

office copy: do not remove

CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE NEWS



A Publication of Child Care Employee Project

January/February/March 1982

Volume 1, Number 1

Hi! Here's your first issue of the Child Care Employee News. We hope this newsletter will be a sounding board for all those concerned with improving working conditions for child care staff.

WHAT'S OUR APPROACH?

We believe that the quality of care children receive is directly linked to the conditions of their care-givers. Just as a tense, overworked, unsupported parent is hampered in his/her ability to care effectively for children, so is a tense, overworked and undervalued child care provider comparably constrained.

WHO ARE WE

The Child Care Employee Project is a program of the Child Care Staff Education Project, a non-profit, tax exempt organization. Presently we are three child care workers who have a variety of experience in teaching, directing and research (as well as in cleaning child care centers, hauling sand, cutting out "alphabets" and changing diapers)!

Working conditions further affect the quality of care because low pay, lack of benefits and input into decision making lead people to leave their jobs. The high turn-over rate in child care, not to mention the exit of many trained people from the field, gnaws away at the morale of those left behind. High turn-over limits efforts to build consistent, responsive environments for children.

Two of us, Jane Friedman and Rory Darrah, live in the Bay Area. Marcy Whitebook lives in Los Angeles. We have worked together for several years to develop this project which will hopefully "better the lot of child care workers." We are indebted to many people and groups -- too many to list -- who have aided us along the way.

There are no simple solutions to the problems facing child care workers, particularly given these economic times. Furthermore, divisions within the field between administration and staff and program types often serve as barriers to open communication about these problems. Our hope is that this newsletter will serve as a vehicle for sharing ideas, debating approaches, and generally encouraging us all to continue our important efforts to secure for child care the economic and social resources it deserves.

**OFFICE COPY
PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE**

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Since 1977 we have gathered data on working conditions, salaries, and needs of child care staff. We have also developed materials and collected ideas with which to remedy some of the problems in child care work. We have shared both our data and problem solving techniques through workshops, publications and the media. In addition, we have hosted "drop-ins" for child care workers wanting to break down some of the isolation we all feel in our jobs. Recently we have been working with people across the country to establish an informal network of those working on staff issues. (See NAEYC article in this issue)

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE FROM YOU

Your ideas for the newsletter, handbook and hand-outs.

Your questions and direction as to how and where to move together for child care workers and the children we serve.

Your use of our materials and resources.

Your attendance at our events.

Your volunteer hours for a million things.

Let us hear from you...what you're doing in your community, what issues you need researched, your favorite movies, etc.

WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

Thanks to a grant from the Rosenberg Foundation, CCEP has the support to pursue the following:

--Coordinate and publish quarterly the EMPLOYEE NEWS which will serve as a networking vehicle for national groups and individuals. SUBSCRIPTION: \$5 per year.

--Write, publish and distribute hand-outs on staff concerns. OBTAIN THESE FREE FROM OUR OFFICES OR SEND A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE TO US. AVAILABLE NOW ARE HAND-OUTS ON BREAKS, SUBS, GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE...more to come soon.

--Develop a data collection system for use in gathering current information on salaries and benefits. If you have done a survey in your community or plan to, let us know.

--Publish a practical manual on child care workers' issues. YOU WILL HEAR ABOUT THIS MORE IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.

--Run workshops in California on staff issues such as policy development, staff structure and occupational health and safety. INVITE US TO YOUR CENTER OR CHILD CARE GROUP.

--Establish regular office hours which people in Northern and Southern California can use for consultation with us and for looking at our resource library.

--Consult via phone or mail with staff anywhere about their concerns.

--Establish on-going workshops for child care workers to discuss burning issues and share with each other.

AN AVERAGE DAY CARE TEACHER AIDE IS PAID \$6675.00 PER YEAR AND A HEAD TEACHER RECEIVES \$9557.00.

BY CONTRAST, A STARTING LETTER CARRIER WITH THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICES MAKES \$17,658.00.

...Maybe if we could just fit the four year olds into a mail bag...

Lana Hostetler in YOUNG CHILDREN, March, 1981.

Thanks to the Minneapolis Child Care Alliance for this item.

REAGAN'S 'REASONING'

In a recent address before the National Alliance of Business, President Reagan, commenting on the need to deregulate community service and to encourage volunteerism stated, "Mothers and grandmothers have been taking care of children for thousands of years without special training. Why is it certain states prohibit anyone without a college degree in early childhood education from operating a day care facility?"

The National Association for the Education of Young Children, at its annual conference in November, issued a statement criticizing the President's remarks. In part it said, "Research has documented that staff knowledge and experience in early childhood education are essential for the provision of quality child care."

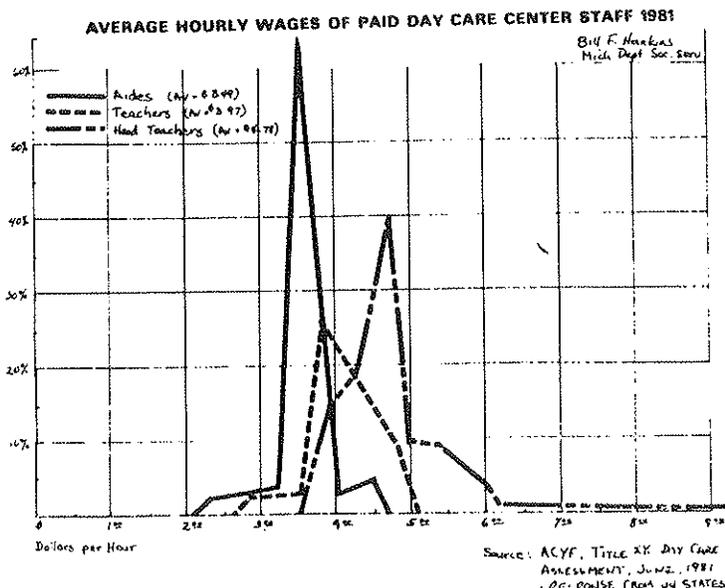
Members at the convention deluged the White House with over 1,000 postcards deploring the statement. Barbara Bowman, outgoing president of NAEYC urged everyone who is involved in caring for young children to write President Reagan, c/o the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500 to express their concern. "While we value enormously the contribution of volunteers, there can be no substitute for trained professionals in the field," said Bowman. Thanks to Ann Arbor Child Care Resource Center for this item.

Meanwhile, before Reagan's volunteer program is off the drafting table, his other policies are hitting parents and workers hard. Most states have suffered a considerable loss of TITLE XX revenue, the main source of federal child care dollars.

Raises in parent fees, changes in eligibility and loss of AFDC grants mean that more and more parents are competing for fewer affordable services. Providers lose more than cost of living increases; many face work hour reductions, and increased staff child ratios as co-workers are laid off or not replaced when they leave. Everyone suffers from loss of support services such as transportation, social workers and training funds.

"Ronald Reagan and the supporters of fiscal conservatism have little to offer the nation's children and are quite literally the mean old men of children's nightmares. Only this administration is one nightmare that children will need more than a hug to forget."
(District 65, UAW press release, Oct. '81).

How are people coping with these cuts? Let us hear from you.



AND THIS IS THE SO-CALLED 'GOOD' NEWS FROM SUBSIDIZED CENTERS!

MADISON, WISCONSIN

The Madison Area Child Care Workers United (MACWU), organized in 1976, is a group of men and women dedicated to improving the quality of child care for workers and families.

MACWU GOALS:

- To support each other in our profession.
- To educate ourselves on child care issues and to exchange ideas.
- To educate our community about our work and the impact of child care on the community.
- To change the status of our working conditions and to improve the quality of child care.

MACWU ACTIVITIES:

- A survey of working conditions, to be updated soon.
- A monthly newsletter -- THE WORKERS EXCHANGE -- which details relevant activities and issues related to child care work.
- Bi-monthly meetings.
- Yearly Workers' Day and Periodic Picnics.

MACWU dues are two hours of pay per year. They also receive a small grant which enables them to put out their newsletter and fund the Workers' Day.

"While unionizing remains a long term goal, our current and future focus will be on developing and encouraging a positive, professional identity among workers. We want to promote a 'craftspirit' among our peers where our work will be valued, cherished, and communicated to the community in which we work."

For information, contact: MACWU,
% Magic Penny Day Care, 203 Wisconsin Ave., Madison WI 53703.

NATIONAL

"NATIONAL NOTES" WILL BE A REGULAR FEATURE OF THE NEWSLETTER.

IT WILL BE USED TO TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT WHAT WE ARE DOING IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR NEWS ... NEXT QUARTER WE WILL TELL THE STORY OF THE BOSTON AREA DAY CARE WORKER'S UNION, LOCAL 65 OF THE UAW.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

This fall, the Ninth Circuit Court ordered the reinstatement and back pay of 13 employees of Golden Day Schools in Southern California.

These workers were fired in October, 1976 for attending a meeting in one of their homes at night to organize a union. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) had ordered the reinstatement and back pay years before this fall, but the school owners refused to obey the order.

Employees are amazed that the school spent thousands of dollars in legal fees to fight a five year battle, rather than spending the money and time on improving the conditions at the centers.

This case now establishes the right of employees, including Golden Day, to join unions and to be supported by the NLRB and the Courts in exercising that right.

Thanks to -- and for more info, contact: Dorothea Keeling, Staff Organizer, AFT Local 1475, Early Childhood Federation, 1082 N. Allen Ave., Pasadena CA 91104.

NOTES

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS MEANS BETTER CARE FOR CHILDREN.

This slogan captures the approach and emphasis of the Minneapolis Child Care Workers Alliance (CCWA). The Alliance is for people working in child care directly with children for at least 50% of their working hours, either in centers or family day care homes.

CCWA GOALS:

- To improve salaries and working conditions of child care workers.
- To expand society's awareness of the importance of work with young children.
- To foster high quality work and self respect in child care workers.
- To provide a forum in which to share common frustrations and to seek solutions to those frustrations.

CCWA ACTIVITIES:

- A monthly newsletter.
- Workshops on burn-out.
- Support groups.
- Picket A Program A Year (this is not a work stoppage, rather a way to inform parents about working conditions).
- Gold Star List of centers: those with good working conditions.

The Alliance just received a grant to enable them to hire a part time staff person. Current focus is on building their membership (dues are two hours of pay a year) and on building linkages with parents.

"Parents and workers work together to give children good quality care. We must also work together to gain respect in society for the important work we do -- raising children."

Despite the financial realities, the Alliance feels it is essential that workers and parents are not adversaries. Their other concerns are keeping up with legislative issues and bridging communication gaps within different segments of the child care community.

For information, contact: CCWA, 3602 4th Ave., South, Minneapolis MN 55409.

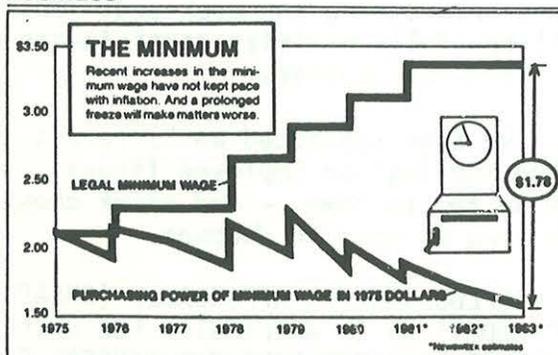
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Workers from three local centers have started a Staff Council for all child care workers in their community. Activities to date include a monthly bulletin, regular meetings, and lobbying with state officials. They also held a demonstration at the state capitol.

Like all social service workers, these child care employees are concerned about the effects of local and federal cuts on their wage and benefit programs, but... "We feel too important to the job we're doing to give up the fight."

For information, contact: Carol Malovics, Staff Council, 941 South Ave., Rochester NY 14620.

BUSINESS



Cynthia Z. Richter—Newsweek

WHAT CHILD CARE WORKERS WAGES MEAN IN TODAY'S DOLLARS

NAEYC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

At the annual NAEYC conference in Detroit, November 5-8, 1981, considerable discussion centered on working conditions of child care workers and early childhood educators.

A pre-conference session on November 5 entitled "Child Care Employee Issues", coordinated by CCEP and the Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service in Ann Arbor, Michigan, focused on the current status of child care staff and strategies to improve our situation. The 100 plus participants came from all over the country, underscoring the common problems facing child care workers nation wide.

Despite the many obstacles child care employees face, we were all encouraged by meeting and sharing with one another our activities.

As Peggy Haack of Madison said, "I was a part of creating a network that is BIG in that it's expanse is from one coast to the other, but it is COMPACT in that our issues, concerns, problems, questions, and motives are so similar. Feeling a part of the network takes the edge off a lot. I'm ready to keep doing what I do."

Discussion of working conditions surfaced at other points in the conference, but the most significant movement by the NAEYC regarding working conditions is that the governing board announced that their PRIORITY ISSUE for 1981-82 is to be the upgrading of the status of people working with young children.

At the annual business meeting of NAEYC (held the last night of the conference), Linda Roddy, from the Minneapolis CCWA, presented the following statement and resolution which represented the participants of the Pre-Conference Session on Employee Issues:

Because the annual NAEYC conference excludes child care workers due to expense and scheduling on week day/ work day times ...

And because most child care workers earn minimum wage, we urge that the following steps be taken to include child care workers in the next and future NAEYC conferences:

- 1. A sliding scale registration fee be instituted.*
- 2. Inexpensive accomodations be provided.*
- 3. Workshops be geared more to day care needs, such as napping, toileting, and mealtimes.*
- 4. The conference be scheduled around a paid holiday as well as a week-end, thus minimizing work days missed.*
- 5. Regional AEYC's be encouraged to provide outreach to child care staff and to facilitate their attendance at national conferences.*
- 6. Young Children be directed to address the issues of working conditions on a regular basis.*

Linda's statement and resolution were met with a standing ovation from the Business Meeting attendees! A proud moment for us all.

NEXT YEAR'S PLAN

The next national NAEYC conference is scheduled for November, 1982 in Washington, D.C.

Rather than repeat a pre-conference session, participants from this year have requested a series of workshops to be held during the week-end. This will hopefully maximize participation by child care workers.

We have also requested an "Interest Group Meeting" on Employee Issues. *Please try to come -- and think about concerns we need to discuss.*

WE ARE LOOKING FOR AFFORDABLE (CHEAP) ACCOMODATIONS IN WASHINGTON FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE.

HAVE ANY GOOD IDEAS?

CARING FOR THE CARE-GIVER

Do you ever want YOUR back rubbed during nap time ... or someone to read YOU a story ... or just someone to say how nice it is to have YOU in the center?

While giving our best to the children with whom we work every day, we are often too occupied to give ourselves the necessary supports it takes to prevent burn-out. Society's view of child care work -- as reflected in our low pay and lack of benefits -- does not encourage an automatic respect or pride in our skills.

To counteract these negative influences on our work and our self esteem, several groups have instituted "Caring for the Care-Giver Days". These days provide a "boost" for workers and help educate our communities about our work and our contributions to society.

In Madison, a Workers Day has been held every year for the last three by MACWU. The latest day included the slide show "Who Cares for the Children?" and a presentation on the history of child care in Madison. Workers also shared their positive feelings about being child care employees.

Last June, the Santa Cruz, California County Office of Education and the local Information and Referral Agency sponsored a "Very Important Provider" day for center and family day care staff. Speakers from Northern California addressed legislation, research on working conditions, and strategies on preventing burn-out. The several hundred participants then broke into small groups according to the age group they were teaching (infants, pre-schoolers, etc), and discussed common problems as well as solutions to those problems.

"Talking Day Care: A Day of Pride and Unity", sponsored by District 65, Day Care and Human Services Local in Massachusetts, was attended by over two hundred child care staff in the fall of 1981. Workshops focused on curriculum as well as organizing strategies in the face of that state's heavy funding cuts.

The worth and value of "Care-Giver Days" is expressed well by Jim Morin in the MACWU WORKERS EXCHANGE, Aug. '81 ... "We must come to accept the idea that to give to children the opportunities they need, it is essential that we learn to get what we need to be effective care-givers. We have overlooked our own needs. It's time for a change!"

Try a "Care-Giver Day" in your community.

Tell us about it and we will print your information to share with everyone!



Courtesy of Etta Hulme, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, NEA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Send in yours and we will run them next time.

Buy the "In" Button of the Year: "Give a Child Care Worker a Break." (They attract attention, believe us!) 50¢ at our offices--we mail free.

Also available from us: "Who's Minding the Child Care Workers? A Look at Staff Burn-Out." Send 50¢ to CCSEP, P.O. Box 5603, Berkeley, CA 94705.

IF WE UNDERSTAND A CHILD'S MIND TO BE OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE, WHY ARE DAY CARE WORKERS PAID A MINIMUM WAGE? Speaking of attracting attention, consider wearing this to work. T-shirts available from MACWU c/o Magic Penny Day Care Center, 203 Wisconsin Ave., Madison, WI 53703. Approximately \$4.00.

CEASE: Concerned Educators Allied for a Safe Environment's newsletter deals with threats to children and families posed by nuclear power and weapons. Also available CHILDREN OF HIROSHIMA, a slideshow depicting one child's experience of the bombing. For more info write Linda de Lissovoy, 694 Green St. #6, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Northern Californians: Save Saturday May 8 and May 16. FACING THE SALARY AND STATUS CRISIS IN ECE--A Problem Solving Session. At San Jose City College (1 unit) Contact J. Machado, 2100 Moorpark Ave., San Jose, CA 95129.



COMING ATTRACTIONS

Watch for these and other topics in our future newsletters.

Health Insurance -- is it possible to get a group plan for centers in your community? It's happening in Southern California and elsewhere -- why not your "home town"?

Comparable Worth -- what is it exactly and can it be a strategy for child care workers?

Employer Related Child Care -- How likely is it to solve our salary woes?

Give
a child care
worker a
break

PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A
CO-WORKER ...

Child Care Employee Project
P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, California 94705