



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)**

March 2006

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MAKING THE CONNECTION - ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

Washington State Advocates Win \$1 Million for the Career and Wage Ladder

Last month, thousands of early childhood educators, parents and allies contacted their legislators in Washington state to voice support for the Early Childhood Education Career and Wage Ladder. As a result, \$1 million was authorized for the program in both the Senate and House budgets. While this fell far short of the \$4 million requested to continue the program at the same level as the pilot, it is an important victory in the fight to improve wages and career opportunities for the state's early childhood educators.

Teachers from the Child Care Workforce Alliance of Washington (CCWA-WA), an affiliate of the Washington Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, were at the forefront of the push for more funding for the ladder. They participated in town hall meetings in the weeks leading up to the vote. In addition, dozens of CCWA-WA traveled to Olympia on Lobby Day to talk to their state representatives about the need to adequately fund the ladder. Barb Randall-Saleh of CCWA-WA said the authorization is "not as much as we were lobbying for but it opens the door to future funding."

Congratulations to CCWA-WA members and other activists for keeping the fight alive for this important legislation! For more information about the Early Childhood Career and Wage Ladder in Washington state, visit the Web site of the Economic Policy Institute at [/www.econop.org/Policy-EarlyLearning&Care.htm](http://www.econop.org/Policy-EarlyLearning&Care.htm).

Week of the Young Child Celebrates New Theme for 2006: Building Better Futures for All Children

Week of the Young Child is being celebrated April 2-8 by early childhood educators, advocates, parents and community partners. Sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration focusing public attention on the needs of young children and their families and recognizing the early childhood services that meet those needs.

Many Worthy Wage activists use Week of the Young Child activities as a springboard for advocacy in preparation for Worthy Wage Day on May 1. Through grass-roots advocacy, early childhood teachers and staff have an opportunity to make the connection between the needs of young children and those who care and educate them. Week of the Young Child celebrations are organized and coordinated by regional, state and local NAEYC affiliates, and by individual early childhood programs and community groups serving young children and families.

To learn more or find out how you can organize your own event, visit www.naeyc.org/about/woyc/.



POLICY

N.J. Coalition Calls for Preschool Expansion

Building on the success of preschool in the Abbott, N.J., public schools, a coalition of advocates is urging state leaders to expand the voluntary program to all districts and to create a statewide system for early learning. The Build Initiative is recommending expanding the program by \$30 million so that all 4-year-olds in New Jersey can enroll in the public program. Staffed by teachers with a bachelor's degree and certification in early childhood education, the Abbott program is highly regarded as a model for effectively preparing children for the increasingly rigorous challenges of kindergarten.

We applaud leaders in New Jersey for making a renewed commitment to its youngest children. However, the coalition acknowledges the difficulty in finding teaching staff with the appropriate qualifications and recommends more coordination between two- and four-year colleges to help current preschool staff who want to improve their education. The commitment to expand the program must be backed up with resources, particularly funds targeted to recruiting and retaining qualified teaching staff, to ensure the program maintains its high standards. We will follow the developments closely and continue to urge policymakers to stay the course with their commitment to early childhood education.

For more information on New Jersey's Abbot preschool program, visit <http://nieer.org/resources/research/multistate/nj.pdf>.

LEGISLATION

Freeze in Head Start Funding Equals Cuts in Service

Funding for Head Start will remain stagnant in 2007 if Congress agrees to the budget proposed by the Bush administration last month – a plan that would essentially cut services for the popular program. According to a recent analysis by the National Head Start Association, when adjusted for inflation, the proposed budget would result in a loss of 19,000 slots. On the heels of last year's 1 percent cut, Head Start and Early Head Start programs would be faced with serious financial constraints.

We are extremely concerned about the effect this budget would have on the capacity of Head Start programs to delivery high-quality services for children and families. In recent years, higher program standards for Head Start have been welcomed as important steps to improving the quality of care and education for young children. As CCW/AFTEF reported in July 2005, new education requirements for teacher and assistant teachers must be accompanied by financial assistance, such as scholarships, to support staff in completing their degrees. Flat funding for Head Start would virtually guarantee insufficient funding to raise the standards of teacher qualifications or appropriately compensate staff.



To send a message to Congress about the detrimental effects the proposed budget cuts would have on efforts to improve Head Start, please visit www.firstclassteachers.org/headstart.

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Caregivers and Teachers Can Help Prevent Infectious Diseases

A recent report by the American Academy of Pediatrics names early childhood staff as key players in promoting healthy behavior and preventing the spread of infectious diseases. *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide* includes fact sheets, charts and sample forms that provide practical information about infectious diseases in group settings. For more information or to order the guide, visit www.healthychildcare.org or e-mail hcca@aap.org.

Study: States Finding Innovative Approaches to Pre-K Funding

Highlighting various approaches that states have used to finance pre-K programs, Pre-K Now's new report, *Funding the Future: States' Approaches to Pre-K Finance*, explores how effective they have been in raising and sustaining funds for high-quality programs. In addition, the report identifies a number of states that are integrating pre-K with the larger K-12 educational system through school funding formulas. For a copy of the report, visit

www.preknow.org/documents/FundingtheFuture_Feb2006.pdf.

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.