



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,
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THIS MONTH

Making the Connection - Advocacy & Outreach

- Worthy Wage Quilts Travel to NAEYC Conference in Chicago

In the Classroom

- Preschool Special Education

In the States

- New York City Family Child Care Providers Set To Vote To Join United Federation of Teachers

- More Leaders Call for Voluntary Preschool

Federal Policy & Legislation

- Bipartisan Children's Health Bill Is Vetoed -- House Fails To Override

Research & Resources

- Study Reports State Child Care Assistance Policies



MAKING THE CONNECTION – ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

Worthy Wage “Everyday Heroes” Quilts Travel to NAEYC Conference in Chicago

Last year, thousands of early childhood educators at the 2006 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference signed the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Worthy Wage quilt with the message that they were tired of “hanging on by a thread.” The signed quilt patches were assembled this past Spring and the quilt was delivered to Congress on Worthy Wage Day 2007 (May 1). During the NAEYC annual conference, Nov. 7-10 in Chicago, Ill., the quilt will, once again, be on display along with the AFT’s Everyday Heroes exhibit.

By popular demand, early childhood educators will have the opportunity to add their names to the growing movement in support of “worthy wages.” Don’t miss your chance to sign the quilt for Worthy Wage Day 2008. Visit Booth #2643 to sign the quilt and get your free “Everyday Hero” button.

See you in Chicago!

For more information about the conference, visit www.annualconference/naeyc.org.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Preschool Special Education

(Adapted from LD Talk: Services under IDEA for Your Preschool-age Child, September 2007, from the National Center for Learning Disabilities)

Often children are not identified at birth as having a disability but exhibit more subtle symptoms between the ages of three to five, such as:

- *speech and language delays or disorders;
- *putting shoes or mittens on the wrong feet or hands;
- *seeming uninterested in playing early learning games or listening to stories; and
- *Seeming mildly uncoordinated.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was created to provide services for children from birth to age 21. Many early childhood educators are unsure about how soon they should make a referral for special education. They wonder how they can know whether waiting a bit longer would be a good thing to do given the enormous amount of catching up these students have to do. So many young children may come to school unprepared for what lies ahead. Readiness to learn suffers for a number of reasons, including special needs.

Here are some tips to consider if you are concerned that a child in your care may need special education services:



- Have an honest conversation with parents about your concerns. You might touch upon the child's physical and medical health as well as the particular concerns that you have about the child's ability to make progress in early academics and social areas.
- In every state department of education's special education office there is an individual assigned to coordinate preschool special education. The Section 619 coordinator in each state department of education, special education office or bureau, can tell families what programs and services are available in their state and can give local contact information.
- Consider Recognition & Response as a helpful resource. Recognition & Response is a new way of thinking about making sure that all children have the best opportunities to learn. It is designed to ensure that young children in all types of early care and education settings receive the attention they need to be successful in school. Unlike "special education" (which by definition focuses attention on a small selection of students who demonstrate "problems" with learning), Recognition & Response is meant for all children and helps adults pay careful attention to the overall quality of their early learning experiences. When children show signs of struggle, the Recognition & Response approach includes steps that should be taken to modify the program, tailor instruction, and provide specific types of support. It also makes sure that children's progress is monitored over time and that this information is shared among teachers and parents.

For more information, go to www.RecognitionandResponse.org.

IN THE STATES

New York City Family Child Care Providers Set To Vote To Join United Federation of Teachers

Last month, ballots went to approximately 28,000 family child care providers to determine whether they want to join the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), the New York City affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The vote marks the final step in the providers' two-year struggle to organize and become UFT members. Once the ballots are in, providers will sit down to negotiate their first contract to improve subsidy rates, benefits, training and working conditions. UFT president Randi Weingarten noted, "If we want to negotiate a good contract, the mayor and governor must know we are serious. Our first step is to get out the vote." Paraprofessional leader Shelvy Young-Abrams told the crowd at the kick-off rally at the end of August, "Twenty-five years ago paras were sitting in the same seats you are. We had no health benefits and earned \$1.50 an hour so we decided to organize. The UFT took us under their wing and today we are 18,000 strong." The providers are sending in their ballots this month. A final count will be completed by the end of October. For more information on the organizing campaign, visit www.uftproviders.org

More Leaders Call for Voluntary Preschool

This year, the national advocacy organization Pre-K Now reported 29 governors recommending funding for state-funded pre-kindergarten for fiscal year 2008, an



increase of more than 12 percent over fiscal year 2007 expenditures. This brings the total state investments in early education across the country to \$4.8 billion.

A number of states have committed to expanding pre-K services:

- New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer committed to new funding for universal pre-K to the tune of a \$146 million increase.
- New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson signed a new budget containing a \$9 million increase for state-funded pre-K.
- Iowa Gov. Chet Culver signed a new budget containing \$15 million for the state's new voluntary pre-K program.
- Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco signed a new budget allocating \$30 million more for state-funded preschool for all at-risk four-year-olds.

For more information on state pre-K plans, visit www.preknow.org

POLICY & LEGISLATION

Bipartisan Children's Health Bill Is Vetoed -- House Fails To Override

Despite bipartisan support to renew and expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), President Bush's veto was upheld by the House of Representatives. The vote was close 273 to 156, 13 short of the number needed to override the veto.

"The president's veto is a disgraceful failure to support our nation's vulnerable children," said AFT president Edward J. McElroy. "Kids need reliable, high-quality healthcare to grow up healthy and succeed in school." The compromise measure hammered out between the House and Senate would expand the \$5 billion-a-year program by an average of \$7 billion a year over the next five years for a total of \$35 billion. This would boost enrollment to more than 10 million children, up from 6.6 million, and dramatically reduce the number of uninsured children in America. The bill was paid for by an increase in the federal excise tax on tobacco. In contrast President Bush supports a meager \$5 billion increase. This amount would require eliminating benefits for 1.4 million SCHIP beneficiaries already receiving benefits. SCHIP helps children whose families don't qualify for Medicaid but can't afford private insurance.

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Study Reports State Child Care Assistance Policies

An annual review and analysis by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) of state child care policies reveals that despite modest progress in some areas, states continue to fall far short of providing low-income parents the support they need to access quality child care. The analysis, *State Child Care Assistance Policies 2007: Some Steps Forward, More Progress Needed*, compares child care assistance policies in 2007 to 2006 and 2001 in four policy areas: reimbursement rates for providers, income eligibility, waiting lists for assistance and co-payment requirements. To review



Center for the
Child Care Workforce

the report, visit:

<http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/StateChildCareAssistancePoliciesReport07Web.pdf>

SOURCES & CONTRIBUTORS

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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.