
TAKING ACTION

**THE ROLE OF CHILD CARE
EMPLOYEES IN
IMPROVING COMPENSATION**

Written by Jim Morin
For the WECA Commission
On Improving Compensation
In the Early Childhood Field

1989

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Forward

The organization and the Board of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (the Wisconsin state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children) is a diverse group of people: teachers, directors, owners, family child care providers, teacher educators, and many others who care for and educate young children.

Through a process of strategic planning, the organization determined that there were two main topics of primary concern:

1. The quality of early childhood programs and professionals, and
2. The compensation of those professionals.

WECA established the Quality Standards Commission and the Compensation Commission to investigate and develop strategies to improve both.

Early in the process, the Compensation Commission wrestled with the question of whose role it was to improve compensation: teachers? directors? boards of directors? owners? family child care providers? others? It was apparent that each of these diverse groups had a role to play, and that the effort to change must involve a collaboration. Singly no group was organized enough or powerful enough to change the whole picture. However, together we could begin to move.

Taking Action: The Role of Child Care Employees in Improving Compensation is a tool to help people change their thinking. It is the product of Jim Morin's thinking, writing and collaborating with the WECA Compensation Commission in 1988 and 1989. The members of that Commission represented teachers, owners, directors, family child care providers, Head Start, union members and teacher educators. Discussions were vigorous and sometimes heated but eventually Taking Action evolved and was adopted by the Board of Directors of Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.

The Compensation Commission has continued to work. Taking Action has been revised, and is the cornerstone of the Wisconsin effort to improve compensation because being able to see the compensation issue from a new perspective is the first step in redesigning the system collaboratively.

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Dear Reader,

It's amazing how many well intentioned, good hearted people are hurting children and parents today.

By accepting the child care system as it exists today we all are promoting harm to those we say we care about. We are currently damaging children by providing poor quality care for them nationwide. The situation is not improving. It's getting progressively worse as the demand for our services grows.

Every day programs are faced with hiring less qualified, less experienced personnel.

As this same story is played out year after year, we find ourselves providing services of lower and lower quality. Since it's a gradual change, we have been able to escape seeing where we're headed. We breathe a sigh of relief and feel successful in averting disaster this time. By looking at the little threats and giving up quality in exchange for keeping our programs open, we are causing a disastrous long term trend. The eroding of quality nationwide is causing damage to millions of children.

Not many years ago there was a pervasive attitude that said compensation issues shouldn't be raised. "Why talk about it? This is just the way it is. You can't do anything about it." Managers tended to not want to bring the issues up so employees wouldn't become discontented. Employees didn't seem interested in talking about it; they just wanted to be with the kids until they couldn't afford or stand it anymore, then they quit.

Directors, owners, board members, family child care providers, teachers, parents, and teacher educators are all responsible for the current situation. All must play a role if we are going to raise compensation. If we choose to not take an active role, then we are causing more erosion of quality.

We need to be clear that when we, as early childhood personnel, choose to sacrifice our own well being, we unwittingly sacrifice the well being of children, families and the larger society, as well.

It's time to work together. It's time to stop accepting sacrifice as a virtue. It's time to deliver the high quality programs we know how to deliver and to charge what they're worth!

In the next years the reading and use of this book will make a difference in the way many people see the compensation issue and a difference in the way we act about compensation. It's about time!

Carol Gross
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
Compensation Commission, Chair

PART I: A CRISIS IN CHILD CARE STAFFING

The care of young children in America has undergone a dramatic change during the past thirty years. In the 1950s most young children were cared for in their own homes by their mothers. Only 20% of mothers of children under six worked outside the home. Today, over 55% of mothers of children under six are employed outside the home. In Wisconsin, approximately 60% of children under six receive some out-of-home care in family day care, day care centers, preschools, or some form of before and/or after-school care. (1)

The impact on children of this shift in child care practices is of major concern to many: to parents who have primary child caring responsibility, to child care providers who want to meet the needs of children they serve, and to the public who will ultimately have to cope with the needs and abilities of these children as they grow into adulthood.

The child care field is now facing a growing crisis in its ability to provide high-quality services. **That crisis is a direct result of our unwillingness as a society to commit sufficient resources to the care and early education of young children.** Because of the severe shortage of adequately trained early childhood teachers entering and remaining in the workforce, parents cannot confidently assume that their child, placed in a preschool, day care center or family day care home will be cared for by individuals adequately prepared to contribute to that child's development and early education. On the contrary, instead of a trained and stable workforce, a parent is more likely to find their child in the care of someone with only the minimal level of training and experience, someone who will further add to the disruption in the child's life by leaving the child care field within the year.

The turnover rate among child care providers, both nationally and on a statewide basis, is alarming. Nationally, two out of every five child care employees will leave their job this year.(2) In Wisconsin, the turnover rate is 33% (3). Anecdotal reports from those attempting to hire new early childhood staff are no less discouraging. Many directors now report fewer and fewer applicants with Bachelor level training than was common even five years ago. **Not only are the teaching staffs turning over at a rate that undercuts the continuity of the adult-child relationship, but more of the people entering the field are doing so with a smaller investment in formal preparation for the challenges of teaching young children in group care.**

It is not difficult to understand the causes of the teacher shortage. There is neither economic incentive nor compensatory status in child care work. Early childhood teachers in Wisconsin have an average starting salary of \$4.92 per hour (4) (See page 20). That's less than parking lot attendants, fast food restaurant workers, dishwashers and zoo attendants. This is a poor enough comparison with jobs that require only minimal skills to maintain and service objects. Yet, when we consider that the care and education of three and four year old children requires training and experience comparable with that required for the care and education of children only two or three years older, the economic incentive to acquire such skills appears even more inadequate.

It is the lack of adequate financial compensation for those who provide the care and education of young children that is at the heart of the teacher shortage. Few would argue with that statement. Recently, it has become accepted practice to identify improvement in the compensation of early childhood staff as one of the keys to improving the quality of child care available to families. While the problem of inadequate compensation has been identified, very few solutions have been found. **Typically, it is presented in the context of a trilemma (6); quality child care, adequate financial compensation for staff, and affordability for parents are presented as competing choices.** One of the assumptions that this proposal will challenge is that the insolubility of the trilemma is a given.

We see the problem but not the solution. Yet in the absence of a solution the crisis grows ever more acute. Why a solution seems so elusive will be the focus of the next section. We will begin by examining the standard responses to the trilemma, and will explore some of the reasons those responses have not led to increased levels of compensation throughout the early childhood field.

PART II: WHY THE OLD SOLUTIONS WON'T WORK

It is not as though the problem of inadequate compensation has gone unrecognized. Those who are committed to making high quality child care available to families have long been aware that current compensation levels work against the recruitment and retention of a high quality workforce. Within the early childhood field, the search for solutions to the problem of inadequate compensation seems to proceed from the following assumptions:

Assumptions About Solving the Problem of Inadequate Compensation

- * Programs simply do not have additional financial resources that could be redirected to increase employee compensation. Additional resources must be found.
- * Parents can't pay much more than what they're now paying for child care. Raising fees high enough to provide the revenue required for appropriate compensation would be a sure way to price child care beyond the limits of affordability for most parents.
- * The taxpaying public does not truly understand the importance of the early childhood years. Neither do they understand the importance of the work done by early childhood teachers and child care providers. A major public education effort is needed before the public will be willing to support the use of public funds to increase the revenue available for salary increases.
- * The early childhood field must be much more active in the political process by shaping and lobbying for supportive legislation. It must also become much more active in supporting candidates for public office who can understand the importance of a trained and stable staff to high quality child care, and who will work to translate that understanding into supportive public policy.
- * The early childhood field is an emerging profession which still has to sell itself to the public. The way the field will sell itself is by making enough persuasive and logical arguments about the gains to be had from investing in children, as well as the moral "rightness" of such investment. Only when those in control of resources, both public and private, are sold on the wisdom and correctness of investing in young children and their teachers, will additional investments in young children be forthcoming.

These assumptions may seem legitimate on first reading. At the very least they probably sound familiar. Nevertheless, they are incomplete. They are incomplete in that they fail to appreciate the economic and social conflicts that result in low status and low pay for those who do the work of caring for young children. They are also incomplete in that they underestimate the tactics necessary to solve the problem of inadequate compensation. The redistribution of resources required to make quality affordable child care a reality for most families is less likely to come as a result of appeals to logic and moral correctness than from forcing such a redistribution.

It may be women and children first when it comes to getting into lifeboats, but in the economics of daily life it is not women and children who come first. More funding for the care and education of young children means--in the short run anyway--more money for women and children and less for men. If access to

economic resources were equal in our society the confrontational nature of increased funding for child care would not be so pronounced. As it is, we appear to be asking for resources that are not being provided voluntarily. Confrontation is merely a response to resistance.

The five assumptions identified above share the belief that some group in society can be convinced that it will ultimately be to their benefit to spend more of their resources on women and children. It is a belief that says the right presentation will be rewarded with investment. This belief has restricted efforts to two exclusive areas: political action to influence public policy, and public education promoting the notion that high quality child care is both essential to and characteristic of the early childhood field. Let us look at each area with an eye to the limitations the prevailing belief engenders.

Assumptions About Influencing Public Policy

Efforts to improve public policy relating to child care seem to proceed from the following assumptions. Be realistic. Don't ask for something that will be perceived as outrageous. Be willing to compromise. Go for what you can get.

These assumptions translate into political and legislative strategies that effectively sacrifice the compensation needs of early childhood employees. Curiously absent from almost all child care related legislation is any attempt at major compensation increases. There have been several exceptions to this trend, and they stand out in their uniqueness. In 1989 New York State passes a salary enhancement bill that pumped twelve million dollars directly into salary increases for child care employees. In 1987 the Massachusetts State legislature passed the Governor's Child Care Partnership bill that earmarked salary increases for state funded programs. More recently the Military Caregiver Personnel Enhancement Package increases salaries in military child care establishments by some \$8 million, and the Head Start Quality Set Aside Provisions of the 1990 Reauthorization Bill allocated some \$25 million for salary improvements. But these increases are isolated and very narrow in the impact.

The recently passed Child Care and Development Block Grant is more typical of the treatment afforded proposals to improve compensation for child care employees. In the first place, even through the legislative proposals formulated under the name of the Act for Better Child Care drew heavily upon the contributions of leaders in the child care compensation movement (i.e. Children's Defense Fund, NAEYC, Child Care Employee Project), it required a major effort to even have compensation addressed. The prevailing sentiment was that legislators would reject out of hand any proposal that called for significant salary increases for staff. The only things that would "sell" would be increased support for families in need and some support for consumer education. The final version of the bill allows for the possibility of spending some of the money allocated for quality enhancement to improve salaries, but that option must compete with funding for provider training, resource and referral services and increased licensing capability.

Assumptions About Shaping Public Education

The limitations on what the taxpaying public is willing to fund have led directly to the establishment of a public education campaign to improve the public's perception of the worth of caring for and educating young children. The first target of this campaign is to portray child care as a legitimate service. Many media presentations now show child care as a normal way of life for most American families. Child care is no longer presented as a service used primarily by the poor or those with inadequate parenting skills. Everyone uses child care now.

The second thrust of the public education campaign is to show that there is a difference between good child care and poor child care. Developmentally appropriate teaching practices, programs meeting local, state or national accreditation standards, and enhanced training opportunities for "early childhood professionals" are some of the items highlighted in this wave of activity.

The third aspect of the public education campaign promotes the idea that parents must become more informed and more critical consumers of child care. Many messages seek to convey the expectation that parents should know and insist upon high standards of quality when they choose a child care arrangement.

The design of current education efforts assumes that a sharing of "correct" information will lead to increases in funding for child care. This approach assumes that if parents, taxpayers and public policy makers only knew what early childhood professionals know, they would willingly provide the resources needed to support high quality child care. However, the obstacles to convincing the public that child care is worth much more than it currently costs have not been fully appreciated.

This approach is very consistent with the "non-demanding" style of behavior in the early childhood field. This style of behavior acts on the principle of appeal to "rightness." In this style, if we just make the "right" argument, if we make a case for something in an accurate, reasonable and professional manner, the merits of that case will eventually be appreciated and others will see it our way. The expectation is clear: ask for something reasonable, in the right way, and someone will give it to you.

There is a fatal flaw in this strategy. It is the assumption that people will do what is "right." Behavior, especially public behavior concerning the use of public resources, is an outcome less of altruism and more of political influence, that is, political and economic power. **There is something about the role of power and the use of power to force desired outcomes that seems particularly troublesome to most people in the early childhood field. The notion that some problems are, and can only be, solved by force meets with very strong resistance within our field.** Perhaps that is understandable since most child care employees spend much of their energy trying to dissuade young children from using force in the solution of their problems. We tell children, "Use your words," and we stand ready to support their use of words to get their fair share.

However, the adult world of economics and social justice is governed by different rules than is the backyard playgroup or the school playground. Economic equality, civil rights, religious freedoms--whatever the movement for a redistribution of economic wealth or status--these fundamental changes in the structure of society happen only when groups demanding such changes have enough power to make them happen. Without power, calls for change are ignored, tolerated or repressed.

The call for high quality child care must be understood as a major social change requiring a massive redistribution of economic resources. It is a change from a male-dominated economy where the value of women's work caring for children is minimized in both status and compensation to an environment where that same work can enjoy the status and compensation of other professional services. This will not be an easy change, and it will not happen through appeals to a more correct assessment of the worth and value of working with young children.

PART III: THE CASE FOR CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

The problem of inadequate compensation for child care employees will ultimately be solved through a variety of approaches. The key players that will bring this solution include public policy advocates, parent educators, employers, parents and child care providers themselves. We can think of these players as having different roles to play in bringing about a solution to a very complex problem. As in a play, some of these roles may be in conflict with one another, but it is the dynamic tension this conflict produces that makes the play successful. Child care providers have a very special, and very central, role to play.

The role of employees pursuing a course of activism in the early childhood field is to create a problem that demands attention. Solutions tend to be found for problems only when there is a consensus that something must be done. We do not have such a consensus in the early childhood field today. Currently, those aspects of the problem of affordable, high quality child care that are beginning to receive some attention are those which relate directly to availability and affordability of care to parents. Concern now centers around how parents can find, enroll, and then afford child care--afford at current levels of compensation. There does not exist a widespread awareness that the compensation levels of employees in the early childhood field constitute a problem requiring immediate attention.

There are several reasons why such an awareness does not exist. Most child care employees aren't telling anyone that low compensation is a problem. Parents who use child care don't see the fact that they aren't paying enough to make higher compensation levels possible as a problem. On the contrary, they feel they're already paying too much! Finally, the general public doesn't see current compensation levels as inadequate because the minimal salaries match the minimal skills and importance they associate with the care and education--they would call it babysitting--of preschool-aged children.

It is of course true that some people do see the problem of inadequate salaries and its impact on the quality of care available for children. Many within the early childhood field acknowledge that compensation is a problem that should be addressed. They know that additional resources should be found, but they also know that this is one of those problems that can be kept on the back burner. They would characterize this problem as one requiring a long-term solution, but not one that we can do anything about right now.

The problem of inadequate compensation can be solved later because there are no major consequences apparent in not solving it immediately. Child care is still being delivered the way it has been. People with the required qualifications are found to work with children. Not only are there no apparent consequences from raising compensation levels, there appear to be no compelling gains to be had from raising them. As a culture, we Americans place a high value on making a good deal. We have too much common sense to be happy making bad deals. No one wants to pay more for something than they have to. **As long as there is nothing forcing child care consumers to pay more, the problem of inadequate compensation remains a problem in theory only. And a problem in theory can be ignored.**

Only those who do the work of providing the care and education of young children can raise the problem of inadequate compensation from the level of a problem that should be solved some day to the level of a problem that must be solved now. It is by organizing themselves into groups having sufficient power to force a solution to the problem of inadequate compensation that child care employees can initiate a process leading to the broad-based public solutions required for high quality affordable child care.

It is not that child care employees solve the problem of inadequate compensation by creating a problem. But what they do is expose a problem that has been kept hidden by an unwillingness to charge the true cost of child care services. Child care employees, by bargaining for salary increases, force parent fees to increase. It is the increased fees that will create a willingness by parents to work for the resources

necessary to ensure quality, affordable care for their children. Real solutions to a real problem then become possible.

What must happen for child care employees to become organized in groups with sufficient power to force anything? There are five conditions which must be met for child care employees to be effective in this way.

Essential Conditions for Improving Early Childhood Compensation

First, child care employees must come to value their work as worthy of increased compensation. They must begin to define that level in specific monetary terms rather than in an unspecified "more".

Second, child care employees must communicate desired levels of compensation to those in positions to act upon this information. For most individuals employed in child care programs, that means the governing body of the program--the owner, administrator, director or Board of Directors--whoever has the job of balancing the budget, must be the body informed of the employees' desired compensation levels. Not only must this body be informed of desired compensation levels, they must be persuaded that this information constitutes a problem requiring immediate attention. For those employed in the delivery of family day care, and for most other programs where parent fees are the primary source of income, the fee-paying parents must also become aware of the employees' need for compensation increases.

Third, child care employees must exercise their power as organized workers united in this issue to force increases in compensation. Without the willingness to force improvements in compensation, this problem lacks urgency and remains one needing only future, not immediate, solution. Forcing does not mean getting everything at once, but it does imply constant pressure most typically applied through the process of collective bargaining.

Fourth, child care fees to parents must be increased to cover the compensation demands of employees. This is the only way that parents will become involved in seeking solutions to this problem. As long as child care is relatively affordable to parents, they have little incentive to find ways of meeting increased child care costs. Parents will only become involved in seeking additional resources to meet the costs of increased compensation when it is in their own interest to do so. Like everyone else, parents have too many complex demands on their time and energy to solve problems that don't really exist for them. Insisting that parents assume more responsibility for meeting the true costs of quality child care is essential. If parents discover they can't meet increased costs on their own, they in turn must present this problem for public resolution.

Fifth, child care consumers must exercise their power as an organized constituency to find the support they require to meet the true costs of child care. Those consumers may find such support from a variety of sources: from their own employers, from their state or local governments or from the federal government. The crucial point is that parents must acquire a more realistic sense of their responsibility for solving the problem of affordable, quality child care. As long as they are not economically motivated to seek solutions to this problem, the problem will remain unsolved.

The process of problem creation depends first on a decision by child care employees to take action to improve their compensation. Without that decision, and without an accompanying vehicle for translating that decision into a problem that demands and receives attention, sufficient urgency for the active involvement of other groups is missing.

In the next section some of the obstacles to this sort of action on the part of child care employees will be identified.

PART IV: OBSTACLES TO PROMOTING CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

Any individual wanting to promote greater involvement of child care employees in efforts to improve compensation should become aware of the obstacles that stand in the way of completing the task. This awareness will be helpful to the trainer or organizer in planning strategies for facilitating involvement. It is also potentially useful to child care employees themselves in that awareness of what obstacles lie in the path to a given goal is usually an advantage. We will examine potential obstacles for each step of the problem creation process.

OBSTACLE: Child care work is seen as having little value.

The Work Can Be Done By Anyone.

* People in this field regularly receive many messages that this work can be done by anyone, and that if it is a skill, it is a skill that comes naturally to women. Furthermore, in comparison with other occupations, the care of young children is rather unimportant since it requires little or no formal preparation.

A High Level of Skill Is Not Required

* Many people have chosen to do child care work because they didn't have the skills to do something else. Minimal entry requirements have drawn many people to this field who lacked the skills and formal training required by more professions demanding more training. For many, there is a lingering suspicion that this work is just glorified babysitting, and as such really doesn't justify professional levels of compensation. It's hard to be proud of your skills if you're doing work in a field where those with few other skills end up.

Training Does Not Address Compensation

* Most early childhood training programs do not deal with the issue of compensation. Preparation in child development, education theory, instruction, classroom management and environmental design typically constitutes the training curriculum. Omitted from the domain of adequate professional preparation is any mention of the causes of inadequate compensation, or the role of child care employees in addressing that problem. No encouragement is offered for a professional identity that would include activism for improved compensation.

No Opportunity for Employees to Define Adequate Compensation

* Employees are isolated and lack the opportunity to discuss their feelings about compensation and what they think that compensation should be. Discussions about appropriate compensation levels are generally not seen as legitimate staff-meeting business. Outside-of-work support or interest groups are most often non-existent, or where they do exist concern themselves with more traditional educational and curricular issues.

OBSTACLE: There is no mechanism for communicating desired compensation levels.

Employees Are Dealt With Individually

* Most employees have no vehicle for presenting compensation requests to their employers. Program staff members have neither the opportunity nor the consensus to present desired salary levels. Conditions of employment are thought to be a private matter between an individual employee and employer. In most programs the employee is not involved in setting compensation levels. While individual employees may make requests for salary increases, these requests are responded to as individual requests, not as collective demands.

No Consensus on Desired Salary Levels

* Even within the early childhood field, consensus has not been reached on appropriate compensation levels. In fact, the discussion has not even been held. There is very little awareness of what other child care employees earn in other areas of the city, let alone the state or nation.

OBSTACLE: Child care employees are not prepared to force compensation increases.

Employees Are Unwilling to Assert Their Own Needs

* Child care employees are not organized to have a voice in setting their conditions of employment. The very notion of organizing into labor unions where collective bargaining would be used to provide such a voice appears to be very threatening to directors, owners, administrators, and to child care employees themselves. The culture of the child caring profession shows much evidence of self-sacrifice, the ability to make the best of a bad situation, and a reluctance to be pushy about one's own financial well-being. This culture values "working together" and "not rocking the boat" rather than looking out for your own needs. In the child care culture, good employees endure, bad employees complain about their pay.

Most Employees Are Not Represented by Labor Unions

* The time and energy required to build an organized workforce with some effective degree of power is formidable. Even if the workforce was interested in organizing, this task would be a major undertaking. As it is, the workforce seems disinterested at best, totally opposed to the idea at worst.

Labor Unions Are Reluctant to Organize This Workforce

* The structure of the child care delivery system is diverse with many small work sites and little centralization of administration. Attempts to organize such an isolated, heterogeneous assortment of child care programs are fraught with communication difficulties.

Employees See Themselves as Powerless

* There exists a pervasive sense of powerlessness throughout the child care field in which any attempts to change the status quo are perceived as ineffectual, destructive, or nonprofessional. The problem of inadequate compensation seems so overwhelming that good reasons are easily found, or made up, to do anything rather than take action to try and improve compensation.

OBSTACLE: There is an unwillingness to increase costs to parents.

Directors/Owners See Too Much Risk in Changing the Status Quo

* Directors say that increasing fees will lead to parents leaving the program in search of more affordable child care options. Employees are told, and believe, that this will cost them their jobs. Lack of coordination of fee levels among providers, and a wide range of commitment to high quality child care, make job loss a very real possibility.

Increased Fees Seen as Problematic

* It is said that raising fees will create two classes of child care. High quality child care that only the wealthy can afford, and mediocre care for everyone else are presented as highly undesirable outcomes of raising fees.

Employees Personalize the Problem

* Making parents pay more is perceived by many as unfair. Child care employees will say parents cannot afford more, and they will be reluctant to transfer the subsidy their low wages now provide to a higher fee for parents.

Directors/Owners Have Power to Resist

* Directors will be reluctant to raise fees and, under existing entry-level training requirements, can easily find minimally trained replacement workers. An organized workforce would have to be quite powerful and resourceful to deal with this resistance to raising fees.

OBSTACLE: There is no existing framework for consumer activism.

Parents Are Unorganized and Transient

* Parents, as consumers of child care services, are not organized to get help through political action. They may use child care for only a few years, and most are out of the market by the time they realize they need to become active for quality child care.

Resource Redistribution Challenges Powerful Social and Political Institutions

* A redistribution of public and private resources to children and those who care for them would represent a major change in the priorities of our society. There are some major philosophical and ideological issues involved, in addition to the substantial economic shift. Questions about the desirability of nonparental care for children--especially for infants--can be expected, as well as issues regarding the role of the public in controlling and regulating the raising of children. We live in a society where approximately 27% of our Gross National Product is spent on military and defense-related activity. With such a major commitment of resources to defense-related activity, new human services programs will have to be very persuasive to compete for funding.

PART V: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

The problem of making high quality child care available to all families who need or want it at a price they can afford seems immense. Our society is just beginning to face the fact that such a problem exists. If a comprehensive solution to the problem is found, it will develop as our society reconsiders the role of women, the value of their work and the relative priority it assigns to human service programs for families. This proposal for promoting child care employee activism is a beginning step toward such a solution.

Given the preceding discussion about the role of an active workforce and the obstacles to the development of an active workforce, what strategies would be most effective for the promotion of child care employee activism? We can begin by examining strategies in two categories: 1) strategies intended to stimulate interest in and awareness of the need for child care employee action, and 2) strategies intended to build organizations that will take action to improve compensation levels throughout the early childhood field.

STRATEGIES: To Stimulate Interest and Awareness

* **Find ways to break the silence.** One of the first things you will notice is that discussion of compensation issues is not widespread. The goal is to find ways to promote concern about adequate compensation among child care employees. Individual, personal, oral communication is indispensable in breaking the silence. Arranging to speak with co-workers in some private setting is always a luxury, but when the opportunity arises, or when it can be created, it is a way to broach this subject in safety.

* **Raise the issue at staff meetings.** Getting the issue of compensation on the agenda at staff meetings might not be as hard as you might think. While many directors would be reluctant to devote staff meeting time to a session to complain about low wages, giving the topic a name like, "Removing Barriers to Effective Teaching," or "Building a Professional Image" might have more legitimacy, yet afford plenty of opportunity to raise the compensation issue.

* **Use other work-related meetings to raise the compensation issue.** Planning meetings for AEYC groups, Week of the Young Child activities and any other existing child care support groups are all possible opportunities to bring the compensation issue out in the open.

* **Present workshops on the compensation issue at local and statewide AEYC conferences.** Organizers of these conferences are usually looking for a range of workshops and the issue of compensation should be addressed at every conference. Even if people choose not to attend this workshop, they have at least seen it offered in the conference program. The more exposure the compensation issue gets, the more legitimacy as a professional issue it gains.

* **Present the compensation issue at public hearings on child care topics.** Often the city council, county board or state department in charge of funding child care will call a public hearing on proposed regulations, funding levels or new program proposals. Those interested in promoting greater awareness of the compensation issue can take advantage of these opportunities to show how the compensation issue is related to the stated topic of the hearing. Creative people can always find ways to talk about quality child care, and once you get to quality child care the compensation issue is only a short step away.

* **Draw attention to media accounts of the compensation issue.** Keep a bulletin board where relevant articles can be kept on display, or simply pass around copies of articles talking about this issue.

* **Use the letters to the editor section of your local newspaper to relate the compensation issue to some other coverage of child care.** With this tool you have the advantage of being able to present your own thoughts. Again, this sort of media coverage is useful only if it is seen by child care employees. Find ways to make coverage of the issue visible.

* **Develop useful written information on the compensation issue.** Accurate information on current wage and benefit levels in your state or community is essential to give people an accurate picture of their status as a class of employees. Information on how those levels compare with other occupational groups can be very powerful. Data showing that parking lot attendants are paid more than child care workers are powerful because they point out a contradiction in values most child care employees would agree with.

* **Point out the impact of inadequate compensation on the ability of the child care field to deliver high quality child care services.** Turnover rates, training levels of those entering the field, and "horror stories" of miseducation help make the case that you get what you pay for. Many child care employees believe it's OK for them to receive the pay they do because they would still be good teachers no matter what they were paid. While this may be true for a number of well trained and committed individuals, it is not true for the field as a whole.

People who feel that money isn't important to them must be helped to see their case as the exception and not the rule. Help people broaden the scope of their ethical responsibility. Just because compensation doesn't seem to affect their teaching ability doesn't mean others in the field aren't adversely affected.

* **Help employees identify those obstacles to action over which they themselves have control.** Many of these obstacles were referred to in Section IV. Included are attitudes and tendencies which could

prove difficult for many people to see or admit. If, for example, we identify as an obstacle an attitude of ambivalence about the worth of the skills one has in doing child care work, we might expect that many people would deny having such an attitude. In exploring the attitudes people in our field hold that may be obstacles to action, the question of the method one can use for this exploration is raised. It is one thing for a person to be able to acknowledge an insight into their own behavior under conditions that are supportive and understanding. It is quite another to simply be given another message that they are inadequate. In the first case the insight may be received positively and lead to change for the better, in the second it would probably be rejected out of self-protection. The point is that in the exploration of obstacles to action there is high likelihood that employees will have to confront some very unappealing ways they have participated in their own oppression. Facing the ways you contribute to your own oppression is not something easily done. It certainly isn't something one person can force on another.

STRATEGIES: For Building Action Oriented Organizations

* Resolve The Conflict Between Role and Identity

Action-oriented organizations require people who want to take action. **This proposal has identified the central role child care employee action could play in making the issue of inadequate compensation a problem requiring immediate attention. It has also identified as one of the major obstacles to the fulfillment of that role the fact that child care employees as a group are currently inactive, and have developed a culture and identity that does not include taking action to improve compensation levels. Building effective action-oriented organizations in the early childhood field can be accomplished only when this conflict between role and identity is acknowledged, and resolved.**

The process of resolving this conflict can be thought of as a process of adult education. It is in the educational writings of Paulo Freire (7) that we may find some useful suggestions about that process. **Action, according to Freire, becomes possible when people are able to critically analyze their situation and clearly perceive the need for action.** A further requirement for action is that they be in a situation where trust, hope and faith in shared goals characterizes the interpersonal climate of the group. **It is important to emphasize the two phases of the process of action. One phase is a critical analysis of the situation facing the group. The second component is a climate that encourages and supports active involvement of all the members of the group.**

* Acknowledge and Define Conditions of Oppression

There is a great deal of strength to be gained from fighting to correct injustice. There is the injustice of sexism where the value of an entire field of work and workers is denied because it is work done by women. The fact that sexism is institutionalized in our society and is thus perceived as "normal" does not lessen the fact that it is a form of oppression. There is the injustice of the costs of the goods and services taking priority over the costs of quality child care. There is the injustice of being indoctrinated to believe the rhetoric of oppression that says anyone can care for children, it's not work that demands professional preparation, and people who do this work aren't in it for the money. Finally, there is the injustice of the way our society allocates its resources--with the care and education of young children ranking a low priority, particularly in light of government and defense spending. Before oppression can be overcome, it must first be seen.

* Dialogue

The process Freire identifies as the means of carrying out this sort of adult education is called "dialogue." We can think of it as problem-posing education. Problem-posing education is very different from most examples of education we are familiar with. Most training is presented as a transfer of information.

The teacher, trainer or instructor has a certain body of information that the students don't, and tries to find ways for the students to get the instructor's information. **Problem-posing education does not attempt to transfer facts or attitudes from a knowing instructor to unknowing students. The content of problem-posing education is the perceptions of a given situation held by those participating in the dialogue. A facilitator or leader has the role of helping to reflect, clarify and interpret the perceptions that are shared in order to help all gain a clearer understanding both of their experience of a given situation and of their reactions to that experience.** Problem-posing education is designed to explore an individual's experience of a topic in depth. It would encourage the sharing of viewpoints and reactions, and of testing the validity of one viewpoint with the experience of other viewpoints.

The process of problem-posing education is as important as the content. Dialogue depends upon a sincere respect for those involved in the dialogue, a sense of equality where all are trying to learn more about their situation than they know at the start, a faith in the good will of others, and a hope that the process of dialogue will lead to effective action to improve their situation. The process must encourage ever greater analysis of the content, at the same time as the analysis of the content builds ever greater trust, respect, faith and hope in those engaged in the dialogue.

Dialogue will always be unique to each group and each situation. However, an example might help to convey the tone and flavor of the process of dialogue. The format will usually be small-group discussion. A group might start out to dialogue about the report that parking lot attendants make more than child care employees. The group might be asked to examine what the situation means to them. Individuals might share information to support or dispute this statement. They might point out why that statement is true, or why it isn't true. The facilitator must be concerned about several aspects of the dialogue. The facilitator should strive to promote open communication and an ability to comprehend what the other person is saying. Creating a climate where other people have the opportunity to say what they feel without fear of rejection is one task. Creating opportunities for people to test out whether what they think they heard is what the other person intended is another. Helping individuals become more skilled at speaking about their experience and at accurately hearing of the experiences of others is essential to the process of dialogue.

Problem-posing education looks not only at the content of the shared experience, but at the reactions individuals have to those experiences. It is one thing to get a clearer awareness of the significance of earning less than a parking lot attendant; it is another to become aware of my own reaction to that significance. Reactions are often discovered by beginning with the question, "How does that make you feel?" Feelings, of course, are not always readily apparent even to those who have them. The problem of how a given experience makes one feel may have to be posed many times and in many different ways before an individual is able to reach an accurate answer.

Entering into the process of dialogue is entering into a commitment to look ever more critically at one's experience--in this case one's experience as a child care employee. Through this process the facilitator will try to help clarify how the self-imposed obstacles to action only serve to frustrate the employee. That frustration cannot be conveyed from the facilitator to the employee, it can only be experienced by the employee. Similarly, the support, trust, faith and hope in dialogue is discovered not by being told these qualities exist, but by experiencing them in dialogue.

There are many obstacles that could easily get in the way of a critical analysis of the statement that parking lot attendants earn more than child care workers. Some obstacles might be:

- * Denial that this is a fact.
- * An attitude of irrelevance, a conviction that the statement really has no bearing on my personal situation.
- * Denial that this fact is bothersome.

- * Humor that we should switch careers to become parking lot attendants.
- * Rational explanation of why parking lot attendants earn more.
- * Anger directed at the person who makes others look at the negative aspects of the field.
- * Excuses why nothing can be done to resolve the situation.
- * Arguing to defeat other participants.
- * Looking for praise and approval from the facilitator for knowing the right answer.
- * Withdrawal and silence.

The challenge to the facilitator is to make these obstacles themselves objects of reflection and critical analysis. Not only must the facilitator be skilled in identifying obstacles, she must be skilled in finding ways to help people examine what they probably don't want to examine. It is a most difficult task and a task where willingness for critical analysis must be built on trust, respect, honesty, hope and courage. Action is not something that people can commit to lightly.

When does the process of dialogue end? When is the content exhausted? The process doesn't end. Action, if it is to be effective in producing positive change in the early childhood field, must proceed from a basis of critical reflection. Without critical analysis we risk action unbounded by our own responsibility as choosing individuals. If we organize for action, but wind up with powerful groups that don't act in the best interests of children and teachers, we have merely shifted problems. Child care employees can act in such a way that they can initiate a solution to the problem of inadequate compensation. But their action must be responsible. And, in the end, they are the only ones who can determine the shape that action should take, and whether or not it is responsible.

APPENDIX A

Footnotes

1. Long Range Plan for Child Care in Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, 1986
2. Whitebook, Marcy et al, Raising Salaries Strategies that Work, Child Care Employee Project, Oakland, CA 1988.
3. Riley, Dave and Kathleen Rodgers, "Pay, Benefits and Job Satisfaction: A Report to the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association," 1989
4. Ibid.
5. Morgan, Gwen Managing the Day Care Dollars: A Financial Handbook, Mt. Rainier, MD: Gryphon House, 1986.
6. Clifford, Richard and Susan Russell, Financing Programs for Preschool-Aged Children, Paper presented at NAEYC National Conference--Anaheim, CA, 1988.
7. Freire, Paulo Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York: The Seabury Press, 1973.

APPENDIX B

National Organizations & Resources

Child Care Employee Project (CCEP)

6536 Telegraph Ave.
Suite 201-A
Oakland, CA 94609-1114
510/653-9889

CCEP is a national resource and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the quality of child care through better wages and working conditions for child care staff.

Resources:

National Child Care Staffing Study--a current and comprehensive profile of people working in child care centers and their relationship to the quality of care children receive. The Study examined demographic characteristics, professional preparation, quality, turnover, pay and working conditions of center staff in five cities--Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Phoenix and Seattle--representing the diversity of child care programs and regulatory environments in the United States.

Raising Salaries: Strategies That Work--A report of 18 public and private initiatives aimed at improving salaries for child care staff. Examples are drawn from individuals programs as well as city, county and state policies.

Taking Matters Into Our Own Hands: A Guide to Unionizing in the Child Care Field--provides and overview of the history and current status of unionizing in the child care field. Includes steps in organizing, contents of a union contract and the process of negotiation.

From the Floor: Raising Child Care Salaries--scores of creative ways various groups have used to improve salaries and increase access to training. Included examples of Salary enhancement legislation from eight states.

Critical Questions--four critical questions to help parents assess what a child care program is doing to attract and retain a qualified staff.

What States Can Do To Secure a Skilled and Stable Workforce--suggestions and strategies for using the quality provisions of the Child and Development Block Grant to enhance compensation.

National Worthy Wage Coalition

Coordinated by the Child Care Employee Project
Address above.

The Worthy Wage Coalition is a national network of groups and individuals participating in a Worthy Wage Campaign. The campaign is a grassroots effort to empower early childhood professionals and mobilize to reverse the child care staffing crisis. Each year the focal point of the Campaign is a nationwide Worthy Wage Day--set for the Thursday of the National Week of the Young Child in April.

Resources:

Worthy Work, Worthless Wages: A Worthy Wage Video--chronicles the Seattle, Washington child care community's activism to improve the quality of services by confronting the staffing crisis.

Worthy Wage Resource Packet--a valuable tool for helping individuals and communities organize for Worthy Wage Day.

Worthy Wage Products--T-shirts, buttons, mugs, posters and tote bags to purchase as tools to make the Worthy Wage Campaign visible and to support its activities.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

NAEYC
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
800/424-2460

The largest professional association for the early childhood field, NAEYC has launched a major campaign to educate the field about the need to identify and charge the full cost of quality child care services. NAEYC supports a panel on Quality, Compensation and Affordability and provides a program of membership grants to support efforts that are directed at improving compensation.

Resources:

Reaching the Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs--this book contains a rationale for reaching the full cost and a series of worksheets designed to help programs determine what the full cost of quality is in their setting. A video on this topic is also available through NAEYC.

Salaries, Working Conditions and the Teacher Shortage--video that explores the relationship between quality and compensation in child care programs.

The Demand and Supply of Child Care in 1990--presents summary findings of two studies, "The National Child Care Survey in 1990" and "A Profile of Child Care Settings."

Other National Organizations:

Child Care Action Campaign
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212/239-0138

National Committee on Pay Equity
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202/822-7304

Children's Defense Fund
122 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202/628-8787

Child Care Workers Alliance
310 E. 38th Street, Rm. 226A
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612/823-5922

In Wisconsin:

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
1245 E. Washington Ave. Suite 260
Madison, WI 53703
608/257-0909

Wisconsin Child Care Union
1344 Spaight Street
Madison, WI 53703
608/251-7874

APPENDIX C

Workshop Format For "Taking Action

Note to the facilitator:

This section of the manual is provided so that people like you who are concerned about low salaries in the early childhood field have a vehicle to help other people become active in creating a solution to the problem of inadequate salaries.

The workshop format is designed to take participants through the steps needed to understand that becoming involved in action to improve compensation is a professional responsibility, not a self-serving diversion.

The person facilitating this workshop need not be an "expert" in salary and compensation issues. The workshop is designed to follow the organization in Taking Action. By reading and becoming familiar with the document, the facilitator will find the necessary support and information for leading this workshop.

Goal of the Workshop: To activate child care teachers, family child care providers, and other early childhood professionals to take action to improve wages in the child care field.

Procedure: In this workshop, participants will

1. Examine the causes of low wages
2. Discuss the effects of low wages
3. Identify obstacles to action
4. Become informed about necessary steps to action
5. Determine the first step

The workshop is divided into five parts. Each part is organized around a question. Consideration of each question by the workshop participants will build increasing understanding of the salary situation and lead to greater appreciation of the options for action.

Focus Questions (with suggested time allotments):

1. Why are wages at the current level? (40 minutes)
2. What are the effects of low wages? (50 minutes)
3. What are the obstacles--both structural and personal--to improving compensation? (40 minutes)
4. How can we overcome the structural and personal obstacles to taking action? (30 minutes)
5. What do you, as an individual, need to be able to take action? (30 minutes)

Time Schedule:

This workshop is viewed as an "in-depth" session to explore the issues of inadequate compensation. Because the workshop format is highly participatory, involving brainstorming and other facilitated activities along with small and large group discussions, we have found a 4 hour time period to be optimal. Because of the nature of the topic, it is suggested that the sections all be considered on the same day. This format prepares participants over a longer period of time to develop the personal conviction to challenge oneself to TAKE ACTION. According to the time allotments suggested for the focus questions, the total estimated time required for presentations is 3 hours and 10 minutes, with 4 ten-minute breaks.

This time schedule, however, may not meet the needs of a particular group. Here are two other options:

OPTION A: A shorter version of this workshop (2 - 2-1/2 hours in length). This is best accomplished by abbreviating the first three focus questions. For questions #1, participants could have done some brainstorming prior to the session and/or categorizing the results of the brainstorming could be modified by the presenter placing just one or two responses from each participant in the categories that have been pre-identified OR by not writing down all responses. For questions #2, small groups could be assigned only one of the numerous situations presented in the hand-out and share them in the large group. Likewise, for question #3, the number of role plays presented could be limited to 1 or 2--carefully chosen to reflect the needs of the group--and participants encouraged to take this activity back to continue at other gatherings of colleagues, i.e. staff meetings, affiliate meetings, etc. Rating the obstacles could also be eliminated.

OPTION B: Two consecutive meetings, as close together in time as possible. If it is necessary to break the sections apart, it would be helpful to keep the informational charts generated at the previous session(s) for review before continuing with the next sections. If any sections need to be abbreviated, consider the first three questions as described above and maximize the time in the second session in a discussion of next steps and strategies to pursue.

PART 1

WHY ARE WAGES AT THE CURRENT LEVEL?

Materials Required

1. Handout on current status of wages and compensation in Wisconsin. (If used in other states, use facts from your state.)
2. Individual writing paper.
3. Large sheets of paper for group recording and magic markers.

Activities

1. Review handout
2. Participants spend about five minutes writing down all the ideas they have about why compensation is so low.
3. Participants compare their ideas with one other person--preferably someone they do not know. Identify similarities and differences in the lists.
4. Facilitator points out that the following categories may be helpful in analyzing the many reasons people have identified:
 - A. Historical Precedent--the way children have typically been cared for in the past.
 - B. Society's Undervaluing of the Work of Caring and Educating Young Children
 - C. Society's Undervaluing of Women as Workers
 - D. Structural Limitations of the Child Care Delivery System.
 - E. Other--someone always has a new idea!
5. The facilitator writes these major categories on large sheets of paper and then attempts to categorize the reasons individual participants offer.
6. The facilitator will have to be prepared to offer possible reasons for low compensation that the group members fail to identify. Taking Action contains a listing of such reasons.

CURRENT STATUS OF WAGES AND COMPENSATION FOR CHILD CARE GIVERS IN WISCONSIN

2/90

- FACT: Full time teachers in full day child care programs earn on the average \$4.92/hour or \$10,200/year. This equivalent to the poverty level for a family of three.*
- FACT: Licensed family day care providers work an average of 61 hours per week, and earn \$5300/year after expenses are subtracted from their income. This is less than the poverty level for an individual or a family of any size.*
- FACT: Nationally, less than half of women in the civilian labor force have attended college, while more than half of the child care assistant teachers and three-quarters of the teachers have some college background. In Wisconsin, one-third of the child care teachers and 20% of the family child care providers had a college degree in early childhood education.*
- FACT: The more formal education a child care teacher has, the more likely she is to demonstrate appropriate teacher behavior with young children.*
- FACT: The turnover rate for child care staff and providers exceeds 30% annually.*
- FACT: The most highly qualified child care center staff, those with the most training and experience, were least satisfied with their jobs.*

*Information provided in the facts above are from two sources:

Riley, D. and Rogers, K., Pay Benefits and job Satisfaction of Wisconsin Child Care Providers and Early Childhood Teachers 1988: A Report to Wisconsin Early Childhood Association. University of Wisconsin-Extension and UW-Madison, Madison, WI.

Whitebook, M., Howes, C. and Phillips, D., Who Cares? Child Care Teachers and the Quality of Care in America: Executive Summary of the National Child Care Staffing Study, Child Care Employee Project, Oakland, CA 1989.

Inadequate Compensation Outcome Examples

Directions: In your small group, appoint a recorder. Group members take parts and read the situations. Answer these questions following each situation:

- * What is the problem being described here?
- * What is the role of inadequate compensation in this situation?
- * Who is most affected by this situation?
- * Have you ever had a similar experience?

1. THE INEXPERIENCED TEACHER:

Betty (a teacher) - Sue can you help me? I don't know what to do. Jeff is driving me crazy. He's always hitting the other kids and I can't make him stop. He's spending the whole morning on the time out chair and that doesn't even seem to help. We used to give time outs alot at the other center I worked in.

Sue: Well, when I was in school we learned that little children can't always control their behavior, and sometimes teachers need to change the classroom environment to cut down on children's misbehaving - like hitting.

Betty: Could I come in and watch you? I still don't know what you mean.

Sue: Let's talk to Diane, the director about this. Maybe she can give you some suggestions. I wonder if we could get a sub so you can come into my classroom and observe. We could learn a lot from each other if we could get subs to cover our classes while we observe each other.

Betty: This sounds like a good topic for our next staff meeting, doesn't it?

2. THE GOOD TEACHER WHO LEAVES:

Joan (a teacher): I'm going to go and tell our director during my break that I've been offered a job as a long term sub as a kindergarten teacher in Lincoln Elementary School. I'm excited about the job, but I know Carol won't want to hear this. She won't want to have to try to hire another new teacher to take my place. There weren't may applicants when John left last month.

Elizabeth (a teacher): Congratulations! That's great for you! Once you get into the public school system as a sub you'll have a great shot at a permanent job. And I bet you'll get paid a lot more too!

Elizabeth: But as far as I'm concerned, I'm really sorry that you're leaving. It's such a pleasure to work with someone who really knows what they are doing. The last 3 people who have been hired have only taken one or 2 courses at the vocational school, and they really struggle with knowing what to do in the classroom. It is a difficult job to teach young children, and having training in child development, teaching methods and developing an appropriate curriculum really helps make a teacher's job easier. I feel like I put in double duty now, helping others plan and doing my own planning too.

Joan: I know what you mean. I'm sorry to be leaving you in a lurch, and I'm really sorry to be leaving the children, but I've got to earn more money to pay off my student loans and my other bills. Besides, I'm worth more than \$5.00 an hour!

3. THE PROGRAM WHICH CAN'T HIRE ANYONE:

Director is sitting and reading through application forms for a position of a teacher she is trying to fill. S/he flips through several forms, sighs, shakes her head...:

This person has worked in a laundry, a fast food restaurant and a nursing home. She has never taken a child development course.

This person was a clerk in the Army until last month. No child development background.

This one is just out of high school. She "really likes children" and she has taken care of her own younger brothers and sisters.

This one signed up for the Child Care Assistant Teacher course but didn't get all the classes because it was the same night as her bowling league, but she likes children.

How can I, in good conscience, hire one of these people to be responsible for a classroom of young children? But what can I do - these are my choices.

(S/he throws up her hands--or the resumes!)

4. THE CHILD WHO LOSES HER BELOVED PROVIDER:

Mother: Sara, I have something to tell you which makes me sad, and will probably make you feel sad too. You are not to be going to Jane's house anymore when I go to work.

Sarah: (4 years old) Why not?

Mother: Because Jane is going to work now at a "real" job, at the grocery store. She isn't going to take care of children anymore.

Sarah: But I WANT to go to Jane's house when you go to work.

Mother (sighs): I know. But we'll have to figure something out. We'll have to find another family child care provider for you, or maybe you can go to a day care center.

Sarah: Why can't I go to Jane's? I want to go to Jane's (stomps feet or cries).

Mother: I know you like going to Jane's while I'm at work. You've been going to Jane's ever since you were a little baby. I'm very sorry that Jane isn't going to be a family child care provider anymore. We will go and visit some day care centers to see which one you and I like best. This will be an adventure for both of us!

Sarah: And Jamie and Allison and Becky will go to the new day care center too!

Mother: Well, I don't know, honey. I don't thing so. Their mommies and daddies will have to find a new place for them to go too, but I don't know if they will pick the same place as you and I pick. Tomorrow I will skip wok and we will go and visit the Learning Center, to see if you would like to go there.

Sarah: I don't want to go to a new day care center. I want to go to Jane's, and play with Jamie and Becky and Allison. (cries or pouts)

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Sarah: I don't want to go to a new day care center. I want to go to Jane's, and play with Jamie and Becky and Allison. (cries or pouts)

5. COST-CUTTING PROGRAM:

Lynn (director), at staff meeting: I'm sorry I have to tell you this, but our rent has just gone up 10%, the gas and electric bills are up 25% (because the furnace doesn't work right), and the telephone is broken, so we have to buy a new phone system. We may have to fix the furnace too. To make matters worse, the Lions Club decided to give their annual gift to the Boy Scouts this year, not to our center. That means we need \$3,000 more for our budget, or we are going to need to trim our budget. We have some options. We can delay the 3% wage increases until next year. We can cut out our program supply budget, field trip budget, and do our own cleaning so we don't have to pay the church to do our cleaning. Or another possibility is that we would have to lay someone off, or at least cut some hours. We're at bare bones ratios most of the time, I know. But here are probably a few places in the day that we could cut. We could try a split shift maybe, so no one has to lose all of her hours. Any of these options would save us \$3000. What do you think we should do?

Judy (a teacher): The choices sure aren't very good, are they? Kind of like a choice between the frying pan and the fire!

Bob (a teacher): I think we deserve pay raises. Besides I need that extra money. I can't make ends meet as it is now.

Ann (a teacher): I guess I'd rather get paid more too. I'm willing to clean my room in exchange. But I'll have to do it while the kids are here, because I have to go to my other job right after I'm done here. I'll turn on the tv and let the kids watch Sesame St. while I do the cleaning.

Judy: sure, I'll do that too. But we only have that one old tv set. Can I send my kids into your room?

Bob: Well, I'm willing to go and scrounge more free materials at the hospital, the school and the newspaper. They are tired of seeing me, but I can get some great things to use with the kids, and then we don't have to budget money for those supplies. But what about paints and art materials? Maybe will have to put away our art centers for the rest of the year.

Ann: Cutting back on staff or having split shifts doesn't sound as good as cutting corners. The times when there are fewer children so we have a little leeway in our ratios seems to vary from day to day and week to week. Also when you work a split shift, it would be hard to come back to work fresh and enthusiastic for the second part of the work day. That would add a little more stress to the other teacher working with that person. And it's not so good for the children either.

Lynn: Well, I'll take these recommendations to the Board. It seems like you are all agreeing that you want the pay raise, and that you'll try to compensate by working harder, doing the cleaning and scrounging materials to cut other costs.

6. TEACHER AND PROVIDER WHO ARE ASHAMED OF THEIR WORK AND WANT A "REAL JOB".

Alice (Family child care provider) when people ask me what I do, I never know what to say. If I tell them I'm a licensed family child care provider, they just look at me like they have no idea what that is. If I tell them I babysit for children then they say things like: "It must be nice to stay home and get paid to do your house work and watch the soaps all day." People have no idea what a difficult job it is to take care of other people's children everyday.

Ellen (teacher): I know exactly what you mean. I get so mad when people say, "It must be fun to get paid to play with kids all day." They don't realize that I went to school for 4 years, just like the kindergarten

and first grade teachers did. And that what I teach these 3 and 4 year olds in the day care center will help them prepare for school life.

Alice: Right! And people don't think about how hard we work, for how little we get paid. Last year, after I figured out my costs for running my child care program, I ended up with \$5,000 for my "salary". And that's after I worked 10 hours a day, 5 days a week, all year. I didn't even get a vacation (I couldn't afford to lose the income from parents even for a week or two). My husband says I need to get a job that pays a regular salary, because our family needs the money. Besides, the child care program is wearing out everything in the house and we can't afford new carpets and furniture.

Ellen: I'm trying to get a "real job" too - one where I can get paid more and earn some benefits. If I can't get a job teaching in the elementary school, I'm going to apply at the factory. It's not nearly as exciting as working with children, but I'd be earning good money, and I wouldn't have to defend my choice of jobs all the time when people ask what I do.

PART 3

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES, BOTH STRUCTURAL AND PERSONAL, TO IMPROVING COMPENSATION?

Materials Required:

1. Role playing situations on "Obstacles to Action." Make copies of the situations listed on the handout for all participants to refer to.

Activities:

1. Have each group prepare and act out one or more of the role playing situations for the entire group.
2. After each presentation, group discussion should focus on identifying which obstacles were portrayed, whether or not these items would be obstacles for them, and why these items might be perceived by someone as obstacles.
3. After all presentations have been made, ask participants to rate the obstacles from most serious to least serious. Ratings may be done individually or by group. Compile the ratings to see which obstacles are most significant for this group. You can ask each individual to rate the 3 top obstacles for him or her by giving 3 points to the most serious, 2 points for the next most serious and 1 point to the 3rd. Then collect information from the group to form a group listing rating the seriousness of obstacles.

Obstacles to Action: Role Plays

A. If parent fees are raised too high, parents will look for something cheaper.

Situation: staff says to director/owner they need to earn more, so just raise parent fees; director/owner points out it's not that simple - parents will go to a cheaper place, and you'll be out of a job. For FCC: If I raise fees, parents will go to a cheaper unregulated provider (with 10 or more children in her home)

B. Individual employees have very little power to get improvements in their wages.

Situation: director tells each staff person individually what their wages will be for next year and staff react individually. Staff responses may be to quit, so director has to hire new people, etc.

C. Nobody wants to go to another meeting about this; they are too worn out from their job, and besides they're looking for a new job.

Situation: In teacher's lounge, staff talk about WECA's upcoming workshop on improving compensation. People give reasons for not going. For FCC providers - two providers could be talking on phone about this.

D. I'm not in this for the money. I love kids.

Situation: FCC support group or group of teachers, talking about their jobs. Some complain, others comment on loving kids, knowing the wages would be low, etc.

E. Politicians set public policy based on how many people will support that policy.

Situation: Public Hearing before County Board about Social Service Department budget. People speak at hearing about raising rates so their wages can be increased. Talk about things like turn over, caused by low wages, who is attracted to the field for their profession and how these things affect children.

F. Child care employees are not assertive; they make the best of a bad situation and keep their complaints to themselves.

Situation: Teachers in lounge talking; some complain about personal problems caused by low wages; others suggest reasons to be cautious about pushing for improvements (don't want to hurt kids, parents can't pay, etc); others talk about why we should make the best of this situation.

G. Union is a four-letter word!

Situation: Group of teachers talking. Someone mentions UNION. Others Say: that's too confrontational; unions are corrupt; parents can't pay more so what good will a union be; etc.

H. Directors/owners make decisions about wages and benefits based on certain assumptions, within their set boundaries.

Situation: A Director's Network Group Meeting. Directors talk about wanting to pay more but being unable to, and they list reasons: parents will leave; there are other expenses we have no choice about; how much should you pay poorly trained people anyway?, etc.

PART 4

HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE STRUCTURAL AND PERSONAL OBSTACLES TO IMPROVING COMPENSATION?

Materials Required:

1. Handout: "The Case for Child Care Employee Activism" (Part III of the Taking Action manual)

Activities:

1. Discuss the main points of the handout.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of the concept of "force" as a tool for overcoming obstacles.
3. Review the "Essential Conditions for an Empowered Workforce." Discuss why these conditions are presented as "essential".
4. Explore what personal reactions and feelings the participants have to the "Empowering" model.

Note to Facilitator:

The intent in this section is to first identify and then legitimize the reactions of the participants to this information. Reactions will probably be more forthcoming in smaller groups where trust can be built up to a degree where sharing reactions truthfully is possible. Therefore, you may want to divide the group into small groups for this discussion, if there are group members who can facilitate the discussion in each small group. It would be a good idea to identify possible facilitators and get their consent prior to the workshop. As the facilitator, you may have to be quite active in raising questions and in using active listening techniques to clarify the feelings and communication of the participants. It is not so important that everyone agree with this model. It is more important that participants are clear about their reactions and their feelings about those same reactions.

PART 5

WHAT DO YOU, AS AN INDIVIDUAL, NEED IN ORDER TO TAKE ACTION?

Material Required:

1. Handout -"Where Do We Go From Here?"
2. Resource listing (Appendix B of the Taking Action manual)
3. Information on joining WECA and/or other support groups in their area.

Activities:

1. In responding to this question, encourage participants to do so as an individual--not as a staff member, a provider, or as a member of an Affiliate group.
2. Using techniques to clarify and stimulate discussion similar to those used in Part 4, try to help the participants think in terms of what they need in order to take the first step.
 - a. Define possible first steps.
 - b. Choose three possible steps and identify what would be needed to take them.
 - c. What could the role of this group be in supporting first steps.
 - d. Identify your first step. Write it down and it will be mailed as a reminder to you in one month.

Note to facilitator:

It is important to end the workshop with a feeling that individual participants have made some kind of commitment to "take action"--regardless of how large or small their commitment. If possible, arrange for a follow-up workshop to work together on strategies they would like to pursue as a group.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Some possible strategies to stimulate interest, discussion, and increased awareness:

1. Find ways to break the silence about wages and working conditions in your everyday life!
2. Raise the issue at staff meetings.
3. Use other work-related meetings to raise the compensation issue (for example, local AEYC affiliate meetings).
4. Work with other interested colleagues to create a local Worthy Wage Task Force in your community.
5. Explore unionization as a vehicle for an organized voice of child care teachers and providers.
6. Present the compensation issue at public hearings on child care topics.
7. Draw attention to media accounts of compensation and/or quality child care issues.
8. Use the "Letters to the Editor" section of your local newspaper to relate the compensation issue to other coverage of child care concerns.
9. Develop useful written information--such as current compensation levels in your community with comparisons to others in your community. The NAEYC publication, Reading the Full Cost of Quality Child Care is a very useful. Also consider working with a local Resource and Referral agency to collect data for your community. The National Worthy Wage Campaign has developed a useful resource packet to use and adapt and the Child Care Employee Project has information on conducting a salary survey.
10. Point out the impact of inadequate compensation on the ability of the child care field to deliver high quality child care services to: parents, employers, elected officials, media, friends, neighbors, etc.!
11. Help your colleagues in the early childhood profession to identify those obstacles to action over which they have some control.
12. Support statewide and national efforts to improve compensation by joining:
The Worthy Wage Coalition - a national network of groups and individuals participating in a Worthy Wage Campaign--a grassroots effort to empower early childhood professionals and to mobilize themselves to reverse the child care staffing crisis. Individual and organizational memberships are available. For more information, contact CCEP or WECA (addresses below).

The Child Care Employee Project - a national resource and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the quality of child care through better wages and working conditions for child care staff, and national coordinator of the Worthy Wage Campaign. For information on membership benefits, contact CCEP, 6536 Telegraph Avenue, Suite A-201, Oakland, CA 94609-1114.

In Wisconsin, the **Wisconsin Early Childhood Association**, the statewide affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For membership information, contact WECA, 1245 E. Washington Ave., Suite 260, Madison, WI 53703.

13. **Other Ideas...**

**Taking Action To Improve Compensation
In the Early Childhood Field
Evaluation**

Workshop date _____

Location _____

1) The facilitator knew the material and presented the information in a clear, organized way
(circle one)

Very Well			Not at All
4	3	2	1

Comments:

2) The information I obtained in this workshop can be applied to my future in the early childhood profession (circle one)

Very Well			Not at All
4	3	2	1

Comments:

3) The workshop format gave me opportunities to express my own knowledge and beliefs about this issue (circle one)

Very Well			Not at All
4	3	2	1

Comments:

4) I would recommend this workshop to other early childhood professionals?
(circle one)

yes	no
-----	----

5) Comments or suggestions about this workshop:

Thank you for taking time to evaluate this workshop.

Good luck as you get involved in TAKING ACTION to improve compensation in the early childhood field!

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
Certificate of Continuing Education

To: _____

For: Taking Action to Improve Compensation in
the Early Childhood Field

Location: _____

4 Hours of Continuing Education Earned

For CDA Candidates, this workshop provides four hours in CDA subject area #6,
"Maintaining a Commitment to Professionalism."

Date

Presenter

Taking Action Workshop Facilitators
Your role - WECA's role

If you would like a commitment to help achieve Worthy Wages in Wisconsin by the Year 2000, you can complete the form on the next page and become a facilitator. WECA's goal is to presenting Taking Action Workshops throughout Wisconsin. This is an important first step in raising awareness and encouraging early childhood professionals to take action on their own behalf to achieve worthy wages. We need facilitators to help present these workshops.

1. Read Taking Action and review workshop handouts.
2. When contacted by the WECA office, decide whether you can be a facilitator for that Taking Action Workshop. You may suggest a person with whom you would like to work as a co-facilitator.
3. If working with a co-facilitator, plan the workshop format together. Decide who will lead which sections. Make notes for yourself about key points to include as you introduce each section.
4. Review the instructions (enclosed) for the local coordinator and check to be sure everything is set for your session.
5. If you have questions, contact the WECA office, (800-783-9322 or 257-0909 in Madison).
6. The WECA Office will send you the handouts you need for your Taking Action Workshop. Be sure to take them with you!
7. Conduct the Workshop.
8. Collect names and addresses of all participants. Distribute and collect the evaluations. Sign the continuing education forms for participants.
9. Send to WECA a list of attendees, workshop evaluations, and a request for travel reimbursement to: WECA, 1245 East Washington Ave., Suite 260, Madison, WI 53703.
10. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!
11. Continue your commitment to achieving Worthy Wages in Wisconsin by the Year 2000.

Thank you!

TAKING ACTION WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Please complete this form and send it to the WECA office if you are willing to become a facilitator. WECA is developing a statewide network of individuals trained to present workshops on compensation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone Number: _____ (work) _____ (home)

In order to accommodate your needs in the best way we can, please indicate your preferences for doing a workshop or indicate "no preference."

1. How many times a year would you be willing to present? Circle one: 1 2 3

2. What geographical area are you willing to consider? How far would you travel?

3. Best day(s) for you. Circle best days and "X" out days that are impossible:

Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat. Sun.

4. Best time of the year. List months:

Months you would not consider, if any:

5. Preferred way to schedule. Rank order:

- ___ One 4-hour session
- ___ Two 2-hour sessions - evenings
- ___ Two 2-hour sessions - daytime

6. Because our goal is to provide pairs of facilitators, please tell us if there is someone with whom you'd like to co-present:

7. Where does your experience primarily lie? Check one:

- ___ Family Child Care
- ___ Child Care Center
- ___ Teacher Training
- ___ Other, specify _____

Are you willing to be paired with an individual whose expertise is different than your own? Circle:

Yes No

8. What else do you need to feel ready to do a **Taking Action** workshop?

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
TAKING ACTION WORKSHOP
Guidelines for Making Arrangements

1. **Group decides to conduct Taking Action.**
Reach agreement with a group of early childhood professionals to sponsor this workshop. The "group" could be your local AEYC affiliate, a family day care support group, a director's network, staff at one or more early childhood centers, a group of teacher educators, students enrolled in an early childhood training program, or early childhood professionals who sign up to take a continuing education course at your local vocational college.
2. **Select date(s).**
Select your preferred date and an alternate. You may want to schedule this for a 4 hour session on a Saturday, for 2 evening sessions of 2 hours each, or for 2 week day sessions if everyone in the group is available to attend at that time.
3. **Arrange facilitators.**
Contact the WECA Office to arrange for a facilitator team. Facilitator teams will generally be two people. The WECA Office will notify you who the facilitators will be, and you should then follow up by contacting the facilitators to make the final arrangements.
4. **Arrange facility.**
Arrange for a facility where you can conduct your Taking Action Workshop. Determine how many people you expect to attend. An ideal location for a Taking Action Workshop is a room with tables and chairs (adult size!) where participants can sit. An easel and pad of newsprint or chalkboard will be needed by the facilitators. The room temperature should be comfortable for people to work. If the room does not have tables and chairs, look for a room with moveable chairs. This workshop involves group participation, working in small groups at times; it cannot be done well in a lecture room with permanent, unmovable chairs. Try to locate a facility which will donate space for this workshop.
5. **Notify WECA of the date and location.**
WECA will mail all the necessary handouts to the facilitators, so they are prepared for your workshop.
6. **Plan a budget - determine the workshop costs.**
 - * **Facilitators:** facilitators have agreed to present one Taking Action Workshop without an honorarium. However, if your group determines it can afford to pay a small honorarium from your own funds, or by charging a small fee to participants, you are encouraged to do so. WECA will pay the travel expenses of the facilitators.
 - ***Facilities:** will you have a facility cost?
 - ***Refreshments:** will you have a cost, will items be donated, or will you decide not to provide refreshments?
 - ***Publicity:** determine the costs to print or duplicate publicity flyers and mail them to potential participants (see item #7).

You may decide to charge \$10, and provide the Taking Action Book and lunch for participants. Now that you know your costs, consider whether you have existing funds to cover those expenses, or whether you want to charge the participants a small fee (\$2-\$5). To determine how much to charge if participants need to cover the costs through the workshop fees, consider how many people you anticipate, and divide the total costs by that number. If the workshop is free, you will want people to feel that it is really a bargain and they should sign up for this important opportunity. We have found that sometimes even a \$2 payment from participants in advance assures their commitment to attend.

7. Publicize Taking Action Workshop

A. Press Releases

Use the sample press release (enclosed) to announce your workshop to your local newspaper, radio and television stations, about 2 weeks before the workshop. You could follow up with a telephone call to see if they would like to attend the workshop and provide some in-depth coverage of the issue of low compensation in child care and how that affects the quality and availability of the child care services families need.

You can order materials from WECA or the Child Care Information Center using the WECA order form to help prepare yourself to talk with the media. You can also refer the media to the WECA office for further information. WECA 800-783-9322 or (608) 257-0909. Child Care Information Center 800-362-7353 or (608) 266-1164.

B. Announce workshop to members of your group and other potential participants.

It is important to give as much advance notice as possible to participants. As soon as the workshop is scheduled, send a mailing to all your members, and anyone else you think should know about it. If you have a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency in your community, check with them about mailing a flyer to their mailing lists. Be sure to inform your County Child Care Certifier and Child Care licenser now. A sample flyer is enclosed which you can adapt to you situation. Contact the WECA Office if you need assistance with this aspect of preparing for your Taking Action Workshop, including helping printing the flyers.

8. Participants register in advance.

Provide an address and telephone number for participants to use in registering for Taking Action. **(Keep a list of the name, address and phone number of every person who registers.)**

9. Collect the materials and supplies you will need for the workshop:

1. Name tags
2. Pad of easel paper (if no chalk board), markers and tape
3. Refreshments if desired

10. Reconfirm with the facilitators a few days before the workshop, and tell them how many to expect.

11. The Day of the Workshop.

Arrive early to check on the room arrangement; put signs on the key entrances to help people find the workshop room; set up refreshments; set up registration table. As people arrive, give them handouts, a name tag and check them off on your registration list. Greet participants and facilitators and help people get settled.

12. During the workshop.

Help the facilitators as needed. Introduce them to get the workshop started.

13. After Taking Action

Send a thank you note to key people on behalf of the sponsoring organization such as facilitators. **Send a copy of your registration list (name, address, phone) to the WECA office so these people can be kept informed of future compensation improvement work.**

14. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!

15. Continue to work to achieve Worthy Wages in Wisconsin by the Year 2000.

APPENDIX D

Raising Issues & Stimulating Interest: Family Child Care

Family child care is a small business where the self-employed provider determines her/his own wages, benefits and working conditions within the parameters of a home environment. This is a different situation from child care center workers and administrators where compensation and benefits are usually determined by an owner or a board of directors. The basic issues of recruiting and retaining qualified teacher in order to have quality child care choices available for families encompass the family child care profession too, however.

In family child care, providers often need to take a preliminary step when they consider the issue of adequate compensation. They need to first determine what their actual compensation is, since they aren't paid an hourly wage or annual salary. Compensation for the family day care provider is calculated by deducting expenses from income. The next step is for a provider to analyze her financial needs, determine the benefits she expects from her job, and develop a budget and policies to help achieve those goals.

Because family child care providers work independently, they may not regularly have other professionals to discuss issues such as policies, fees, and the value of this work. Support groups or other professional associations serve a valuable role in giving providers people to share concerns and frustrations with, as well as people to work cooperatively with in reaching solutions. Support groups tend to help providers stay in business longer, as isolation is reduced. Support groups can be the "clearinghouse" for opinions and desires in regard to child care issues. A recent study conducted for the WECA Commission on Improving Compensation by David Riley and Kathleen Rogers of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Child and Family Studies (1988) found that an important factor in determining how satisfied family child care providers are with their jobs is whether or not they had access to a support system in this profession.

Additional resources for family child care providers:

The Language of Money and Family Child Care, a collection of essays that address provider compensation and other related issues. Available through: Windflower Enterprises, 142 S. Claremont Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80910. 719/520-1614.

Support Group Representative Training Manual, provides information on how to set up and make use of family child care support groups. Developed by Debbie Hintz and Patti Richards, this manual is available through the St. Croix Valley Early Childhood Association, a WECA affiliate. Contact: Patti Richards, 1129 Hwy. 63, Baldwin, WI 54002.