Are Public Programs Keeping Qualified Child Care Workers in their Professions?

By Dr. Stacie Golin, Ph.D.

In IWPR’s new report, Building a Stronger Child Care Workforce: A Review of Studies of the Effectiveness of Public Compensation Initiatives, researchers conclude that, although results are still preliminary, child care teacher retention programs are having a positive impact. IWPR researchers reviewed findings on the implementation and short-term effects of seven programs that provide financial incentives to early childhood teachers for gaining additional education and/or staying at their programs. The report summarizes studied programs and program evaluation efforts. Changes in compensation, education, retention, feelings of professionalism, and worker morale are examined.

Evidence strongly suggests that the presence of a highly qualified, stable early care and education practitioner is an important factor in children’s later educational success. Despite this likely impact on quality, in 2000, child care workers made an average of $7.86 per hour, only slightly higher than parking lot attendants. These low wages force many child care workers to leave the field. The resulting high turnover adversely affects the quality of services for children. Consequently, as of 2000, twenty states have addressed early care and education compensation in a variety of ways.

The report documents well-known models to address the problem of qualified child care workers leaving the field. The programs varied in worker education requirements, types of financial rewards, and funding. Evaluation efforts ranged from large, third-party studies to in-house, ongoing monitoring. In general, program evaluators reported that child care workers participating in these programs saw an increase in their income and education, and were less likely to leave their jobs in the short-term. These programs still need to secure stable funding levels, however, and must increase outreach efforts. Strong leadership seemed to play a positive role in program implementation. Evaluators reported that programs had indirect benefits, as well, including cases of increased demand for college courses in early childhood education and more highly qualified applicants to child care programs.

While the authors agree that evaluation studies of these programs are finding positive results, they stress that many of these findings should be interpreted with caution. Available information about the effects of compensation models is still in the preliminary stage. In addition, IWPR researchers found that funding limitations, time constraints, and matching goals to evaluations methods challenged many efforts to evaluate these programs. For more information about the study, please contact Dr. Stacie Golin at sgolin@iwpr.org.

Disabilities in Low-Income Families

By Meghan Salas

A recent IWPR study suggests that low-income single mothers of disabled children are likely to face even more difficult times in the current welfare climate. This is due to a combination of work requirements, limited cash assistance, and more stringent disability standards for receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 1997 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the study points to a disproportionate prevalence of disability among low-income families with children.

(contin’d on p. 3)
With the passing of Congresswoman Patsy Mink, the American people have lost a champion of civil rights and civil liberties, women have lost a tireless advocate for the redress of their needs at home and abroad, and IWPR has lost a special friend. An intellectual and energetic powerhouse in a petite frame, Patsy Mink had a huge heart and her courage seemingly knew no bounds. She was fierce in her beliefs, but she knew how to wage a fight and when to fold her cards, and no one ever doubted she’d be back again and again to argue her point and to speak for the powerless and the voiceless. A first class orator, Patsy could fire up an audience as she shared both her wisdom and her passion. Patsy came to Washington to represent Hawaii in 1964, the first woman of color elected to the U.S. Congress.

Patsy Matsu Takemoto was born in Maui in 1927 to Japanese-American parents. She graduated from the University of Hawaii in 1948 and the University of Chicago Law School in 1951 (having been denied admission to all 20 medical schools she applied to). She was an early opponent of the Vietnam War and achieved her most significant legislative victory in 1972, with the passage of Title IX of the Higher Education Act. Title IX prohibits schools that receive federal aid from discriminating against women and requires equality of opportunity, not only in educational programs, but also in extracurricular activities like sports and in admissions and financial aid. Patsy left the House in 1976 to run (unsuccessfully) for the US Senate and returned in 1990 to serve another six terms. Before her tragic and much too early death in September, she was considered virtually certain to win reelection to another term. She leaves in her immediate family her husband and ally John Mink, her daughter Gwendolyn Mink, professor of political science at Smith College and long-time IWPR member, and her brother, Eugene Takemoto.

In recent years, Patsy often commented on how much the world around her had moved away from her ideals. Yet, she never gave up her struggle to improve people’s lives or her belief that government could and should help people achieve their everyday dreams. She campaigned ceaselessly to increase public funding for child care and to enable poor women to participate in post secondary education and job training so they could improve their skills and attain a decent standard of living. Patsy spoke at IWPR’s biennial conferences in 1992 and again in 2001 to warn of the erosion of women’s rights. Congresswoman Mink addressed IWPR’s advisory committees several times on child care, welfare reform, and anti-poverty programs. On one of her last visits, she counseled that more child care funding would only be forthcoming when child care became understood as education rather than as minding working mothers’ children.

Patsy had faith that the pendulum of public opinion and policy would swing back to a more humanistic and generous approach and she believed the way would be led by young people. She thrilled IWPR’s young staff members when she called for information and treated them like the experts they are, who could provide the information she needed when she needed it (which was always “now” if not sooner).

Patsy loved Hawaii. She urged me to visit Maui and the other islands, especially off-season, when the crowds aren’t too big. I’m thankful that Patsy was at home in her native Hawaii when she died, and thankful, too, that in her last summer she was celebrated many times (including at the WNBA All-Star Game) for her leadership in the passage of Title IX, now in its thirtieth year. Patsy leaves a lasting legacy in the generations of girls who have had expanded opportunities because of her. Yet, it is a legacy which is not secure, which she, most of all, understood. Patsy, we will never forget you as we continue fighting for the rights of women and girls in the social, political, and economic arenas.
Disabilities in Low-Income Families

(cont'd from p. 1) According to the study, low-income families are almost 50 percent more likely to have a child with a disability than higher-income families. Single mothers receiving TANF, in particular, are most likely to have a child with a disability. Moreover, close to 40 percent of the mothers themselves have a disability. While the 1996 welfare reform legislation allows 20 percent of a state’s caseload to be exempt from work requirements and time limits, the IWPR analysis shows that nearly 50 percent, or half, of single mothers receiving TANF in 1997 had a disability or had a child with a disability.

Findings also suggest that having a disability is a significant barrier to employment among low-income single mothers, further increasing the likelihood of economic hardship. Only a quarter of the mothers with a disability worked consistently throughout the four-month period prior to the survey, and half of them did not work at all. Approximately 40 percent of the disabled mothers received TANF, yet very few low-income single mothers who had a disabled child received either TANF or SSI benefits.

The high prevalence of disability among TANF families can be detrimental to children’s well-being and to mothers’ efforts toward self-sufficiency. From a policy standpoint, disability in low-income families needs to be addressed through more careful assessment of disability status, more income supports, and expanded childcare services.

On November 19, 2002, IWPR held a lively press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, to release the fourth series of its flagship project The Status of Women in the States reports. IWPR staff responded to numerous requests for interviews from local and national (and even international) radio, television, and print media outlets. Spotlights on The Status of Women in the States appeared in the news from Florida to Alaska, including articles in the Washington Post and USA Today and day-long coverage on CNN, and public radio spots around the country.

In addition, many people visited our website to learn more about the States reports. The day of the release, the number of daily visitors to IWPR’s website increased fivefold. The most popular destination was the Best and Worst States Fact Sheet.

State level coverage of the States reports included stories in the Birmingham News, the Des Moines Register, the Topeka Capital Journal, and the St. Louis Dispatch, as well as numerous radio and television stories.

And, in the continuing saga of Hootie, Augusta, Martha Burk and the National Council of Women’s Organizations, Heidi’s comments were published in the Washington Post on September 26 and in the Washington Times on October 30.

On November 21, IWPR also hosted a public event in New York City to release Building a Stronger Child Care Workforce: A Review of Studies of the Effectiveness of Public Compensation Initiatives.

Vicky Lovell was quoted in a front-page USA Today article on October 21 about women’s unemployment rates during times of recession. This story caught the attention of several other media outlets that called IWPR for further comment. Heidi Hartmann was interviewed on “Mind Your Business” a nationally syndicated Radio One program on October 31, and CNN International on October 25.

Vicky appeared in Kiplinger Business Forecasts on November 7 commenting on the California model of Family Leave; and in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on September 29 regarding labor rates. Vicky also was asked by the New York Times to weigh in regarding the media’s reaction to Martha Stewart’s problems in a September 15 column on whether or not some of the criticism of Stewart was gender-motivated.
California Victory on Paid Family Leave

By Vicky Lovell, Ph.D.

California workers are the first in the nation to be covered by a statewide paid family leave policy. They won this important new employment benefit in October when Governor Davis signed a bill adding temporary family disability leave to the state's existing temporary disability insurance program. The new policy allows workers to take up to six weeks of paid family care leave per year and to receive benefits amounting to 55 percent of their usual wages (to a maximum of $728 per week) if they meet certain employment-related eligibility criteria.

Family care leave may be taken to care for a newborn, newly adopted, or newly placed foster child or for a seriously ill parent, child, spouse, or same-sex domestic partner. (California workers are already covered by temporary disability insurance for their own serious non-work-related health conditions.) Leave for workers in firms with 50 or more employees is job-protected under the California Family Rights Act and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Payroll deductions for the employee-financed program begin January 1, 2004, with the first paid family care leaves commencing July 1, 2004. Employers may require workers to use up to two weeks of accrued paid vacation leave during the leave (including the unpaid one-week waiting period).

This new policy marks a significant victory for advocates of paid leave. Since passage of the FMLA in 1993, which mandates unpaid but job-protected time off work when a worker needs to recuperate from a serious health condition or to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member, researchers and advocates have been concerned about workers who cannot afford to take an unpaid leave from work or who have to return to work too soon because they can't get along without their earnings. Surveys about use of FMLA leave conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor in 2000 found that 78 percent of workers who needed to take a family or medical leave, but did not take one, could not afford the leave.

The success of paid family leave in California is expected to give a boost to similar campaigns across the country, which have faced new challenges in recent months because of declining state revenues. Over half the states have considered some form of paid parental or family and medical leave act in the last several years.

For further information on the California campaign and advocacy in other states, check out websites for the California Labor Project for Working Families (http://labor-project.berkeley.edu) and the National Partnership for Women and Families (www.nationalpartnership.org).

“Putting Milk Into Babies”

By Avis Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.

“There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies.” Winston Churchill clearly knew the value of investing in children. Today, many American babies are hungry. A recent IWPR study of children in low-income single parent families, Children Left behind Are Deeper in Poverty and Have Fewer Supports, indicates that children under six are at the greatest risk of living in extreme poverty. With household incomes below 50 percent of the poverty line, these children are the least likely to receive cash assistance and food stamps and the most likely to have no health insurance. These findings support what many researchers know—since welfare reform, the poorest families are in the gravest danger of falling further into despair.

This same study also revealed an increasing racial disparity in the current welfare system. Since 1996, more whites have left welfare than their African-American or Hispanic counterparts. In fact, Hispanic populations appear to have entirely missed out on the benefits of the booming economy, since their overall economic well-being remained stagnant throughout the “boom” period. In 2000, only one-third of Hispanic children with single parents lived on or above the poverty line. Yet, receipt of cash assistance dropped by one quarter among those who live in extreme poverty, compared with 1996.

The reality of poverty shown in the IWPR study raises serious concerns about the ability of the current welfare system to promote self-sufficiency and economic prosperity among the families of our most needy children. All children in America, regardless of their family's income, hold the promise of our future. We owe it to them to help their parents rise out of poverty. To do so, Congress must increase childcare funding and ensure that poor families have adequate food and medical care. Steps must be taken to promote real self-sufficiency through increased access to job training and education, which leads to better earnings and long-term economic stability.
NEW RELEASES

Mother and Soldiers

Mothers and Soldiers by Amy Caiazzo. IWPR Study Director Amy Caiazzo, Ph.D., explores the effects of changes on women's and men's organizing in the emerging democracy of Russia. Published by Routledge Press, Caiazzo observes public policy and institutions in Russia. She argues that despite institutional disruption, gender role ideologies continue to shape opportunities for women's and men's political activism. The book is available now. Contact Routledge Press at 1-800-634-7064 (or see enclosed flyer).

Status of Women

Released November 19, 2002

The Status of Women in the States

By Jean Siznack

The fourth edition of IWPR's Status of Women in the States was released November 19, 2002. As they have since 1996, the reports spotlight women's status in our Nation. While the reports show some promising gains made by women over the last decade, they still have not achieved equality with men in any state. The disparities in women's status among the states have not improved either.

The top-ranked states for women are Massachusetts, Minnesota, Vermont, Connecticut, Washington, Alaska, Maine, and New Hampshire. For the third time in a row, since 1998, Mississippi remains the worst state for women in the United States. Women also fare poorly in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Oklahoma.

The 2002 series includes the updated national overview report as well as nine state-level reports (Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Rhode Island, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). Each report ranks the states on 30 different indicators and includes data in five different areas: women's political participation, employment and earnings, social and economic autonomy, reproductive rights, and health and well-being. The reports compare women's status in an individual state to other states and the national average.

Due to the huge disparities between states, where a woman lives often influences her status. For example, women's earnings tend to be higher in the West, the Northeast, and parts of the Midwest. They are much lower in much of the Southeast and in the Mountain states. In general, women in the Northeast, the West, and parts of the Midwest are the most likely to have college degrees and own a business. Women in the Northeast and the Midwest are also more likely to have health insurance and live above the poverty line. In all states, disparities in health status based on race and ethnicity are wide. African American women are much more likely to die of heart disease and breast cancers and to have AIDS than white women.

"It would be nice if all our states provided a decent environment for American women," says Heidi Hartmann, IWPR's President and CEO. "But the reality is that many do not. For certain, those who think feminism is dead, or should be, need to take a closer look at the data."

Report

The Fiscal Viability of New Jersey Family Leave Insurance

by Michele Naples and Meryl Frank.

Exploring the development of family leave policy in the US and in New Jersey, the authors address the need for publicly provided family leave insurance and offer an in-depth assessment of the direct economic costs of a New Jersey bill that would expand coverage to encompass parental leave and leave to care for ill family members. Now on sale for $10.00. Order form on back cover.

See www.iwpr.org/pdf.html for all IWPR New Releases

Women's Status and Social Capital Across the States

Women's Status and Social Capital Across the States by Amy Caiazzo, Ph.D. and Robert D. Putnam, Ph.D. This briefing paper analyzes the relationships between social capital and indicators of women's status using data on social capital from Robert Putnam's book, Bowling Alone, and IWPR's Status of Women in the States reports. Now on sale for $8.00. Order form on back cover.
According to Ellen, IWPR holds the key to solving many of the toughest issues facing women. “We need to stop having to constantly refight the battles that we fought in the 1970s and 1980s and turn our efforts to new and emerging issues facing women. Roe v. Wade should be reaffirmed once and for all. We need to eliminate the gap between men’s and women’s wages. Women and men need to be able to make life decisions without having to worry about losing their jobs.”

Ellen received her law degree in the early 1970s and started her law career in federal and state governments. For the past 20 years, she’s been a small business owner, doing a range of consulting work in the area of equal employment opportunity. This work builds on her background in law and her earlier experience in disability, race, and sex discrimination issues. Since its inception in 1981, DSZ has investigated employment disputes for national and local employers, including managing national contracts for dozens of federal agencies.

Political and economic conditions have changed drastically in the last year, but Ellen is rising to the challenge. “My highest concern is that IWPR continue to have the funding it needs to carry out its research programs. This is a period of economic uncertainty. Public programs are being pared to the bone. More and more women are facing the reality of poverty and need. It is imperative, therefore, that we continue to support projects that assist women to make sound economic decisions and to give policymakers the research they need to make the right decisions about programs. To do this, IWPR needs support from organizations and also from our individual members.”

Friday Forum

On Friday, December 6, IWPR, in collaboration with the George Washington University, hosted a Friday Forum, “What’s a Good Job ... for a Woman? Job Quality and Benefits in the Current Economic Climate,” at George Washington University Marvin Center. It highlighted IWPR’s Job Quality project, funded by the Ford Foundation, which includes work on unemployment insurance, paid family and medical leave, and wage mobility. Speakers included Vicky Lovell, IWPR Study Director; Holly Fehner, Chief Labor Counsel for Senator Kennedy on the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee; Cynthia Deitch, Professor of Women’s Studies at the George Washington University; and Nancy Mills, Executive Director of the Working for America Institute.

‘Tis the Season for Shopping and Giving

By Rebecca Sager

The holiday shopping frenzy is right around the corner. Did you know there is an easy way to avoid the aggravation of searching for a parking space at the mall and standing in endless lines? It’s simple, it’s safe, it’s hassle free, and it benefits IWPR. It’s www.iGive.com. Shop online and support IWPR at the same time. It’s easy to do—log onto www.iGive.com, register, and select IWPR as your charity. That’s it! With hundreds of stores to choose from—including over 50 clothing shops and more than 30 gift and gourmet shops—you are sure to find the perfect gift for everyone on your shopping list. From J. Crew to Brooks Brothers, Harry and David to wine.com, bluelight to L.L. Bean, Lands End to Ann Taylor, Chadwicks to J. Jill, and Amazon to Bath and Body Works, the right gift is just a mouse click away. Every time you shop through iGive, a percentage of your purchase is donated to IWPR at no extra cost to you and no charge to IWPR.

In memory of and/or In honor of contributions are thoughtful ways to memorialize or celebrate special people or events in your life. It’s an ideal graduation, birthday, holiday, or any day tax-deductible gift. What better way to mark an event, while at the same time, support the important work of IWPR? When you make an In memory of and/or In honor of gift, the recipient will be acknowledged in our upcoming newsletter and receive an attractive card notifying them of your thoughtful gesture. It’s a wonderful tribute and it supports IWPR’s important work for women and their families.
Having Fun as a Feminist Trustbuster

By Heidi Hartmann, Ph.D.

Last February while visiting the University of Washington, I had the opportunity to visit a good friend and founding IWPR member Eleanor Hadley in her beautiful home overlooking the Puget Sound, Mt. Rainier, and the Olympic Range (yes, all three!). She told me her autobiography, Memoir of a Trustbuster: A Lifelong Adventure with Japan, was nearing completion. She gave me a brief rundown, summarizing the themes as “trust busting, civil liberties, and women’s lib.” With a tag line like that, I knew it had to be a “must read.” Now that I’ve read it, I heartily recommend her “slim, little volume,” as she calls it, to you (please see the enclosed flier to purchase your copy at a discount or recommend it to your library).

Eleanor was one of many economics graduate students (though not so many female ones) who migrated from Cambridge to Washington during WWII, following their professors to help with the war effort. Eleanor could already pass as a “Japan expert” at that time, not only because there were so few in the United States, but also because she lived and studied in Japan, right out of college, from autumn 1938 through March 1940, when Japan had already invaded the Asian mainland. She also traveled to Korea, China, Manchuria, and Inner Mongolia, often under difficult circumstances.

In Washington, she worked in the OSS and then the State Department preparing for the post-war occupation of Japan. She then worked on General MacArthur’s staff in Japan implementing the plans she had helped develop, which largely involved democratizing and decentralizing Japanese industry by breaking up the zaibatsu or combines (which we would call trusts or conglomerates).

What follows next is definitely material for a screenplay. She became known and feared by the Japanese business community as the “trust-busting beauty.” After returning to the states to finish her Ph.D. and resume government service, she found herself blacklist-ed—most likely for espousing the New Deal ideals of the post war occupation of Japan (pro-democratization) too fervently. The 1950’s, McCarthyism, and the Cold War had quickly superceded the New Deal era and the WWII alliances—former friends became enemies and former enemies friends. It took her 17 years to clear her name and resume her government service.

A dedicated public servant as well as university scholar, Eleanor Hadley has since been recognized by her alma mater, Mills College, with an honorary degree. She’s been decorated by the Japanese government and received awards from the Association of Asian Scholars and others. Her 1970 book, Antitrust in Japan, is a collector’s item.

Eleanor’s Memoir is fascinating, and it is incredibly timely. Not only do we struggle in another era of infringement of civil liberties in the name of national defense, but we also confront the power and destructive behavior of our homegrown business trusts. And, of course, women’s liberation is always timely. Happy reading!
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