

## Action Committee for Decent Childcare

The Action Committee for Decent Childcare (ACDC) demonstrated at the City Council meeting on December 11. Approximately 75 women and children gathered outside the Council Chambers to demand that funds for childcare be added to the proposed City budget. There was (and is) no allocation by the City of Chicago for childcare centers.

The only response the City has made to the need for childcare has been to form, under the Department of Human Resources, a Division of Day Care Services to handle all childcare services. A total of \$25,000 was allocated to hire an administrator for this new division. In practice it appears that this division may simply add one more step to the already complicated procedure for setting up childcare centers. That will be able to happen unless women organize to demand that the new Day Care Division be responsive to women's rather than City Hall's needs.

This is one of the reasons for the formation of ACDC. Currently, we are attempting to organize local community groups which will then meet on a citywide basis. Together we will select targets, develop strategies, and, through direct action, make demands on the City, institutions, and industry. Our goal is to make childcare a reality. Therefore, we plan to make specific demands rather than simply to mobilize women to demonstrate for childcare services in general.

For example, we are examining the proposed Day Care Services Division and studying its development to see if it will meet women's needs. If it does not, we will be ready to mobilize women to demand adequate childcare services and licensing procedures. Or, we might select the University of Chicago as a target since a group of women have been attempting to create a childcare center for over a year. We might also offer assistance to centers in crisis--to publicize their situation and support them in their demands. There are a variety of potential targets which might be selected--Department of Public Aid, Department of Children and Family Services, churches, industry to name some others. These examples are given simply to indicate the type of focus ACDC is interested in.

A more general reason for the creation of ACDC at this time is that childcare is becoming a national issue. Many groups are becoming involved. We feel that it is important for the issue of childcare to be defined in terms of women's needs. This means defining childcare as a woman's and a child's right not as a necessary evil only for those women who must work.

It means an understanding that children are a social responsibility, and thus their well-being must be of concern to us all. Parents need alternatives available for assisting them in the care of their children.

And, specifically, in terms of childcare centers which will be created, it means that these centers must be controlled in terms of policy and program by the parents who use them. At the same time such centers must be made available for everyone who needs them regardless of ability to pay. And mothers must have the freedoms to decide whether or not they want to use childcare services when they are available. Women must not be forced to work outside the home.

We need your help if ACDC is to continue to grow. You can participate in your own community or work with the committee on a citywide basis. If you are interested, please contact:

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### Lincoln Park-

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