

Swing shift kids: For parents who work nights, child care can be difficult to find [US] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

At the height of the Puget Sound economic slump nearly two years ago, the staff at Tillie Cavanaugh Child Care Center in Seattle's Chinatown International District took notice: More and more parents needed late-evening care for their children.

"We were approached by several people who had better-paying jobs who were forced into lower-paying jobs, but who did not have the usual 9-to-5 hours," said Camille Monzon, executive director of the community agency that operates the program, the Seattle Indian Center. "They had no place to take their kids."

So Monzon added Tillie Cavanaugh's to the short list of child-care centers in the Seattle area that stay open around-the-clock for parents who work late shifts.

Today, the problem for retail clerks, nurses, restaurant workers, bus drivers and others seeking night child care is that Tillie Cavanaugh Child Care remains an exception.

Parents who work nights may make do with informal child care, such as friends, relatives and baby-sitters. Of course, not everyone has those options.

Auerbach said evening child-care services surged in the late 1990s during the region's economic boom. Welfare-to-work programs put many low-income parents back into the labor pool, often in jobs that required night and weekend shifts.

The sluggish economic recovery, however, has been both good and bad news for parents who need evening care and the providers who offer it.

Some child-care operators, however, say they can barely afford to accept parents who receive child-care financial aid from the state because the reimbursements are too low.

- reprinted from Seattle Times

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