

# CHANCEN FÖRDERN ANERKENNUNG FORDERN

## Dear Parents,

**On 16/17 July 2009 we will resume negotiations for better working conditions for social service and education employees. ver.di will continue to do everything possible to resolve the ongoing pay dispute, since we are acutely aware of the impact that the strikes at our creches are having on parents and children. We would like to thank you all for your valuable support.**

The forthcoming negotiations will show us whether the politicians are prepared to put their money where their mouth is. We will see if they really mean it when they talk about how important creches are to them and about the need to place much greater value on the services provided by creche workers.

## Better working conditions benefit children and parents

ver.di is aiming to conclude a collective agreement on workplace health promotion that would give every single employee two fundamental rights: the legal right to have every workplace investigated for health hazards, and the right to have measures implemented to remove or reduce any hazards identified.

Health hazards may be caused by physical or mental stress.

The causes of physical stress (e.g. noise, ergonomic issues or heavy lifting) can be measured scientifically and can usually be resolved by implementing the appropriate technical or structural improvements.

**Mental stress is much harder to quantify, but is a particularly important issue as far as parents and children are concerned.**

Recent years have seen a sharp increase in the demands placed on people working in creches.

The different German Länder have all introduced their own education plans requiring every child to receive individual support so that they can develop in accordance with their own particular strengths and abilities. It is therefore now necessary for each individual child to be thoroughly assessed. This involves observing the children, documenting their educational progress, holding team discussions and working closely with parents.

However, the size of the groups and the lack of sufficient preparation and follow-up resources make it very difficult to provide every child with the optimal support to which they are entitled. Studies by the health insurance institutions confirm that the combination of high demands, personal responsibilities and insufficient time to perform a large number of duties results in



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staff becoming overburdened and subject to high levels of mental stress.

**The demands that ver.di and its members are making are geared towards changing this state of affairs. By improving workplace health we will also be improving the overall working conditions of the professionals employed in this sector, and this will contribute to a better learning environment for your children.**

## **New pay scale needs to reflect higher demands**

In the collective agreement for public sector workers (*TVöD*) signed in 2005, ver.di and the employers in the public sector agreed to create a new pay scale by October 2007. However, employers have kept putting the employee side off and postponing the negotiations. The transitional regulations (*TVÜ*) which were only intended to remain in force for a short period of time have now in fact become the norm and have led to a drop in employees' incomes. As a result, the professionals working in creches now fall into one of two different pay categories: those who were recruited before October 2005 are paid in accordance with the public sector collective agreement that was in force until 2005, while those recruited after October 2005 are in a lower pay band. Creche workers cannot and do not wish to accept this state of affairs.

The most recent offer brought to the table by the Municipal Employers' Association (*VKA*) only considers those employees covered by the transitional regulations, i.e. just one in five of all creche teachers across Germany. Whilst it is true that the offer constitutes a genuine improvement for this group, it is actually below the current salary level of all the other employees who have been working in the sector for many years and therefore amounts to a pay cut for these workers. Far from being a compromise, the Municipal Employers' Association's offer is in fact an attempt to sell creche workers short. The pay rise that they claim to be offering actually only applies to the most recently recruited workers.

**We are calling for pay to take account of the greater demands being placed on workers. We have therefore drawn up a list of forceful demands covering all the professions in the sector, i.e. paediatric nurses, care workers, creche managers and their deputies, teachers, social workers and social education workers. ver.di is looking for ways to resolve this dispute, but unfortunately the employers' strategy is to drag the negotiations out for as long as possible. It is clear that they intend to use every means at their disposal to cut creche teachers' pay. Obviously, this is something that we cannot accept.**

For more information visit

**[www.chancen-foerdern.de](http://www.chancen-foerdern.de)**