

weca

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2019



Reflections from Ruth

Reflecting on 2019, I am filled with wild hope for what comes next. Over the past year, we have thoughtfully and intentionally deepened our community-level work. We have created multi-sector partnerships that strengthen the very fabric of our state. We have led with integrity, patiently listening and collaborating. We have built a grassroots response to the needs of Wisconsin's children and families along with those of our early care and education system. We have done this knowing that when our field thrives, we see higher well-being for children and families and flourishing local economies.

Rich relational work leads to innovations built on rethinking who is around the table. Yes to early childhood educators and the organizations that exist to serve them and advocate for their changing needs. But also yes to our partners in health care, faith communities, county government, philanthropy, workforce development, economic development, among others, that helped shape a robust agenda with our Wisconsin Infant Toddler Policy Project, generously funded by the J.B. and M. K. Pritzker Family Foundation.

Additionally, the We Care for Dane Kids systems change initiative (see page 9) works to tackle the thorny issues of both the supply and demand of early care and education in Dane County. These examples are a small sample of the many ways in which WECA is working to anticipate the needs of communities and proactively create stronger and smarter ways forward.

A bright future for our children and families depends on the strength of our communities. We know that what impacts an early educator, also impacts the children in her classroom and subsequently, their families. True and lasting change requires us to consider the dynamic nature of so many intersecting parts of this complex system. This systems approach is also how I view our work at WECA. An innovation in our Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN) strengthens the entire HUB of supports for all WEESSN members and cohorts across the state. T.E.A.C.H. scholars who are supported with free memberships to the Wisconsin Shared Education Resources (WISER) platform have a wealth of current and trusted research at their fingertips. We know that a conference that is responsive to pressing needs of children and educators enables programs to serve their communities with the skills and expertise to meet varying challenges. We know that supporting early educators in our state with REWARD stipends alleviates financial stress that impedes their ability to nourish quality learning environments. We are meeting the needs of our state compassionately and cooperatively and we are grateful to have you on that journey with us.



Ruth Schmitt
WECA Executive Director

Program Highlights



A Strong 20-year Run and A Brighter Future Ahead

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2019. Since its inception, our program has provided more than 16,300 higher education scholarships to over 9,000 professionals who work in regulated early childhood and school-age programs. We continue to work with our state, higher education partners, and local agencies on initiatives to improve access, quality, and the sustainability of the Wisconsin early care and education system. We are also looking forward to a promising 2020. In December of 2019, we received a grant from the Alliance for Early Success and recruited a cohort of 25 early childhood Advocates.

Additionally, we received funding from the WI Department of Children and Families to eliminate our wait list. Now, more than ever, we are committed to ensuring early educators can attain an excellent and affordable education and supporting innovative practices in higher education.

Investing in Workforce Development and Making an Impact

We continue to put education, compensation, and retention at the heart of all scholarship models and thrive to ensure our program reaches all under-served communities of Wisconsin. In 2019, T.E.A.C.H. provided scholarships to more than 788 early education professionals. Our recipients show a remarkable dedication to remaining in the profession with turnover rates of 8% for bachelor and 6% for associate recipients, far less than the national turnover rates of 30-40% (Dresser, Rodriguez, & Meder, 2016). Despite the demands of life, work, and school, they continue to excel in their courses. The average GPA for a T.E.A.C.H. associate scholarship recipient was 3.54 and 3.66 for a bachelor's degree recipient. Furthermore, while our field is still plagued with low wages, the average increase in earnings for an associate degree scholarship recipient was 7% and 6% for a bachelor's degree scholarship recipient. We understand there is much work to be done to ensure that early educators earn livable wages and invite you to keep sharing your stories because our policymakers MUST know that those educating our children deserve livable wages. Let's keep doing what we do best, continuing to serve the 34,023 Wisconsin children who in 2019 benefitted from consistent early education and care provided by better prepared T.E.A.C.H. scholars.

References

Dresser, L., Rodriguez, J., & Meder, M. (2016). *Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce: Wages, Benefits, Education, and Turnover of the Professionals Working with.* Madison: COWS and the UW Survey Center.

T.E.A.C.H. DEMOGRAPHICS



Asociación de Proveedoras Unidas de Milwaukee

46% of recipients worked with 3-5-year-old children.

59% of recipients worked with children under 3.

35% of recipients were women of color and/or Hispanic origin.

T.E.A.C.H. recipients attended 16 different community colleges and 17 universities offering early childhood degree programs in Wisconsin.



19 Years and Counting

Wisconsin's young children depend on high-quality and consistent child care. Yet, the early childhood profession offers low wages and few benefits, causing many professionals to leave the field. For 19 years, The **REWARD**

Wisconsin Stipend Program has been working to change this. Salary supplements are awarded to early childhood educators in recognition of their educational completions and dedication to the field. These supplements have significant impact on the professionals who receive them. Turnover is greatly reduced within REWARD participants. The financial boost can be huge to someone who makes a very low wage. And recipients regularly speak to how just receiving a stipend makes them feel like they are finally being recognized for the important and hard work that they do.

2019 was an active year in REWARD. 2484 stipends were awarded to 1610 early childhood educators in 2019. Stipend amounts ranged from \$50 to \$450, and the average stipend awarded was \$280. These professionals worked at 905 Wisconsin child care programs. This was also the year in which REWARD improved internal systems. The stipend agreements changed from one year in length to six months in length to simplify participation, and REWARD also began taking on-line applications, making the application process much quicker.

We have a long way to go close the gap between what the early childhood education workforce deserves and what it is paid, and until then REWARD will be a leader on compensation issues in the early childhood field in our state and in the nation.



51 Years and Counting of Supporting Children's Nutrition

The WECA Food Program is celebrating its 51st anniversary of supporting family childcare programs in providing healthy meals and snacks. In 2019 alone, we helped family childcare providers serve 2,219,122 meals to 5952 young children

in 640 childcare 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 and snacks 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.

Wisconsin's Family childcare programs offering meals through the WECA Food Program play a critical role in supporting the wellness, health, and development of children by providing nutritious foods. Childcare providers have an amazing opportunity to instill healthy eating habits in young children which serves as a sound foundation for healthy choices for the rest of their lives.

The meals and snacks served to children in care include a great variety of vegetables and fruit. The meals and snacks include more whole grains, less added sugar and less saturated fat. In addition, the WECA Food Program also encourages providers to create a breast-feeding friendly program. The WECA Food Program provides guidance, resources, best practices, and ongoing training for childcare providers to support them in providing healthy, balanced meals and snacks to the children of Wisconsin.



Children enjoying a snack/lunch at Imagination Station Family Childcare in Rice Lake, WI. Owner Sheri Johnson has been involved in the WECA Food Program since Sept 1, 2011.



Our Progress So Far and Why it Matters

The Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN) is a

program designed with and for child care providers in Wisconsin. It is customized to deliver on-site executive coaching and program support, responsive professional development, ASQ trainings and screenings, and resource sharing. Additionally, WEESSN offers a Relief Squad, which affords child care programs access to a highly qualified substitute teacher pool.

After years of intensive development, design, and community building, we launched our first cohort last January in Vernon and Monroe Counties. At the end of 2019, this WEESSN cohort represented over 30% of all regulated care in the region, provided community ASQ screenings and placed an emphasis on technological enhancements for programs.

The WEESSN Dane County cohort was born out of the We Care for Dane Kids system change initiative and includes 40 family, group and after-school programs throughout the county. This cohort focuses on strengthening business practices through on-site executive coaching and delivering high quality professional development opportunities featuring a year-long study of reflective supervision.

Along with our day-to-day work with programs, we were busy sharing the WEESSN story. Our team members were invited to present at the National Shared Services Conference in Detroit, Michigan and the NAEYC conference in Nashville to share our innovative work at a national level.

2019 was a year of expansion and growth for WEESSN and looking ahead to 2020, we are excited about deepening our service offerings with bulk purchasing and shared back office staffing and expanding to serve more child care programs throughout the state.



Ms. Demetria Perkins of Mother and Daughter Child Nurturing Center and her new program laptop.




Melissa McKittrick of Sprout Child Care shows off her new program laptop. WEESSN is grateful to Gundersen Health System for their generous support of dedicated program laptops for WEESSN-enrolled providers in Vernon and Monroe Counties.




During a ProCare tech support session, Laurie Oryall, WEESSN staff, gives child care provider Jessica personalized support.


Social Stats 2019


Social media is essential in connecting WECA with Wisconsin child care providers, donors, and supporters. Our channels continue to grow strong.

 3927 Followers

 751 Followers

 314 Followers

 183 Followers

 103 Followers

 65 Followers
(launched November 2019)



What is the “value’ of being a WECA Member?

WECA represents Wisconsin as the state affiliate for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the largest professional membership association of early childhood educators in the United States. When you become a WECA member you are automatically a NAEYC member! WECA’s membership is 1253 members strong. We use our collective voices to provide leadership in the development professional standards and competencies, best practices for children and families, and support early childhood educators with professional development.

Power to Profession work continued in 2019. Power to the Profession is a national collaboration that worked to define the early childhood education profession. WECA actively sought feedback from the early childhood workforce, higher education faculty, and stakeholders to influence the final Unifying Framework of recommendations on educator roles and responsibilities, aligned preparation and pathways, profession compensation, and a supportive infrastructure with shared accountability. At the 2019 WECA Annual Conference, a Pre-Conference day brought together early childhood educators, directors and administrators, and higher education faculty along with Mary Harrill from NAEYC to reflect on the framework and next steps toward implementation.

WECA Chapters continue to provide high quality professional development opportunities in Wisconsin. Our chapters offered 27 unique events to help support and educate early childhood educators. The annual WECA Conference is a much-anticipated conference that actively engages the early childhood workforce. This year, the fees for the conference were structured to support a standard membership in WECA. For many, it was the first time joining a professional organization! The real “value” in being a WECA member is our strength in numbers to advocate for policies that positively impact children and families, family child care providers, early childhood educators, directors and administrators, and preparation programs. With our passion and knowledge, we can build a solid foundation that allows children and society to thrive!



Advocacy in Action

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

Forward for Kids Network

(1,874 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.

In 2019, WECA was awarded a grant from The Alliance for Early Success which helped us launch our new one-time Grassroots Advocacy Initiative.

The cohort, which represents both rural and urban Wisconsin child care professionals, allows the workforce to give voice to the need for affordable, accessible, equitable

child care. The cohort, 20 strong, met during the 2019 WECA Conference to begin exchanging ideas and goals and held their first advocacy training in January 2020.

We recognize that those whose lives are most directly impacted, Wisconsin child care providers, are often missing at the tables when programs and policies are made. It is the passionate stories of our cohorts’ lived experiences we believe will serve as a powerful tool for change. Stay tuned as we share their successes.



WECA's Grassroot Advocacy Cohort



CONNECTIONS
2019 WECA Conference

Leadership, Resiliency and Wonder

For 65 years, WECA has been supporting professional development critical to the work the early care and education workforce does in supporting children and families across Wisconsin. Our 2019 WECA Conference was held on November 14-16th at the Ingleside Hotel in Pewaukee, Wisconsin.

The conference theme of Leadership, Resiliency and Wonder calls to the heart of what we have always believed in and do with young children on a daily basis. Our conference provided the perfect collection of big ideas calling us to action in the field of early childhood, skillful workshops by knowledgeable leaders and inspirational classroom ideas found in the tour of accredited programs.

Thursday we welcomed Mary Harrill, Senior Director of Higher Education National Association for the Education of Young Children, with her focused workshop entitled “Stepping into the Audacious Vision: A Well-Prepared, Well-Compensated ECE Profession” where she explored the latest on the Power to the Profession initiative. We also welcomed

Friday’s focus was on resiliency where our keynote speakers Lea Denny, MS, LPC, NMT, Founder & CEO HIR Wellness Center, Tammy H. Scheidegger, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, Associate Professor, Practicum & Internship Coordinator Mount Mary University presented on “Historical and Institutional Trauma: The Power of Community Activated Resilience”

Lastly, Wendy Ostroff, Ph.D, Professor University of California- Sonoma, Author of “Cultivating Curiosity in Classrooms” and “Understanding How Young Children Learn: Brining the Science of Child Development to the Classrooms” held her keynote entitled “Cultivating Curiosity & Inspiring Wonder in Young Learners”

More than 450 people attended the conference which included, presenters, exhibitors and volunteers and we offered a total of 57 workshops which covered numerous hot topics in early care and education.



Left: Keynote Speakers: Mary Harrill, Senior Director of Higher Education National Association for the Education of Young Children, Lea Denny, MS, LPC, NMT, Founder & CEO HIR Wellness Center, Tammy H. Scheidegger, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, Associate Professor, Practicum & Internship Coordinator Mount Mary University, and Wendy Ostroff, Ph.D, Professor, Sonoma State University, Author



Providers enjoyed more than 57 workshops which covered leadership, resiliency and wonder.



We Care for Dane Kids

WECA staff joined community leaders from REACH Dane, The City of Madison, Madison Out of School Time, Satellite Family Child Care, Total Administrative Services Corporation (TASC) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison to develop the We Care for Dane Kids initiative. The multi-sector partnership and funder collaborative that enabled this work is a shining example of true systems change. Drawing on years of practical experience and rigorous research, this team developed a set of four interdependent, mutually reinforcing, innovative strategies to transform the child care system for families with children up to 12 years of age.

1. Encourage the use of Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts to help working parents afford child care and advance an IRS Private Letter Ruling so that employers can make 401(k) contributions matched against employee child care payments.
2. Develop a shared services cohort in Dane County allowing child care programs to capitalize on efficiencies of scale and expertise.
3. Expand use of the Wisconsin Child Care Subsidy by employing outreach workers in communities to help families apply for and maintain the subsidy.
4. Boost wages of child care professionals by employing philanthropic resources and policy changes to advance public and private investments in compensation for the workforce.

We Care for Dane Kids serves as a catalyst for stabilizing the child care and out-of-school time market for working families, child care programs, and employers within Dane County and beyond. What's more, this initiative will elevate the quality of care for our children who deserve high quality, safe, responsive, and stimulating learning environments while their parents are at work.

We Care for Dane Kids was inspired by Schmidt Futures' The Alliance for the American Dream Challenge and made possible with the generous support from the following partners and funders:

American Family Insurance
 CUNA Mutual Foundation
 Dan & Patti Rashke (TASC) Family Foundation
 DreamUP Wisconsin
 Endres Manufacturing Co. Foundation

Evjue Foundation, a charitable arm of The Capital Times
 Foley & Lardner LLP
 Madison Community Foundation
 MGE Foundation
 M3 Insurance

NeuGen
 The QTI Group
 Schlecht Family Foundation
 Schmidt Futures
 State Bank of Cross Plains
 Summit Credit Union
 University of Wisconsin - Madison



Nathan Beck, Madison Out of School Time Coordinator, presents at a funding competitions for We Care for Dane Kids.



We Care for Dane Kids team: (left) Beth Grau, Ruth Schmidt, Katherine Magnuson, Coral Manning, Nathan Beck, Amy Christianson and Paula Drew Not pictured: Jen Bailey, Laura Dresser and Kelly Hook.



Daniel Rashke, CEO of TASC (left), along with the We Care for Dane Kids team at the 2019 Dream UP Wisconsin competition. We Care for Dane Kids came in 2nd.

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.

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

Rafat Arain
Crescent Learning Center
Milwaukee, WI

Corrine Hendrickson
Corrine's Little Explorers
New Glarus, WI

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

Jessica Cavazos
Latino Chamber of Commerce of South
Central Wisconsin
Madison, WI

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

Patricia Wooldridge, Secretary
Mariposa Learning Center
Stoughton, WI

Dave Edie
Retired
Madison, WI
Term ended 8/5/2019

Laura Krystal Porterfield, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Whitewater, WI
Term ended 11/4/2019

Rick Perrin, Treasurer
B2B CFO
Verona, WI

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

Henry Wilde
Acelero Learning
Cudahy, WI

Financials

	2019	2018		2019	2018
Revenue			Expenses		
Food Program	\$3,461,723	\$3,671,464	Operations	\$6,575,237	\$7,506,020
T.E.A.C.H. & REWARD	\$3,918,202	\$3,745,371	Personnel	\$1,751,181	\$1,747,961
Race to the Top	\$ -	\$1,382,533	Indirect Administration	\$201,019	\$175,195
Other:			Total Expenses:	\$8,527,438	\$9,429,176
Other Contracts	\$850,600	\$536,360	Increase (Decrease) in		
Contributions	\$205,948	\$19,873	Net Assets	\$537,117	\$59,791
Membership	\$22,687	\$34,642			
Annual Conference	\$83,049	\$86,324			
Training Events	\$348	\$ -			
Interest	\$14,278	\$7,615			
Miscellaneous	\$20,576	\$4,785			
Total Revenue:	\$8,577,411	\$9,488,967			

2019 Donors

WECA's work of improving the lives of thousands of Wisconsin children and the professionals who dedicate their lives to caring for and educating them is made possible by the following generous donors, funders, partners and stakeholders:

Individuals

Abby Abrisham
Chelsea Aeschbach
Jocelyn Andreas
Nishat Bashar-Ntim
Conni Bigler
Linda Briggs
Beau Brummund
Brian Campbell
Thomas G. Campbell
Thomas W. Campbell
Pat Carter
Susan Carter
Jessica Cavazos
Luke Chirhart
Heather Christianson
Sachiko Cullen
Dalia Dannenberg
Tammy L. Dannhoff
Jeff Degenhardt
Sally Dischler
Susan Dorsch
Paula Drew
Candace Duerst
David Edie
Amanda Espinosa
Sara Finger
Arial Ford
Robin Fox
Shawna Fromfeld
Brian Frushour
Amanda Gallman
Sandra L. Geier
Jolene Giese
Peggy Haack
Mike Hablewitz
Mary P. Hall
Heather Halvorson
Corrine Hendrickson
Alex Hilgendorf
Jennifer Hilgendorf
Amy G. Holste
Kelly Hook
Jennifer Hughley Rutherford
Alain Hung
Dave and Jean Johnsen
Jackie Johnson
Steve Kleiss

Joan Klinkner
Courtney Larsen
Brandy Lea
Michelle Lehman
Mary Mastaglio
Kelly Matthews
Crestalee Meyer
Valerie McClain
Dipesh Navsaria, M.D.
Stephanie L. Nichols
Tracy Owen
Jeanette A. Paulson
Wayne and Nancy Paulson
Richard Perrin
Riley Pink
Pam Polenz
Cynthia Poole
Jordan Rodewald
Ingrid Rothe
Cynthia Rudd
Elizabeth Schmidt
Hildegard Schmidt
Ruth Schmidt
Deborah Schmidt-Rogers
Amy Schuster
Roy Schuster
Yamila Simonovsky
Rebekah Stauffacher
Jason Stephens
Christine Stern
Janet Marie B. Swanson
Sherri Taylor
Gregory and Carolyn Vanek
Derrick Van Mell
Georgia Wallace
Nancy Webb
Sarah Westcott
Sharon White
Eric Widner
Henry Wilde
Daithi Wolfe
Patricia Wooldridge

Conference Sponsors

Alliant Energy Foundation
Child Care Purchasing Alliance (CCPA)
City of Madison – Community Development Division
First Business Bank

Gordon Flesch Company Inc.
Kaplan Early Learning Company
M3 Insurance
Reach Dane
The Registry
Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA)
UW Health, UnityPoint Health – Meriter & Quartz
Wegner CPAs

Other Funders

Alliance for Early Success
American Family Dreams Foundation
Community Shares of Wisconsin
CUNA Mutual Foundation
Dan & Patti Rashke (TASC) Family Foundation
DreamUp Wisconsin
Endres Manufacturing Company Foundation
Evjue Foundation, Inc. – A charitable arm of The
Capital Times
Foley & Lardner LLP
Gundersen Health Systems
Madison Community Foundation
MGE Foundation
Neugen LLC
The QTI Group
Quilt Basket ‘n Creations
Schlecht Family Foundation
Schmidt Futures
State Bank of Cross Plains
Summit Credit Union
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Vernon Women’s Alliance
Wisconsin Partnership Program

Gem of a Friend and/or In-Kind Donors

4C – For Children, Inc.
ARTS for ALL Wisconsin

Baby Signs 4 U, LLC
Bare Books
Blackhawk Technical College
Bright Horizons
Brookes
Cardinal Stritch University
The Centers for Behavior Intervention (CBI)
Complete Office of Wisconsin
Madison Public Library
Madison Sourdough
Concordia University
Felt Lady
FunShine Express
Honey Do Products
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Jamaroo Kids
Lakeshore Learning
Learning Props
Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial
Office of Early Childhood Initiatives (OECI)
Prepare Parents LLC
Save the Children
School Specialty
Simply Fun
United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha
County
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
University of Wisconsin – Platteville
University of Wisconsin – Superior
University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
Usborne Books & More
Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health
Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association (WCCAA)
Wisconsin Family Child Care Association (WFCCA)
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College
Wisconsin Public Television

WECA remains committed to being a trusted steward of federal, state, and private funds that help to advance early care and education across Wisconsin and promote the optimal wellbeing of children and the early childhood workforce.



Get Involved

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 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, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter. Share your thoughts and join the conversation.



Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood



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



NEW! Find us on Instagram at [WECAEarlyEd](https://www.instagram.com/WECAEarlyEd)



Connect with us on LinkedIn at [Wisconsin Early Childhood Association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Wisconsin-Early-Childhood-Association)

weca Wisconsin Early
Childhood Association

2908 Marketplace Drive., Suite 101
Fitchburg, WI 53719
800-783-9322
[wisconsinearlychildhood.org](https://www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org)

WECA is the Wisconsin affiliate of

naeyc[®]

WECA is a proud member of

 **COMMUNITY
SHARES**
OF WISCONSIN