



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)**

April 2006

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MAKING THE CONNECTION - ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

Worthy Wage Day 2006 – Plan Your Event Today!

Worthy Wage Day is less than a month away! On May 1, early childhood educators nationwide will raise their voices for better wages and benefits for our workforce. All too often, our most committed professionals leave the field because they cannot afford to stay. Worthy Wage Day is our time to remind the country – policymakers, legislators, educators and parents – that early childhood educators are important and deserve more rights, raises and respect. There are many ways to get involved. Here are just a few ideas for Worthy Wage Day celebrations:

1) We need to ensure early childhood educators get real Worthy Wages – not "Play-Dough." Please send a letter to Congress asking for their support for additional funding for scholarships and adequate compensation for early childhood educators. On Worthy Wage Day, *First Class Teachers* will deliver your letters along with a can of Play-Doh® to each member of Congress with the message – "We Can't Make it With "Play-Dough"! Worthy Wages for Early Childhood Educators!"

To send a letter to Congress go to
<http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/playdough>.

2) Visit the Worthy Wage Day Section of the *First Class Teachers* Web site at <http://www.firstclassteachers.org/>. It is full of resources to help you plan activities and educate others about Worthy Wage Day. Check out the site for suggested activities, logos and information. Use these resources to make your Worthy Wage Day a success!

3) Share ideas and/or upcoming plans for Worthy Wage Day activities.

<http://www.firstclassteachers.org/worthywageday/index.cfm>

Keep an eye on your in-box for more Worthy Wage Day actions and activities. Please get involved, take action and help advocate for the wages and benefits that our early childhood educators greatly deserve!

POLICY

Proposal To Move Child Care Bureau Threatens To Jeopardize ECE Services

A proposal to reorganize the Head Start Bureau and Child Care Bureau stands to jeopardize the coordination of services between the two bureaus. Outlined by the Bush administration in late March, the new structure would separate the Head Start Bureau from the Child Care Bureau by moving both programs out of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). Some of the functions of the Child Care Bureau would be moved into the Office of Family Assistance, which is responsible for overseeing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other welfare programs.



The Child Care Bureau has been working in partnership with the Head Start Bureau to align child care policies with state prekindergarten programs and Head Start Collaboration offices. The reorganization could disrupt these efforts to integrate child care with other early childhood education services, particularly Head Start. The American Federation of Teachers and other education and children's advocates are vigorously opposing this plan. They sent a letter to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sharing their concerns. For a copy of the letter, visit www.nwlc.org/pdf/ChildCareBureauSignonLetterFinal_withSignatures.pdf.

New Mexico Governor Adds New Funding for Kindergarten-Plus

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, recently signed a bill to extend the state's K-Plus program for three more years and to any school district with high-poverty schools. Originally piloted in 2003 as a three-year project, the program served 260 students across four districts (Albuquerque, Gadsden, Gallup-McKinley and Las Cruces). The program has proven successful in New Mexico. Positive outcomes include decreases in students classified with delayed skills, positive assessment trends in letter naming, word sound fluency and strengthened social maturity, plus greater parental involvement.

Kindergarten-Plus is based on an idea put forth by former AFT president Sandra Feldman to extend the school year by adding instructional days in the summers before and after the regular kindergarten year.

For more information on K-Plus visit www.aft.org.

LEGISLATION

Collective Bargaining Approved for Family Child Care Providers in Washington

More than 10,000 family child care providers in Washington state will now have the option to join a union. On March 15, the governor signed a bill authorizing collective bargaining for the in-home child care workers paid by the state in child care subsidies. This legislation places family child care providers in a better position to negotiate, with the support of a union, for better pay rates and benefits.

Washington is the second state Legislature to enact a bill that gives family child care providers the right to bargain collectively. The Illinois Legislature passed a bill in 2005. However, two other states have achieved collective bargaining for family child care providers through executive orders by the governor -- Oregon and Iowa.

A similar bill is currently moving through the Legislature in New York.

Washington's new law is HB 2353 and can be viewed at

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/Summary.aspx?bill=2353&year=2005>

For more information about AFT's union organizing, contact Jessica Smith at jsmith@aft.org.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Annual Yearbook of State Preschool

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has released its annual



State of Preschool: 2005 State Preschool Yearbook, which rates state-funded pre-kindergarten programs serving 3- and 4-year-olds. The report measures the quality of programs in the 2003-04 school year by evaluating several indicators such as curriculum, parental involvement, enrollment and teachers' education level. Trends show that while enrollment increased by 100,000 children nationwide, quality and funding could not keep up with the growth. The lack of quality is a result of the limited requirement for teachers to have a bachelor's degree; 29 states did not require a bachelor's degree for all teachers.

The yearbook is available at <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>.

Report Measures State Efforts in Pre-K and Politics

A new report by Pre-K Now, "Pre-K and Politics 2005," highlights various approaches and their effectiveness in states that have created or expanded state-funded pre-K programs. Some states have made progress through the legislative or legal processes, while others have benefited from gubernatorial or grassroots advocacy. This report praises successful models as those that garner broad support from various stakeholder groups. According to Libby Dogget, director of Pre-K Now, "political will is critical to moving pre-K forward in this country."

Download the report at www.preknow.org/documents/AnnualReport_Mar2006.pdf.

Professional Development Models in Various Sectors

Harvard Family Research Project's winter edition of The Evaluation Exchange is dedicated to the topic of professional development. The early childhood education sector is discussed in articles highlighting promising professional development models. Other sectors targeted include youth development, child welfare and K-12 education.

For a copy of this edition, visit www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue32/.

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.