

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association RESOLUTION

CHILDCARE

1990

As women enter the work force in ever-increasing numbers, we have yet to deal effectively with the dual challenge that this trend poses for our Jewish community and the general public: First, the need to provide care and early Jewish education for our own young children; and secondly, for public-supported child care on a national level. Both these issues must be addressed if we are to preserve and protect our children as the resources of our future.

By the year 1995, it is projected, that of all pre-school children and $\frac{3}{4}$ of all school-age children in the United States will have their primary care-giver in the labor force. With child care costs upwards of \$3,000 a year, women in lower paying jobs may be forced out of the job world entirely, if viable alternatives are not provided. The availability of child care may be the deciding factor for a family struggling to overcome poverty. In spite of this danger, government allocations have actually decreased by 12% since 1981. Child care is still the last benefit offered as a job-reward when it should be the first.

As more women move into the work force, the provision of Jewish-supported child care can only strengthen our sense of family and community. Further, Jews have traditionally supported the universal concerns of the large community. Answering the call to the child care emergency is an investment in the growth of the Jewish community and our earliest opportunity to break the cycle of prejudice, ignorance and poverty resulting from unequal opportunities to quality care and education for all children.

Therefore be it resolved that the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association urge it's members:

1. In the congregational setting;
 - a. As a priority concern, to establish on their own, or in conjunction with Jewish communal agencies, child care centers which provide extensive experiences in our tradition and engender a love for Judaism.
 - b. For the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, in conjunction with the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot, to provide resource materials for the purpose of establishing such centers in our congregations.
2. In the general community:
 - . To take affirmative steps with other religious organizations, private sectors and government agencies to assure that universal child care is provided without regard to race, religion, gender, class or income.
 - a. To support legislation such as the following, keeping in mind that it be consistent with protecting the First Amendment's principles of the separation of church and state:
 2. Funding only for licensed child care centers.
 3. Benefits that reflect the current market cost of child care and go directly to the provider or individual.
 4. A federal minimum standards guide for all centers, including inspection by federal or state officials and minimum training requirements for child care providers.
 5. Cooperative efforts between private and federal agencies for on-site child care.
 6. Job protection with medial leave for families with newborns, or children with serious illnesses.
 7. Child care provisions for parents and children with special needs:
 - Non-traditional working hours
 - Neglected and abused, disabled, emotionally disturbed children
 - Children of migrant families
 - Care for newborns and pre-toddlers

- Drop-in care
 - Sick-child care
 - On-site care for children of high-school age parents
8. An upgrading of the image and status of child care providers, including advocacy of adequate training, better salaries and benefits.
 9. Providing public information and evaluation services.