



ZERO TO THREE

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Work-life Consultation: *Improving the Lives of Children, Parents, and Employers*

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RECENTLY I WALKED INTO A CORPORATE Board room to deliver a report on the findings of a needs assessment and feasibility study for an on-site child care center. The room was filled with people who had heard employee rumblings for years about the need for a child care center, and they were tired of the whole idea, but resigned to listening. The needs assessment showed that quite a large child care center would be utilized and appreciated by the employees. The study included projected budgets and the costs of establishing a scholarship system for lower income

employees so that the center could be affordable to them. "Why is it so expensive?" the committee members asked. "It's expensive to build and the tuitions will be expensive for the parents. We don't want a Cadillac; we might consider a Ford." (That old, tired analogy, again! I groaned to myself.)

My consulting strategy was to show that the "Cadillac/Ford" choice did not really exist. I explained that we were not talking Cadillacs, we were talking reality. "Look at the budget," I said. "The largest percentage, by far, of the expenses is for salaries. We must pay attractive salaries to attract and retain qualified staff. The choice is not there: if we do not pay attractive

Margery Sher and Madeline Fried are authors of *Child Care Options: A Workplace Initiative for the 21st Century*, published by Oryx Press (see **Publications** this issue).

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