



# MAKING HEADLINES: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**weca** Wisconsin Early  
Childhood Association  
2018 ANNUAL REPORT



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## WECA LEADING THE CHARGE FOR BOLD CHANGE



RUTH SCHMIDT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If you've been reading the news lately, you are aware that early care and education is making headlines; here are just a few: *"Republicans and Democrats are taking early education more seriously," "Want to Grow the Economy? Fix the Child Care Crises," "At the Breaking Point - How to Better Compensate and*

*Support Teachers of our Youngest Learners," "Taking on the Child Care Crisis in Monroe and Vernon Counties"* and so many more. Wisconsin is taking notice of a crisis that threatens the well-being of children, families, early childhood educators, business community and our communities all across the state.

Here at WECA, we are considering the problems and solutions from a variety of angles. We have experienced 2018 as a year of strengthening relationships, building new partnerships, and discovering advocates in many more places. We realize that fixing our child care system requires innovative thinking and a diverse array of stakeholders. More than ever before, we are collaborating with a variety of sectors including healthcare, business and economic development groups, local governments, social justice organizations, schools, libraries and more to create multi-pronged solutions to the problems we face.

Solution-oriented approaches that help to stabilize the current early care and education workforce are at the heart of this work, and exemplified through WECA's core programs including, our scholarship and stipend programs (T.E.A.C.H. and REWARD), and our Food Program for family child care providers. In 2018 we've added a new core program, Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESN). This network allows early childhood programs to capitalize on economies of scale and tap into a variety of sources of expertise as a larger group to increase revenues and cut staff hours spent on administrative tasks. Also at our core is growing the power of this profession through membership in our association.

Opportunities presented through a number of collaborative grants that WECA has been a part of are also addressing some of the unique challenges facing children, families, and child care providers in both urban and rural parts of Wisconsin. WECA received a grant from Milwaukee Succeeds to provide coaching and mentoring to child care programs within some of the most under-resourced zip codes in Milwaukee, resulting in a 100% staff retention rate and increased quality rating for some during their tenure in the program. WECA received a Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program grant to start a shared services network to stabilize and increase access to child care in Vernon and Monroe counties. In Dane County WECA, along with a host of partners, has advanced to the final round of a substantial grant from Schmidt Future's Alliance for the American Dream. Our "Dream Up" proposal is focused on out-of-school time children, working families, and the early childhood workforce.

Finally, we cannot minimize the opportunities that arise from the talented staff who work daily to elevate the early care field through professional development training and counseling of the workforce. Also, they work with Wisconsin's colleges and universities to enhance the quality of professional preparation. WECA staff are also involved in countless committees and events focused on creating positive change for children, families and the workforce. Through these interactions, we keep our pulse on how policies and programs are impacting communities around the state.

This annual "year in review" propels us to reflect on what is truly newsworthy and to imagine the headlines to come. It begins with the headline with which we would end 2018:

**"WECA is leading the charge for bold change in early care and education!"**



Executive Director, WECA

### Citations for Headlines:

Taking on the Child Care Crisis in Monroe and Vernon Counties - LaCrosse Tribune 4/24/2018

At the Breaking Point - How to Better Compensate and Support Teachers of our Youngest Learners, - New America livestream panel presentation 11/8/2018

Want to Grow the Economy? Fix the Child Care Crises - Ready Nation Report, 1/16/2019

Republicans and Democrats are taking early education more seriously, - The Economist 1/24/2019



# WELL-EDUCATED

CHILD CARE TEACHERS ARE BRAIN BUILDERS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

In the first five years, brains are growing more rapidly than during any other time of life and the actions we take today support healthy brain growth... or not. The evidence is in: for the hundreds of thousands of young children in Wisconsin whose parents are in the workforce high quality early education can help lay the foundation that children need. This relies, however, on a well-educated and



stable workforce able to provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment. The skill of early childhood educators is paramount and **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood WISCONSIN®** scholarships are making a difference. T.E.A.C.H. means more early childhood educators are going to school **(1,168 scholars in 2018)** to improve their education **(2,865**

**courses taken in Wisconsin schools of higher education)**, and strengthening the care children receive in **more than 400 child care programs** statewide. Overall, these teachers earn more and stay longer in their jobs because of their commitment to school while they work. Jeanette Paulson, director of workforce initiatives at WECA states, "In an industry characterized by low wages and high turnover, these 'Brain Builders' need all this support and more."



## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEGREE PROGRAMS INVEST IN A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

students, first generation college attendees, Spanish speaking early childhood educators, and tribal early childhood educators through **Early Learning Grants** to five Wisconsin technical colleges. Additionally, T.E.A.C.H. supports a unique collaboration between UW-

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood WISCONSIN is sponsoring innovative programs in support of non-traditional

Whitewater and Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal College in an innovative program known as "A Pathway to a Degree Program - ECE4U." The grants initiated in 2018 are an effort to increase access to education in support of new students and a diverse student body. In addition, WECA is sponsoring five higher education institutions in pursuit of **NAEYC accreditation**, with a goal to increase high-quality pre-service and ongoing professional development for early childhood educators in Wisconsin.

## MILWAUKEE SUCCEEDS WHEN OUR YOUNG CHILDREN SUCCEED

WECA staff bring expert knowledge to the field through professional learning opportunities for the child care workforce. For example, the **Early Childhood Coaching and Mentoring Program (ECCMP)** in Milwaukee, worked with ten 3-star programs that were struggling to retain quality early childhood educators. The programs were provided with over 450 hours of classroom training and program coaching on classroom environment, teaching practices and licensing standards. All programs completed the program and we saw a **90% retention rate for staff during the life of the program**, significantly higher than the control programs. Additionally, two programs



increased their YoungStar rating from 3 to 4 stars. This project also helped forge relationships with local organizations such as the Milwaukee Public Library, the Betty Brinn Children's Museum, UW-Milwaukee, Books 2 Go and the child care programs with whom we worked. What was truly newsworthy about this program was the participant responses:

*"The rest of my staff want to know when it will be their turn to have Jeanne or a coach come into*

*their classroom to offer support and guidance. At first this seemed like it was going to be a burden, now I wish I could offer it to all my staff."*

*"Our YoungStar technical consultant came to our program in the last month of the ECCMP and exclaimed about how much we had improved since the last time she had visited. She asked us what happened, and we were able to tell her that we had participated in the ECCMP and it made a huge difference in our ability to improve our quality."*

ECCMP was just funded for another round of coaching and mentoring and to include 10 new family child care programs.

---

## THE WISCONSIN EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE GETS "WISER"

This year Wisconsin joined 31 states in providing an online resource platform known as the **Wisconsin Shared Education Resources** or WISER. The resources provided will benefit early childhood program directors, family child care providers, early childhood educators, trainers and consultants, and higher education faculty. The WISER online platform ([www.WISERECE.org](http://www.WISERECE.org)), includes **over 1,600 administrative and classroom supports** including sample policies and procedures, customizable handbooks, curriculum and classroom tools, health and safety procedure guidance, state regulation information, professional development opportunities and exclusive cost savings programs. The WISER platform also features an exclusive online job board (Wisconsin ECE Jobs) which manages each step of the hiring process from job posting to making the hiring offer. With funding support from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), WISER is free to our T.E.A.C.H. scholars, sponsors and higher education partners. Others may join for a nominal membership fee to gain access to all resources, including the job board.



## REWARD NEWS

# BETTER PAY

WORKS TO KEEP CHILD  
CARE TEACHERS IN  
THEIR PROGRAM



As demand for high-quality early education grows, so must the wages of the workforce. Those who make significant gains in their education and stay in their jobs may be eligible for an annual stipend.

**REWARD Wisconsin** provided **1,257 stipends** to early childhood educators in **743 child care programs** in 2018; stipends averaged **\$486**

**annually.** The year began with some additional funds from the Dept. of Children and Families to temporarily extend agreement periods and increase stipend amounts. REWARD, however, is so popular that it is once again operating with a waiting list. While we have a long way to go close the gap between what the early childhood education workforce deserves and what it is paid, REWARD is poised to be a leader on compensation issues in the early childhood field in our state and in the nation. 2018 marked the end of our official engagement in a multi-state national effort called “Moving the Needle on Compensation”<sup>1</sup> but the work continues. We will continue to increase awareness, network with other states, and seek solutions to low wages and high turnover in our field.

**reward**  
Wisconsin

1. To read more, check out <https://teachecnationalcenter.org/center-initiatives-and-resources/center-initiatives/compensation-project/>

## WECA REVIEWS

“Thank you WECA, my check is much appreciated. I’m so glad Wisconsin has the REWARD stipend program.” -**Anne Alexander, Owner, Wee Family Child Care, DeForest, WI**



“Wisconsin Early Childhood Association is wonderful. I appreciate how dedicated they are to teaching and learning. I highly recommend them.” -**Autumn Roeling, early childhood education student, Elkhorn, WI**



“I enjoyed Kelly’s workshop on WEESN so much! Extremely informative on an amazing pilot program from WECA. Kelly’s passion and drive for better childcare in Wisconsin was infectious and I can’t wait to see the shared networking system grow. Thank you Kelly and your team for the work that you do!” -**Maxine Bieritz, Assistant Director at Small World Inc, New Glarus, WI**





## FOOD PROGRAM NEWS

# CELEBRATING

## 50 YEARS OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

The WECA Food Program celebrates its 50th anniversary of supporting family child care programs in providing healthy meals. In 2018 alone, we helped family child care providers **serve 2,299,362 meals to 5,840 young children in 758 family child care programs** all around our state! The WECA Food Program, the only one of its kind to serve the entire state, is instrumental in providing partial funding to programs that serve meals in every Wisconsin county. We have the unique opportunity to connect with many diverse programs, and learn from the providers themselves about some truly delicious, nutritious and amazingly creative meal options that feed thousands of Wisconsin young children.



## FOOD PROGRAM IN ACTION

Children enjoy a morning snack at Honeypie Family Childcare in McFarland, WI. Owner Janell Moran has been involved in the Food Program since 2009.

## CHANGES IN FOOD PROGRAM MEAN BETTER FOOD CHOICES FOR GROWING CHILDREN

Family child care providers in Wisconsin are rising to the challenge of serving healthier meals to children. Recently, the **U.S. Dept. of Agriculture updated the Child Care Food Program meal patterns** to require: more frequent servings of fruits and vegetables, an increase in the use of whole grains, lower sugar levels in yogurts and cereals, a wider variety of foods for children to try, and more support for breastfeeding. We also see more local, healthy foods infused into menus with the **Farm to Early Care and Education Initiative**. This initiative connects children to food origins through gardening and food-based activities. Together these programs are alleviating hunger and setting healthy eating patterns for our youngest Wisconsinites.

This past year has been one of learning and integrating the new meal patterns, beginning with training our own Food Program staff and then taking what we learned out to providers. We offered the guidance they needed to make the changes while still receiving reimbursements for food during the learning process. Providers excelled at embracing the healthier guidelines and were creative in finding ways to implement them. We're proud of our family child care providers and the wonderful work they do each day serving healthy meals and snacks to the young children of Wisconsin!

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS CHILD CARE CRISIS



### SPREADING THE NEWS

*Kelly Matthews, Shared Services Coordinator, presented on the our new program across Wisconsin.*

In 2018 we've added a new core program: the **Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN)**. WECA is at the forefront of bringing this innovative concept to Wisconsin child care programs. Working with local communities, child care providers, and national experts we've developed a network of partners who are not typically engaged in

child care conversations to develop and implement meaningful, targeted support to child care programs.

WEESSN allows programs to capitalize on economies of scale and tap into a variety of sources of expertise as a larger group, resulting in an increase in revenues by cutting staff hours spent on administrative tasks. By streamlining regulation compliance, business practices, purchasing, and program logistics, WEESSN helps providers work smarter so they can focus on what matters most – the children and their families. Still in its infancy, this will be a program to watch as it takes on some of the seemingly intractable issues in the early education field and works to solve them in new, collaborative ways.

This project is funded in part by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

## ADVOCACY NEWS



### FORWARD FOR KIDS

Forward for Kids describes both the direction we promote for Wisconsin public policy on children and families, and the name of our online advocacy network.

**1,492 Forward for Kids Network**

**subscribers** receive a monthly digest connecting them to recent reports, blog posts and research to help them be effective advocates. Network members are called upon to act on behalf of children and families and engage in our activities as needed. **Advocacy** at WECA takes many forms.

Here's just a sampling of our 2018 activities:

- visiting legislators in their offices and building relationships across both political parties

- engaging in the statewide Early Learning Coalition and the Pre-Natal to Three Coalition
- participating in Wisconsin Partners
- co-sponsoring a Week of the Young Child event called Wisconsin Strong! to build partnerships and advocates among business leaders
- Getting Out the Vote activity at our annual conference
- showing a new and powerful documentary *No Small Matter* as a free community event
- participating in a multi-state project called Moving the Needle on Child Care Compensation
- writing an article on child care for the League of Municipalities monthly magazine.
- The year ended in a flurry of grant writing to support more advocacy efforts in 2019.



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

# WECA MEMBERS

## ARE THE POWER OF OUR PROFESSION

Joining WECA is an opportunity to act collectively with professional colleagues on one's beliefs and values to affect the changes we envision. WECA has been engaging in a national dialogue called Power to the Profession, to have a say in our future. There is power in saying what we know; there is power in articulating the value of our work, and there is power in our numbers - **WECA is currently 1137 members strong.**

This past year has been one of change as we followed our national organization's lead in a restructuring and rebranding process. Big changes can be hard on membership, especially for those active in what were formerly called local affiliates, now called chapters. The year ahead of us will be one of re-building and welcoming new members.

What hasn't changed is reduced member rates for our trainings and annual conference, which continue to be a draw for both members and non-members. **Connections**, our annual fall conference, engaged **589 educators** in a variety of inspiring professional development experiences. We welcome all to join us in 2019 - November 14-16 in Pewaukee, WI.

 Wisconsin Early  
Childhood Association

### NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK

*WECA's new logo which aligns  
with NAEYC's branding.*

---

## SPOTLIGHT

### WECA CHAPTER LEADERS

The Chapter Leaders serve as support for WECA's local chapters across the state such as, planning events and providing resources to WECA members.

#### **Beyond Dane:**

Heidi Heller, President  
Jenee Jerome, Vice President  
Amanda Ehlert, Treasurer  
Mary Catherine Green, Secretary

#### **Fox Valley:**

Amy Nogar, President  
Gina Heling, Vice President  
Deana Pupp, Secretary  
Autumn Gill, Treasurer

#### **Greater Milwaukee Chapter:**

Michelle Sorce, President  
Catherine Roach, Treasurer  
Jennifer Fremgen, Secretary

#### **Great Rivers Chapter:**

Kim Gorka, President  
Jenny Ahlert, Secretary  
Kim Amundson, Treasurer

#### **Kenosha and Racine Early Educators (KARE) Chapter:**

April Orth, Treasurer

#### **Rock County:**

Michelle Weirich, Treasurer  
Sue Schimke, Board Member

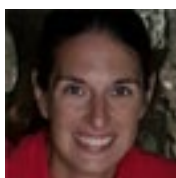
# ADMINISTRATION NEWS

## SPOTLIGHT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WECA's Board of Directors is comprised of 9-13 members with varied backgrounds, from professionals who work directly with children to those who carry the voice of our workforce, and from ECE leaders to leaders in other businesses who know the importance and value of early childhood education for Wisconsin's children. The purpose and focus of the Board is to carry out the legal, fiduciary and operating responsibilities of WECA. We are proud to recognize them for their volunteer service.



**Janean Dilworth-Bart, Ph.D.**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Madison, WI



**Corrine Hendrickson**  
Corrine's Little Explorers  
New Glarus, WI



**Robin Fox, PhD, President**  
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Whitewater, WI



**Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MSLIS, MD**  
University of Wisconsin  
School of Medicine and Public Health  
Madison, WI



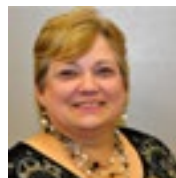
**Abby Abrisham, Vice President**  
Careplus Child Care, Inc. & Fitchburg  
Careplus Preschool  
Fitchburg, WI



**Laura Krystal Porterfield, Ph.D.**  
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Whitewater, WI



**Luke Chirhart, Secretary**  
Amazon Web Services  
Libertyville, IL



**Sue Schimke**  
Little Turtles' Playhouse Cooperative  
Beloit, WI



**Rick Perrin, Treasurer**  
B2B CFO  
Verona, WI



**Henry Wilde**  
Acelero Learning  
Cudahy, WI



**Rafat Arain**  
Crescent Learning Center  
Milwaukee, WI



**Patricia Wooldridge**  
Mariposa Learning Center  
Stoughton, WI

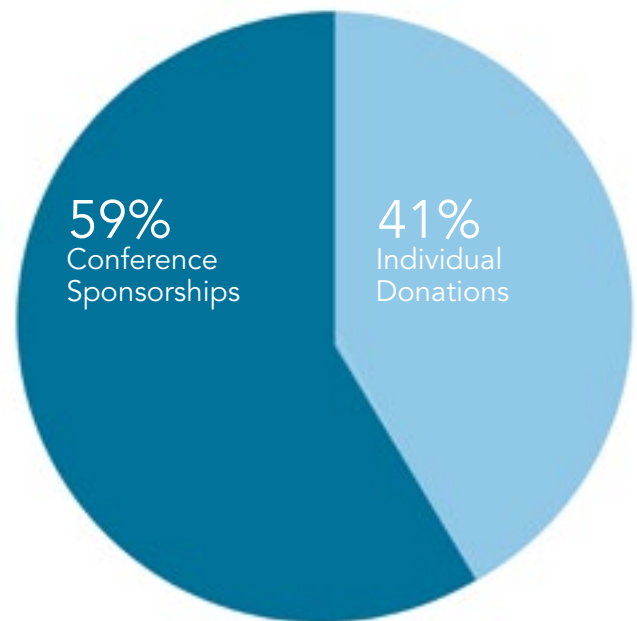
# BY THE NUMBERS

	2018	2017
<b>Revenue</b>		
Food Program	\$3,671,464	\$4,173,961
YoungStar	\$ -	\$42,051
T.E.A.C.H. & REWARD	\$3,745,371	\$3,794,382
Race to the Top	\$1,382,533	\$1,554,116
Other:		
Other Contracts	\$536,360	\$549,696
Contributions	\$19,873	\$21,078
Membership	\$34,642	\$33,348
Annual Conference	\$86,324	\$96,676
Training Events	\$ -	\$10,197
Interest	\$7,615	\$4,210
Miscellaneous	\$4,785	\$18,836
Total Revenue:	\$9,488,967	\$10,295,551
<b>Expenses</b>		
Operations	\$7,506,020	\$7,663,267
Personnel	\$1,747,961	\$2,422,242
Indirect Administration	\$175,195	\$253,423
Total Expenses:	\$9,429,176	\$10,338,932
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$59,791	(\$43,381)

WECA had a successful year in fundraising. In March, it was WECA's fourth year in the 2018 The Big Share, an annual online day of giving hosted by Community Shares of Wisconsin. Our campaign secured \$7,620 from 42 donors. Corrine Hendrickson, family child care provider and WECA Board member shared her thoughts on the giving day. "I am proud to donate to WECA to continue their advocacy for young children and their early childhood educators."

Also this year, our conference revenue hit a 5-year high with more than \$11,500 in sponsorships.

## CONTRIBUTION BREAKDOWN Where did \$19,873 come from?



## CALLING ALL ALLIES

As WECA continues to explore solution-oriented approaches that help to stabilize the current early care and education workforce, we're also seeking allies and invite you to join us! Here are three ways you can support WECA in the near future.

- 1. Donate:** Visit [wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate](https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate) and give a gift in honor of a special early childhood teacher or program.
- 2. Advocate:** Join WECA's Forward For Kids advocacy network to receive updates and action alerts on key early **childhood education issues**. To join, visit <https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/get-involved/forward-for-kids/>.
- 3. Connect:** Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. Share your thoughts and join the conversation.





2908 Marketplace Drive., Suite 101  
Fitchburg, WI 53719  
800-783-9322



Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood](https://facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood)



Follow us on Twitter at [@EarlyEdMatters](https://twitter.com/EarlyEdMatters)

WECA is the Wisconsin affiliate of



WECA is a proud member of

