



Center for the
Child Care Workforce

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)

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MAKING THE CONNECTION – ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

Worthy-Wagers Raise Their Voices!

On May 1, Worthy Wage activists nationwide sent a message to Congress—“we can’t make it with play-dough!” The campaign was coordinated by First Class Teachers, an associate membership program for early childhood educators offered by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). It drew more than 3,000 letters to Congress. Together, early childhood educators put Congress on notice that we need more federal attention to pressing issues facing the profession, especially high turnover because of low pay.

Many representatives and senators heard the Worthy Wage Day message and supported a Resolution that recognized early childhood educators and Worthy Wage Day. [Click here to view the resolution.](#)

Worthy Wage Day is just one day, but the fight for better wages and working conditions for early childhood educators must go on. You still have time to take action!

- If you have yet to send a letter to your member of Congress for worthy wages for early childhood educators, it’s not too late. [Click here to take action.](#)
- [Please click here to spread the word](#) to your friends and co-workers about our campaign for worthy wages.
- Tell us what you did on Worthy Wage Day. We’d like to highlight the different ways Worthy Wage Day was celebrated. If you have stories or photos, please send them to us at ccw@aft.org.

Remember, together we are strong!

Apply Now for the Early Childhood Professional Award

[Scholastic](#), the well-known and highly respected children’s publishing company is recognizing early childhood professionals who demonstrate a commitment to excellence and to continued growth as educators of young children. A diverse pool of candidates is being sought for the *Early Childhood Professional Awards*. A bevy of prizes, including \$4000 of Scholastic products, will be awarded to five grand prize winners.

To apply, you must have at least three years’ experience in early childhood education, and must have been in your current position for the last two years as a paid employee. For complete eligibility requirements and a full list of the prizes visit: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/ect/ecpa.htm>.

Entries must be completed in full and postmarked by June 30, 2006 and received by July 12, 2006.



POLICY

Preschool for All of Illinois' Children is on Its Way

Illinois has joined a wave of states attempting to guarantee preschool education for its state's youngsters. The Governor recently announced a \$56 billion budget which allots \$45 million for a Preschool for All initiative. The initiative would ensure that all 3- and 4-year olds would have the opportunity to attend preschool by 2010. The first phase would serve children identified as "at risk" for school failure and poor children.

Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) president James Dougherty believes this is the right direction for the state. "Access to high-quality preschool for all Illinois children is one of the surest ways to help students achieve throughout their life," said Dougherty. "Every Illinois student deserves the opportunity."

The IFT has been closely involved in making recommendations for the proposal. As one of the organizations of the Illinois Early Learning Council, they were able to influence the measures included such as providing funding to allow practitioners to get certified and obtain professional development.

Specific language in S.B. 2202 was also influenced by the IFT and would make it easier for teacher aides and other early childhood educators to pursue teacher certification while juggling job and family responsibilities. The measure allows workers to continue to be paid while at the same time receiving credit for student teaching at their place of employment.

For more information on Illinois' Preschool for All initiative, visit <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/index.php?section=policy&action=pfa>.

Oregon Addresses Lack of Teacher Diversity in Early Childhood Education

A recent report by the Oregon Department of Education shows that the population of children served in early childhood education programs is more diverse than the teachers who care for and educate them. For example, 35 percent of the children in the state Head Start program in 2005 were Latino, while only 22 percent of the staff members were Latino.

These findings highlight a pervasive problem found in educational settings nationwide: recruiting and retaining staff who reflect the ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity of their communities. The country is becoming more and more diverse. Advocacy groups such as the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) point out that children need positive interactions with caregivers and teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds for their own healthy growth and development. Therefore, there is a great need to recruit and retain a diverse population of teaching staff.

As diversity among children grows, it is essential that teachers are properly trained to serve them. To better prepare teachers, opportunities must be sought for federal and state funding to address these concerns.



For tools on how you can help the English language learners in your early childhood education program, visit First Class Teachers resource page at <http://www.firstclassteachers.org/language/index.html>.

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Indiana's Early Childhood Workforce Remain One of the Lowest Paid Professions

According to a recent study by the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC), annual turnover continues to climb because of poor pay among all staff, including directors and teachers in early childhood programs.

Highlights of the findings are:

- The median hourly wage for teachers is \$7.95.
- Sixty percent of licensed centers reported not paying for health insurance.
- The annual turnover rate for full-time teachers in licensed child care centers is 26 percent.
- Programs that offer more professional support benefits have fewer teachers leaving.
- Twenty-six percent of teachers reported that they are planning to leave the field within three years, and 77 percent of those teachers identified low wages as a major reason.

The results in Indiana reflect what is happening nationally. Be on the lookout for an upcoming report by CCW/AFTEF that highlights these trends across the country.

To request a copy of the report visit www.iaeyc.org.

Measuring Child Well-Being

The Brookings Center on Children and Families, in cooperation with the Foundation for Child Development and Duke University, recently released the *2006 Child Well-Being Index*. The CWI gives a sense of the overall change in direction of the well-being of children and youth since 1975.

Despite numerous reforms, education attainment, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), has been relatively flat over the entire 30-year period. The most significant increases reported were in reading and math performance of 9-year olds. The foundation notes that this year's increase "corresponds with the dramatic expansion of prekindergarten since the mid-90s."

To download the *2006 Child Well-Being Index* visit <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060328.htm>



The Effects of Investing in Early Education on Economic Growth

A new policy brief by the Brookings Institution analyzes the impact of high-quality universal preschool on economic growth. By 2080 the program would cost the federal government \$59 billion, but would generate \$2 trillion in federal revenue. The brief also addresses why a more highly educated workforce would also increase economic growth.

To download *The Effects of Investing in Early Education on Economic Growth*, visit:
<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb153.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.