Office of Child Care and Family Resources
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

FALL 2016

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.

In This Issue

MESSAGE FROM CIGDEM.....1

CAMPUS CHILDREN CENTERS UPDATE.....1

THE EAGLE'S WING COLLABORATION.....2

CAMPUS-BASED CHILD CARE & THE STUDENT PARENT.....2

DR. MINOR VISITS OCCFR.....3

DEVELOPMENT NEWS.....3

THE LESSON OF BUR OAK.....4

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
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Message from Cigdem

I can't believe I have been in my new role for a year. Time flies while you are doing something you love! Early care and education has been my passion and I am grateful to have the opportunity to support campus children, families, and educators. I am thankful for my outstanding team—Teri, Jen, Marcia, Angus, and Candice—who have made this transition seamless. Over the past year, we have prioritized providing professional development opportunities for campus early educators as we have identified continuing education as an area of need. And we are making headway in addressing the biggest need of all: increasing capacity for the children of students, faculty, and staff.

It is becoming increasingly clear that campus child care is essential to institutions of higher learning for many reasons. Student parents attend college, graduate, and gain the ability to earn a living. Faculty and staff seek high-quality early care and education for their children with a convenient location, allowing them to thrive in their careers. In the end, research has proven that this essential service strengthens our campus, community, state, and nation through lasting economic and social benefits.

We continue to focus on how our campus early care and education system fulfills the teaching, research, and outreach mission of the University. Our campus centers provide valuable hands-on teaching, training, and work experiences for future teachers. Hundreds of UW–Madison and Madison College students complete thousands of hours in practicums and observations to learn best practices from our exceptional, multicultural early education programs and highly qualified staff. Also, our five centers offer research opportunities that benefit investigators in many disciplines.

In terms of outreach, campus early education staff are leaders in local, state, and national early childhood communities. Our teachers play instrumental roles in articulating the interconnections between theory, research, and practice in the early childhood field and serve as models of excellence for the greater community and for future early childhood teachers.

By effectively addressing all three parts of the UW mission, campus centers add to the knowledge base of early childhood education and development; supply a ready source of well-trained educators; maintain model programs with the latest best practices for the local, state, and national early childhood communities; and offer an attractive site for the implementation of research.

As we continue to improve access to the best possible early childhood programs for our campus, we will also make a vigorous effort to broaden our commitment to our University's mission.

Cigdem Unal

Campus Children Centers Update

Pyramid Model Trainings

Our centers are implementing the Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. The Pyramid Model offers a tiered system of support to promote optimal well-being for all children so they can reach their full potential. It gives us evidence-based practices to ensure a healthy foundation for future success. Our office has initiated a new collaboration with Dane County Parent Council (DCPC) to provide ongoing Pyramid Model trainings on campus.

More Nature Education

There are never enough opportunities for our early educators to expand their knowledge of nature education from the experts! The next training will take place in October at A Natural Branch of Learning located in Washburn, WI. "Inspirational Play & Learning in Nature" will enable campus teachers to experience three days of locally-grown, handmade, sustainable, one-of-a-kind, outdoor play and learning possibilities for young children in a beautiful boreal forest.

This summer, Scottish nature and outdoor learning pioneer, Claire Warden, traveled to Durward's Glen in nearby Baraboo to teach a training class titled: "Eco Awareness, Natural Creativity and Risk It!" Our teachers were able to explore the impact of nature on a child's creativity, physical activity, cognitive ability, and academic performance.

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The Eagle's Wing Collaboration: Promoting Teachers of English Language Learners

For Beth Graue, Sorenson Professor of Childhood Studies and Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction for the School of Education, consistently placing her students at Eagle's Wing Early Childhood Program has been essential to the success of her department's Early Childhood/English as a Second Language (ESL) certification program, which prepares teachers to work with English Language Learners (ELLs) ages birth to eight.

"[Eagle's Wing is] just a perfect place for us to collaborate," says Graue in reference to the ESL design and the high-quality practice happening with ELLs.

Graue also appreciates the fact that placement in a campus child care program means teachers get to know children individually as well as in relation to their families.

"...a lot of the assumptions that preservice teachers come in with can be stretched in a way that I think is really important," says Graue.

And this benefit becomes especially evident at a center like Eagle's Wing, with a high volume of international families.

"It's different when you're working with international families, because it gives the preservice teacher some sense of what it's like not to be able to communicate and trying to understand how kids then get put in the middle of communication in a lot of ways," says Graue.

Eagle's Wing adds another dimension in educating international students who are pursuing degrees on campus in that it allows them a chance at teaching in United States schools and truly understanding our model of early childhood education. Graue says these students are often unable to get teaching positions in the public schools because, while they may have been fully employed in their home country, their credentials are not recognized under state standards.

And a number of students who start their master's program decide they like where they are and want to go on to earn their Ph.D.

"Having experiences at places like Eagle's Wing makes it an attractive place to do more than one grad degree," says Graue.

Graue firmly believes that campus child care centers consistently make a positive impact on the university and the greater community abroad: "I think the collaboration between the university and the university child care centers is really important, for teacher education reasons, for research reasons, for discussions about what quality is in education."

Candice Wagener

Campus-based Child Care on the Decline: At What Cost for the Student Parent?

A recent publication (#Q051) by the Institute for Women's Policy Research indicates that the availability of campus-based child care is declining. At its peak in 2003-2005, 55 percent of public four-year colleges reported having campus child care during that time. By 2015, that figure decreased to 44 percent and it is reasonable to speculate that this downward spiral will continue.

The student parent population, however, is at an all-time high in both two-year and four-year institutions, so the falloff in campus-based child care runs counter to the attainment of degree completion, the ultimate marker of academic success.

Campus-based child care has been one of the many casualties of dwindling external funding streams and a decrease in state government support for higher education. The operational costs of a center, including competitive salary and fringe benefits for staff, are prohibitive with little margin for profit.

So, why should colleges and universities make an investment in campus-based child care? The most compelling argument is that their primary consumers are enrolling in record numbers. As a means to retain student parents, not to mention faculty and staff, it makes good business sense to allocate resources to campus-based child care centers and to ensure that student parents have access to these services. If the bottom line shifts to improved graduation rates, work-life balance, career progression, and closing the achievement gap, an increase in campus-based child care must be in the conversation.

Of course, affordability remains the second part of the equation. The Child Care Tuition Assistance Program administered by our office pays an average of 40-60% toward the cost of child care for qualifying students. Between tuition fees, housing and other living expenses, the yearly cost of being a student can easily exceed $30,000, depending on education level and residence status. Add full-time child care to the ledger and the total can creep into the $50,000 range. At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we are fortunate to have three campus centers and two contracted centers proximate to campus. While capacity still falls woefully short of the demand for service, our number one priority is to seek out opportunities for growth. And a close second involves finding additional resources to help student-parents with the cost of care, making degree completion possible.

Teri Stratton

Dr. Minor Visits OCCFR

UW's Office of Child Care and Family Resources had the pleasure of meeting Dr. James T. Minor, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, during his recent visit to campus this past spring. Minor, who earned his Ph.D. at UW–Madison, spent the day touring various areas, including OCCFR which is part of the School of Education.

During his hour with OCCFR, Minor invited CCAMPIS (Child Care Access Means Parents in School) recipients to talk about the value of the federally-funded grant for them and their families.

CCAMPIS supports the participation of low-income parents in post-secondary education through the provision of high-quality, campus-based child care services. The UW–Madison's CCAMPIS program has contributed nearly $1 million in support of our campus student parents and early education programs, with the grant money going directly toward reducing the cost of child care tuition for eligible students at each of our five campus early education centers.

Dr. Minor poses with CCAMPIS student parents

Candice Wagener

Development News

Another successful fundraiser for campus child care and early education is in the books. With help from our community and campus partners, we raised over $15,000 to support our programs. We honored five teachers from our centers: Joann Laufenberg and Terri Strother, Preschool Lab; Michele McDonough, Eagle's Wing; Sharon Radbil-Cooper, Waisman Early Childhood Program; Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Little Chicks. We also recognized two campus leaders who have been instrumental in our growth: former Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, Darrell Bazzell, and longtime champion for University Staff, Mary Czynszak-Lyne.

All Jazzin' proceeds return to our five centers for the purpose of curriculum enhancement, playground upgrades, and for the purchase of classroom resources that increase research and best practice. Mark your calendars for Thursday, May 25, 2017, as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of this event. From humble beginnings, Jazzin' has evolved into a thriving gala honoring our exceptional early educators and their champions. We owe a debt of gratitude to our loyal boosters who have shared a commitment to campus child care and early education and to Connie Wilson for her energy and vision to create this event twenty years ago.

In other development news, there are many favorable results to report from your gifts. The most notable is our increased ability to issue grant requests from teachers for professional development and classroom equipment. The funding for these requests falls outside of the scope of center budgets. One grant request involved the purchase of pediatric wheelchairs. According to the recipient: "These wheelchairs will give kids a hands-on experience with something they don't typically get to see. They see Teacher Mike using his wheelchair, but since he needs it all the time, they are not able to experience what it feels like to ride in it. In line with our anti-bias curriculum, children will develop a better understanding and fewer prejudices toward this means of transportation and the people who rely on it."

Jazzin' honorees (left to right) Terri Strother, Mary Cyznszak-Lyne, Michele McDonough, Joann Laufenberg, and Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

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 "How to Give," then "Give Online." Under "Choose What to Support," select the "Advanced Search" option and type in "Campus Child Care." Follow the instructions to make a gift to one of our five funds. As always, please contact Teri Stratton with any questions about contributions, programs, or to discuss how you can help with major gifts.

Teri Stratton

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- University Ridge Golf Course
- UW Athletic Department
- UW Credit Union
- Vintage Brewing
- Vitense
- Willy Street Coop
- Wisconsin Union Theater
- Woodman's
- Zoobooks

The Lesson of Bur Oak

Albert Einstein observed that looking deep into nature will help us understand everything better. Recently, the 4K Bunnies at the Preschool Lab gained valuable insight into the lessons of the natural world as they followed the life cycle of a beloved bur oak tree on the grounds of the UW School of Human Ecology.

One of the kids' favorite activities involved visiting the 300-year-old President's bur oak, the oldest tree on campus, and recording monthly changes in their tree journals over a two-year span. The discovery that their tree was dying and needed to come down resulted in many meaningful learning skills. The kids created their own goodbye ceremony involving science inquiry, observing, recording, writing, social and cultural understanding, social justice and the arts. They even requested a meeting with the UW Grounds supervisor to discuss how the tree would come down and to let her know that they wished to be present to collect some wood from the tree. As a tribute to Bur Oak, the group decided to create a "cemetery rock" for future generations. They constructed this memorial out of cement and added branches, leaves and acorns from the tree. The inscription read: "Dearly beloved, here lies Bur Oak." A piece of Bur Oak was saved and made into a playhouse for future PSL students to enjoy for years to come. Finally, in thinking about the circle of life and the understanding that endings turn into beginnings, the Bunnies would like to see a new tree planted. They are working with Leopold Greenhouse to raise seven baby bur oaks sprouted from acorns from another bur oak tree.

Kris Krystofiak

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