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 accommodations 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?