



a workplace for all

Bargaining Equality

B

Child Care

CUPE has long been a leader in the fight for a national child care program. In spite of promises by many governments, Canada still does not have a national strategy. About 70 per cent of women with young children work outside the home. For many of these families, the lack of affordable, quality child care is a major source of stress that makes balancing work and family responsibilities difficult and sometimes impossible.

Data from Canadian collective agreements show that we still have a lot of work to do to meet the needs of working families. Surprisingly, the majority of major collective agreements covering more than 500 workers do not have child care provisions. In 1998, 94.2 per cent of workers covered by a major agreement had no child care language.* In fact, only about ten per cent of Canadian children, 12 and under, have access to regulated child care.

Why is bargaining child care important? Why should your CUPE local include child care on its bargaining agenda? The reasons are compelling:

- **Bargaining child care is about advancing women's equality.** It allows working mothers to enter the workforce. It also provides working mothers the freedom to remain in the workforce once hired.
- **Bargaining child care is about reducing poverty.** It allows single mothers to work and provide for themselves and their children.
- **Bargaining child care is about helping to balance work and family obligations.** Working women, more than men, assume responsibilities for child care, elder care and many domestic tasks such as cleaning, laundry and preparing meals. Access to affordable, quality child care helps working mothers balance these competing work and family obligations.
- **Bargaining child care is about providing the very best for our children.** Research shows that regulated, quality child care programs promote healthy childhood development, including intellectual development.

Your local's bargaining team will have to carefully consider your members' child care needs before deciding on a course of action. You might want to negotiate onsite child care facilities, child care subsidies, or financial assistance to parents. Joint committees to analyze needs and discuss potential solutions can also be negotiated. Locals can bargain employer funds to assist families that have children with disabilities. Expenses for members who must work outside of normal working hours can be negotiated as well.

* *Workplace Gazette*, Winter 2000, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 172-173.

Bargaining child care benefits working mothers, children, entire families, our union and our workplaces. It allows working mothers the freedom to contribute to the workforce, society, and the ability to provide for themselves and their families. Bargaining child care makes good sense. Make it a part of your local's bargaining agenda.

Resource:

Work and Family Provisions in Canadian Collective Agreements, HRDC Labour Program, March 2001, website:
<http://labour-travail.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/worklife/welcome-en.cfm>.

Child Care

- Does your agreement recognize the importance of providing child care arrangements to workers and their children?
- Does it allow for the establishment of a worksite child care facility?
- Are employer-funded financial assistance or subsidies available for licensed, non-profit child care in the community?
- Is there an employer-paid fund available to help families who have children with disabilities?
- Is there paid leave for child care responsibilities?
- Are there shorter and/or flexible work hours to allow for child care responsibilities?
- Does the agreement provide for the establishment of a Joint Child Care Committee to analyze members' needs and discuss solutions?

LANGUAGE

CUPE Local 1500 (FTQ) and Hydro-Québec et le Syndicat des employés de métiers d'Hydro-Québec

Article 11 – Committees

11.03 Child Care Committee

- a) At the provincial level, a committee shall be established consisting of three (3) employees in active service selected by the CUPE locals and three (3) representatives of Management.
- b) The purpose of this committee shall be to discuss any matters relating to the establishment of child care centres.
- c) It shall meet upon request in writing from either of the parties, which shall submit in advance the proposed agenda and the names of its representatives. Barring special circumstances, the committee shall meet within fourteen (14) days of any request.

CUPE Local 2316 and Children's Aid Society of Toronto

Where an employee is required to perform unscheduled overtime work of an emergency nature and as a direct result incurs legitimate out-of-pocket expenses arising out of the care of the employee's dependents, the Society will reimburse the employee for such expenses provided they are reasonable and the employee obtains supervisory approval, in writing if required, within two (2) working days following the date on which the expenses were incurred.

The Society agrees to meet with the Union during the terms of this Agreement to discuss child care and elder care workplace initiatives that may be mutually agreed upon between the parties, that do not conflict with any terms of the Collective Agreement.

CUPE Local 2189 and YWCA of Greater Toronto

Article 20 – Provisions for Families

- 20.01 Upon receipt of a child's proof of age, the Employer shall pay to each Employee who has one or more children under the age of twelve (12), sixty dollars (\$60) per month per child to help defray the cost of childcare, retroactive to a maximum of three (3) months of benefits. An Employee on a personal leave of absence or on pregnancy/parental leave will not be entitled to receive this benefit.
- 20.02 All Employees, their spouses and dependent children are entitled to a 20% discount on all programs including residential camp.
- 20.03 Nothing in the above provisions shall give the employer the right to discriminate against job applicants because of the number of dependants they may have.