



QUALITY CHILD CARE

A Guide for Working Parents

**By the California Federation of Teachers &
Labor Project for Working Families**



As a Working Parent...

You know that quality preschool can lay the foundation for our children's success. However, as you also know, finding high-quality, reliable, affordable care can be difficult, stressful, and time-consuming for working parents. Programs are often too far, too expensive, too inflexible with their hours, or just not a good fit for our families. According to a recent report*, sending one child to preschool part-time can cost as much as tuition at California State University. And that's not counting what it costs for full-time care!

So, what do unions have to do with child care?

The bottom line is that we can't work without child care. Unions take an active interest in our members having a quality work experience. That includes the peace of mind that comes when our children are being well cared for while we are on the job.

The California Federation of Teachers and Labor Project for Working Families recently surveyed parents like you on your concerns around child care. This guide contains those results, facts around child development, community resources to help you find child care, and ways your union can negotiate child care in your contract.

We hope you will use this book to help find the best child care situation for your family, and to get more involved in the movement towards affordable, quality child care for ALL working families!

*Fight Crime, Invest in Kids – http://www.fightcrime.org/issue_earlyed.php

Parents' Priorities for Child Care

There are a number of child care choices, and what works best depends on your preferences, your finances, and how long you will need the care. Members of the California Federation of Teachers and Labor Project for Working Families' volunteers surveyed more than 500 union parents about their priorities for child care.

Parents indicated their priorities for child care (in order) are:

- #1: Quality education
- #2: Location near home or work
- #3: Hours that cover work schedules

For type of child care setting for kids under 5, parents choose:

- 55% Preschool or child care center
- 22% Family member or friend
- 17% Child care in a private home
- 6% Nanny or Au Pair

91% of parents surveyed rated preschool as very important, but a similar majority said that they need all day care and would not benefit from a part-day program.



Parents' Platform for Quality Affordable Child Care

- ✓ **CHOICE:** We should be able to choose the programs that best suit our needs.
- ✓ **QUALITY:** Our kids deserve quality educational programs.
- ✓ **HOURS:** Child care must cover all of the hours we work.
- ✓ **LOCATION:** Child care centers must be near our home or workplace.
- ✓ **AFFORDABILITY:** Quality care must be affordable for ALL working parents.
- ✓ **PRESCHOOL:** ALL 3 & 4 yr olds should have the opportunity to attend preschool.

Developmental Stages Change Care Needs

*What works for your child will change over time. According to child development specialist, Helen Neville BS, RN, infants, toddlers and preschoolers all need different types of care and stimulation.**

INFANTS (0-1): Warm, Close, Stable Relationships

One-on-one attention and intimate connection are essential for infants both at home and in child care. Early, stable bonds shape babies' long-term trust in ongoing relationships. Ideally, a baby should remain with the same child care provider over a period of years, not months. It is important to minimize change.

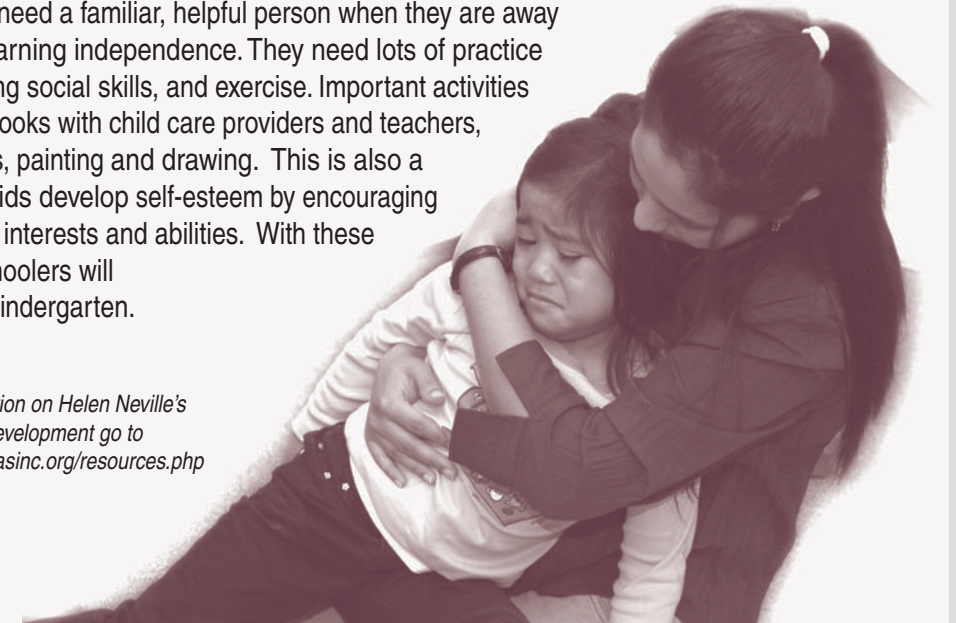
TODDLERS (1-3): A Warm, Positive Emotional Environment

Toddlers need to feel accepted and loved while being taught new things. Toddlers need practice talking and learn more from adults than from each other. They also must learn how to share and play with others. Routines provide an excellent learning environment for toddlers. As with infants, it is best to have the same provider for a year or two if possible.

PRESCHOOL (3-5): A Warm Connection to Child Care Providers

Preschoolers need a familiar, helpful person when they are away from home learning independence. They need lots of practice talking, learning social skills, and exercise. Important activities are enjoying books with child care providers and teachers, rhymes, songs, painting and drawing. This is also a time to help kids develop self-esteem by encouraging them to follow interests and abilities. With these basics, preschoolers will be ready for Kindergarten.

For more information on Helen Neville's papers on child development go to <http://www.bananasinc.org/resources.php>



Child Care & Your Union Contract

Many unions have successfully addressed the child care needs of their members in contract negotiations. Following are some examples of different types of benefits:

Finding Child Care: Resource and Referral Services

Referral services help match workers with child care providers, taking into consideration the special needs of each family. These services can be handled in-house or contracted through an outside referral agency. Here is an example of union contract language:

“Bright Horizons, Inc. and the UAW recognize that the competing demands of the workplace and the family can create stress... When employees are able to balance their work and family lives, they can be more productive both at work and at home. The joint parties agree to establish a Resource and Referral Program that will assist workers in locating and selecting dependent care services that meet their specific needs and to provide caregiver education on topics ranging from parenting to elder care.”

-United Auto Workers & Bright Horizons, Inc.

Negotiating Pretax Programs and Flex Spending

A dependent care assistance plan or flexible spending account allows workers set aside up to \$5,000 of their salary tax-free to pay for child care or elder care. This is an IRS plan, and cost to the employer is only the administration of the plan. Example of union contract language:

“Dependent Care Reimbursement: Up to \$5,000 in pre-tax dollars may be reduced from salary on a monthly basis for eligible child care... Reimbursable expenses are limited to those incurred on behalf of I.R.S. dependents and children who are under age thirteen.”

- American Federation of Teachers, Local #2433, Rindge Faculty Federation

Winning a Child Care Fund

A child care fund directly offsets the high cost of dependent care. Funds may provide direct cash payments, reimbursement for child care expenses, and/or pay for specific child care programs to address members' needs. Some unions have been successful in redirecting money from existing funds that are underutilized. Example of union contract language:

“Effective July 1, 1994, the Employers shall begin to contribute to the [SEIU] 1199-Employer Child Care fund at a rate of three-tenths percent (.3%) of gross payroll to provide child care and youth programs for 1199 members' children.”

- Service Employees International Union 1199 & Multiple Employers

Programs Funds Can Subsidize

- Child care subsidies
- Elder care subsidies
- Summer camp
- Resource & Referral services
- Holiday camp
- Subsidized child care slots
- SAT prep courses
- Scholarships
- Tutoring programs
- Adoption assistance



Want to Negotiate Child Care in Your Contract?

If you are interested in negotiating contract provisions that support working parents - such as access to child care, information on child care, and other programs, contact Labor Project for Working Families.

go to www.working-families.org or call 510-643-7088.

Get Involved! Make a Difference!

To get the support you need and to ensure that affordable quality child care is available for all families, you can get more involved in your community! Following are some organizations to consider contacting:

The Infant Toddler Consortium

An exciting, statewide grassroots organization working to support and promote quality care for infants and toddlers statewide through multilingual caregiver training, public education and advocacy.

➔ 5236 Claremont Avenue Oakland, CA 94618
Tel (510) 658-9189 Fax (510) 658-2067
www.infanttoddlerconsortium.org

Parent Voices

A parent-led grassroots organization combining leadership development, advocacy, and community organizing to increase funding, improve quality, and provide better access to child care for all families in California. It is coordinated by the Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

➔ 111 New Montgomery Street, 7th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105
Tel (415) 882-0234 Fax (415) 882-6233
www.parentvoices.org

Children Now

A national organization of people who care about children and want to ensure that kids are the top public policy priority. Contact Children Now for up-to-date research and analysis on the full spectrum of matters affecting children.

➔ 1212 Broadway, 5th Floor, Oakland, CA 94610
Tel (510) 763-2444 Fax (510) 763-1974
www.childrennow.org

Preschool California

A non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that brings together a diverse group to support access to publicly funded preschool for every child.

➔ 414 13th Street, Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94612
Tel (510) 271-0075 Fax (510) 271-0707
www.preschoolcalifornia.org



Your Union is the Best Place to Get Involved!

If you want to advocate for affordable, quality child care for all, your union is a great place to start. Many unions are already involved in supporting child care policy, and as a union parent, you make a great spokesperson!

Contact your union representative to find out what your union is doing around child care and how you can help.

Resources & Referrals

California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Located in each county of California, child care resource and referral (R&R) organizations help parents find different types of child care in their price range. They take the guesswork out of care, giving parents referrals to providers, information about state licensing requirements, and the availability of child care subsidies. R&R services can also help develop resources in an area if no appropriate child care exists.

To find your nearest Resource and Referral Agency, call the toll-free Consumer Education line at 1.800.543.7793 or go to <http://www.rrnetwork.org/resources-and-links/counties.html>

Labor Project for Working Families

A national, non-profit advocacy and policy organization providing technical assistance, resources and education to unions and union members on family issues in the workplace including child care, elder care, family leave and quality of life.

A Job and A Life: Organizing and Bargaining for Work/Family issues: A step-by-step guide designed for union leaders, activists, negotiating teams and organizers, providing the tools needed to advance a successful work and family agenda.

Labor Family News: The Labor Project Newsletter with up-to-date reports on policy and union wins around balancing work and family.

2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720
Tel (510) 643-7088 Fax (510) 642-6432
www.working-families.org

California Federation of Teachers (CFT)

The CFT is the California affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), representing more than 120,000 educational professionals at every level, from early childhood education to higher education. The CFT is dedicated to early childhood education – from organizing center based teachers – to ensuring that parents have access to quality child care and publicly funded preschool.

CFT – Early Childhood Education Organizing Project
One Kaiser Plaza, Suite 1440, Oakland, CA 94612
Tel (510) 832-8812 Fax (510) 832-5044
www.cft.org



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**Important information for union members
about accessing quality affordable child care**