

July 29, 2009

To the Members of the Community Services Committee

It is with great reluctance that I forward these budget recommendations to you on behalf of the Early Childhood Care and Education Committee. We are offering the \$52,362 in cuts to programs only because we have been asked to do so, not because we believe it is the right thing to do. Quite the opposite.

Over years of working with and evaluating programs providing services to children and organizations, we have come to recognize them all as essential. They are the components of an intricate system that supports the well being of Madison's low income children. These programs also create and maintain the infrastructure that makes Madison one of the best cities for child care in the country -- even with only half of our young children in accredited care.

But the infrastructure is incredibly fragile. The proposed cut to Satellite means fewer accredited family child care providers receive support. Cutting the Rainbow Project means that fewer child care workers will be able to respond appropriately to a child traumatized by her parent's death or his parent's job loss. The cuts to every single one of our preschool, after school, and summer programs will result in lower wages for workers, fewer materials to use for activities, or fewer children served by the program. And so on.

Every cut we make today has ramifications for tomorrow, and not in equal amounts. The four-year-old who hits today and doesn't learn how to deal with his or her anger is tomorrow's child who doesn't achieve in school, requires more resources or may join a gang. A few more years down the road, we have an abuser or addict or disturber of the peace using police, jail, and prison resources. The investment in early childhood care and education reduces the need for much more expensive resources, such as police, in the future.

I know that you all understand these issues, since I sit with you on the CSC. I wanted you to know that the ECCEC understands this too.

Sincerely,

Joanne Brown

On behalf of the Early Childhood Care and Education Committee

Cc: David Cieslewicz, Mayor, City of Madison

Noble Wray, Chief of Police, City of Madison

Thomas L. Schlenker, Director of Public Health, Madison & Dane County

Alders, City of Madison