

CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE NEWS



A PUBLICATION OF THE
CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE PROJECT

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Thanks to our many readers who responded so positively to our "Child Care Scare" article in the last CCEP NEWS. Your feedback and suggestions were helpful to us and we hope that you will continue to share how the issue of child abuse in child care is being addressed in your community. Now, more than ever, it is important to contact local media about doing positive stories on child care. See CCEP News in this issue for details about our new resource to help you in the process!

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WANTED: Experienced Teachers

While the media is focused on exceptional cases of abuse in child care, a widespread problem affecting program quality remains hidden from the public eye: Programs are having difficulty filling job openings, especially for experienced teachers. Directors tell us more and more that qualified teachers are hard to find; many have openings for months at a time and find themselves spending inordinate amounts of their energy trying to locate new staff. Teaching staff tell us of increased stress from the additional work of constantly orienting new subs and the increased responsibility for program planning and communication with families.

What's going on? Is this a trend or just a temporary inconvenience? At CCEP we cannot forecast the future, but we do think it's important to analyze the child care job market and forces affecting it in order to be prepared for what lies ahead. Below we've summarized some factors impacting employment prospects in child care.

TURNOVER: The continual need for teachers stems in part from the high turnover rate in the field (the number of staff leaving their jobs) which may be increasing. Studies

conducted by CCEP and local groups across the country have found turnover rates ranging from 15-30% a year. According to the Sept. 10, 1984 issue of DAY CARE USA, a recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) study reports that "workers in day care centers, nursery schools, Head Start and other child care professions except family day care left work at a 41.7% rate in a 12 month period in 1980-81." This study ranks child care work among the country's top ten job categories with the highest turnover. (Dishwashers, peddling and pumping gas share the top honors.) (CCEP is awaiting the full copy of the study, "Occupational Projections and Training Data," available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 for \$4. Future issues of the NEWS will detail the findings).

LOW PAY: Poor compensation not only fuels turnover within programs but also forces trained staff to leave the field altogether. Little economic incentive exists for experienced teachers to make a life long career commitment to early childhood

continued on page 2

education. As staff gain experience they also age, thus they need more economic security. Consequently, many communities experience a critical need for head teachers but have an adequate supply of entry-level applicants. According to a recent study in Massachusetts (see National Notes), this phenomenon has resulted in substantial increases over the last two years in directors' and head teachers' wages (20% and 19% respectively) in order to attract and maintain experienced staff, while entry level wages have remained the same. A report on job opportunities for child care staff in Santa Cruz, California conducted by the State Employment Development Department suggests likewise that experienced teachers face a very good outlook (the demand is greater than the supply of qualified applicants), whereas aides face keen competition because the supply of qualified applicants is considerably greater than the demand.

GROWTH IN CHILD CARE SERVICES: While child care programs are coping with turnover and the exit of staff from the field, the rapid growth in child care services in many parts of the country is resulting in steep competition for trained staff. This growing demand can be expected to continue well into the next decade due to the continued influx of mothers into the labor market. According to the same BLS study, the projected growth rate for preschool teachers over the next decade is 37.9% to 43.9% compared to the total projected labor force growth of 23% to 28%. (Considerable regional variation depends on other forces in the labor market. For an overview of regional trends in day care, see "How's Business?-Trends in Child Care Across the Country" by Sharon L. Kagan and Roger Neugebauer in CHILD CARE INFORMATION EXCHANGE, Sept./Oct. 1983)

TEACHER SHORTAGE: Compounding the demands on the pool of available early childhood staff is the shortage of elementary school teachers beginning to affect many communities and expected to increase over the decade. In California this trend stems from growth in the school age population due to the upturn in the birth rate along with a high percentage of teacher retirement. (High teacher retirement is attributed to the cutbacks of recent years which eliminated many younger people from the profession.) National studies also name wages and status as other factors which discourage college students from pursuing teaching careers. Still, career opportunities in elementary schools are considerably more attractive than in child care. For those early childhood staff with

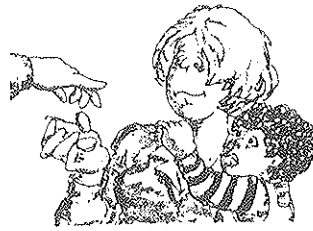
elementary teaching credentials and/or bachelor's degrees, once unavailable public school jobs are again an option.

IMPLICATIONS: From our vantage point at CCEP, the child care workforce appears to be at a major crossroads. Because of economic and demographic forces outlined above, it is likely that it will become even more difficult to find experienced staff to fill program vacancies. It is also likely that the profile of child care workers will likewise shift. One possibility is that younger workers with less formal education and shorter "career expectancy" will outnumber their current counterparts, many of whom are 30 or older, college educated and originally thought to be long term child care workers. The problem isn't finding someone to work but finding trained staff (and the resources to train them.) Child care - even though it is low paid work - will always have potential workers. After all, it is important to remember that most jobs in this country, especially for women, tend to be low paid like child care. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, low paid service jobs have and will continue to grow and higher paid manufacturing jobs will shrink. Thus the task before us is not only to explore strategies to improve wages and working conditions in order to attract and maintain qualified staff, but also to develop training mechanisms that will enable us to offer the best quality care given the pool of available job seekers.

Reconsideration of both inservice and preservice training curriculum is essential. Preservice training, especially in community colleges, must recognize that many students will enter the job market during or before their course of study rather than after. Courses must be geared to this new reality, thus requiring programs and instructors to develop new methods to teach students who are already working in the field. Inservice training, all too infrequent due to funding cuts, must accomplish the dual task of orienting new staff not just to a particular program but to child development theory and standard early childhood practices. Additionally, experienced staff need guidance in how to supervise and give feedback to their novice coworkers.

Now, along with pressures to secure resources for better salaries and benefits already felt widely throughout the field, come a mounting need for training monies as well. CCEP will continue to share strategies developed around the country to meet these needs. (See National Notes and CCEP News in this issue.)

Employee Talk



Dear ET:

Although my staff and I need (and deserve) medical coverage as a benefit, there is no realistic way the center can afford to pay monthly insurance premiums for each person. Are there any alternatives to regular medical insurance coverage for child care staff?

Signed, Could Benefit From Some Benefits

Dear Could:

Although good health is an essential part of being an effective child care worker, often our only "insurance policy" is to neglect everyday health problems and fervently hope that major emergencies don't befall us. Most workers can't easily afford to purchase health insurance due to low salaries, and most programs can't afford to provide all the necessary benefits.

With no medical insurance or money to purchase health care, staff may continue to work while suffering from minor ailments. Left untreated, minor problems often become larger illnesses, creating potentially serious problems for the employee, his/her family, and the children and staff in the program. Recognizing the importance of helping employees protect their health is a good first step towards establishing policies which provide child care staff with the respect and security they deserve.

With that in mind, one alternative (and/or supplement) to regular insurance is to establish a "health fund". This is a budgeted amount of money which the employer provides per year for each employee (eg. \$300.00) and which can be used for health related services. Depending on the program's tax status and funding source,

unexpended funds may or may not be carried over to the following year's budget. (As with other major administrative policies, consult your lawyer, accountant or the IRS for the specific regulations covering your situation.)

The fund is considered a "fringe benefit", and as such neither the employee or employer is taxed on the money. The employer who pays business taxes can claim the payment as a deductible business expense. An additional "plus" is that the employee can choose where to spend health fund money. For instance, it can be used for eyeglasses, therapy, dentists, etc. The employee "fronts" the money and is then reimbursed upon submitting receipts to a designated staff person administering the fund.

A fund such as this is an excellent beginning or supplementary benefit for staff. Over time, as the program's budget is discussed or staff pay negotiations are initiated, other steps can be taken towards the goal of fully paid medical coverage by the employer. The more traditional health coverage options for staff are individual or group insurance plans. (See CCEP Handout #3 for more detailed discussion of these topics.)

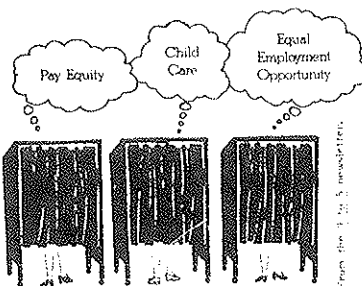
Remember, programs can also respond to staff health needs through effective preventative training and thoughtful personnel policies regarding sick leave, substitutes, breaks, environmental hazards, and so on. The CCEP Health and Safety Packet for Child Care Workers and many of our handouts address these areas, and we are also available to provide training and technical assistance to individuals and programs. See our publication list on the back page, or call us.

Finally, if readers are aware of other creative health coverage options, please write to us and we'll share your ideas in future newsletters!

Signed, ET

Coming in the next issue of the News: Special Health Concerns for School-Age Staff.

VOTE!



VOTE!

CCEP NEWS:

Protections for Child Care Staff

We are happy to report that SB1754, the bill which contained legislation to help protect child care staff who report licensing violations from discrimination and firing **passed and was signed** by Governor Deukmejian! We're now waiting for word on how the state licensing department (DSS) plans to implement the requirements set forth in the bill so that CCEP can let child care workers know about this new provision and other employment rights affecting them. Copies of the bill's language, developed by CCEP and the Child Care Law Center, are available by writing CCEP.

Professional Preparation

One of the three new CCEP resources available this month is: Beyond "Just Working With Kids": Preparing Early Childhood Teachers to Advocate for Themselves and Others". This curriculum for early childhood instructors at 2 & 4 year institutions contains over 150 activities and resources to help students understand and practice effective advocacy. (To order the curriculum, see the CCEP publications list on the back page.) The curriculum will be introduced and discussed at the California Community College Early Childhood Educators conference in October and at a series of three workshops on teacher education at the NAEYC conference in Los Angeles on Friday, November 9. We're very grateful to the members of our Professional Preparation Advisory Committee for their hard work and input on this project, and to Margo Trombetta for enabling us to produce the curriculum.

Salary Survey Results and Local News

Results of the Northern Alameda County salary survey conducted by CCEP and BANANAS Resource and Referral agency are available from CCEP by sending us a self-addressed stamped envelope. (Please specify which results you would like: full-day, part-day or school-age programs.) Results of the survey were announced and discussed at our first child care worker community education meeting in Berkeley. The dates and topics of future meetings, supported by our grant from the Vanguard Foundation, are available by calling CCEP. Recognizing the problems of crossing the Bay, we'll soon be organizing San Francisco meetings too. The Vanguard grant also enables us to continue our ongoing directors support

group which meets regularly. Participants are always welcome for any of these groups. Call CCEP for details!

The CCEP Southern California Support Group is currently working on a presentation about child care working conditions for the local Commission on the Status of Women. (Join us! For information about Southern California CCEP activities, call Jan Brown at (818) 796-4346.) Southern California participants have also finished work on another new CCEP resource, Handout #20, called: "What Every Parent Should Know About Their Child Care Worker." Although we originally looked forward to a large printing donation to distribute the handout free to centers and R & R agencies, our generous, but ill-fated printer went bankrupt! Nevertheless, we will print as many as our budget allows, and ask that individuals and groups reprint as many as they can to share with parents.

Copies of Handout #20 are available by sending a SASE to CCEP. We'll also be distributing it at the **NAEYC Conference** in L.A., November 8-11. If you plan on attending, look for CCEP workshops on salary surveys, health and safety, professional preparation, stress in school-age programs, and parent/provider relations throughout the conference, and please join us and share your thoughts on child care working conditions at the Child Care Employees Caucus on Saturday evening!

CCEP Goes to Washington...

CCEP Director Marcy Whitebook recently crossed the continent to testify on abuse in child care before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee on Oversight and the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families. The hearings were held in response to a proposal to institute fingerprint checks for all persons working in child care, a policy already in effect in California. Although the potential effectiveness of such a measure to thwart abuse in child care is in question, it is extremely heartening to see people (especially legislators) talk seriously about the need for increased support to child care and staff training. Particularly supportive of these issues and responsive to CCEP's testimony was Congressman George Miller, who heads the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, and is a true friend of child care. Let him know you support his efforts to develop a more coherent child care delivery system in this country. (Copies of the testimony are available by sending a SASE to CCEP.)

(continued on page 5)

GLOBAL GLIMPSE:

CANADA

Judging from the increase in CCEP contact with Canada, many of our Northern neighbors are advocating strongly for input and change in their child care system. We're happy to offer a report on local issues from our newest correspondent, Peter Ashmore of the British Columbia Day Care Action Coalition:

In many Canadian provinces, as in many American states, the squeeze is on social programs including day care. In British Columbia the day care subsidies - available only to eligible low income families - have been at the same level since December, 1981, in spite of an increase of over 15% in the cost of living. The subsidy level is a kind of benchmark for the fees that centres charge parents. So, no increase in the subsidy levels plus an increase in centre costs equals a slow rise in parent fees, enrollment problems for some centres, and hard bargaining for only small, and sometimes no, wage increases for day care staff.

In B.C., and especially in metropolitan Vancouver, where many day care workers are unionized, the squeeze has added impetus to the work of public education and of coalition building within the day care community. A number of things have happened in the last few months:

1) In May the day care community celebrated our 3rd Annual Day Care Week with a parade, a fair, a petition campaign, and a brief to the members of the provincial legislature.

2) In June representatives of the 5 different unions which bargain for day care workers, along with the provincial Pre-School Teachers' Association (similar to a state AEYC) met together for the first time to share information and discuss common goals.

3) During the summer Federal Election, day care was a mainstream campaign issue.

Perhaps the most critical development of the past few months is the appointment by the federal government of a Task Force on Child Care. The Task Force has commissioned research on a number of topics - including the first Canada wide study of day care wages and working conditions and will report to the new federal government in December, 1984. (CCEP will print the results in an upcoming issue of the News) (Those interested in joining the B.C. Daycare Action Coalition to work for a coherent, province-wide, quality day care system, write P.O. Box 3932, Vancouver MPO, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3Z4.)

Working on a national level in Canada is the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, a non-profit membership organization addressing the immediate and long-term needs of children, parents and providers. The CDCAA worked hard (and apparently successfully) to make day care an issue in the recent federal elections, utilizing national and local media to reach their goals. They will continue to keep these issues on the federal agenda, garnering support from individuals and groups in all regions of the country. The CDCAA publishes a newsletter and other materials. For more information write 323 rue Chapel Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7Z2, Canada.

CCEP NEWS (continued)

develop a more coherent child care delivery system in this country. (Copies of the testimony are available by sending a SASE to CCEP.)

Managing the Media Maze

Yet another CCEP resource is hot off the press: "Managing the Media Maze: A Resource Guide for Child Care Advocates. Thanks to

grants from the Eastman Fund and NAEYC, we have been able to produce this "how-to" booklet which de-mystifies the process of using the media. (To order a copy, see the inside back page.) Taking a page from our own booklet, a major article by CCEP Director Marcy Whitebook on the "child care scare" and its effect on parents and workers appeared in the September 23rd San Francisco Chronicle, the largest circulation newspaper in Northern California. We're gratified by the large response we've received to the article, all of it positive. (Write us for a reprint.)

NATIONAL

MINNESOTA

Last December six frustrated teacher aides in a local infant-toddler center met with a representative of the **Minneapolis Child Care Workers' Alliance** to brainstorm solutions to their many workplace woes. Their frustrations included: salaries only slightly above minimum wage, lack of paid sick leave, vacations or holidays (even though parents paid full fees for legal holidays such as Christmas and Fourth of July), chronic staff shortages and violation of state licensing ratios. Initially doubtful of what they could accomplish, these six women spearheaded **one of the first successful unionizing drives in a day care chain** in this country. Late this summer, 61 aides working for La Pepiniere, a Montessori chain, voted to affiliate with AFSCME, Council 15 of the AFL-CIO. Heartened by their victory, this diverse group of women ranging in age from their twenties to their fifties know that their work has just begun. Over the coming months they will be working to negotiate their first contract.

The **first nationwide symposium on Infectious Disease in Day Care** occurred in Minneapolis this summer. Cosponsored by the Minnesota Dept. Of Health and several departments at the University of Minnesota, the symposia allowed epidemiologists, doctors and a host of child care experts to debate the causes and cures of the rash of illnesses now linked to day care. Protecting staff from disease ranked high among the expressed concerns as did improving working conditions and increased staff training. One specific recommendation was to develop a nationwide mechanism for dispersing information and gathering statistics about health issues in day care. Such data is sorely needed by child care providers seeking to decrease incidents of disease as well as trying to protect their own health and receive compensation for job related disabilities. A tape summarizing the Symposium is available for \$6 + \$1 postage from Westmark Tapes, 8345 Duluth St. Golden Valley, MN 55427 (612) 544-3050. Written proceedings of the conference are scheduled to be published in June 1985. We'll keep you posted! For more information about health and day care see Dear ET in this issue.

In the last CCEP NEWS we reported that the Child Care Workers' Alliance and Minneapolis AEYC were working with the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare to revise the instrument used to collect salary data within the state in order to secure more accurate findings. (Minnesota is the only state that conducts an annual salary survey of child care workers!) Over the last couple of months, the University of Minnesota and the Center for Urban and Regional Advancement have committed additional resources to these efforts. Staff have been hired to conduct a statewide salary survey. CCEP will report the findings in the next issue!

MASSACHUSETTS

Over 250 child care providers gathered on September 22 in Western Massachusetts for "Quality Child Care: The Future Is In Our Hands", a **day-long conference sponsored by the Day Care and Human Services Local of District 65, UAW**. Plenary sessions focused on the need for empowering members of the child care community -- both within their workplaces through organizing and in the broader political arena. Over twenty workshops in the afternoon covered topics ranging from curriculum to child abuse to unionizing. The day also marked the first annual **statewide Child Care Worker Recognition Day** proclaimed by local officials. To note this event, conference planners arranged a lunchtime ceremony to honor all providers -- calling to the stage those family day care providers and center staff working in the field for ten years or more!

District 65 was entirely responsible for the event, but the Department of Social Services subsidized the conference to the tune of \$10 per attendee. How did this happen? Thanks to the tireless efforts of Massachusetts advocates, their state budget includes \$300,000 each year for day care training. Most of the money is used by DSS to sponsor free courses for child care providers at local colleges. But a small percentage of the money is reserved to assist organizations serving the child care community to provide training. Perhaps some day such a policy will be the rule, rather than the exception, in every state!

NOTES

Results of a recently released survey conducted by the Child Care Resource Center in Cambridge documents the low pay and high turnover plaguing the field. For a copy of the survey results, write to CCRC Publications, 552 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139 and ask for Child Care Salaries and Benefits, 1984: A Survey of Full-time Programs in the Greater Boston Area. \$1.50 for individuals, \$2.00 for agencies plus 50 cents postage.

CALIFORNIA

How many times have you wanted to take a class during the day or attend a workshop but have just not been able to afford the time off work? Because of low pay, most child care workers can secure more training or education only at considerable financial sacrifice. Recognizing this problem, the **Child Development Resource Center (CDRC** in Santa Cruz) approached the Greater Santa Cruz County Community Foundation with an unique idea. They requested funds to provide stipends to child care workers seeking training and they were awarded the grant! CCEP and other resource groups will participate in the project and the CDRC will announce how the funds will be distributed in the community. This groundbreaking experiment can hopefully be replicated in other communities ---we'll keep you posted on how it works!

Hot off the press! A salary survey of San Joaquin County conducted by a group of child care advocates including staff from the local Resource and Referral Center. The survey includes information on wages, benefits, working conditions and staff requirements for 68 programs under public, private non-profit and private for-profit auspices in this "semi-rural" community. Like other recently conducted surveys in California and elsewhere, findings reveal that staff in public programs fare best while those in private for-profit receive the worst pay and benefits. Starting teachers in public programs can expect \$7.32/hr. while their counterparts in private non-profit and for-profit can expect only \$4.67/hr. and \$3.99/hr. respectively. For a summary of the findings or additional details contact Joan Richards, San Joaquin Family Resource and Referral Center, P.O. Box 4646, Stockton, California 95204 (209) 948-1553.

Child Care Employees in Oakland Win Wage Compensation! \$68,000 was awarded in back pay this summer to 38 instructional aides employed in the Oakland Public School Child Development Programs. The School District had hired these aides as long term subs and failed to grant them permanent employee status even after they had worked close to a full school year. The Oakland Federation of Teachers Local 771, which represents permanent instructional aides in the centers, went to bat for the "temporary" aides who they felt were being kept from union eligibility as well as their right to other benefits of permanent status. Union members found a provision in the local Education Code which stated that after 195 days of straight employment, employees automatically move from temporary to permanent status. During contract negotiations, the District agreed to pay back wages to those who were eligible, anticipating a few rather than the 38 that qualified. According to Agnes Ramirez, an OFT spokeswoman and prime mover in negotiations, another possible 30 workers may qualify for additional back pay due to the District's continued policy of using long term employees as subs.

WISCONSIN

Staff from several Madison child care centers spent their summer deliberating union representation. After thorough interviews with several unions, they decided to join with District 65, United Auto Workers to form a **day care organizing committee**. The Organizing Committee, composed of 12 staff from 11 centers, plans to spend the next period doing local outreach. In addition, the District 65 committee will be working with other Madison groups including **MACWU** (Madison Area Day Care Workers United) and the Worker Outreach Project, sponsored by the local 4 C's to explore ways to achieve their joint goals of improving the availability and quality of child care through reduction in staff turnover and improved salaries and working conditions. For more information about the Organizing Committee of District 65, contact Clarke Anderson at (608) 251-7844. Information about MACWU and The Worker Outreach Project can be obtained from Peggy Haack, (608) 255-6260.

PERFECTING THE PARENT-

In the last issue of the CCEP News the lead article, "Child Care Scare," discussed the impact that recent reports of child abuse in day care have had on parents and providers. In it, we offered suggestions for alleviating some of the fear and guilt that has permeated relationships in child care lately. Increased tension between parents and child care staff may certainly be the result of new anxiety and defensiveness that both parties are feeling. These emotions and fears, on both sides, cannot be overlooked, and they demand sensitive responses coupled with increased communication. However, it is also important to remember that even under the best of circumstances, parent/staff relationships can be fraught with conflict because of the various economic, physical, and emotional needs of each person. The current climate surrounding child care has worsened what is often already a problem in many programs - the intense, yet fragile relationships between staff and parents.

While acknowledging the special care that must be taken to help parents and staff together face the recent events in child care, in this article we will focus on the more ordinary, day-to-day components in child care which contribute to stronger parent-staff relations. Is it a luxury (or even a frivolity) to speak of building relationships right now? We think not. The understanding that will enable parents and staff to work together to solve the problems in child care is founded in relationships based on mutual respect and clear communication, the strength of which evolves every day in a child care program.

Very often when we conduct workshops we ask participants to list components of "ideal" child care for parents, and the same for child care workers. The areas of conflict built into the present system emerge quickly: parents need affordable care/workers need decent wages; parents need flexible schedules/workers need to begin and end their days at designated times; and so on. In the ensuing discussion of how to reduce some of these conflicts, it becomes clear that two things will help insure

successful parent/staff relationships: **clear communication and expectations.**

How does this translate into the everyday world of child care? **The best means of communication is individual and consistent interchanges with parents and staff.** Ideally, this type of communication is a two-way street, but in reality if the child care worker does not initiate contact, it probably won't happen. So, in addition to the myriad of other responsibilities of the job, we must add this one. However, take heart that this is actually a much needed "first step" with rewards for everyone. A good standard for staff would be that no parent leave the center without a greeting and an "opening" for further conversation. If extended discussion is impossible due to the needs of the children, staff can encourage parent sensitivity to the demands of the job by arranging an appointment. Parent conferences are a must for insuring that there are opportunities for contact, and it's helpful if all staff working with the child can periodically attend parent conferences. Now, more than ever, parents need reassurance that all staff are accessible to them. And staff need encouragement (and financial support) to initiate and maintain meaningful parent contacts.

Besides everyday contact and occasional parent conferences, staff need to **encourage parents to remain involved by visiting the program.** This not only can help parents feel more comfortable with their child's care, but also enables them to learn more about what child care workers do, thus increasing opportunities for support of workers' issues.

Find ways for willing parents to participate and offer their input (such as a seat on the Board, or regularly scheduled parent meetings). Giving parents a chance to impact program decisions which affect them will help them become more knowledgeable and responsive about all aspects of the program, including staff concerns and needs.

Constant communication between parents and staff provides a framework for the future.

PROVIDER PARTNERSHIP

Previous contacts can minimize the awkwardness and tension necessarily involved in criticism or expression of concerns. **Encourage parents to talk about their complaints, rather than let them fester.** This prevents small problems from growing and helps check paranoia. Beyond talking and listening, it becomes the responsibility of both parties to then move toward action on the problem.

Open relationships between parents and staff best begin early on with use of **entrance interviews** which give parents a time to learn about program philosophy, policies, regulations and parental involvement. This is also a time for staff to learn as much as possible about the family's personal life and their expectations from the program.

The program's expectations of the parent can best be outlined in a **parent manual** and **admission intake forms**. These provide a good opportunity to reinforce information shared in the entrance interview, and give parents a source to refer to when in doubt about a specific program policy regarding lateness, sick child care, fees, etc. Policies outlined in a manual should be clear and consistently enforced, giving parents advance notice of the consequences they will face if not compliant with program requirements.

Don't forget that just like you, parents don't appreciate surprises or sudden changes in policies which affect them: let parents know in advance when their child's primary caregiver will be on vacation, and if possible introduce the substitute to the child and parent before the fact. And, try to schedule a specific time of year when parent fees will be reviewed and possibly raised, so parents can prepare accordingly.

Introduce the staff to parents by distributing a written staff biography and/or personal introductions at an informal gathering or

parent meeting. This helps satisfy parent curiosity about the people who are caring for their children all day. This is particularly reassuring in large centers or in centers which undergo frequent staff turnover. Beyond personal introductions, you can help parents understand more about child care staff by giving them a copy of CCEP's Handout #20, "What Every Parent Should Know About Their Child Care Worker." This new handout talks about the current status, causes and implications of child care working conditions, and how parents can help.

Perhaps most important is the institution of a reliable **information exchange system** which shares daily happenings, policy changes and long range plans of the center with parents, keeping them abreast of current program successes and dilemmas. Try a regular center newsletter, parent-staff bulletin boards (kept up to date!), and potlucks. Speakers on special topics, discussion groups on childhood issues and working committees of parents and staff also help. This doesn't have to be restricted to child-oriented issues - letting parents see and discuss the center budget will make them become more aware of the constraints child care staff are facing.

Developing trust between parents and staff is neither a quick nor easy process, although it is extremely rewarding. Parents are often preoccupied with other worries and lately many are feeling even more than usual guilt and anxiety about child care. Staff, on the other hand, are overworked with personal and financial problems of their own, not to mention the extra toll that current events are taking on them. Can we help each other through all this? Yes, but as partners, not strangers!

(Thanks to the BANANAS newsletter for added tips on parent/staff relationships.)

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DON'T FORGET — CCEP MATERIALS MAKE GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR STAFF, CO-WORKERS AND PARENTS!!

RESOURCES:

"Works independently on complex problems...Plans the full range of actions needed to effectively utilize the system...Identifies the nature of desired results, major steps to be accomplished, and the relationships between various steps of the problem solving routine...May provide direction to lower level staff..."

Does this sound like your job? If it does, you probably aren't earning \$15.79 an hour. But that's what an average Computer Programmer III who fits this description earns in the San Francisco area. Maybe you earn closer to \$9.69 an hour...that's the median wage for a janitor, porter or cleaner. Information like this may help people better understand the inequities of child care wages and working conditions. The U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes **Area Wage Surveys** for 115 cities and areas around the country, and an **annual national survey of professional, technical and clerical pay**. You can request these publications from your BLS regional office or write the Labor Dept., Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C. 20212. Specify your particular city or part of the country. (There may be a small fee for the information.)

More ways to respond when they ask: "Does quality make a difference in child care?" A recent study by UCLA Professor (and CCEP Board member) Carollee Howes suggests that children in high quality care (defined by staff/child ratio, staff training and low turnover) may be more socially mature in terms of compliance and self-regulation than children not in day care, or those in low quality programs. The study compared groups of children attending high and low quality child care centers, and those not attending day care to examine the influence of family dynamics and child care. A full report is available from Carollee Howes, Graduate School of Education, UCLA, L.A., CA 90024.

Who's Got the Button? The Minnesota Child Care Workers Alliance has two great ones reading: "CHILD CARE WORKERS WORK, SO YOU CAN TOO" and "CHILD CARE WORKERS' WORKING CONDITIONS ARE YOUR CHILD'S

LIVING CONDITIONS." Available for \$1 each (includes postage) from CCWA, 3602 4th Avenue So., Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Yes, numbers have increased in day care since 1981 (the # of working mothers, the # of kids needing child care) but not these numbers: \$\$\$\$. According to the new Children's Defense Fund report, "**Child Care: The States' Response**", half of all states are spending less in 1984 on day care than they were in 1981 when President Reagan reduced federal social service block grants by 21%. The details of how each state has responded to child care needs are included in the report available for \$5.75 from CDF, 122 C St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Fundraising, volunteers, decision-making and networking are all vital concerns of non-profit programs. The **Western Center on Domestic Violence** offers resources on these and other relevant topics. Contact the Center for their publication and loan lists at 870 Market St., #1058, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 362-0454.

Even though they are integral to many programs, and staff often participate on them, what a Board of Directors is, does and can do is often a mystery. "**A Handbook for Day Care Board Members**" offers good fundamental principles of board development, interaction and program management. Although it is somewhat short on encouraging staff input and participation, thoughtful use of the handbook allows readers to see the opportunities that really can exist for staff to influence boards. Available for \$10.50 from the Day Care Council of New York, 22 W. 38th St., NY, NY 10018.

The causes of stress, its effect on health and well-being, and best methods for coping with it were the major topics of the **9 to 5 National Survey on Women and Stress**. Responses from 40,000 women to psychosocial stressors such as job design, work relations and socio-economic factors -- all of which are relevant to those working in child care -- were examined. Not just interesting, but useful, the report is available for \$6.50 from 9 to 5, National Association of Working Women, 1224 Huron Road, Cleveland, OH 44115.

CCEP RESOURCES

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yearly subscriptions to the Child Care Employee News: 4 issues per year.

\$25/year Sustaining Subscriber

\$10/year Supporting Subscriber

\$5/year Regular Subscriber

Complimentary subscriptions for those who cannot presently pay for a sub.

Additional donations always welcome and appreciated!

MATERIALS

NEW! Managing the Media Maze: A Resource Guide for Child Care Advocates Includes information and resources on planning an approach, specific skills needed, media options, getting positive results and evaluating your efforts. \$2.50 + .50 postage.

NEW! Beyond "Just Working With Kids": Preparing Early Childhood Teachers to Advocate for Themselves and Others A curriculum guide containing over 100 resources and activities to help early childhood students and child care workers become effective advocates for improving quality, status and working conditions in child care. \$3.00 + .50 postage.

Health and Safety Resources for Child Care Workers: Includes materials on child care occupational hazards - cleaners, art materials, back injury, infectious diseases, pesticides, stress, burnout, personnel policies, etc. \$3.00

Salary Surveys: How? Why? Who? When? Where? How to conduct a salary survey in your community. \$3.50

Unions and Child Care: Includes an overview of child care and unions in the U.S., questions and answers about collective bargaining, choosing a union, sensitive issues in organizing, what's in a union contract and information about women workers and organized labor. \$1.50

Buttons: "Give a Child Care Worker a Break". 20 cents each.

CCEP HANDOUTS

Individual handouts are free with a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Series I: \$2.50

1. Improving Substitute Policies
2. Break Policy
3. Health Coverage
4. Grievance Procedures
5. Shared Decision Making
6. Parent-Staff Relations
7. Calif. Employment Rights
8. National Employment Rights
9. Occupational Health and Safety
10. Staff-Staff Relations

Series II: \$2.50

11. Special Stresses of School Age Child Care
12. Child Care Work Can Be Dangerous to Your Health
13. Facts About Worker's Compensation
14. Payroll Taxes
15. Working in Parent Co-ops
16. Providing Extended Day Care in a Parent Co-op or Nursery School
17. Special Stresses of Infant Caregiving
18. Writing Personnel Policies
19. Staff Evaluation
20. What Every Parent Should Know About Their Child Care Worker

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- ___ Sub @\$ _____
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___ Union Pamphlet @\$1.50
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___ Advocacy Curriculum Guide @\$3.00
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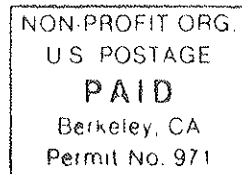
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CCEP believes that the quality of care children receive is directly linked to the working conditions of their caregivers. Low pay, unpaid overtime, lack of benefits and little input into decision-making create tension in programs and lead to high staff turnover. The exit of trained staff from the field gnaws away at the morale of those who remain and limits efforts to build consistent, responsible environments for children.

Given these economic times, no simple solutions to the problems facing child care workers emerge. Divisions within the field between administration and staff and program types often serve as barriers to open communication about these issues. This newsletter is intended as a vehicle for sharing ideas, debating approaches and generally encouraging us all to continue efforts to secure for child care the economic and social resources it deserves.
