

As an initial step in looking at the City's support for universal child care for all Madison residents, the Madison Child Care Unit will ensure that the current processes used to accredit programs are efficient and geared to the needs of the individual program utilizing all available resources.

The Madison Child Care Unit reaffirms one of its initial goals to link the support for high quality early childhood education (Madison Accreditation Program) to the funding of child care costs for low income families (Madison Child Care Assistance Program). This also reiterates the Community Development Division's focus on poverty.

The staff of the Child Care Unit will adapt processes for the accreditation of new programs as well as adjusting the processes used in the re-accreditations of existing centers. Every center will initially enter the accreditation process as an Affiliate Member. The center remains at this designation until it is fully accredited.

1. During each accreditation we will determine the best manner to support centers in meeting Madison Accreditation Standards.
 - Identify internal resources of a center, other community resources (YoungStar, resources of accredited programs), and the resources of the Madison Child Care Unit to that can support accreditation components.
 - Identify next steps for development of quality early childhood education, specifically the program for children (curriculum, interactions), the administrative systems (policy, governance, finances, supervision, center training and individual professional development), relationships with families, equipment and materials, and the needs of environment etc.
 - Determine resources available to successfully work with low income families; connect with center that successfully meets these families needs, investigate scholarships, payment plans, co-pays.
2. Specialists will use various types of accreditation processes to best meet the needs of the center and staff: full accreditation, expedited accreditation, hybrid, self-accreditation, accelerated accreditation. This will allow us to:
 - Efficiently use our and the center's time during an accreditation.
 - Utilize the time saved to accredit additional centers and programs.
 - Provide focused services to those programs needing additional resources.
3. Along with need, an accreditation grant is tied to the support services a center provides to low income families in its program or to other centers serving low-income families. Consideration is given to:
 - Number of publically funded/low income families served
 - Scholarships provided
 - Changes in center policy (waive co-pays and fees, priority on waiting list etc.)
 - Administrators and/or staff acting as mentors to other center staff
 - Training offered free or low cost to other centers
 - Sharing policies, forms, practices etc.

4. The Madison Child Care Unit will continue to assist centers in expanding accredited care to low-income families.
 - Offer trainings regarding serving high needs families: Understanding Poverty, Effects of Poverty on Brain Development, Family Stressors and Poverty, Trauma Informed Care etc.
 - Partner accredited centers with communities efforts and agencies connected to families in poverty.
 - Financial training to ensure fiscal solvency.

The staff of the Madison Child Care Unit has begun to initiate these changes. Accredited centers will be given information regarding these practices during the focus groups and general meetings that will be held in the summer and fall of 2015. These meetings will be called to inform centers of the changes in the Madison Accreditation Standards.

The revised standards will be brought to the Early Childhood Care and Education Committee in the fall of 2015.

Next discussion: What can be done to support accredited providers in serving low-income families? (Oma Vic McMurray's letter; center's concerns)