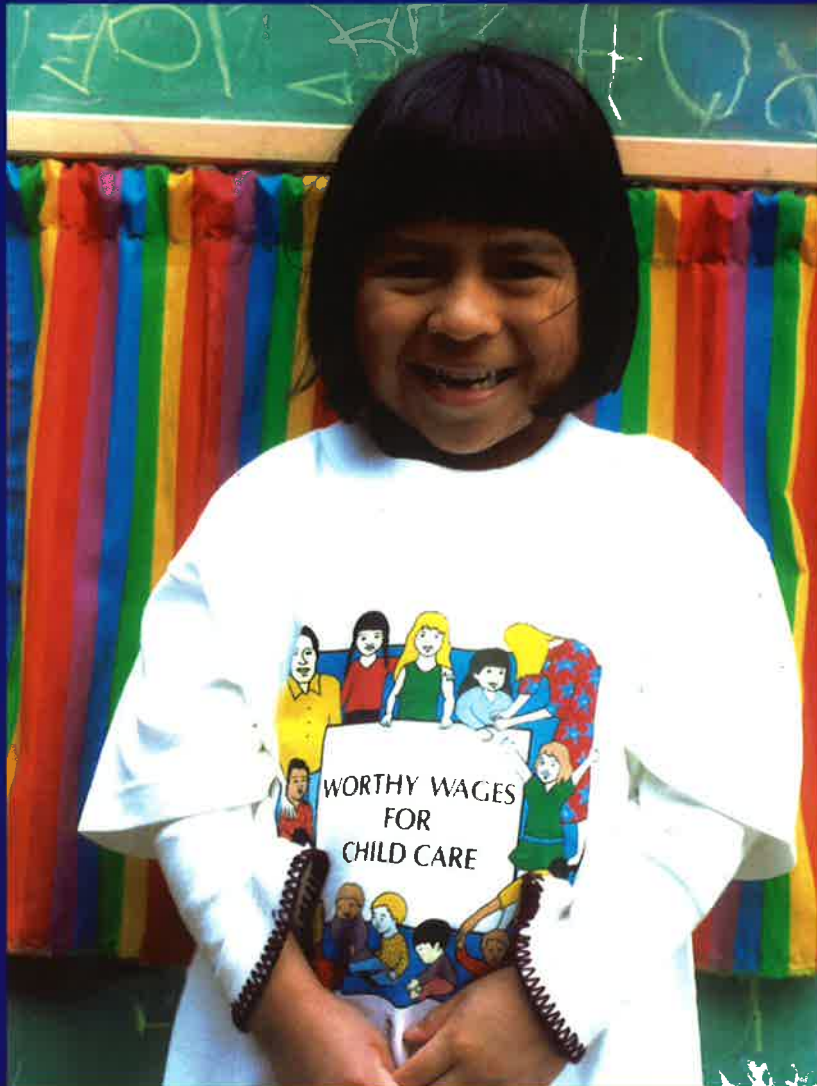


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Working for Quality Child Care

By Dan Bellm
and Peggy Haack

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Good Child Care Jobs Equals Good Care for Children

Dan Bellm and Peggy Haack



CENTER FOR THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

Washington, DC

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The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) was founded in 1978 as the Child Care Employee Project, and was known as the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force from 1994 to 1997. CCW is a nonprofit research, education and advocacy organization committed to improving child care quality by improving child care jobs: upgrading the compensation, working conditions and training of child care teachers and family child care providers.

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Introduction



What was your first day in child care like? Were you working alone, or did you have help? Were you nervous, confident, overwhelmed, shy? Did you feel prepared? Were you greeted and welcomed? Did parents or co-workers appreciate and thank you for your work? Did you have any kind of mentor to help show you the way? How did you feel when the day was over – exhausted, ready for more, some of both?

There are many ways of entering the child care field. You might have begun:

- ❖ after a short or long period of training, which might offer you college credit or a credential, or neither
- ❖ as an outgrowth of caring for your own or others' children in your home
- ❖ as a job option during the time when your welfare payments are ending
- ❖ through a process of becoming licensed or registered with your state, or providing care more informally
- ❖ as a teacher or administrator, as a small-business owner or as a paid employee, as a substitute or volunteer

- ❖ through a school-age care program, or a child care center at your workplace or faith community
- ❖ through Head Start or a state-funded preschool

or in even other ways....

Working in a group child care setting might be a temporary job choice for you, or it might be a job you've planned for – and a field you'd like to stay in.

As you enter this profession, you quickly find out – or you already know from experience – how much children learn and develop during the first years of life and into the years of elementary school. Their brains, bodies and personal dispositions are forming with breathtaking speed, and you are a vital partner with their parents in helping them reach their full potential. You witness and guide their growth as they move and play, express feelings and thoughts, question and create, solve conflicts and make friends, and begin to respect and trust themselves and others. You provide not only a home away from home, but a whole workshop and laboratory for early learning. The job takes

being knowledgeable... warm...energetic...and perceptive about children's and parents' needs.

By educating young children – because caring is educating – you are also making a major contribution to the health and well-being of your community. Your work is the cornerstone that makes it possible for many others to work and support their own families. Consider for a moment what would happen if all the child care programs shut down tomorrow. The entire economy could come to a standstill!

We know that the work we do in child care is vitally important. We know we make a daily difference in children's and parents' lives. But then, why is it often so difficult to sustain ourselves in

this profession?

Whether we call ourselves child care workers, family day care providers, preschool or early childhood teachers, assistants or aides or caregivers or directors, we are working in a field where most of us are underpaid and undervalued.

This book is intended to help you understand the occupation you've entered, what you can expect from it, and what you can do to make it better – both as a work environment, and as an opportunity for your own growth and development as a caregiver, teacher and leader. The book offers a variety of tools for helping you do the best job you can, and throughout it, you will also hear some of the stories and voices of this very diverse child care workforce.

Our approach can perhaps best be summarized with *three* “working assumptions”:

Good child care for children depends on good child care jobs for adults. Much of the general public recognizes that child care helps working parents stay on the job. But it doesn't often consider that child care programs, too, are workplaces where adults are trying to earn a decent living, or that many people in this field are working

“When I first started at my center ten years ago, I was welcomed with open arms. People approached me and made me feel welcome. I felt very unsure of myself, because my training was in elementary education, and I didn't have much more than instinct to go on. I didn't know how I was going to apply what I had learned. But I knew right away that this was going to be a good place to work. People asked me for my opinions; they wanted to know what I thought and felt. I was fortunate. I had no idea that other places were not of such high quality. I had never been educated about what good child care is.”

—Amy Schuster, teacher, Madison, Wis.

parents themselves. While the work you are doing in child care may often be called valuable or even priceless, it is much rarer in this field if your job also earns you a living wage. And yet, you can only apply what you learn about child development and quality child care – and give the best for children and families – if you have a good work environment of your own.

As children build confidence and trust in themselves and their world, they need stable, consistent, dependable caregivers who are treated well and who are happy to stay on the job. But instead, roughly one out of three child care workers in the U.S. leaves the job every year, most often to earn a better living elsewhere. In far too many child care programs, the result is a constant cycle of stress, disruption and loss for the children, parents and co-workers who stay behind. No one benefits from this situation, and it's the children who suffer the most.

Child care training should prepare you for the realities of the job – and it should offer a vision of how to improve this field. Many great educators and trainers over the years, in the course of helping prepare child care teachers and providers, have kept alive a progressive vision of how to advocate for better job conditions and better-quality care in this profession. We hope you will read more of their work,

among the resources we have listed at the end of each chapter as “References and Further Reading.”

But much of the available training for the child care workforce prepares us for working with children only – not for working with the wide array of adults we encounter, including co-workers, parents, the media, other community groups and businesses, even political leaders in our local, state or national governments. It's important to learn what to expect and assume as our rights, challenges and responsibilities on the job. It's good to know about, and talk about, the possibility of improving our own workplaces, and joining with a wider community to improve child care jobs as a whole – helping to make this fundamentally important work we do a more sustaining and well-rewarded career for all.

Caring for children should not mean neglecting to care for ourselves. Many of us may have been taught, trained or socialized that our work should be focused entirely on the children – that by definition this kind of work involves great personal sacrifice, and that we should not expect to make a decent living at it. We can receive very mixed messages – on the one hand, that there is great dignity in educating and caring for the young, but on the other hand, that it's unskilled, “women's

No one prepared me really for what it would be like to begin a family child care. This was 1975. The licensing handbook was incomprehensible, just legal blabbedy-blah; I don't remember a single thing in it. It's gotten a lot better since then. But the whole huge piece of working with families; of running a business; of trying to make this work for your own family; of figuring out how to make some kind of living at it – no one prepared me for any of that.

—Nancy Gerber, family child care provider,
Spokane, Wash.

work,” and therefore counts for less somehow. In any case, we may have learned not to call attention to our own needs. But this book, like the organization that produced it, takes a different path. We applaud the work you do each day – and we believe that it should sustain you personally, professionally and economically.

We believe that you have the capacity to make child care better, and that child care workers can and should take action not only for children but for ourselves, as powerful advocates and “agents of change.” We believe that you can help make the education and care of young children a line of work that you and others can afford to stay in – a profession that sustains your own growth and well-being, and your economic health.

A Note on the Term “Child Care”

Perhaps more than most, our field is plagued by problems of terminology. What should we call ourselves? What term will account for the diversity of what we do, who we serve, the programs we run, the different goals and funding streams that shape our system?

How can we present ourselves in the best possible light to gain public and political support for meeting the needs of children, youth and families?

Increasingly, the term “child care” has come into question – often from within our own field, by practitioners, funders and fellow advocates. Other terms such as “early care and education” or “early learning” have been put forward as replacements, and we at the Center for the Child Care Workforce sometimes use them, too. But none of them exactly roll off the tongue, and they’re not what parents, policy makers or children themselves tend to use, either. We have kept “child care” in our organization’s name, and these are the words we use most often.

We agree that no single term is perfect to describe the breadth and

complexity of what we do, and what happens in our programs daily. We agree that “child care” may not give enough emphasis to the education we provide, and that it may seem to exclude such programs as school-age (or “out-of-school-time”) care, or Head Start, or state preschools. Some say, too, that “child care” sounds too custodial or unskilled. Some say that we won’t get anywhere – or won’t be taken seriously – until we have a name that links us with education, learning, teaching, something more professional than caring for children.

But we also believe that caring is professional. A booklet published in 2000 by the U.S. Department of Education is entitled “Child Care is Education,” and we couldn’t agree more. Anyone who has worked with young children knows the variety and richness encompassed in “taking care of” someone in their earliest years. It means an incredible range of physical, emotional and intellectual skills and experiences: touching, talking, listening, feed-

Originally I was working outside the home, but I was not able to have much quality time with my little boys. My husband and I decided that I would stay at home, but I also began helping out with a co-worker's children. I started off seeing myself as just doing 'babysitting,' until I found out about becoming certified and licensed. That was 18 years ago. Now I help teach new providers as they come into the business. I tell them it requires a whole lot more than babysitting, and it's not always going to be easy – but if you decide that this is what you want to do, you can learn to run a good quality program.

— Annette Wilburn, family child care provider,
Milwaukee, Wis.

ing, comforting, encouraging, modeling, and yes, teaching. It calls upon just about every aspect of who we are. If anything, it is far more complicated than the school and classroom experience that most people mean when they use the word “education.”

We believe it’s time to reclaim the term “child care” and all of what it stands for. Perhaps we need better, shorter sound bites for the news. We’re not always clear to outsiders about who this profession is and what we want. But the term itself is not really the problem: the problem is that caring activities are traditionally undervalued – like “women’s work” of all kinds, and like women and children themselves. To the extent that our own profession undervalues caring, we buy into this traditional

view of our work as “unprofessional” and “less than.” We communicate ambivalence and defensiveness about our own value.

We don’t object to any of the newer terms like “early care and education,” but the term “child care” still seems to be the simplest and best one we have. Whatever we choose to say, let’s remember that ter-

minology by itself is not the key to social change. We need to move past the debate over words and focus on the real task: securing the best we can for our children and youth, and guaranteeing rights, raises and respect for the adults who help prepare them every day for a lifetime of growth and learning.

Who We Are

In 1976, a group of San Francisco Bay Area child care teachers and parents participated in a class on the politics of child care. Before long, we were bemoaning high teacher turnover, inadequate pay, poor working conditions and low status. A few of the teachers from the class decided to do something about these issues, and in 1978, this loosely organized group founded the Child Care Employee Project – a locally-based research, education and advocacy organization dedicated to improving child care by improving child care jobs.

We began by setting up a drop-in evening where child care workers could share their problems and ask for advice. We documented the staffing crisis in an article called “Who’s Minding the Child Care Workers?,” which was based on interviews with 100 San Francisco child care teachers. This small-scale survey later helped shape our National Child Care Staffing Study, a groundbreaking five-city examination of center-based care released in 1989, that clearly established the link between child care quality and the pay, working conditions and stability of child care teachers.

From the beginning, we developed resource materials to address on-the-job problems, and worked with other groups and friends to influence public policy – leading to the California Early Childhood Mentor Program, and a state law protecting child care workers who report licensing violations. We were finding like-minded teachers, providers and par-

ents throughout the country, some of whom had local organizations or unions of their own. Together, we formed the Child Care Employee Caucus at the annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and a decade later, in 1991, we launched the Worthy Wage Campaign, now known as the Worthy Wage Network – a broad coalition focused on legislative and other efforts to improve child care jobs. In 1994, we moved our central office to Washington, D.C., and in 1997, we changed our name to the Center for the Child Care Workforce.

During these two decades and more, we have been alternately cheered and jeered. To talk about child care jobs, especially pay, has challenged the culture of the early childhood field, and for many of us, our own upbringing. But the support we found from one another encouraged us to keep on, and today we are proud that compensation is widely acknowledged throughout the country as a central child care issue deserving major, immediate attention. Yet the uphill struggle to improve child care wages and working conditions is far from over.

We have produced publications and training models addressing the most crucial child care workforce issues, including *Taking On Turnover: An Action Guide for Child Care Center Teachers and Directors*, a policy guide entitled *Making Work Pay in the Child Care Industry*, a two-volume *Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum* for mentors and trainers, and *Model Work Standards* for centers and family child care. Our web site at www.ccw.org, and our monthly on-line newsletter, *Rights, Raises, Respect*, provide up-to-date information about our and others’ efforts to improve child care jobs, and we continue to work as advocates at the federal level, in the communities where we live, and with partners in many states. We provide training and consultation on “taking on turnover” and other issues, and we help locally-based groups of teachers and providers become leaders and advocates through our Leadership Empowerment Action Project (LEAP).

The most important lesson from our history is this: our past and future success lies in joining together and learning from each other.

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Working in Child Care Today



What do you like most about working in child care? What are the best parts of your job? What keeps it interesting and challenging? And on the other hand, what would you most like to change about your job? What are the hardest parts?

There are many rewards in making a commitment to working in child care. There is great excitement and pleasure in playing an important role in children's and families' lives. With proper pay and a good, supportive working environment, child care can be one of the very best jobs of all. But we also know that for many people in this field, decent pay, benefits and working conditions are a dream that may seem quite far off. For many, the pleasures of continuing in this work are in direct conflict with the challenges of making a living at it. Too often, working in child care involves hardships and compromises – and every year, many teachers and providers end up leaving the work they love best, in order to earn a better livelihood elsewhere.

That's why being part of this profession means, almost by necessity, getting involved in making improvements in it. In order to do that, we need to understand where we are today, and how we got here. This chapter will lay out information

about the current status of the child care workforce that at times may seem grim and even depressing – but we have also tried to balance it with facts about what teachers and providers like yourself, along with many others, are doing to improve child care jobs.

The following comments about child care workers may sound like they were made only yesterday. Perhaps you have recently said similar things yourself:

“The problem is keeping competent personnel....Teacher turnover [happens] because of lack of funds....Our main problem is teachers' salaries....More experienced teachers are needed....Considering the gap between the salaries of elementary school teachers and day-care teachers, the problem is how to get good day-care teachers....”

Sadly, these statements come from child care center directors who were interviewed for a book called *Windows on Day Care*, published in 1970! After interviewing center-based staff and family child care providers throughout the country, the book's authors came to a conclusion that could apply equally today: “Good care requires people of ability and training who must be paid adequately if they are to be

My idea of a good child care job is one that pays an income you can live on by yourself. We shouldn't have to depend on living with a roommate, a spouse or a partner to be able to afford to work in this field. We also need health insurance, and paid holidays and vacation time, and we should be paid for the training we pursue.

— Joanne McDonough, teacher-director, Williston, Vt.

attracted to this field of work. The quality of day care depends on what we are willing to pay those who are responsible for it.” They added that as long as pay scales are as low as what they found in their survey of child care programs, “we are shortchanging children.”

But just as in 1970, the United States still does not have a comprehensive, universal, well-funded system of early care and education services for children before they enter elementary school. At present, our child care “system” remains heavily based on parent tuition, and since many parents have a limited ability to pay more, fees and wages are kept depressed at levels that fail to match the actual cost of providing high-quality child care (Willer, 1990). As a slogan of the “worthy wage” movement in child care says, “Parents can’t afford to pay....Teachers can’t afford to stay....A public invest-

ment’s the better way.”

But meanwhile – short of a major investment of public funding in strengthening our child care system – the current situation is one of high child care costs for parents, combined with low earnings for a child care workforce that is 98% female and at

least one-third women of color. In effect, our nation has adopted a child care policy that relies on a “subsidy” we don’t even acknowledge: the contribution that child care workers make by earning very low wages for their skilled and vital work. Especially in low-income communities, where many parents need child care *and* where child care work is a major job option for women, the problems of low pay and poor child care quality are two of the major reasons why poverty can be so hard to escape.

How did this situation develop? Although we may often think of workplace and professional challenges in child care as our own “personal” problems, it turns out that they are shared by many people. They have social, economic and political dimensions. They have historical roots. And when we engage in “critical inquiry” about the larger issues surrounding our own

experiences in child care work – in other words, when we ask questions that help us see ourselves in the bigger picture – we can begin to make more lasting changes in improving our field.

Fortunately, change is in the air, and you are working in the child care field at a time when there is more public support than ever for improving child care jobs. We hope that you will be a part of this growing movement!

Child Care in the United States: A Brief History

In nearly every culture, since the beginnings of history, children have at times been cared for by people other than their own parents – whether by older siblings, relatives, neighbors, servants, slaves, wet nurses, nannies, or tutors. Most of this care, throughout history, has taken place inside the child’s or the caregiver’s home. To this day, home-based child care – what we now generally call “family child care” – remains the most widely used form of care in the United States.

From the earliest Colonial times, many of our nation’s first “schools” were actually home-based programs such as “dame schools,” in which educated middle-class women offered preschool-age and elementary schooling in their own homes – a

service that was only gradually replaced by more formal schoolhouses. As education for older children became more formalized, child care for younger children generally became a separate concern, and well into modern times it remained informal and unregulated by government. The regulation of family child care – whether through licensing, or a more informal system of “registration” with local or state authorities – did not generally begin until the mid-20th century. In our own day, for the first time, there is a fast-growing movement to professionalize the field of family child care, while maintaining the distinct values and advantages of home-based care that make it very different from child care centers.

For the past hundred years or more, “center-based” programs for young children have also been developed in the United States – and for a variety of reasons and motivations. Beginning in the late 19th century, “day nurseries” and “settlement houses” were established in a number of urban neighborhoods, largely as a socially conscious, charitable effort to benefit working poor or so-called “underprivileged” families. Rather than actually affirming a woman’s right to work, these early day nurseries were largely considered an unfortunate necessity arising out of the

What I like best about my job is making a difference in children's lives every day – helping a child to stop crying when her Mom leaves, or write the letter A for the first time, or discover something really cool about a bug he's found. What we do in child care is such a springboard for so many other experiences a child will have later in life.

— Amy Schuster, teacher, Madison, Wis.

conditions of poverty. Some supporters actually called them a “necessary evil.” The ultimate goal was for women to be able to remain at home and care for their children themselves.

Separately, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, European educators and theorists such as Frederick Froebel, creator of the first Kindergartens (or “children’s gardens”), and Maria Montessori, who founded “casa dei bambini” (“children’s houses”), were beginning to promote the idea that young children had unique intellectual and educational needs of their own. In effect, they created the field of “early childhood education,” which slowly gained influence in the United States. But as opposed to day care for the working poor, kindergartens and “nursery schools” came to be seen as an advantage that middle- or upper-class families should choose in

order to promote their children’s early development. By the 1920s, Kindergartens were getting quickly absorbed into public school systems – leaving the rest of the child care system, in terms of funding and public support, “high and dry.”

From the very start, our child care “system” experienced a split between various

types of programs: informal home-based care, social welfare schemes to help relieve poverty, and educational efforts to promote early learning and readiness for school. Of course, child care can serve more than one of these purposes – and it does so on a daily basis for millions of children and families today. But the way our system is structured, and the radically different ways that policy makers and politicians talk about the need for child care, reveal that this split is very much alive.

During World War II, for the first time, child care suddenly became available for a much wider variety of working women – expanding on the system of centers for poor children that had been established during the Great Depression of the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Hundreds of centers were estab-

lished under the federal Lanham Act so that women could work in wartime industries, since most men of working age were serving in the military. But most policy makers viewed this rapid change as only filling a temporary need. In almost every state, this “emergency” child care system was quickly dismantled after the war, as most women were laid off from their jobs and urged to return home. Only a few states, including California and New York, were able to keep any vestige of the wartime child care system, largely with the help of labor unions that made child care for working families a political cause.

In the mid-1960s, with the creation of the federal Head Start program, early childhood education became an official part of the U.S. government’s declared “War on Poverty.” For the first time, Head Start combined an anti-poverty strategy with an emphasis on providing learning, health care, and enrichment experiences for the children of poor families, as well as offering parenting education – and often job and advancement opportunities – for

their parents. But because Head Start was intended only for exceedingly poor families, many other families had to continue to rely on a private child care market that generally provided little or no financial help. In 1972, unfortunately, the Comprehensive Child Development Act, an effort passed by Congress to create a broader federally-funded child care system, was vetoed by President Nixon.

At the same time, the number of women joining the workforce began rising dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s, a trend which has continued to this day. As a result, even though a sizeable number of people continue to view child care as a necessary evil at best, there is general agreement that it is here to stay. Most parents of young children, at least at some time or other, need child care in order to work and sustain their families.

I love the interactions with children and the relationships with families. The challenges I receive are a good thing, too, because they're what have caused the most growth in me. I can be creative in this job – I don't like to do the same thing every day. I can create as we go, season to season, year to year, according to who the children and families are. Every year our program gets better.

— Nancy Gerber, family child care provider, Spokane, Wash.

I'm fascinated watching the children in my program grow and learn. I want them to know that I value their choices and ideas, that they are important and powerful and capable. I am a strong influence on their lives, and I take that responsibility seriously.

— *Kathy Siepak, family child care provider,
Greensboro, N.C.*

Largely in recognition of this fact, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), passed by Congress in 1990, brought a much higher level of child care funding to all 50 states – but unfortunately, very few of these dollars were geared to improving the quality of child care, or addressing the economic needs of the child care workforce.

The “reform” of the U.S. welfare system, beginning in the mid-1990s, requiring almost all women on welfare to seek jobs, also led to an especially rapid increase in child care needs. In recent years, new attention by researchers to early brain development, and renewed concern about school readiness, have fueled new interest in improving the quality of child care programs as learning environments for young children. There is growing interest at the state and national level in making pre-Kindergarten programs universally avail-

able for all three- and four-year-old children, and even in absorbing most child care programs into the public education system. School-age care programs have also received new attention and funding, as a way of strengthening children’s school experience, and preventing delinquency and youth crime.

Even in this brief thumbnail history, we can see several threads or themes, implying a range of attitudes about the underlying goals of child care, and about who’s responsible for paying for it. Is it enrichment and early learning for young children? Is it a mechanism to help parents work? Is it an anti-poverty strategy? Is it a charitable cause for faith communities or other groups? Is it a “welfare reform” strategy? Is it a positive good for young children, or something that we’re stuck with because parents need to work?

Our patchwork “system” of child care and early education in the United States is largely a result of these varying, conflicting attitudes and goals. It is also the result of many different short-term political decisions made by governments over a long period of time. Instead of one coherent system, backed by a major investment of public funds (such as we have for elementary and secondary

education), we have many different programs, approaches, and settings, regulated by different branches of federal, state and local government (or in some cases, completely unregulated), and funded by many separate “streams” of public, private and corporate sources of support, none of them sufficient by themselves. While certain other industrial nations, such as France and Sweden, have made a more comprehensive, well-funded commitment to child care and early education, the United States, thus far, has not.

For more discussion of the relationship between family child care and center-based care, see “Crossing Bridges,” by Alison Lutton, on page 29. For a brief portrait of child care in four other countries – Denmark, France, New Zealand and Spain – see page 27.

The U.S. Child Care Workforce: An Overview of Current Conditions

Because we have not made a strong, unified, national commitment to strength-

The biggest thing I would want to change is that there’s got to be a greater public investment in the child care system, so that every child has access to a center like the one where I work. I don’t mean that it has to be exactly the same, but children should receive care from adults who have been well educated, have made a commitment to this work, and are well compensated for it. Parents need help in knowing what good quality care is, and being able to put their foot down and say, ‘My child deserves this.’

— *Amy Schuster, teacher, Madison, Wis.*

ening the U.S. child care system, it remains seriously under-financed and dependent on the limited ability of parents to pay for this costly, labor-intensive service. As a result, we have not yet solved the problem that most of the child care workforce is severely underpaid. For all the diversity of our child care programs, most teachers and providers have something in common: wherever we fit in the system, job conditions in our profession generally remain far poorer than they should be. And yet, throughout the country, many child care activists, including teachers and providers like you, are working to make improvements in the field. Here is an overview of current conditions, balanced in part by some “good news” to help brighten the picture:

Poverty-level earnings

The average child care worker has achieved a higher level of education than the average member of the overall U.S. workforce. But even after earning a two-year or four-year degree in early childhood education or a related field, most child care teachers and family child care providers earn considerably less than a sustainable living. Roughly one-third of teachers are paid the minimum wage, and even those at the highest end of the pay scale, who are likely to have a B.A. degree and several years of experience, rarely earn enough to support a small family. Family child care providers earn even lower pay than the average center-based teacher – and to earn this modest income, providers often need to maintain a high enrollment of children, and even make costly renovations to their homes to make them safe and appropriate for group child care.

Through our own state and local surveys, and through contacts with many other child care researchers, the Center for the Child Care Workforce maintains up-to-date information about average child care salaries and benefits throughout the country. For the latest figures, please check our annual publication, *Current Data on Child Care Salaries and Benefits in the United States*, or visit our Web site at www.ccw.org.

On the positive side

Despite the obstacles, there is evidence that in certain circumstances – particularly in the better-funded sectors of the field – child care is an occupation that can offer decent compensation, stability and a future. Since 1990, the Head Start program has devoted substantial resources to increasing teacher salaries. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the Military Child Care system has drastically reduced staff turnover by making major improvements in its salary schedules and training programs. Unionizing, while still a relatively small movement in the child care field, has also proven successful as a strategy for securing higher wages for child care staff. (Unions thus far have been most active in public-school-based and Head Start centers, but several communities have also succeeded in organizing other kinds of child care programs. See page 116 for a profile of recent union drives in Seattle and Philadelphia.) In addition, states and communities are increasingly developing child care “compensation initiatives” that offer stipends or other rewards to help retain experienced teachers and providers. Visit www.ccw.org, and see also our publication, *Making Work Pay in the Child Care Industry: Promising Practices for Improving Compensation* (CCW, 1997).

Unequal opportunity

Child care is a relatively easy field of employment for anyone to enter. Most states require no pre-service training for working in a child care program (Morgan et al., 1993). But because of unequal access to training, education and other avenues of career advancement, poor and minority women tend to remain disproportionately at the entry-level, lowest-paid child care jobs. (National Black Child Development Institute, 1993; Chang et al., 1993; CCW, 1998.)

On the positive side

Organizations such as the National Black Child Development Institute, the Center for the Child Care Workforce, and the “Taking the Lead” project based at Wheelock College’s Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives, are actively working to increase leadership and mentoring opportunities for people of color in early childhood education. The TEACH Early Childhood scholarship program, first begun in North Carolina and now operating in many other states, is helping a more diverse population of teachers and providers to pursue their education. The California CARES/Child Development Corps model, which offers stipends to reward and retain the child care workforce, allows for additional stipends to teachers and providers who have bilingual skills.

Poor benefits

Even though child care workers face high exposure to illness and physical strain on the job, fewer than one-third of child care centers provide health insurance. Even fewer offer a pension or retirement plan, although a high number of women and men over the age of 45 work in this field. In seeking access to health insurance and other benefits, family child care providers fare even worse.

Many center-based child care staff are expected to work without breaks, and often for extra hours without pay; only about five percent have a union contract. Ironically, most child care workers – roughly half of whom are parents – do not receive assistance with their own child care needs, and many find it unaffordable to purchase the care that their own programs offer.

On the positive side

DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality), a group of family child care providers in Rhode Island, won a hard-fought campaign to secure health benefits for providers and center-based teachers who care for children receiving public subsidies (Abrams, 1999). The TEACH program in North Carolina has begun a health insurance program for TEACH participants. San Francisco devotes public funds toward offering health benefits for family child care providers. Renewed interest in unionizing in Seattle, Philadelphia, Madison (Wis.) and other communities has also focused significant attention on improving benefit packages in child care programs.

High turnover

More than one-third of the nation's child care workforce leave their jobs each year – most often, to earn a better living elsewhere. At such a rate of turnover, the shortage of trained and qualified workers has become a crisis situation in most states and communities. Children and adults alike experience loss and disruption in their lives, and caregivers who do remain on the job share the extra task of constantly training new co-workers. Hand in hand with this lack of continuity, the quality of services that children and parents receive continues to suffer.

On the positive side

Many of us can point to people – perhaps even ourselves – who have stayed in the child care field and made a career of it. A variety of initiatives around the country to boost teacher/provider compensation are also having an impact on reducing turnover. CCW's publication, *Taking On Turnover: An Action Guide for Child Care Center Teachers and Directors* (1998), and our training program based on that book, are helping communities to tackle the turnover problem by making program-level and community-level improvements in child care that encourage staff to stay.

Lack of professional organizations

Unlike the members of some other caring and teaching professions – most notably, nurses, home health workers, and elementary and secondary teachers – child care workers lack a large national association or union that can amplify their voice in the political arena, mobilize their activism, defend their interests, and devote itself to meeting their economic and professional needs. Unions are currently expressing greater interest in organizing child care workers, but with less than five percent of the child care workforce belonging to a collective bargaining unit, this movement remains small, and there is no single union representing all child care workers.

Although there are a number of professional organizations in our field, most child care workers do not belong to any of them. Many teachers and providers may not know what the organizations do, or how to join – or they may feel that these groups do not really represent them, and don't see the benefit. Turnover and isolation also play a role in keeping our field unorganized.

The largest professional association in our field – the National Association for the Education of Young Children – has taken as its primary mission to focus on the quality of services for young children, rather than on the economic well-being of teachers and providers. Family child care providers are represented by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC), but NAFCC membership remains small when compared to the total number of providers nationwide. The Center for the Child Care Workforce addresses employment issues in the national arena, but it, too, is relatively small, and lacks the resources to serve as a national membership association.

On the positive side

All of the major child care organizations, as well as many resource and referral offices and other support agencies, are increasingly thinking about the economic needs of teachers and providers. The need to improve child care jobs, and retain the child care workforce, has become an unavoidable, central concern. A number of local affiliate groups of NAEYC are especially forceful in their advocacy work. Although child care is a difficult field to organize, unions are becoming more active. The Internet is furthering a much greater flow of information, relieving isolation in our field and helping people become more connected to networks of support. The Worthy Wage Network, coordinated by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, is promoting national legislation to improve teacher and provider compensation. *For a list of organizations and how to join, see page 118.*

A shortage of classroom teachers and family child care providers in positions of leadership

Just as critically, child care teachers and providers are almost completely excluded from positions of leadership and influence in their chosen field. Unlike other fields such as medicine, law, and even K-12 education, child care spokespersons are generally not people who spend their days in direct service with children. In many cases, if they worked directly with children in the past, the leadership of our field did so under circumstances dramatically different from today's. When compared with the early childhood workforce as a whole, the traditionally recognized leadership is also disproportionately Caucasian and male (NBCDI, 1993; Whitebook, 1997). It is unlikely that the field will place workforce concerns high on its agenda until a significant number of teachers and providers have reached positions of leadership and are able to represent themselves effectively.

On the positive side

Many child care organizations are now stepping up the effort to engage teachers and providers in taking leadership in our field. The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) has developed the Leadership Empowerment Action Project (LEAP) training model, which has successfully prepared and motivated teachers and providers to take active leadership roles in child care advocacy in a number of states. CCW also hosts a "Leaders in Action for Worthy Wages" Summer Institute. Other efforts include the Taking the Lead project based at Wheelock College; a mentoring program for emerging African American leaders coordinated by the National Black Child Development Institute, and an annual institute for emerging leaders hosted by the Children's Defense Fund.

Most training programs not linked to better pay

To do this work well, child care practitioners need good opportunities for training and professional development. Our goal, after all, is a skilled and stable child care workforce. But in most cases, child care training is not linked to any kind of economic reward or movement up a career ladder – and therefore offers very little incentive for staying and growing in this profession. Simply providing more training, without helping trained people to stay in child care, is like filling a bucket with a hole in it: as experienced teachers and providers continue to leave the field, we need to keep training new people, and the cycle continues.

On the positive side

Increasingly, states and communities are developing training efforts that are linked with better compensation, such as TEACH Early Childhood, the WAGES program in North Carolina, California CARES/Child Development Corps, Washington state's Early Childhood Wage and Career Ladder, and training and retention programs within Head Start and Military Child Care. For current information about these and other initiatives, visit the CCW Web site at www.ccw.org, and see *Making Work Pay in the Child Care Industry: Promising Practices for Improving Compensation* (CCW, 1997).

Child Care Around the World: Four Profiles**Denmark**

Denmark is renowned for its publicly-funded, universal system of early childhood services (including centers and family child care) and for its generous, popular system of paid parental leave, which allows up to four paid weeks before birth, and up to nearly a year after birth. Child care programs are funded as part of Denmark's social welfare system, but are managed by local governments, with parents contributing an average of 20% of the cost. Child care slots are guaranteed for all one-year-olds, and over half of all children under age 3 attend publicly organized and funded family child care programs. As of 1997, 88% of children ages 3-6 received publicly funded services. All Danish child care services operate for a full day, year-round.

Most teachers and family day care providers in Denmark are unionized municipal employees, and receive five weeks paid vacation per year, as well as full pensions. Nearly two-thirds of the Danish child care workforce are trained "pedagogues" who have completed a three-and-a-half-year course at a specialized college, and most others are gaining work experience before beginning their pedagogue training. There is a high demand for this training: in 1997, there were 21,000 applications for 5,000 spaces. In 1995, 22% of all students admitted to pedagogue training were male.

France

French services for children below the compulsory school age of 6 are split into two segments, both of which receive major public funding. The welfare system oversees nurseries and family child care for children from birth to 3, and the Ministry of Education is responsible for nursery schools ("*écoles maternelles*") for children 2-6. Nursery schools are free to parents, and almost all children attend; they operate four days per week during the school year. Welfare-funded services for children under 3 are open for a full day, year-round, and as of 1996, parents paid an average of 23% of the cost.

Head teachers in welfare-funded services complete a 4-year training course as medical nurses, specializing in pediatrics. Head teachers in nursery schools complete a 5-year university-level course of study. Afterschool care is managed by the Youth and Sport ministry and by private organizations; the staff in these programs are commonly students who have completed a basic 26-hour course of training.

New Zealand

Through a national program of education reform in the mid-1980s, New Zealand became the first nation in the world to integrate the full range of its early childhood services into the education system. The Ministry of Education funds all programs, sets nationwide standards and regulations, and has developed a nationwide curriculum that reflects both the majority culture and the native Maori culture. All child care centers are licensed, but they must be chartered (and meet higher standards) in order to receive public funding; centers can also receive higher funding by boosting their staffing standards over the minimum. Services in New Zealand's system include full-day child care centers for children ages 0-5, part-day nursery schools (called kindergartens) for children ages 3-4, family child care homes, playgroups, and "Te Kohango Reo," a system of community-based programs geared to supporting Maori language and culture.

In the past, "kindergarten" teachers generally received more professional training than others, but the national education reform is seeking to bring all staff in the system up to the same level (a diploma in early childhood education or its equivalent) and to eliminate all distinctions between "child care" and "education." This has been only partly successful; there tends to

be a continuing split between "teachers" who have earned a diploma and "child care workers" who meet lower qualifications. Teachers with a diploma earn on average about 73% of the salary of elementary school teachers.

Spain

With an education reform law passed in 1990, Spain became the first European country to place all child care services, from birth, into a unified national education system extending from birth to the age of 18. Under this model, even services for the very youngest children are now seen as an educational and public issue, not just as a program to benefit working families and the poor. Care and education services before the compulsory school age of 6 are divided into two stages: birth to 3 and 3-6. While the long-term goal is to assure universal access to services for all children from birth to 6 who need them, funding priority thus far has gone into guaranteeing services for children ages 3 to 6. Child care teachers complete a three-year university-level course, and are accorded the same pay and status as elementary school teachers.

Crossing Bridges Between Home and Center-Based Child Care (excerpt)

by Alison Lutton

When I opened my family child care home, I filled my living and dining rooms with open shelves, child-sized tables and child-sized chairs. I hung the walls with children's artwork. When I explained my new career to friends, I made it clear that this was just the beginning. Everyone nodded with encouragement. My program would grow. Soon I would need assistants. In a few years, I would own 'a real child care center.'

As I spent my days with my little band of children, my talk about growing up to be a real child care center grew false. I came to understand something about myself. Those child care center dreams were not my own. They were an attempt to legitimize my career choice, to make my work seem more important. I was falling into the trap of thinking that what defines real teachers is that they work in classrooms. But I came to love starting the day by reading and talking with a squirming, giggling pile of children on my living room sofa.

I joined the struggle to professionalize the work of early childhood care and education. I examined the biases our field has toward women who provide early care and education in their homes. I ran into many people who did not respect family child care, and I learned some hard lessons....

Crossing Bridges to Build a Profession

At the 1999 Mid-Atlantic AEYC Leadership Conference, a lunch table discussion group talked about the ways to cross the bridges between home and center-based child care. Family child care providers have resources and knowledge to offer center providers. Family child care has decades of experience with the satisfactions and challenges of primary infant caregivers, teacher-child relationships that are sustained over many years, and mixed-age groupings. Center and home-based providers could work together to develop training, lending libraries, shared substitute programs, child care consumer education programs, and accreditation support projects.

Dawn, a family child care provider, and Valerie, a preschool teacher, came to the conference together. Valerie explained, "I noticed Dawn during a training. I could see that Dawn was professional, that she understood and used developmentally appropriate practices." Dawn saw professionalism in Valerie too: "I could see Valerie's heart was in this; it was not just a job to her. Basically we are all doing the same things with children, the same work. We all need and use the same training. I've gone to observe preschools. It helps me to define my own program and identity."

Both Dawn and Valerie learned more about their own career choices by learning more about each other. Valerie saw that family child care providers "have to work with the parents more, deal with late payments." Dawn saw that she has "more freedom to do what I want, to make changes."

Valerie believes that "what I do is not that different from family child care. I teach in a preschool in a farmhouse. My classroom is just me and seven kids. It is a very intimate group size and setting. Parents choose our preschool because they want a home environment. Sometimes we need to focus on what's the same, not just what's different."

In many communities, the time for building the bridge between child care centers and family child care homes is now. We have a lot of work to do together, as we learn to acknowledge and respect all of our history and all of our present. That is the only way we can hope to build a future.

Building the Bridges

If you work in a center-based program, here are a few ways to start building bridges with family child care providers. If you already have bridges, cross them!

- *Begin discussion at both individual and organizational levels.* Is there a family child care support group or professional association in your area? Where are the

family child care providers in your community? You may find them at a professional workshop or conference, on a neighborhood walk, or at the library. Expect the same range of professional knowledge and attitudes in family child care that exists in center child care.

- *Be open to many possible ways of making new connections.* Make sure local and state NAEYC affiliates include family child care providers on boards and committees. Join with family child care associations to co-sponsor events, develop training ideas, create a shared substitute program, or conduct joint field trips. Home-based and center-based providers may want to meet to discuss a book or portfolios of children's work, or to share curriculum and project ideas.
- *Use inclusive language.* Think about the words you use to refer to our profession and the people and places it embraces. Referring only to 'classrooms' or 'homes' will result in someone feeling left out. Instead of using either center or home language, try 'facility' or 'building' when referring to the physical site, and 'program' when referring to what people do. Some people think of themselves as teachers, some as providers, some as child care workers, others as caregivers. Alternate

these words, or try using 'practitioners' and 'professionals.'

- *Learn more about each other and respect differences.* Family child care is different from center-based care; it is child care in someone's home. Remember to respect the privacy of the household. The environment will reflect the culture and values of the people who live there. Cultural authenticity and identity may be just as important to the program as cultural diversity – especially for providers from minority or oppressed cultures.
- *Consider diverse ideas about professionalism.* Professionalism in family child care is generally perceived as less hierarchical than professionalism in center-based or school-based child care. In family child care, both the brand new provider and the provider with decades of experience, accreditation and a graduate degree are referred to by the same title – most often, simply, 'provider.' Professional providers resent being called babysitters, substitute mothers or day care moms.

Movement between roles and titles is not generally seen as the path to increased professionalism. Most family child care providers see professionalism as choosing to pursue training and education, supporting and mentoring oth-

ers, helping to build professional organizations, and increasing mastery in direct work with children and families. As in center-based child care, individual credentials and program accreditation are increasingly valued among experienced leaders in the field.

- *Consider diversity in career paths.* Some providers begin their careers in family child care and move on to other roles. Some open their child care homes after many years in the field. Some never finish high school. Some hold graduate degrees. Some choose family child care in order to stay at home with their own children. Some choose it because it is the best match to their own teaching style and philosophy.
- *Think about stereotypes and quality.* Some child care centers look and feel like home. Some child care homes look like a preschool with just one classroom. Some centers are experimenting with family-style mixed-age groupings. Some homes specialize in just one age group. Across settings, real quality is measured in supportive relationships with families and in sensitive, responsive interactions with children. The entire range of quality, from harmful to excellent, exists in both home-based and center-based programs.

Remember that we are all colleagues and peers in the same field. Professionalism is defined by making a commitment to a long-term career in this field, a commitment to high-quality care and education, mastering our common core body of knowledge, and continuing professional development.

Too many center-based providers think of home-based providers as uneducated and unprofessional, and home care as unstructured. Too many home-based providers think of center-based providers as market-driven and unprofessional, and center care as impersonal and institutional. Building bridges that bring home and center providers together is the key to developing the future leaders our field needs.

Today the field of early care and education is being shaped and defined for decades to come. We have an opportunity to create new definitions of quality, profes-

sionalism, career development, and leadership. We have an opportunity to help break the barriers between mothers who choose to work out of the home and mothers who choose to stay home with their children. We'll have the most interesting discussions and come up with the best ideas if we can figure out how to teach and learn from each other. And if we are respectful of differences and interested in finding common ground, crossing this bridge could turn out to be one of the best things to happen in our field.

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Activities

Our personal backgrounds

- How did I decide to enter the child care field? How much training did I receive in advance? How prepared was I for the realities of the job?
- What do I like or value most about child care work? What are the greatest rewards in it for me, that help to keep me going? What are the good parts of my job? (As a way of making this more concrete, bring an object that symbolizes your work and what you find most rewarding about it.)
- Who has been a mentor or leader to me? How?
- A favorite exercise in Seattle's Worthy Wage movement is to tell the story of how you were given your name. In the process, many people find that they have something interesting to tell about family history, or about role models, mentors or heroes from the past.
- How does low compensation affect me personally? What difficulties does it create in my life? How does it affect how I feel about my own worthiness and skill as a child care worker?

Tell a story about a time when....

- someone outside our field belittled in some way the work you do. What did you do or say? If you had the experience over again, would you do or say anything different?
- you stood up for yourself or for someone else – either on the job or elsewhere. What worked or didn't work, and why? What were the conflicts or barriers you faced?
- you did something to improve your work environment. For example, you raised your rates, asked for a raise, advocated successfully for an improvement in your benefits, or shared in making an important policy decision. What were the immediate consequences, good and bad? What were the long-term consequences?

Our workplaces

- What are the most urgent issues at my workplace, in terms of working with children, parents, or other staff?
- What are the barriers to change that exist in my workplace?
- What barriers might there be within myself to taking action for myself or my co-workers, or for the children?

Who gets to define us?

- On separate index cards, write down any words you can think of that are used by others to define or describe people who work in child care. Share the results with others in the class. Together, eliminate the words that are inaccurate or that you don't like, and add others that are truer, that you would want to include instead.
- Display the word "Babysitter" on a large piece of paper, and then write down phrases or words that you associate with this word. Next, on other sheets, display the words "Child Care Teacher" and "Family Child Care Provider," and write down phrases or words that you associate with these job titles. Do any words from the first list transfer to this one? Which words under "Babysitter" would you want to discard as you claim your own identity?

Research Activities

1. Are there local data in your community or state about child care wages, benefits, turnover, etc.? How do these data compare with conditions at your own child care program? and with national averages? Are there data that allow you to compare child care wages with other occupations in your community?
2. What are the pre-service and continuing education requirements for child care teachers and providers in your state? Is there any kind of program in your state or community to help teachers and providers financially as they pursue their training and professional development?
3. Read about the child care system in another country. (See the following "References and Further Reading," for suggestions on where to find information.) How does this country's approach compare with the U.S. system? How is it funded? Which children and families is it intended to serve – everyone, or a certain age group or segment of the population? What are you able to find out about the job conditions, training or professional status of child care workers in that country? How does this compare with your own experience?

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Working Relationships in Child Care Programs



What is your idea of a good child care program?

Chances are that when you hear this question, you think immediately about the aspects of quality that children need: a safe environment for exploring and learning....an interesting variety of materials that are appropriate for their age level....nurturing attention from sensitive, creative, well-trained adults.

But what about the adults themselves who are working in the child care setting? What is a good child care environment for a classroom teacher or a family child care provider?

As we prepare to work in child care, or as we participate in ongoing training after we have started this work, we commonly learn how to identify and define the characteristics of high-quality care for children. We learn how children develop, and what they need at different ages. We learn to look at classrooms or home environments in terms of how safe they are, and how they help or hinder children's abilities to play and grow. Many resources have been developed on these topics. Tools are available to help us assess the quality of an early childhood learning environment. And more and more, centers and homes are

using national accreditation standards to examine their own levels of quality, to make improvements, and to gain accreditation as a measure of their success.

But research has also shown that the quality of the adult work environment – including a fair and decent level of compensation, a low level of staff turnover, and good opportunities for training and professional development – is a very strong predictor of the quality of a child care program. (See "The Links Between Child Care Quality and the Adult Work Environment: What Does the Research Say?" on page 89.) This stands to reason, because the needs, experiences, and well-being of children and adults in child care are closely interconnected. If adults in child care do not feel valued and respected, it is all that much harder for them to help children and families feel valued and respected. And if teachers and providers constantly leave the field, children can't form the close attachments with consistent, reliable caregivers that they need in order to develop trust and confidence in themselves and the world around them. What we call "staff turnover," children

experience as loss.

The term “work environment” is a broad one that includes many aspects of what it is like to work in a particular setting.

Whether you are an employee or a self-employed provider, it includes the policies and practices that define your working conditions, such as income, vacation and sick leave, job descriptions, grievance procedures, and provisions to ensure your health and safety. The policies and practices connected with good work environments are the subject of Chapter 3.

But your work environment also includes the “climate” or “organizational culture” among the people in your program: your relationships with co-workers, the ways in which decisions are made, the lines of communication, and patterns of power and leadership among the adults in the workplace. It also includes your relationships with parents. Creating a harmonious and satisfying place to work requires close attention to the ways in which adults in your program work together and relate to each other.

In family child care, providers may tend to have fewer adult-to-adult interactions than center-based staff, but because most family child care programs operate

My idea of a good child care job is one where your thoughts and ideas are respected and utilized. Someplace that values the work that you do, and shows it – not just by allowing you to take responsibility, sit on committees, and make decisions, but by paying a decent wage and benefits.

— Amy Schuster, teacher, Madison, Wis.

on a smaller scale than centers, these interactions are likely to be more intimate. The relationships with families in a family child care program can be the kind of close partnerships that all of us in the child care field strive for. But if you are a family child care provider, these relationships can also blur the boundaries between your work and family life, and between your roles as personal friend and business owner. In considering working relationships, you need to feel comfortable with the dual roles of small business operator and early childhood educator, and find a balance that works for you.

The quality of working relationships in a child care program strongly affects how well you can do your job, your effectiveness with children, your level of stress, the extent to which you “take your work home with you” at the end of the day, and whether you decide to stay on the job or leave. Your relationships with co-workers, supervisors, administrators, and/or parents, are the product of several interrelated concerns:

- the management style of leaders in the program (in a child care center: supervisors or administrators; in family child care: the provider who manages the child care business)
- power and influence: who has it and does not have it, and to what extent it is shared
- issues of race, class and culture: the degree to which all voices and perspectives are heard and honored;
- professional respect (in a child care center: between managers and staff, among staff, and between staff and parents; in family child care: between the provider and parents, and between the provider and any assistants or employees).

Individual co-workers in a child care program need to feel that they are a valuable and respected part of the whole, so that they can share a natural sense of “ownership” of and commitment to the program’s health and well-being. Each adult needs to feel able to contribute his or her knowledge and perspectives, just as we want every child to feel valued and involved in making decisions that affect their daily lives. But as a profession, we are often more democratic and participatory in spirit with

children than we are among ourselves.

Power relationships and conflicts among adults are especially challenging. In such a “giving” profession as child care, many of us are wary of conflict and even try to wish it away. Although we may be superb at helping children cope with conflict, we often don’t acknowledge strains between co-workers or between staff and management. We don’t always clearly recognize the power relationships – official or unofficial, written or unwritten – that exist in any workplace. On the contrary, it’s not uncommon to hear adults in child care programs say, “We get along just like a family,” or “We’re all so close,” or “I don’t really have any power here as a director. No one thinks of me as the boss.” But closer examination may reveal that only some people in the program feel safe to express themselves directly to one another or share their opinions.

If you are a teacher, or an assistant in a family child care program:

- Do you feel that your input is asked for when important decisions need to be made? Does it feel safe to give it? Or do you feel that some people’s suggestions are heard and others are ignored?
- Is there an atmosphere of openness and listening?

- Do decision-making processes focus on the issues involved, rather than the personalities?
- Are resources and supplies shared equally and fairly among the staff?
- Do you and your co-workers have opportunities to build closer communication, and address any differences or conflicts that come up?

If you are an administrator:

- Do you find that staff sometimes (or often) talk to each other about problems and concerns, but not to you? Does the real staff meeting take place afterward, in the teachers' lounge or out in the parking lot?
- If you direct an agency that has more than one work site, do you feel isolated or "at arm's length" from staff?
- If you work in a middle management position (for example, as a site director in a multi-site program) do you indeed feel caught in "the middle" when conflicts arise?

If you are a family child care provider:

- Do you sometimes feel "taken advantage of" by the families you serve, or that your concerns about your own

needs fall on unsympathetic ears?

- Do you listen to your own family's needs when making decisions for your program?
- Are you assertive and clear in your communication with parents, asking for what you need, and saying exactly what you mean, but remaining respectful and open to dialogue?
- Are you fair in how you relate to families, or does it depend on the person you are communicating with?
- Do you have procedures in place for communicating with families, such as newsletters or a bulletin board?
- Do you have any outside sources of help when difficulties come up, such as talking to a fellow provider, a support group, or a consultant for feedback and advice?
- Do you work with any assistants or employees in your program? Or are you part of a family child care system or network, receiving monitoring, supervision, and/or support from a central office? If so, what is the quality of your working relationships with these other adults?

This chapter is designed to help you explore these questions as they relate to your workplace, and to reflect on how they may be affecting the quality of your work environment and your ability to do something about it.

Activity

1. Think of a co-worker, parent or other adult in your program, and ask yourself: How do I feel when I see this person? Am I satisfied with this relationship? What is one step I can take to work on this relationship – either to improve it, or to help it keep growing stronger?
2. Reflect on your own role in building good working relationships by asking:
 - What do I do when I need help from another adult? (For example: Do I feel free to ask? Do I wait for someone else to reach out to me?)
 - What do I do to show appreciation to others? What do I do to express criticism?
 - How do I handle conflict? (Do I avoid it? Do I act harshly? Do I look for opportunities to talk about it and reach agreements?)
 - How do I respond to change? (Do I tend to embrace it, and enjoy making new things happen? Do I avoid change? Do I "go with the flow," hoping it will all work out somehow? Do I tend to respond with excitement, dread, resistance, or a combination of feelings?)

3. Questions for family child care providers:

- In my relationships with parents, do I maintain a balance between meeting their needs, and meeting the needs of myself and my own family? Do I cater to my clients' needs and requests more than I want to, because I'm worried about losing enrollments? Or have I set clear policies that help me protect my own boundaries?
- Are there other people I can turn to when relationships become difficult (a support group, a fellow provider, a trusted friend, or a child care consultant)?

Activity

Describe an experience you have had (or witnessed) where a policy, practice or interaction in your workplace was unfair, or kept you from doing your best work with children.

Situation:

How did you feel?

What did you do?

What was the result?

Assessing a Child Care Center's Work Climate

Thanks to the work of Paula Jorde Bloom and her colleagues at the Center for Early Childhood Leadership, a number of tools are available to help you assess your child care program's work climate. Here we

include a survey that is recommended for center-based programs with a relatively high level of trust among staff. You might want to use it to clarify your own thinking about your work environment, as well as to share your responses with co-workers.

Activity

The Work Climate

The administrator(s) and teaching staff should all complete this worksheet, then meet to compare responses and note areas of agreement and disagreement; this discussion can provide a springboard for fine tuning how you and your co-workers communicate. If there is a high level of divisiveness among staff, however, or you sense that some staff members may have "hidden agendas," a more formal and anonymous approach to assessing the work climate may be advisable.

For each question, consider:

- what works in your present system, and
- what needs to be improved.

1. To determine how well your center encourages collegiality among teaching staff, list the opportunities provided for staff to:

- work collaboratively on projects
- share resources
- solve problems together

2. To determine what opportunities the center provides for professional development, describe the opportunities that teaching staff have to:
 - improve their skills and gain new skills
 - gain a better understanding of the theories and principles of child development and early childhood education
 - learn best practices for working with young children
 - learn strategies that support positive relationships among staff, between staff and children, and between staff and parents
3. What types of feedback do teaching staff members receive about their job performance?
4. How well are job roles and responsibilities defined? How are they explained to staff? How are different roles and responsibilities distinguished?
5. How fair and equitable is the program's reward system? What rewards are available to staff, and how are they administered?
6. To determine how involved staff are in making decisions on important issues:
 - Identify the types of decisions that teaching staff are empowered to make through a group process.
 - Identify the types of decisions for which teaching staff's opinions are solicited, and in which their perspectives have an influence. In what ways are opinions obtained from teaching staff?
7. How are teaching staff involved in setting program goals and objectives?
8. How realistic are teaching staff work loads?
9. How conducive is the physical setting to good job performance?
10. How are creativity and innovation encouraged?

—Adapted with author's permission from Bloom, 1997

Self-Esteem: Your Relationship With Yourself

Perhaps the most neglected, least talked-about "working relationship" in child care is the relationship we have with ourselves. The term "self-esteem" is commonly used to refer to this relationship — the whole pattern of attitudes and feelings we have about our own needs and our own worth.

Self-esteem is the complex result of our training and experience, the parenting we received ourselves as children, our personality and values, the resources we have to draw upon in our lives, and whether we or others around us have been victimized by abuse of any kind. All of these affect how we relate to other people, how well we take care of ourselves, and to what degree we feel worthy of respect and care.

Many of us in the "caring professions," of course, have been trained in a variety of subtle ways to place other people's needs before our own — caring for others before thinking to care for ourselves. While this is not true for all of us, many caregivers tend to be very good at cooperating, compromising, and adapting to change. This is a great virtue and strength, but it can also become unhealthy. It can come into direct conflict with our need to model self-esteem for children: learning to speak up for our-

selves, having confidence in our own values and beliefs, expecting to be treated with respect, and knowing that we are important and valuable as human beings. If we tend to be passive to unfair treatment, or feel powerless to change a bad situation, what does this show children?

The key to good relationships in child care is mutual respect — it cannot be a one-way street. Standing up for yourself or voicing your needs does not, of course, mean becoming a bully or an unkind person. Good self-esteem means taking care of yourself while being respectful of others.

In family child care, self-esteem and self-confidence are essential for creating a good balance between your work and family life, and for setting fair policies and procedures that meet parents' needs for good child care but also protect your own needs to operate a successful business. In a child care center, self-esteem and self-confidence mean taking part in decisions that affect your work; feeling free to speak your mind when you feel that something in the program should be changed; and collaborating with co-workers in a mutually respectful way — not simply "giving in" to others' wishes in order to avoid conflict. This confident attitude about ourselves is one of the very best gifts that we can give to the children in our care.

Activity

1. What are three things that I can affirm about myself today?
2. What can I do daily/weekly to nurture and be good to myself: At work? Outside of work?
3. Who are three people I can turn to for support, and to help maintain or build my self-esteem and self-confidence? Do I turn to them for help often enough? Do I lend them my support, too?
4. Under my present working conditions, what is the best job I can do? To what extent is my work environment to blame, rather than myself, if I feel that I am not doing my best?

Activity

Tell the children in your care that some day – if they are especially talented! – they may be able to be child care teachers or family child care providers, too. Add these occupations to the list of desirable professions you talk to children about: not just doctors, lawyers, firefighters and police officers!

Working Relationships with Parents

“How can I get the parents to understand what we’re doing and what we need from them?” “How can I make them see how important it is to pick up their children on time?”

“Why can’t the child care program keep better track of my child’s belongings?” “Why can’t it be more flexible about hours?”

Do these questions sound familiar? It may seem at first that parents and child care workers are involved in a “simple” business arrangement, but the intense and intimate nature of the work can cause powerful frustrations and tensions to arise between them – just as they arise in any close relationship. Despite a shared interest in the child, parents and child care providers have different short-term goals, and these can create conflict.

Parents:

- want individual attention for the child.
- want a low fee.
- want a flexible schedule.
- find it hard to leave work, or take a day off, when the child is sick.

Child care teachers and providers:

- care for a group, and need to see all the children as special.
- want to be paid well.
- want specified work hours, and want to close promptly at the end of the day.
- want to control the spread of illness, and usually can’t devote individual attention to a sick child.

But by following a few basic ground rules, you can make the partnership more successful and satisfying, and build mutual respect from the start.

Parents need reassurance that you are accessible and open to communicating. A patronizing or “we know better” attitude can make parents feel intimidated or resentful. Both sides are “experts”: you know about group child care and child development, but the parent knows far more about the child’s history and personality. Without communication, neither has the whole picture. You know what happens at child care, and the parent knows what happens at home.

The best means of communication is a consistent, individual exchange between

you and parents. Ideally, this is a two-way street, but often it doesn't happen unless you make the first move – beginning with telling parents clearly about your program's policies, procedures, expectations, and child care philosophy when they first enroll their child. Having an ongoing means of communication is also very important – such as a bulletin board or simple newsletter, and perhaps individual parent conferences a couple of times per year. Another good standard to follow is that no parent should arrive or leave without a greeting and an "opening" for further conversation. If a longer discussion is impossible because you're busy with the children, be open to making an appointment. Encourage parents to talk about concerns and complaints, rather than letting them get bigger.

Encourage parents, too, to become involved and informed by visiting your program in action. This can help parents not only to feel more comfortable with their child's care, but to gain more understanding of and respect for what child care workers do all day. Parents who have observed you on the job can often be your strongest allies in advocating for better pay or working conditions. Share copies with them of "Who's Caring for Your Child? Critical Questions for Parents," found on page 63.

Respect for Diversity in Child Care Settings

Inevitably, the quality of your program's work environment involves issues of race, class and culture: for example, whether the composition of the staff reflects the diversity of the families and community you serve, and whether the program has a climate of mutual respect, fairness, understanding and trust. Challenges can arise when a staff member with any kind of difference joins the program: anything from race, language or culture to style of dress or personal interests outside of work. As you work to build good relationships, you may find that such issues strongly affect how different people approach the job, and the priorities for change that different people identify.

Teachers who are single parents, for instance, may need better family health coverage or other benefits. But others who already have decent benefits through a spouse or partner, or have the means to pay for them, may want better professional development opportunities instead, so that they can complete an advanced degree. Perhaps a local workshop series on "improving your hiring practices" is available, but it's run entirely by European-American trainers who haven't thought about how to recruit teachers from com-

munities of color. Perhaps training events tend to be accessible only to people who own cars. Perhaps whenever a head teacher leaves the center, women of color on the staff consistently feel left out of consideration for the job.

In these and other cases, is everyone in the program really on the same wave-length when it comes to creating a satisfying work environment? Or do "cliques" form among staff along racial or cultural lines, and if so, how are these related to power relationships, who's in the "information loop" or not, who "fits in" with the group as a whole or doesn't, and so on? How does the program seek to bridge differences among the staff, and create equal access to professional development, promotions, decision-making and other opportunities?

Just as we seek to develop culturally diverse and responsive programs for children, we must also be active in promoting fairness and respect in working relationships among adults. For all of us, becoming fully aware of diversity and committed to challenging prejudice is an ongoing process of learning and practice, and each person is at a different place along the journey. Some people "internalize" the dominant culture's prejudices and stereotypes about their own group to the point where they appear to accept or agree with them. Others may deny differences altogether –

saying, for example, "We're 'color blind' in this program; we see all people as the same," or, "We get along just like a family."

Whatever the current work environment in your program may be, respect for diversity can't be taken for granted – it takes conscious, dedicated, continuing effort. Louise Derman-Sparks, a noted anti-bias educator, has written about the stages which adults go through in the effort to unlearn bias and honor diversity (Derman-Sparks, 1989):

Stage 1 **Awareness** learning about the patterns and sources of discrimination prevalent in our society, our culture and ourselves. We come to recognize that we have all been scarred by it.

Stage 2 **Exploration** digging deeper into the root causes of prejudice; examining our own experiences and origins, and any stereotypes we may have been taught about race, class, ethnicity, sex roles and sexual preference; searching for evidence of bias in our classroom or home learning environments.

Stage 3 **Inquiry** asking for more information about causes, roots and symptoms of bias, and seeking out ways of changing those negative patterns and belief systems.

Stage 4 **Reflection** sharing with each

other what we have learned, what we would like to change, and how we might go about doing so.

Stage 5 **Utilization** putting into practice new approaches toward becoming freer from bias: for example, changing one's classroom/home environment, cur-

riculum content, and interactions with others in order to be culturally relevant and respectful of diversity.

These stages can provide you with a framework for embarking and continuing on your own journey, beginning with yourself.

Activity

Our Origins

1. Divide into pairs. Each pair then takes turns reflecting on their own family and cultural backgrounds. For example, choose among the following questions. (Since this is a long list of suggestions, please note that you don't have to discuss all of them to have a successful activity!)

- Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
- How would you describe the neighborhood where you were raised?
- What is your ethnic, racial and class heritage?
- What languages or dialects were spoken in your home?
- Did both of your parents work? What were your family's attitudes about work? At what age did you start working?
- Was religion important during your upbringing? If yes, how? If not, what was the most important source of your ethical values?
- Who makes up your family (either your family of origin, or the one you live with now)?
- What traditions does your family follow?
- How do the members of your family relate to each other? For example, how are love, anger, closeness and individuality expressed?

- How is your culture expressed in your family?
 - What things are most important for people to know about your racial, ethnic and class identity? What things would you not want people to say about your identity?
2. Reconvene as a large group to discuss these dialogues:
- What did participants learn about each other?
 - What was most interesting, important, surprising, challenging?
 - Where and how do you see these issues being played out in the workplace?
 - Do these issues relate to your program's efforts to improve the work environment, and if so, how?
 - How might you keep such conversations going in the workplace?
3. As an alternative or follow-up activity: Write in a journal about any of the above topics, or more than one in combination. Then, at a staff meeting or retreat, or provider support group, divide into pairs to discuss what you have written, and then gather as a group to discuss these dialogues.

Activity**Issues of Diversity in the Workplace**

This version of the previous activity is geared to identifying specific issues of diversity and inclusiveness in your program. Since this kind of conversation depends on a significant level of openness and trust in the workplace, it may be helpful to have an impartial outside facilitator or trainer assist you. Again, since the activity contains a long list of suggested questions, it is by no means necessary to address all of them at one session.

1. Divide into pairs. Each pair then takes turns reflecting on issues of diversity in the workplace. For example, choose from among the following questions:
 - What values did you learn as a child that you carry into the workplace?
 - What did you learn about relationships between children and adults? How were children expected to show respect to adults? How does this influence how you show respect to authority figures or supervisors? How do you know when you are respected by others?
 - How are problems solved in your family (either your family of origin or the one you live with now)? How does this influence how you expect problems to be solved in your workplace?
 - How does the race or culture of the director/administrator (or family child care provider) affect the culture of your workplace – for example, in styles of communication, meetings, workplace celebrations, etc.?
 - Have you worked in a place where your employer was of the same race or culture as yourself? How was that different from working with an employer of a different race or culture?
 - If you are not a member of the majority racial or cultural group in your program, in what ways have you needed to adapt to different ways of doing things? How did you figure out the “rules” of the dominant group in the program?
 - How does your program demonstrate inclusiveness and respect for diversity? In what ways could or should the present climate be improved?

2. Reconvene as a large group to discuss these dialogues:
 - What did participants learn about each other?
 - What was most interesting, important, surprising, challenging?
 - How could you get such conversations going in your workplace, or in your provider support group?
3. As an alternative or follow-up activity: Write in a journal about any of the above topics, or more than one in combination. Then, at a class or meeting, divide into pairs to discuss what you have written, and then gather as a group to discuss these dialogues.

Shared Decision Making

In Chapter 3, we will discuss a whole variety of ways to make positive changes in your work environment. But before you can make such changes, it's important to reflect on how your program currently does other kinds of planning, problem solving and decision making. Are these processes the exclusive job of one or several people? To what extent are they shared?

The terms "shared decision making," "shared participation" and "participatory management" all refer to a work environment in which administrators and teaching staff – or a family child care provider and her assistants – work together to develop and operate the program. Shared participation can be promoted in a variety of ways – for example, through:

- staff meetings in which all staff have input into the agenda;
- training sessions on problem-solving and team work;
- staff/supervisor conferences;
- problem solving teams that are empowered to research ideas and solutions, and to come back and present results or proposals to the entire staff;
- collective bargaining between unionized staff members and the management of a child care program.

A Note to Family Child Care Providers

More and more, family child care providers are hiring assistants or employees to take part in caring for the children and operating the program – especially if the program serves a larger group than a provider can care for alone. If so, this section can help you reflect on how to solve problems and make decisions as a team.

On the other hand, if you are a provider working alone, this section may not apply to you. But if you take part in a provider support group or discussion group, or any other kind of child care professional association, think about applying the following discussion to that experience. How can the support group or association work more democratically to make decisions together?

When all staff share in the decision-making process, they have a greater commitment to achieving the program's goals and objectives, and the quality of the child care they provide is enhanced because they are involved in shaping it. Shared decision making involves getting all stakeholders together and allowing each person's opinions, ideas and vote to carry equal weight in solving problems. Leadership, in this model, is based on the idea that the person with the best skills, knowledge, interest and energy for a particular issue should take leadership on it.

Perhaps your program is more accustomed to a top-down management style, in which administrators make all major decisions and the other staff carry them out. But although the idea of "participatory management" may sound far-fetched or unappealing to you, child care programs have found it to be of enormous benefit to teaching staff and administrators alike. Teachers come to feel more trusted, resourceful and capable as they help shape the work environment. And just as importantly, directors begin to feel less isolated and overburdened – less like the proverbial "Mom" who is expected to be in charge of everything, the one who constantly bears bad news and takes the flak whenever tough decisions must be made.

But shared decision making doesn't just come naturally. Many people are not accustomed to a work environment where what they say really matters or is listened to. It may take staff a while to trust that it's "for real" when a child care program begins moving in this direction. They may need help in building the skills and confidence necessary for speaking up, analyzing and solving problems, and participating in shaping programs and policies. Otherwise, the few staff members who are more comfortable with such an approach may tend to dominate all the meetings and decision making processes, in which case you have simply replaced one form of hierarchy with another. Moving to a participatory management style is a learning and training process in itself, and needs to be recognized as such. It is essential to be clear from the start, too, about any limits to the staff's decision making influence – for example, restrictions imposed by licensing regulations – so that they don't feel deceived afterward, or feel that the process was not so open after all.

The following case example outlines a process for participatory management and teamwork in a child care center.

- *Identifying the problem.* Let's say that two teachers in a child care program have talked with each other and feel

that the staff do not receive enough paid sick days. In a participatory environment, all staff would feel welcome to bring such issues to the staff as a whole, rather than feeling excluded from making decisions about them. And by the same token, all would feel responsible for taking issues through the proper group channels, rather than harboring resentments, sowing divisiveness or spreading rumors.

- *Gathering information.* The staff members who have identified this issue prepare to present it to the group, including all available current information. This may mean that they will need to do some research and information gathering to put a presentation together—for example, finding out the amount of sick leave that other local programs offer, or checking to see what is recommended in the CCW publications, *Creating Better Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care* (CCW, second edition, 1999), and *Creating Better*

Family Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards (CCW, 1999), *Creating Better School-Age Care Jobs: Model Work Standards*. (We will discuss the Model Work Standards more extensively in Chapter 3.)

- *Communicating.* The two staff members contact the group about the need to discuss the issue—either asking to put it on the agenda at a regularly scheduled meeting, or scheduling a separate meeting at another convenient time. In advance, the presenters might send information out to the group so that everyone will be better prepared to discuss it. This could also include working up the cost implications of different approaches. Note that thinking about costs does not have to be solely the administrator's job; other staff members can take responsibility for developing a financially realistic plan.
- *Analyzing the problem.* At the meeting, the group considers the following:

Whenever there is something to discuss in a classroom, we include all the classroom teachers in the conversation so that no one is pitted against someone else, or left out of the loop. One policy we work very hard on, in setting the tone in our center, is no gossip!

— Joanne McDonough, teacher-director, Williston, Vt

What are the issues? Why is this a problem or concern? Does everyone agree that it is a problem worth working on? Who is affected? What will or could happen if nothing is done? What financial costs are involved? What other barriers, if any, need to be addressed? The group must reach a clear, shared understanding of the problem before it can function in making decisions to solve it.

- *Brainstorming possible solutions.* Someone other than the presenters should act as a facilitator or moderator, as group members put forth their ideas. At this point, nothing should be ruled out; ideas should be allowed to flow freely and creatively, without interrupting, judging or criticizing. Another person should take notes or use chart paper to list these responses.

Examples:

- One or two additional sick days per year for all staff.
- But that would cost x, which we can't afford.
- We can make this a priority for our fundraising this year.
- We can consider a tuition increase.
- We could transfer funds from another item in the budget.

f. Can people who have accumulated unused sick time donate it to other staff in need? etc.

- *Decision making.* Next, the group evaluates the merits and drawbacks of each solution, and reaches a decision. Ideally, everyone participates in this discussion and contributes his/her point of view. (See the accompanying article, "Approaches to Decision Making," page 60.)
- *Developing a plan of action.* The group reaches the following decision, to be presented to the Board of Directors at its meeting next month: one additional sick day per year, with a budgetary plan to cover the additional costs, and the commitment to change the policy to two additional sick days in the next budget year. Now, turning this decision into an action plan means taking into account who will do what, when, where, and how. Two or more people should be assigned to be in charge of implementing the plan (in this case, taking it to the Board), and setting up a system for reporting to the group on progress—making sure that tasks are shared among a sufficient number of people. Before the meeting ends, someone in the group should develop a

written description of the action plan, to ensure that everyone understands and agrees with it, and that anyone who was absent can receive a copy.

- *Follow-through.* As part of implementing the plan, the group checks up with each other regularly at staff meetings or other occasions about any progress made, and reviews or restructures the plan as needed. Another important part of follow-through is to communicate this progress and success to parents and others in the community.

In the following chapter, you will have the opportunity to put these shared decision-making principles into practice, as we discuss the policies and practices that help create a high-quality work environment, and your role in taking steps to improve your own workplace.

Approaches to Decision Making

Individuals are more likely to support a decision in which they have played a part. Although it can be difficult to achieve an agreed-upon decision – often because group members have little experience in other approaches besides a traditional “win-lose” model – it is crucial to realize that avoiding a decision is, in fact, a decision: a choice not to move forward or change the status quo.

Group decisions are sometimes made by individuals or subgroups who push through a decision, relying on the passivity of other participants. This is particularly likely to happen when a group is new or unused to making decisions together, and informal leaders emerge who tend to take charge of the decision-making process. All group members, however, can confront that pattern of decision making by commenting on it whenever it occurs, and questioning whether all opinions are being considered.

Decision making methods include:

Majority vote: More than half the group members agree on a single choice. A major drawback is that those who voted against the decision may not feel committed to implementing it.

Unanimous vote: All group members agree. Problems may arise because some people who feel the pressure to agree may not really support the deci-

sion, and because one person can block the decision by disagreeing.

Consensus: Internal discussion and polls take place to find common points of agreement. In the course of trying to reach consensus, group members suggest modifications to the original proposal that may be acceptable to others, resulting in a genuine agreement to implement the revised decision. This method, although time-consuming, is most appropriate when important policy decisions are being made.

Many believe that decisions made by consensus are of higher quality than those arrived at through other methods. Consensus is a collective opinion arrived at by a group whose members have listened carefully to the opinions of others, have communicated openly, and have been able to state their opposition to other members' views and seek alternatives in a constructive manner. When a decision is made by consensus, all members – because they have had the opportunity to influence it – should feel they understand the decision and can support it.

Johnson and Johnson (1975) suggest the following guidelines for reaching decisions by consensus:

- Avoid blindly arguing for your own individual judgments. Present your position as clearly and logically as possi-

ble, but listen to other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.

- Avoid changing your mind only to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support only solutions to which you are at least somewhat agreeable. Yield only to positions that have an objective and logically sound foundation.
- Avoid "conflict-reducing" procedures such as majority vote, tossing a coin, averaging or bargaining in reaching decisions.
- Seek out differences of opinion; they are natural and should be expected. Try

to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because they present a wide range of information and opinions, thereby creating a better chance for the group to hit upon more adequate solutions.

- Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all members.
- Discuss underlying assumptions, listen carefully to one another, and encourage the participation of all members.

I build trust with parents by keeping confidentiality – by being a listener – by providing information about nutrition and other things that I have learned in my training – by asking them to share information from their own lives – and most of all, by being concerned, honest and open. Sometimes people hold back from talking frankly for fear of losing a parent from their program, but I say, if we are going to work together for the sake of your child, we have to communicate.

— Annette Wilburn, family child care provider, Milwaukee, Wis.

Who's Caring for Your Child? Critical Questions for Parents

Your child deserves the best...and when it comes to child care, the key to quality is the person providing the care. Whether it's a child care teacher in a center-based program or a family child care home, it's more than love that's offered. Love combined with skill, knowledge, and the ability to maintain a consistent relationship with your child creates the foundation for healthy development.

But the work of child care is typically undervalued and underpaid. As a result, there is often very high turnover in this field, leading to a disruption in the important relationships between young children and their caregivers, and a lessening of the quality of care. Good child care for children depends on good child care jobs for adults. Here are some questions to ask about the people who are caring for your child.

Family Child Care Providers

1. Has the provider received education and training in child development, and does she participate in ongoing family child care training?

Family child care providers are more sensitive to the needs of your child, and offer more appropriate learning and activities, if they have specific training in child care and child development. A family child care program can also be more stable if the provider has received training in business management.

Higher-quality family child care programs have better-educated providers who continue to seek opportunities to learn more.

2. Does the provider operate a licensed or certified program?

Regulation increases the likelihood that appropriate health and safety practices are consistently in use.

Center-Based Teachers

1. How much training do the teachers have?

Teachers tend to be more sensitive with your child and provide more appropriate learning activities if they have more years of education and college-level training in early childhood education.

Higher-quality centers hire better-educated and trained teachers, and provide ongoing opportunities for teacher training.

2. How often do the teachers leave?

Many centers lose more than one-third of their staff each year. Centers paying the lowest wages lose the greatest number of teachers. In programs with so much inconsistency, children suffer. They spend less time using learning materials, and build language and social skills more slowly, than other children their age.

Higher-quality centers have lower teaching staff turnover.

Family Child Care Providers

Higher-quality family child care programs are regulated.

3. How long has the provider been in business, how long does she expect to continue offering child care, and does she have access to professional support?

Healthy child development depends on stable, consistent and long-lasting relationships with adult caregivers. Professional support networks can increase a provider's longevity in the field.

Higher-quality family child care programs are managed by experienced providers who are engaged in provider support networks.

4. Does the provider formalize the child care arrangement with a Parent-Provider Contract or Agreement?

A contract or agreement signifies that the provider has carefully considered the financial and practical resources she needs to operate the family child care business well. She is entering into a partnership with you in order to provide good child care, and to earn a family-supporting income and reasonable benefits for herself.

Higher-quality family child care programs are operated by providers who are committed to child care as important work that provides them a decent living.

Center-Based Teachers

3. How much do the teachers earn?

Despite their relatively high average level of education, many child care teaching staff earn unacceptably low wages. Real wages have remained stagnant over the past decade. Most child care centers do not offer full health benefits to all teaching staff, and often teachers are paid for very few if any holidays, sick days or vacation days.

Higher-quality centers pay higher wages and provide better benefits for teachers.

4. What is your program doing to get and keep qualified teachers?

There are many centers working to create a better environment for children and teachers by increasing salaries and benefits and improving staff training.

Higher-quality centers involve parents in these efforts by:

Providing information about:

- current teacher wages, teacher qualifications, and compensation goals,
- how well the center meets the criteria of the Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care, developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce,
- how the child care program fees relate to program costs,

Family Child Care Providers

5. What is the provider doing to create a good learning environment for children and a good work environment for herself?

Improving provider training, increasing income and benefits, and finding professional support contribute to a better environment for the children as well as the provider.

Higher-quality family child care programs involve parents in these efforts by:

Sharing information about:

- the provider's qualifications and career goals,
- how well your family child care program meets the criteria of the Model Work Standards for Family Child Care, developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce,
- how the child care program fees relate to program costs,
- child care tax credits, and child care benefits from your employer, that may help you meet the cost of care.

Encouraging participation in:

- advocacy efforts to obtain additional public and private funds for child care,
- raising funds or making non-monetary contributions that improve program quality,
- the Worthy Wage Network.

Center-Based Teachers

- child care tax credits, and child care benefits from your employer, that could help you meet the full cost of care.

Encouraging participation in:

- advocacy efforts to obtain additional public and private funds for child care,
- raising funds targeted for salary increases,
- the Worthy Wage Network.

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Your Child Care Work Environment



As we saw in Chapter 2, the fundamental requirement of a good place to work is the presence of fair and respectful relationships among adults. No positive spirit of caring, learning, understanding and growth is possible without them – either for adults or for children.

The focus of this chapter is to complete the picture of a high-quality child care work environment – helping you to measure your own workplace in light of what other child care teachers, directors and providers are experiencing around the

country, and to think about changes you'd like to see. This chapter will discuss:

- The policies and practices that make for a high-quality work environment
- Steps you can take to improve your work environment
- Your employment rights under the law.

Activity

Reflecting and Envisioning

One way to begin talking about a good work environment is to reflect on your own personal definition of quality, and your vision of a good work environment. Before any of us can move forward, we need a vision of where we'd like to go. It is hard to work for something we can't imagine. Envisioning widens our sense of what is possible, and it gives a framework for evaluating the present. To live with a vision also challenges us to remain flexible. We are challenged to ask how the dreams of others fit with our own, and to question whether anyone's ideas are perhaps being left out.

Here, and throughout this chapter, you will find brief Questions for Discussion. Try answering them yourself in a journal, or by talking with a partner or in a small group. Begin with these "envisioning" questions:

- What do you need in order to give your best to the job of providing high-quality child care?
- What are the key elements of a compensation and benefit package that would reward the value of this work?
- If you were able to make three changes in your child care workplace, what would they be?

What is a High-Quality Child Care Work Environment?

To develop a set of standards that could help child care programs define a good working environment, and take steps toward achieving it, the Center for the Child Care Workforce conducted a year-long national campaign in which we asked child care teachers, center directors and family child care providers two key questions:

- What is a high-quality work environment?
- What needs to be changed to improve your job and your ability to be effective in it?

Through postcards, focus groups, house meetings, workshops and other gatherings, we collected many different answers to these questions from the field. This feedback, combined with research findings on best practices in child care, formed the basis for three publications, available from the CCW office and Web site:

Creating Better Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care (CCW, second edition, 1999)

Creating Better Family Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards (CCW, 1999)

and Creating Better School-Age Care Jobs: Model Work Standards (CCW, 2001)

Although wages and benefits frequently came up, of course, in our discussions with teachers, directors and providers, we found that not all of the elements of a good work environment are necessarily monetary. For example:

In family child care:

- Do you have a good system of communication with parents, and a clear contract that spells out your program policies?
- Do you have other providers or colleagues you can turn to for support?
- Is your work environment healthy and safe for you, as well as for the children?

In a child care center:

- Do you have a written job description?
- Are there clear processes for hiring, promotions, evaluations, and grievances?

- Do you have regular staff meetings, and what are they like?
- How are decision making and problem solving handled in the center?
- Is the environment healthy and safe?

In the Model Work Standards publications produced by CCW, certain standards are marked as **essential**, because we believe they are a necessary part of providing a good adult work environment. These are standards which either: a) directly affect the quality of care that children receive, as shown by current research, or b) were repeatedly stressed by the teachers, directors and providers who helped us develop the standards. Some standards also indi-

cate two possible levels of quality: a **high-quality** level and a **striving** level. For many child care programs, meeting a standard at the “striving” level would mean major progress in improving the work environment, while other programs may have the ability and resources to go further.

Lists of the “essential” standards for family child care programs and child care centers can be found in the Appendix on page 123. For the complete set of standards, please see the original Model Work Standards publications from CCW.

The following checklist activities are designed as an introduction to the Model Work Standards – a self-assessment tool that can help you to take stock of your workplace (or one where you are considering working) and to identify priorities for change.

Questions for Discussion

- What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
- What are the most stressful aspects of your job?

A Checklist for Family Child Care Providers: What are the Current Policies and Practices in Your Workplace?

Check all that are included in your current contract or parent agreement:

- A fee schedule and payment policies, including late fees for overdue payments, overtime rates for late pick-ups, and fees for non-contracted hours if provided.
- All contracted hours are paid in full, regardless of child's attendance.
- An annual increase in fees, to allow for cost-of-living increases.
- Fee increases as the provider achieves a higher level of formal education or becomes accredited.
- A minimum of five paid sick/personal days per year.
- A minimum of seven paid holidays per year.
- A minimum of five paid vacation days per year in the first two years; 10 paid vacation days per year after the first two years.
- A minimum of two paid professional development days per year.
- Advance notification by families of when they are terminating care; minimally, two weeks' payment after notice is given, whether or not the child is in care.

Check all that your child care earnings provide for, in addition to general operating expenses:

- A self-supporting income.
- A family-supporting income.
- Program liability insurance.
- Individual health insurance coverage.
- Family health insurance coverage.
- Disability insurance.
- Retirement savings.
- Professional development funds to cover costs and related expenses, such as substitute providers, transportation, etc.

Check all aspects of your work environment that support you in this job:

- A work schedule allows for occasional respite and/or breaks.
- Measures are in place to facilitate ongoing communication with and among parents (e.g. journals, a bulletin board, a newsletter, a parent handbook, parent meetings, social events).
- Peer support is available through either an informal network of providers or a more formal support group.
- Access to community services includes but is not limited to: substitute providers, resource and referral services, technical assistance/consultation, and information on educational and community leadership opportunities.

Check all items that are included in your professional development plan:

- Continuing education to enhance the programmatic aspects of family child care.
- Continuing education to enhance the business aspects of family child care.
- Ongoing anti-bias/anti-racism training.
- Training in leadership and advocacy.

Check all that apply to the physical environment of your program:

- Regularly used equipment (e.g. diapering table) and storage areas are designed at a height and location that allow the provider to use gestures and postures that are safe and comfortable.
- There is office space or a designated area for conducting family child care business.
- Adult-sized chairs and work stations are available.
- There is ample, accessible and safe storage space.
- Periodic evaluation is made for the health and safety needs of both the children and the provider.
- The provider's own family participates in decision-making regarding the use of the home as a child care environment.

Check all that apply if you are an employer in your family child care business:

- Employee(s) receive: a written job description, adequate orientation to the program, an employment agreement specifying wages and benefits, and an annual job performance review.
- The wage and benefit plan is reviewed annually, and employees receive at least an annual cost of living increase.
- A grievance procedure is included in the employment agreement.
- Policies and procedures regarding termination are included in the employment agreement.
- Employees are involved in decision-making as it directly affects their day-to-day practice, and are engaged in setting program goals, measuring progress, and solving problems.
- The provider and employee(s) share observations and plan together as appropriate.

Questions for Discussion

- Do you plan to remain in child care for:
 - 1 more year? 1-3 years? 3 or more years? Why?
- Would you recommend child care as a career choice for others? Yes/no. Please explain....

**A Checklist for Child Care Center Teachers:
What are the Current Policies and Practices in Your Workplace?**

Check all that apply to the wage and benefit policies at your center.

- Salary scales for all positions are published and readily available to all employees.
- Salary scales identify different levels of pay for different levels of education.
- Increases in education are rewarded with increases in compensation.
- Staff receive cost of living increases annually.
- Staff receive overtime pay for working more than 40 hours per week.
- Full-time employees receive at least 75% employer-paid health insurance.
- Staff receives at least 12 paid sick/personal days per year.
- A minimum of eight holidays are paid each year.
- In the first year of employment, employees accrue at least five vacation days per year.
- In years two through four, employees accrue at least 10 vacation days per year.
- After five years, employees accrue vacation at the rate of 15 days per year.
- An employer-paid retirement or pension plan is offered to staff after their first year.
- Wages are paid in full when the program has an unexpected closure (e.g., inclement weather days).
- After six months of employment, each staff member is allocated at least \$150/year for professional development expenses.

Check all that apply to the personnel policies at your center.

- Orientation is provided before a new employee begins teaching responsibilities.
- Staff members are provided a copy of their written job description before beginning employment.
- Job descriptions are reviewed regularly, and teaching staff have input into any revisions.
- Policies focus on developing current employees for promotions and leadership positions.
- No discharge for unsatisfactory job performance takes place until an employee has been warned of unsatisfactory performance in writing.
- Employees who have received unsatisfactory evaluations are given reasonable time to improve unless employee behavior poses danger to the children.
- Grievance procedures are in writing and available to all employees.
- There are written policies describing the conditions under which an unpaid leave of absence may be taken by employees.
- Staff are evaluated at least annually.
- The evaluation process includes self-evaluation by the employee and a written evaluation by the supervisor.

- Staff receive open, honest and regular feedback based on routine classroom observation.
- A procedure is in place for employee evaluation of supervisors.
- Confidentiality of all information regarding employees is maintained.
- Staff development and training plans are determined through a mutual evaluation process between the staff member and the supervisor.
- In hiring for teaching positions, at least one of the teaching staff members in the room where the vacancy exists is included in the interviewing/decision-making committee.

Check all that apply to the classroom and staff meeting policies at your center.

- Classroom assignments are stable and are not changed in response to daily fluctuations in child enrollments.
- When work schedules must be changed temporarily, staff input is considered.
- In a 40-hour work week, one paid 15-minute break for each four-hour period is scheduled.
- Teachers receive at least two hours of paid planning time each week.
- Child care teachers are not responsible for caring for children during their planning time.
- Proposed changes in policies and procedures are circulated in writing to all staff.
- A sufficient period is allowed for meaningful staff input and response before changes are made.
- Staff participating in parent meetings are paid for their preparation and attendance.
- Paid staff meetings for all staff are held at least once per month for improving program quality, enhancing staff communication, and promoting professional development.
- Teaching staff make decisions regarding daily activities, room assignments and other matters that affect their day-to-day practice.
- In addition to planning time and staff meetings, staff have a minimum of 25 hours of paid professional time each year.
- Program consistently maintains sufficient staff for manageable group sizes and adult/child ratios that ensure individual attention for each child every day.
- Trained and qualified substitutes or floater teachers are available and arranged by the program administration for all staff leave time.
- Staff are engaged in setting program goals, identifying priorities to meet the goals, and measuring progress.
- The program philosophy and a vision for the future are shared by staff and reviewed at least annually.
- Staff have access to petty cash funds for immediate consumable supplies, and a system is in place for requesting funds when needs arise.

Check all that apply to how your center handles diversity.

- Employees may use personal or vacation leave for religious or cultural holidays on which the center is not closed.
- All staff participate in anti-bias/anti-racist training annually as part of in-service and professional development activity, with a focus on adults as well as children.
- Staff recruitment, retention and promotion policies and practices reflect a commitment to staff diversity.
- The center does not discriminate against employees based on differences such as race, age, religion, sex, disability and sexual preference.
- The center's communication system respects the various learning styles of staff.
- Staff development and training plans are determined through a mutual evaluation process between staff members and supervisors.
- Reasonable accommodations are made for staff with special needs, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Check all that apply to the health and safety/physical environment policies at your center.

- The program accepts responsibility for providing a safe and healthy working environment.
- Personal protective equipment or clothing, e.g. disposable gloves, are available without cost to the employee.
- Staff receive annual training on safe methods for handling objects and children (e.g., lifting toddlers), and on healthy classroom practices.
- Adult-sized chairs, sinks, toilets and work stations are available.
- Security measures, as identified with input from all staff, are in place to ensure staff members' physical well-being (e.g., alarms, lighting, or other security systems; emergency back-up plans; double staffing at the end of the day, etc.)
- Classrooms have comfortable places for adults to sit and be with children.
- Staff have a safe place to put personal belongings and a work area for preparation and planning.
- Regularly used equipment (e.g. diapering tables) and storage areas are at a height and location that allow staff to use gestures and postures that are safe and comfortable.
- Copies of reports resulting from inspection of the work place by building, health, safety or licensing officials are posted.
- No retaliatory action is taken against employees who refuse to perform work in violation of the regulations, after notifying the employer of the violation.
- The physical setting is evaluated periodically for the health and safety needs of employees; improvements are planned in response to staff needs.

How Can You Take Steps to Improve Your Work Environment?

Improving a child care work environment can take considerable time, energy and money. Some improvements may involve only a small financial cost, but a large investment in changing the climate of a workplace. And the key to changing the climate of a workplace is to improve the working relationships among adults – whether with fellow teaching staff, with the director and other administrators, or (especially in family child care) with parents.

Other improvements may challenge you to change your priorities in how the program's funds are spent, or to find additional funding sources. Still others may call for a community-wide plan to unite forces and take action. As a result, the Model Work Standards are intended to be used on several levels:

- by teachers, directors, and providers in child care programs, as a way to immediately begin to improve job conditions;
- in local communities, where child care programs and other support organizations (such as resource and referral agencies, or community colleges) can identify and start cooperative projects

to improve the local child care system; and

- with policy makers and funders, to raise awareness about the amount of resources that will be necessary to make lasting, comprehensive improvements in the nation's child care system.

A Note of Caution for Family Child Care Providers:

While engaging in professional support activities is an essential part of creating good family child care jobs, providers must be aware that by law you may not come together for the purpose of setting specific rates or fees in your community. See "The Legal Impact of Antitrust Laws on Family Child Care Providers," page 142, in the Appendix.

Using the Model Work Standards in Your Child Care Program

The following steps can help you develop an action plan to improve the work environment in a family child care home or child care center.

1. Assess your current working environment, using the Model Work Standards.

In family child care: Looking at each standard, decide whether your program meets this particular goal. If it does, check it off.

In a center: You may choose to do this as a group – preferably the teaching staff and director together – or ask everyone to assess the program individually, and then come together to identify areas where you agree or disagree. Looking at each standard, determine whether all staff agree that your program meets this particular goal. If all agree, check it off. If not everyone agrees whether a certain standard has been met, it will be important to work toward understanding why the staff have varying perspectives on this subject.

2. Determine your priorities for improvement.

In family child care: For those standards which your program does not consistently meet, decide which ones are of higher and lower priority for you. Setting priorities means taking the time to reflect on what you really want or need. Invite your own family members, employees if you have them, and those who know your

business well (perhaps someone who has provided good advice in the past) to take part in this conversation. Make a list of the standards that would really make a difference to you, then rank them in order of importance and by how “do-able” they are. Focus first on a standard that ranks high on both of these lists. Achieving some success, even on a relatively small item, can encourage you to take further action.

In a center: For those standards which your program does not consistently meet, decide together which ones are of higher and lower priority, using a process similar to that in step #1, and checking the appropriate column to the left of the standard.

3. Determine the cost for each of your top priorities.

It is important to place a dollar amount on the various goals you have set.

In family child care: Some programs decide how much money they can allocate for program improvement or how much money they are committed to raising in order to make changes. This amount may start small and increase each year (for example, \$500 the first year, \$1,000 the next year and \$2,000 by year three). The

standard you select to work on must fit into your annual budget.

In a center: Some programs decide how much money they can allocate or will raise to make changes (for example, \$5,000 for the coming year) and then select their top priority.

4. Make an action plan.

Use the steps outlined in the Action Plan Work Sheet on the following page.

In family child care: Start by identifying a standard that you believe will be both achievable and meaningful to you, and then be specific about the change you want. For example, “I will increase my number of paid sick days from 0 to 5 days per year.” Your action plan should include a timeline – for example, the date when you will alert parents of the change, and when it will be added to your contract. Finally, your action plan might list the kinds of support, resources, and people who need to be involved to help you achieve your goal – for example, other local providers who have successfully put sick days into their contracts, and sympathetic parents who could talk to other parents.

In a center: Ask each staff person to identify, among their high priorities, one to three standards which they want to work on achieving first. Then, rank the top one to three priorities that are agreed upon by all staff members, and use the Action Plan Work Sheet. You may want to start with a standard that you believe will be fairly achievable but meaningful to the teaching staff – for example, increasing your amount of paid break time. Your plan should also include a time line, notes on what kinds of support and resources you will need to accomplish your goal, and information on who will take responsibility for certain tasks.

5. Document your progress.

This will help you evaluate, learn from and adapt your strategies in order to sustain continued efforts. You are also in the best position to encourage other teachers and providers to create better child care jobs!

6. Celebrate and broadcast your accomplishments.

Every victory, no matter how large or small, moves you closer to your goal of achieving good child care jobs!

Activity

Model Work Standards: An Action Plan Work Sheet

The standard I am/we are working to improve:

What I/we have now:

My/our goal:

Note: The goal may be to meet the standard fully at either the high-quality or striving level, or may simply be a step in the direction of meeting the standard.

Estimated cost, if any:

While some standards may require minimal or no additional resources, others may take significant financial investment. In the latter case, appropriate steps will include funding strategies. The actual cost should be calculated in your evaluation.

- I. What needs to be done? List the specific steps needed to meet the goal.
- II. When? Create a timeline including the end point (when you hope to achieve the goal) and action steps along the way.
- III. Who? In family child care: While the greatest burden for creating change will fall on you as the provider, you should also identify parents, support agencies, and members of the community who could be helpful in reaching your goal. If you employ others in your family child care business, engage their participation as well.

In a center: Determine who will be responsible for each specific action step. In addition to staff, identify parents and members of the community who could be helpful in reaching your goal, and how and when they will be contacted.

- IV. Progress/Notes. This action plan is likely to change or need to be re-evaluated along the way, as new opportunities and new barriers present themselves. Be open and flexible...but keep sight of the goal. Check on your progress frequently and keep those who are helping you informed. In a center, report on progress at staff meetings, through the staff bulletin board, etc. Keep a journal or notes for future reference, and to offer help or advice to child care programs that follow in your footsteps.
- V. Evaluation: Ask all participants in the process to answer the following questions:
 - Did I/we succeed in reaching the goal?
 - If so, how will I/we celebrate and broadcast the news?
 - If not, what barriers still confront me/us?
 - What did I/we learn?
 - What was the actual time and cost involved?
 - How do I/we feel about the process? How could I/we improve it?
 - What next?

Questions for Discussion

- If the President of the United States asked you which one thing the government could do to improve child care jobs, what would you recommend?

Using the Model Work Standards in Your Community

The Model Work Standards can help child care programs gain community-wide recognition for offering a high-quality work environment for teachers and providers, and they also offer parents another important way to measure a program's quality. We therefore recommend using these standards with the broader community – including resource and referral agencies, early childhood training institutions, child care advocacy groups, professional associations, provider support groups, and business, labor and women's groups – so that, together, many people in the community can:

- support child care programs who are engaged in improving child care jobs,
- inform other teachers and providers – those just entering the field, as well as seasoned professionals – that these standards exist and that they can be useful in making decisions about future professional growth,
- promote careers in child care programs that recognize the value of a quality work environment;

- identify potential resources and funding opportunities for improving the child care work environment,
- educate consumers about quality child care,
- broadcast the successes of child care programs and showcase model work sites, and
- engage in community-wide action to address some of the most difficult standards to achieve, such as affordable health care coverage.

For two perspectives on how a community Model Work Standards project has helped family child care providers improve their programs, see the article on page 87.

What Are Your Employment Rights Under the Law?

The main focus of this chapter has been on how to improve your child care work environment – usually through an informal process of discussing changes with your co-workers and administrators, or (in family child care) with fellow providers and the parents who use your program.

But along with the Model Work Standards – which are a voluntary system

for improving your workplace – there are some fundamental legal employment rights that apply to most child care teachers and other child care employees. Unfortunately, these legal rights are not always upheld in every workplace, which makes it extra important for child care staff to know about these rights themselves.

Along with federal law, each state can also pass certain employment laws of its own. For example, some states have set a higher minimum wage than the federal minimum, and some states have passed family and medical leave bills, and non-discrimination bills, that are stronger than federal law. As a result, it is important to know both sets of laws.

In general, the areas of law that are most likely to apply to center-based child care staff have to do with:

- the minimum wage
- overtime pay for hours worked beyond regular time (typically 40 hours)
- non-discrimination practices
- the right to join a union, or to organize co-workers into a union
- occupational health and safety
- worker's compensation for injury on the job or illness caused by conditions in the workplace
- equal pay for male and female employees who are performing work that is substantially the same
- unemployment insurance.

If you work in a large child care center, or your center is part of a larger agency or institution, additional employment laws may apply to you, including the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Equal Pay Act.

Family child care providers also encounter legal issues on the job – for example, the right to collect timely payments from families, and in some communities, zoning laws or other regulations that unfairly discriminate against home-based businesses such as family child care.

An excellent legal resource for both teachers and providers is the Child Care Law Center, a national, nonprofit legal services organization dedicated to using legal tools to promote high-quality child care. The Child Care Law Center has produced a variety of publications, and has staff available to answer legal questions for teachers and providers during certain hours.

Contact them at: Child Care Law Center, 973 Market St., Suite 550, San Francisco, CA 94103; telephone (415) 495-5498; www.childcarelaw.org.

For more detailed information about legal rights in center-based child care, see the booklet, "Rights in the Workplace: A Guide for Child Care Teachers" (CCW and WORC, 1997), available from CCW and

on our Web site at www.ccw.org.

The previous chapters have focused on ways to reflect on your child care work environment and how to improve it. The next and final chapter invites you to build on this experience by recognizing yourself as a leader and advocate – both within your workplace and beyond.

Activity

- "What do you give? What do you deserve in return?" On your own, or in a group of other students or colleagues, brainstorm some answers to these questions:
- What do you give to children?
- What do you give to families?
- What do you give to the community in which you work?

Generating these lists will help you become more articulate about your work of caring. Make your lists as extensive as possible. Next, as you reflect on these lists, answer one additional question:

- What do you deserve for the worthy contributions you are making to children, families, and the community?

Special Aspects of Working in School-Age Care

Since many programs for school-age children are open for less than a full day – operating for certain hours before and/or after school hours – many jobs in school-age care offer less than full-time employment. As a result, one of the greatest challenges in school-age care is building a high-quality, stable workforce that is dedicated to working together to create a good program. The low wages and lack of benefits that are common to the field are compounded in school-age care by the reliance on part-time workers, and by the fact that many programs do not operate year-round. It is typical in many fields of work to pay part-time workers less, offer few if any benefits, engage them less in ongoing decision-making, and expect less in terms of a commitment to the job. But in the school-age care profession, the consequence of these employment practices may be a well-meaning staff that is ill-prepared for the realities of the job, or staff members who are unwilling to invest their emotional selves in a way that school-age children demand.

School-age programs that are intentionally working to improve program quality and reduce turnover use strategies like these:

- Create as many full-time jobs as possible to attract and retain staff – especially program directors, site coordinators, and group leaders. Examples of how a program may increase the number of

full-time jobs include: scheduling staff for both a.m. and p.m. shifts (before and after school), adding administrative tasks to a part-time shift with children to increase hours, reducing the number of hours considered to be "full-time," taking into consideration all the time (including planning and preparation time) actually required of a job that may be full-time but is treated as part-time, or piecing together part-time jobs in the same program. Especially if a program has a preschool component, providing some work time in this program as support staff or in a "floater" position could create a full-time job.

- Provide full-time staff with the full range of benefits (medical insurance, retirement benefits, paid vacation and holidays, paid sick leave, etc.) and pro-rate benefits for all staff, based on full-time work hours.
- Create a work environment that gives staff a sense of community among children, families, and other staff; shared leadership; sensitivity and flexibility around work/family issues; and adequate training and supervision.
- Seek out professional development opportunities that speak specifically to the job of working with school-age children.

- Organize the voices of the workers themselves and engage them in the development of turnover plans as needed. Programs that do not operate year-round particularly need to plan carefully for turnover.

The physical spaces in which school-age programs operate can also present some unique challenges. Instead of a classroom, a school-age site may be a converted cafeteria or gymnasium, a space in a community center, public park or playground, or any combination of these. Often it is shared space that must be set up and taken down each day so that other users can occupy the space when the program is not in operation. Clearly, a work environment such as this must offer the staff ample paid time to

prepare and clean up, and program resources must be invested into making this a reasonable task (for example, shelving on wheels for ease of movement). Staff in school-age programs should be engaged in designing the most effective and creative use of the space for all concerned – staff as well as children. Finally, many school-age care sites are part of a larger multi-site agency, and the unique characteristics of the various sites must be considered in program decision-making.

*For more information on the school-age care work environment, *Creating Better School-Age Care Jobs: Model Work Standards*, (CCW, 2001) is available through the CCW catalog or can be ordered on our Web site.*

What to look for in a place to work is not just a nice facility. A lot depends on the director, such as: what education and background does she have? How is she going to help you in your work with children? Will this person encourage you as a teacher to grow? support what you're trying to do in the classroom? Be open to discussing ideas and sharing information? Will you have a good supply budget and other resources? Will she share information with you about scholarships, classes and other opportunities? The director in many ways sets the tone of the program.

-- Rene Hendricks, teacher, Charlotte, N.C.

A Community "Model Work Standards" Project for Family Child Care Providers: Two Perspectives

Recently, the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC) received a grant to help family child care providers and centers in the Philadelphia area improve their programs by using the Model Work Standards. Here is what a provider and a project staff member had to say about the process.

Margarita (Maggie) Cruzado, family child care provider:

The Model Work Standards have been a wonderful help! When I first met Debbie, though, it took me awhile to feel comfortable, because she was a stranger coming into my home to help me evaluate my program, and I felt somewhat intimidated by the standards. I didn't know what to expect because we were from different cultures. But the Model Work Standards and Debbie have given me the support I needed but didn't know was available. They've helped put me on track, and allowed me to focus on my business in terms of where I plan to go in the future.

There were things I needed to correct to keep a balance between family and work. There were things I had to do to get my business on track. I've completed grant proposals to purchase equipment for my program, and opened a separate bank account for the business and a retirement plan for myself. My program now has a complete Parent Handbook that includes my philosophy and views on how children learn. I have

a new banner posted outside my home to advertise my child care business.

Working with the Model Work Standards and Debbie has given me the confidence to write letters and pursue various agencies that don't always fulfill their invoices in a timely manner. The standards helped me to think and plan ahead before I encounter emergencies. I've put in place an alternative caregiver for my children in case of an emergency, illness, or planned vacation. To be more efficient in my business, and so that I would have more time with the children, I also purchased a copier and fax machine to get reports out quickly. And I've completed progress reports for each of the children to give to the parents.

I recommend the Model Work Standards for anyone who works in the child care profession. They outline what you need to have a productive, efficient program that takes care of the families and children we serve, but without excluding the provider and her family's needs!

Debbie Butler, Model Work Standards project staff:

I've always felt that there needed to be written guidelines for people in child care to follow – both for management to address the needs of their employees, and for child care workers to have a tool to assess their needs and see that their needs are met.

The program has been widely accepted

by family child care providers, and many more are eager to be a part of it. It's great to see them think about the future of their business and their own personal growth and well-being. Each program is different and unique, and the Model Work Standards don't take away this individuality. It allows them to take the talents they have and blossom. They are growing professionally, developing self-confidence and awareness, becoming comfortable with making choices and decisions, and setting professional and personal goals for themselves.

One of the providers I've had the pleasure to work with has been Maggie Cruzado. My initial visit with her was a bit strained, because we were both unsure how this would all turn out. But Maggie was able to describe in detail what she felt she needed to make her business more productive and effective. She knew what she

needed professionally and personally, but didn't know how to put her concerns into action. She was aware of her program's strengths and weaknesses. After reviewing the components of the standards, she decided which ones she need to work on to meet her goals for the business, and we made an action plan. This can all be overwhelming at first, but it's important for each provider to be able to choose where she wants to begin.

Maggie has truly blossomed – I've seen such tremendous growth in her abilities and confidence as a business person. This project has allowed the two of us, from different cultures but so alike in other ways, to come together for what we love: the care of children and their families, and helping child care providers understand the importance of this profession.

The Links Between Child Care Quality and the Adult Work Environment: What Does the Research Say?

Common sense and "folk wisdom" have long told us that parents need a decent livelihood, and support from an extended family or community, in order to give the best for their children. In recent years, research has confirmed that this is also true for teachers and providers who work in child care programs: the quality of child care is directly linked with the quality of the caregiver's adult work environment. The first large-scale study to make this link was the National Child Care Staffing Study, published in 1990. Programs in this landmark study were re-visited nearly a decade later, confirming the original findings. From that first study until now, major national research studies have drawn similar conclusions. The following is a summary of these findings.

The National Child Care Staffing Study (1990)

- The quality of services provided by most centers is barely adequate. Better-quality centers have: higher wages, better adult work environments, lower teaching staff turnover, better-educated staff, and more teachers caring for fewer children.
- Children attending lower-quality centers and centers with more staff turnover are less competent in language and social development.
- The most important determinant of staff turnover among the adult work environment variables is staff wages

- The education of child care teaching staff and the arrangement of their work environment are essential determinants of the quality of services that children receive.

Marcy Whitebook, Carollee Howes & Deborah Phillips. (1990). *Who Cares? Child Care Teachers and the Quality of Care in America: Final Report*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988-1997 (1998)

- Centers that remained in operation over this decade pay higher wages, employ more college educated staff, and report lower staff turnover.
- There was a significant increase in public dollars for child care during this decade, but these funds were rarely targeted to quality improvements or increased compensation. The result is that wages essentially remained stagnant over this decade at \$13,125 - \$18,988 per year, and the teacher turnover rate in 1997 was 31%.
- Approximately one third of child care centers employ former welfare recipients, sometimes at less than the prevailing wage and often with limited training.
- The majority of centers still offer their teaching staff limited or no health insurance, despite heavy exposure to illness in child care employment.

Marcy Whitebook, Carollee Howes & Deborah Phillips. (1998). *Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages: The National Child Care Staffing Study*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care (1995)

Higher-quality family child care programs:

- have better-educated providers who continue to seek opportunities to learn more,
- are operated by providers who are committed to child care as important work that they want to be doing,
- charge higher rates and follow standard business and safety practices, and
- are managed by experienced providers who are engaged in provider support networks.

S. Kontos, C. Howes, M. Shinn & E. Galinsky. (1995). *Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers (1995)

- Child care at most centers in the United States is poor to mediocre, with almost half of the infant and toddler rooms having poor quality; only one in seven centers provides a level of quality that promotes healthy development.
- Quality of care is related to staff educa-

tion, higher staff-to-child ratios, and administrators' experience.

- Teacher wages, education and specialized training are the most important characteristics separating poor and mediocre centers from good-quality centers.
- Higher-quality centers that have extra resources use them to improve quality.

Suzanne W. Helburn, ed. (1995). *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers: Technical Report*. Denver: University of Colorado, Department of Economics, Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy.

Study of Accreditation in Child Care Centers (1997)

- Higher wages and lower rates of turnover are predictors of quality.
- Higher-quality centers have less turnover of staff.
- Highly-skilled staff are more likely to remain at their job if they:
 - Earn higher than average wages,
 - Work with a higher percentage of well-trained teachers, and
 - Work in a climate where other well-trained and educated teachers (as well as directors) remain on the job.

Marcy Whitebook, Laura Sakai, and Carollee Howes. (1997). *NAEYC Accreditation as a Strategy for Improving Child Care Quality: An Assessment*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Abecedarian Study (1999)

In this study, children from low-income families received full-time, high-quality educational intervention in a child care setting from infancy through age 5. Children's progress was monitored over time, with follow-up studies conducted at ages 12, 15, and 21.

- High-quality early childhood education significantly improves the scholastic success and educational attainments of poor children, even into early adulthood.
- Quality care requires sufficient numbers of well-trained staff to ensure that every child receives appropriate, individualized attention.

The Carolina Abecedarian Project. (1999). Chapel Hill, N.C.: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina.

Then and Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994-2000 (2001)

This study of 92 child care centers in California sought to identify the characteristics of teaching staff and directors who stayed in their jobs, left their jobs, newly entered the field, or left the field altogether, between 1994 and 2000.

- Over these 6 years, 82% of all staff had left their jobs. Between 1996 and 2000, 76% of teaching staff left, and 40% of

directors left. Numerous positions turned over more than once during these periods.

- Real wages declined for all categories of child care staff by 6% between 1996 and 2000 – despite the economic boom in the U.S. during these years.
- There were significant wage differences (roughly \$2.00/hour for teaching staff, and almost \$3.00/hour for directors) between those who stayed and those who left.
- Overall, people newly coming into the field have lower qualifications; in particular, fewer have B.A. degrees. In 1996, 3% of staff were at the minimum level of qualification; in 2000, 10% were at this level.
- The most important factor in sustaining quality in a child care center is a center's ability to retain a higher number of highly-trained staff. The presence of stable, well-trained, competent leadership helps to keep turnover down. Centers that are able to recruit and retain highly-trained teachers and directors pay higher salaries.

Marcy Whitebook, Laura Sakai, Emily Gerber & Carollee Howes. (2001). *Then and Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994-2000*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

References and Further Reading

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Path Finders Unlimited, Inc., ed. (1993). *The Language of Money and Family Child Care.* Ft. Lauderdale, Fla: Path Finders Unlimited, Inc. (Includes information on the full cost of family child care, and a

chapter on scholarships and sliding fee scales written by Kathy Modigliani.)

Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D.A. (1990; updated 1994, 1998). *Who Cares? Child Care Teachers and the Quality of Care in America.* Final Report of the National Child Care Staffing Study. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Leadership and Professional Growth: In Your Workplace and Beyond



Throughout the country, child care teachers and providers like yourself have become leaders in our field, taking action with others in ways that have had many concrete effects in improving child care jobs. In Milwaukee, Wis., a group of family child providers called PTA (“Providers Taking Action”) were tired of getting late reimbursement checks from the county – and got the system changed (see profile on page 114). In Providence, R.I., providers formed the Home Daycare Justice Committee, demanding state-sponsored health insurance in exchange for serving state-subsidized families – and won (Abrams, 1999). In Berkeley, Calif., several teachers started meeting after work to talk about how to improve their working conditions and pay – and formed the organization that eventually became the Center for the Child Care Workforce. In Boston, Mass., a group of teachers started meeting for the same reasons – and formed a union that now has over 1,000 members across the state of Massachusetts.

These stories illustrate how any of us can take a leadership role in improving our working conditions in the child care field. Anyone can become a leader: it’s not a mysterious process that is open to

only a few people who are born with special qualities. If you are interested in creating change, and if you are willing to accept responsibility in making this happen, you can become a leader yourself.

What do we mean by “leadership”? For some, the word may sound too unreachable or forbidding. Perhaps it reminds us of an old, top-down, authoritarian style that we have come to reject: leadership based on a single, dominant personality. But we can redefine for ourselves what leadership is – and recognize that child care teachers and providers already have many of the skills it takes. Building leadership means creating opportunities to:

- find our own voices and articulate what we know;
- name and understand the barriers and dilemmas we share in common in the child care field;
- experience and use our own power in finding solutions;

- connect our confidence and knowledge about working with children to the tasks of working with adults; and
- strengthen ourselves and the “worthy wage” movement as a whole.

In this chapter, we discuss why we need child care teachers and providers in leadership roles, and we examine the process of becoming a leader and activist. We identify the specific skills that leaders and activists learn, and suggest ways to use these skills. And we invite you to reflect on the skills you already have, that can help you create change on the job and become an advocate both inside and outside of your workplace.

Why do we need teachers and providers to take leadership in our field?

In previous chapters, we have described the current realities of working in child care, and what we need in order to provide the best care and education for young children. This gap – between what we have, and what we need – often leaves teachers and providers frustrated about not being able to do their best work with children, and about how hard it is to care for their own families on the wages they

earn. Many feel that they have no other choice but to leave child care and find another job. This has caused such high rates of turnover that many people describe the situation as a staffing crisis, or a child care crisis – a severe problem with serious consequences for children, families and the child care workforce itself. We need teachers and providers to join with others in the field who are looking at new ways to understand this problem, and who are proposing creative solutions.

Our own experiences reflect the issues best: we know how the instability of the child care workforce affects not only our own well-being, but the stability and potential of young children’s lives. Only we can move child care compensation from a problem that might be solved someday, to one that must be solved now. Our voices carry urgency, authenticity and strength.

The Chinese symbol for “crisis” is a combination of two figures: “danger” and “opportunity.” What are the dangers that we, as child care workers, face in this staffing crisis? There is the danger that we will feel powerless to act, and therefore take no action. We may feel powerless because the problem seems so big and we can see no effective solutions. We may have come to believe that in order to do

this rewarding work, we must make great personal sacrifices. We may feel overwhelmed by what we are already doing – caring for our families, perhaps going to school, even working a second job – and believe we can’t take on anything else. There is the danger that we will end up embracing the old belief that speaking up for ourselves is unprofessional or selfish. We may accept the view that we are undeserving, and not entitled to what most workers expect from a job. The greatest danger in this crisis is that many children will continue to receive poor-quality care.

Fortunately, the other side of a crisis is opportunity. We have the opportunity to accept a role and a contribution in reversing this crisis and working for change. We can create our own definitions of what it means to be an early childhood professional. We have the opportunity to share what we know and to educate others about the staffing crisis. We can build our leadership skills, and ensure that teachers and providers are represented in the places where important decisions are made. We can become engaged in action,

and become a model and inspiration for others. We can work in coalition with other advocates in our communities to be a powerful voice for change. We can make a difference in the lives of children, and the lives of our fellow child care teachers and providers.

How can we turn this crisis away from danger and toward opportunity? We can learn to take our rightful place as leaders in our field. As with any other skill – such as planning a curriculum for children, or leading a group game or other activity – we can learn the skills necessary for leadership and advocacy. We can learn how to overcome the barriers to our participation as leaders. We can learn to integrate our leadership work with our personal lives so that it is rewarding, not overwhelming. And we can learn to draw on our cultural and spiritual roots to sustain us in our work for change.

To begin this process, we will look at how we can draw strength from our early childhood culture: our beliefs and values about our work, and the skills we already possess.

Activity

1. Think of someone you consider a leader – not a famous person, but someone who is a part of your life. Write down a few of the characteristics and qualities that you have observed in this leader. Then, make another list of the characteristics of a skilled child care professional. Note any overlap in the two lists.
2. Relax, close your eyes, and remember a time when you felt that some action you took made a difference that was positive. What happened? Who was involved? What was the setting? Remember as vividly as possible the qualities of mind and feelings you had at the time. Write this down for yourself or share it with someone.
3. Read the article excerpt, “Who’s Missing at the Table? Leadership Opportunities and Barriers for Teachers and Providers,” on page 99. As Marcy Whitebook observes in this article, anyone who works effectively in group child care has some “well-honed leadership skills” already. Ask yourself:
 - What are the leadership qualities that I possess?
 - What are my strengths?
 - What are the areas I would like to improve on as a leader?

If providers aren't at the table, we can't have a voice. And as long as we're not at the table, the "powers that be" will continue to be very happy making rules for us without asking. But as providers, we know that this doesn't work. You can't just say, "These are my rules," and leave it at that. Children won't comply unless the rules make sense, and neither will adults.

— Sue Ryan, family child care provider, Burlington, Vt.

“Who’s Missing at the Table? Leadership Opportunities and Barriers for Teachers and Providers”

by Marcy Whitebook

As anyone who has ever worked with a group of children knows, being effective [as a teacher or provider] requires well-honed leadership skills. One has to guide, both directly and indirectly, the interactions and movements of many young children (and adults) through space and time. Facilitating the transition of a group of children from high-energy outdoor play to a more low-key circle time, and then on to a snack, for example, strikes terror in the heart of many a novice caregiver.

These leadership skills often do not resemble more traditional ideas of a leader – as someone who commands authority and respect, and directs others. Leadership skills in an early childhood environment require a more subtle and participatory style which are hardly visible to the untrained eye. While co-workers know who has these skills, they are often invisible in the greater society (which tends to view child care as something that just “comes naturally” to women), and they are often hard to acknowledge in oneself and one’s colleagues. Even less obvious are the many adult skills required of teachers and providers as they interact with co-workers, parents, grandparents, foster parents, volunteers, trainees and other professionals. Effective teachers of young children are also supervisors and teachers, and therefore leaders, of adults. This style of leader-

ship by early childhood teachers and providers with their peers does not often call attention to itself, but it nevertheless requires careful honing and practice.

The leadership skills that teachers and providers develop while working with children and families can be applied relatively easily outside the classroom or home, if there is adequate support and recognition. Teacher and providers can translate what they know about working with children and adults, but all too often, when they participate in settings outside their child care programs, they feel unacknowledged for what they know, and excluded from information or processes which in turn limit their participation. When it comes to public policy discussions, for example, child care teachers and providers might not have access to the most recent information about proposed legislation, and they may remain silent in discussions. But they have important contributions to make in helping articulate the implications of policy changes, because they have valuable first-hand knowledge, from their daily work, about what children and families truly need. But teacher and provider voices are often muffled by those of us who are used to public meetings, and used to volunteering our opinions – often without considering whether our group process encourages everyone to share their perspectives. When our early care and education meetings assume certain types of knowledge, with-

out recognizing the range of information and perspective that people bring to the table, those with the least recognized types of skill and experience are often hushed.

My hope is that the early childhood field can begin to recognize and challenge the cultural standards of leadership that silence many of our most creative and dedicated colleagues. We can challenge the internalized values of child care work in the greater society that are reflected in the limited presence of teachers and providers as

our acknowledged leaders and spokespersons. By so doing, we can develop a group of leaders who will be willing to challenge the status quo, and to take the necessary risks to make working with young children a career that people will be respected for and can afford to pursue.

from Rethinking Leadership in Early Care and Education, eds. S.L. Kagan & B. Bowman. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997.

I'm learning to be a leader. I feel that someone has to put out some extra effort in order for our profession to change, and I'm doing what I can!

— Kathy Siepak, family child care provider, Greensboro, N.C.

Activity

A Child Care Advocacy Quiz

- Do you think that all children have a right to happy and healthy early childhood experiences that enhance their development?
- Do you think that all families should have access to such child care?
- Do you think that 'quality child care' means: enough caregivers for each child to be guaranteed individual attention; caregivers who are knowledgeable in child development; and caregivers who can provide stable relationships with children and their families?
- Do you think you have a right to earn a self-sufficiency wage in child care – one that enables you to support yourself and your family? How about a wage comparable to others in your community with similar skills and education?
- Do you think you deserve a good work environment, complete with paid leave for holidays and vacations, health insurance, a retirement plan and supportive community resources?
- Do you think that good child care benefits all of society, and therefore deserves public support?
- Do you think that it will take all who care about children – parents, child care professionals, community leaders, private industry, and the government – to create and pay for a child care system that will work well for all?

Did you answer "yes" to any of these questions? If so, it looks like you are a child care advocate!

Using the Leadership Skills You Already Have: An On-the-Job Case Study

Too often, we make a separation between working in a child care home or classroom, and participating in advocacy work – but these are not really such completely separate things. There is a strong connection between the two, and there are many ways in which your skills as a teacher or provider overlap with the skills that advocates need. The purpose of this section is to focus on what you already know, and to remind you that your skills, and your first-hand, daily knowledge of children and families, allow you to identify the most important issues in our field in ways that many other people cannot. In becoming a leader, you really are not “starting from scratch,” but instead, are transferring your skills to new arenas. What you know as a teacher or provider needs to be heard. Your voice matters, and your contribution is essential!

Your first impression about advocacy may be that it’s all about influencing public policy, changing laws, or “taking on” a community leader or a system that needs to be more responsive to the needs of caregivers. But if we define advocacy as “speaking up; doing something about what you think, know or believe,” then we

see that advocacy can happen on the job as well. For some people, this is where we begin to build our confidence and skills before we can work as advocates in the broader community. For others, it’s easier to become active in the community first, before we can take steps to improve our own work environment. The following workplace scenario illustrates some of the issues and challenges – and the ways in which we already have the necessary skills for creating change.

A Scenario:

As a result of recent staff turnover, a director of a child care center has announced that she is making some changes in the staff schedules and classroom assignments – but she has done so without any input from the staff. The teachers feel that they could come up with alternative solutions; their daily work has given them plenty of firsthand knowledge about how these decisions could affect their own jobs and the quality of the program. The director’s decision may mean that:

- several children will not cope very well in the new groupings;
- one teacher will be strapped to find

after-school care for her own child due to her new schedule;

- the plan will create a teaching team whose styles do not work well together; or
- conflicts will develop over scheduling playground or lunch routines.

Now, consider the following skills that you already use with children, and that could help you take action to change this situation. These are skills in the areas of: communication, observation, building self-esteem, guidance, problem-solving, play and planning.

Communication Skills. Your first step is to ‘speak up’. We know from our work with children that it’s important to choose our words carefully: to speak in a positive tone; to be concise and direct with our message, so that it’s clear what we would like to see happen next; and to speak with knowledge and authority. Requesting a meeting with the director will require these same elements of communication.

If your approach with the director is positive – not the result of pent-up anger and frustration – the communication is much more likely to be productive.

Approach her with the assumption that you share the same goal of having a good program. She probably did her best with the knowledge she had, and she may have felt time pressure to make a decision quickly. State clearly to her what you would like: in this case, a meeting with the staff to address concerns and to consider alternative solutions. Finally, speak from what you know. Be thoughtful and factual in how you present your rationale. Do your “homework” in advance: take the time to talk with your colleagues about their issues, and be prepared to share any comments from parents or any behaviors of children you’ve observed, so that you can fully explain what is happening.

Because you regularly communicate with children in your work, you have learned that sometimes we need to repeat our messages over and over, perhaps reframing them until they get the desired result. Being persistent is a challenge that an advocate takes on as well.

Self-Esteem Building. Before we move on to the meeting between the director and staff, you might be wondering how you will even reach this initial place of being able to speak up. Am I confident enough, powerful enough to make this request? Is it my role to do this? Do I have

a right to question the director's decision?

These questions are not unique to you. They are asked by many of your colleagues around the country. The questions are a result of internalizing the messages we have received from others about who we are and the work we do. The definition most often assigned to our work is summed up in the word 'babysitter.' Yet we know that this definition does not cover the value and importance of what we do, so we are challenged to re-define who we are and to act in a way that is consistent with a new view of ourselves.

In our work with children, we observe daily the continuum of high to low self-esteem. We know that children are more or less successful, depending on their view of themselves. There is always the child who believes she can do anything she sets her mind to, and as a result, she is incredibly competent in many endeavors and takes risks as a matter of course. True, she may also be the child who hits, pushes or shouts to change the situation when things are not right for her – but she is persistent, and things happen for her! And then there is the child who acts helpless much of the time, whimpering and whining when things don't go his way – the child who tends to wait for things to happen to him.

As with these children, your success in communicating with the director depends

to some extent on your view of yourself. Remember that the first time you speak up is the hardest. Draw on the support of your colleagues. Ask them to help you craft the message and provide supportive information. Practice what you're going to say before you say it. Hold an image in your head of a child or an adult who inspires you!

Guidance Skills. When guiding children's behavior, we are constantly analyzing situations and adjusting our actions accordingly. We identify the situations where we must be firm and unwavering in our convictions, those that warrant negotiation or even re-consideration, those that require a thoughtful, well-planned strategy to be implemented over time, and those that simply warrant a response of "No, that is unacceptable."

When it comes to our own work environment and what we know works for us and the children, we can also recognize the negotiable and the unacceptable, and we can be part of a strategy to make things more acceptable. This is the opportunity afforded to you when you successfully arrange a meeting between the director and the staff to discuss the most recent turnover problem. The meeting may result in a new strategy that is good for everyone, but sometimes a well-planned strategy

may demand that you lend support to temporary, less-than-desirable, short-term solutions based on new understandings. In either case, you will have experienced a new sense of power to create change in your workplace.

Problem-solving, play, and planning skills: The problem-solving skills that we identified in Chapter 2, in the discussion of shared decision-making as an element of good working relationships, are very likely similar to the ones that you use with children. Most simply stated, we gather information from the children about the situation, we help to articulate the problem in a way that the children can hear and understand, we discuss possible solutions, we agree on something to try, we try it, and we check back to see whether it worked. These are the same steps you will need to employ in your meeting to successfully develop a new plan for managing a turnover situation.

This is also where play skills and planning skills come in. Our play skills remind us that we can "play around" with ideas, and even go with an idea we're not sure will work but are willing to take a chance on – all the while bringing a sense of humor to the difficult task of finding a good solution. And in terms of planning skills, whether or not you write a daily lesson plan, you are undoubtedly documenting what you do and reflecting on how it works. To see plans in writing often helps. Take this to heart, and try ending your meeting with a written action plan, including a plan for checking back to see what worked and what didn't.

With any luck, the end result will be a much better plan than you would have been stuck with if you had sat back and said nothing – even if it is a compromise or a temporary solution that is less than what you hoped for.

Every year, as part of the teaching staff, I sit on the negotiating team and help renew our union contract with the center. Most recently, we've changed our health care system, so that all staff pay an equal flat rate, no matter which plan they need, and the center picks up the remaining cost. This seems much fairer to us, and makes choices easier – there used to be major inequities in the co-payments. As team teachers, we're all doing the same job – we should share the same benefits equally.

— Amy Schuster, teacher, Madison, Wis.

Activity

Internal Barriers. In small groups or pairs, each person should think back to a particular situation where she or he faced a problem or dilemma related to child care work. For example: your director said “no” to a request, or someone showed a lack of respect for the work you do. Remember back to what you were feeling at the time. What happened? What stopped you from responding or taking action; or what worked? If you are dissatisfied with how that situation turned out, practice in your small group, or with your partner, what you could have said or done, or what you can say or do in the future.

Further Reflection

1. Do I have trouble expressing personal power? If so, why?
2. What do I need in order to nourish – and maintain – myself as a leader or advocate?

Developing Your Advocacy Skills: “Be a 30-Minute Advocate”

by Diane Adams, Child Care Consultant, Madison, Wis.

It seems that child care advocates are made, not born. Learning what to do about advocacy issues is not something that comes easily to everyone. Often it’s impossible to “drop everything” and put all your effort into child care advocacy issues. Advocacy is something to be practiced, so that when an issue comes along that requires our attention, you already have some good advocacy skills developed. This article can help you focus on how you might become more comfortable by being a “30-minute advocate” – doing the simple things that help make child care work better.

Advocacy requires dedication to the concept of quality child care. The author of “The One Minute Manager,” Ken Blanchard, says that there’s a big difference between interest and commitment. We’re interested in lots of things: gardening, movies, jogging, basketball, gourmet cooking. Then there are the things to which we’re committed, such as our family, or our religious affiliation. The difference, he points out, is this: “When you’re interested in something, you do it only when it is convenient. When you’re committed to something, you accept no excuses, only results.”

Most people in child care would say that they are committed to the children and families they serve. Yet there is this other challenge: to be an outspoken advocate for good child care! Yes, you’re committed to the children and families, but you’re also committed to an excellent child care system, made up eventually of a balance between quality for children, affordability for parents, and good compensation for caregivers.

Some advocacy strategies are a little scary; others are fairly easy for almost anyone. Think about the following potential strategies on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least difficult for you (a “piece of cake”) and 5 being the one to which you’d say, “No way, I couldn’t do that.” Circle your answers to see how you feel about some of the strategies for being a 30-minute advocate.

Advocacy Strategy	A piece of cake		If I have to		No way
Read about child care issues	1	2	3	4	5
Wear a “message” button or T-shirt	1	2	3	4	5
Visit an elected official/ask questions	1	2	3	4	5
Post a cartoon about child care on your bulletin board	1	2	3	4	5

Send a letter to a newspaper editor	1	2	3	4	5
Send children's art work to an elected official	1	2	3	4	5
Contribute to an elected official's campaign	1	2	3	4	5
Invite people to dinner, but don't feed them until they agree to work on child care issues!	1	2	3	4	5
Invite an elected official to visit your child care program	1	2	3	4	5
Send an e-mail to the President	1	2	3	4	5
Vote!!	1	2	3	4	5

You probably feel fairly comfortable with some of the ideas on the above list. Speaking before Congress or at a public hearing, on the other hand, are advocacy tactics that are much more challenging for most of us. But the less risky things are often the most effective. Many people doing some small things to heighten awareness on the part of public officials, for example, helped Congress pass major legislation for child care in 1990. Think about what you can do to help your community and the nation to have a child care system which truly supports children, families, and teachers and providers.

Local or federal child care issues come up frequently, such as new regulations for family child care, or some new rule on welfare reform or child care subsidies. Your position on these issues may differ from those of other child care advocates – that's what democracy is all about. But it is important to listen to the issues, read and learn about them, and then take a committed action. If you spend just a few minutes each time you're asked, child care will be strengthened. Your vocal commitment to child care issues need not take extensive time away from your main work. Try to be a 30-minute child care advocate!

— Reprinted with permission from the author

Activity

1. Write down two things you can do to get involved with others who are committed to upgrading child care jobs. Copy this list, give it to someone else, and ask her to mail it to you in two months. Offer to mail a list for her as well!
2. Envision the kind of child care workforce you would like to see in your community in five years. What steps need to be taken in order to get there? What are the barriers to be overcome? Try doing this just for yourself and with your co-workers, or in a local group. The answers could become your priority list for taking action.
3. *Activists as risk-takers.* At different stages of our work, each of us has different amounts of time and energy to give. Make a list of what you might risk by becoming more active in improving your working conditions, or child care jobs in general. Then look at this list, and consider which risks you are willing, and not willing, to take at this time. Finally, consider: what are the risks of not getting involved?

“Developmental Steps” in Becoming a Leader and Advocate

“Developmental readiness” is something that we learn to identify in children – and it can also apply to your development as a leader. Of course, you may still be feeling, “I don't think I could ever be a leader or an advocate.” But each of us comes in somewhere on the scale of readiness for leadership, and each of us has somewhere further we can go. Your work as a leader and advocate will probably begin wherever you feel that change will

affect you most personally, or wherever you feel you will be most effective. Then, as your comfort level grows and you experience some successes, your path will lead to taking the next steps.

The following activity – from Margie Carter and Deb Curtis's book, *Training Teachers: A Harvest of Theory and Practice* (1994), and adapted by Philadelphia trainer and activist Gerri DiLisi – may help you break through some of your own barriers and reflect on what you are ready (and not ready) to do next.

Activity**The Developmental Stages of Activists: Place Yourself on the Continuum**

Working with young children requires that we think developmentally, recognizing their stages and milestones. We must learn to do this for ourselves as adults as well. Look over the different developmental continuums here, and for each one, choose the item that is closest to your developmental stage for that activity. (Or, if working in a group, write down the five stages on five large sheets of paper, and ask people to stand next to the stage that matches their developmental level.)

Developmental Markers for Housekeeping

1. I can keep a path cleared from one room to the next.
2. I can keep common areas neat (e.g. living room, bathroom, kitchen).
3. I can keep common areas both neat and clean.
4. I can keep an entire house neat and clean.
5. My entire house/apartment/office could be featured on the cover of Dream Palaces.

Developmental Markers for Swimming

1. I can dangle my toes in the water.
2. I can submerge my entire body, including my face, in the water.
3. I can float or tread water for an extended period.
4. I can perform particular strokes and swim laps in the pool.
5. I can swim regularly for exercise and pleasure.

Developmental Markers for Using a Computer

1. I can find the switch and turn it on.
2. I can type with two fingers and print it out.
3. I can use several software programs.
4. I can write software programs and applications for the PC.
5. I can design web pages and set up such things as photo albums, e-commerce and chat rooms.

As you explore these different continuums, notice how you – or other people – are at different developmental stages in different arenas. In a group: If you are at the first stage for a particular activity, is there something you would like to ask the person at the other end of this continuum? If you are at the fifth stage, what advice would you offer the others? If you are in the middle, can you remember when you were at the beginning? What helped you move forward and develop?

Next, talk as a group about what some of the markers or stages would be for becoming a child care leader and advocate, and try to place them in developmental order. (For ideas, you may want to check the activity below, a “to do” list for child care advocates.)

The longer we work with young children – and with other adults – the clearer it becomes that learning is a lifelong activity. So is the process of trying to create change in ourselves, our workplaces, our communities, and our profession. We hope that Working for Quality Child Care has offered you food for thought as you

continue your path in the child care field – knowing that whatever stage of development you are in, there is always somewhere further for you to go. In this spirit, we leave you with one final activity, a checklist that invites you to choose the next steps on your journey as a child care professional, advocate, and leader.

I didn't find out I was a leader until I got into the child care business. People saw things in me that I didn't, and they stayed on me, telling me, 'You can do this – you have to use the gifts that have been given to you – you won't know how far you can go until you try them out.' Now, I help other providers develop their abilities as leaders, too.

— Annette Wilburn, family child care provider, Milwaukee, Wis.

Make a Commitment Today: A Child Care Advocacy "To Do" List

Make a Commitment Today: A Child Care Advocacy "To Do" List. What are you willing to do to increase your professionalism, advocacy and leadership skills? Consider the following list and check the items where you are willing to take action. After reviewing the items you've checked, you may want to prioritize your list.

I will:

- Join the Worthy Wage Network – a national advocacy network in support of a public investment to improve child care jobs – and encourage at least two other colleagues to join.
- Join a professional organization, support group, child care union, and/or a local worthy wage campaign to make my voice for better child care louder.
- Respond to 'Action Alerts' put out by the Network or my professional affiliations.
- Speak out to friends, colleagues, family, and others about the link between wages and working conditions and the quality of care that children receive.
- Object to all references to my work as 'babysitting' or other statements that undervalue my work.
- Acknowledge my own leadership qualities.
- Write a letter to a legislator or other policy maker.
- Visit a legislator or other policy maker.
- Write a letter to the editor of my local newspaper in response to a child care story.
- Be an informed voter, and vote.
- Provide ongoing parent education on the link between quality child care and good child care jobs.
- Create opportunities for parents to act (for example: to make calls, write letters, or give testimony), and invite them to join the Worthy Wage Network.

- Continue my own education to build advocacy and leadership skills.
- Start or maintain a portfolio that reflects my accomplishments and professional growth.
- Set goals to improve my wages and work environment, using the Model Work Standards as a guide.
- Mentor or be a 'buddy' to another child care teacher or provider.
- Be a guest speaker/presenter to a class, community meeting, parent group, or early childhood conference on worthy wages and quality child care.
- Invite an elected official or community/business leader to visit my program to show child care in action and discuss the challenges I face.

In concert with others (my co-workers, colleagues, AEYC affiliate, support group, or other professional organizations), I will:

- Celebrate the accomplishments of our work.
- Help plan an event that brings child care issues into public focus. For example, I could volunteer for the planning committee, help design flyers, work on mailings, make calls, get donations, work on a media strategy, etc.
- Engage in building the Worthy Wage Network in my community.
- Ask, or accept an invitation, to be part of a community child care advisory or planning group.
- Include an article or column in my group or my program's newsletter addressing issues of the child care work environment and the child care staffing crisis.
- Participate in developing an action plan to improve my work environment.
- Keep a written record of the impact of the child care staffing crisis on our work, document our progress, broadcast 'good news,' and celebrate successes in improving work environments and reducing turnover in my program and in my community.

Advocacy at Work: Providers Taking Action (PTA), Milwaukee, Wisconsin

(as told by Annette Wilburn, family child care provider)

In 1997, our state began implementing a welfare reform program called Wisconsin Works, or "W-2." While former welfare recipients were being required to go to work, and to find care for their children, family child care providers in Milwaukee were in an equally intense struggle to survive. Many of us were not getting paid for the care we were providing, and there were numerous programs either closing down or facing the danger of closing. W-2 agencies were swamped with paperwork, and they were so backed up that providers were taking children in hopes that the funding would be approved. Sometimes it was, but sometimes it wasn't.

For a provider like myself, the routine every two weeks became dragging our day care children with us, or finding a helper to cover for us, while we physically took in our attendance reports to the W-2 agency in hopes of getting paid on time. What we most often found there was a box so full of reports that they were falling onto the floor. We could only hope that ours was a lucky one that didn't get lost in the shuffle. Social workers were rarely available to take our calls. There was no system or structure for providers to express our opinions about this situation.

PTA (Providers Taking Action), a support group of mostly African American

providers in inner-city Milwaukee, decided to take the matter into our own hands. We began by making phone calls – and more phone calls – to county supervisors. We invited some key decision-makers to meet with us, and our demand was: "No more decisions if we don't have representation!" They listened, and they responded. Two of us – myself and Annisa Walid – attended countless meetings, trying to help stave off a county-wide child care crisis.

Today, there is no longer an overflowing "box." The state of Wisconsin has taken over the payment system, and as long as our attendance reports are in on time, our payments don't come late. Most of us still deliver our reports in person to the W-2 office – but now, someone is there to receive them in person, and providers with computers can also send them in online. Social workers hold regular office hours to attend to our phone calls. Most importantly, Milwaukee County has started listening to the voices of family child care providers, and taking us seriously for the role we play in promoting high-quality child care.

Since that time, I have continued my work with the Milwaukee County Planning Council. I recall very well how it was when I first attended those meetings. It took me awhile to be willing to speak up. I would just take notes and bring them back to the support group; then I'd write up their thoughts and send them in to be added to

the official minutes. But I was sitting with people at these meetings who had much more education than me, and I would listen and say to myself, "You know this is wrong!" Finally the spirit just told me, "You've got to let it out," and now I do!

It has helped a lot to know that I have my whole PTA group supporting me, because it takes more than one voice to make the changes we've made. It is so important for providers to be "at the table" – and now we are.

Advocacy at Work: The Child Care Union Project, Seattle, and The United Child Care Union, Philadelphia

In recent years, teachers and providers in Seattle and Philadelphia – two cities with a strong history of “worthy wage” activism – have made impressive strides in organizing community-wide child care unions. In Seattle, teaching staff and 12 centers joined District 925 of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) through the Child Care Union Project (CUP), and have negotiated a group “master contract” with the 12 centers’ management. In Philadelphia, over 200 teachers and providers launched the United Child Care Union in May 1999, chartered by the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees/AFSCME and containing two divisions: the center-based United Child Care Professionals and the family child care-based United Child Care Providers.

While some Head Start and school district or municipal child care employees have organized in New York, Los Angeles and other areas, community-wide child care organizing is still rare – and with only about five percent of the child care workforce belonging to a union, it presents formidable challenges. Thus far, the Child Care Employees Union (Locals 1596 and 2322 of the UAW) is the most notable success, recruiting over 1,000 members in Massachusetts since 1980.

Most child care teachers and providers work in small and often isolated workplaces, making them hard to reach and

organize. And since parent fees alone can’t cover the costs of high-quality care and decent pay, workplace bargaining has to be combined with advocacy for more public and private child care funds. Child care workers also have the same range of questions about unions that most non-organized workers do: Will they really represent me and understand my issues? How democratic is this particular union? How will I benefit? Will it add tension to my workplace instead of improving it?

Long-time Worthy Wager Barb Wiley, an organizer for Seattle’s project, reported “a very supportive tone” among teachers and management at the centers as they worked toward a contract. “We’ve aimed for good-faith, win-win bargaining. The Model Work Standards developed by CCW have been an excellent guide, and we wanted to make some of those standards a legally binding reality. Most of the directors were excited to be part of this too,” she added. “Many had been working on wage and quality issues for years, and they saw this as a positive, concrete way to make improvements.” Participants in the union drive also became active in two successful legislative efforts to put more public funds into child care wages – a King County compensation bill, and an Early Childhood Wage and Career Ladder for Washington state.

As in Seattle, Philadelphia’s United Child Care Union has aimed to create a center directors and owners’ association to recognize the union and negotiate a master agreement with teaching staff. “We are proud of the work we do,” said UCCU organizer and former child care teacher Vicki Milhouse. “But quality care should translate into quality salaries.” Provider Marge Hauptman added, “Family child care is a wonderful occupation – it just needs to be given the dignity it deserves. We desperately need a union.” Members see affiliation with AFSCME as a way to gain a more powerful voice in local and state government and in Washington, D.C. Home-based providers hope union support can

also help them develop affordable health insurance, shared substitute pools, bulk purchasing and other improvements.

“I think that working with unions is an excellent opportunity,” said Barb Wiley of Seattle. “And I think that for Worthy Wage groups and other community organizations thinking about unions, it’s also good to maintain your independence, go in with your eyes open, and be clear about your own strengths, resources and power. We’re having successes with the union and we’re happy we’ve done it – and we still really need to have a Worthy Wage movement that can keep organizing for all of us as a united workforce, whether we’re union members or not.”

Advocacy Organizations for Child Care Teachers and Providers

The **Center for the Child Care Workforce** is a nonprofit resource, education and advocacy organization committed to improving child care quality by upgrading the compensation, working conditions and training of child care teachers and family child care providers. Our goal is to create a unified and powerful voice for the child care workforce. We coordinate the Worthy Wage Network, a broad-based mobilization of teachers, providers, directors, parents, and allies of all kinds who join us in calling for a major investment of public funds that is directly targeted to improving child care jobs. We also offer an annual Summer Institute called "Leaders in Action for Worthy Wages;" leadership and community organizing training through our Leadership Empowerment Action Project (LEAP); and community-based training on Taking On Turnover. Contact: CCW, 733 15th St., N.W., Suite 1037, Washington, DC 20005-2112; (202) 737-7700 or (800) UR-WORTHY; e-mail: ccw@ccw.org; Web site: www.ccw.org.

The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** offers professional development opportunities to early childhood educators designed to improve the quality of services to children from birth through age 8. NAEYC's current network of 90,000 members in 450 Affiliate Groups was founded in 1926. NAEYC administers a national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools. Its Professional

Development Institute and its Quality, Compensation and Affordability groups focus on improving career options in the field and the quality of services. It publishes *Young Children*, a bimonthly magazine focused on classroom practice, teacher training and advocacy. Contact: NAEYC, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426, (800) 424-2460; Web site: www.naeyc.org.

The **National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)** is a membership organization for family child care providers. NAFCC offers insurance for its members and operates a national accreditation project. It also provides members with a newsletter and other educational materials. Contact: NAFCC, 525 S.W. Fifth St., Suite A, Des Moines, IA 50309; (515) 282-8192; Web site: www.nafcc.org.

The **National School Age Care Alliance (NSACA)** is a membership organization composed of state coalitions of school-age child care staff, as well as individual staff who are new to the field and seek affiliation with a professional organization. Basic membership benefits include a newsletter, a discount to the annual national school-age child care conference, and access to current information about school-age care, including accreditation. Contact: NSACA, 1137 Washington St., Boston, MA 02124; (617) 298-5012; Web site: www.nsaca.org.

The **National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)** is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the

quality of life for African American children and youth on the national and local levels. Founded in 1970, NBCDI provides direct services to African American children and youth, monitors public policy issues, and educates the public through reports, newsletters and conferences. Contact: National Black Child Development Institute, Inc., 1101 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 387-1281; Web site: www.nbcdi.org.

The **National Latino Children's Agenda** is implemented by leaders from many organizations that are working together to ensure the health and complete development of Latino children. The group works to report on the crisis of Latino children, and to build support for policies that lead to high-quality programs that are respectful of Latino cultural values and language. Contact: National Latino Children's Agenda, 320 El Paso, San Antonio, TX 78207, (210) 228-9997; Web site: www.ncli.org.

Labor Unions. Nationally, the unions that have been most active and successful in organizing child care workers are AFSCME (the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), the NEA (National Education Association), SEIU (Service Employees International Union), and the UAW (United Auto, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America). Note that this is not a comprehensive list. Find out more about labor

organizing and collective bargaining, and their possible role in your workplace or community, by contacting these unions at the following locations.

- AFSCME: 1625 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; (202) 429-1000; Web site: www.afscme.org.
- NEA: 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; (202) 833-4000; Web site: www.nea.org.
- SEIU: 1313 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005; (202) 898-3200; Web site: www.seiu.org.
- UAW: 8000 East Jefferson, Detroit, MI 48214; (313) 926-5000 or (800) 2GET-UAW; Web site: www.uaw.org.

Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives strives to improve the quality of care and education for young children by creating viable career development systems for practitioners. The activities of the Center are designed to help states and localities bring about systematic change to replace the fragmented systems of training that now exist. The Center also offers seminars in child care administration, as well as assistance in director credentialing, and has created the Taking the Lead project for early childhood leadership development. Contact: Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives, 200 The Riverway, Boston, MA 02215, (617) 879-2211 Web site: www.ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/ccdece/ccdece.html.

The Children's Defense Fund seeks to "provide a strong, effective voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves." Contact: Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street N.W., Washington, DC 20001; (202) 628-8787; www.childrensdefense.org. CDF also has regional and affiliate offices in California, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) is a national network of community-based child care resource and referral agencies; "a common ground where families, child care providers and communities can share information about quality child care." Contact: NACCRRA, 1319 F Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20004-1106; (202) 393-5501; Web site, www.naccrra.net.

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Appendix



Model Work Standards for Family Child Care Programs and Child Care Centers: The Essential Elements

As outlined below, the Model Work Standards for family child care programs are divided into five sections:

- Model Contracts and Program Policies (including provider income, provider benefits, hours of work, and provider-parent communication)
- Professional Development
- The Family Child Care Home as a Work Environment
- The Provider as Employer
- Community Support for Creating Better Child Care Jobs.

The Model Work Standards for child care centers and school-age programs are divided into 13 sections:

- Wages
- Benefits
- Job Descriptions and Evaluations

- Hiring and Promotions
- Termination, Suspension, Severance and Grievance Procedures
- Classroom Assignments, Hours of Work, and Planning Time
- Communication, Team Building and Staff Meetings
- Decision Making and Problem Solving
- Professional Development
- Professional Support
- Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Physical Setting.

The following discussions, organized separately for family child care and child care centers, outline the standards which we have marked as essential. (For the complete set of standards, please see the original Model Work Standards publications from CCW.) We have labeled these standards as essential because we believe they are a necessary part of providing a good adult work environment. These are standards which either: a) directly affect the quality of care that children receive, as shown by current research, or b) were repeatedly stressed by the teachers, directors and providers who helped us develop the standards.

Some standards also indicate two possible levels of quality: a high-quality level and a striving level. For many child care programs, meeting a standard at the “striving” level would mean major progress in improving the work environment, while other programs may have the ability and resources to go further.

The Family Child Care Work Environment

At first glance, you may look at the Model Work Standards and say, “This is impossible,” or “I must not be doing things right,” or “I’ll never get there.” But the intention behind these standards is not to compare one provider to another – and certainly not to make you feel guilty or inadequate! The standards are meant to represent a vision that we can all strive towards. Every provider has a starting place, a point at which she or he can say, “I can improve this” – and that’s where change begins.

Strengths and Challenges of Family Child Care as a Profession

Given the current financing of child care in our country, family child care providers – even more than center-based teachers – are aware on a daily basis that their livelihood depends on the very personal exchange of money from parents’ hands to their own. But this personal exchange, which is a great strength of family child care, can also be an obstacle in promoting a high-quality work environment.

Most providers are self-employed business people who are able to make their own decisions about their work environment through contracts and program policies. When you need to assert your right to an income that sustains your family, there is no one else that you need to be accountable to. But because family child care operates on such a small human scale, relationships with families tend to be intimate. It can be very difficult to charge the true value of your service when there is no “buffer” between your needs and the needs of the families you serve. In a larger child care program, the teacher providing the care is rarely the one that collects the fees; this role is played by an administrator or book-keeper who is more detached from the relationship.

As a small business, family child care also requires you to perform a multitude of tasks on your own – everything from marketing the program and recruiting clients, to caring for a mixed age group of children, cooking, cleaning, shopping for food and supplies, record-keeping and more. And family child care programs do not always have access to the resources that are available to child care centers. In order to stay in business, providers sometimes sacrifice quality by enrolling the maximum number of children, working long hours, failing to provide enough toys and materials, or not taking care of their own needs

for such things as health insurance, vacation time, and retirement savings.

The Model Work Standards can serve as guidelines for setting your fees, creating or improving your contract with parents, and doing your financial planning. They are a reminder that you can take charge of your own work environment. And as a self-employed business person, you may have found other unique ways to manage your financial, professional, family and health needs that we have not thought of in developing this book. The Model Work Standards are a tool to help you improve upon what you already have – but no single provider can do it alone. The standards can also help us call for a greater investment of public funds to support our nation's child care system.

Model Contracts and Program Policies

Most family child care providers find it helpful – if not essential! – to have a written family child care contract or parent-provider agreement that is read and signed by every family using the program. The discussion here will focus on items related to your work environment that you may want to include in your contract. Other items that you would include in your agreement with parents, addressing the learning environment for children or other aspects of the program, can be found in the standards for family child care accreditation.

Provider Income

What is a fair and decent income for a family child care provider? Coming up with a dollar amount, for the purpose of defining a good family child care job, is a complicated matter. Many providers speak of the personal benefits of providing family child care – such as being able to work at home, staying at home with their children, and saving on their children's child care costs. But while these advantages and possible cost-savings are very important for many providers and their families, they do not outweigh the basic need and right for a working person to make a living wage. In many cases, the personal benefits of working in family child care do not make up for the poor pay that is typical in this profession.

Currently, a provider's income is the sum total of fees collected directly from families, plus any reimbursements she may receive for families whose child care is subsidized by government or community agencies, and/or reimbursements from the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Net income, which the provider relies on to support herself and her family, includes these sources of income, minus business-related expenses. Some business-related expenses are *direct* (such as insurance costs, licensing fees, and the purchase of toys and equipment), and others are *indirect* expenses related to working in your home (such as utility costs which are shared by the occupants of the home).

According to a study of the economics of family child care (Modigliani et al., 1994), over half of all U.S. providers earn a net income lower than the federally-established poverty level. Until we achieve the investment of public funds in our child care system that we truly need to fully meet the Model Work Standards, providers depend largely on a combination of strategies to take gradual steps toward improving their jobs: raising the fees for their service, building community support and resources to offset some of the expenses involved in providing high-quality care, and engaging in fundraising.

The following "essential" policies can also help guarantee that your family child care program will move toward securing you a livable income.

1. The provider receives an annual cost-of-living increase, as reflected in increased fees. In addition, until provider compensation reaches a level that is comparable to that of others in the community with similar levels of education, experience and responsibility, there is an additional annual fee increase. (High-Quality Level.)

The provider receives an annual cost-of-living increase, as reflected in increased fees. (Striving Level.)

2. The provider's income is guaranteed by a written provider-parent contract, which stipulates that:
 - all contracted hours are paid for in full, regardless of a child's attendance, and
 - fees are paid in full when the program has an unexpected closure due to provider

illness or family emergency. A maximum number of paid days for such closures may be established in the contract.

3. Financial records, including an operating budget, are used to track the program's stability.
4. The program is covered by insurance policies, including program liability insurance, homeowners insurance, and disability insurance for the provider, and vehicle insurance if the program sometimes transports children. (*Note: Many providers may find it difficult to obtain disability insurance, but we consider it essential to have the other forms of insurance listed here.*)

Provider Benefits

5. The provider receives one paid sick/personal day per month, which can be taken to care for sick family members as well. Up to ten days can be carried into the next year. (High-Quality Level.)

The provider receives a minimum of five paid sick/personal days per year, which can be taken to care for sick family members as well. One year's worth of sick/personal leave may be carried over from one year to the next. (Striving Level.)

6. The provider receives payment for eight to ten holidays per year, which are paid in full by families whose contracted hours fall on these days. When holidays fall on a weekend, the day before or after is taken as the paid holiday. (High-Quality Level.)

The provider receives payment for seven holidays per year, which are paid in full by families whose contracted hours fall on these days. (Striving Level.)

Note: Typical paid holidays include New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Alternatively, you might substitute or add holidays based on your own religious or cultural traditions.

7. The provider earns ten days of paid vacation per year. This number increases to 15 days for five years or more. Unpaid vacation leave may be negotiated with parents as specified in the contract. (High-Quality Level.)

The provider earns five days of paid vacation per year during the first two years of providing care. In subsequent years, this number increases to ten days. Unpaid vacation leave may be negotiated with parents in the contract. (Striving Level.)

Note: Rather than charging parents for care during the provider's vacation, a "vacation fee" may be included in the regular weekly or monthly fee, as long as parents clearly understand the purpose of this additional charge.

8. The provider receives three paid days per year to enhance her professional development. (High-Quality Level.)

The provider receives two paid days per year to enhance her professional development. (Striving Level.)

Hours of Work

9. In calculating hours worked, for the purpose of setting fees, the provider includes time for planning, preparation, cleaning, shopping, record-keeping, and conversing with enrolled or prospective parents.

Provider-Parent Communication

10. The provider communicates regularly with parents to ensure that they are informed about new procedures, policies and events, and to build a partnership with them for the care and education of their child. This can take many forms, including bulletin boards, newsletters, daily activity reports, journals, phone conversations, parent-provider conferences, an "open door" visitation policy, parent volunteer opportunities, pot-lucks and other social activities, and fundraising projects.

Professional Development

Your work environment as a family child care provider is enhanced when you approach your job with confidence in your skills, and with knowledge of child development and small business management. As in all professions, a family child care provider's education deserves to be viewed as a lifelong process. But professional development for providers also poses unique barriers, some of which are addressed below, in the section called "Community Support for Creating Better Family Child Care Jobs."

11. The provider has received education in child development and in small business management, including the special aspects of running a family child care business.
12. The provider has received training in child care health and safety issues, including those areas that affect her own well-being, and receives updated training as needed. This includes training on:
 - safe practices for lifting children and heavy objects, in order to prevent back and knee injuries
 - the management of infectious diseases and universal precautions for blood-borne pathogens
 - nutrition and safe food-handling practices
 - stress management and other issues related to the emotional and mental well-being of the provider and children.
13. The provider participates in continuing education. Her professional development time may be used for state-mandated training, college classes, professional conferences, observation time in other child care programs, and/or release time for child care advocacy activities.

14. The provider participates in ongoing anti-bias/anti-racism training as part of her professional development activity, with a focus on working with both adults and children.
15. The provider has peer support through either an informal network of providers or a more formal family child care support group, in order to engage in problem-solving with colleagues and to benefit from their experiences and encouragement.

The Family Child Care Home as a Work Environment

To allow you to do your best work, the physical setting of the child care program must nurture not only the children but also you as a provider. Because your work environment is also your home, you might assume when designing and equipping the space for child care that the space already meets your own needs, when in fact it does not. Typically, a child care environment is evaluated from the perspective of the children, not the provider.

To evaluate your environment from your perspective, consider for example whether you have comfortable adult-sized furniture for yourself; whether you have a comfortable desk or office space for doing your business-related work; whether you have a comfortable place to meet with parents; and whether you have enough space in the child care program to store your own materials and belongings. Since licensing regulations are meant to guarantee that a family child care space is safe, and since they are a requirement in most states for operating a family child care program, the following standard is an essential one.

16. The provider follows applicable state and local regulations regarding the physical space.

The Family Child Care Provider as an Employer

More and more providers are regularly employing others in their child care business, often as a way to share the workload, to ensure individual attention for each child every day, to serve a larger group of children, or to relieve the isolation that some providers feel when working alone. Serving a larger group may also be a strategy for increasing your income as a provider, but this must not come at the expense of your or your employee's well-being. We suggest that you use the "Child Care Center Work Environment" section

of this chapter, as well as the center-based Model Work Standards book (CCW, second edition, 1999), as resources for establishing a good work environment for employees. The following are some standards from that book.

17. Employees are provided a written job description that is accurate and specific. Any changes in the job description are discussed with the employee before they are put into effect.
18. Employees are evaluated at least once a year on their job performance, and have an opportunity to evaluate themselves and their employer in the process. The evaluation procedure is discussed with the employee at the time of hire.
19. An employment agreement identifies a fair wage that reflects the employee's education, experience and job responsibilities.
20. Employees are encouraged to participate in ongoing educational opportunities.
21. A grievance procedure is included in the employment agreement and is reviewed with the employee at the time of hire.
22. The employment agreement includes policies and procedures about termination. Employees are not discharged without just cause, and whenever possible, a termination occurs only after the provider and employee have attempted to resolve the conflict.
23. An employee is informed of grounds for immediate dismissal upon employment. These include the display of physical violence to children, adults or property; a guilty verdict or substantiated state investigation of child abuse or neglect; evidence of alcohol and/or other drug abuse; misuse of funds; falsification of documents; and violation of confidentiality requirements.
24. The provider offers the employee helpful, consistent and constructive feedback on job performance.
25. Employees are involved in decision-making as it directly affects their day-to-day practice, and are engaged in setting program goals, measuring progress, and solving problems.
26. The provider accepts responsibility for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for employees.
27. The provider meets all state requirements regarding the hiring of employees, such as staff health reports, criminal records background checks, and documentation of education.
28. The provider assumes all legal responsibilities for the hiring of employees, such as paying the employer's share of social security and worker's compensation, as well as federal and state unemployment taxes. The provider is also aware of applicable state and federal labor laws; for example, by federal law, all hours worked over 40 hours per week must be paid at the overtime rate of time and a half.
29. The family child care program honors, respects, and affirms the culture and traditions of all employees of the program and all families served.
30. Employees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, handicap, marital status, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry, physical appearance, income level or source of income, student status, sexual preference, union activity, or criminal record except as required by licensing regulations.

Community Support for Creating Better Family Child Care Jobs

Resources and support within a community can contribute tremendously to the quality of your family child care job. Unfortunately, what communities have to offer varies a great deal in terms of quantity, quality, and accessibility to providers. Quantity of services, in fact, may not be the main issue: providers working in rural areas may have fewer community resources, but ones that are well-targeted and useful, while providers in a large city may be surrounded with resources that they know nothing about. There is potential to do more and to do better in both cases. But since you as a provider cannot necessari-

ly control what (if any) community support is available to you, no types of support are listed here as being "essential." Knowledge of the possibilities, however, can influence you as an advocate for better child care jobs. Possible types of community support for creating better family child care jobs include:

- an available pool of substitute providers, allowing the provider to take sick, personal or vacation leave
- technical assistance and consultation on such issues as program and business management, applying for loans or grants, and designing family child care environments
- a resource and referral (R&R) agency that help providers maintain their desired enrollment
- access to appropriate, affordable and relevant training and education
- provider support groups, associations or other networks
- opportunities to develop leadership and advocacy skills.

The Child Care Center Work Environment

The Model Work Standards describe a high-quality work environment. Your center may have achieved many of the standards, and others may seem within your grasp. But there are likely to be some that are impossible to reach within the current scope of your program. In that case, use these guidelines to reflect on your work environment and to set goals for improvements. The Model Work Standards can help you identify the gap between your current job situation and an excellent, high-quality child care work environment. These standards, especially those that require greater financial resources, are included not to frustrate you but to remind ourselves and others of our vision of a good child care job, our goals for change, and the need for a greater investment of public funds in our child care system.

Wages

1. Salary scales for all positions are published and readily available to all employees.
2. Salary scales identify different levels of pay for different levels of education.
3. Until salaries reach target levels, staff minimally receive an annual 5% raise in wages, in addition to a cost-of-living increase. (High-quality Level.)

Staff receive cost of living increases annually. (Striving Level.)

4. Until salaries reach target levels, salary scales are reviewed annually and revised when additional funds become available from parent fee increases, reimbursement or other subsidy rate increases, or other sources.
5. As required by federal law, all work by child care teaching staff that is over 40 hours per week is paid at the overtime rate of time and a half.

Benefits

6. Full-time employees receive 100% employer-paid health insurance, including prescription coverage. Health insurance for part-time employees is pro-rated. (High-quality Level.)

Full-time employees receive 75% employer-paid health insurance. Health insurance for part-time employees is pro-rated. (Striving Level.)

7. Staff receive at least 15 paid sick/personal days per year, which can be taken to care for sick family members as well. (High-quality Level.)

Staff receive at least 12 paid sick/personal days per year, which can be taken to care for sick family members as well. (Striving Level.)

8. A minimum of 11 holidays are paid each year. Staff and employer together determine days closed for holidays. When holidays fall on a weekend, the day before or after is the paid holiday. (High-quality Level.)

A minimum of 8 holidays are paid each year. Staff and employer together determine days closed for holidays. When holidays fall on a weekend, the day before or after is the paid holiday. (Striving Level.)

9. During the first year of employment, employees accrue vacation time of at least 10 days per year. During years two through four, this increases to at least 15 days per year. After five years, this increases to 20 days per year. (High-quality Level.)

During the first year of employment, employees accrue vacation time of at least 5 days per year. During years two through four, this increases to at least 10 days per year. After five years, this increases to 15 days per year. (Striving Level.)

Job Descriptions and Evaluations

10. Staff members are provided a copy of their written job description, and of evaluation procedures and forms, before they begin employment.
11. The evaluation process includes: 1) a self-evaluation completed by the employee, 2) a written evaluation by the supervisor, 3) a peer or team evaluation, and 4) a meeting between the employee and the supervisor to discuss the evaluation.

Hiring and Promotions

12. Hiring policies focus on developing opportunities for current employees to gain promotions and assume leadership positions within the program.

(Note: Ideally, teaching staff are also involved in the interviewing and decision-making process whenever new teachers are hired.)

Termination, Suspension, Severance and Grievance Procedures

13. Employees are not discharged without just cause.
14. No discharge for unsatisfactory job performance takes place until the employee has been warned of unsatisfactory performance in writing and has been given reasonable time to improve (except under circumstances as described below). Written notice of discharge, stating reasons for dismissal, is given to the employee.

Grounds for immediate dismissal include: the display of physical violence harmful to children or adults or property, a guilty verdict or substantiated state investigation of child abuse or neglect, evidence of alcohol and/or other drug abuse, misuse of funds, falsification of documents, and violation of confidentiality requirements.

15. Grievance procedures are in writing and are available to all employees.

Classroom Assignments, Hours of Work, and Planning Time

16. Classroom assignments are stable and are not changed in response to daily fluctuations in child enrollments. No arbitrary or capricious changes occur.
17. When work schedules must be changed temporarily, teaching staff input is considered.
18. When work schedules must be changed permanently, a minimum of two weeks' notice is given.

Communication, Team Building, and Staff Meetings

19. There is close communication between teaching staff, and administrative and supervisory staff, as a way of showing respect for the valuable work of child care.

20. An effective communication system ensures that everyone on staff is informed about new procedures, policies and events. Such a communication system respects the various learning styles of staff – using both visual and verbal messages, and as appropriate, “walking people through” any new procedures.
21. Written policies and procedures for the program are provided to employees at the time of hire, including but not limited to:
- job descriptions,
 - personnel policies,
 - salary/benefit schedules,
 - staff disciplinary policies,
 - program policies,
 - expectation for staff involvement in parent meetings, conferences, fundraising events and other activities,
 - health policies for both children and staff.
22. Proposals for changing policies and procedures are circulated in writing to all staff, and a sufficient period is allowed for meaningful staff input and response before changes are made.
23. Paid staff meetings, including all staff, are held at least once per month. The primary purposes of staff meetings are for improving program quality, enhancing staff communication, and promoting professional development of staff. Staff meetings may also be used for announcements, reminders and general issues of efficient program operation.

Decision Making and Problem Solving

24. Teaching staff make decisions regarding daily activities, room arrangements and other matters that affect their day-to-day practice.
25. Staff are engaged in setting program goals, identifying priorities to meet the goals, and measuring progress.
26. The child care program’s philosophy and vision for the future are shared by staff and reviewed at least once a year.

Professional Development

27. Staff receive open, honest and regular feedback about their work, based on routine classroom observation.
28. All information about employees is kept confidential.
29. Staff development and training plans are determined through a mutual evaluation process between the staff member and the supervisor. Training choices reflect the learning styles and interests of individual staff members.
30. In addition to planning and staff meeting time, staff have a minimum of forty (40) hours of paid professional time each year. (High-quality Level.)
- In addition to planning and staff meeting time, staff have a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours of paid professional time each year. (Striving Level.)
31. Increases in education are rewarded with increases in compensation.

Professional Support

32. The program consistently maintains sufficient staff for manageable group sizes and adult/child ratios that ensure individual attention for each child every day.
33. Trained substitutes or floater teachers are available and arranged by the program administration for all staff leave time, including sick, vacation, personal and professional leave.

Diversity

34. All staff participate in anti-bias/anti-racist training annually as part of their professional development, with a focus on working with adults as well as children.
35. The program honors, respects, and affirms all staff members. Fulfillment of this goal is evaluated regularly with staff input.
36. Program recruitment, retention and promotion policies and practices reflect a commitment to staff diversity.
37. Employees are not discriminated against based on race, color, age, religion, sex, handicap, marital status, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry, physical appearance, income level or source of income, student status, sexual preference, union activity or criminal record except as required by licensing regulations.
38. Reasonable accommodations are made for staff with special needs as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Health and Safety

39. The program accepts responsibility for providing a safe and healthy working environment for employees.

40. Regularly used equipment (e.g. diapering tables) and storage areas are designed on ergonomic principles – that is, they are at a height and location that promote physical safety and reduce fatigue and strain.
41. Adult-sized chairs, sinks, toilets and work stations are available.
42. Copies of reports resulting from inspection of the workplace by building, health, safety or licensing officials are posted.
43. No retaliatory action is taken against employees who refuse to perform work that is in violation of regulations, after notifying the employer of the violation.

The Physical Setting

44. There is adequate classroom space that is designed with the developmental needs of children in mind. Staff have input into room arrangements and are provided resources, training and support to improve the classroom space.
45. Classrooms have comfortable places for adults to sit and be with children.
46. Staff have a safe place to put personal belongings and a work area for preparation and planning.
47. The physical setting is evaluated periodically for the health and safety needs of employees, and improvements are planned in response to staff needs.

The Legal Impact of Antitrust Laws

According to antitrust laws in the United States, no business may enter into a contract or agreement that has the impact of restraining trade or commerce. “Price fixing” — which covers any agreement between businesses that affects the cost to consumers, including any restrictions on the availability of services — is one of the most commonly known activities seen as restraining trade.

In general, government bodies and “labor” (i.e., non-managerial employees) are exempt from antitrust laws. As a result, the staff of child care centers — or family child care providers’ employees — are permitted to organize and to enter into agreements which could affect their wages and, potentially, the price of child care services for consumers. Likewise, the government can make recommendations, regulations and laws concerning wages and the price of child care.

But individual businesses, such as child care centers and family child care providers, cannot join together to agree to charge a certain rate, pay a certain wage, or maintain certain hours of operation. These activities would constitute price fixing and would violate the antitrust laws. Nothing in the law, however, prohibits an individual provider from making her own independent business decisions.

For-profit and nonprofit businesses, as well as organizations such as the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) or the Worthy Wage Network, which include members other than non-managerial employees, are also subject to antitrust laws. We at CCW could be found in violation of these laws if we recommended certain child care wage scales, or entered into any agreement to charge parents a certain fee, because we could be considered as benefiting financially from such activities.

These Model Work Standards are intended as general recommendations for how family child care providers can improve their income and working conditions. By law, however, CCW cannot recommend or suggest that family child care providers in a community come together and agree to set their fees at a certain rate. We are prohibited from doing so, just as family child care providers and center directors are, and nothing in this publication should be construed as encouraging or endorsing such an activity. The antitrust laws apply regardless of a group’s motives, social justification, or level of ability to actually affect the market with its actions.

Activities aimed at raising public awareness about low wages, poor working conditions and high turnover in child care, however, are protected as “free speech” under the First Amendment. Anyone, therefore, may undertake these activities regardless of their status. (But keep in mind that if the main purpose for the activity is not public education, but raising wages, the activity could be ruled as a violation of the antitrust laws.) In addition, we can all lobby federal, state and local governments to intervene in the market to remedy the child care staffing crisis, for example by urging the government to raise its reimbursement rates to an amount that covers the true cost of providing quality child care.

Good child care for children depends on good child care jobs for adults.

Whether you work in a child care center or a family child care home, *Working for Quality Child Care* is intended to help you understand the occupation you've entered, what you can expect from it, and what you can do to make it better – both as a work environment, and as an opportunity for your own growth and development as a caregiver and leader. The book offers tools for helping you do the best job you can, and it upholds a vision of how we can work together to improve this vitally important profession.

Written for entry-level and experienced teachers and providers alike, *Working for Quality Child Care* covers the following topics and more:

- the current status of the U.S. child care workforce
- the links between quality care for children, and high-quality work environments for teachers and providers
- working relationships, communication, and decision making in the child care workplace
- “model work standards” for center-based and home-based child care programs
- leadership and professional growth, both in the workplace and beyond.

A Trainer's Guide for *Working for Quality Child Care* is also available.



“As a trainer, I look for materials that will help my students interact not only with the ideas in the text but with the ideas of their fellow students. *Working for Quality Child Care* is just such a book. It presents an important knowledge base in an authoritative style, encouraging both reflection and action. I was delighted to find this resource as we began planning a leadership training program in my state. Most works on leadership lean towards the dry and pedantic – but students and trainers alike will find this book a practical, valuable approach to supporting real change and growth in child care practitioners.”

— **Carol Gestwicki**, Early Childhood Instructor, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, N.C.

“The Center for the Child Care Workforce is uniquely responsible for having put the critical issue of caregiver compensation on the map. Thanks to the Center's efforts, policymakers and parents alike now realize that taking care of young children requires taking care of their child care providers.”

— **Deborah Phillips**, Director, Study on Integrating the Science of Early Child Development, Washington, D.C.

“The Center for the Child Care Workforce has been a strong and consistent voice for over a decade to ensure that the public and policy makers understand that adequate compensation must be the cornerstone of any efforts to improve the quality of child care.”

— **Helen Blank**, Director of Child Care, Children's Defense Fund, Washington, D.C.

“If it weren't for the Center for the Child Care Workforce, child care workers would not have a voice at all in the United States.”

— **Margaret Boyer**, Executive Director, Alliance for Early Childhood Professionals, Minneapolis, Minn.

DAN BELLM has co-authored *Taking On Turnover: An Action Guide for Child Care Center Teachers and Directors*, *The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum*, *Making Work Pay in the Child Care Industry*, and many other training resources for the child care profession. He is Senior Writer/Editor for the Center for the Child Care Workforce.

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