



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
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## Meeting Minutes - Approved EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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Thursday, March 14, 2013

8:00 AM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Room 260 (Madison Municipal Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

**Present:** 5 - Linda E. Benzschawel; Scott Peters; Jennifer Templin; Karalyn A. Kratowicz and Muriel Simms

**Absent:** 4 - Anita Weier; Michael B. Jacob; Patricia A. Lasky and Diane B. Adams

**Staff Present:** Monica Host, Jim O'Keefe, Deb Diaz, Connie Williams, Lisa Strub, Terri Strong, Cheryl Tolley, Varinia del Moral

Peters called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION** by Benzschawel, seconded by Simms to approve the minutes. Motion passed by voice vote.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

### DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None.

### NEW BUSINESS

1. [29388](#) ECCEC Forum:  
What are the current challenges in providing quality early childcare and education?

**Attachments:** [March Forum Invite](#)  
[WAN Forum Handout #1.pdf](#)  
[WAN Forum Handout #2 & #3](#)  
[CCSSO Forum Handout #1.pdf](#)

Peters introduced Jennifer Dittrich-Templin, the newest ECCEC member.

Dittrich-Templin discussed her background in child care and what brought her

to the committee. She has a degree in Human Development and Family Studies, worked at DCPC, in the Infant and Toddler Center at UW Madison, and is now working in the Office of Child Care and Family Resources at the UW. She administers child care assistance for UW students, does parent education, and works with Launching into Literacy and Math. Jennifer has a 2 year old in an accredited family child care program.

The rest of the committee members gave Jennifer a snapshot of their credentials.

Peters thanked the providers for coming and reiterated that the committee was interested in what they may be able to do to help the providers. He asked that they keep their comments within the 5-10 minute range.

Christie Howell-Yrios from Animal Crackers and Wendy Rakower from Red Caboose spoke together. Together they have 60 years in the field. Wendy stated that centers are having a hard time balancing affordability with quality care, and it is becoming increasingly impossible to do so. Red Caboose has a sliding fee scale which helps. Wisconsin Shares has been a challenge. 30-40% of the children at Red Caboose are on WI Shares. Animal Crackers has 60-80% of their children receiving WI Shares. Red Caboose has had to raise their rates six or seven times and the gap is becoming so big. They need to raise an additional \$50,000 every year so they can offer scholarships to those families that need it. Christie Howell-Yrios stated that the copay is the least of their worries at Animal Crackers. The switch from enrollment based reimbursement to enrollment based reimbursement has been terrible. The City's stabilization funds do help fill the gaps, and without it the gaps would just continue to expand. Families do not have stability, so Animal Crackers chose to freeze the rates for this year in efforts to help stabilize things.

Staff benefits have increased, while longevity bonuses and vacation pay have decreased to help bridge the gap. Wendy added that at Red Caboose, they pay \$228,000 for staff health insurance, so there is little left over for salary raises. She suggested that perhaps City of Madison centers could get into the City insurance pool to help alleviate some of this stress.

Christie said that at least two times per week they rely on the City child care specialists for help and support. City accreditation is not easy, and the specialists help keep them on the path. They also help with issues with State licensing, which is more punitive and complicated.

Christie stated that families are under stress, which causes the children to be stressed, which stresses the center staff. She suggested that it would help to have PRIDE come in to cover parent education.

ROLL CALL: Karalyn Kratowicz arrived at 8:35 am.

Linda Eisele is School Age Consultant and works with the afterschool network. She thanked the City for including after school programs in their accreditation process. The City has a challenge to make sure after school programs are exemplary and of the highest quality in the state. The City needs to maintain the same level of support and training to accomplish this.

School age programs have a problem in that they have a part-time workforce that has a high turnover rate. There is no system for professional development, and any training that is done, is done by the City. It is not being done anywhere else in the state. She would like the City specialists to bring their expertise to the rest of the state.

Linda encouraged the committee to give its full support to bring the City, UW, and child care centers together in a collaborative effort. Many school age programs operate outside of the licensed arena, so they are not under any kind of oversight. Linda feels that the child care unit needs at least one more specialist to look beyond the programs that can be accredited and give support to those that are in need of help to become better programs.

Christine Garrett and Annette Kornell appeared for DCPC Satellite, which provides accreditation for family child care programs. Annette discussed the financial loss to family child care providers associated with attendance-based reimbursement. She also discussed the emotional component associated with this reimbursement system. It tells family care providers that they are professional businesses that are valued. Providers are not paid for days children are sick or on vacation. Family child care providers are businesses, and many times create jobs and contribute to the overall economy of Madison. Annette would like the committee to lobby the State, if possible, to go back to enrollment based assistance.

Annette went on to discuss the lack of communication between the County and parents. Parents do not understand the reimbursement process, and it is hard for the family care provider to educate them on what they are supposed to be paying for care. There may be more to the parent's cost than just the copay. The County does a good job of educating providers on what is expected of them. They need to do this for the families too.

Annette felt YoungStar is a great start, but there is room for improvement. Education has become a barrier. Experience, as well as education, should count. The switch from non-credit education to the requirement for credit bearing coursework is a hardship for family providers. It is more expensive, and many of the providers have many hours invested in non-credit education that is now useless to their rating. She would like the committee to consider lobbying for a change.

Christine Garrett is a family child care provider and works with many W2 families. She discussed a family that she works with that have two children with sickle cell anemia. The children miss many days of child care, and she cannot be reimbursed for these days. The family needs the flexibility of a family care setting, but this puts a large financial burden on her in providing that care. She feels family child care needs to be recognized for their work, and are entitled to enrollment based reimbursement. Paid vacation and sick days are standard benefits in most professions. It should be for family care providers too.

Beth Beavers from Lussier Family Education Center has been in the education field for 30 years, and now works in afterschool. She is in favor of a collaboration of invested parties to work on the challenges facing afterschool programs. One such challenge is the obtaining, hiring, retaining of quality

staff. The pay an excellent wage, but do not offer benefits. She finds that young staff members really need training. We are blessed in the City of Madison to have the child care accreditation team, along with the technical college, expanding the school-age credentials. Credit coursework is very expensive though, compared to non-credit coursework.

Debb Schaub from Eagle's Wing thanked the committee for their support and for being willing to listen. Many of the parents with children in their center are grad students and living in poverty. They may have made the choice to live in poverty for the short-time, but they still face the same struggles as other families that are in poverty for different reasons. She would like to see more help for these families, perhaps in the form of a low interest loan, since most of them will eventually have good jobs.

Eagles Wing is supported and sponsored by the UW. They do not get any tax dollars. They have expanded their bilingual program to a multilingual program. They have five classrooms with children from 39 countries.

Debb reported that she is seeing more "millennials" coming into the job market, and they come with a different work ethic and energy. The time of the 60-70 hour work week for the same pay, may not happen anymore. She needs to budget for anything more than the 40 hour work week. Simms asked if Debb is saying that the "millennials" do not expect to work more than a 40 hour work week. Debb confirmed that yes, that is what she is seeing.

Angela Ferguson, the owner and director of Sandbox Childcare Center, agreed with the issues brought up by the speakers before her. One issue she has been having is that her center has had 2 different licensers that were not on the same page. One licenser told her that changes needed to be made, she complied, then she was assigned to a new licenser who told her things were wrong. The State was not receptive when she tried to complain about this issue.

Another big problem her center has is with the W2 authorizations. 90% of her parents get help from the State. Funding can change or end without any notice. This is burdensome to the center. She needs to have notice of changes in funding.

The committee members asked her several questions about how the authorizations work. Authorization can change from week to week. Childcare assistance may just end and copays can change from week to week. Monica Host shared that the child care specialists have been told to contact Jennifer Aubrey with their concerns.

Arturo Ambriz and Shanee McCoy from Bridge Lakepoint Whenona Neighborhood Center discussed how small their Los Ninos Primeros program is and how easy it is to get lost. Arturo said they do not have many of the large challenges that the bigger programs have. Most kids in their program are 3-4 years old. They help parents navigate MMSD when the time comes. They need good bi-lingual trainers to train parents in early childhood activities. Most parents take additional classes at BLW. Due to their limited space, Los Ninos Primeros cannot take in any additional children. The program meets 3 days a week, and the ability to add a 4th day would be beneficial. They are

trying to be more like a 4K program to make school transition easier for the children.

Shanee is the Youth Program Director and is concerned with the availability of summer camp for the kids from the Owl Creek/Great Gray neighborhood. She has seen that kids are benefiting from the program. They currently have transportation for afterschool activities, but that will be cut off in the summer. The children have the need for services, but no way of getting them to the Center in the summer. It is an 8 hour program and it would give kids something to do and keep them engaged all day.

The committee discussed the location of the Owl Creek/Great Gray neighborhood. Monica Host suggested there may be a City bus that goes out there. Shanee confirmed the bus, but asked if it is appropriate for elementary school students to ride the bus alone. BLW has one van for the whole center.

The children did go to a program at Evangelical Life Church, but the program could not handle the amount of students. Muriel asked if Shanee has reached out to Evangelical Life or other churches and organizations that may have a van or bus that they can borrow. Shanee said she would pursue that avenue.

Donna Jost from MMSD spoke about the impact 4K has on the early childhood community. The District created a preschool resource teacher 13 years ago, as well as Launching into Literacy and Math in collaboration with the City. She is hoping to continue the collaboration. This is the 2nd year of 4K, so there is only one year of measurable data. In the first year, city-wide, 856 children were in 4K. The 5 year old screening tests have shown an 8% increase in scores across all high-risk populations. This is consistent across school and community based programs. It is very important that the school based and community based 4K programs collaborate.

Donna feels it is important to continue to work the MMSD and administrators in the 4K development. It will ensure we help each other grow and understand the same messages. She hopes the child care specialists continue their involvement on the 4K committees. She recognizes it is a time commitment, and hopes it continues to be supported.

Sara Hagen from Country Creek shared that their City accreditation is ending at the end of the year. She understands as they are outside of the City limits and do not serve City school children, but this is devastating to the school. She has been very grateful of the 12 years of support. If the City could come up with an affordable fee, they would be the first to pay it. The City provides such quality service and support, it will be missed.

2. [29053](#) August Meeting/ECCEC Subcommittee

The subcommittee for the April 11th meeting will consist of Muriel Simms, Scott Peters and Karalyn Kratowicz.

## ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION** was made by Muriel Simms, seconded by Linda Benzschawel to adjourn at 9:40 am. Motion passed by voice vote.