

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center

Blog from the Executive Director

It's Long Past Time

May 1, 2015

It's long past time for the teachers of our young children to receive the respect, recognition and compensation they deserve. They make THE difference for so many children every day, helping them develop and learn, setting a trajectory for success in school and life. Their job requires a complex array of knowledge and skills, compassion, physical and emotional stamina, an ability to partner with families and the willingness to continue learning. They must have knowledge of child development and the ability to assess when children may need extra support. Good teachers observe young children and know when and how to stage activities that move their learning forward and keep them wanting to learn more. And they know how to support their emotional well-being by modeling respectful, nurturing relationships so they learn to work and play well with others.

We know that the pathway for learning is set in the first five years of life. We know that what we do in those years makes a difference. Yet we fail to recognize the value of teachers in our early care and education settings. They are not paid a living wage, only about \$10 an hour on average; they often work without benefits and paid sick leave. Many have to work a second job to make ends meet. And, sadly, many have to rely on public assistance for things like food and child care assistance for their own families. We collectively have failed to invest in these significant adults who are such a critical part of the lives and futures of so many of our nation's children. With the recent report from the Institute of Medicine, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* has made it clear. Young children need well educated, supported and respected teachers. We must find the ways to make that happen... It will take greater public and private investments, it will take communities coming together, it will take parents and politicians and funders all committed to paying teachers what they deserve.

#WorthyWages

Sue Russell



P.O. Box 901
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

919-967-3272
fax: 919-442-1988

www.teachearlychildhoodnationalcenter.org