

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
University of Wisconsin-Madison, University Child Care Committee
White Paper on UW-Madison Campus Child Care
June 2000

Over the last decade, campus child care has expanded and been strengthened by a supportive university administration. Previous studies conducted by the Committee on Women in the University and the University Child Care Committee have been encouraged and many recommendations submitted by these groups have been implemented. Facilities have been expanded, infant care services have been introduced, the funding for the Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP) has been increased and the establishment of the Office of Campus Child Care in 1992 has provided leadership and coordination for the decentralized child care centers across the campus. While further development of child care services for the campus continues to be a priority, the absence of comparative baseline data about activities and financing of the campus child care centers was an impediment to establishing clear priorities for the 21st Century.

This white paper summarizes the data, findings and recommendations emerging from a survey of all campus children's centers conducted in spring 1999. A work group comprised of representatives of the University Child Care Committee and the Committee on Women in the University developed and administered the survey, which requested information about mission, services, finances, and personnel and staffing issues from six child care centers. These data provide a fuller understanding of the program and operations of the Children's Centers on campus and permit us to quantify similarities and differences in the way services to families and are delivered while maintaining the university mission. Survey data was augmented by data collected from the community and by consultation with a variety of sources.

This report documents the extent to which Children's Centers fulfill University of Wisconsin System policy (Financial and Administrative Policy, G38, commonly known as GAPP 38), which requires that children's centers support the research, teaching and outreach/service mission of UW campuses while providing high quality child care for UW students, faculty, and staff. These multiple missions contribute to the high quality standards found in campus child care programs but they also have profound staffing and cost implications. University subsidies and in-kind support acknowledge the training, outreach and research missions of the Children's Centers. However, a very high proportion of the cost of campus child care is borne by client families. In order to preserve our current standards of excellence and balance competing needs -- to attract, retain and adequately compensate qualified teachers while remaining accessible and affordable to a diverse clientele of students, faculty and staff-- this report encourages the campus to consider new ways of funding campus Children's Centers.

Findings of the survey in six key areas: research, pre-service training, community outreach/service, scope, personnel and finances are presented in the white paper. The analysis prompted a series of recommendations in all six areas. This executive summary highlights only those findings that prompted the ten major recommendations to the campus.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research

Finding: Campus Children's Centers provide opportunities for university research that benefit investigators in many disciplines and campus child care programs. However, the full potential of Children's Centers as sites for research is impeded by the lack of appropriate research facilities, by the lack of socio-economic diversity in the enrollments of some children's centers, and by the amount of time directors must spend introducing new research projects to parents.

Recommendation: We recommend new policies that will highlight and strengthen the research mission of the Children's Centers. To this end, we recommend specifically that the Office of Campus Child Care implement a centralized system for coordinating research projects conducted at the Children's Centers. Implementing this recommendation could be facilitated by a small technology grant to assist with the creation and maintenance of an enhanced web site. Costs associated with this project will include staff time and technical support.

Training

Finding 1: The structure for pre-service teacher training is changing in the School of Education and the School of Human Ecology. New curricula will emphasize expanded community placements and seek more exposure to socio-economically diverse children and families. More diverse enrollments at Children's Center sites would help to retain student placements and sustain the valued and historic training mission in early education.

Recommendation: We recommend that the Campus establish the goal of creating greater diversity as a priority when contracting and collaborating with community groups. Both the research missions and pre-service training missions of the Children's Centers require socio-economic diversity and the inclusion of underrepresented minorities in the children and families served.

Finding 2: Eagle's Wing, the most diverse children's center on Campus, is not fully utilized as training site at the present time.

Recommendation: We recommend that the School of Human Ecology and the School of Education designate Eagle's Wing as a third key site for pre-service training.

Unmet Needs for Child Care Services

Finding: There is great demand for excellent and affordable child care on or near Campus from all segments of the Campus community. While the report documents campus Children's Centers waiting lists, it also notes the anecdotal evidence relating to the positive impact of child care in the recruitment and retention of staff and a more diverse student body. The prohibitive tuition costs of campus Children's Centers for many students and members of the staff coupled with very limited scholarships are partially responsible for the creation of unmet needs.

Consequently, the campus should consider a number of financing strategies as well as capacity solutions.

Recommendations:

- We recommend that the Campus Planning Committee give priority to projects that establish child care centers and/or services when building new facilities or remodeling existing facilities.
- We recommend that the UW administration encourage individual schools and colleges to explore their need for child care, to coordinate these efforts with the Office of Campus Child Care and to consider including child care needs as one of their fundraising priorities.
- We recommend that the campus continue to pursue the addition of child care sites wherever appropriate including through contractual arrangements. Such arrangements require administrative support beyond that which is currently in place. This is especially true for higher cost services including infant care, sick child care and extended hours.
- We recommend funding of increased access to the Children's Centers by low-income students and staff through subsidies to employees and scholarships to students.
- We recommend that the University collect data to determine if access to childcare is a barrier to recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students. When studies such as Plan 2008 are undertaken, the issue of childcare should be included. The annual Student Satisfaction Survey should include items about childcare. Offices and units such as The Equity and Diversity Resource Center, the Graduate School, Student Services, and campus schools and colleges should be sensitive to the need to include the issue of childcare in studies and projects *they* undertake.
- We recommend that UW administration evaluate the expansion of the Office of Campus Child Care as child care services are expanded.
- We recommend that the Office of Campus Child Care and the Office of Human Resources work with the UW Benefits Office to evaluate the provision of child care funding as a staff benefit.

Personnel

Finding: The salaries of campus Children's Centers teaching staff, which are paid by parent tuition, are low compared to salaries paid to public school teachers. There is concern about future recruitment and retention of teachers in the Children's Centers with certification changes (to the K-6 license) and with increase in teacher hiring by the Madison Public Schools to reduce class size.

Recommendation: We recommend that the salaries of Teachers, Assistant Teachers and substitutes be raised to attract and retain qualified staff.

Finance

Finding 1: The university provides various forms of support to the centers, but tuition continues to finance the majority of costs. Because teacher's salaries are the largest part of the Children's Centers budgets, the finding that teacher's salaries are below market levels brings into question both the campus' ability to attract and retain high quality staff and the appropriate division of future costs between the campus, client families through tuition and private resources.

Recommendations:

- We recommend that the University financially support the instruction and research missions and activities of the Children's Centers. Even after recognizing existing University subsidies to the Centers, too many of these costs are dependent on child care tuition paid by parents. When costs are calculated using appropriate levels of teacher salaries, the gap between current subsidies to Children's Centers and the actual cost is even wider. The provision of student training and research are institutional needs that present real costs to the Children's Centers. The university needs to consider other ways to financially support these costs.
- We recommend that the University Child Care Committee evaluate the use of a sliding scale within campus child care centers and put such a plan into place, if appropriate.

Finding 2: Fundraising/Development Opportunities: A formalized partnership with the UW Foundation has assisted the University Child Care Committee in analyzing opportunities and obstacles for attracting private resources. A long-range plan has been developed to assist in the cultivation of major gifts. The success of these efforts requires the administration endorsement of these strategies.

Recommendations:

- We recommend that the University include funding for childcare as a priority when raising private dollars through the UW Foundation and similar groups.
- We recommend that the UW Foundation work with the Office of Campus Child Care to specify priority projects for funding and that these needs are broadly publicized through the UW Foundation web site and through other means.

Respectfully submitted,

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