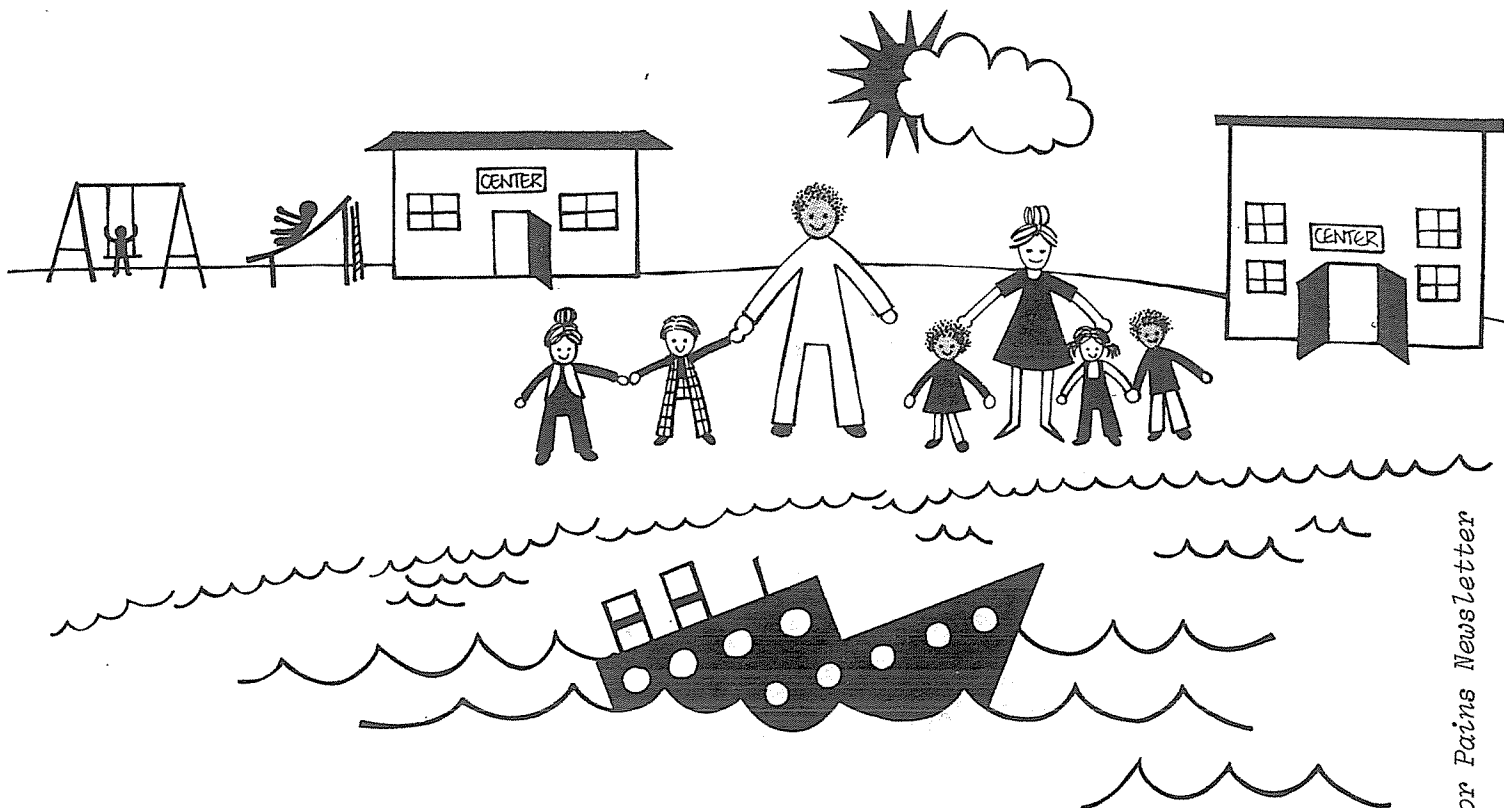


**DON'T LET THEM TAKE AWAY
OUR DAYCARE!**



1976

There are many misconceptions about who needs daycare and why, and about who pays for it. As parents and child care workers, we believe that child care services are important and necessary. If we are ever going to win free or inexpensive daycare services, we need to know the truth.



Labor Pains Newsletter

IT'LL BE A GREAT DAY WHEN OUR CENTERS HAVE ALL THE MONEY THEY NEED AND THE NAVY HAS TO HOLD A BAKE SALE TO BUY A BATTLESHIP.

Boston Area Daycare Workers United: We are women and men working in child care facilities throughout the Boston metropolitan area. We are dedicated to unity among all teachers, cooks, nurses, social workers, bus drivers, and office workers. Our solidarity is with daycare parents as well. We fight for more funds for daycare together. We also stand ready to take part in any struggles parents initiate toward our common goals. By working together we can improve work conditions and wages, provide better care for children and extend needed services to parents. We invite anyone who works in a daycare situation to work with us.

To reach us call: ~~617-267-2222~~ ~~617-267-2222~~
Sandy 868-4476

Labor Pains Collective: We are a group of parents and daycare workers who meet regularly to discuss how parent and worker controlled child care can help to improve working conditions for women at home and at work outside the home. We believe that multi-cultural daycare which is organized and run by parents and workers builds an environment which helps us and our children to stand up against repressive schools, big corporations, and a government which benefits the rich at the expense of working class people.

To reach us call: ~~617-267-2222~~

WHO NEEDS DAYCARE?

All of us who have children do child care in our homes. But many of us also need child care services outside our homes. Some of us need daycare, or full day services, while others need part-time care, such as nursery schools and half-time daycare programs like Head Start.

What are some of the ways we feel daycare helps families?

It is a healthy experience for children.

Most parents we know feel daycare is an important and positive experience for children. One mother said, "I want my son to learn to live with other children. I want him to have exposure to other ideas and feelings." Another said, "I think daycare is fantastic. My daughter is more sociable now."

It enables parents, particularly mothers, to have some time for themselves.

Many parents feel daycare is a good experience, just to give them and their children some time away from each other. One mother said, "I'd feel frustrated all day at home. I need to work part-time and I also need time and space for myself. If I were home with my three-year old all day, I'd be climbing the walls. I feel the time I spend with him now is quality time. When I see him, it's special and I make all kinds of special plans for trips, reading, games. We appreciate each other more."

It is a necessity for working parents.

Today, one-third of all children under six have working mothers. There are six million children under six whose parents both work. But in the whole country, there are licensed child care programs for only one million preschool children. So, many parents who need child care must use relatives or informal babysitting arrangements for their children. And many children stay home with older brothers and sisters, or even by themselves.

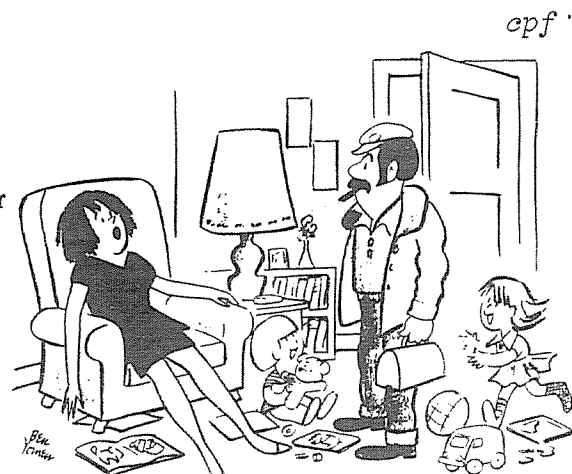
A lot of parents do not favor babysitting as an alternative to daycare, even when it is cheaper. One parent said, "My daughter is an only child. I'd prefer her to be with children her own age -- to be exposed to other kids, and not be so secluded."

Without daycare, many women would not be able to continue working, or would have to stop their education and would be faced with being on the welfare rolls.

As one mother put it, "I need daycare to go to school and to work. Without it, I'd be back on welfare. I'd be sitting home. No way out!"

A daycare center can provide a place for people to get together.

A problem we all face is our isolation from one another. A daycare center can provide a common meeting place for people. There is already the daily contact between staff and parents. Parents get to know each other when they bring and pick up their children every day. A daycare center may also offer its space for use by other community groups such as tenants and workers organizations, food co-ops and women's groups. Some centers organize community activities such as health care courses, meetings about daycare issues, movies or lectures. Whether people meet through the day to day running of the center or through planning particular events, working together strengthens the bonds between people.



"I want a voluntary overtime agreement, too."

WHO PAYS FOR DAYCARE?

There really is no *free* daycare. Most daycare is paid for by families directly. Some daycare is provided by social service programs that are paid for by states or the federal government.

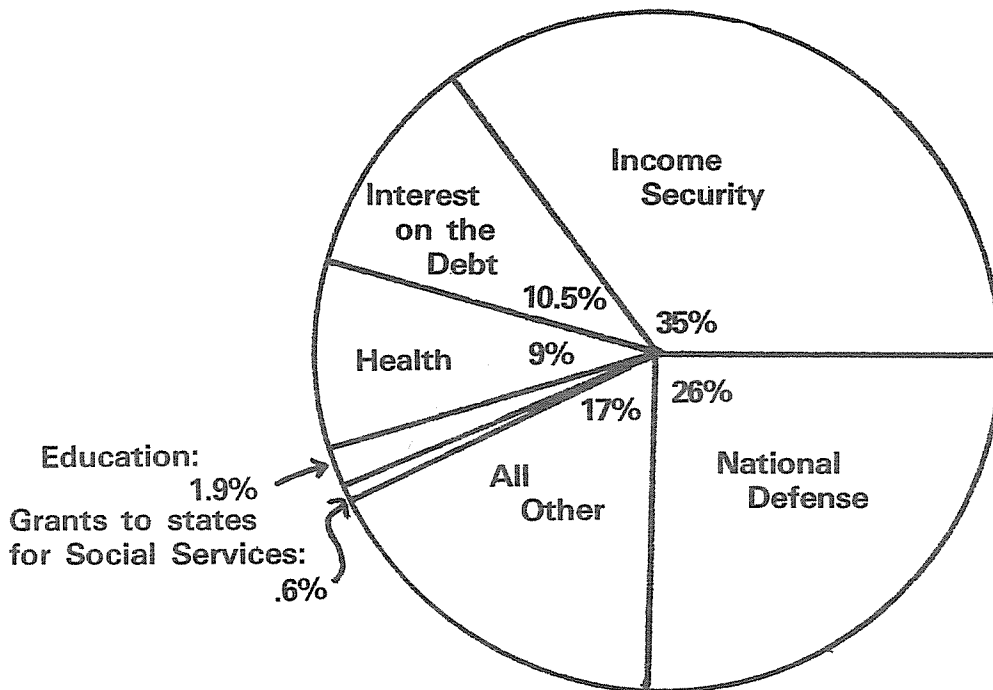
Federal and state budgets come out of our pockets. We all pay taxes.

Many people have the misconception that low income people in particular don't pay taxes. This is not true for several reasons.

First, as working people, we pay a larger part of our income in taxes, compared to the wealthy. Secondly, poor and working people pay a large proportion of income in sales taxes every time they buy needed commodities like home appliances, food, soap and paper products. Finally, while tenants do not pay property taxes directly, landlords pass them on by including a proportion of the property tax in the rent they charge (on the average, 23% of our rent pays for the landlords' property taxes).

In this chart you can see where our tax dollars are spent.

THE PROPOSED 1977 FEDERAL BUDGET



Most of our taxes are spent on military programs, income security and interest on the national debt. "Income security" means money paid directly to individuals: benefits to retired workers and the aged (through social security), public assistance (including food stamps and Supplemental Security Income), disability insurance and unemployment compensation. Grants to states for social services, on the other hand, amount to a tiny proportion of the federal budget. Of that amount, less than one-fifth is spent on child care.

Some other federal money is spent for child care, particularly for Head Start. But the total amount spent on child care is only about one billion dollars, or one-quarter of 1% of the federal budget!

Parents, staff and children converge on Welfare Department to protest cutbacks that would force their centers to close



HOW THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES DAYCARE: THE CASE OF TITLE XX

Low income families that fall within certain financial guidelines qualify for social service assistance for daycare. Without this public assistance, many working people cannot afford child care.

Financial Requirements

The government pays for child care through the social services program under Title XX of the 1975 Social Security Amendment. Title XX stipulates that each state must develop its own set of regulations controlling daycare and other social services available through this program.

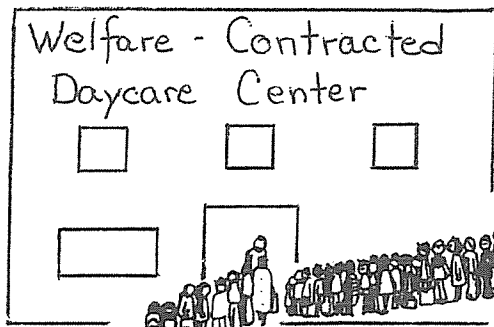
Federal guidelines state that daycare services may be made available free to families whose income is 80% or less of the median income for the state. Daycare on a sliding fee scale may be provided to families whose income is between 80% and 115% of the state median income.

In Massachusetts, this would mean that a family of four whose gross income is \$11,424 (80%) or less would be eligible for free daycare services. A family of four earning about \$16,500 (115%) or less would be able to receive care with the government paying part of the cost and the family paying part, depending on their income.

While these figures appear to be reasonable, there is a problem. Under Title XX, the federal government does not provide enough money to make them possible. Without a greater share of federal money, the state simply will not pay more for social services.

In order to serve the most needy families, Massachusetts set a limit of 69% of the state's median income (\$9,900 for a family of four) as the cut-off for free services. And, with its present share of federal money, Massachusetts does not even implement a sliding scale for services.

Thus, families earning more than the cut-off point cannot continue to receive daycare paid by social service funds. If their income goes over by even \$1.00, then they must pay the full cost, which is around \$50 a week on the average.



Family Need

Government funded daycare and other social services are provided to families on the assumption that it will make them less dependent on the state welfare programs. Senator Mondale, a strong daycare advocate, has described Title XX as legislation based on the "old fashioned notion that dignified work is better than welfare, that independence and self sufficiency are better than life in a state supported home...by providing child care to working parents, the program can reduce the welfare rolls."

But in order to use daycare services paid by social service money, Massachusetts requires a family to do more than meet the financial requirements. The family must also *prove* that they need daycare.

The need must be explained in terms of the family's intention to reduce "dependency" on state supportive services. Social service plan forms must be filled out for each family itemizing how daycare will help them "achieve or maintain economic self-support" or "self-sufficiency" or how it will help in "preventing or remedying neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children unable to protect their own interest, or preserving, rehabilitating, or reuniting families."

The daycare provider must indicate the nature of the family's "problems" according to pre-designated categories which include "family conflict," "broken families," or "inadequate parental functioning." This information is kept in state files and put on computers with name, address and phone numbers of the family.

Federal regulations do not require this centralized storage of personal data.

Only low income families have to give out personal information about themselves. In contrast, if a family has the money and wants to send their child to a daycare center, no one asks them personal questions. No one asks them, for instance, whether the mother drinks, how much money they make, or why they have decided to put the child in the center.

Federal Standards and Cutbacks

Federal social service funding is tied to federal standards that are designed to protect health and safety. The standards affecting daycare are called the Federal Interagency Daycare Requirements (FIDCR).

Until recently, the federal and state governments did not enforce these standards very strictly. Now, under Title XX, they are required to do so. At the same time, however, the government has refused to provide enough extra money to enable centers to meet these standards.

In order to attempt to meet federal standards, small, community-based daycare programs face having to raise their fees or else being forced to close. This will particularly hurt third world communities.

Massachusetts is using the federal standards as an excuse for cutting back on daycare services.

Previously, when a family was eligible for state-funded daycare, they could send the child to a center of their choice and the state paid the fees directly to the center through a system called “vendor payments.” Now, the state claims that they have no way of checking to see if these centers or “vendors” meet the federal standards.

So the state is eliminating vendor payments altogether.

An eligible family, therefore, can only send their child to a center which has a “welfare contract.” When centers apply for a welfare contract, they have to specify the geographic area they serve. Families seeking daycare, therefore, will be forced to choose from a limited number of centers that have welfare contracts. This will have the effect of segregating children in welfare contracted centers by class, race and ethnic background.

Many small centers are unable to get welfare contracts because they cannot offer all the services the contract requires. A lot of daycare centers are so hard-pressed to keep costs down, they cannot even apply for a contract they might be eligible for, simply because their staffs are too overworked to do the paperwork required to apply for the contract.



Guardian photo by George Cohen



WHY GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR DAYCARE IS SO LOW

Our government serves the interests of the powerful and wealthy corporations. And government funding for daycare is linked to women's position in the workforce. How does this work?

During World War II, when men left their jobs to fight at the front, women were needed to replace them in the defense industry. The government increased its spending on daycare services so that women could work. After the war, women were discouraged from working, so daycare funding was cut.

Today, unemployment is high and many people need public assistance.

In our country, families are normally expected to support and provide for the young, the unemployed and the elderly. Families considered incapable of taking care of themselves are given social service assistance such as daycare, welfare, and General Relief.

But during periods of economic depression such as now, more and more people need these services. At the same time, the government claims it has to cut social service spending.

To do this, it makes complicated rules and regulations in order to limit public assistance to only those people who cannot work because of illness or to those people who are proving that they are trying to get back to work.

Women on AFDC and in the WIN program know the system well. Welfare mothers need child care in order to get training for jobs that would pay well enough to enable them to get off welfare. But as soon as they get jobs that pay well, they no longer qualify for child care assistance. Then they have to pay so much for child care, they cannot afford to use it, so they have to leave their jobs and go back on welfare.

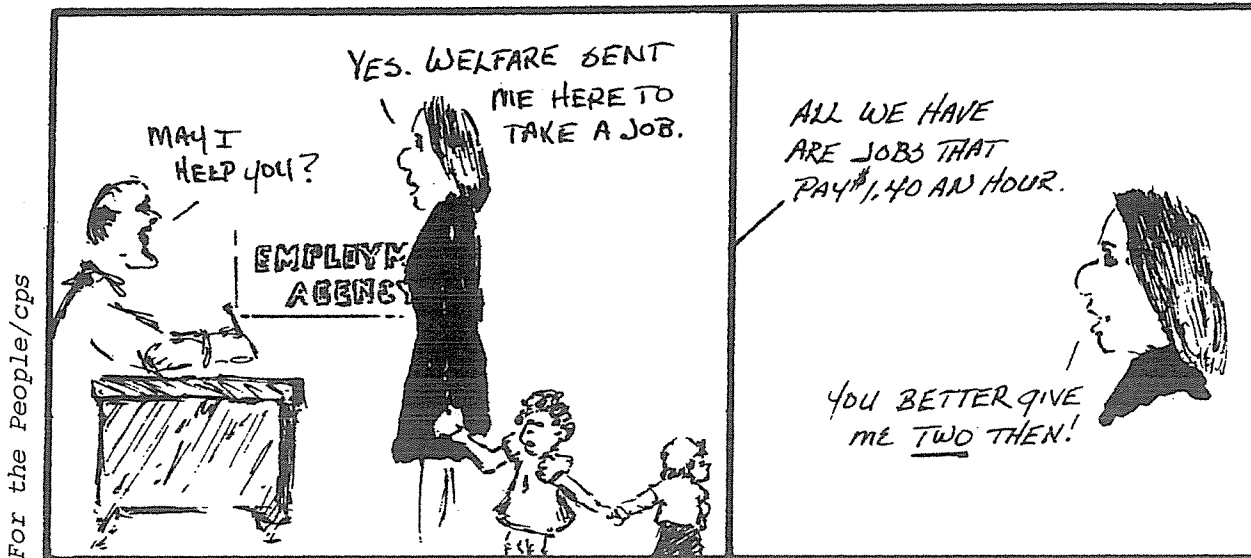
If there were enough child care, more people would be demanding more jobs and jobs at a decent wage. Without adequate child care, families, and particularly mothers, cannot work full time. Therefore women are forced to take low-paying part-time jobs.

Women frequently work in only seasonal jobs (like around Christmas time) or during school hours. Frequently these are jobs with no health benefits and no unions. Instead of being angry about being manipulated into and out of the labor force, women are often thankful to get any jobs.

To keep child care, families have to stay in low-paying jobs. These families are being used by their employers as cheap labor. Fellow workers resent it and nobody benefits except the boss.

The government's interest in providing daycare is thus motivated by needs of controlling the economy and not by the needs of families.

Daycare is an important service to parents and children. If we start with *that* premise, and recognize the widespread need for positive quality child care, we end up with different priorities than the government has about welfare and daycare assistance.



WHAT WOULD IT COST FOR MORE CHILD CARE SERVICES FOR OUR CHILDREN?

We believe that all child care should be free and that the government should use our tax dollars to pay for it. But we know that won't happen in a country governed by big business and the profit motive. It will take a complete reorganization of our country's priorities before there is free child care. We should all keep working together to insist on a change in our country's long-term priorities.

Meanwhile, many of us would be willing to pay a reasonable amount for child care. But, to make it within our means, the government must subsidize child care more than it does now.

Good, full-day, child care services can cost an average of \$50 a week per child. If the government paid one-half of child care costs and sliding fee scales were used (tuition based on families' ability to pay), the total cost of child care for 10 million children would be 13 billion dollars a year. This would be only 3.3% of the federal budget.

But child care assistance should be based solely on need. Child care should not be tied to forced-work programs, like WIN, that keep women in low-paying jobs. And parents should not have to reveal detailed personal information about themselves to get it.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

Things are tough now. Some parents will be losing the daycare they depended on. Some centers, facing increasing financial difficulties and unwilling to raise fees, will be forced to close. More child care workers will lose their jobs and some will face pay cuts.

We have to make demands on local, state and federal governments for more child care and we have to fight cutbacks which take away needed services. But first we have to organize ourselves where we are. Parents and staff must get together and figure out how to keep child care in our communities.

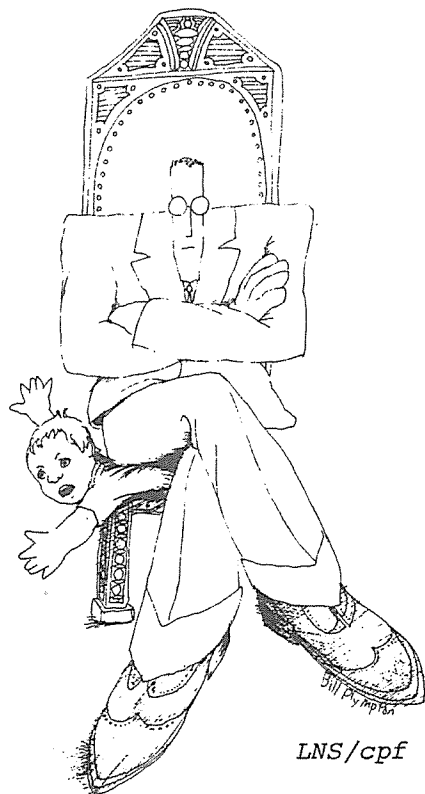
Maybe unemployed teachers and working parents who need daycare could get together to demand that city-owned facilities be made available for neighborhood daycare. Perhaps some daycare centers could rearrange their fee schedules to develop a sliding fee scale so working families could send their children at rates they can afford to pay. Fundraising from bake sales, yard sales and local business will never bring in a lot of money but could be done to make up for insufficient funding. There are probably other child care centers in each community that are experiencing similar problems and have found some solutions they could share.

Although few centers have secure funding, those that do should help centers that are poor. We encourage sharing of equipment, administrative and social service staff, and extra foods and snacks. There should be a spirit of cooperation in the daycare community so the "haves" help the "have-nots."

The important thing is not to allow ourselves to face the setbacks alone. We should be holding meetings at our centers to discuss what is happening and to find ways of supporting each other -- people to people, and center to center.

We have to understand why business and government do not support daycare and learn how to expose the local and national big-wheels so they can't get away with disregarding the needs of families and children. We must not let them use class or race to divide us.

All of us -- women and men, black and white, English and non-English speaking, poor and working people -- can grow stronger by trusting each other and depending on our own resources. Only by working together will we end the attacks on all poor and working people. **DON'T LET THEM TAKE AWAY OUR DAYCARE!**



If you are a parent who is losing or being denied daycare, or if you are a daycare worker concerned or affected by what's happening to daycare, these organizations can help:

Child Care Resource Center, 187 Hampshire St.,
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
547-9861

- Works to help families with their child care problems and encourages the expansion of parent and worker-controlled child care.
 - Offers free assistance in locating child care, including: daycare centers, family daycare, nursery schools, play groups, babysitting and after-school care.
 - Current information on welfare policies as they affect families and child care.
 - Information on other resources for families, such as: food stamps, emergency services related to housing or child abuse, health services, single parents' groups, and other support groups.
- Additional services in Cambridge and Somerville:
- Helps child care programs: locate and keep physical space; work out budgets to support the program and keep tuition as low as possible; meet licensing requirements; develop non-racist, non-sexist curriculum.
 - Helps get child care programs in touch with each other on matters of common concern.

Boston Area Daycare Workers United, ~~1000 Massachusetts Ave.,~~

9 Leonard Ave.

Cambridge 02139

868-4476

- Supports struggles of workers, parents and centers around all daycare issues.
- Aids parents and centers in dealing with the Welfare Department around daycare, such as writing contracts, appealing decisions, interpreting welfare guidelines.
- Helps workers work toward better working conditions and a living wage.
- Supports daycare workers unionizing.
- Offers assistance to parents and workers who feel their center is not meeting the needs of parents, children and workers.
- Provides support to parents and workers who are struggling to keep their centers open.

This pamphlet was written by Boston Area Daycare
Workers United ~~1000 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02139~~
and the Labor Pains Collective ~~1000 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02139~~