

Can't wait for child care!

Child care actions for Labour Day 2007

Working families have been waiting three decades for quality early learning and child care. This Labour Day, let's send a strong message: we can't wait any longer.

CUPE's national child care working group is encouraging locals to make child care a visible issue this Labour Day in parades, on floats, at picnics and other events.

The working group has developed some easy and creative ideas to help make this happen. Use these suggestions as a springboard to a successful Labour Day event, adding your own ideas to suit your members and community. With just over a month to go before Sept. 3, now's the time to get organized.

Bellies on parade

The main idea is to organize a group of people to wear extra-large t-shirts stuffed with a beach ball or pillow, with slogans about the need for child care on their bellies.

These "pregnant" people can then march as a group or appear on a float. It doesn't take many people to make a big visual impact. The heavily pregnant people help drive home the point that there is an urgent need for child care. Real pregnant women are of course welcome, as are men and children!

Message on a belly

A collection of slogans will be available for download as PDFs at cupe.ca/childcare in mid-August.

The slogans can be downloaded as artwork that locals can print onto t-shirt transfers to iron directly onto t-shirts, or to use to create a banner out of a bed sheet or other fabric. T-shirt transfers are available from most office supply stores (note: this requires access to an ink jet printer).

The slogans can also be printed out on 8.5 x 11 paper or card stock, which marchers can stick to their bellies with tape or string.

Not everyone needs to stuff their belly. Activists can also use the slogans as inspiration for picket signs – either by enlarging them on a photocopier or by copying them with paint and markers.

Handouts and stickers

The Labour Day 2007 child care toolkit will also include a downloadable PDF flyer about child care. The flyer will point people to actions they can take at cupe.ca and at buildchildcare.ca, the Code Blue for Child Care campaign website.

You can also order stickers with child care message to wear and distribute. The sticker artwork can be viewed at cupe.ca/updir/Echildcarestickers.pdf. Send an email to comm@cupe.ca to order your stickers. Delivery can't be guaranteed after Aug. 20 in time for Labour Day, so order early.

Code Blue is gathering messages on a visual petition to politicians about the need for child care. Labour Day is a great time to take photos of people with their bellies, picket signs and other messages about child care. Instructions about how to post the photos to the petition are on Code Blue's website.

Get organized

Now's the time to get in touch with CUPE locals in your community, your district council if there is one, and your local labour council to make sure child care's on the agenda and visible at Labour Day celebrations.

Make sure to organize someone to take pictures of your activities, so they can be posted on CUPE's National website.

Watch for the Labour Day 2007 toolkit of materials on cupe.ca/childcare. For further information, email childcare@cupe.ca.