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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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Message from Cigdem



I hope that your transition into fall has been peaceful and filled with the bounty of the season. With a recommended vaccine for our youngest, we are ready to turn a corner on this pandemic.

While there has been progress in enrollment consistency and staffing, our campus and network centers continue to adapt to ongoing requirements and restrictions of COVID-19. The emotional fallout has been overwhelming. It is essential that early childhood educators find healthy ways to cope with the changing landscape of society and its impact on their programs. Change begins with the acknowledgment that business as usual is not working. Taking care of one's own physical and mental health has become an urgent necessity.

I have been thinking about innovative ways to support the well-being of our directors; center stability and emotional happiness begin with them. Directors spend most of their time and energy in resolving daily administrative issues such as workforce shortages and have little left over to address their own needs. To that end, I am laying

the groundwork for two new growth initiatives: a "Reset, Recharge, and Reimagine" retreat with Mary Peters, trained facilitator in Parker Palmer's Center for Courage and Renewal, and a "Child Care Center Director Peer Mentor Network and Leadership" training series. The retreat is partially funded by a grant from the Evjue Foundation, enabling participants to gather and reflect under Mary's direction. I will have oversight of the network and leadership series. The goal is to provide opportunities for directors to connect with peers who understand their unique set of circumstances. Together directors will create a collective voice for empowerment and resilience in their field.

Through these two undertakings, participants will find a safe and nurturing space to share their everyday experiences as child care center directors and a forum to exchange stories about their individual journeys. It is my wish that these opportunities will increase the health and well-being of our directors, and that they will find the strength to continue in their roles.

As always, we remain grateful for your generosity and support of our efforts.

OCCFR Fall Family Engagement

It has been over two years since we held our Lil' Badger Bash and Backpack Giveaway in person. We missed welcoming student families to our campus in celebration of a new academic year. Never again will we take for granted the opportunity to gather in person. In total, 60 families attended this event. In addition to backpacks stuffed with school supplies, we catered a burrito dinner and coordinated fun activities such as face painting, a photo booth, and a sidewalk chalk art contest. Families were able to intermingle and meet OCCFR team members. A positive and welcoming beginning makes such a big difference for campus

families. We want them to know that they belong here.

We are also excited to offer other family support programs and events for parenting students. In August, we started UW Student Parent Coffee and Connections, where student parents share the joys and difficulties of parenting while in pursuit of degree completion. Dr. Laura Froyen continues to add programming excellence to our activity roster. She is our resident expert in research-based parenting strategies. Her topics include: a lunch and learn; one-on-one consultations; respectful parenting 101; and an infant development play group.

Reflective Practice Initiative for Campus Early Educators



All three campus early childhood programs are partnering with Dr. Roseanne Clark, Professor, Department of Psychiatry, and the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Team to support professional development priorities around mental health consultation and reflective practice as a means to combat the burnout and emotional fatigue of the last two and a half years. With pandemic-induced challenges for early education classrooms, reflective work with a focus on the well-being of children, parents, and staff is more timely than ever.

Reflective practice helps early educators support relationships with each other, the children they serve, and their parents by creating space to:

- Step back from their immediate experiences
- Explore challenging situations from multiple perspectives
- Sort how one's own values, beliefs, feelings, and reactions may shape understanding
- Use inquiry to identify new ideas, get “unstuck,” and discover potential solutions (Clark, R. et al, 2019, Zero to 3, *Mindful Practices to Enhance Diversity-Informed Reflective Supervision and Leadership*)



Dr. Linda Tuchman-Ginsberg provides reflective consultation to leadership and staff for the reflective practice initiatives at the Child Development Lab (CDL) and Waisman Early Childhood Program. Dr. Kathleen Hipke offers biweekly mental health consultation sessions to CDL teachers. Dr. Roseanne Clark and Gretchen Becker Crabb, MS, OTR, LPC, have

provided mental health consultation and supported well-being initiatives at Eagle's Wing, including a mindfulness class and a day of yoga, mindfulness, and self-compassion. Programs have also sent staff to the UW Infant, Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Capstone Certificate Program, where they experience reflective mentoring. Our deepest appreciation to the Office of Child Care and Family Resources for funding these important initiatives.

Here are reflections from campus child care program directors:



Reflective practice during the pandemic has given us amazing tools to engage in our daily work while continuing to grow our perspectives together. Reflective practice has been critical in grounding our teachers and allows regular time and space to consider and contemplate the uncertainty. It helps shine a light on how we might approach our work and broadens our ability to see and consider new or different perspectives.

Jill Riley, Director, Child Development Lab

At a time when educators are exhausted, undervalued, and overworked, we have been able to find encouragement. We are in the preliminary stages of our reflective practice journey, and what we have absorbed thus far have been moments of validation, warmth, cohesiveness, and hope. In the end, reflective practice focuses on creating open and authentic relationships that invite personal and professional self-inquiry in order to advance children's healthy development.

Ann Marie Lauritzen, Director, Waisman Early Childhood Program

Early Educator Wellness: A Pressing Priority



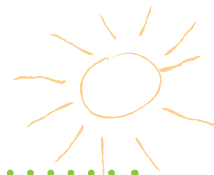
The COVID-19 pandemic delivered unprecedented challenges to the early childhood education workforce.

In the face of declining enrollment, employment uncertainty, and vaccine volatility, early education teachers experienced harmful levels of personal and professional stress. These educators continue to deal with long hours, inadequate salaries, and a general lack of respect and public recognition for their work. In spite of risk factors for burnout and mental distress, teachers often lack the resources to address these important issues.

As Cigdem indicates in her message, early educator well-being has been a focal point of our efforts to support our campus teachers. Healthy working environments are critical for teacher retention and productivity. In the words of one of our campus center directors, “Self-care is not an indulgence; it is act of self-preservation.” Access to self-care can play a transformative role in stress management, cultivating joy and rebounding from the inevitable setbacks in life. Furthermore, there is a direct link between the well-being of teachers and the educational outcomes of their young students.

With a financial commitment from our office, each of our three campus child care centers has created a recharging or relaxation space where teachers can step away from their classrooms to engage in stress-reduction activities: music, aromatherapy, drawing, and meditation.





Teacher Spotlight: Kori Kriewaldt from Eagle's Wing

How did you get interested in the field of child care and early education? I've had a passion for being around children my entire life. I studied child psychology in college and worked in child care after I graduated. I have been employed at centers in Minneapolis and Milwaukee, gaining experience with all ages. Most of my teaching has been in infant and toddler classrooms. In February of 2018, I began working in the infant classroom at Eagle's Wing. I have recently moved to the preschool classroom.



What is something important a child has taught you?

Children continue to teach me and remind me to find joy and amazement in small things. For example, as an adult, I don't necessarily love snow or cold weather, but as a teacher, I build snowmen, snow forts, roll the "biggest snowball ever," make snow angels, go sledding, and paint snow. I'm able to see through their eyes the wonder of snow.

What is most important in your classroom? I believe that allowing children time and space to learn to problem-solve with others and develop prosocial relationships with peers are most important. I strongly emphasize helping children navigate social relationships with each other and especially social conflicts. Children in my classroom are beginning to form stronger social relationships with specific peers and

learning how to communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas verbally with others.

What brings you joy outside the classroom? Outside the classroom, I enjoy a variety of arts and crafts, including sewing, woodworking, and painting. I appreciate the challenge of creating and developing my own plans and ideas to create something versus following a pattern or plan someone else has created. I also relish being outside in nature. I also enjoy baking sweets, solving Sudoku and logic puzzles, as well as singing.

Kori Kriewaldt, Eagle's Wing



Development News

As this year winds to a close, we are pleased to report significant gains in our UW Foundation accounts. You likely know that our fundraising priority over the past two years has been the growth of the new Office of Child Care and Family Resources Fund to support pandemic-related deficits in our three campus centers. From July 2021 to the end of the last fiscal year, gift revenue in this fund increased by over 45 percent, including a major gift of \$10,000 from Marlene Hartzman. The Student Child Care Scholarships Fund also recorded substantial growth with a 76 percent increase in gifts from FY21–FY22. A boost in recurring gift revenue explains, in part, the magnitude of this percentage. The four other funds were less active during this time period.

As for future fundraising projects, in this little office, we dream big. Our goal to create a Student-Parent Resource Center is alive and well. This center will provide a gathering space for our families to connect with each other. As this center

evolves, we also envision offering these services: onsite parent resource specialist; a food pantry and inventory of common but costly household items such as diapers, formula, and toys; a computer area with laptops and printers; a playroom and library. We will keep you informed of our progress.

At UW–Madison, children are our bottom line. Your gifts enable us to make a profound difference in their young lives. We are grateful for all you do to strengthen our work. 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. Ongoing or one-time gifts can be made at any time during the year. The giving page on our website, occf.wisc.edu/giving, provides descriptions and links to all six of our funds. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions about how your gift will best serve our children and child care community.

Teri Stratton, Annual Giving



Parenting Student Voices

"CCTAP was a huge help to me and my family! Returning to school after more than a 10-year gap was scary and stressful enough, but my wife and I also had our first child while I was a full-time student. The funds we received from CCTAP allowed me to complete my degree with less stress and made the decision to enter the public sector after graduation much easier. The staff at the Office of Child Care and Family Resources also worked with my providers, who speak primarily Spanish, to make sure they understood the forms and what was happening with the program. They really went above and beyond. Thanks so much!"

Will Anderson, Juris Doctorate (JD)



"The OCCFR and CCTAP/CCAMPIS awards have been such a huge part of my journey through the PhD while being a mom of two young children. I am so very thankful for all of the office's help in finding quality child care, offering financial support, and organizing classes to learn more about child raising and parenting. Thank you so much!"

*Holly Rubalcava,
PhD Art History*

