

Working for worthy wages: A lived history of the child care compensation movement, 1970-2002 ^[1]

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Excerpt

Introduction 2023

Working for Worthy Wages focuses on three distinct phases of the history of the child care compensation movement. During the first phase, between 1970 and 1985, signs of a movement surfaced as the problem of poverty-level wages was identified and publicly articulated, primarily by child care teachers of young children. In the next phase, between 1985 and 1995, researchers demonstrated the link between low wages and quality of services. Community and labor organizing, public awareness campaigns, and public policy initiatives chipped away at the wall of silence around the issue. Finally, between 1995 and 2001, the movement achieved greater visibility through sustained grassroots organizing efforts and creative public policy responses, driven largely by a growing child care staffing crisis, an overall economic boom in the United States, and the passage of national welfare reform legislation in 1996. This phase was also invigorated and inspired by other burgeoning economic justice movements. While not yet drawn into the mainstream of U.S. public policy debates, the issue of inadequate compensation became a staple of discourse and activity within the child care field.

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