BREAKING THE SILENCE

In a 1995 postcard campaign, teachers, providers, and parents around the country wrote about their experiences working in our underfunded child care system. These powerful messages help us realize how the well-being of our young children is being jeopardized. They show us how the lack of decent wages drives away the best and brightest from the field.

low wages

"The starting salary at our center is $4.25 per hour. How can we possibly keep educated teachers for 'our' children?"

Teacher, Perrysburg, New York

fact

Average Annual Wages:
Child Care Teachers: $11,725
Family Child Care Providers: $8,627
General Female Work Force: $21,747
General Male Work Force: $30,407
Poverty Level for Family of Three: $12,187

leaving the jobs we love

"I had to leave this field for many years because I could not support myself on an $11,000 annual salary. I returned to this field because I am now married and my husband's wages support us. His company is experiencing layoffs and if it effects his job, I would again have to return to retail and an annual salary of $40,000+. It is hard to stay in early childhood education...."

Teacher, Center Stratford, Hew Hampshire

fact

Approximately one third of all child care teachers leave their centers each year.

children suffer

"The turnover at my child's day care center causes emotional upheaval each time it occurs. Our son weeps and acts out after a change of providers."

Parent, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

fact

Children attending lower-quality centers and centers with high staff turnover are less competent in language and social development. As a result, they are less likely to be prepared for school.

education does not guarantee a decent wage

"Although I have a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education, twenty years of teaching experience, and I love what I do, I am seriously considering leaving the field so that my own children can attend college. In my community, office cleaning personnel receive higher pay than early childhood teachers at my level."

Teacher, Austin, Texas

fact

Although they earn substantially lower wages, child care teachers are better educated than the general public.

struggling to care for ourselves and our own families

"I am a single mother with a B.S. in Early Childhood Education, yet I am on food stamps and live with my parents because I can't afford rent. I am a full-time teacher."

Teacher, Sudbury, Massachusetts

fact

In 1988, 25% of all early childhood teaching staff worked a second job.

living with no health or dental insurance, sick leave or retirement

"I have no medical care and if I get sick I can't take off work, because I don't get paid for it."

Teacher, Laurinburg, North Carolina

fact

Only 18% of child care centers offer health coverage to teaching staff.

the lack of respect

"I know caring for young children is crucial, but it makes me feel badly when I earn less than people who work in professional fields that don't influence the future. I am well educated and proud of what I do, but I know that others perceive child care as 'baby-sitting.' I am not able to save for my future. Thus, I cannot work for tomorrow's future."

Teacher, Madbury, New Hampshire

the worthy wage campaign

Whether we call ourselves child care workers, family care providers, preschool or early childhood teachers, teacher assistants or caregivers, we are working in a field where most of us are underpaid and undervalued—a field that is continually losing its best workers.

The Worthy Wage Campaign is a nationwide grassroots effort to empower ourselves and mobilize to reverse this child care staffing crisis. The work of local campaigns in more than forty states is coordinated by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force.

Get Involved:

- Join your local Worthy Wage Campaign
- Write your local and national policy makers about the need for more resources for child care
- Treat your children's caregivers with respect and support their efforts on behalf of your children
- Become a member of NCECW/Worthy Wage Campaign

national center for the early childhood work force

The over-arching mission of the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force is to assure high-quality, affordable child care services for families by upgrading the training and compensation of teachers and providers. The NCECW addresses its mission through program and policy development, research and evaluation, and public education activities at the local, state, and national levels. Additionally, NCECW coordinates two major efforts to promote leadership and career advancement for teachers and providers: the Worthy Wage Campaign, a grassroots initiative empowering the work force itself to press for staffing solutions, and the Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance, an information and technical assistance network for mentors and mentoring programs nationwide.

For more information, write or call us:
NCECW, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 1037, Washington, DC 20005-2112 (202) 737-7700.

The child care statistics cited in this brochure are taken from research conducted by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, the Work and Family Institute, and other sources.

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membership form detach and mail to NCECW

"I cannot imagine being part of this profession and not being involved in NCECW and the Worthy Wage movement."

Family Child Care Provider, Madison, Wisconsin

❒ **regular membership** $30 ($15 for teachers and providers)

I would like to receive the new biannual NCECW newsletter, plus a discount on selected NCECW publications and products.

❒ **comprehensive membership** $50 ($25 for teachers and providers)

In addition to the benefits of regular membership, I would like to receive all special mailings from: ❒ The Worthy Wage Campaign ❒ The Early Childhood Mentoring Alliance ❒ Both

❒ **publication fee** $50 for members, $75 for non-members

Please send me all new NCECW publications (policy papers, research reports, etc.) issued during the year.

❒ **donation**

I would like to make an additional donation to NCECW to support its services for the early childhood work force in the amount of: ❒ $25 ❒ $50 ❒ $100 ❒ other $ _____

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-mail address _____

I am currently working as a: ❒ Child care center teacher ❒ Family child care provider ❒ Child care advocate ❒ Center director ❒ Program developer ❒ _____

❒ Enclosed is a check in the amount of $ _____
❒ Please charge $ _____ to my ❒ MasterCard ❒ Visa

Card number _____ Expiration date _____

Signature _____

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