

A Victory For Childcare Workers: **First Contract!**



Portland Childcare workers Portia Moye and Deliza McClinton celebrate!

Homecare workers have a special connection with childcare providers. While we work for seniors and people with disabilities and childcare providers work for the parents of children,

that's where the differences end. Child care providers have been isolated, struggling to make ends meet on very low wages, no benefits and with little acknowledgment of the

importance of the work they do. Low-income working parents were also struggling with high co-pays while living on poverty level wages themselves.

Child care providers have worked hard to form a union to address their issues. Early in December, their efforts paid off. Child care providers reached an agreement that will change the lives of 5,000 license-exempt family care givers and make child care more affordable and accessible for working families throughout Oregon.

Some highlights of their agreement:

- **Wage increases, on average 18% effective October 2007**
- **Co-payments charged to families reduced by 20%**
- **Eligibility threshold increased from 150% to 185% so more families can get child care**
- **A training program**
- **Agreement to negotiate health benefits in the 2009-2011 biennium**

You could be eligible for a Tax Refund!

You may be eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. This refund has no effect on eligibility for Medicaid, SSI, food stamps or low-income housing. Depending on your family size and income, you may qualify for between \$412 and \$4,536 in Earned Income Tax Credit.

Between February 1 and April 15, AARP of Oregon is offering free tax filing advice to anyone who calls toll free: 866-554-5360 or 888-687-2277. When you call, they'll ask for your zip code and then refer you to the nearest AARP representative in your community to receive free tax filing assistance. You may also receive assistance by calling the Tax Payer Advocates Service Intake Line at 877-777-4778 or TTY/TTD 800-829-4059.

Take advantage of this tax credit. Consider it a small token of appreciation and a bonus for a year of providing critical services to your consumer-employer!