WE DO WORTHY WORK...
WE DESERVE WORTHY WAGES

Helping children learn and grow... comforting... maturing... reading... playing... diapering... feeding.... We know that the work we do every day in our child care programs is vitally important. We know it takes energy, dedication and skill. So if we're working so hard at something so valuable, why is it such a struggle to make ends meet with the salaries we earn?

Whether we call ourselves child care workers, family day care providers, preschool or early childhood teachers, teacher assistants or caregivers, we are working in a field where most employees are underpaid and undervalued.

In the past, many people have expressed their discontent about low wages and poor benefits by leaving the child care field altogether. Now there is something else we can do instead. On April 9, throughout the U.S., employees from all kinds of child care programs, along with parents, program directors and other concerned advocates, will join together for a "Worthy Wage Day" to raise public awareness about inadequate compensation in the child care profession. This day, which falls during the annual Week of the Young Child, is the first step in a multi-year, nationwide Worthy Wage Campaign.

Child Care Employee News Spring 1992 Volume 11, Number 2

What is the Worthy Wage Campaign?

The key to quality child care is the training and skill of caregivers--but the field is continually losing its best workers because of poor wages and benefits. The Worthy Wage Campaign is a five-year, grassroots effort to find our voices, empower ourselves and mobilize to reverse this child care staffing crisis. We need to let the American public know that:

- the nation's child care system must have a level of funding that meets the true cost of providing quality care;
- we can no longer keep a poorly funded system afloat by working for substandard pay;
- child care compensation is a problem that must be solved now.

Many local, state and national child care organizations have joined together in a Worthy Wage Coalition to promote the Campaign. Members range from national organizations such as NAEYC, the Children's Defense Fund, the National Head Start Association and National Association of Family Day Care, to local family day care associations, teachers' and directors' groups, and early childhood student committees. Any group or individual is welcome to join.

What can you do to get involved?

The first step in making change is to recognize that there is a problem. Many of us have been reluctant to talk about our own working conditions. As a result, many parents and policy makers are unaware how low our wages are, or that many of us lack such basic benefits as health insurance or adequate sick and vacation leave. Many people don't realize that the average rate of staff turnover has reached nearly 50% a year--and that this constant change in caregivers can have drastic effects on young children's development.
THE PRINCIPLES OF THE WORTHY WAGE CAMPAIGN

• Create a unified voice for the concerns of the early care and education work force at the national, state and local levels
• Increase the value and respect for those who provide early care and education through improving their wages, benefits, working conditions and training opportunities
• Promote the accessibility and affordability of high-quality early care and education options that meet the diverse needs of children and families

You can support the Campaign by joining or purchasing Worthy Wage Products.

COFFEE/TEA MUG
Generous in capacity, these white porcelain mugs with the Worthy Wage Campaign logo are of excellent design and weight. Microwave and dishwasher safe. Colors: green/bk and red/bk, 11oz. $8.00 each, set of six $40.00

BUTTON
At the heart of our campaign is the all important "Support Worthy Wages for Child Care" button. Colors: green/bk and red/bk, 2" x 3" $1.00 each

1993 CALENDAR
This useful twelve month calendar, has all the important dates to remind you when Worthy Wage Day is and other significant dates and holidays. Size: 8" x 10"; $8.00

TEE SHIRT
The official campaign tee is now available. Colors: multi-color printing on white Sizes: M, L, XL, 2XL $15.00 each

WW POSTER
The official Worthy Wage poster designed by artist Nancy Hom is great for your home, center, or office. If you would like your poster sent in a mailing tube, add $1.00. A tube can hold 12 posters. Size: 16" x 24" $5.00

TOTE BAG
These practical carry-all tote bags with the Worthy Wage Campaign logo are great for carrying those extras that all teachers, providers, and parents need on outings. Colors: Natural with red & black printing. Size: 14" x 10" x 5". $10.00 each

WORTHY WAGE RESOURCE PACKET
The Worthy Wage Campaign Resource Packet is a valuable tool for helping individuals and communities organize for Worthy Wage Day 1993. $10.00

WORTHY WAGE VIDEO
Worthy Work, Worthless Wages
Produced by Margie Carter, in collaboration with the Child Care Directors Association of Greater Seattle (CDAGS), the Worthy Wages Task Force and the broader child care community in Seattle. This is a Mowing Images Video Project. This video chronicles the Seattle, Washington child care community's activism to improve the quality of services by confronting the staffing crisis. VHS format, 15 minutes running time. $12.95 for individuals $20.00 for institutions

ORDER FORM

☐ Yes, I'm interested in building the membership of the Worthy Wage Campaign. Please send information to:

Check one:
☐ Bill my Visa*
☐ Check enclosed**
☐ Bill my MasterCard*

Card# ____________________________ Expires _____________

Signature ____________________________

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City/State/Zip ____________________________

Phone: _______

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* For credit card, minimum order is $20
** Please make check payable to: Child Care Employee Project
6536 Telegraph Avenue, Suite A-201 • Oakland, CA 94609-1114

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**WORTHY WAGE CAMPAIGN GOALS**

- To increase the value and respect for those who provide early care and education through improving their wages, benefits, working conditions and training opportunities

- To promote the accessibility and affordability of high quality early care and education options that meet the diverse needs of children and families

- To create a unified voice for the concerns of the early care and education work force at the national, state and local level

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**TO JOIN THE WORTHY WAGE CAMPAIGN, FILL OUT THIS FORM AND ENCLOSE IT WITH YOUR CHECK.**

**Organizations** joining the Worthy Wage Campaign become a member of the National Worthy Wage Coalition, a network of groups participating in Worthy Wage efforts. As a member, your organization will receive access to Worthy Wage products and resources, as well as updates on strategies and triumphs throughout the Campaign year. Suggested donations are as follows:

- Small organization/agency: 5-100 people - $25-$100
- Medium organization/agency: 100-500 people - $100-$500
- Large organization/agency: 500 or more people - $500 or more

Organizations wishing to support the Campaign but not join the Coalition at this time should contact the CCEP office.

**NAME________________________**

**ORGANIZATION________________________**

**STREET ADDRESS________________________**

**CITY, STATE, ZIP________________________**

**AREA CODE AND PHONE________________________**

- Check here if you would like the name of a contact person in your area.

**Individuals** are invited to join the Worthy Wage Campaign and are encouraged to participate in local and regional Campaign activities. By joining as an individual member, you also become a member of the Child Care Employee Project, and will receive CCEP's quarterly newsletter highlighting national child care compensation issues. Contributions are based on income as follows:

- Regular membership: $25
- Supporting membership: $50
- Sustaining membership: $100 or more

**NAME________________________**

**ORGANIZATION________________________**

**STREET ADDRESS________________________**

**CITY, STATE, ZIP________________________**

**AREA CODE AND PHONE________________________**

- Check here if you would like the name of a contact person in your area.

Return this form with your contribution to:

The Child Care Employee Project/Worthy Wage Campaign • 6536 Telegraph Avenue, Suite A-201 • Oakland, CA 94609-1114 • (510) 653-9889
Designating April 9, 1992, as "Child Care Worthy Wage Day"

WHEREAS, Child care allows parents to provide for their family's economic well being and that of the country; and

WHEREAS, High quality child care enables children to optimize their development, yet is beyond the means of many American families; and

WHEREAS, High quality child care services require a well-trained and stable work force; and

WHEREAS, Research continues to demonstrate that unskilled and inconsistent caregiving for young children negatively impacts their language and social development; and

WHEREAS, even those child care workers who fulfill state or federally mandated education and training requirements earn between one third and one half of what comparably educated workers earn in other fields, and real wages when adjusted for inflation for child care teachers and providers have decreased over 25% in the last fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, Poverty level wages averaging $11,000 a year and the absence of health or retirement benefits fuel an alarmingly high turnover rate among child care teaching staff and family day care providers, which has tripled to over 40% annually since the mid 1970s: Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That April 9, 1992 be declared Child Care Worthy Wage Day throughout the United States to recognize the important contribution of the child care work force to the future education and productivity of the nation and the well-being of its children and families, and further to acknowledge the need of the work force for higher wages and health benefits, and of parents for assistance to cover these necessary costs. The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

This resolution, being introduced into the House of Representatives by Congressman George Miller, and a similar version before the Senate, require the signatures of half the members of both the Senate and House to pass.

Write your Representatives and Senators immediately; let them know:
1) How much you (or the teachers and providers you depend on) are paid.
2) How your earnings compare to other jobs in your community.
3) How salaries affect turnover which is almost 50% annually in many communities.
4) How turnover affects children and parents. Get parents to write their own letters.

Address letters to:
The Honorable Congressman’s Name
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Senator’s Name
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

WRITE CONGRESS TODAY!
Recommended Worthy Wage Policy Platform

In 1988 the National Child Care Staffing Study exposed the minimally adequate and deteriorating quality of many full day child care centers and linked the problems with these programs to the inadequate compensation of child care teaching staff. A 1992 update of the study reveals that teachers continue to earn exceptionally low wages, receive limited or no health insurance and are leaving their jobs at rates which jeopardize program quality. Similar conditions plague home-based services as well. The lack of significant improvement in the compensation of the early care and education workforce and the related implications for program quality require immediate changes in policy.

In order to make high quality early childhood programs accessible and affordable to all families, and to achieve a minimum average wage of $10 an hour for teachers and providers, the following goals should be applied to policies at the federal, state and local levels. These objectives apply to welfare reform efforts and job development programs. Quality enhancement funds recommended below should not result in a reduction of services for families, but rather require an increased commitment to early care and education programs.

1) Assure the health of child care providers and children, by implementing comprehensive health coverage which does not reduce current wage rates, for all child care teachers and providers who work in licensed facilities in 1995.

2) Establish equity in quality for child care programs by modeling new and reauthorized federal and state funding for early care and education, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant, after the 1990 Head Start Reauthorization (which mandated that 25% of funds be spent on quality enhancements, half of which were earmarked for salaries).

3) Remove all restrictions on reimbursement rates for services which institutionalize the poverty-level wages of the early care and education workforce. Increase reimbursement rates to an amount which insures a fair wage for teachers and providers. Explore mechanisms which will permit higher payment rates to programs which meet locally agreed upon salary goals.

4) Restructure governmental assistance to parents for early care and education services to be more equitable. Increase the level of support for families earning below the median income in their community to ensure that cost does not limit parents’ access to care. Reform the Child Care Tax Credit to link these governmental subsidies more closely to the quality of services.

5) Promote the necessary skills for child care employment by increasing access to higher education opportunities for those who are currently employed in the child care field as well as those considering such a career. Expand loan forgiveness, grants and other programs that reward those who wish to make early care and education a career choice they can afford and are proud to choose.

The Worthy Wage Executive Council has joined with nearly 100 other advocacy groups calling on President Clinton to create a commission on the economics of child care on the scale of the current effort to reform health care. This commission would examine new financing options that can insure comprehensive high quality care to families of all incomes without relying on the subsidies provided by the child care work force through their low wages. Worthy Wage Day activities give us the opportunity to convince the President to take action on these recommendations.

WORTHY WAGE ANNUAL MEETING

When? June 4 - 6, 1993
Where? Minneapolis, MN
What? Looking forward, looking back, and where we've been and where we're going
Who? Worthy Wage Campaign Steering Committee and Coalition members
How Much? $20 per person per day for food and lodging.