Dear Child Care Employee,

As you know, two of the most critical components of quality child care are the education and training of the caregivers and the rate of staff turnover within a center. Here in Austin we have a critical shortage of trained child care professionals at a time when the local economy is making it very difficult to attract and keep qualified staff.

Finally though, some good news! Austin Community College, with funding from the City of Austin, and Travis County continues to offer the Teacher Training, Retention and Compensation (Teacher TRAC) Project. The project’s goal is to improve the quality of child care for young children by:

- providing scholarships for child care professionals to earn college credit,
- increasing the compensation for those who complete training, and
- reducing turnover at participating child care centers.

About now you’re probably thinking, “How does this work?” Teacher TRAC builds partnerships between ACC, the City of Austin, Travis County, child care centers, and child care center employees. The City, Travis County, and ACC provide financial support so that participating child care professionals receive:

- scholarships for courses,
- textbooks for courses you take,
- the support of the Teacher TRAC mentor to help you enroll and stay in school, and
- a $75 bonus from Teacher TRAC at the completion of the first course, and a bonus of $100 after every 12 hours of college credit in a Child Development degree plan.

In order to participate, child care professionals must:

- be a director, teacher, assistant teacher, or classroom aide
- currently reside or work in the city of Austin,
- be currently working in a State licensed child care center or Registered Family Day Home,
- have at least three months prior experience in the child care field
- and have the support of their employer.

Applications will then be prioritized as follows, for those working in the City of Austin:

- first priority to those child care professionals who live and work in the city of Austin, or Travis County
- second priority to those child care professionals who work in the city of Austin, or Travis County, but live outside of the Austin city limits, or Travis County, and
- third priority to those child care professionals who live in the city of Austin or Travis County and work outside of Austin city limits or Travis County.
- Priority will also be given to those working 30 or more hours per week.

Those selected for the program must agree to:

- successfully complete the courses for which you have registered,
- attend any required orientations, and
- remain at your current child care center for at least one year after the completion of your course/training. (This is the aspect of the program that we hope will reduce staff turnover!)

When your center agrees to sponsor you, your employer must agree to award you a bonus or a raise upon completion of the coursework. At the completion of your first college course through Teacher TRAC, the center provides you a bonus of $25 or a 1 – 2% salary raise. A bonus of a minimum of $50 or a 2-4% salary increase should then be given to you after every 12 credit hours of college coursework. This is the aspect of the program that we hope will increase staff compensation.
Becoming a Teacher TRAC participant is easy! Any interested child care professional should complete the enclosed application (feel free to make copies.) You and your director must sign the enclosed contract (please read carefully so you know what you each are agreeing to do!) Then return the application and the signed contract to:

Teacher TRAC Project Coordinator
Child Development Department
3401 Webberville Road
Austin, TX 78702
Fax: 223-5219

Application for the Summer 2005 semester must be returned by May 1, 2005. Applications will be accepted after this date, but priority will be given to those received by November 8th.

A representative from the Teacher TRAC Project will call you to inform you whether or not the scholarship has been awarded. For more information please contact:

Teacher TRAC Project Coordinator
223-5204
223-5219 fax

So if you need a hand with your professional development…

*Get back on track with Teacher TRAC!*