

Listening to workers: Child care challenges in low-wage jobs ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report (pdf) ^[2]

Description:

Workers in low-wage jobs often struggle not only with inadequate income but also with difficult working conditions that undermine their best efforts to both provide and care for their families. Women make up the large majority of workers in these jobs and they also shoulder the majority of caregiving responsibilities. Given the rapid growth in low-wage jobs, and the continued strong growth projected in low-wage female-dominated occupations, there is an urgent need to examine and address working conditions in these positions that are incompatible with family life. In particular, low wages and difficult working conditions make it nearly impossible for many of these workers to access and afford high quality child care.

The Ms. Foundation is supporting an effort by six worker justice organizations - Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Garment Worker Center, the Retail Action Project and Center for Frontline Retail, and Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United - and the National Women's Law Center to identify and call attention to these challenges. The worker justice organizations represent workers from a wide range of industries - retail, agriculture, restaurant and fast food, nail and beauty, domestic work, and garment work.

Survey and focus group findings revealed that parents working in these low-wage jobs confronted significant barriers to obtaining the high-quality child care they wanted for their children: very low wages and high child care costs, limited information about child care options, lack of access to assistance, and challenging work schedules. As a whole, the information workers provided paints a picture of incredible resilience - many workers were able to find some type of child care so they could hold on to their jobs, despite the formidable obstacles. But it also paints a picture of a child care system that seems totally inaccessible to many workers and fails to provide the early learning opportunities they want for their children, and of workplace policies and practices that place incredible strain on working parents and their children, who all suffer considerable stress as a result.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: affordability ^[4]

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Links

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