



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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MAKING THE CONNECTION – ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

Worthy Wage Quilt Is a Hit at the NAEYC Conference in Chicago

So far, more than 2,400 early childhood educators and supporters have signed their names to the AFT's 2008 Worthy Wage Quilt. The first opportunity to sign the quilt was at the 2007 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference in Chicago this month. Conference participants came in droves to the AFT booth to be a part of the movement to recognize early childhood educators as "everyday heroes" who deserve improved wages, benefits and professional development opportunities.

The 2007 Worthy Wage quilt that was presented to Congress earlier this year was on display at the booth. Some of last year's "everyday heroes" even found their names on last year's quilt. They continued to make their voices heard with this year's campaign!

If you weren't able to make it to the conference but would like to have your name included on the quilt, please send us an e-mail to ccw@ccw.org and include your name, city and state. You can also send us a statement about why your work makes you an "everyday hero."

To find out more about Worthy Wage Day, visit www.ccw.org

IN THE CLASSROOM

Developing Preschoolers' Expressive and Receptive Language *(Information from Transitioning to Kindergarten: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Educators)*

Starting early to prepare for kindergarten does not mean learning "kindergarten skills" in preschool. Rather, it involves making sure children have the important skills such as the ability to retell a simple story and to recognize the letters in their names when they enter kindergarten. Linguistic awareness begins with development of expressive and receptive language. Here are some tips to ensure that the educational experience of the children in your care gets off to a good start.

- Ask children about the different parts of their day, using questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer.
- As you go through the day, give children directions that involve at least two steps.
- Set aside time each day to read with the children individually or in small groups. Let children participate in book reading by looking at the cover of a book and telling what he or she thinks the book is about, what will happen next in the story, or talking about the pictures.

For more information, visit the Get Ready to Read! website at www.grtr.org.



IN THE STATES

New York City Family Child Care Providers Vote To Join Union

In the largest addition of unaffiliated workers in the history of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 28,000 child care workers have voted overwhelmingly for representation by the AFT-affiliated United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in New York City. The organizing drive was the most extensive in nearly 50 years in the nation's largest city.

According to the New York State Employment Relations Board (SERB), which on Oct. 23 tallied secret-ballot cards mailed in between Sept. 5 and Oct. 15, the child care workers voted 8,382 to 96 to form a union that will be represented in contract talks by the UFT, which represents the city's 110,000 public school educators. A simple majority was required for the UFT to become the collective bargaining representative.

The organizing campaign was a joint project of the UFT and the community group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), which together collected more than 12,000 signatures from child care providers this summer in support of a union election. This followed New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer's executive order in May allowing providers—who are among the lowest-paid workers in the region—to form a union. The providers covered by the order are those who receive government subsidies to watch, care for and educate children from low-income families in preschool and after-school settings.

The vote caps a two-year campaign to secure an economic and political voice for home child care providers, said UFT president Randi Weingarten, adding that they "share a bond with teachers in that they help educate and care for thousands of our city's youngest children. We are grateful for this vote of confidence, and we are committed to fighting for their interests and the interests of the kids they serve and integrating the providers into our union family."

For more information on the organizing campaign, visit www.uftproviders.org

FEDERAL POLICY & LEGISLATION

Head Start Approved For Reauthorization

After a five-year debate on the Head Start Bill, the House and Senate approved the reauthorization of the country's only federal program for early childhood education on Nov. 14. The bipartisan bill, Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, includes provisions to boost the quality of services and encourages collaboration between federal and state early childhood programs. The bill includes many provisions to increase standards for teacher qualifications and professional development. Key provisions include:

- Expansion of the program's income eligibility cut-off to allow more three- and four-year olds to be served.
- Funding for staff training and education.



- Requiring half of all teachers nationwide to hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education by 2013.
- Encouraging growth of Early Head Start by targeting more resources to infants and toddlers.

For more information, visit <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-1429>

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

California RAND Preschool Study Released

On Nov. 8, RAND released the first two reports in its California Preschool Study. This research is the most comprehensive look to date at the school readiness gaps that exist when kids enter kindergarten and the achievement gaps in the early elementary school years in California.

The studies confirm the crucial role that effective Pre-K can play in closing the achievement gap by addressing the readiness gap, and will inform education reform conversations. The RAND studies join a growing body of Pre-K research in underscoring the importance of high-quality early childhood education. To review the report, visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org/rand-study/

SOURCES & CONTRIBUTORS

Jennifer Luciano, Get Ready to Read!, UFT press release and Marci Young. Mary Boyd, copy editor.

Rights, Raises, Respect will be on vacation for the month of December. Have a joyous and safe holiday season!

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.