

The Children's Journal

News from Campus Child Care for parents, advocates and all who work to provide quality early care and education for children and their families.

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OUR MISSION

The Office of Child Care and Family Resources promotes the academic and professional goals of the University of Wisconsin community through the administration of early education and family support programs.

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School of Education
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Message from Cigdem



Since I began my professional journey 20 years ago, I've dreamt about the day when we would assemble under one roof early childhood leaders, directors, teachers, and pretty much anyone who has a stake in supporting children, families, and teachers in our community. I told myself that we would all have the same common aspiration: to enable children, families, and educators to reach their fullest potential.

I wondered about the energy in the room, what creative ideas we would generate, and what action items would emerge from our conversation. I knew that we would have monumental concerns to address: the growing teacher shortage; low salaries and compensation; and high teacher turnover and retention. Further, we would need to make the case that this is not only an issue about early childhood educators, but it also touches our community and state since it affects our workforce and economy. I imagined a room full of brain power and problem-solvers all focused on these significant goals: to find more ways to collaborate; to come up with solutions to support early care and education; and to make early childhood education more of a funding priority through public and private partnerships.

We all know that there is strength in numbers. Together, we can be a powerful voice. When we invest in children, we also invest in future generations and create stronger communities and a more vibrant society.

On February 15, 2017, my dream came true at the monthly Director's Caucus. Our office hosted a group of local early education directors to examine the critical shortage of preschool teachers in the state. A panel of seven experts from UW-Madison, Madison College, Edgewood College, and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association convened at the Waisman Center to discuss and strategize on key topics: student recruitment to the early education field; low teacher salaries; additional revenue sources; and incentives for staff retention.

This event exceeded my wildest expectations. The energy in the room, with two news cameras and UW press coverage, was incredible. One of the major takeaways was a desire for more opportunities and platforms like this one. My firm intention is to build on what we started and to make our case even stronger.

I would like to thank both panelists and attendees for their participation in this extraordinary gathering. Here is the link to Channel 3000 coverage: <http://www.channel3000.com/news/state-deals-with-critical-preschool-teacher-shortage/335779521>

Cigdem Unal

Infant-Toddler Community of Practice: Welcome to the Bébé Café

We would like to express our gratitude to the Evjue Foundation for making our youngest learners a priority by approving our grant request for the Infant-Toddler Community of Practice Forum. The demand for professional development to address the needs of child care providers who work with infants and toddlers is extremely high. This funding will enable us to create a unique collaboration unlike any other in the Madison area, bringing together infant and toddler teachers as caregivers, researchers, and partners. We envision the Infant-Toddler Community of Practice as an opportunity to not only expand our own resources and

to help our teachers reach their fullest potential as leaders and models of what best practice looks like, but to also cultivate relationships with the families and community members who surround our youngest children. Additionally, this forum will act as a 'growing ground' for developing expertise among infant-toddler teachers, and its outcomes will be shared widely. Pam Bennett (MS, Child & Family Studies, UW-Madison) is the facilitator for this group. Bennett is a prominent early childhood education instructor and consultant, passionate about improving the quality of programs that serve all children.



We appreciate your generous support!*

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* Gifts received March
2016–February 2017



Blazing a Trail for More Infamous Mothers

Sagashus Levingston is not your typical college student. She's spent the last 10 years at UW, working simultaneously toward a master's degree in African American Studies, earned in summer 2009, and a Ph.D. in English Literature, which she will complete in 2017.

And she's done all this while raising six kids.

While many of us think of a "college student" as a young person with a whole realm of possibilities ahead of them, 26% of undergraduate students nationwide are raising dependent children, already transitioned into real-world responsibilities.

The Office of Child Care and Family Resources (OCCFR) provides support to this very important, often overlooked, demographic. Despite the challenges they face, UW–Madison's student parent population has an 88% graduation rate. Federally funded programs administered through OCCFR—like the Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP), which helps pay for child care while student parents are attending class—contribute to this positive outcome.

For Levingston, programs like CCTAP, along with a single parent support group and parenting workshops, were invaluable. "I had no idea how to be a student with children away from my family and so [OCCFR] taught me a lot," says Levingston. "Not to mention the fact that I can come in here and just talk to anybody, at any given moment. That made a difference. People who actually specialize in helping people with children and family issues."

Born and raised in Chicago, Levingston earned her undergraduate degree at UIC. But she blazed her trail to Madison, three kids in tow, inspired to do



greater things like fully committing to her education and starting the groundwork for her Infamous Mothers project, which encourages women to share their remarkable journeys through motherhood and challenges perceptions of black mothers.

Officially launched last summer, Infamous Mothers has already garnered media attention locally, and Levingston herself was the cover girl for *Brava Magazine's* Women to Watch issue in January.

Eventually, Levingston hopes to be in a position to extend resources to other mothers trying to make school work as a single parent raising a large family. Her own family, which grew to seven during her tenure here, was often something unexpected for many different agencies on campus and around Madison.

"The good thing about OCCFR is, even though they didn't expect me, people made room for me, and they figured things out...all types of things that I wasn't expecting that kind of helped me navigate and figure out how to get on my feet, [OCCFR] made possible because of the resources. [OCCFR] has become an extension and lifeline for me. I love this office!"

Candice Wagener

Quality Child Care: Time to Invest

In the last three years, I've had the privilege to work with the Ascend program at The Aspen Institute as one of their Fellows. Ascend focuses on two-generation solutions which affect both parents and children positively, rather than focusing on just one or the other. What does this have to do with child care, you may ask? Because early childhood education is a classic example of where a two-generation approach is not only advisable, but necessary.

When looking at the needs of a child, a center with a consistent, well-trained, stable workforce providing nurturing, responsive interactions is what is called for. For working parents (especially student parents), the issue focuses on flexibility, affordability, and the support necessary to build practical skills around good parenting. A fantastic early childhood center would address both, with

great outcomes for both parents and children, resulting in less dependency and a bright future contributing to society.

This is, of course, a tall order—to achieve this benefit to society, society must in turn pay for these types of programs. To ask parents to fund this through tuition alone isn't practical. But the payoff is immense. This is an example of a true investment, where we collectively pay to support this type of program with the expectation of returns in the future. Nobel Laureate James Heckman has done these kinds of analyses—and says it clearly works.

So what are we waiting for? We have the need, the solutions, and the analyses to back them up. We need just the political will to make it a reality.

*Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MSLIS, MD
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health*

Child Care in the Bigger Picture

Seth Pollak is a researcher, a parent, and an advocate for campus child care. Pollak, who heads up the Child Emotion Lab at UW–Madison, has done several studies at Waisman Early Childhood Program (WECP) and says the accessibility of both the early childhood center and the research facility housed within the same building is invaluable, especially for longer-term studies that often involve short sessions, but require multiple visits.

One major study that Pollak and his team conducted at WECP investigated whether children understood the antecedent to people's emotions. Children were instructed to teach a robot about feelings using rewards. The researchers would show an adult feeling an emotion. If the robot's response seemed appropriate to the child (i.e., "I think this mom is angry because her child painted on his bedroom wall,"), they gave the robot a reward.

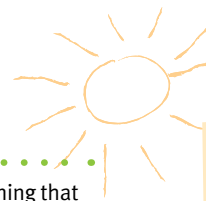
"What we found was that actually very, very young children were able to understand the social dynamics of all the different situations that could or could not cause emotional reactions," says Pollak, adding "...children whose parents didn't have very good emotion regulatory skills, for example parents that beat

their children, those children ended up reasoning that almost anything can cause a parent to become angry and so it turned out to be just a really, really rich experiment that's ended up being cited a lot in the field."

Pollak appreciates child care from more than just a researcher's lens. While he and his wife, Jenny Saf-fan, who heads the Infant Learning Lab at UW–Madison, didn't even have children when they were on the job market, Pollak says seeing the WECP influenced their decision to come to UW–Madison. Ultimately, their two children ended up attending WECP.

Pollak believes the university needs to continue investing in early childhood programs. "I feel like campus child care is...just critical for the mission of the university, and unless it's widely available and really high quality, people are going to have to cut corners to make things work... unless universities are willing to pick up and understand that in order for parents to contribute meaningfully, professionally, they have to have good, high-quality places for their children to be during the day, you're going to continue to see disparities, particularly for women."

Candice Wagener



We appreciate your generous support!*

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Development News

The first word that comes to mind when we consider all of your support for campus child care and early education is gratitude, followed closely by generosity. Your gifts play such a vital role in our ability to serve our youngest learners, their teachers, and families. We could not be more appreciative of your kindness. Here are a few notable outcomes:

- New Initiative gifts helped to provide laptops for Preschool Lab classrooms to assist with the national accreditation process. Then, in keeping with best-practice emphasis on nature education, a New Initiatives grant enabled Bernie's Place to design an elaborate mud kitchen.
- With gifts to the Connie L. Wilson fund, we were able to purchase a new sensory table for Eagle's Wing's Niiji room.
- The Lynn E. Edlefson Fund for Early Education Advancement sent a campus early educator to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference. This is what she shared about her experience: "Not only did I gain a wealth of knowledge, but I feel more respected in my position after networking with professionals that have the same interest as me. These are the types of events that continue to reignite my passion for early childhood education, advocacy, and supervising the next generation of professionals."

Mark your calendars! On May 25, we will host the 20th anniversary of Jazzin', the major fundraiser for our office and a celebration of our amazing early educators. Proceeds from this event help to pay for expansion projects, upgrade outdoor play space, broaden curricular innovation and programming, as well as fund campus and community child care and early education outreach. In a time of fiscal uncertainty, Jazzin' has also become a necessary source of income for our centers. We need our entire village to make this event a success. We are looking for sponsors, silent auction and raffle donations, and table captains. Please let us know if you can lend a hand. Call me at 608-890-0436 or send me an email at teri.stratton@wisc.edu.

Ongoing or one-time gifts to campus child care can be made at any time during the year through the UW Foundation's website: www.supportuw.org.

Click on "Give Now" on the homepage, then click on the "Advanced Search" option with the looking glass icon below the CHOOSE WHAT TO SUPPORT box. Type in "Campus Child Care," and you will find all five of our fund options. As always, please contact me or Cigdem with any questions or to discuss how you can help with major gifts.

Teri Stratton



Professor Bootsy Inspired by Eagle's Wing Classroom

Renowned cartoonist and author Lynda Barry (aka "Professor Bootsy," her Project DrawBridge nickname) has returned to Eagle's Wing for ongoing research this semester. Here is what she has to say about the 4K Purple Classroom:

"I adore the teachers in the Purple 4K Room and I adore the kids, too...I feel like there really is time enough to go deeply into play. I love that the kids have a rich class environment and enough uninterrupted 'free play' time to really address the things that are concerning them. This is so very rare. I study the nature of creativity and there is no better place to see it in full bloom than in the Purple 4K Room at Eagle's Wing. I want to understand why creativity seems to fade as we grow older. Why do we become afraid to draw, sing, dance, build things, and tell stories? One of the ways my students and I have been studying this question is to work side-by-side with the people who know the most about it. Pre-K kids have more information about creativity than anyone I know, and their input has been invaluable to me, both in terms of my research and my teaching at the university. I'm especially grateful to be able to work with the kids and the teachers in the Purple 4K Room at Eagle's Wing. I've spent time in many pre-K classrooms on campus, and they have all been wonderful, but something very special is going on at Eagle's Wing, and I'm so grateful that my students and I are able to be a part of it."



JOEL NIMMANN

Lynda Barry, Associate Professor in Interdisciplinary Creativity, Department of Art, Director of The Image Lab, Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery

