

Officials try out child-care jobs [US] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A group of local and state officials found out what it was like to put in four hours as a child-care worker Friday morning in the first "Child-Care Job Shadow of Lenawee County," sponsored by Child Care Network.

Participants included Lenawee County Sheriff Larry Richardson; state Rep. Gene DeRossett, R-Manchester; Nancy Jenkins, district representative for state Sen. Cameron Brown; Lenawee County Commissioner Karol Bolton; Tecumseh police chief Mack Haun; and Phil Dew of the Lenawee County Family Independence Agency.

Each participant was assigned to work at one several area child-care facilities.

During a luncheon at the county Human Services Building in Adrian following the morning of work, participants also found out what it is like to be paid as a child-care worker when they were rewarded for their efforts with a check of \$24.20, the average take-home pay for a child-care teacher assistant in Lenawee County for a half day's work.

"They definitely need higher pay," Dew said. "The impact they have on children is tremendous."

The purpose of the job shadow event was to give participants a chance "to learn hands-on what is like to care for children and how skilled that is," according to Jennie McAlpine, executive director of Child Care Network of Washtenaw County, which sponsored the event.

DeRossett, who serves on a bipartisan committee on early childhood development in the state legislature, described the jobs performed by child-care professionals as "hard work," and said that increasing public awareness of the importance of quality child care could lead to improved status and pay for employees at child care centers.

McAlpine said the turnover rate in the child-care profession is "as high as 40 percent, which is higher than any other service industry -- which affects children."

Piper Jaynes, director of St. John's Learning Center, said she is working with St. John's administrators to try to offer some benefits to the center's eight employees, but added, "that's why centers have to charge so much for child care."

"Most working people don't earn enough to pay for quality day care," Dew commented.

Jaynes commented that most who stay in the child-care profession do so because they love the work -- something that Dew said he could relate to after his job shadow experience Friday.

"I enjoyed it," he said. "I'd like to go back."

Child Care Network offers referrals to license child care homes and centers and information on finding and recognizing quality child care.

-Reprinted from The Daily Telegram

Region: United States ^[2]

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