

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
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Message from Cigdem



I hope that you are staying healthy and doing well. Just when we thought that we'd turned the corner on this pandemic, we find ourselves in the crosshairs of a dangerous mutation. Delta variant cases have quickly climbed in Dane County. With the arrival of a new academic year, it feels as though we haven't made much progress since last October. Still, we move forward with the optimism that a vaccine for our youngest will help us turn the page on this chapter once and for all.

When public schools and most campus units were closed, our three campus child care centers stayed open for business. Their directors and teachers have been working tirelessly to serve our families. We owe an immense debt of gratitude to these early childhood educators. Under the most challenging of circumstances, they have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the children in their centers. Their commitment to campus families has enabled UW students and employees to continue to work and to be productive in their roles.

The importance of early educators' well-being has been a focal point for our office. Over the past eighteen months, campus and network early educators have reported high levels of work-related stress and emotional fatigue. The increased demands on these teachers have also led to burnout and staff turnover and shortages. Early educators have been asked to go above and beyond in response to the mental health concerns of children and families during this time of uncertainty. Growing evidence suggests a deep connection between early educators' well-being and developmental outcomes for the children that they serve.

Simply put, if we want the best for our children, we need to take care of the early childhood educators on our campus. To that end, we've established a COVID-19 Relief Fund to assist our centers with wellness initiatives, including reflective practice trainings, self-care and self-compassion resources, and healthy food for staff meetings. It is with sincere appreciation that we thank you for your thoughtful consideration of continued support on behalf of our youngest, their families, and their teachers.

Satellite Family Child Care: A Core Partnership for Campus Families

Satellite Family Child Care System (a program with Reach Dane) is a network of approximately 54 accredited in-home family child care providers. These providers have achieved accreditation through the City of Madison, which offers a higher level of regulation in addition to county certification or state licensing. Our family child care programs engage in a cycle of continuous quality improvement of their small, independent businesses. These providers offer care for young children ages 0-12 years. Satellite also has Spanish or bilingual (English and Spanish) programming.

UW-Madison contracts with Satellite Family Child Care for accreditation and oversight of high-quality family child care homes. This partnership is designed to expand capacity for

infant/toddler care for faculty, staff, and students. Fees and contracts for services are determined by the providers. Over the past year, almost 80 children from UW-Madison families have been enrolled in Satellite programs. Many accredited Satellite providers also accept Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP) funding from the OCCFR to increase the affordability of care for student parents. The OCCFR also offers financial support to Satellite providers through a mini-grant process. Satellite staff can apply for funds for professional development or training opportunities. We are grateful for the strong connections that we have to the OCCFR at UW-Madison!

— Amy Christianson, *Satellite Family Child Care System Director, Reach Dane*

Teacher Spotlight: Katie Grimm from Bernie's Place

How did you get interested in the field of child care and early education? I always enjoyed hanging out with kids when I was younger. When I got married, we moved to California while my husband was in the military and childcare was always in demand, so I started to look into it and worked to get my degree in psychology with an emphasis on early childhood. When we returned to Wisconsin, I worked at the YMCA child care in Onalaska while I finished my degree. We eventually moved to Madison and I found my current community at Bernie's Place.



What is something important a child has taught you?

More than one child has taught (and constantly reminds) me to live in the moment. Often children don't care what's going to happen next if they are having fun and making connections.

What gives you the greatest sense of accomplishment in this noble profession?

I experience the biggest sense of accomplishment when a child has that "aha!" moment. This happens often when working with toddlers. It's very fulfilling as an educator.

How do you show children that you value them?

I try to show children that I value them by giving them my time and attention. They each deserve to have a special moment where you can look into their eyes, touch their hand or cheek, and talk only to them. It always amazes me how a child can build a bond with you by doing those simple things.

What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

My greatest challenge is sometimes putting my own life aside when I step into the classroom. My personal life defines who I am in so many ways, but taking it into the classroom can sometimes detract from what I need to do.

What is the one thing you wish that the general public understood about the early childhood education profession?

I wish the public understood how important these years are in a child's life and to give more time, understanding, and funding to this profession.

Student Parent Testimonial: Jesus Garza-Noriega

As a first-generation college student, understanding campus resources and academic processes have been very challenging, so much so that I contemplated withdrawing from the university once my wife and I had children. After discussing this possibility with my academic advisor, she told me about the services of the Office of Child Care and Family Resources (OCCFR).

As soon as I reached out to the OCCFR, I was thoughtfully and kindly guided through the application steps for child care tuition assistance. Thanks to the OCCFR, I am able to pursue my academic dreams while knowing my family is being cared for. It is the best of both worlds. Furthermore, their ongoing support has allowed me to advance my studies to the graduate-school level. I am proud to share that I have made the Dean's list each semester since I enrolled at UW-Madison! I've also become a Ronald E. McNair scholar, enabling me to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully navigate the rigors of PhD studies. My family and I are forever grateful to our friends in the OCCFR!

— Jesus Garza-Noriega



Little Chicks to Offer Evening and Weekend Care

Little Chicks Learning Academy, one of UW–Madison’s child care network centers, has provided flexible scheduling through non-traditional contracts and reservations since 2004. Hourly care was created for two primary reasons: to serve families who don’t require 40 hours a week Monday–Friday and to give families other options when their current child care provider is unavailable. Families can choose the hourly care program at Little Chicks on an as-needed basis or can sign a short-term contract based on duration and number of hours per week.

New this fall, Little Chicks will pilot evening and weekend care options. According to Director Amanda Sattler, “During our years of affiliation with UW–Madison, we have witnessed a growing need for a variety of non-traditional services. Over the last few years, we have offered finals care and theme days to student parents who attend UW. We have had great turnout at these events. Feedback indicates that families were appreciative to have a safe and fun environment for their children while they were able to study or run errands.

Our hope is that night and weekend service will appeal to many families, especially parents in the medical field who have evening classes or work commitments. By expanding our non-traditional hours, we can offer a little bit of flexibility to our contracted families and to those in need of extra care at the end of the day. Many of our families do not have immediate or extended family members in town and find it difficult to find someone they trust to watch their child, even for a couple hours. We are more than happy to fill that need for them.”



Development News

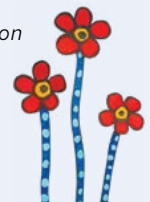
Our fundraising focus over the past eighteen months has been the growth of the new *Office of Child Care and Family Resources fund*. The central purpose of this fund is twofold: to offset thousands of dollars lost during the pandemic closures of our campus child care centers and to sustain them during this period of enrollment uncertainty. To date, gift revenue has climbed to over \$15,000 with generous commitments from thirty donors. We’ve been able to assist our centers with teacher salaries, reflective practice training, and early childhood mental health consultations. These professional development and wellness opportunities have played a critical role in the emotional well-being of our early educators. As Cigdem suggests in her message, the stress load on our early educators continues to escalate. We will use donor gifts to provide our centers with necessary operational funds to help mitigate the serious threat of teacher burnout and attrition. This is currently the highest priority for our office.

Our centers have demonstrated extraordinary resilience during this difficult time. Still, it has been a balancing act with growing budget deficits for the foreseeable future. In the words of one campus child care director, “COVID has taken its

toll and stretched all of us thin.” It is imperative that policy makers prioritize long-term economic assistance for child care. To quote Melinda Gates, “As governments rebuild their economies, it’s time to start treating childcare as essential infrastructure—just as worthy of funding as roads and fiber-optic cables.” Ongoing concerns for both campus and network child care centers include: Delta variant illness and risk management; growing staff shortages and the inability to find and hire qualified replacements; staff compensation; and low enrollment.

We are deeply grateful that you understand the value of our services to UW–Madison families and the urgent needs of our campus and network child care providers. Your ongoing support will ensure the long-term survival of campus child care. As always, we appreciate your consideration of a gift to the Office of Child Care and Family Resources. Here is the electronic link to this fund: <https://www.supportuw.org/giveto/OCCFR-fund>. Do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns about how your gift will best serve our children and child care community.

Teri Stratton



Lil' Badger Bash 2021

Our annual Badger Bash took place on August 12. We had hoped to hold the event on the grounds of the Eagle Heights Community Center, but an increase in Delta variant cases changed these plans. Our office sponsors this event for student parents who receive Child Care Tuition Assistance (CCTAP). Typically, the evening is filled with festive activities, including a guest appearance by Bucky Badger, and a hearty burrito dinner with all the trimmings. At the center of the Badger Bash is our backpack giveaway. Parents select backpacks filled with basic school supplies for children ages five and older. We also provide preschool packs so our youngest can join in the fun. Although we couldn't gather in person because of the ongoing pandemic, we were still able to host the backpack giveaway. Current CCTAP families came to our office in Eagle Heights to select a backpack for their child. With protocols firmly in place, everyone was safe and ready for a successful school year.



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