17)	30.3***	9.9 ns	4.3*
Employment status			
Not employed	63.8	20.5	4.9
Part time (1–34 hours)	49.3***	14.9**	4.4†
Full time (≥35 hours)	36.5***	12.6***	4.6*
Family structure			
Marital status			
Married parent	43.5	14.1	4.7
Single parent	40.3 ns	15.0 ns	4.4*
Spouse's work hours			
Married, spouse not employed	36.0	10.3	5.3
Married, spouse employed part time (1–34 hours)	37.9 ns	8.8 ns	4.7*
Married, spouse employed full time (≥35 hours)	46.2***	16.0***	4.6***

Note: The reference group is mothers, youngest child is school age, not employed, married, spouse not employed, respectively. Mothers and fathers are from different households. † $p \leq .10$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

main or primary activity, the interviewer probed as to whether the respondent was doing anything else during that time. Responses to the anything-else probe, referred to in the time diary literature as secondary activities, were also coded into the categories shown in Appendix A. Finally, respondents reported who was with them during each activity during the day. This enabled us to capture parent-child time in which parents were not necessarily directly interacting with children, but were in contact with them.

Weekly hours with children is a measure of total or quantity of time with children, and includes all of the minutes parents spent with children on the diary day, including (a) primary parent-child activity, (b) nonoverlapping secondary parent-child activity, and (c) any other activity parents engaged in, such as housework or leisure, accompanied by their children. The daily minutes were divided by 60 and multiplied by 7 to obtain an estimate of weekly hours. Note that the measure does not include all time in which parents were accessible to or in the household with children. Rather, it more specifically captures when parents and children are in fairly close contact. For example, if a mother reports that she did dishes from 6:00 to 6:15 p.m., her reply to the query "Who was with you?" is unlikely to elicit the presence of a child in the same household, but upstairs doing homework. Although such accessible time is not systematically included in the quantity time tabulations here, some argue that it is an important part of involvement with children (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985).

Focused time measures were based on stylized weekly time estimate questions, including (a) a measure of eating together as a family and (b) hours of one-on-one time with the youngest child. First respondents were asked, "How many days a week does the family usually sit down and eat the main meal together?" Second, *one-on-one hours with youngest child* is measured by a question, "Thinking about last week, how many hours did you spend in one-on-one time with your [youngest] child, that is, just the two of you, for example, playing or doing leisure activities, doing projects together, or having private talks?" Parents with only one child in the household were asked this question with reference to that child rather than youngest child. If the child was under age 5, the question only gave the example *playing*. A follow-up question, "Is this *more than usual* (coded 3), *less than usual* (coded 1), or

about the same amount (coded 2) of one-on-one time as you spend with your [youngest] child in a typical week?" was used as a control variable in multivariate analyses of feelings about time with the youngest child.

Race was coded as a series of dummy variables: non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, or other racial group. Whites were omitted in the analyses as the reference category.

Age of the respondent was measured in years. In the programming of the CATI interview for the National Survey of Parents data collection, the age of the respondent was inadvertently omitted from the household roster. Age was obtained in a callback for the majority of respondents but had to be imputed for about one third of the sample. Missing cases were imputed by using the predicted values from regressions, including gender, spouse's age, and youngest child's age for married respondents, and gender, youngest child's age, the number of children under age 18 in the home, income, and usual weekly hours of employment for unmarried respondents. An age imputation flag is included in the models.

The number of children in the household is coded as a series of dummy variables: one child, two children, and three or more children, with the category *two children* omitted from the regression models.

Education is a continuous variable indicating years of completed schooling, which ranges from *no years* (0) to *graduate or professional degree* (18). Respondents with missing data on education were assigned the median value. In the GSS, years of education was originally coded from 0 to 20. For this study, those who have 19 or 20 years of education were recoded as 18 to parallel the National Survey of Parents.

Family income is coded as a categorical variable using the midpoint of the categories. The midpoint of the highest category was calculated by using a Pareto estimation for assigning a value to open-ended intervals. In the National Survey of Parents, \$172,628 was assigned for the *\$100,000 or more* category. To check this figure, the estimate was compared with the 1999 Current Population Survey (CPS) data, with the result being quite close: \$174,326. In the GSS, \$173,753 was assigned for the *\$110,000 or more* income category. All values except the top category were rounded and coded to represent thousands of dollars of annual household income. Missing income data were imputed by assigning the median income category for the respondent's

education level and gender. An imputation flag is included in all regression models when income is imputed.

Weekend is a dichotomous variable. In the National Survey of Parents, those whose diary recorded a *weekend day* were coded 1. In the GSS, those whose date of the survey was *Saturday or Sunday* were coded as 1. *Summer* is a dichotomous variable, assigned a 1, with respondents surveyed between June 20 and September 1, roughly corresponding to summer vacation from school. All interviews in the GSS were completed during nonsummer time. In the National Survey of Parents, data are weighted based on control totals for age, gender, race, and educational attainment from the Current Population Survey. The data were weighted in the GSS based on the number of adults in the household and respondents' gender. See Appendix B for descriptive statistics of the independent and control variables used in the analyses.

RESULTS

Parental Statuses and Feelings About Time With Children

Table 1 presents the percentage of parents who feel too little time with their youngest child (columns 1 and 3), and too little time with all children (columns 2 and 4). Overall, in the National Survey of Parents, 48% of all parents reported feeling too little time with their youngest child, and 43% feel too little with all children. In the GSS, 42% of parents reported too little time with their youngest, and 40% with all children. The vast majority of parents who did *not* say that they had too little time report that their time with children is *about right*. Only about 5% of each sample reported that they have *too much* time with children (data not shown).

Table 1 shows that fathers more than mothers feel too little time with their children: 55% of fathers compared with 42% of mothers feel too little time with their youngest child, and 50% of fathers compared with 38% of mothers report spending too little time with all children in the National Survey of Parents ($p < .001$). Similarly, 53% of fathers compared with 34% of mothers feel time strain with the youngest child; 52% of fathers compared with 31% of mothers feel time strain with all children in the GSS ($p < .001$). Unexpectedly, with only one exception, those parents whose youngest child is a preschooler or

adolescent feel similar levels of time strain compared with parents whose youngest is elementary school age.

Across measures and data sets, those employed part time and full time more often reported too little time with their children than those not employed. The differences are quite large, with respondents employed full time at least two to three times more likely than those not employed to report too little time with their children.

Family structure also relates to feeling time strain. In the National Survey of Parents, single parents were significantly more likely than married parents to report that the time they have with children is not enough (53% compared with 46% for the youngest child [$p < .05$]; 50% compared with 41% for all children, $p < .01$). In the GSS, however, there is not a significant difference between single and married parents' reports. In terms of spouse's employment, both data sets show, unexpectedly, that those parents whose spouses worked full time felt significantly less time strain than those whose spouse was not employed. This may be because spouse's work hours are correlated with respondent's hours. In the multivariate analysis, when respondent's own work hours are controlled, the expected difficulties of dual-earner parents (particularly fathers) may become apparent.

How Parental Statuses Are Related to Time

We expected that gender, age of the child, work hours, and family structure are related to feelings, partly because these characteristics correlate with the amount of time parents spend with their children, and the amount of focused time they spend with children. Thus, we examined how each of these characteristics relates to time with children using the National Survey of Parents.

Table 2 presents bivariate results. Mothers and fathers differ in two dimensions of time with children, with fathers having significantly fewer hours in total quantity and in one-on-one time with children. Mothers spent 50.2 hours per week with children, compared with 33.4 hours for fathers ($p < .001$). Mothers estimated 16.4 focused hours per week with the youngest child, whereas fathers estimated 11.7 ($p < .001$). In contrast, mothers reported typically eating a main meal together as a family 4.5 days per week; fathers reported a slightly higher 4.8 days ($p < .05$).

As expected, parents whose youngest child is a preschooler spend more total hours with children

Table 3. *Seemingly Unrelated Regression Coefficients (Standard Errors) Predicting Quantity and Focused Time With Children: National Survey of Parents, 2000*

	Quantity Time		Focused Time	
	Weekly Hours With Children	One-on-One Time With Youngest/Only Child Last Week	Days per Week Family Eats Together	
Parental and family statuses				
Gender (1 = <i>father</i>)	-7.29*** (2.00)	-0.35 (1.02)	0.24 (0.18)	
Age of the youngest child (reference: school age)				
Preschool	10.75*** (1.88)	6.40*** (0.96)	0.07 (0.17)	
Adolescent	-6.67*** (2.29)	-2.13† (1.17)	-0.54** (0.20)	
Work hours	-0.44*** (0.05)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.02*** (0.00)	
Family structure				
Marital status (1 = <i>single parent</i>)	-2.12 (2.71)	3.03* (1.39)	-0.79** (0.24)	
Spouse's work hours	0.05 (0.05)	0.09*** (0.02)	-0.02*** (0.00)	
Controls				
Number of children (reference: two)				
One	0.02 (1.83)	7.66*** (0.93)	0.04 (0.16)	
Three or more	5.92*** (2.00)	-1.05 (1.03)	-0.06 (0.18)	
Years of education	0.69† (0.36)	0.20 (0.18)	0.01 (0.03)	
Income (thousands of dollars)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	
Income imputation flag	0.07 (3.13)	-1.94 (1.60)	0.21 (0.28)	

Table 3. Continued

	Quantity Time		Focused Time	
	Weekly Hours With Children	One-on-One Time With Youngest/Only Child Last Week	Days per Week Family Eats Together	
Race (reference: White)				
Black	-8.43** (2.54)	-0.26 (1.30)		-0.56* (0.22)
Hispanic	-2.86 (2.23)	4.41*** (1.14)		-0.05 (0.20)
Other	-0.12 (3.54)	4.52* (1.81)		0.20 (0.31)
Age	-0.01 (0.10)	-0.22*** (0.05)		0.02* (0.01)
Age imputation flag	-2.95† (1.73)	-1.59† (0.89)		0.02 (0.15)
Diary about Saturday/Sunday	11.99*** (1.69)	0.81 (0.86)		0.04 (0.15)
Summer diary	5.52* (2.22)	-1.15 (1.14)		0.11 (0.20)
Intercept	47.36***	15.88***		5.12***
R ² adj	0.28***	0.24***		0.05***
N	1,079	1,079		1,079

Note: The reference group is mothers; youngest child is school age, not employed, married, no spouse or spouse not employed, respectively. Mothers and fathers are from different households.

†p ≤ .10. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001 (two-tailed).

and more one-on-one time with children than parents with older children: 50.8 hours in total time per week with a preschooler compared with 38.2 hours when the youngest is elementary school age ($p < .001$); 18.7 hours in one-on-one time with a preschooler compared with 10.2 hours with a school-age child ($p < .001$); and similar days per week eating together, 4.7 for each group. In turn, parents whose youngest child is elementary school age generally spend significantly more time with children than those whose youngest is an adolescent (38.2 hours vs. 30.3 hours per week in total time, $p < .001$; 10.2 hours vs. 9.9 hours in one-on-one time, not a statistically significant difference; and 4.7 days per week eating a main meal together vs. 4.3 days per week, $p < .05$).

More hours of employment strongly relates to less time with children, both in the total quantity and in the amount of focused time. Nonemployed parents spend 63.8 total hours per week with children on average, compared with 49.3 hours for parents employed part time ($p < .001$), and 36.5 for parents employed full time ($p < .001$). Nonemployed parents spent 20.5 focused hours with their youngest child in the prior week, compared with 14.9 hours for parents employed part time ($p < .01$), and 12.6 hours for those employed full time ($p < .001$). Nonemployed parents eat the main meal as a family 4.9 days per week, compared with 4.4 days for parents employed part time, and 4.6 days for parents employed full time ($p < .10$ and $p < .05$, respectively).

Single parents did not differ from married parents in the total quantity of hours spent with children reported in the diary data (43.5 vs. 40.3 hours), nor in one-on-one hours with children, with married parents reporting 14.1 hours versus single parents' 15.0 hours. There is a significant difference in the number of days the family eats together: Married parents spend a mean of 4.7 days per week, compared with 4.4 days for single parents ($p < .05$).

Spouse's hours of employment matters for one's own time with children for married parents, with longer employment hours of the spouse related to more time with children but fewer meals together. Those whose spouse is employed full time report 46.2 hours in quantity time with children, compared with 36.0 for those whose spouse is not employed ($p < .001$). Similarly, those whose spouse is employed full time report more one-on-one hours with the youngest child compared with those with nonemployed spouses

(16.0 vs. 10.3, $p < .001$). Having a spouse employed full time or part time relates to significantly fewer days eating together, compared with having a nonemployed spouse (4.6 and 4.7 vs. 5.3 days per week; $p < .001$ and $p < .05$, respectively).

The bivariate results show that being a father, having older children, working longer hours, and being a single parent relate negatively to certain kinds of time with children. Given that some of the effects of gender, age of the child, and family structure on quantity and focused time with children may be a result of work hours or other parental characteristics, we included all of these characteristics, as well as control variables, in multivariate analyses using Seemingly Unrelated Regressions, which accounts for correlated errors among the dependent variables. Results are presented in Table 3.

Controlling for work hours and other factors, fathers spend fewer total hours with children, but do not differ from mothers in focused time. The age of the youngest child and a parent's work hours remain strong predictors of the total quantity of hours and of focused time with children. Family structure is also important in its relationship to time with children. Once we controlled for work hours and other factors, single parents and those whose spouses work long hours spend significantly fewer days eating a meal together with children, but not in total (quantity) hours with children. Moreover, single parents and those whose spouses work long hours appear to be able to create more focused hours for their children (in the form of one-on-one hours that have some flexibility) than their counterparts.

In sum, parental statuses are related to actual time spent with children, although not always in the expected ways. We now turn to examine more precisely how gender, age of the youngest child, work hours, and family structure relate to feelings about time with children once we controlled for the actual amounts of time spent with children.

Parental Statuses and Feelings, Controlling for Time With Children

Table 4 presents logistic regression models showing the relationship of gender, age of the child, work hours, and family structure to feelings about time with children, controlling for quantity and quality time and other variables. First, we examined the relationship between the four status

variables and feelings of time inadequacy with children, without controlling for quantity and focused time, supplementing the National Survey of Parents with analysis of the GSS data. For each data set, we examined two models: Model 1 presents results of main effects, and Model 2 adds the interaction terms of gender (of parent) \times age of the child, gender \times work hours, and gender \times family structure variables.

The first two columns show the results from the GSS. Model 1 shows that after controlling for work hours and other factors, there are no significant differences between fathers and mothers in their feelings of too little time with children. Age of the child is not related to feelings after controlling for other factors, but fathers whose youngest child is an adolescent report marginally more strain than other groups (Model 2). Work hours have a strong relationship to feelings of too little time with children ($p < .001$), and Model 2 shows that there is no gender difference in the relationship. Marital status is not related to parental feelings of time strains, but the interaction between gender and marital status is statistically significant (Model 2). To interpret this result, we examined the same regression models for mothers and fathers separately. The results suggest that, whereas single fathers do not significantly differ from married fathers in their feelings about time with children, single mothers are less likely than married mothers to feel time deficits with their children, controlling for other factors (data not shown). Spouse's work hours are not related to parents' feelings, but the interaction between gender and spouses' hours of paid work is significant. Separate regression models for mothers and fathers show that, unexpectedly, although spouses' work hours are not related to fathers' feelings, mothers whose spouses work longer hours are significantly less likely to feel a time deficit with their children (data not shown).

The next two columns of Table 4 present the same models using the National Survey of Parents data. Model 1 shows, unlike the GSS, that fathers feel marginally less time strain with children than do mothers, after employment and background characteristics are controlled. Parents whose youngest child is an adolescent report more strain, and Model 2, which includes gender interaction terms, indicates that this is especially the case for fathers. Again, the relationship of work hours and feelings is strong: More hours relate to a higher likelihood of feeling too little

time with children. There is no gender difference in this relationship, however. Controlling for a parent's own work hours and other factors, those whose spouses work more hours are less likely to feel time strain, which we also found in the GSS data, but only for mothers.

What happens when we control for the amount of time spent with children? Models 3 and 4 add weekly hours (i.e., quantity time) spent with children aggregated from the National Survey of Parents diary data to the main effects and interaction models. Interestingly, the coefficient and odds ratios for work hours remain virtually the same, even when controlling for the quantity of time spent with children. Indeed, other statistically significant relationships, such as gender, youngest child's age, and spouse's work hours, remain similar even with controls for time spent with children. One new marginal relationship appears: Controlling for time spent with children, parents whose youngest is a preschooler feel more time strain than parents whose youngest child is elementary school age.

Models 5 and 6 of the National Survey of Parents (in columns 7 and 8 of Table 4) add a measure of focused time—the number of days the family eats the main meal together—as a control to the prior two models. Again, the relationship of work hours with feelings remains very strong, even controlling for this important aspect of family time. Mothers and parents of preschoolers report more time strain even when controlling for days eating together, and those whose spouses work more hours report less strain. Model 6 again shows a father \times adolescent interaction effect.

Feeling Too Little Time With the Youngest Child

The National Survey of Parents includes a question to parents about one-on-one hours in rewarding activities, such as play and talking with the youngest child, that allows us to examine an additional control indicator of quality time. The first two columns of Table 5 repeat the first two National Survey of Parents models from Table 4, but with the dependent variable now restricted to feelings about time with the youngest child. Here, note that the findings from the prior models remain generally consistent, with spouse's work hours, and especially own work hours, showing strong effects. Those whose youngest child is an adolescent, especially fathers, report more strain. Models 3 and 4 in Table 5 show similar results to

Table 4. Coefficients (Odds Ratios) From Logistic Regression Predicting Too Little Time With All Children^a: General Social Survey and the National Survey of Parents 2000

	National Survey of Parents							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6		
GSS								
Parental and family statuses								
Gender (1 = <i>father</i>)	0.23 (1.26)	-0.33 (0.72)	-0.30† (0.74)	0.06 (1.06)	-0.33† (0.72)	-0.02 (0.98)	-0.30† (0.74)	-0.02 (0.98)
Age of the child (reference: school-age)								
Preschool	0.12 (0.89)	-0.02 (0.98)	0.23 (1.26)	0.31 (1.36)	0.28† (1.32)	0.38† (1.47)	0.27† (1.32)	0.36 (1.43)
Adolescent	-0.04 (0.96)	-0.47 (0.63)	0.37† (1.44)	0.04 (1.05)	0.34† (1.41)	0.02 (1.02)	0.30 (1.35)	-0.03 (0.97)
Gender × preschool	-	-0.12 (0.88)	-	-0.13 (0.88)	-	-0.18 (0.83)	-	-0.14 (0.87)
Gender × adolescent	-	0.74† (2.10)	-	0.67† (1.95)	-	0.67† (1.96)	-	0.68† (1.98)
Work hours	0.04*** (1.04)	0.05*** (1.05)	0.04*** (1.04)	0.03*** (1.03)	0.04*** (1.04)	0.03*** (1.03)	0.03*** (1.04)	0.02*** (1.03)
Gender × work hours	-	-0.01 (0.99)	-	0.02 (1.02)	-	0.01 (1.01)	-	0.02 (1.02)
Family structure								
Marital status (1 = <i>single parent</i>)	-0.08 (0.93)	-0.92* (0.40)	0.11 (1.12)	-0.08 (0.92)	0.10 (1.11)	-0.10 (0.90)	0.04 (1.04)	-0.21 (0.81)
Gender × marital status	-	1.14* (3.12)	-	0.19 (1.21)	-	0.20 (1.22)	-	0.28 (1.32)
Spouse's work hours	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.03** (0.98)	-0.01* (0.99)	-0.01† (0.99)	-0.01* (0.99)	-0.01† (0.99)	-0.01** (0.99)	-0.02* (0.98)
Gender × spouse's work hours	-	0.03* (1.03)	-	0.01 (1.01)	-	0.01 (1.01)	-	0.01 (1.01)
Quantity and focused time with children								
Weekly hours w/children (diary data)	-	-	-	-	-0.01† (1.00)	-0.01* (0.99)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)
# of days/week family eats together	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.10** (0.91)	-0.10** (0.91)
Other controls								
Number of children (reference: two)								
One	0.27 (1.32)	0.24 (1.27)	-0.25 (0.78)	-0.24 (0.78)	-0.25 (0.78)	-0.25 (0.78)	-0.25 (0.78)	-0.25 (0.78)

Table 4. Continued

	National Survey of Parents							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Three or more	-0.08 (0.92)	-0.07 (0.93)	-0.71*** (0.49)	-0.69*** (0.50)	-0.68*** (0.51)	-0.67*** (0.51)	-0.71*** (0.49)	-0.69*** (0.50)
Years of education	0.04 (1.04)	0.03 (1.04)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.01 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)
Income (thousands of dollars)	-0.00 (0.98)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)
Income imputation flag	-0.13 (0.88)	-0.15 (0.86)	-0.69* (0.50)	-0.65* (0.52)	-0.68* (0.51)	-0.64* (0.53)	-0.66* (0.52)	-0.61* (0.55)
Race (reference: White)								
Black	-0.44† (0.64)	-0.48* (0.62)	0.10 (1.11)	0.10 (1.11)	0.06 (1.06)	0.06 (1.06)	0.02 (1.02)	0.02 (1.02)
Hispanic	-0.59* (0.56)	-0.59* (0.56)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.02 (0.98)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)	0.00 (1.00)
Other	0.20 (1.22)	0.19 (1.21)	-0.37 (0.69)	-0.38 (0.69)	-0.36 (0.70)	-0.36 (0.70)	-0.37 (0.69)	-0.37 (0.69)
Age	-0.02 (0.98)	-0.02 (0.98)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01 (0.99)
Age imputation flag			0.04 (1.05)	0.04 (1.04)	0.04 (1.04)	0.03 (1.03)	0.04 (1.04)	0.03 (1.03)
Diary about Saturday/Sunday	0.02 (1.02)	0.01 (1.01)	0.09 (1.10)	0.11 (1.11)	0.16 (1.18)	0.18 (1.20)	0.15 (1.16)	0.17 (1.18)
Summer diary	-	-	0.22 (1.25)	0.24 (1.28)	0.25 (1.29)	0.28 (1.32)	0.27 (1.31)	0.29 (1.33)
Intercept	-1.29† 969.39*** 821	-0.68 957.59*** 821	-0.75 1,319.60*** 1,114	-0.67 1,311.89*** 1,114	-0.50 1,315.79*** 1,114	-0.40 1,307.68*** 1,114	-0.10 1,306.11*** 1,114	0.02 1,298.10*** 1,114

Note: The reference group is mothers, youngest child is school age, not employed, married, no spouse or spouse not employed, respectively. Mothers and fathers are from different households.
 †Reporting too little time with all children is technically a report of too little time with the only child in one-child families, or with both the oldest and youngest child in families with two or more children. We examined the GSS data and found that those in families with three or more children who report too little time with both their oldest and youngest children typically also report too little time with their middle children. The Sloan data do not include responses to this question for middle children.
 ‡ $p \leq .10$. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

Table 5. Coefficients (Odds Ratios) From Logistic Regression Predicting Too Little Time With Youngest Child: National Survey of Parents, 2000

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Background characteristics						
Gender (1 = father)	-0.18 (0.84)	-0.49 (0.61)	-0.18 (0.84)	-0.60 (0.55)	-0.18 (0.84)	-1.02 (0.36)
Age of the child (reference: school-age)						
Preschool	0.10 (1.11)	0.13 (1.14)	0.16 (1.17)	0.20 (1.22)	0.38* (1.46)	0.42† (1.53)
Adolescent	0.36† (1.44)	0.06 (1.06)	0.28 (1.33)	-0.04 (0.97)	0.23 (1.26)	-0.13 (0.88)
Gender × preschool	-	-0.02 (0.98)	-	-0.04 (0.96)	-	-0.04 (0.96)
Gender × adolescent	-	0.65† (1.92)	-	0.67† (1.96)	-	0.74† (2.10)
Work hours	0.03*** (1.04)	0.03***	0.03*** (1.03)	0.03*** (1.03)	0.03*** (1.03)	0.03*** (1.03)
Gender × work hours	-	0.01 (1.01)	-	0.01 (1.01)	-	0.00 (1.00)
Family structure						
Marital status (1 = single parent)	0.14 (1.15)	-0.28 (0.76)	0.06 (1.06)	-0.44 (0.65)	0.25 (1.28)	-0.37 (0.69)
Gender × marital status	-	0.55 (1.74)	-	0.68 (1.97)	-	0.83 (2.30)
Spouse's work hours	-0.01* (0.99)	-0.02* (0.98)	-0.01* (0.99)	-0.02** (0.98)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.02** (0.98)
Gender × spouse's work hours	-	0.01 (1.01)	-	0.01 (1.02)	-	0.02 (1.02)
Quantity and focused time with children						
Weekly hours w/children (diary data)	-	-	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00† (1.00)	0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)
# of days/week family eats together	-	-	-0.11*** (0.90)	-0.11*** (0.90)	-0.10** (0.91)	-0.10** (0.91)
# of one-on-one hours last week w/youngest	-	-	-	-	-0.04*** (0.96)	-0.04*** (0.96)

Table 5. Continued

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Controls						
Number of children (reference: two)						
One	-0.51** (0.60)	-0.52** (0.60)	-0.52** (0.60)	-0.52** (0.59)	-0.23 (0.80)	-0.22 (0.80)
Three or more	-0.50** (0.61)	-0.49** (0.62)	-0.49** (0.61)	-0.47** (0.62)	-0.58** (0.56)	-0.56** (0.57)
Years of education	0.01 (1.01)	0.01 (1.01)	0.01 (1.01)	0.01 (1.01)	0.02 (1.02)	0.02 (1.02)
Income (thousands of dollars)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)	-0.00 (1.00)
Income imputation flag	0.01 (1.01)	0.07 (1.07)	0.04 (1.04)	0.10 (1.11)	-0.01 (0.99)	0.05 (1.06)
Race (reference: White)						
Black	0.21 (1.24)	0.22 (1.25)	0.11 (1.12)	0.12 (1.13)	0.13 (1.14)	0.15 (1.16)
Hispanic	-0.05 (0.95)	-0.03 (0.97)	-0.07 (0.94)	-0.03 (0.97)	0.17 (1.18)	0.23 (1.26)
Other	-0.48 (0.62)	-0.49 (0.62)	-0.47 (0.62)	-0.47 (0.63)	-0.32 (0.72)	-0.30 (0.74)
Age	-0.02† (0.98)	-0.02† (0.98)	-0.01 (0.99)	-0.01† (0.99)	-0.02** (0.98)	-0.02** (0.98)
Age imputation flag	0.10 (1.11)	0.10 (1.11)	0.10 (1.11)	0.01 (1.10)	0.09 (1.09)	0.09 (1.09)
Diary about Saturday/Sunday	0.11 (1.21)	0.13 (1.14)	0.18 (1.19)	0.20 (1.22)	0.18 (1.20)	0.20 (1.23)
Summer diary	0.24 (1.28)	0.26 (1.29)	0.28 (1.32)	0.29 (1.34)	0.23 (1.25)	0.24 (1.27)
One-on-one time w/youngest typical	-	-	-	-	-0.17 (0.85)	-0.17 (0.85)
Intercept	-0.41	-0.06	0.32	0.74	0.94	1.54*
-2 Log likelihood	1302.33***	1295.92***	1285.15***	1277.89***	1221.48***	1212.16***
N	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,074	1,074

Note: The reference groups are mothers, youngest child is school age, not employed, married, no spouse or spouse not employed, respectively. Mothers and fathers are from different households. †p ≤ .10. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001 (two-tailed).

Table 4, Models 5 and 6: Work hours and spouse's work hours relate strongly to feelings, even in the face of controls for the diary quantity time measure and eating together. Gender, the age of the youngest child, and marital status do not show any significant relationships with feelings, controlling for work hours and other characteristics. Model 4 shows gender interaction terms added to the model. Similar to the prior results, there are no gender \times work hour effects, gender \times marital effects, or gender \times spouse work hours effect. Also similar to earlier models, the father \times adolescent interaction effect is marginally significant.

The last models in Table 5 control for another dimension of focused time: the number of one-on-one hours last week with the youngest child (see Models 5 and 6). Again, a greater number of paid work hours continues to relate to feelings despite the introduction of all of the *time with children* indicators. Here, parents of preschool children show more strain than those whose youngest is elementary school age, and fathers of adolescents show more strain.

In sum, the results of Tables 4 and 5 suggest that more time with children in and of itself may not be enough to alleviate time strain. Key structural roles such as employment have a strong relationship to parents' feeling too little time with children, and this is true even controlling for the actual amounts and kinds of time spent with children. Differences by gender of the parent, age of the child, and family structure are less consistent.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study is to chart the landscape of American parents' feelings about time with their children. Despite the focus today on tensions that parents allegedly have in creating enough time to spend with their children, there has been little systematic research to sort out how parents actually feel. We found that a significant percentage—almost half—of American parents residing with their children feel that they spend too little time with them.

Fathers are more likely to feel time deficits with children in both surveys. Once we controlled for work hours and other factors, however, the National Survey of Parents and the GSS results show a divergence: In the former, mothers actually feel marginally more time strain than fathers. Perhaps the different contexts of the surveys may explain

the slight disparities. In any case, fathers' greater likelihood of feeling time deficits with their children was due to gender differences in the amount of time spent in paid work and away from children.

Indeed, paid work hours matter greatly for parental time deficits, regardless of gender. The more hours of paid work, the more likely parents are to feel time strain with children. The intriguing aspect of work hours is that they are not explained away in models controlling for the amount of time parents report spending with their children, nor do activities such as eating together as a family or the number of focused one-on-one hours spent together with children reduce the parenting time pressure that accompanies work hours. Something other than a simple loss of parent-child hours or activities related to longer work hours must influence parents' time strain; Daly (2001) suggested that it is the lack of ability to spontaneously respond to children's needs, as the demands from employment are not easily escaped (see also Presser, 1995). Perhaps, as Garey's (1999) study of employed mothers' experiences and feelings suggests, employment and childrearing are highly intertwined, and it may be difficult for parents to disconnect the characteristics of one arena from the feelings about the other. Although we do not have appropriate measures to discern direct pathways related to role conflict, this is an area ripe for further investigation. For example, future work should consider qualitative aspects of paid work, including flexibility, shift work, and satisfaction, as well as the sheer amount of work.

The age of the youngest child is a factor in parental feelings about time with children. Parents of young children tend to spend more total time and more focused time with them, compared with those with elementary school-age children. Once the amount of time with children was controlled, there was some evidence that parents felt more time strain in parenting young children, suggesting that their perceived need for time is quite high. Although we expected that mothers of young children might feel this strain more acutely, this was not the case. Fathers of adolescents seem to feel a stronger time deficit as compared with mothers of adolescents and parents of elementary school-age children. Perhaps, as suggested by Kurz's (2002) research, fathers know that these youngsters will soon be off on their own, and they anticipate that it is their last chance to be with their children, who tend to remain closer to mothers as adults.

Single parents do not appear very different from married parents in terms of time strain. Further, in the GSS, single mothers felt even less time strain than married mothers, controlling for other factors. Perhaps because they generally are able to spend the same amount of time with children that married parents do, indeed even more one-on-one time, they do not appear to be especially strained once we controlled for work hours and other factors. Of course, noncoresidential single parents may feel quite different from the coresidential single parents in this study.

A spouse's work hours matters for feelings, even when we control for one's own work hours. Unexpectedly, however, the more hours a spouse spends in the labor force, the less strain a parent feels, perhaps because the relative absence of the other parent provides (or demands) more interaction with one's child. In the GSS, this was the case only for mothers, who feel less time strain when husbands work long hours than when they work shorter hours. A limitation is that we could not directly assess spouse's time with the child, which may be more relevant to the parent's feelings; instead, we used spouse's work hours as a proxy for his or her time with the child. Further research on the role of the spouse in a parent's own feelings is warranted.

We acknowledge limitations in this study. Because we used cross-sectional data, we do not know causal directions among some status and role characteristics such as work hours, the amount of time spent with children, and feelings. Some parents—perhaps more likely mothers than fathers, especially those in the middle class—may have already reduced their work hours *because* they felt time strain for their children. How parents feel about time with their children may depend on how much and in what ways (e.g., quantity or quality) parents feel that they should invest time in children, and what they actually (can) do to achieve their standard. Presumably, these factors, which we are unable to assess because of data limitations, vary by parental, child, and family statuses. The implications of parental time strain with children for the well-being of family members and parents themselves remain unanswered as well.

In sum, clearly a sizeable group of American parents experience a gap between the ideal amount of time they would like to devote to their children and the actual amount they allocate in their daily lives. When time demands of paid work are great, both mothers and fathers feel time

deficits with their children, regardless of the actual amount of time they spend with children. Children's age and the role of the spouse also matter for parents' feelings, with some differences for mothers versus fathers. The literature on parental investments in children has focused on what parents *do* for their children, such as the amount of time spent with them, and the types of activities they engage in, as well as their parenting practices. Our research suggests that how parents *feel* about what they do for their children as they struggle with achieving an ideal balance of time allocations across many obligations also helps further our understanding of parenthood in contemporary U.S. society.

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Appendix A. Activity Codes

00–09 <i>Paid Work</i>	34 Government/financial service	69 Travel/organizations
00 (not used)	35 Car repair services	70–79 <i>Entertainment/Social</i>
01 Main job	36 Other repair services	<i>Activities</i>
02 Unemployment	37 Other services	70 Sports events
03 Travel/during work	38 Errands	71 Entertainment
04 (not used)	39 Travel/goods & services	72 Movies/video
05 Second job	40–49 <i>Personal Needs &</i>	73 Theater
06 (not used)	<i>Care</i>	74 Museums
07 (not used)	40 Showering/bathing	75 Visiting
08 Breaks	41 Medical care	76 Parties
09 Travel/to or from work	42 Help and care	77 Bars/lounges
10–19 <i>Household Work</i>	43 Eating	78 Other social
10 Food preparation	44 Personal hygiene	79 Travel/social
11 Food cleanup	45 Sleeping/napping	80–89 <i>Recreation</i>
12 Cleaning house	46 (not used)	80 Active sports
13 Outdoor cleaning	47 Dressing, etc.	81 Outdoor
14 Clothes care	48 NA activities	82 Exercises
15 Car repair/maintenance	49 Travel/personal care	83 Hobbies
16 Other repairs	50–59 <i>Education & Training</i>	84 Domestic crafts
17 Plant care	50 Attending full-time school	85 Art
18 Animal care	51 Other classes	86 Music/drama/dance
19 Other household work	52 Other education	87 Games
20–29 <i>Child Care</i>	53 (not used)	88 Computer use
20 Baby care	54 Homework	89 Travel/recreation
21 Child care	55 Using library	90–99 <i>Communication</i>
22 Helping/teaching	56 Using Internet	90 Radio
23 Talking/reading	57 Playing games on the PC	91 TV
24 Indoor playing	58 Other PC use	92 Records/tapes
25 Outdoor playing	59 Travel/education	93 Read books
26 Medical care—child	60–69 <i>Organizational</i>	94 Reading magazines, etc.
27 Other child care	<i>Activities</i>	95 Reading newspaper
28 (not used)	60 Professional union	96 Conversations
29 Travel/child care	61 Special interest	97 Letters/writing/paperwork
30–39 <i>Obtaining Goods &</i>	62 Political/civic	98 Thinking/relaxing
<i>Services</i>	63 Volunteer/helping	99 Travel/passive
30 Shopping for food	64 Religious groups	
31 Shopping for clothes/household	65 Religious practices	
items	66 Fraternal	
32 Personal care services	67 Child/youth/family	
33 Medical appointments	68 Other organizations	

(Adapted from Americans' Use of Time Project; see Robinson & Godbey, 1999, pp. 355–357).

Appendix B. Weighted Means (SDs) or Percents for Independent and Control Variables

	NSP ^a (N = 1160)	GSS ^b (N = 821)
Parental and family statuses		
Gender (1 = <i>father</i>)	44%	44%
Age of the child		
Preschool	48%	41%
School age	31%	39%
Adolescent	20%	20%
Work hours	34.71 (19.77)	33.59 (20.18)
Family structure		
Marital status (1 = <i>single parent</i>)	24%	25%
Spouse's work hours	27.65 (23.20)	26.05 (22.62)
Quantity and focused time with children		
Weekly hours w/children (diary data)	43.27 (30.41)	—
# of days/week family eats together	4.62 (2.23)	—
# of one-on-one hours last week w/youngest	16.25 (20.35)	—
Other controls		
Number of children		
One	37%	40%
Two	40%	40%
Three or more	23%	20%
Years of education	13.37 (2.47)	13.46 (2.38)
Income (thousands of dollars)	59.49 (44.00)	57.03 (44.21)
Income imputation flag	9%	8%
Race		
White	68%	70%
Black	12%	15%
Hispanic	15%	11%
Other	5%	4%
Age	36.81 (9.34)	37.92 (8.10)
Age imputation flag	29%	—
Weekend survey	30%	32%
Summer diary	14%	—
One-on-one time w/youngest typical	1.93 (0.49)	—

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

^aNational Survey of Parents. ^bGeneral Social Survey.