

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.

SPRING 2023

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OUR MISSION

We empower UW parenting students to achieve their academic and professional goals by administering childcare financial assistance, providing parent and family support programs, and building access to high-quality early childhood education.

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Office of Child Care and Family Resources
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Message from Cigdem



We hope that your days are filled with peace and joy. It is hard to believe that we have just marked the three-year anniversary of the start of the pandemic. During this challenging period, it has been

our honor to support campus families. The Office of Child Care and Family Resources team continues to marvel at the unwavering commitment of campus and network teachers to our youngest learners and their families. We look forward to a safe and promising future.

One of our most pressing concerns is the growing teacher shortage. This crisis is affecting families, businesses, and the workforce nationwide. Demand for high-quality child care is increasing while the supply of qualified teachers is on the decline. Consequences include growing waitlists for childcare slots and higher tuition costs for families. Teacher shortages continue to impact UW-Madison campus childcare centers, resulting in classroom closures and a reduction in the number of families served.

The UW-Madison School of Education, our administrative home, has taken a major step to address the teacher shortage and to establish a thriving pipeline of teachers in our state. This initiative is called the Teacher Pledge program. It is an opt-in loan forgivable program

for teacher education students who make a commitment to stay and teach in Wisconsin post-graduation. The financial rewards include coverage of in-state tuition, along with testing and licensing costs. Here is the most exciting news of all: student-teachers in our three campus childcare centers have been approved for inclusion in this program. So, aspiring early education students who enroll in a School of Education teacher education program and who agree to the terms of this pledge qualify for this substantial financial aid package. Becoming a teacher at one of the top schools of education in the nation is a dream come true!

Our campus centers contribute to the university's teaching mission by offering student-teacher practicums, internships, and teacher-assistant job opportunities. Paid internships yield numerous benefits for students, including hands-on experience while they are building their resume and references, improved confidence and competence, and the possibility for post-graduation employment. We hope that the Teacher Pledge program will help address teacher shortages and create mutually productive partnerships. I have been working on creating this alliance to benefit everyone who is involved and to provide financial support for UW campus childcare centers to offer paid internships to students.

Spring Parent Education and Family Engagement

Our office continues to sponsor workshops and other educational opportunities for campus families. As always, our goals are to build communities of support and to keep parents current on the latest research, resources, and parenting advice. To this end, we have gathered experts in the field of early childhood parenting. These meetings often take the form of lunch and learns. The spring roster includes a single parents workshop; "I'm New at This," a primer for expectant and new parents; "Raising Problem Solvers," a three-part series on how to address

family conflicts through the medium of collaborative problem solving; "Partners in Parenting," a two-part workshop where parents learn how to apply the concept of teamwork; and finally, "Tantrums and Meltdowns," a session on how to recognize big feelings and handle them in developmentally appropriate ways. In addition, Dr. Laura Froyen oversees an infant development playgroup and offers one-on-one parenting consultations. All classes and workshops are free of charge and open to current UW-Madison students, faculty, and staff.



Reflections and Directions: The View from Eagle's Wing

We appreciate your generous support!

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Ellie Squire and Rob San Juan are associate directors at Eagle's Wing. We invited them to share their thoughts on how their center has evolved over the past three years.

Rob: My first year at Eagle's Wing was 2022. It marked a different time in the pandemic, but I encountered the same challenges that I'd experienced in a similar role; namely, staff mental health and staffing shortages. At the same time, we started seeing movement toward a new "normal." Masks were going away, and children were eligible for vaccines. By the end of that year, we found ourselves fully staffed for the first time.

As an administrative team, we've started to look ahead into "bigger picture" projects and goals. We're excited to create more opportunities for parent engagement, teacher professional development, and updates to our websites and tools for communicating with prospective



families. It is a major shift from where we were a year ago.

Ellie: The pandemic brought to light the importance of our field. I felt hopeful by the political attention given to early childhood. The general public needs to recognize our value to the workforce, but more importantly, as the teachers of our population during its most critical time of development.

I also had the chance to revisit the resilience of the people who choose early childhood as their profession. Our teachers were adaptable, worked together to figure out solutions to complex and ever-evolving problems, and remained consistently loving and present for the kids in our care.

As we move beyond the pandemic and embrace our new "normal," I look forward to being an advocate for early childhood education. Hopefully, we are able to capitalize on the increased attention that the pandemic gave to our field.



Teacher Spotlight: Gabrielle Sherrard from Little Chicks



How did you get interested in the field of child care and early education? I've always wanted to be a teacher. I knew from a young age that's what I wanted to do. I student taught in Ireland as part of the practicum for my bachelor's in early childhood education and was fortunate enough to teach in their 4K and kindergarten classrooms. Then, while pursuing my master's in special education, I realized how much I truly treasure young life with all the growth that occurs.

What gives you the greatest sense of accomplishment in this noble profession? Watching children and the size of their families grow over the years, getting to see them experience siblings, and the milestones they accomplish while enrolled in our center. The children grow so much in the first few years.

How do you build on a child's individual and family strengths, cultural backgrounds, and experiences? It takes time and communication that is both informal and formal. Having casual conversation with parents at drop-off and pick-up enables us to talk about the day-to-day experiences and expectations for our center. With our looping system, we get to know each family over the years. Phone calls, emails,

Facebook Messenger, and Facebook posts are all effective ways to stay in touch and to build rapport with each family.

How do you show children that you value them? Talk with them about their big feelings and give them affection. They are taking in so much every day. The value of learning from their mistakes is important for their development, self-worth, and sense of well-being.

What is the one thing you wish that the general public understood about your profession? It's a dirty, loud, chaotic, and sometimes difficult job that I hope is appreciated by others.





Five Ways College Instructors Can Support Student Parents

Kateri Weege is a parenting student at UW–Madison. Her current research focuses on the complex relationship between student parents and teaching faculty at UW–Madison.



Normalize acknowledging nontraditional students. A welcoming and inclusive classroom addresses not only those who come from differing backgrounds on the basis of race, gender, and class, but also on parenting status. On the first day, welcome your students and verbally acknowledge that your classroom is a safe space for students from all walks of life and for those who are caretakers and/or have children.

Be flexible. Title IX provides ample protection for pregnant students, such as accommodations for illness and leave. However, once the child is born, student parents are no longer afforded the same protections. Verbally acknowledge that you understand some students have caretaking and parental responsibilities. Offer class recordings, a no-questions-asked three-absence policy, and remote office hours.

Educate yourself on parenting experiences writ large. The experiences of student parents

exist within a greater context of the struggle of parenting in the United States. Rising costs of food, housing, child care, and health care are immediate and consistent factors in the day-to-day lives of many parents. The pandemic has further exacerbated existing issues with child care. Many locations have year-long waitlists, and the cost of quality child care is often prohibitive.

Reach out! Parenting and being a student can often feel lonely and isolating. If a student has disclosed their parenting status, feel free to send a kind email or talk to them after class. Let them know that you see them and are excited that they are a part of your classroom community.



Advocate for a more inclusive campus. Student parents are among the highest achievers of academic success. Their voices and experiences matter. Utilize your position as a member of the faculty and raise attention to the value that these students bring to campus. Fight for policies that require the same flexibility granted to pregnant students and encourage other staff members to apply these practices.

– Kateri Weege, BSW, graduate student in social work, and student parent

- Rebecca Spithill
- Teri Stratton
- Dr. Anthony Sturm
- Erica Turner
- Sharon Trimborn
- Dr. Linda Tuchman-Ginsberg
- Alan Ginsberg

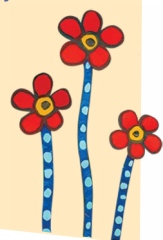
Student Child Care Scholarship Grants Fund

- Andrea Bosquez-Porter
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- Sally Rowe
- William Bauer

*Gifts received March 2022–February 2023



Development News

One of the most beloved fight songs at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is “If You Want to Be a Badger.” Aspiring graduates and proud alumni alike know this song by heart. Of course, Bucky Badger is best known as a team mascot, but he is also a prolific fundraiser and the face of the annual Day of the Badger (DOTB) giving campaign. This philanthropic event took place on March 28 and 29 to raise funds for many units across campus and to celebrate Badger pride. This year, the Office of Child Care and Family Resources made its official debut in the DOTB. The report of final outcomes will have to wait, as this newsletter went to print before the end of the campaign. We are deeply indebted to Marlene Hartzman for her generous \$10,000 matching gift. It is not too late to join in the fun. Here is a link to our webpage: dayofthebadger.org/campaigns/childcare-and-family-resources.

Never underestimate the impact of giving to campus child care. The little ones are at the heart of everything we do. Your gifts enable children to thrive in high-quality learning centers, ensure that children receive affordable access to child care while their parents earn degrees or work on campus, and empower campus early educators to create innovative learning environments and to gain the professional development they need to thrive in the classroom.

We are grateful for your firm commitment to support our work. 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 Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association funds. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions about how your gift will best serve our children and childcare community.

– Teri Stratton



**Office of Child Care
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Parenting Student Voices...

My experience with the Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP) has been abundantly supportive. Being a student while pursuing a degree is a uniquely challenging experience and I'm so grateful for the support CCTAP has given me and my family. I can confidently say I was able to finish my degree in a timely manner thanks to CCTAP, Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS), and the OCCFR team!

CCAMPIS made it possible for me to remain in graduate school this academic year. My husband and I had saved and planned for adding a child to our family while I was a grad student, but were surprised with twins! Without CCAMPIS, I would have had to take a few years off to stay home with the twins, since infant child care for two babies is well beyond our means. I'm very grateful to the CCAMPIS team for helping me navigate this process and for allowing me to pursue my passion.

*Roxy Etta, PhD
Teaching & Research Coordinator
Child Development Lab
School of Human Ecology*

