



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)**

September 2005

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MAKING THE CONNECTION

Katrina Disaster Relief

We were all deeply saddened by the tragic destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and other cities, towns and communities along the Gulf Coast. Millions of people including several thousand AFT members and their families, have been affected by the storm and its aftermath. While reports are still coming in, government officials are estimating that thousands of homes and businesses have been ruined or severely damaged the floods, winds and devastation that tore through that region last month. As you undoubtedly have seen or heard reported by the continuing media coverage, essential services, including clean water and sanitation, have been disrupted, and power companies report that nearly 3 million customers are still without power.

In response to this tragedy, the AFT has established a relief fund to help provide small grants to AFT members who are victims of Hurricane Katrina. Contributions should be made payable to the AFT with "disaster relief" written in the memo portion of the check and sent to:

AFT Disaster Relief Fund
Attn: Connie Cordovilla
555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Other organizations dedicated to serving young children that are accepting donations include:

National Head Start Association -

http://www.nhsa.org/announcements/announce_disaster_update.htm

Save the Children – www.savethechildren.org

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) –

<http://store.yahoo.com/naacp-donate1/>.

Below are sources to help young children cope in times of crisis:

National Black Child Development Institute, African American Parents Project-

<http://www.nbcdi.org/programs/aapp/aapp.asp>.

National Association for the Education of Young Children -

<http://www.naeyc.org/families/disaster.asp>.



POLICY

Low Wages Lead to Reduction in Teacher Qualifications

According to a new report by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), from 2002-2004, only 30 percent of center-based early childhood education teachers and administrators had at least a four-year degree. This represents a 13 percent decline from 20 years earlier. Persistent low wages and benefits are named as the major reasons for the decline in qualifications, as it is difficult to attract or retain teachers with college degrees in the absence of appropriate compensation. According to the report, the average salary for ECE teachers with a college education is only about \$28,000 per year, and only a third of all center-based teaching staff receive healthcare through their jobs.

"The EPI report echoes the message and calls for the types of changes that we've spent years fighting for," said CCW director Marci Young. "The number of highly qualified, early childhood professionals will continue to decline if the issues of compensation and access to education are not addressed now."

The report includes a table on qualifications and pay in 39 states. *Losing Ground in Early Childhood Education* can be downloaded in its entirety at www.epi.org

Georgia Provides INCENTIVE\$ to Early Childhood Educators

According to preliminary data released by Smart Start Georgia, 2,557 early care and education professionals in 151 of Georgia's 159 counties collectively received \$1.12 million in incentive money to increase their education. This represents almost 60 percent of INCENTIVE\$ money, which rewards early care and education professionals at the associate's and bachelor's degree level.

Initiatives like INCENTIVE\$ support early childhood education workers in advancing their education while providing them with financial incentives to help raise their compensation. Programs like these have proven successful in increasing morale and reducing turnover. Unfortunately in many states, funding has been unstable for such programs. Georgia's program is one of the few that has had a consistent funding commitment with payments exceeding \$5.6 million since the programs inception in 2001.

For more information on Georgia's INCENTIVE\$ program visit http://www.smartstartga.org/educators_and_professionals/programs/incentives.php.

For more information on similar programs, visit CCW's website at www.ccw.org.



LEGISLATION

New Federal Bill To Provide Hiring and Training Grants for Pre-K Teachers

U.S. Rep. Harold Ford (D-Tenn.) has introduced new legislation that would provide grants for hiring and training pre-K teachers. The Prekindergarten-Oriented Professional Support Act (H.R. 3296) would provide \$50 million annually in state grants for professional development. Funds could be used for salaries, benefits and training for new teachers. This bill also would establish a career ladder to increase retention. To qualify for aid, programs would have to serve low-income children, meet standards set by the U.S. secretary of education that identify "quality," and must match the funds equal to 25 percent of total costs. The bill has been referred to the House Education and Workforce Committee.

A copy of the bill can be downloaded by going to <http://thomas.loc.gov> and typing in H.R. 3296 in the "search bill text" icon.

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Two New Reports from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, led by Marcy Whitebook, founding executive director of CCW, released two new reports related to teacher preparation and competency in California.

The first report, "Time to Revamp and Expand: Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs in California's Institutions of Higher Education" presents the results of an inventory of nearly all (98.5%) of California's institutions of higher education that train adults to teach children under age five, including certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. programs. The report includes data on student and faculty characteristics, coursework and practica, challenges and student supports. To view the report, visit: http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/revamp_report.pdf.

The second release, a policy brief, "Establishing Teacher Competencies in Early Care and Education: A Review of Current Models and Options for California," discusses the purpose of teacher competencies, reviews the subject areas that competencies generally cover, outlines options for how they might be developed and structured in California, and illustrates major efforts by national organizations and other states. To view the report, visit <http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/competencies.pdf>.

At a Loss for Words

A new book, *At a Loss for Words: How America is Failing our Children and What We Can Do About It*, by Betty Bardige, addresses the long-term effects of early language development. A central message of the book is the need for an educated, well-compensated early childhood workforce that helps young children develop language early. The work that CCW has initiated with the Worthy Wage movement, and much of the data collected by CCW, is cited in the book.



To learn more about the book, visit the author's website at www.awealthofwords.com.

New Study Demonstrates the Positive Long Term Effects of Preschool

Children who attended the Brookline Early Education Program in Boston have better academic performance, higher salaries and better physical and mental health 25 years later. A recent study tracked alumni who participated in the program from 1972-1979. The program offered a range of educational and health resources to children and their families from birth until kindergarten. This study is the first of its kind to demonstrate health benefits as well as to compare effects on children from urban and suburban districts. It finds staggering differences in the urban children who attended the programs compared to their urban peers who did not. Few differences were demonstrated between suburban children who attended the program and their peers who did not.

The study was published in the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics and can be found at <http://pediatrics.aapublications.org/>.

New Paper on Head Start's Unfunded Mandate to Increase Teacher Requirements

A recent policy paper by the Center for Law and Social Policy highlights the lack of funding attached to mandates in Head Start to raise teacher education qualifications. The paper, *Making the Case: Improving Head Start Teacher Qualifications Requires Increased Investment*, points to the need for funding to help teachers earn degrees as well as maintain competitive salaries in light of the discussion to require all Head Start teachers to have bachelors' degrees. While the case continues to be made about the need to raise teacher qualifications, helping teachers attain the qualifications and providing the salary to retain better qualified staff is essential for success. The paper concludes that an unfunded mandate will likely result in turnover and instability for the many children relying on Head Start.

To download a copy of the report, visit www.clasp.org

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.