



Child Care and Early Childhood Education

WHAT IS CHILD CARE?

The term “child care” often is used to describe the care provided from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in a child care center for preschool-age children. However, for parents who work different shifts, regular overtime or weekends or who have school-age children, child care also means the following:

- Preschool care,
- Before- and/or after-school care,
- Holiday care and
- Emergency care.

Child care is one of the biggest challenges for working families. Underpaid child care workers are leaving the field in record numbers to take better-paying jobs elsewhere. Quality child care has become both scarce and expensive. Recent research by the National Academy of Sciences shows that high-quality early education enhances children’s emotional, cognitive and social development and helps them enter school ready to learn.

SOME IMPORTANT FACTS

- Nearly 1 in 5 full-time workers works non-standard hours (hours beyond “9 to 5”). More than 1 in 3 are women.
- Nearly half of all women who are married or living with someone (46 percent) work a different schedule than their spouse or domestic partner.
- In 1999, 54 percent of children from birth through 3rd grade received some form of child care on a regular basis from someone other than their parents.

- Some 24 million school-age children are in need of care during out-of-school time.
- In 1999, 60.7 percent of mothers with children under age 3 were in the labor force, compared with 53.6 percent in 1990.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Before bargaining for child care provisions, it is important to identify the actual needs of the members. This information can be gathered through a needs assessment survey or in a bargaining survey.

For help, refer to the sample *Bargaining Questions on Work and Family* by the Labor Project for Working Families or contact one of the organizations listed in the Resources section at the end of this fact sheet.

CONTRACT LANGUAGE

Below are examples of recently won child care provisions in union contracts. For actual contract language or more examples, please contact the Labor Project for Working Families (see Resources).

Resource and Referral Services

Finding high-quality, reliable, affordable care can be difficult for working parents. Resource and referral services can help match employees with appropriate and available child care providers, taking into consideration the special needs of each family. Unions have negotiated for these services, which may be contracted through an outside referral agency or handled in-house. Resource and referral services also can help develop child care resources in an area if no appropriate child care exists.

Contract Example

■ *Communications Workers of America/International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and AT&T*: CWA negotiated a national community-based child care resource and referral service to be engaged by the company to help employees locate, evaluate and manage quality child care for children under the age of 13. This service is provided by a professional organization charged with the responsibility of locating existing services and, if necessary, canvassing for new providers of child-care service. Information concerning costs, hours of operation, location, transportation and curriculum is provided to employees via a dial-up contact number.

Pretax Programs

A dependent care assistance plan or flexible spending account allows workers to set aside a portion of their earnings in a tax free account for dependent care expenses. This is an IRS plan in which workers set aside up to \$5,000 of their salary tax free to pay for child care or elder care. The only cost to the employer is the administration of the plan.

Contract Example

■ *Transport Workers Union Local 100 and New York City Transit Authority*: TWU Local 100 successfully negotiated a dependent care reimbursement account that allows pretax contributions for child care expenses. Employees may redirect up to \$5,000 of pay into an account to fund dependent care expenses with pretax dollars to the extent allowed by law.

Child Care Fund

A child care fund directly offsets the high cost of dependent care. Funds may provide direct cash payments or a reimbursement for child care expenses, as well as fund specific child care programs to address members' needs. Some unions have been successful in redirecting monies from existing funds that are underutilized.

Contract Example

■ *Amalgamated Transport Union Local 192 and AC Transit*: ATU Local 192 successfully negotiated a child care fund. AC Transit contributes 3 cents

per hour per employee for all hours worked by employees in ATU classifications. The purpose of this contribution is to assist ATU members with their child care needs. A Child Care Committee is responsible for implementing child care programs.

Child Care Funds—Specific Uses

Contract Examples

Direct Reimbursement

■ *1199 Health and Human Service Employees Union, New York City, Child Care and the Contributing Employers*: In 1989, the 1199 Health and Human Service Employees Union negotiated for a child care fund with various hospitals and health facilities. Employers contribute a percentage of gross payroll. Each institution has a labor-management committee that makes decisions on which benefits to offer. The fund provides direct reimbursement for child care and after-school care, as well as other programs, including summer camp subsidies, child care resource and referral, a holiday program, a cultural arts program and child care centers.

Holiday Child Care

■ *CWA/IBEW and Verizon Inc.*: CWA and IBEW negotiated with Verizon to increase the Dependent Care Fund to \$1.65 million a year for three years. One of the most successful and unique programs funded has been "Kids in the Workplace." This program is targeted to parents of school-age children ages 5-12 who need care for their children on school holidays when schools are closed but parents need to be at work. The program runs approximately 15 days per year at 30 sites.

Extended-hour Child Care

■ *UAW and the Tonawanda Business Community Child Care Consortium*: The UAW worked with businesses in Tonawanda, N.Y., to create a child care consortium. The consortium developed day care programs that are available in the daytime, before and after school and during holidays and vacations. The consortium also has an emergency backup telephone network to provide care for

families whose regular provider becomes unavailable.

In-home Child Care

- *Canadian Auto Workers Union and Chrysler, Ford and General Motors*: CAW bargained with Chrysler, Ford and General Motors for a Child Care Fund for both extended-hour child care centers and a network of family day care homes for shift workers who want their children in a more homelike setting. The employers contribute 4 cents per hour worked. A nonprofit agency set up by CAW directly employs the child care providers, who receive benefits including paid vacation and sick time, health care, pension and overtime pay.

On-site/Near-site Child Care Centers

Unions have negotiated for on-site and near-site child care centers, but it can be a costly and time-consuming process. It is important to research this option thoroughly before choosing it as a way to address members' child care needs (see Resources).

Contract Examples

- *AFSCME Local 2415 and Toledo Medical College of Ohio*: The union bargained for an on-site child care center that is more than 70 percent subsidized by the college. Center staff are employed by the state of Ohio and are members of Local 2415, receiving good salaries and benefits.
- *San Mateo (Calif.) County Central Labor Council, Machinists and other unions, employers and the San Francisco Airports Commission*: These groups created *Palcare*, a nonprofit, extended-hour center to provide care to children whose parents work at the San Francisco International Airport and surrounding businesses, many of whom work at times other than the traditional 9-to-5 workday. Parents can change the hours and days of care each month to reflect their changing work schedules.
- *UAW and Ford Motor Co. and Visteon*: UAW, Ford and Visteon recently launched the Family Service and Learning Centers program. Under the program, a network of FSLCs is being created in 15 states. They will provide early childhood edu-

cation services for infants through kindergarten, including 24-hour child care, backup and "get well" care; family and adult education programs, including before- and after-school programs and summer camps; and community service education and volunteer programs.

Emergency/Sick Child Care

Backup care can be provided for mildly sick children on days when normal care arrangements fall through or in other such unusual situations as snow days. Backup care can be provided through a special program, such as employer subsidies for in-home care or a backup center, or by allowing parents to use their sick time to care for sick children. Please see the *Bargaining Fact Sheet on Family Leave* for more examples.

Contract Examples

- *UFCW/RWDSU Local 3 and Bloomingdale's*: RWDSU successfully negotiated a one-year pilot program offering emergency child care services to Bloomingdale's employees through the Lipton Child Care Center. Employees can take their sick child to the center at a subsidized cost of \$10 per emergency to help defray the cost. The terms and conditions of the program are determined by the program agreement between the company and the Lipton Center.
- *Alameda County Employees Labor Coalition/SEIU locals 535, 616 and 790 and the County of Alameda, Calif.*: SEIU locals 535, 616 and 790 negotiated a fund with Alameda County to provide reimbursement for parents whose children are mildly sick or who, for some other emergency reason, are unable to use their regular provider. Employees receive reimbursement for 90 percent of up to \$80 a day, to a maximum of \$350 a year. The employer also provides resource and referral services for families who need sick or emergency care.

Subsidized Child Care

Finding and being able to afford quality child care is often a challenge for families. Unions have been able to help working parents afford child care by negotiating for subsidized slots at local day care centers.

Contract Example

■ *Raritan Valley Community College Administrative Society and Raritan Valley Community College Staff Federation, NEA, and Raritan Valley Community College Board of Trustees:* The union negotiated employer subsidies for child care through discounts at an existing child care center. Discounts are provided on a sliding scale based on employee earnings. Union members earning less than \$30,000 receive a 37.5 percent discount, members earning \$30,000–\$39,000 receive a 25 percent discount and members earning \$40,000–\$49,000 receive a 12 percent discount. Members earning \$50,000 or more pay full rate. Members who put a second child in the center pay only half the rate they pay for the first child.

Sick Time for Family Members

Caring for mildly sick children is one of the biggest challenges that working parents face. Sick children cannot attend a child care center but parents still need to work. Finding a last-minute backup can be costly and often impossible. Backup care can be provided through a special program, such as employer subsidies or by allowing parents to use their sick time to care for sick children.

Contract Example

■ *Office and Professional Employees Local 3 and Northern California Council for the Community:* OPEIU Local 3 won the right for eligible members to use up to five days of sick leave per calendar year when required to care for a sick or injured family member. In no event shall leave to care for another reduce an employee's bank or remaining sick leave to less than 10 days.

RESOURCES

AFL-CIO Working Women's Department

Provides information on issues that face women in the workplace.

Website: www.aflcio.org/women

Phone: 202-637-5064

Labor Project for Working Families

Maintains a national database of family-friendly contract language. Provides technical assistance to unions on negotiating work and family benefits and policies.

Website: <http://laborproject.berkeley.edu>

Phone: 510-643-7088

Child Care Action Campaign

A child care advocacy organization. Provides information on model programs and national advocacy efforts on child care.

Website: www.childcareaction.org

Phone: 212-239-0138

Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)

Provides educational tools on a variety of topics of concern to union women.

Website: www.cluw.org

Phone: 202-223-8360

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

The national network of community-based child care resource and referral agencies. These agencies are locally based and provide information on local child care services.

Website: www.naccrra.net

Phone: 202-393-5501

National Child Care Information Center

A national resource that provides information on child care and contains links to state child care programs.

Website: www.nccic.org

Phone: 800-616-2242