**FEBRUARY 8, 2000**

# REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY POINTS TO NCJW REPORT ON NEED FOR QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and other members of Congress at a news conference to release NCJW's report on our nation's child care crisis. The report, Opening a New Window on Child Care, found that millions of families are struggling to find affordable, quality child care for their children. Members attending the news conference also signed a Statement of Principles developed by NCJW on the critical need for quality, affordable, and accessible child care.**

**"We are all aware of the importance of early childhood development. Children begin learning well before kindergarten. That is why we must commit ourselves to provide families who need it with affordable, quality child care. It is a wise investment for their children's future and our nation's future," Schakowsky said.**

**The report found major hurdles facing families of all income levels who are seeking child care services for their children. First, access to quality, affordable child care is shrinking. Second, the quality of care is often substandard. Third, the cost of child care, even poor quality care, is exceedingly high. Finally, our nation's economy is negatively impacted when women are forced to leave the workforce because they cannot afford or find quality child care.**

**Nationally, more than 50 percent of preschool children are in child care arrangements. In Illinois, three out of five children younger than six spend some or all of their day being cared for by someone other than a parent.**

**NCJW is launching a multi-year campaign to address the issues raised in the report. The organization will work with local, state, and federal officials to increase funding for child care and school-age programs. In addition, NCJW recommends that standards for child care quality should be created and enforced, that the public and private sectors work together to help employers offer workers opportunities to increase child care options, and that parents have greater access to resources and referral services.**

**Schakowsky said, "As a proud member of the National Council of Jewish Women, I applaud the organization's effort and dedication on behalf of children and families nationwide. Together, we can work to bring millions of families quality affordable child care and peace of mind."**