

# CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE NEWS



Child Care Employee Project members, as well as many child care advocates and policy makers across the country, recently received copies of CCEP's newest resource booklet, *WHAT STATES CAN DO to Secure a Skilled and Stable Child Care Work Force*. (See page 7 for information on ordering additional copies.) We hope this booklet will be useful to advocates working on their states' Child Care and Development Block Grant plans--particularly in the effort to improve child care quality by increasing staff compensation and access to training. Please keep us informed as your state's CCDBG plan develops; we will be offering technical assistance to state planning groups, and sharing information in forthcoming issues of *Child Care Employee News*.

CCEP is pleased to welcome two new staff members: Teri Jackson, Administrator, is a parent and the former financial manager of Food First, a policy institute in San Francisco. Renee Shizue Ramos, Special Projects Assistant, is a parent and a former child care teacher at a parent cooperative and an infant center in Berkeley.

We would also like to express our appreciation for their years of service to departing CCEP staff Caryn Fugami and Maria Benjamin. We wish them the best of luck.

## ON THE MOVE FOR WORTHY WAGES: SEATTLE CENTERS STAGE ONE-DAY WALKOUT

Thursday, April 4 turned out to be the rainiest day of the season in Seattle, but that didn't stop nearly 1,800 teachers, parents, center directors, child care advocates and children from attending the city's annual child care parade, organized this year under the theme, "Child Care on the Move for Worthy Wages." While the Child Care Directors Association of Greater Seattle (CDAGS) has organized a Week of the Young Child parade for the past five years, this year's event was different: some 75 centers had closed for part or all of the day, in order to get more parents involved in demonstrating the severity of the child care staffing crisis to their employers, the government and the general public. Others remained open but operated on a skeleton crew, urging parents to take the day off, notify their employers why, and bring their children to the parade, which was led through downtown by Seattle Mayor Norman Rice.

Many of us in the child care compensation movement have at times envisioned a massive child care walkout or a nationwide "strike," but the Seattle action was the biggest such step ever taken in the U.S. (In early 1990, child care workers in Nova Scotia, Canada won a salary enhancement grant after a province-wide walkout.)

*(continued on page 2)*

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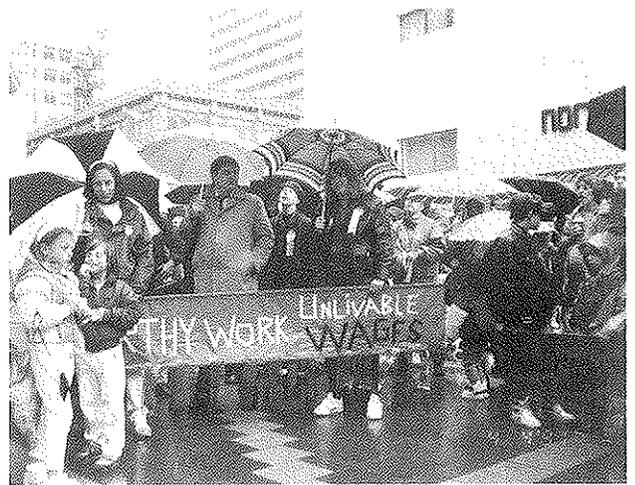
*(On the Move ... continued from page one)*

For fear of alienating parents, directors and other allies, caregivers have often shied away from making such a drastic move. But Seattle directors are feeling so hard-pressed by the teacher shortage that many welcomed the idea: CDAGS members voted unanimously for the closure. And as Joy Conley, a Seattle teacher who has been in the field for 15 years, observed, "There wasn't much else left for us to do to make our point. We weren't asking parents for money out of their pockets--just to stand with us for the needs of the children. We're losing teachers, and new people aren't coming into the field. This situation has got to change."

Two days later, 140 activists attended a full-day "Child Care Summit," sponsored by Child and Family Resource and Referral (CFRR), to discuss next steps and new strategies. Marcy Whitebook of CCEP gave the keynote address. One result was the formation of an advisory group to work on developing "consensus standards" for wages and working conditions in the state, similar to what has been done in Minnesota (see page 4). Many of the teachers involved in the walkout are also exploring the possibilities of unionization. CFRR Director Rita Hagan called the day "inspirational" because of the group's "high energy and a new sense of impatience that I think is very healthy." But others admit that it was still sobering to return to work the next Monday, wondering whether anything had changed. "We're facing a tough year and there's little hope in sight for the near future," says center director Leslie Howle. "The state budget looks very discouraging, and our salary enhancement bill went nowhere in the legislature. We're still up against the fact that this society doesn't value children." Child care advocates, however, do hope to secure a portion of Washington state's federal block grant for three pilot projects to address staff compensation and other quality issues.

To reach the goals of quality care and decent

staff wages, the child care compensation movement will continue to depend on three parallel efforts: public education, public policy work, and above all, the empowerment of teachers themselves as activists, which has often proven to be the hardest of the three. But the Seattle parade and summit are an excellent model of teacher activism--and this summer, a newly-developed project, sponsored by the King County Child Care Program, will be holding "empowerment training" for child care staff throughout the Seattle area (see page 6). Seattle activists are also producing a video--showing the preparations for the parade and summit, the events themselves, and interviews with teachers and others about the worthy wages movement--which can be used locally and nationally as an inspirational and organizational tool. *The video will be available in September. For ordering information, contact Margie Carter, Worthy Wages Task Force, 3212 East Terrace, Seattle WA 98122.*



Parents, teachers and children marched and sang songs together under the rain. To the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot" one song went:

*I'm a child care worker all burned out  
Wages are a problem we must talk about  
When we join together we'll have clout  
Find your voice and help us shout!*

After the Seattle events which gained excellent media coverage, there is renewed interest around the country in a coordinated effort to use the center closure strategy elsewhere--perhaps with child care staff staging walkouts in several cities or states on the same day. But this strategy also raises important organizational questions about the compensation movement: Where would leadership come from, since no single organization represents child care teachers? What is the relationship among advocacy groups in various parts of the country? Will a walkout pit teachers against parents and directors, or (as in Seattle) can a sense of common purpose develop?

Seattle organizers hope that next year's parade-day closure will be even more widespread. We encourage any groups or communities who are interested in exploring such a strategy to contact us at CCEP. ♦

### Special Thanks To:

The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ford Foundation, for their support of our publication of *What States Can Do*, and of our technical assistance work in helping groups throughout the country develop state CCDBG implementation strategies which address staff compensation and training.

The Cowell Foundation, for its support of our CCDBG implementation work in California.

The Jewish Fund for Justice, for its support of CCEP's local child care advocacy and organizing efforts.

The Rockefeller Family Fund, for providing funds which will enable CCEP to hire a Development Director for the coming year.

The San Francisco Foundation, for supporting the expansion of CCEP's Mentor Teacher Program throughout Alameda County, and of the replication of the program at other community colleges throughout California.

(We'll report more on the Mentor Teacher Program in our next issue.)

## SHARING THE BLOCK: BATTLE LOOMS OVER CCDBG PLAN

Several promising proposals are now under consideration for how to spend California's \$78 million share of the Child Care and Development Block grant: a Work Force Stabilization Grants Program which includes a statewide health benefits pool and salary enhancement, a statewide Mentor Teacher Program, and a Training Access Fund that would cover the cost of hiring substitute teachers. Some of these proposals have been included in Senate Bill 500, sponsored by Sen. Becky Morgan which called for \$10 million for compensation improvements.

Unfortunately serious barriers stand in the way of securing these proposals. The recently released CCDBG regulations limit the percent of funds that can be used on quality improvements to the original 5% earmark and 1.5% undesignated funds, plus 15% of the total 75% committed to direct services during the first two years and 10% thereafter. This translates to 17.5 % of the total amount given to states but must include administration costs.

Furthermore, Governor Pete Wilson's office has expressed the intention to spend most of the block grant on program expansion, and only a very limited amount on quality improvements (among which staff compensation appears to be the least favored option.) A form letter from the Governor in response to the 10,000 signatures on petitions calling for quality expenditures signed by CCEP and San Francisco AEYC members, other advocates and parents, suggest an uphill battle to secure a more appropriate distribution of the funds.

Further public hearings will be held, and we will keep California CCEP members informed. If you serve on a local county CCDBG planning committee, let us know so that we can share information. ♦

## NATIONAL NOTES

### MINNESOTA

Child care advocates in Minnesota have developed a set of 1991-92 "Consensus Standards For Child Care Wages, Benefits and Working Conditions." Although these are a voluntary set of guidelines not intended as a proposal for state regulation, advocates hope they can be used to influence the setting of state reimbursement rates.

The standards define three graduated levels of quality, as a way of setting minimum requirements as well as goals for future progress. The "minimum standard" is intended to be a level of decency below which no child care employer should remain. The "industry standard" represents the best of the field based on current funding, a level most programs are expected to be able to reach within one to three years. The "professional standard" outlines an ideal level of quality that teachers, parents and children deserve, but that cannot be achieved without substantial new public or private funding.

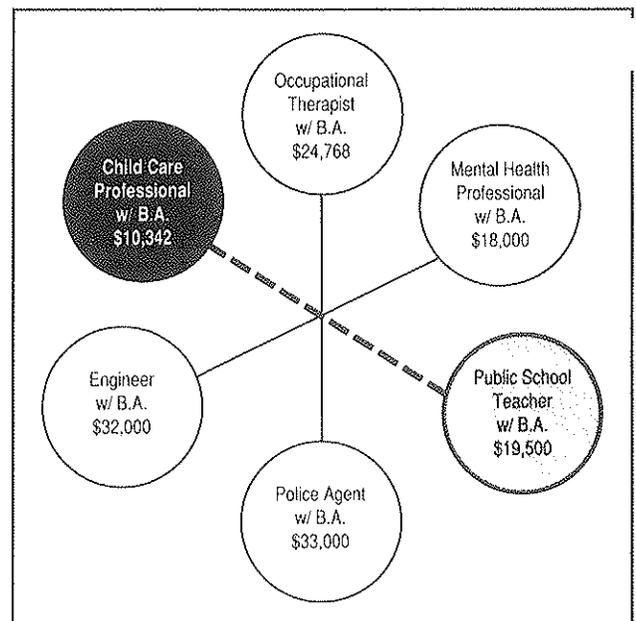
To account for economic differences, separate sets of standards have been developed for Minnesota's urban and rural areas. For more information, contact Nancy Johnson or Jim Greenman of the Consensus Standards Coalition, c/o Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, 1628 Elliot Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404; (612) 341-1177.

### COLORADO

With help from an NAEYC Membership Action Grant, Colorado child care advocates have recently published an excellent educational brochure for parents entitled, "Keep Qualified People Working With Children - By Paying More Than Poverty

Level Wages!" The brochure reports the findings of a Colorado AEYC survey of child care wages and benefits in the state; compares child care wages to those in comparable fields; outlines the true cost of quality child care when teachers are paid a living wage; and suggests what parents can do to advocate for quality child care and salary enhancement.

According to the CAEYC survey, the average starting salary for a Colorado child care teacher is \$4.76/hour; 79% of child care staff receive no health coverage; and the average number of vacation days is only six per year. It is calculated that if teachers were paid \$10/hour plus benefits, child care costs would leap from an average market rate of \$268/month to \$428/month, representing a "subsidy" by underpaid staff of \$160/month per child in care.



*Reprinted with permission from the flyer "Keep Qualified People Working With Children by Paying More Than Poverty Level Wages!" For more information, contact Laurel Thompson, CAEYC Salary Survey Committee, at (303) 759-4341.*

## KINDER-CARE

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Washington recently ruled that Kinder-Care, the nation's largest for-profit child care chain, unlawfully fired a teacher from its Antioch, California center for union activity in June 1986. At that time, teachers at several Kinder-Care and La Petite Academy centers in the San Francisco Bay Area had undertaken a drive to unionize with District 65, UAW. While Kinder-Care claimed that the teacher was merely being laid off for the summer, the NLRB judge ruled that the "layoff" was more probably a firing, in direct retaliation for her attendance at several union meetings and her discussions with parents at the center about staff working conditions.

In the past, Kinder-Care personnel policies have prohibited teachers from communicating with parents or with other outside parties about their working conditions, requiring them instead to speak to Kinder-Care management first. The NLRB ruled that this unduly inhibited employees' right to seek redress of work-related grievances.

As a result, Kinder-Care has been ordered to rescind this employee policy and to post a notice that it has done so for 60 days at all 1,400 of its centers across the U.S. While the company also had to offer to reinstate the fired teacher, she said, "No, thanks." For more information, contact Meredith Wilson at the Berkeley, CA office of District 65, UAW: (415) 549-3881.

## HEAD START

Head Start advocates secured a significant victory last year for all those concerned with child care compensation by pushing for and winning a 10% set aside for quality improvements (with a 5% earmark for salaries) in the Congressional Reauthorization. According to Don Bolce,

Director of Government Affairs for the National Head Start Association, the quality set aside "marks real progress, even it's not enough to solve the salary crisis. We view it as a down payment for the future."

Unfortunately, the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) which oversees Head Start did not provide money in this year's budget for cost-of-living adjustments (COLAS), thus undercutting the salary increases. In protest, the National Head Start Association staged a press conference attended by Senators Kennedy and Dodd calling for a change in Administration policy which they claim violated the intent of the quality set-aside. In response, the Administration changed plans. While there still are not funds for COLAS, each Head Start program can now use part of the monies intended for expansion of programs to "maintain their current effort." Bolce says "the impact of the revised policy is unclear, but believes it allows programs more flexibility in addressing the problems caused by the lack of COLAS". Advocates meanwhile are working to insure that the 1991-92 appropriation will include a provision to insure that each program receives a COLA prior to allocation of expenditures for quality improvements.

For more information, contact Don Bolce, Director of Government Affairs, National Head Start Association, 703-739-0875. ♦



## FINDING OUR VOICES: SOME STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT

*The following training ideas come from the Seattle-based Empowerment Training Project, which is designed to inspire and encourage child care staff to remain in the field by providing opportunities for activism, network-building and leadership.*

### *Naming the Problem*

The first step is to reach agreement that we indeed share a common problem and to name it out loud. Sometimes, people want to hold onto a vague definition such as "the quality of child care," and have a harder time narrowing it down to something as specific as "our wages and working conditions." The following exercises can help:

- **"The Job Title Game"**: Write the names of different occupations on 100 3x5" cards, then circulate and trade them among the group. Are any of these more valued by society than child care? Are any better-paying? Worse? Are any of these tasks not part of a child care worker's job? You'll find that very few jobs pay less, and that almost all of the tasks listed are somehow part of the complex job that child care workers do.

- **"Job Listings"**: Collect as many job listings as you can which show job descriptions and wages--a few that are child care-related and many that are not. Post them on the walls, and ask people to compare them to their own jobs. One agency we found was advertising two positions--one in food service and one in child care. The food service job, involving such tasks as "opening cans," paid \$1.00 more per hour than the child care job, which required at least a two-year degree in Early Childhood Education.

### *Building Confidence*

- **"Saying No"**: One of the barriers our work force faces is a strong sense of nurturing others and a discomfort with standing up for ourselves. In this exercise, each person stands facing a partner about two feet away.

Someone reads a list of questions about child care working conditions, such as, "Do you make enough money to support your own family?" Everyone responds by saying "NO!" to their partner, working on using a strong, clear voice that doesn't sound apologetic!

- **"Speak Out"**: Each person can practice addressing the rest of the group as an audience, talking about how wages and working conditions affect them. Applauding each person sincerely is helpful.

- **"Staff Meeting Role Play"**: Assign specific roles and personalities (facilitator, director, loner, debater, whiner, etc.); conduct a practice "meeting" fishbowl-style, with some participating and some observing. Afterwards, discuss what worked and what didn't.

### *Creating Vision and Commitment*

- **"I See"**: In order to make change, we have to know what we are working for. Have a large group brainstorm and record (on paper and/or on a tape recorder) their visions of quality child care, or ideal working conditions, beginning each sentence with "I see." For a variation that makes connections between all the visions, use a ball of yarn: as each person speaks, they wrap the yarn around their hand and then toss the ball to someone across the circle. Reread the visions and respond to each of them with a "YES" that is just as strong and assertive as the earlier "NOs."

- **"Commitment Letter"**: This exercise can transform visions into concrete strategies. Ask everyone to choose a partner for support, then address (and mail) a letter to themselves completing such statements as, "I will overcome this barrier...," "I will work for change by...," and "For support I will contact..." Or combine the letters in a

- **"Commitment Quilt"**: each square is unique, representing one more person who has added their strength to the child care movement.

*For more information about the Empowerment Training Project, call Wendy Harris at (206) 296-1362 or Becky Clark, Worthy Wages Task Force (206) 527-9482.*

## NEW RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

### **WHAT STATES CAN DO To Secure a Skilled and Stable Child Care Work Force**

#### **Strategies to Use the New Federal Funds for Child Care Quality**

*This 16-page booklet describes how the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) can be used to improve child care quality by addressing the staffing crisis. Specific information is included about the three approaches to salary enhancement: reimbursement rates, salary grant programs, and health benefit pools -- as well as information on salary data collection and programs to improve provider access to training.*

Priced at \$5.00 each with discount for bulk orders of three or more copies. For price quote and more information contact the Child Care Employee Project, 6536 Telegraph, A-201, Oakland, CA 94609. Or call (415) 653-9889.

*Bargaining for Family Benefits: A Union Member's Guide*, by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), includes information on organizing strategies and sample contract language for gaining various types of family benefits at the work place--including child care, elder care and parental leave. Available for \$5.00 from CLUW, 15 Union Square, New York, NY 10003.

The Child Care Workers Alliance (Minneapolis) has produced two new booklets. *Between A Rock and a Hard Place: Raising Rates to Raise Wages* is a "how-to book" on securing better compensation at the child care program level; the cost is \$5.00 plus \$1.00 postage. *Changing Your Working Conditions: The First Step* is a workbook for

child care professionals on ways to plan and negotiate for better wages, benefits and working conditions; \$2.00 plus \$1.00 postage. Both are available from CCWA at 310 E. 38th St., Room 226-A, Minneapolis, MN 55409.

*The Unfinished Agenda: A New Vision for Child Development and Education*, a recent report by the Committee for Economic Development (CED), a national business group, calls for a "systematic reappraisal" of the way children are prepared for school and urges "a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for human investment that redefines education as a process that begins at birth." Recommendations also include increasing the salaries of child care workers. The report is available for \$12.50 from CED, 477 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022.

The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education has recently published two papers on career development in the child care field: *A Concept Paper* by Gwen Morgan (\$3.00), and *A Planning Approach* by Joan Costley (\$2.50). Both are available from the Center, Wheelock College, 200 The Riverway, Boston, MA 02215. ♦

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### **ATTENTION CALIFORNIA CHILD CARE PROGRAMS:**

A new occupational health and safety bill (SB 198) takes effect on July 1. Under this law, all California employers (i.e., those who file a W-2 form for one or more workers) are required to develop a written work place injury and illness prevention plan, including training of employees in general safe and healthy work practices. Employers must have a system in place for identifying and removing work place hazards, and must encourage employees to report such hazards without fear of reprisal. The plan must be available to employees, as well as to inspectors from Cal/OSHA. If you need help in developing your work place plan, please call CCEP.

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 (\$90 for child care workers)
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 (includes 2 copies of each issue of  
 CCEP News)

The Child Care Employee Project (CCEP) is a resource and advocacy organization dedicated to improving child care quality through better wages and working conditions for child care staff. For more information, please call (415) 653-9889 or write: CCEP, 6536 Telegraph Ave., Suite A-201, Oakland, CA 94609.

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**SPECIAL THANKS:**

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