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October 18 Testimony
City Budget Recommendations

City Council Community Budget Hearing

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I am here to provide you with information about how the proposed \$10,773 cut to 4-C's training and professional development services will affect services to childcare providers in the City of Madison. The training program last year provided the following services in Dane County :

**53 Workshops and classes for
1421 Child care center staff or family child care homes
96% positive evaluations from the providers attending the trainings**

**441 curriculum kits, or materials loaned to child care providers
1598 technical assistance consultations.**

4000 children (44% of the children in early childhood education programs in Madison) a conservative estimate of the children whose quality of care was improved by the 4-C trainings.

(So far in 2005 we have had almost 1900 people attend our classes and workshops)

This is a very large program run on a small budget.

Madison rightfully is known across the country for the quality of life as it relates to children especially child care and early childhood programs. It is a reason many people including myself moved to this area. Madison has good early childhood programs because of a long term commitment by the city to quality child care and a local city run program for creating and accrediting high quality programs. **Over half of the children last year in the city were able to attend high quality accredited child care programs- a feat unmatched anywhere in the country** and largely the results of the work of the city's child care unit and your commitment to help support those programs.

But that still leaves almost half of the city's children (with a disproportionate number of younger children, infants and toddlers) in care of varying quality – most of which is good and meets basic licensing standards but a portion of which is substandard and which serves a disproportionate number of low income children. Of the \$1,827,834 in city levy funds expended each year related to child care and early childhood only the \$66,827 budgeted for the 4-C programs (3.66% of the child care budget) can be used to address the needs of those almost 5000 children - not in city accredited programs. \$31,629 of that goes into direct Training and Technical Assistance and it is proposed that small amount be reduced by a third.

The provision of quality low cost training is one of the best ways to improve the quality of care. The Latino project was the first time we were able to provide an intensive program of training for a relatively small group (60-100) of providers. The end result has been half of the regulated Latino Family Child care homes today are City accredited, far higher than any other family child care group. Investing in training outside the city accredited system helps to grow the pool of programs able to be accredited.

This is happening mid contact with no prior notice and through no fault of our own as we regularly exceed our target goals . It is happening during a year in which our other funding sources are flat with no increases . As such we are already struggling to raise private sector funds to cover increases in health care and gasoline costs. We are selling cookbooks, doing a Playhouse raffle and other fundraisers. We have already laid off staff and have placed our building up for sale in preparation for a very tight next few years. As such we do not see any option for replacing the money cut from our city contract between now and January.

I can also provide more detailed information on trainings, and their participants if you desire I can also provide additional information about the amount and quality of child care in different parts of the city