

RIGHTS, RAISES, RESPECT

News and Issues for the Early Care and Education Workforce

A monthly electronic newsletter

From the Center for the Child Care Workforce,

A Project of the AFT Educational Foundation (CCW/AFTEF)

November 2003

Please feel free to send this to anyone you think would be interested in supporting our efforts. Visit our web site at www.ccw.org for the latest information on the early care and education workforce, CCW/AFTEF activities and the online order form for our publications. (E-Newsletters you receive from CCW/AFTEF will be sent by ccw@v2.listbox.com.)

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THIS MONTH:

Making the Connection

-CCW/AFTEF Launches New Website

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-Update on Head Start Reauthorization

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-Recent Activities of CCW/AFTEF Staff & Colleagues

Making the Connection

CCW/AFTEF has recently launched our new website, www.ccw.org. On these pages you can review publications and reports, find data about salaries and benefits of early childhood teachers, and discover strategies already underway for addressing recruitment, retention and turnover issues that may be useful in your program or community. The site has also been updated to include information on state-specific initiatives related to the early care and education workforce.

Our website is a resource to learn more about these workforce issues, and an opportunity to remain connected to thousands of early childhood teachers, parents, grandparents, school teachers, union members and allies of all kinds, who recognize that the key to quality early childhood learning is a skilled and well-compensated workforce.

Please visit this new, expanded resource at www.ccw.org.

Federal News

Update on Head Start Reauthorization

In late October, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) approved legislation, sponsored by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), to reauthorize Head Start.

Despite the exclusion of the troublesome provision, earlier passed by the House, that would have allowed eight states full oversight of this federally-funded program, the Senate version still raises concerns. Experts both within and outside of the early care and education field are concerned with key components of the bill – specifically, the evaluation and future funding of the program linked to child outcomes, and the lack of appropriate funding to support increased requirements for teacher education.

While there is agreement that appropriate assessments of children are crucial in the effort to provide high-quality early learning experiences, advocates and educators have called for a review of the outcomes by experts in the field, in order to determine the extent to which they align with research and best practices.

Likewise, nearly everyone agrees that increasing teacher credentials is consistent with the effort to ensure high-quality early care and education for all Head Start children. Without the appropriate funding to support teachers in meeting the new requirements, however, or the necessary compensation package to retain these well-qualified teachers, the bill still falls short of its teacher education goals.

CCW/AFTEF will continue to work with our network of advocates, educators and other experts to ensure that the final bill, which is expected to be voted on early next year, resolves these concerns.

National Parent Website Recognizes the Importance of Highly-Qualified and Well-Compensated Preschool Teachers

Earlier this month, BabyCenter.com, an online parent resource, featured an article on its website, *Signs of a Good Preschool*, as a guide for parents selecting preschool programs for their children.

One of the critical six signs that were highlighted was a “qualified, caring staff.” The article recognizes the importance of highly-qualified and well-compensated teachers in “good preschools.” It indicates that a quality preschool provides appropriate benefits to their staff, such as better salaries, vacation time and health insurance options in order to reduce turnover. The article further recommends that preschool teachers be educated with at least an associate degree and a background in early childhood development.

The bottom line? “If the teachers’ training isn’t up to snuff, if they seem overworked, or if they don’t stick around very long, the preschool isn’t for you.”

This tool for parents was highlighted on MSN’s e-mail page, Hotmail, the world’s largest provider of free web-based e-mail. To view the article, visit <http://www.babycenter.com/refcap/toddler/toddlerchildcare/6054.html>.

State News

Florida Pre-K Plan Calls for Increased Teacher Credentials

The Florida State Board of Education has recommended that the state be required to offer free pre-kindergarten to all four-year olds whose parents choose it. The plan, submitted to the Board by an advisory council, also highlights such program requirements as increased teacher credentials. Specifically, the plan calls for at least two staff members of every Pre-K program to hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or its Florida equivalent. One staff member would be required to have a CDA upon implementation, and the second would have until September 2006 to obtain it. By 2008, at least one staff member in each Pre-K classroom would be required to have an associate degree in early childhood education, and by 2011, a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education. For further information, contact Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings, chair of the UPK advisory council, at toni.jennings@myflorida.com.

Resources

Leadership in Action

Leadership in Action: How Effective Directors Get Things Done, written by Paula Jorde Bloom, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Early Childhood Leadership in Illinois, is a new tool geared to directors of early care and education programs. It assesses directors’ individual leadership styles, and provides practical suggestions for and examples of how directors can use their leadership style to benefit their programs. The guide is the most recent installment of The Director’s Toolbox: A Management Series for Early Childhood Administrators. For a copy of *Leadership in Action* or any of the other guides, contact New Horizons at 847-295-8131, or by e-mail at newhorizons4@comcast.net.

Turnover Begets Turnover

A recent article by CCW founder Marcy Whitebook and Laura Sakai, examines turnover among child care center staff. The study, *“Turnover begets turnover: an examination of job and occupational instability among child care center staff”* highlights the links between the characteristics and stability of a center’s overall teaching staff and the retention of its highly trained teachers. The article can be found in the *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 18 (2003) 273-293.

National Child Care Teacher Awards

The Tylenol & Terri Lynne Lockoff Child Care Foundation's National Child Care Teacher Awards program invites you to nominate an early care and education teacher for Teacher of the Year. Applicants are asked to design an enhancement project for the children in their classroom or home, illustrating the educational, social, and emotional benefits from the project.

To obtain an application or for more information about the program, visit www.childcareabc.org.

New Leaders, New Voices

New Leaders, New Voices is a video by Harvest Resources that shares first-hand stories from home- and center-based providers who have come to see themselves as leaders as a result of the Leadership Empowerment Action Project (LEAP). This video is useful for staff, directors, trainers, and college teachers. LEAP was developed by CCW to help address staff turnover and strengthen the voices of teachers and providers as leaders in the field.

To obtain a copy, visit <http://www.ecetrainers.com/videos.html>.

Corrections/Clarifications

Chicago Union Hosts Job Shadowing Event

In last month's *Rights, Raises, Respect*, we highlighted the first of a series of three job shadowing events hosted by SEIU Local 880. Although job shadowing is an event originally created by CCW's Worthy Wage Campaign (WWC), Local 880's efforts are not part of the WWC.

People & Places

In October, CCW/AFTEF staff Marci Young and Dori Mornan attended the annual conference of the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) in New Orleans, LA.

On November 5-8, CCW/AFTEF staffers traveled to Chicago, IL to attend the annual NAEYC Conference. At the conference, CCW/AFTEF hosted a breakfast where we had a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, Worthy Wagers and advocates and to meet new supporters. Thanks to all who attended and helped to make this event a great success. We look forward to continuing these types of networking opportunities throughout the year.

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The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) was founded in 1978 as the Child Care Employee Project, and in 2002 merged with the American Federation of Teachers Educational Foundation (AFTEF). CCW/AFTEF is a nonprofit research, education and advocacy organization committed to improving early care and education quality by upgrading the compensation, working conditions and training of early childhood professionals.