



Center for the
Child Care Workforce

RIGHTS, RAISES, RESPECT
News and Issues for the Early Care and Education Workforce

**From the Center for the Child Care Workforce,
A Project of the AFT Educational Foundation (CCW/AFTEF)**

Summer 2004

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MAKING THE CONNECTION

Worthy Wagers Gather for another Successful Institute!

Late last month, worthy wage advocates from Washington State to Rhode Island gathered in Philadelphia, PA for the Leaders in Action Summer Institute.

Center teachers, assistant teachers, directors, family child care providers, advocates, union representatives and others gathered for four days to engage in intensive, hands-on education and training such as the Leadership Empowerment Action Project (LEAP) and cultural diversity workshops. In addition, several sessions and workshops were held on the major issues facing the early care and education field including access to health insurance, compensation strategies and the role of the labor movement in advancing improvements in the field.

Participants enjoyed formal and informal opportunities to learn from each other and work to build stronger connections and stronger voices in the fight for better jobs for themselves and colleagues in the early care and education field.

Volunteer Worthy Wage advocates have successfully continued the tradition initiated years ago by CCW. Volunteers have once again agreed to take on the challenge again next year when the Institute will be held in North Carolina.

If you'd like to help organize next years Institute or would like more information about how you can participate, contact Rosemarie Vardell at rosemariev@belovedcommunitycenter.org.

FEDERAL NEWS

Teacher Unions Gather for Summer Conventions

This July over 12,000 educators flocked to Washington, D.C. for conventions of their respective union.

From July 2-7, members of the National Education Association (NEA) attended their annual meeting whose theme was, "Team NEA: Uniting the Nation for Great Public Schools." The week's events revolved around the unions goal to, "recommit themselves to ensuring that every child in the country has an opportunity to attend a great public school."

In recognition of its commitment to quality early childhood education, the NEA, presented the Friend of Education Award, the highest award of the meeting, to Marian Wright Edelman, the founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). Since the early 1970's, CDF has lead efforts in advocating for children and families. NEA President Reg Weaver described Edelman as, "a true pioneer in paving the way for many disadvantaged children to receive an equal opportunity in education." Further, NEA delegates amended a policy statement on early childhood education to reinforce the organization's belief that pre-kindergarten teachers should be fully licensed and certified.

For more information on NEA's annual meeting, visit their website at www.nea.org.



Two weeks later, delegates gathered for the bi-annual convention of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) where the issue of quality early childhood education was prevalent throughout the days events. At the opening event, President Sandy Feldman was introduced before her final speech by Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) who commended her for her tireless efforts to improve the quality of education for young children. Dodd introduced his new legislation, Kindergarten Plus, which was a vision of Feldman as a “down payment” to allow disadvantaged young children to attain a level playing field. This bill creates a competitive grant program for States to provide local educational agencies (LEAs) with funds to provide kindergarten to disadvantaged children the summer before and the summer after the traditional school year. To recognize Feldman’s great commitment to young children, the legislation was named in her honor.

Another highlight of the convention was the speech by Senator John Kerry who spoke of his commitment to education and addressed the need to invest in the “front end” rather than, “picking up the costs on the back end.” Kerry said that if he became president, he would lead this country in a direction where they would stop investing, “\$50,000-70,000 a year to house a young person in prison for the rest of their lives,” but rather, “invest \$10,000-\$11,000 a year in Head Start, Early Head Start and early childhood education.”

Further, the AFT passed a resolution to support high-quality, affordable child care. The resolution calls for the AFT to work to secure federal funding and legislation to dramatically increase the supply of quality child care.

In the final day of the convention, Ed McElroy was elected to succeed Sandra Feldman after she announced her resignation as president. In his acceptance speech, McElroy emphasized that the AFT’s policies and priorities during his presidency would be a continuation of those advanced during Feldman’s tenure. Calling his predecessor “a voice of clarity and reason,” he pledged to pursue the important causes Feldman championed.

For more information on the AFT convention visit <http://www.aft.org/convention>.

Federal Legislation Impacting Young Children

Below is a list of federal bills recently introduced relating to young children.

Preparing, Recruiting and Retaining Education Professionals (PREP) Act (S.2335)

Introduced by: Senators Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.)

This measure is designed to improve preschool teaching and expand teacher aid by offering grants to states and partnerships that would develop projects to improve early childhood teacher recruitment and training. The initiative would provide \$500 million a year for activities such as, encouraging recruitment, holding colleges more accountable for preparing early childhood teachers and support scholarship that cover tuition, room and board and other support services.

The Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S. 2706)

Introduced by: Senators Olympia Snow (R-Maine) and Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.)

This bi-partisan bill would create a program to assist kinship caregivers (relatives and grandparents who care for young children) by developing partnerships between them and support groups and programs to help them obtain housing, health insurance and child care.

To review any of these bills visit <http://thomas.loc.gov> and enter the bill number in the search engine.



STATE NEWS

Louisiana Legislature Approves Kindergarten Plus

Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco signed into law a Louisiana Federation of Teachers-sponsored bill to create the nation's second Kindergarten Plus program.

This bill would develop a pilot Kindergarten Plus (K-Plus) program modeled after the program introduced by the AFT, that would provide an extended-year, full-day kindergarten to at-risk students by enabling them to begin kindergarten the summer before they would ordinarily enter. The program will be implemented in 2005-06 and would serve one school in each of the state's eight districts. It would allow for continuation during the 2008-2009 school year based on an evaluation of results by the State Department of Education.

Louisiana is just the second state, behind New Mexico, to create a Kindergarten Plus program.

For more information contact Les Landon of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers at llandon@lft-aft.org.

Governor Bush Vetoes Florida Pre-K Bill

Governor Jeb Bush of Florida vetoed a Pre-K initiative proposed by the state legislature. Though the plan would have provided Pre-K to Florida's 4-year olds, many components of the plan raised concerns for early care and education advocates including teacher-child ratios teacher credentialing requirements. Advocates have expressed their intent to work with the legislature and Governor next year on the plan.

Economic Impact of Child Care in North Carolina

The National Economic Development and Law Center recently released the first ever, "Economic Impact Study on North Carolina Child Care Industry." This study confirmed that North Carolina's child care industry is a significant industry that plays a crucial part of the state's economic development infrastructure.

To access a copy of the executive summary or full report, please go to:

<http://www.ncsmartstart.org/national/nceis04.html>

RESOURCES

New Report Highlights Universal Access

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), a lead research organization in the field of early childhood education, recently released a report that reveals the benefits of prekindergarten for children from all economic backgrounds. The report, "The Universal vs. Targeted Debate: Should the United States Have Preschool for All?" examines the pros and cons of making publicly funded preschool programs available to all children versus only those who are at risk of failure.

The report is available at www.nieer.org.

AACTE Addresses Early Childhood Teacher Quality

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), a leading association of schools, colleges and departments of education released a report which makes the recommendation for all preschool teachers to have a B.A. degree. Further, the report, "The Early



Childhood Challenge: Preparing High Quality Teachers for a Changing Society," calls for salaries of preschool teachers with BA degrees to match the salaries of public elementary, middle and high school teachers. This report reflects a step in the right direction - including the K-12 and higher education communities into the discussion of improving early childhood education.

To view the report visit www.aacte.org.

Present and Future of California CARES

A new paper, "The Present and Future of the CARES Initiative," identifies the strengths and challenges of the CARES (Compensation and Recognition Enhance Stability) initiative and the potential role CARES programs can play in communities planning for and implementing universal preschool. These papers resulted from a series of stakeholder meetings convened by Working for Quality Child Care, A Project of United Way of the Bay Area in 2003-2004.

For more information or to share your feedback, contact Alice Burton at aburton@uwba.org. To view the paper, visit:

http://uwba.org/uw_impact/w4cc/w4qcc_careshist.htm

National Child Care Teacher Awards

Tylenol® and the Terri Lynne Lokoff Child Care Foundation are offering awards of \$1000 to child care teachers throughout the 50 states and Washington, D.C. Applicants are required to design a project that demonstrates educational, social and emotional benefits of children as well and the role of the teacher. For eligibility requirements or to request an application visit www.childcareabc.org. Applications are due on December 3, 2004.

"Rights, Raises, Respect" is made possible with generous support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

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.