

## APPENDIX B

### NOTES TO STAKEHOLDERS

*Implementing the Model Work Standards is likely to meet with the greatest success when all stakeholders embrace their role in the change process. In the following section, we offer some specific guidance to various stakeholders.*

#### Using the Model Work Standards: A Note for Educators

How often have we heard it said that despite poor wages and working conditions, “we do it for the children”? In fact, current research and best practice tell us that improving the work environment and supports to educators is critical to improving the care and education that we offer children (IOM & NRC, 2015). Providing educators with what they need to build long-term, consistent relationships with children *is* “doing it for the children.” Improving working conditions, gaining skills through education, and earning a living wage in order to remain in the field *are all* “doing it for the children.” Asking for what you need and working in cooperation with other adults may not be easy, but undertaking the challenge is worth it for yourself and for the children in your care.

You will need the support of your program administration to make real change. Many child care directors will support these standards and will be equally involved and invested in improving early care and education jobs. If you are presenting them to your director for the first time, be open to their concerns and questions, be willing to learn from their business experience. Likewise, you can expect others to learn from your classroom experience.

What if the director or the administration does not support the Model Work Standards or working together to achieve them? In that case, you can gather with co-workers during off-hours and develop strategies for approaching your administrator that will help them understand the importance of this work and why it is meaningful to the staff and to the center's outcomes. Assess your current work environment, discuss your priorities for change as suggested in the introduction of this tool, and then take the following steps.

- Practice articulating to others why these changes are important. How will they help you, the administration, the parents, and the children? How will they improve the quality of child care that the center provides?
- Decide on a plan for communicating with the director or administration about the change(s) you want and why.
- Listen respectfully to the response, even if it differs from your own.
- Offer to work cooperatively to find solutions or compromises.
- Seek allies in your community and in other early childhood programs.

## Using the Model Work Standards: A Note for Directors/Administrators

As a child care center director, you did not create the problems of low wages, inadequate benefits, and high turnover in the field, and they are not your problems to solve alone. But you do have a leadership role in helping to recruit and retain an excellent teaching staff. The Model Work Standards can help you to:

- Learn from the teaching staff in your program about what would make the greatest difference to them in their work lives;
- Prioritize the use of your limited resources where they will have the greatest impact on staff retention;
- Educate the teaching staff about the economic realities of operating the program, where the money comes from, and how it is currently spent;
- Improve program quality by improving early care and education jobs;
- Acknowledge the positive working conditions your center does have and measure the progress you've made; and
- Focus your arguments for increased public and private support for quality early care and education in your community;

There are also some ways in which using these standards could be difficult. You may sometimes be caught between a rock and a hard place — receiving demands or requests from staff that you feel you cannot meet, even if you would like to. The teaching staff may also have ideas or priorities that are different from your own, and you may be asked to share some of your decision-making power. The following are ways that you can help your center get started in using the Model Work Standards.

- Approach this work with the same level of commitment as when you address QRIS or accreditation standards.
- Begin with a staff development session devoted exclusively to this topic. Establish the ground rules for working together and then really listen to staff concerns, suspending both your judgments and your defense of current practices.
- As you work through the steps described in the Introduction, use small work groups, create opportunities for individual reflection, and delegate tasks to keep everyone involved. Make documenting progress an ongoing agenda item at staff meetings.
- If you are part of a directors' network, find support from other directors: What have they done? How did they do it? What can you work on together?

## Using the Model Work Standards: A Note for Parents & Governing Boards

Creating a high-quality learning environment for young children and a high-quality work environment for early educators is a costly endeavor. The cost of a high-quality program is more than most parents can afford to pay, and they shouldn't have to shoulder this cost alone if we agree that there is a public benefit. Currently, when we set fees based on what we believe parents can afford to pay, we too often sacrifice the well-being of early educators and consequently fuel teacher turnover.

Early educators are most likely to continue in the profession, building their careers in early childhood education, if they have a supportive work environment and can earn a decent living for themselves and their families. This is why your engagement in improving early care and education is important. Working with your child care program to create better child care jobs will give you a deeper understanding of the true value of early care and education. Joining with child care advocates to secure the public and private resources they need is also an excellent way to strengthen a partnership with your child's teacher. Here are some ways you can help.

- Provide feedback and input into the Model Work Standards “action plan,” as requested by the staff of your child care program.
- Agree to serve on a committee, participate in fundraising efforts, or respond to other requests for involvement.
- Consider your own workplace and/or community groups that you are involved in. Do you have access to any resources that could be useful in improving child care jobs?
- Talk to your employer about child care issues and what your workplace could offer.
- Advocate for increased public investment in the child care workforce.