



December 8, 2009

Community Development Division Director,

I am the Director of Here We Grow Learning Center and I am writing you to appeal the denial of our application for City of Madison Childcare Accreditation.

The only reason for denial was The City's Early Childhood Care and Education Committee (ECCEC) recommendation that as of September 2009 no new applications from facilities outside the City of Madison be accepted. I believe the decision by the Child Care Coordinator to follow the ECCEC recommendation should be reconsidered for the following reasons:

- 1) Our facility is located at 5206 Anton Dr, Fitchburg, WI 53719 and while outside the City of Madison boundaries, children at our facility can literally toss a ball over the fence and have it land in Madison.
- 2) The main goal of the Madison Child Care Program is to support and promote high quality child care and early education for children and families in the City. At our facility 71 out of the 98 families are City of Madison residents.
- 3) At our facility, 13% of the families from Madison are supported by the Wisconsin Shares Childcare Assistance Program. These families are not eligible for assistance from the City of Madison Child Care Assistance Program because our facility is not a City Accredited program. This does not take into consideration the additional families that do not qualify for State or County assistance, but would be eligible for City Tuition Assistance if our facility was a City Accredited program.
- 4) The ECCEC recommendation to exclude applicants outside the City of Madison goes against a City of Madison Ordinance that allows applicants from outside the City.
- 5) Our application was sent on October 5. Had we applied 1 month earlier (prior to the ECCEC recommendation) we would have qualified for the program.
- 6) Once initiated only facilities that are City Accredited will be eligible for the Madison Metropolitan School District 4K Program. This will be another example where the majority of our children/families will not be able to participate.

In conclusion, nearly 75% of the children that attend our facility are Madison residents and several of these families are currently on assistance. The ECCEC recommendation excludes these children based on a boundary line. This exclusion is contrary to the stated goal of the Madison Child Care Program and a City of Madison Ordinance allowing facilities outside the City to be accredited. Based on these facts, we ask you to reconsider the decision of the Child Care Coordinator by allowing Here We Grow Learning Center to be part of the City Accreditation Program. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (608) 270-9000.

Sincerely,

Chris Leatherberry
Director, Here We Grow Learning Center