

Early Childhood Care and Education Board

Brenda Konkel

She obtained a Criminal Justice degree from UW-Platteville (1990) and a Law degree from UW-Madison (1993). After opening a solo practice law office and practicing law for two years she took the position as Executive Director of the Tenant Resource Center in 1995 and has served in that position since then. She has been active in advocating not only on tenant/landlord issues, but also affordable housing, fair housing, development issues, homelessness, poverty and race issues. She is a co-founder of the Affordable Housing Action Alliance, was active in forming the Social Justice Center, is a board member of Community Shares of Wisconsin, co-chair of a local political party Progressive Dane and is serving her 4th term on the Madison City Council. Brenda is interested in quality childcare issues because it is important to many of the struggling families in the City of Madison that she deals with every day.

Tracy Kuczenski

Tracy Kuczenski works as a legislative attorney with the Legislative Reference Bureau, a non-partisan agency serving both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature. Tracy drafts legislation pertaining to primary and secondary education, economic development, and occupational regulation. Tracy obtained a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a masters degree in land resources from the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. Tracy lives on the near west side with her husband, a "school-ager" at Franklin Elementary, and a much-adored cat named Billy.

Patricia A. Lasky, RN, Phd. (Pat)

Educated at Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin- Madison Originally from Indiana On the Faculty of the School of Nursing, University of Wisconsin until retirement in 2003. Served as Associate Dean and Program Director of the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Graduate Program. Over the years has served on Meeting House Board of Directors, various MMSD committees and currently a member of the Child Care Council, UW-Foundation. Interest in preschool age children throughout entire professional care.

Kathy Raschke

She is an instructor and Program Co-chair at Madison Area Technical College in the Early Childhood Associate Degree Program. She had the honor of starting the program in 1979 with Sally Schrag who has since retired. She has watched it grow from a 1-year vocational diploma program, to an Associate Degree.

Before teaching at MATC, she received a Masters degree in Education from Erikson Institute in Chicago, Illinois. She also worked in a variety of child care settings including full-day centers, and part-day summer programs. She was a director of a child care center in the uptown neighborhood of Chicago, run by Lutheran Welfare Services (now Lutheran Social Services), before moving to Madison.

Her current work involves supervising students who are placed in area child care programs, many of which are accredited, for their Practicum courses. Having such high quality training settings so accessible in the community has been a benefit for the students, and for the MATC program. In return, many of the center teachers who work with her students now, are graduates of MATC. In addition, her own two children attended both accredited preschool and after school programs in the city. Kathy knows how fortunate her family was to have such an option.

Kathy has served on the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Board for several years as a Child Care Specialist and hopes to contribute as much as she has learned.

Dick Schultz

Dick is a native Chicagoan, who moved to Madison 42 years ago to study, and like many, stayed on. He has two daughters and five grandchildren. He was a School Psychologist, and for many years in private practice as well. Now retired, he spends his time with ECCEB, the University-sponsored senior learning program PLATO, and reading medieval history, his hobby.

Joanne Brown

Joan is a librarian and mother of a 14-year-old son. She was a member of the board of two daycares. Her first child care center went out of business when (the board) made the decision to close the doors because it could not pay the bills. The second (Red Caboose) remains extremely well-managed. Joan joined ECCEB at the request of a teacher at Red Caboose, and has been a member ever since.

Michael Jacob

Michael works as the Project Coordinator for Covering Kids and Families, a statewide coalition of 65-plus organizations housed at the UW and dedicated to reducing the number of uninsured children and families in Wisconsin, primarily by promoting and facilitating enrollment in BadgerCare Plus through partnerships with public schools.

Michael is a father of a seven year old first grader at Lapham Elementary. You may have seen Corey in the news as he and his family worked with others to keep that neighborhood school open. Corey was born six weeks premature, a harbinger of his eagerness to get moving with life. He was in a Madison-accredited in-home day care setting at three months and moved on to the Atwood Center's preschool program when he was three.

Michael worked at the Center on Wisconsin Strategy way back when it was partnering with ECCEB and Mayor Bauman to study quality of care in Madison and there were quiet, and ultimately scrapped, discussions about going to referendum to garner funding for four-year-old kindergarten in Madison. Before that he served as press secretary to US Senator Russ Feingold.

In addition to ECCEB, Michael serves on the Ethics Board, is president of the Marquette Neighborhood Association and spends the rest of his free time mucking around in local politics and trying to dedicate a little time to wife Lisa.

Lynn Edlefson

Lynn Edlefson moved to Madison in 1997 where she is employed as the Director of the Office of Child Care and Family Resources. Lynn coordinates a system of 10 centers at UW Madison who serve over 500 children each week, implements student financial support programs including CCTAP (funded through student segregated fees) and a federally funded undergraduate student parent project; collaborates with MMSD and other community partners on professional development for early childhood education and oversees a variety of other parent support services geared towards faculty and staff parents. Additionally, the UW System of child care centers, including Directors from UW programs around the state, are also supported through this office.

Lynn received a master's degree in clinical social work from the University of Kansas in 1977 and subsequently worked as a therapist, clinical director and CEO in private not-for-profit agencies serving at risk children and families within therapeutic settings. She taught social work practice and child welfare; worked in private practice with children and families, and co-authored a book on play/art therapy with young children. She lives in Middleton with her husband Dale, a Director of Actuary Research and daughter Kelli who is finishing high school. Her older daughter Jeni is a tax accountant in Chicago. Her special interests are attachment issues and ensuring responsive environments for young children, especially those who experience multiple challenges and risk factors.

Joanna Parker

Joanna Parker is the Executive Director of The Learning Gardens Child Development Center. The Learning Gardens provides care and education to young children six weeks to five years of age. Joanna moved to Madison in 1998 to direct an Early Head Start program servicing five counties in rural south central Wisconsin. Joanna has worked within the field of early childhood education and care and family support for 14 years, primarily in the Head Start and child care arena. Joanna lives in Madison with her husband and five children who are between the ages of three and eleven.

Joanna received a master's degree in education, focusing on early childhood education from Antioch University in 1997 and subsequently worked as a classroom teacher, home visitor and manager within the Early Head Start program. She ran a consulting company providing training and technical assistance to programs across the country providing services to pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. She has participated in program reviews through the Head Start Bureau and served as a grant reviewer for the Head Start and Child Care Bureaus. Her special interests are quality early care and education and issues around maternal and infant health.

Bev Willer

Bev Willer guided her two biological daughters to adulthood over the past two decades as a single parent, but when they left home, she found she missed the play, the curiosity and

the wonder of children in her life. She “started over“ by welcoming through foster parenting and adoption 12-year-old Sophie and 3-year-old Tyler, both of African American heritage. A single parent with a full-time career managing the office of a health care advocacy organization in Madison, she also opens her arms and Westside home to her 10-year-old grandson, Jacob, on weekends. Bev is committed to working to fulfill the personal and public needs of children in our community. Her experiences with child development and rearing span the range of childhood – and parenthood - issues common to many Madison moms and dads, from connecting with affordable, appropriate child care in Dane County, to assuring that her younger children have frequent access to their heritage, to advocating in the school to secure for her children the attention and resources to become successful adults.

Bev has worked at the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association for the past nine years and is pursuing her degree in Human Development and Family Studies, planning to work in child care in the next phase of her career, continuing to advocate for those who need a voice bold, committed and wise to speak until they are able to do so for themselves.

Diane Adams

Diane Adams, retired child care/early education policy analyst and writer, had a long career with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies, including 21 years as an administrator of 4-C/Madison and 3 years as Coordinator of the state CCR&R Network. Diane served on the state Day Care Advisory Committee, co-chaired the Wisconsin Women’s Network Child Care Task Force, and provided child care data papers for 3 Wisconsin governors. She was on the national board of NACCRRRA for a 3-year term, and has been a frequent presenter at local, state, and national conferences. From 2000-2007, Diane was the Project Director for the Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership, a federal research project that focused on child care for low-income Wisconsin children and conducted research on 4-year-old kindergarten in Wisconsin.

Diane has done research and consulted with child care policy leaders in Uganda and Kenya. She helped U.S. leaders launch the World Forum on Early Care and Education and has presented at their conferences in Hawaii, Singapore, Mexico, New Zealand, and Greece. During 2008, Diane and her husband, Bert, were part of the faculty team accompanying a group of UW-Madison students to Uganda as part of a “Health and Disease” course taught in the Medical School. In May 2008, she conducted interviews with elderly ex-colonial women in Kenya, and is currently completing a 30-minute film documentary about these women’s lives, as well as a book about their work with the East African Women’s League.