



## **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)**

**November 2004**

#### **THIS MONTH:**

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#### **MAKING THE CONNECTION- ADVOCACY & OUTREACH**

##### **The Election is Over- Now What?**

As expected, the 2004 Presidential race, as well as many gubernatorial and congressional elections, was close. This year marked an unprecedented voter turnout with close to 60% of all Americans flocking to the polls on November 2. Hopefully, you were one of those to cast a ballot and whether your candidate won or lost, we applaud your participation in one of your most important civic duties.

Now that the results are in and the winners decided, you may think you can take a break until 2006 when mid-term elections take place. Well, we want to remind you that NOW is when the real work begins.

Remember, elected officials work for you so it is critical for you to stay in touch with them and let them know how they are doing on the issues most important to you.

There are several ways you can connect with your representatives. You can do one or many, but it is important that you STAY IN TOUCH. Here is how:



- Send a letter to recently elected officials. Remind them of the promises they made during the campaign. Educate them about issues that are important to you such as ensuring that early care and professionals have better compensation and access to appropriate resources to improve their education.
- Invite elected officials to your program. Organize a job shadow and give them a mock check for their work to show how undervalued this workforce is.
- Join together with other advocates. There is power in numbers and as seen by close margin in this election, even one individual can make a difference.

## **POLICY & PRACTICE**

### **Stagnant Head Start Budgets Leads to Teacher Lay Offs**

In a survey of their members, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) reports that over the last two years, 18 percent of Head Start grantees have laid off teachers and 27 percent have laid off other non-teaching staff. Other reported cuts to the programs include:

- 12 percent of the programs reduced the number of children served;
- 40 percent cut back hours or calendar year; and
- 52 percent reduced staff training.

For the last three years, Head Start budgets have been stagnant and have not been able to meet the demands of inflation. The NHSA describes the lack of additional funding or legislative action from federal lawmakers on Head Start as “neglect, disdain” and characterize these actions as attempts to “dismantle” the program.

In spite of the mandates to increase teacher qualifications in Head Start programs, the survey reports that more staff cuts are expected during the 2005 fiscal year:

- 23 percent will lay off teachers;
- 50 percent will lay off other staff;
- 46 percent will cut back hours or calendar year; and
- 65 percent will cut training.

CCW/AFTEF will remain involved in the reauthorization of Head Start to ensure that the program is appropriately funded at levels that can support maintaining the workforce. Further, CCW/AFTEF will continue to advocate for funding to support teachers in meeting the new mandates to attain BA degrees.

For more information on the results of the survey, visit NHSA at [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org) or contact them at 703-739-0875.

### **Georgia Provides Record Number of Salary Supplements**

This year, more than 2,300 early care and education providers in 125 Georgia counties will receive salary supplements. The Smart Start Georgia INCENTIVES program will distribute a record \$1.1 million to early care and education providers who meet specific educational criteria and have been working in the same setting for at least one year.

The INCENTIVES program, established in 2001, is a salary supplement program designed to award early care and education providers who seek higher levels of education. More than \$4.5



million has been distributed to over 3,000 early care and education providers since the programs inception. INCENTIVES\$ has been successful in reducing turnover and increasing the level of education of providers.

Programs like these are needed now more than ever as efforts to raise the qualifications of early care and education teachers are becoming more and more widespread. Success in attracting and retaining a highly-qualified workforce will continue to be hampered without opportunities to help teachers obtain college degrees and resources to pay them appropriately. To learn about similar wage incentive or scholarship programs visit CCW/AFTEF's State and Local Initiatives Page on our website at [http://www.ccw.org/policy\\_state\\_data.html](http://www.ccw.org/policy_state_data.html).

For more information about Smart Start Georgia's INCENTIVES\$ program visit [www.smartstartga.org](http://www.smartstartga.org) or contact Brad Johns at Care Solutions, Inc. at 678-822-5199 or toll-free at 800-939-9694.

## **RESOURCES & RESEARCH**

### **Oklahoma Tulsa Study**

A new report from the Center for Research on Children in the U.S. (CROCUS) has found positive effects for Oklahoma's universal pre-k program. The study, which includes three measures of cognitive development for children from varying demographic subsets, concludes that the program "has succeeded in enhancing the school readiness of a diverse group of children." The Oklahoma universal pre-k program is of special interest to researchers and policy makers for several reasons.

- It enrolls a higher percentage of four-year olds than any other pre-k program in the U.S.
- It is operated through and based in the public schools.
- All lead teachers have college degrees, early childhood certifications and are paid at the same rate as other public school teachers.

A PDF version of the report is available at:  
<http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/oklahoma9z.pdf>.

### **Annual Yearbook of State Preschool**

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has released its annual, *State of Preschool: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook*, which rates state-funded pre-kindergarten programs serving three- and four-year-old children. The report measures the quality of programs in 2002-2003 school year by evaluating several indicators such as curriculum, parental involvement and level of education of teachers. States identified as making gains in funding include New Jersey, North Carolina and Louisiana.

To view the yearbook, visit: <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>.

A similar study, produced by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), *The Status of Early Care and Education in the United States: A State-by-State Overview*, provides national and state data on the availability, quality, and cost of early care and education programs. One of the recommendations highlighted in this report for improving quality is raising staff qualifications while ensuring necessary funding for professional development and increasing levels of compensation.



To download the report visit, <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/R264.pdf>.

**Preschool Programs Produce Lifetime Effects**

High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, a well-known preschool longitudinal study, has once again followed their cohort of 123 African Americans who were at risk of failing school and attended high-quality preschool programs at the age of 3 and 4. The most recent report reveals the results of the cohort at age 40. This study confirms the earlier results that conclude that the individuals who participated in the high-quality preschool programs had higher earnings, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did attend preschool.

For more information visit <http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>.

**Tools to Educate Your Families about Claiming Tax Credits**

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) has developed a toolkit to assist child care centers and family child care homes in educating their families about available tax credits beginning in January 2005.

The toolkit includes information such as fact sheets and other federal and state specific information on how to claim tax credits such as the federal Child and Dependent Care Credit, the federal Child Tax Credit, and the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

Materials are available on the NWLC's website at <http://www.nwlc.org/details.cfm?id=1742&section=tax>.

***CCW/AFTEF does not produce a newsletter in December.***

***Please have a happy and safe Holiday Season.***

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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.**