

**Office of Operations Review and Audit**



**Program Review**

**Children's Centers  
at University of Wisconsin Institutions**

**November 2003**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UW System child care policy recognizes the importance of access to child care for UW students, faculty and staff. The Office of Operations Review and Audit reviewed the implementation of Regent Policy Document 83-5, which specifies that each UW institution “should set a goal of seeing that top quality, low cost child care and extended child care services, preferably campus based, are available to the children of students, faculty and staff.” Center operations were reviewed to assess how UW children’s centers are meeting the challenge of providing necessary programs of high quality while keeping costs low.

### **Mission**

Twenty-two children’s centers and preschool laboratories serve the child care needs of the university community. In addition to providing child care, the centers provide instruction and academic support, research, public service and outreach. Academic departments increasingly use children’s centers for a wide range of degree programs, although we found some centers did not document such use, as required by UW System policy. The report recommends centers document the full range of their functions to assist in the determination of proper funding.

### **Child Care Services and Availability**

Capacity at UW children’s centers has increased by approximately 18 percent over the past ten years, ranging from eight children at the UW-Madison infant/toddler center to 285 children at UW-Milwaukee’s center. Although some centers do not provide summer or interim care because of reduced demand, most centers operate on a year-round basis, using various strategies to offset periods of reduced enrollment, such as school-age programs, opening the center to the community or using a combination of academic and annual appointments for their teaching staff.

Decisions about ages of children to serve and types of services to offer are based on a combination of need, space and cost effectiveness. The centers provide care to children from infant to school age. The number of centers providing infant/toddler care continues to increase, as directors report this to be the area of greatest unmet need. Several centers offer care for school-aged children, and all centers periodically serve children with special needs. Nontraditional services, such as part-time, drop-in, evening, weekend, or sick-child care, may be areas of special need for university parents, but these services are only provided on a limited basis. Most centers offer part-time enrollment, ranging from hourly to half-day minimums, but only UW-Eau Claire offers evening care and only UW-Madison offers sick-child care.

### **Child Care Needs and Enrollment Management**

Changing demographics of the university population, as well as university initiatives, are among the factors affecting the demand for child care. Only a limited number of institutions have conducted recent needs assessments. To enhance planning efforts, the report recommends UW institutions assess child care needs on a regular basis.

The UW children's centers served approximately 1,655 children during the fall of 2002, serving students, faculty, staff, and sometimes community and alumni parents. Although most centers give some priority to student parents, the proportion of children from the community ranged from none at two centers to 71 percent in fall 2002. UW children's centers have adopted strategies for managing the enrollment process that include: monitoring enrollment levels, requiring non-refundable registration deposits, or charging fees for schedule changes.

### **Program Administration**

In administering UW children's centers, directors balance quality-of-care issues with concerns about resources. Providing an educated, experienced staff or reducing child-to-staff ratios can result in higher costs to parents, reductions in services, or both. Minimizing staff turnover is important for ensuring quality care. The report identifies strategies that centers have adopted to minimize turnover.

Child care facilities are subject to extensive state licensing standards, and UW institutions must maintain existing centers, find additional space for program expansions or build new facilities. Although a Board policy prescribes state funding for children's centers, in practice the UW institutions must find alternate funding sources, such as use of segregated fees or donations, to meet facility needs.

While state licensing requirements represent a basic level of consumer protection, accredited programs tend to have higher quality. Although UW System policy requires that each children's center maintain accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, four campus-operated programs and two institutions' private contractors are not accredited, as required. The report recommends that UW institution administrators ensure that all UW children's centers or private vendors ensure accreditation is maintained. Also, the report recommends that children's center directors analyze parent survey results and use additional evaluation tools, such as National Health and Safety Performance Standards, to assess and improve program quality.

### **Financial Operations**

Setting rates and identifying revenue sources are among the UW children's centers' financial responsibilities. Parent fees are the primary source of funding for children's centers. Segregated-fee, GPR and in-kind support are also appropriate. We found that while most centers offer student parents a discounted rate, there is often no assurance that segregated fees are fully used to subsidize student parent fees. Also, the level of GPR support for the children's centers varies widely; most UW children's centers perform instructional and research functions, but UW institutions do not consistently provide GPR support for salaries or other expenses. The report recommends assigning costs according to the mix of program activities. In addition, the report offers several recommendations for centers to take greater advantage of specific federal funding sources, as well as fundraising opportunities.

## SCOPE

The UW System Office of Operations Review and Audit reviewed children's centers at the UW institutions. Regent Policy Document (RPD) 83-5, "Equal Opportunities in Education," recommends that UW institutions provide low-cost, quality child care and extended care services. Office staff also reviewed guidelines established to implement Board of Regent (BOR) policy – Regent Resolution SG 18 1986, "The Future of Child Care Services in UW System," and Financial and Administrative Policy (FAP) G38, "Child Care Centers," which was revised in July 1994. Areas examined included: 1) the role of the centers and the extent of instructional and academic support provided; 2) the steps centers take to meet the needs of the university population; 3) the types of services provided by the various children's centers; 4) sources of funding for center operations; and 5) best practices among children's centers.

We visited children's centers at UW-Eau Claire, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Whitewater, and Fox Valley, as well as the seven centers at UW-Madison. We collected data for the other UW comprehensive institutions and some UW Colleges through questionnaires and telephone interviews. Staff interviews were conducted with various UW institution staff, including children's center directors, student service and student life directors, Dean of Students staff, business office staff, and others. Finally, we conducted research on child care programs at peer institutions, state and federal requirements, funding opportunities for child care providers, and best practices in center operations. Our review did not include compliance with Wisconsin licensing requirements for group day care centers because the Department of Health and Family Services conducts site reviews, and centers are re-licensed every two years.

## BACKGROUND

UW institutions have a long history of providing child care services. A 1992 UW System study of the status of children's centers credits UW-Stout with providing child care since 1926. A UW-Madison University Child Care Committee report notes that a Preschool Lab was opened in 1926 as a cooperative nursery school to help mothers develop parenting skills. It further notes that the support of student parents dates to 1946 when a nursery school was established for preschool children residing in "Badger Village." Twenty-two children's centers and preschool laboratories now operate within the UW System to provide for the child care needs of the university community, as well as to serve as training and observation sites for academic purposes.

UW System child care policy recognizes that access to child care for students, faculty and staff is crucial, and UW institutions should ensure that child care needs are met. Each of the doctoral and comprehensive UW institutions, with the exception of UW-Green Bay, provides child care services to students, faculty, staff and sometimes community members. Additionally, two UW Colleges provide campus child care services, and several of the other UW Colleges allocate a part of segregated fees to subsidize student-parent child care costs in the community. All of the operations are located on campus, with the exception of one UW-Madison center operated in an off-campus location. The majority of children's centers are UW institution-operated, although

**UW System policy recognizes that meeting child care needs is essential.**

four are operated by private vendors and one is operated as a parent cooperative. UW-Green Bay discontinued its child care operation in 1994-95 due to a combination of problems with the center's financial position and the facility; a UW-Green Bay committee to address the need for campus care has issued a draft report which includes various options to meet the needs of student parents.

Employer-sponsored child care is used increasingly as an employee recruitment and retention tool and is viewed as an important work/life issue. FAP G38 recognizes that actions taken by the State of Wisconsin give public recognition and funding for child care as a service that supports employees and meets a recognized need, maintains competitive status and increases employee productivity. A 2000 University of California System Child Care Policy and Program task force report notes that major employers, like the university, must recognize that child care services can give the university a critical advantage in the employment market, as well as in retention of current employees. Also, the 1999 UW System Equality of Women report notes that the university will need to offer benefits that balance work and personal life in order to be competitive in recruiting the best faculty, staff, and students. The report adds that the University will act in partnership with child care providers to meet demand for child care, provide flexible hours, and develop a funding system that makes child care affordable for students as well as employees.

**Child care availability is an employee recruitment tool.**

The first UW System policy on child care was implemented in 1974 and amended in RPD 83-5 as part of the "Equal Opportunities in Education" policy. Unlike some other BOR policies that mandate minimum levels of service, such as RPD 78-9 which governs student health centers, the child care policy itself does not dictate that child care programs be established. The child care component of RPD 78-9 states only that each UW institution should set a goal of providing high-quality, low-cost child care and extended care services, preferably campus based, when community care does not meet the needs of students, faculty and staff. In this context, we reviewed how UW institutions have implemented the guidance in RPD 83-5, FAP G38, and Resolution SG 18, as well as how UW children's centers have met the administrative difficulties associated with providing high-quality, low-cost child care.

**Board of Regents policy provides that UW institutions are to offer high-quality, low-cost child care when community care does not meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff.**

## **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A major challenge facing UW children's centers is balancing model, high-quality programs with affordable fees. It can be costly to provide nontraditional services, such as part-time, evening, or sick-child care, or care for infants and toddlers, while also maintaining accreditation standards. In addition, the centers are limited by the facilities themselves, since space is a major factor in licensed capacity. The centers are multi-purpose in function, but parent user fees are the major funding source for center operations. The UW centers have worked diligently to maintain

**UW children's center directors work to keep services affordable.**

user fees that are affordable to university parents, while at the same time expanding services. Center directors have attempted to implement effective staffing patterns, good enrollment management practices and other cost-saving measures.

This review includes: 1) a discussion of the mission of the UW children's centers; 2) a description of the types of child care services UW institutions offer, including nontraditional services; 3) an analysis of needs assessment and enrollment-management efforts; 4) an overview of administrative issues, such as staffing and quality assessment; and 5) financial operations.

## **MISSION OF UW CHILDREN'S CENTERS**

FAP G38 recognizes that children's centers serve a mix of functions that include instruction/academic support, student services, research, public service/outreach, institutional support, and auxiliary enterprises. Accordingly, administrative reporting arrangements for the UW children's centers vary widely, with centers reporting to student services, business and finance, academic departments, or others, representing the range of centers' functions. UW child care policy also states that the instructional obligations and academic/institutional support roles of the centers should be recognized and documented. We reviewed the role of child care centers and the extent to which they document their academic/institutional support responsibilities.

### **Educational Role**

Academic departments increasingly use children's centers for education and research covering a wide range of degree programs, such as early childhood education, music, foreign language and physical education. Centers work with students and faculty from their own UW institutions; and some centers report that students from other UW institutions, as well as technical and private colleges, use the centers for educational purposes.

**Academic departments use children's centers for education and research.**

Although the earliest child care services were developed as preschool laboratories in conjunction with educational and research programs, the current children's centers combine the education and research role with child care services. The current distinction between UW children's care centers and preschool laboratories is characterized more by length of the daily program than by type of programming. The laboratory programs tend to be shorter, but most of the centers have a high-quality educational component that promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Three programs are limited to either enrichment or laboratory use.

FAP G38 suggests that research findings in child development and early childhood education be integrated into the operation of the children's centers. Extensive child development research conducted at the UW institutions allows innovative practices to be implemented. For example, the UW-Madison Preschool Labs have implemented "looping," which means that teachers move with children from one age group to the next in order to provide continuity; UW-Eau Claire also established this practice beginning in Fall 2002.

## Documentation of Functions

We found that nearly all of the UW children's centers address their instructional and academic roles in the centers' mission statements. However, some centers do not document and summarize use for purposes other than child care, as required by G38, even though such use may be extensive.

The centers' academic and institutional support roles include developing and testing model curricula; offering activities that provide a mechanism for students to gain practical experience, such as field placement experiences, practicums and observation sites; and providing faculty and student research project pilot sites. Use of the centers for academic purposes varies significantly. For example, UW-La Crosse maintains a guest log and reports over 3,900 hours of use in FY 2002 for observation, student teacher placement and other curricular efforts. UW-Parkside, on the other hand, reports that the center is seldom used for purposes other than child care since its School of Education does not place student teachers and very little classroom observation occurs.

**Funding sources should reflect the mix of functions that UW children's centers serve, but some centers do not fully document academic and other functions.**

G38 states that institutions are responsible for the assignment of costs according to activity and should weigh the mix of program activities accordingly. Since children's centers should be funded by sources appropriate to their activities, *we recommend that all UW children's centers: 1) document their role in functions such as instruction/academic support, research, public service, and other activities, and 2) verify the appropriate funding mix and assign costs proportionately.* Documentation could be useful in requesting GPR support.

## CHILD CARE SERVICES AND AVAILABILITY

The UW children's centers vary significantly in the type and extent of services provided to the university parent population. Most of the UW institutions have elected to establish a campus-operated center to provide child care services, while UW-Superior and UWC-Waukesha use private vendors to supply this service. Also, UW-Madison contracts with outside providers to better meet campus needs. The infant/toddler center was established to ease the critical shortage of infant care. UW-Madison also supports a vendor affiliated with the Wisconsin Union. In addition, University Housing at UW-Madison supports a parent cooperative. The UW-Madison University Child Care Committee has recommended a continued emphasis on establishing contractual arrangements with private providers to increase the access to care on or near campus and as a means of avoiding the high cost and lengthy process of building new facilities.

**Most UW institutions have on-campus children's centers.**

Capacity at UW children's centers has increased by approximately 18 percent over the past ten years. Licensed capacity of the centers totaled 1,444 in fall

**Children's centers have increased their capacity by 18 percent over the past ten years.**

2002, compared to a systemwide capacity of 1,226 students, based on a 1992 report. The licensed capacity of the UW children's centers ranges from eight children at the UW-Madison infant/toddler center to 285 children at UW-Milwaukee. Licensed capacity is dictated by a combination of factors, including the needs of the campus, size of the facility and staffing. In addition to the total licensed capacity, state licensing requirements establish limits on the number of children in a given group, which usually varies by age. Most centers generally group children by age, with some flexibility regarding the individual child's development.

G38 lists child care needs for university parents, including availability, infant care, after-school and vacation care and care for children with special needs. Operating hours, calendars, ages of children served and types of nontraditional services offered vary among the UW children's centers. We reviewed each of these areas and also examined efforts to expand services through collaboration with other organizations or UW departments.

### **Service Availability**

Although some parents need child care services throughout the year, other parents need care only during times when school is in session. Most UW children's centers operate on a year-round basis, with the exception of several weeks, such as between Christmas and New Year's or spring break. This compares favorably to a 1992 UW System study that found many centers open only during the academic sessions and three centers closed all summer. However, a small number of centers continue to limit the availability of child care. For example, UW-La Crosse did not provide care during the summer of 2002; according to the director, parents are surveyed in spring to determine whether summer enrollment would justify the cost of staying open for the summer period.

**Operating on a year-round basis creates staffing and enrollment concerns.**

Summer and interim periods create additional concerns among directors about enrollment levels and fixed costs. The centers must balance staffing requirements with uncertain enrollment during these periods. To reduce the impact of lower enrollments, centers have employed a number of different policies to alleviate or reduce the loss of revenue. For example, UW-Stevens Point reports that staff is reduced to meet summer needs, a school-age program is made available, and the center is opened to the community. Another center uses a combination of academic-year and 12-month appointments for its teaching staff.

The UW children's centers generally are open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., although some centers open as early as 7:00 a.m. and/or remain open to 6:00 p.m. Since fewer children are enrolled in the early morning or late afternoon, the centers usually combine age groupings at these times, within allowable staff-to-child ratios, as a cost-saving measure.

### **Ages of Children Served**

UW children's centers are licensed to serve various ages of children, ranging from one-week-old infants to 12-year-old school-aged children, as detailed in Table 1. Almost all centers provide

care to children from the age of two years through six years, but infant/toddler and school-age program offerings are more limited.

**Table 1**  
**UW System Children's Center Capacity and**  
**Ages of Children Served: Fall 2002**

<b>UW INSTITUTION</b>	<b>LICENSED CAPACITY</b>	<b>AGES CENTER IS LICENSED TO SERVE*</b>	
<b>Eau Claire</b>	75	2 yrs.	10 yrs.
<b>Green Bay</b>	None		
<b>La Crosse</b>	72	1 yr.	12 yrs.
<b>Madison</b>			
<b>Preschool Lab-Linden</b>	50	2 yrs.	9 yrs.
<b>Preschool Lab-Bethany</b>	67	6 wks.	9 yrs.
<b>Waisman Early Childhood</b>	100	1 yr.	8 yrs.
<b>Eagle's Wing</b>	107	1 ½ yrs.	12 yrs.
<b>Bernie's Place</b>	36	2 ½ yrs.	6 yrs.
<b>University Houses Nursery</b>	14	2 ½ yrs.	6 yrs.
<b>Infant/Toddler Center</b>	8	3 wks.	2 ½ yrs.
<b>Milwaukee</b>	285	6 wks.	12 yrs.
<b>Oshkosh</b>	84	2 wks.	8 yrs.
<b>Parkside</b>	80	4 wks.	4 yrs.
<b>Platteville</b>	52	2 yrs.	8 yrs.
<b>River Falls</b>	60	6 wks.	12 yrs.
<b>River Falls Preschool</b>	21	4 yrs.	5 yrs.
<b>Stevens Point</b>	68	6 mos.	10 yrs.
<b>Gesell Institute</b>	20	2 yrs.	5 yrs.
<b>Stout</b>	66	6 wks.	6 yrs.
<b>Superior</b>	65	6 wks.	12 yrs.
<b>Whitewater</b>	40	2 yrs.	11 yrs.
<b>UWC-Fox Valley</b>	52	1 wk.	6 yrs.
<b>UWC-Waukesha</b>	22	6 wks.	6 yrs.
<b>Total</b>	1,444		

Source of Data: Children's center directors.

\*Some centers maintain a license to enroll a wide age-range of children, although actual enrollment practice may limit the ages served.

### **Infant and Toddler Care**

Almost every UW children's center director noted that the greatest unmet need is for infant/toddler care. Facility limitations, as well as the high cost of infant/toddler care, are factors in offering this service. Costs are significantly higher for infant/toddler care because of Wisconsin licensing requirements for this age group, such as pre-enrollment interviews, additional staff training requirements, and a four-to-one child-to-staff ratio. Accreditation standards recommend even lower child-to-staff ratios.

Eleven centers currently provide care to infants (under one year of age), serving approximately 92 children. This compares favorably to five centers providing this service at the time of the 1992 child care review. Several centers have recently expanded their service to include or increase the capacity for infants/toddlers: 1) UW-Stevens Point began relocating its program beginning in fall 2001 to accommodate an infant/toddler program; 2) UW-Stout recently established an infant/toddler program; 3) UW-Madison contracted with a private vendor to establish an infant/toddler center in an existing UW-Madison facility; and 4) UW-Milwaukee added an additional infant classroom in January 2002.

**Despite higher costs for infant care, the number of centers providing this service has increased.**

### **School Agers**

Numerous studies identify a high need for care of school-age children who are often left unsupervised; nationally the number of extended-day child care programs has grown substantially over the past two decades, but has not met the need. In addition to meeting need, providing school-age care is not as costly as other care because of higher child-to-staff ratios for older children. Also, some centers use multi-purpose space or mixed-age groups when serving school agers. We examined the extent to which UW institutions offer school-age care.

**Before- and after-school care** -- Several UW children's centers offer care for school agers before and after school hours. UW-Madison Eagles Wing has a before- and after-school service and transported enrolled children in a leased state-owned van to and from the closest elementary school during the 2002 academic year. However, Eagles Wing now uses a private vendor for transportation because the use of 15-passenger vans is no longer permitted at UW-Madison. Because of safety concerns, UW institutions are reviewing the advisability of transporting children in 15-passenger vans. (UW children's centers sometimes use vans for other purposes, such as field trips.) UW-River Falls hopes to build a school-age program in the future and will be asking the school district to notify parents of the center's availability. The school district reportedly is willing to bus children to the center from the home school, if needed. UW-Milwaukee also provides child care services for children from the closest elementary school, within walking distance of the center, charging a fee to accompany children from the school. The center also provides care to school agers from other area schools through transportation arrangements with a van service.

**Providing before- and after-school care can be complicated by transportation issues.**

Other institutions do not serve school agers for various reasons. UW-Parkside noted the large geographic area and number of elementary schools involved decrease the opportunity for a school-partnering relationship. Other centers cite lack of transportation as a reason for not offering this service. In some campus communities, community providers, such as the YMCA's "Surround" program in La Crosse, provide school-age care through arrangements with the public school system. UW-La Crosse notes that most parents opt for the YMCA program.

**Vacation (school out) care** -- Several UW children's centers, such as UW-Eau Claire, La Crosse, Milwaukee, and Platteville, offer child care on days that public schools are closed. The

Status of Women report, which recognizes peer university best practices, includes offering child care on snow days at the University of Pennsylvania as a best practice. Summer programs have also been established for school-agers by several of the UW centers. For example, the UW-Stevens Point center includes school-age children in its summer program, University Preschool labs have "Summer Roustabout" programs, and UW-Madison's WECF operates a "Camp Vacation."

In order to better identify the demand for infant/toddler or school-age care, *we recommend that UW institutions develop plans for determining the appropriate service level to meet the needs of the university community and explore funding opportunities to expand services to meet needs.*

**Some UW children's centers offer school-out care, which has been identified as a best practice.**

### Services for Children with Special Needs

All UW children's centers serve children with special needs, at least periodically. Directors report that lower child/staff ratios are sometimes necessary in order to meet the needs of the child. For example, UW-Eau Claire currently maintains a child-to-staff ratio of one-to-one for a special needs child. The cost of the additional staffing has been assumed by the center's budget. The UW-Madison WECF focuses on care for special needs children as part of its mission and is reported to be a model program for meeting the needs of a developmentally diverse group of children. The WECF enrolls 20 to 30 percent of its children from the special needs population and funds positions in occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and school psychology; these services are offered on a fee-recovery basis.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides funds to states for two programs that address the developmental needs of young children, the Birth-to-Three program and preschool grants that entitle each child with a disability, aged three to five, to receive free appropriate public education. In many instances, the UW centers work with the Birth-to-Three program or the school district (for children over three years of age) to provide additional services. National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care notes that facilities should pursue the "many funding mechanisms available to supplement funding for services." The standards further note that child care providers should discuss with parents potential sources of financial assistance, such as Medicaid, private health insurance, state or federal funds for child care, or community resources, to assist in providing needed accommodations.

### Nontraditional Services

University parents may need child care services that differ significantly from services community providers offer. FAP G38 includes an appendix of needs for university parents that includes many services that are non-traditional in nature, such as flexible hours, sick-child care, and evening, weekend and drop-in care. User

**Flexible hours, sick-child care, and drop-in care are helpful to parents, but user fees may not fully support these services.**

fees may not always fully support these services. For example, extending more flexible scheduling options or evening care may result in less than full utilization, which may not support staffing costs. Nationally, nontraditional work arrangements are growing, and several states offer incentives to providers who provide care during nontraditional hours. We examined the extent to which UW children's centers offer nontraditional services.

**Part-time care** -- Community providers often offer services only on a full-time basis, and full-time care may not be necessary or affordable for many university parents. While all UW centers provide for part-time enrollment, the extent of flexibility varies. Some centers offer care in half-day blocks of time, ranging from one to five days required per week, while other centers offer more flexibility through hourly minimums. Centers that offer hourly care options may limit this care to children of student parents or to preschool children. One center director noted that establishing four-hour minimums provides more consistency to children and strengthens the quality of the program, and another observed that scheduling hourly increments is not cost efficient. However, the UW-Milwaukee children's center noted that low child-to-staff ratios help to accommodate transitions that occur as a result of flexible scheduling.

**Drop-in care** -- Most centers provide care to enrolled children outside the contracted hours, when space is available, for an additional charge. Drop-in care for children not enrolled is provided only by a limited number of children's centers, if space is available and required documentation is submitted in advance of attendance. The U.S. Department of Labor's Child Care Best Practices identifies back-up care as a best practice, since it must be recognized that child care arrangements are not infallible.

**Limited drop-in care is available, although the U.S. Department of Labor identified this as a best practice.**

**Evening and weekend care** -- Although FAP G38 suggests that child care services may be needed during the evening or on weekends, the centers do not generally provide this care. Currently, only UW-Eau Claire provides some evening care, but the program was not well attended at the time of our review. Both UW-Parkside and UW-Madison Eagle's Wing have piloted evening programs, but these programs were discontinued due to low enrollment. The private vendor at UW-Superior is reviewing the feasibility of providing this service.

Some directors reported that parents prefer in-home evening care, and less expensive alternatives may be available during the evening hours. Several centers provide babysitting lists of their student employees to better meet the needs of campus parents during evenings, interim sessions, or as required. UW-Milwaukee center policy, on the advice of campus legal counsel, specifically states that the center will not endorse or recommend staff to parents and is not liable for the conduct of any staff or parents who enter into a babysitting agreement.

**UW-Madison sick-child care** -- Studies conducted as part of Wisconsin's Early Childhood Excellence Initiative have indicated that caring for sick children is the biggest problem facing today's parents, and child care programs that offer sick-child care are performing a crucial service. Only UW-Madison provides sick-child care for its student parents; it began in fall 2000 and is funded by segregated

**Only UW-Madison offers sick-child care.**

fees. Student parents are able to use the service in four-hour blocks, dependent on a nursing assessment, so they can attend classes, labs or work. Sick-child care had been offered through a hospital program that provided space for care within the hospital; the current agreement, which began in January 2002, provides for in-home health care services for children of student parents. Participation in the in-home program has not been as high as participation in the hospital-based program. One report indicates that initial participation in such programs is usually low and increases with parent-user recommendations. (The University of Michigan provides in-home care for children of faculty/staff, up to 48 hours per year, with fees based on household income.)

### Collaborative Efforts to Expand Services

In addition to providing nontraditional services, the UW children's centers have implemented a number of innovative options to enhance existing services, both within the university community and in collaboration with outside agencies. Some UW children's centers have made partnerships within the university community to enhance or enrich child care services. The children's centers also have established collaborative agreements with outside agencies in order to improve or enhance services. Examples of these efforts are included in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**UW Children's Centers Collaborative Efforts**

UW INSTITUTION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<b>CAMPUS COLLABORATION</b>		
<b>Eau Claire</b>	Community Service	The children's center is an approved site for community service work required for a degree.
<b>Oshkosh</b>	Suzuki Music Program Multicultural Experiences	An agreement with the Suzuki music program, "Adventures in Music," provides early music experiences. A liaison with the Multicultural Center provides multicultural experiences through a diversity innovation grant.
<b>River Falls</b>	America Reads	Participation in the America Reads program makes College Work Study students available for literacy projects.
<b>Whitewater</b>	Literacy Program Family Program Physical Education Program	Special programs are provided to children and families in the center by several departments, including a literacy program by Communicative Disorders, a family program through Curriculum and Instruction, and a physical education program through the School of Education.
<b>EXTERNAL COLLABORATION</b>		
<b>Eau Claire</b>	Head Start Jump Start	A collaborative project with Head Start contributes to the fees for eligible children, as well as providing stipends for child care staff to participate in individual service plans, reimbursing providers for each training opportunity, and providing certain services to enrolled Head Start families. Through Jump Start, a new grant program that began in Fall 2002, each participating university student spends ten hours per week with the objective of enhancing literacy, language, and social and emotional development of center children.

<b>UW INSTITUTION</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>Madison WECP</b>	Parent/Infant/Toddler Program UW Hospital Sibling Care	A partnership with the Birth-to-Three program provides a Parent/Infant/Toddler program to provide educational services to parents with children between birth and two years of age, with an emphasis on learning through play. The WECP also has an agreement with the UW Hospital to provide care to siblings of children who are hospitalized, although the program is not extensively used.
<b>Milwaukee</b>	Ghana Exchange Urban Ecology	The Center has a partnership and exchange program with a children's center in Ghana. Also, the Urban Ecology Center of Milwaukee works with the Center's school-age children.
<b>Stout</b>	Birth to Three	The Center collaborates with the Birth to Three program. By working with occupational and physical therapists, children are provided specialized experiences in the classroom.

To enhance services provided to children, *we recommend that all UW children's centers explore opportunities for establishing partnerships with both campus departments and off-campus agencies.* Partnerships benefit both university students and the UW children's centers.

## **CHILD CARE NEEDS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

RPD 83-5 authorizes UW institutions to provide child care services when community providers cannot meet the needs of the university community, and BOR Resolution SG 18 further directs that all institutions periodically conduct a needs assessment of child care services. Demographic changes in the student and employee populations, such as recruitment of younger faculty or increased numbers of older adult students, may result in changing needs for child care. UW System or institution practices, such as increasing evening or weekend classes, may also affect demand. We reviewed needs assessment procedures and enrollment management.

### **Needs Assessment Procedures**

G38 recommends that a consortium of children's center directors develop community assessment procedures addressing the needs of UW institution target populations. We found that Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, serving all Wisconsin counties, collect and manage comprehensive child care data on supply and demand, quality, and local rates, thus providing community assessment information. Periodic needs assessment of the university population, as required by the Resolution, has been conducted by a limited number of UW institutions. Recent assessments include the following:

**UW children's centers have conducted only a few recent needs assessments.**

- A UW-La Crosse task force recently completed a review of child care needs. A needs-assessment survey of faculty/staff and students documented a need for infant care and predicted that the need for child care will increase with an increase in the non-traditional student population.

- UW-Parkside convened a working group on child care services in 1998 to study existing services and make recommendations for improving services or providing new services to better serve students. The resulting report provided extensive findings on the university parent population, including primary child care arrangements used, work absences related to child care problems, concerns when selecting a child care arrangement, and how employees rank new services.
- UW-Oshkosh recently conducted a survey of both the student and faculty/staff populations to determine the extent of unmet needs.
- UW-Stout reported that it recently performed several needs assessments, identifying that the center could easily support another infant program. However, the campus notes that space and cost factors prohibit expansion of the current program.

In addition, several peer institutions have conducted on-line assessments of child care needs. UW-Whitewater also reported piloting a project that uses the children's center website to tally persons interested in future child care.

Apart from these efforts, children's center directors reported that UW institutions do not systematically collect data on whether the university population has children or on the ages of the children. The UW-Madison Office of Campus Child Care (OCCC) reported exploring the possibility of including parent information on the UW admission application, but these efforts were not successful. Collecting parent data could be useful for several purposes, including determining unmet need, advertising the services of the children's centers, and providing data necessary for some federal child care grants. Our research indicates that some peer institutions have begun efforts to collect this information. For example, the University of Michigan Child Care task force recommended that a database be established on the numbers and ages of dependent children of faculty, staff and students.

**Data on the university population could be used to determine unmet need, to advertise the centers, or to prepare for federal grant applications.**

UW children's centers generally maintain waiting lists of families seeking child care at times when center enrollment is full. The size of the reported waiting lists varies among UW institutions and also varies from year to year, according to the center directors. The Waisman Early Childhood Program (WECP) at UW-Madison reported 136 families on a recent list, and UW-La Crosse reported 24. These lists may serve as some reflection of unmet needs, although some center directors reported that lists may understate unmet need, since families sometimes do not choose to be included if there is no likelihood of enrollment. On the other hand, the lists can overstate need because some families on waiting lists have found child care elsewhere by the time enrollment offers are made. Institutions differ in how they maintain the data, such as cumulative or by semester, or university-related families only or all interested families. UW-Madison OCCC is purchasing reporting software which is expected to assist in compiling more useful waiting list data by establishing a more uniform method across centers.

Campus populations need to be assessed on an ongoing basis due to fluctuations in child care needs. *We recommend UW institutions: 1) establish procedures for assessing child care needs on a regular basis, and 2) consider compiling parent data to target assessments and meet federal grant requirements.* Documenting unmet need is important in requesting new or additional facilities or in expanding program offerings.

### Enrollment Management

Maximizing enrollment is necessary for a financially stable operation. The UW children's centers served approximately 1,692 children during fall 2002, as shown in Table 3. Enrollment in the UW children's centers is usually greater than the licensed capacity because many children are enrolled on a part-time basis. For example, a center that offers enrollment in half-day blocks with a one-block minimum could enroll ten different children in that slot each week. On the other hand, some directors reported that it is their policy to enroll fewer than licensed capacity,

**Table 3**  
**UW System Children's Center Enrollment and Parents Served: Fall 2002**

UW INSTITUTION CHILDREN'S CENTERS*	TOTAL ENROLLED	STUDENTS		FACULTY/ STAFF		COMMUNITY/ ALUMNI	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Eau Claire	109	41	37.6%	53	48.6%	15	13.8%
La Crosse	86	44	51.2%	42	48.8%		
Madison							
Preschool Lab-Linden	60	28	46.7%	29	48.3%	3	5%
Preschool Lab-Bethany	56	11	19.6%	17	30.4%	28	50%
Waisman Program	83	8	9.6%	48	57.8%	27	32.6%
Eagle's Wing	145	103	71.0%	36	24.8%	6	4.2%
Bernie's Place	32	10	31.2%	19	59.4%	3	9.4%
University Houses	39	28	71.8%	7	17.9%	4	10.3%
Infant/Toddler Center	11	4	36.4%	7	63.6%		
Milwaukee	318	154	48.4%	70	22%	94	29.6%
Oshkosh	94	59	62.7%	35	37.3%		
Parkside	90	38	42.2%	28	31.1%	24	26.7%
Platteville	66	24	36.4%	26	39.4%	16	24.2%
River Falls	50	24	48.0%	9	18.0%	17	34.0%
Stevens Point	79	46	58.2%	27	34.2%	6	7.6%
Stout	94	42	44.7%	15	16.0%	37	39.3%
Superior	121	27	22.3%	8	6.6%	86	71.1%
Whitewater	62	35	56.5%	22	35.5%	5	8.0%
UWC-Fox Valley	69	18	26.1%	8	11.6%	43	62.3%
UWC-Waukesha	28	15	53.6%	5	17.9%	8	28.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,692</b>	<b>759</b>		<b>511</b>		<b>422</b>	

Source: UW children's center directors

\*Excludes UW-River Falls and Stevens Point preschool labs.

since licensed capacity may only be based on the size of the building rather than on the number of children who can be adequately served. The population served varies significantly among the centers.

The UW children's centers serve both students and faculty/staff, and many centers also make enrollment available to alumni or to members of the community. Almost all of the UW children's centers noted that priority is given to student parents during the enrollment process. FAP G38 notes that community users can provide a more stable funding base and be a source of economies of scale. It also identifies other benefits from community use, such as helping to meet community needs and possibly providing a broader representation of children for researchers. Only UW-La Crosse and UW-Oshkosh report that care is not provided to the community.

**UW children's centers serve students, faculty and staff, and community/alumni members.**

We identified various factors that affect the enrollment level and mix of university and community parents who enroll their children in the UW children's centers. Among these are: enrollment priorities, enrollment timing, and the relationship with the local public schools.

- *Enrollment priorities:* While some priority is given to student parents, priority may also be given to currently enrolled children, siblings of currently enrolled children, or children enrolled during the summer; this can influence the mix of parents. The UW-La Crosse task force study noted, for example, that the percentage of student parents decreased when the sibling policy was instituted. Several UW-Madison centers first serve a specific university population, such as WECP staff, or residents of University Apartments. A limited number of centers, including UW-Milwaukee, allocate a certain enrollment level to students based on segregated fee support, which guarantees they will serve a certain number of student parents.
- *Enrollment timing:* When registration for the fall semester occurs in the preceding March or April, openings in enrollment are less likely to be available to students who register after that time. One center holds its registration closer to the start of classes.
- *Earlier public school attendance:* Changes within public school systems have affected enrollment at some of the UW children's centers. In recent years, some public school districts in Wisconsin have implemented all-day kindergarten and kindergarten for four-year-olds. Enrollment losses have created temporary budgetary concerns at some centers, such as at UW-Platteville. However, the director reported that the loss in enrollment of four- or five-year-olds can be offset by serving additional younger children.

**Enrollment priorities, enrollment timing, and other factors affect the number and mix of parents who use UW child care services.**

In other instances, the local school districts are unable to locate adequate space in their existing facilities to expand to four-year-old kindergarten programs and, as a result, enter into cooperative agreements with child care centers. UW-Milwaukee was the only center to enter into such an agreement at the time of the review, but other centers have been approached

about providing this service. For example, the UW-Madison centers reported that the Madison school district is exploring collaboration with existing centers for the kindergarten-for-fours program, since the Madison school district does not have space to expand its program. All UW-Madison campus-operated centers expressed interest in participating in this program.

The UW children's centers have adopted a number of different strategies to strengthen the enrollment process. Various centers have adopted the following practices:

- Monitoring enrollment levels: Some centers monitor enrollment through periodic calculation of occupancy rates.
- Requiring deposits or fees to hold a space: Several practices exist: 1) establishing an application process that requires parents to pay a fee in order to be placed on the waiting list, as well as completing an application; 2) adopting a non-refundable tuition deposit or reservation fee due at the time of registration (one center director noted that it would be best to apply this payment to the last scheduled payment due, since many outstanding-account balances exist at the time of termination); and 3) assessing a holding fee to parents who do not enroll their children during summer sessions or requiring summer enrollment to receive priority for fall registrations.
- Charging fees for schedule changes: At one center, parents sign a formal contract and are responsible for fee payment covering the semester or other contract period unless families no longer have a university affiliation or are moving from the community; most centers have more informal enrollment agreements. Since students often change their class schedules, requests are often made to change enrollment times at the children's center; several centers charge a fee for scheduling changes.
- Mixing age groups to manage staffing patterns and minimize costs: Although the major reason for mixing age groups is programmatic -- these groupings can provide older children with the opportunity to be helpful, as well as provide desirable role models to younger children -- mixed groups also offer more flexibility in scheduling during the registration process. In addition, many centers blend children from different age groups at the beginning and end of the day in order to minimize staffing costs during periods of low enrollment.

**UW children's centers have developed strategies to help them strengthen enrollment practices and manage staffing levels.**

Thus, UW children's centers have identified a variety of creative ways to manage enrollment, while attempting to accommodate university parents' need for flexibility.

## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

We reviewed several administrative areas to determine how the UW children's centers balance quality-of-care issues with concerns about the adequacy of resources. We examined: staffing, facilities and quality assessment.

### **Staffing**

The quality of the staff is the most important factor in the quality of the early childhood program, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation manual. The Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership (WCCRP), a joint effort by the Department of Workforce Development, UW-Extension and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, notes that high quality care is characterized by education, training and experience. It further notes that there is an emphasis in the state on professional development with new state-funded programs to increase educational levels. At the same time, addressing quality issues, such as low child-to-staff ratios and educational credentials of staff, may result in higher costs to users, reductions in services, or both. We reviewed staffing and required staffing levels at the UW children's centers, as well as efforts to retain teachers.

### **Staff Composition**

UW children's center staffing is based on Wisconsin licensing requirements for child-to-staff ratios. These ratios range from a four-to-one ratio for infants to two-year-olds, to thirteen-to-one for four-to-five-year-olds, and 18-to-one for children six years and older. These levels are considered a "floor," and accreditation standards generally suggest lower child-to-staff ratios. Some UW centers adhere to minimum child-to-staff ratios required by licensing; other centers provide lower child-to-staff ratios than required, resulting in significantly higher costs. For example, UW-Milwaukee uses a two-to-one child-to-staff ratio for its infants and a three-to-one ratio for its toddlers.

**Administrators and directors** -- The UW children's centers are managed by directors who generally are responsible for program and curriculum, as well as personnel, facility and financial management tasks. According to a brief from the WCCRP, Wisconsin is one of only five states to require specific administrative training for administrators or directors. The WCCRP notes that as the early childhood education field becomes increasingly demanding, with staff shortages and wage issues, the administrator's credential will be essential. A survey by WCCRP found that only 250 individuals in Wisconsin (15 percent of all directors) have earned the administrator credential since its inception in 1998. A national newsletter praised the UW-Milwaukee center director as founder of "one of the nation's most promising and innovative programs devised to train directors," a six-course 24-credit professional credential program for child care administrators.

**Child care teachers** -- "Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers," a study conducted by the National Research Council at the request of the Department of Education, recommends that every group of children in an early childhood program be assigned a teacher who has a bachelor's degree and has completed coursework in developmental psychology or a related field. We found

that lead teaching positions are generally filled by academic staff who have attained at least a four-year degree, although a few UW institutions do not require that academic staff positions have degrees. Many UW institutions require lead teachers who serve as supervisors to student teachers to have a teaching license and/or complete a supervisory teaching course, and some do not. Two UW centers rely solely on limited term employees to fill lead teaching positions.

**Lead teachers at most UW institutions have at least a bachelor's degree.**

Since enrollment levels can vary throughout a day due to flexible scheduling, the centers use a number of different practices in order to maintain the required ratios. The lead teaching staff are supplemented by a high number of student employees at most centers, except at UW-Madison which uses academic staff for most teaching positions. Many centers reported using over sixty students during a semester; UW-Milwaukee employs an average of 140 students each semester. Although education levels are dictated by state statute, student employees may be in the process of attaining the educational credentials required by group day care licensing. At UW-Parkside, the director has developed a training course that meets state requirements and that student employees must complete during their first semester of employment. Also, some centers use a permanent floater, have a pool of substitutes, or schedule the director for occasional teaching responsibilities.

**Student employees supplement lead teachers at most UW institutions.**

**Health specialists** -- A future staffing concern may be the need to include health specialists on staff. Wisconsin provides funding to a number of child care centers, designated as Excellence Centers, through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Excellence Initiative; the purpose of the funding is to enhance quality of care for urban low-income children. One Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development requirement is that Excellence Centers have on-site health specialists included in the program. Health specialists can assess and diagnose the daily health care needs of children, conduct health workshops, provide written materials for parents and teachers, or directly teach children about health topics. Additionally, the National Health and Safety Performance standards provide that children's centers use health consultants to evaluate the adequacy of health-related policies and procedures and to conduct periodic on-site visits.

### **Retention Efforts**

Minimizing staff turnover plays an important role in the quality of child care. One WCCRP brief notes that the annual turnover rate for child care teachers in Wisconsin is over 40 percent, citing low wages as a major factor influencing retention. UW centers have explored how to upgrade LTE and student positions that are subject to higher turnover due to lower wages and few benefits. For example, UW-Madison OCCC has started to investigate whether classified positions, instead of LTE positions, could be used for teachers who do not have a four-year degree. UW-Milwaukee has started using an intern position in order to reward selected student employees.

**UW children's centers have explored ways to reduce turnover among employees.**

Each center director and child care teacher has been required, since January 1998, to obtain a certificate from the registry of the Wisconsin early childhood professional recognition system within three months of employment. We found several UW centers had not complied with this requirement. In 2001 the Department of Workforce Development used federal funds to implement the R.E.W.A.R.D. Wisconsin (Rewarding Education with Wages And Respect for Dedication) program, a compensation initiative that awards annual stipends to early childhood professionals based on their level in the Registry Recognition system. This program is designed to reward attained education, retain staff specific to the early childhood field, reduce turnover by awarding stipends after demonstrated commitment, increase compensation, and encourage continued education. Those staff who did not obtain certification through the registry did not participate in the R.E.W.A.R.D. program. Also, at one center staff reportedly were not allowed to participate in R.E.W.A.R.D. because department administrators interpreted the awards to be bonuses and did not believe that state employees were entitled to such benefits. Our research indicates that it is acceptable for state employees to participate; this is an area that children's center directors should review with their institutions' human resources staffs if the program is continued in the 2003-05 biennium.

### **Facilities**

The ability of the children's centers to meet the needs of the university is determined in part by the availability of space. The UW children's centers are housed in a wide variety of buildings, self-contained or multi-purpose, GPR- or PR-funded. Some centers have been allocated space that was not originally designed for child care purposes and, as a result, extensive renovation was required to meet licensing and accreditation standards. Also, centers may have sought additional space for program expansion to meet unmet needs or to meet licensing standards.

Funding sources for center relocations or program additions vary by UW institution. UW-Stout, for example, expanded care for infants and toddlers in a GPR facility that was funded by Access to Learning funds of \$80,000. UW-Stevens Point relocated its program through a federal grant and a \$50,000 donation, with the excess paid from the center's operating account. UW-Platteville is the only UW center that has recently built a new self-contained center, using a combination of donations and PR funding. The UW-Parkside children's center is housed in a temporary building, constructed in 1970, that was intended to have a life expectancy of 20 years. This facility is subdivided by temporary walls that are of concern to the center director; the center's request to use space in another campus building when an outside agency moved from that location was not authorized.

Although Regent Policy Document 90-3, "Funding of University Facilities Capital Costs," states that prescribed funding for child care centers used by students and staff should be GPR, children's centers constructed in recent years have used PR or other funds. UW-La Crosse incorporated the children's center into its plans for the Recreational Eagle complex. This facility is funded by student segregated fees, but the debt repayment is not allocated to the children's center account. Other states, such as Illinois, Minnesota and New York, have developed grant programs for child care facilities.

Two UW children's centers are planning for new sites and others may need to be relocated or increased in size. UW-River Falls recently obtained approval for PR funding for a new facility. Also, the UW-Eau Claire center is housed in a former elementary school that is on the state agenda for demolition, and the director is working with the campus planner to plan a self-contained facility.

Newly constructed facilities may not always meet campus needs. A task force report has identified a need for infant care at UW-La Crosse; its new facility did not include space for infants and, as a result, there is interest in securing an additional facility for this purpose. UW-Platteville also did not incorporate infant/toddler care into its new facility.

### **Quality Assessment**

Program evaluations can be used to assess the degree to which child care programs meet goals and objectives, identify problem areas, and allow administrators to improve quality. According to a Mathematica policy research paper, quality is a concept “used to describe features of program environments and children’s experiences in these environments that are presumed to be beneficial to children’s well-being.” We reviewed various tools for ensuring that children’s centers offer quality programs, including accreditation, customer surveys, and advisory committees.

### **Accreditation**

In order to ensure high standards in teaching, research, and public service, FAP G38 requires that each children's center seek and maintain accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP). Programs that are accredited tend to have higher quality, according to an Early Childhood Research & Policy Brief. While state licensing requirements represent a basic level of consumer protection, accreditation standards are developed to achieve quality improvements. The accreditation process: 1) begins with an extensive self-study by program staff and parents to determine how well the program meets criteria; 2) continues with an on-site visit by trained validators to verify the accuracy of the program description; and 3) is completed by a commission decision based on substantial compliance with the criteria. A review of Commission Decision reports shows that UW children's centers were commended for many aspects of their programs.

**FAP G38 requires accreditation, which is designed to promote quality child care programs.**

All but four campus-operated programs are accredited through the NAEYC, which is part of the NAECP, and the UW-Madison centers also are accredited by the City of Madison. The four UW programs that are not accredited are: 1) UW-River Falls, which has only operated its own children's center since the 2001-02 academic year and will be seeking accreditation (the accreditation process requires that a center be operational for at least one year prior to seeking accreditation); 2) the UW-Madison WECP, which is also in the process of seeking accreditation and hopes to receive this status during FY 2003; 3) UW-Stout, which lost its accreditation in

**Four UW children’s centers were not accredited as of June 30, 2002.**

2000 when the former director did not seek re-accreditation and which reports that accreditation paperwork has been completed and a validation visit is forthcoming; and 4) UW-Parkside, which expressed no plans to seek accreditation, since there is significant use of part-time LTE employees that may not support the continuity of staffing desired by the accrediting agency.

FAP G38 also requires that private child care contractors used by UW institutions seek accreditation within a three-year period. We found that the UW-Madison parent cooperative lost its accreditation status for a three-year period between 1998 and 2001 when the center was without a director. Also, private contractors used at two institutions have not attained NAEYC accreditation, and one UW-Madison center is a family day care not governed by the NAEYC, since its licensed capacity is less than nine.

While the majority of UW children's centers are accredited, only approximately 10 percent of Wisconsin's licensed centers, or 238 programs, were accredited in Wisconsin as of February 2002. Accreditation is costly, but Wisconsin is one of 29 states paying accredited programs higher rates for subsidized child care, which somewhat compensates for the additional expenses associated with accreditation.

### **Customer Surveys**

Customer surveys can also be useful in assuring that quality is maintained. G38 requires that centers conduct periodic surveys of parent-clients to assess client satisfaction. All but two UW children's centers provide parents the opportunity to evaluate the centers, either by semester or by academic year, most frequently using the parental survey from the NAEYC as an evaluation tool. Some centers summarize the survey results or share the surveys with their advisory/parent committees in order to develop action plans to correct noted deficiencies or implement suggestions. Some other centers do not formally use the survey results. A review of parent responses at some centers indicated a high level of satisfaction with the services offered.

### **Advisory Committees**

Although many children's centers use parent advisory committees to establish annual rates or consider policy setting, university-wide committees to provide guidance and oversight have not been established at many UW institutions. UW-Madison has established a university child care committee to address various issues and strategies to meet campus child care needs. UW-Madison also funds an Office of Campus Child Care (OCCC), which is responsible for promoting the development and implementation of a coordinated child care system at UW-Madison, working with the Campus Planning committee, a variety of academic and administrative departments, student groups and existing child care resources. The UW System Office of Women's Studies previously facilitated periodic meetings of center directors and completed a comprehensive study of the status of child care in the UW System in 1992; however, there is currently no systemwide coordinator to provide assistance in needs analysis, grant applications, cost models, and other areas.

## Other Tools for Evaluation

Several other tools have been established or used that provide a basis for additional self-evaluation. These include the following:

- The National Health and Safety Performance Standards (NHSPS): Guidelines for Out of Home Child Care were partly funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and used in a 1998 GAO study to help compare state standards.
- The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) have become standards for assessing quality in the classroom; according to one Wisconsin report, both rating scales have high test-retest reliability as well as high validity, but both national and Wisconsin studies have found a high percentage of centers to be rated as mediocre in quality using this standard.
- Outside consultants, such as one UW-Stout hired to perform an evaluation of the facility and programming of the children's center, can be useful.

To assure continued high-quality programs, *we recommend:*

- *UW institution administrators ensure that all UW children's centers or private campus vendors seek accreditation and ensure that accreditation is maintained, as FAP G38 requires; and*
- *UW children's center directors: 1) summarize and assess parent survey results to determine whether corrective actions are necessary; 2) meet periodically as a group in order to share information about quality programming; and 3) consider using additional evaluation tools, such as NHSPS or rating scales, to further assess and improve program quality.*

## FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

UW children's centers are charged with providing quality, low-cost child care. Setting rates, identifying revenue sources, and collecting fees are among the centers' financial responsibilities. We reviewed: funding sources, fee payment and billing practices, and the financial position of the UW children's centers.

### Funding

FAP G38 establishes that while user fees are the primary funding source for children's centers, each institution may determine GPR, segregated-fee and/or in-kind support appropriate to its center's activities. The policy acknowledges that the centers vary widely in use and purpose, and funding should be in accordance with the mix of these activities. A survey

**Some UW children's centers do not receive direct GPR support.**

completed by the National Coalition of Campus Children's Centers (NCCC) reports that only 50 percent of respondent support was derived from user fees, while direct subsidies provided 21 percent; in-kind donations 10 percent; and other sources, such as grants and fundraising, provided 19 percent. In comparison, user fees at most UW institutions are more than 50 percent of revenues; and at least one-third of the UW centers do not receive direct GPR support.

Table 4 shows certain sources of revenue available to the UW children's centers. Some sources of direct and indirect support, such as for the College Work Study match, facilities, utilities, custodial and maintenance costs, are not always separated in accounting records; consequently, these are not included. We examined the primary revenue sources for the UW children's centers: parent fees, segregated fees, county assistance, and other revenue sources.

**Table 4**  
**UW System Child Care Revenue**  
**Campus-Operated Centers: FY 2002**

UW CENTER	USER FEES (1)		SEGREGATED FEES		REPORTED GIFTS, GRANTS AND OTHER		GPR SUPPORT		TOTAL
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	
<b>Eau Claire</b>	\$311,227	68.9	\$115,000	25.4	\$25,808	5.7	\$0		\$452,035
<b>La Crosse</b>	185,137	48.9	155,706	41.1	10,828	2.9	26,978	7.1	378,649
<b>Madison (2)</b>			609,600		CCMPIS				
<b>Preschool Labs (3)</b>	876,284	89.5			34,796	3.6	67,914	6.9	978,994
<b>WECP</b>	623,381	84.7			29,754	4.0	83,088	11.3	736,223
<b>Eagle's Wing</b>	454,360	98.5			6,998	1.5			461,358
<b>Milwaukee</b>	1,682,150	69.9	434,700	18.1	283,821	11.8	5000	.2	2,405,671
<b>Oshkosh</b>	201,911	64.6	78,440	25.1	32,291	10.3	0		312,642
<b>Parkside</b>	248,207	75.9	78,982	24.1	0		0		327,189
<b>Platteville</b>	149,274	60.1	22,496	9.1	20,059	8.1	56,522	22.7	248,351
<b>River Falls</b>	158,361	78.7	40,248	20.0	2,555	1.3	0		201,164
<b>Stevens Point</b>	217,300	56.7	37,451	9.6	59,259	15.4	70,028	18.3	384,038
<b>Stout (4)</b>	182,083	38.5	127,038	26.9	9,786	2.1	153,857	32.5	472,764
<b>Whitewater</b>	168,674	64.8	65,833	25.3	5,166	1.9	20,766	8.0	260,439
<b>Colleges-Fox</b>	303,269	92.5	9,660	2.9	15,132	4.6	0		328,061

Source of data: Financial reports provided by children's center directors. This table excludes centers operated by private vendors.

- (1) User fees include parent fees, federal subsidies (county assistance), and university scholarships.
- (2) Segregated fees and CCMPIS funds are administered centrally and provided in part to UW-Madison centers as user fees.
- (3) Preschool labs revenue did not include facility rental payment by the UW-Madison administration.
- (4) Differential tuition, rather than segregated fees, is used at UW-Stout to support the center.

## **Parent Fees**

Child care affordability can be one of the greatest barriers to parents seeking a higher education. One report notes that the average annual child care cost for a 12-month-old in selected Wisconsin areas was more than twice the average annual cost of public college tuition in Wisconsin during 1998-99. The Almanac of Policy Issues notes that child care expenses can range from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year per child, and this expense is prohibitive for lower- and

middle-income families. Child care costs vary greatly by location in Wisconsin, as reflected in the wide range of county reimbursement rates for the state-funded Wisconsin Shares program. Rates at the UW centers are similarly wide ranging. For example, rates for preschool children of faculty/staff parents at eight UW centers that publish daily rates ranged from \$21.50 per day to \$48 in 2002. We reviewed factors that affect child care fees, as well as available financial assistance.

**Child care rates** -- User fees account for the largest source of revenue for children's center operations. Rate structures vary widely among the UW children's centers, based on type of user (student, faculty/staff, community); age of children served; or scheduling option selected, such as hourly, half-day, or full time. Students are generally offered a fee discount based on segregated fee support, and faculty/staff and community parents are assessed a higher rate. Several centers assess a higher rate to community users than to faculty/staff. Those centers that establish rates based in part on the ages of children assess the highest rates for infant care. Also, rates for hourly care are significantly higher than rates for full-time enrollment. At many centers, however, rates are not based on studies that could ensure that actual costs related to the age of children or length of care are recognized and recovered.

Some other center policies can provide flexibility in costs to parents. Factors that may influence the cost of child care include:

- *Length of enrollment agreement:* The number of enrollment sessions offered varies widely among the UW children's centers. Centers that offer more enrollment sessions offer more flexibility for parents, since parents are not responsible for paying fees during those periods when child care is unnecessary. While some centers require a semester or nine- or twelve-month agreement, other centers offer care during various inter-sessions, the week of spring break, and as many as eight different summer session periods.
- Some enrollment options, discounts, and scholarships can reduce or offset parents' costs.**
- *Sibling discount policy:* Some centers offer rate reductions when more than one child per family is enrolled. (The Wisconsin Best Practices project notes that sibling discounts are not a good practice because the actual costs to provide care for each child are approximately the same.)
  - *Vacation and sick-day policies:* Vacation and sick-day policies include reducing fees for approved absences, exempting students from contracted hours during exam week or interim periods, or granting parents a specified number of sick days each semester.
  - *Financial support:* A small number of UW institutions or departments, such as UW-Stevens Point and the WECP, have established scholarship funds to provide support to student parents. Federal grants, such as the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) funds also may be available to subsidize student parent fees.

Policies that reduce fees for parents lead to a commensurate reduction in revenue for the centers. This may suggest a need to ensure rate-setting practices, including fee-reduction policies, are based on actual costs to the extent possible.

While there are some options available to student parents to reduce child care costs, such as lower student-parent rates, there is little available to offset fees for university employees. FAP G38 allows that a sliding fee scale for child care may be offered to staff and junior faculty, but this option has not been implemented at any of the UW centers. Several peer institutions, including the University of Michigan, Michigan State and the University of Illinois, provide sliding scale subsidy programs, generally based on gross income and household size. Both the federal government and state of Wisconsin have recognized the need to support child care costs.

**UW employees have not been offered rate reductions.**

**County and other assistance** -- Wisconsin's subsidy program for low-income families, Wisconsin Shares, is available to some student parents. The program has seen significant increases in federal funding, from \$107 million in 1998 to \$216 million in 2001; approximately 74,000 children from 42,000 families were served in 2001. The UW children's centers report that very few center parents (approximately 125 families for fall 2001-02) received child care assistance from the program. Twenty-five other states extend eligibility for assistance to families in education or training without a work requirement. However, eligibility in Wisconsin includes an employment requirement, which reduces the number of UW student parents receiving assistance and does not provide an incentive for low-income parents to seek a college degree.

**Government subsidies for low-income families may assist some student parents.**

In its 2001-03 biennial budget priorities, the United Council requested that a statewide GPR-funded financial aid program be established for student parents to help defray the costs of child care services. This request identifies a model in the state of Oregon that uses federal funds to provide grants to individual student parents. Oregon is also exploring matching state funds to provide increased grants. A 2001-2003 Report to the Governor and Legislature by the Oregon Commission for Child Care notes that the Student Block Grant Program provides assistance to about 250 students per month; the waiting list for the program is over 900 families long and approximately one year in duration. Also, Maine has created a Parents as Scholars program, which offers financial assistance with child care to allow recipients to attend two- and four-year degree-granting institutions. *We recommend that UW System explore ways to be represented in various legislative initiatives concerning child care, such as extending eligibility to post-secondary students, providing quality improvement funding, or creating additional scholarship funds.*

### **Segregated Fees**

Segregated fees are assessed to students at the doctoral and most comprehensive UW institutions to support the children's centers. Segregated fees for child care ranged from \$2.24 for full-time students at UW-Superior to \$21.52 at UW-Parkside for FY 2002. Regent Resolution SG 18

allows the segregated fees to be non-allocable in order to maintain a more stable funding base. Although a number of UW institutions have defined this fee to be non-allocable, those centers supported by allocable segregated fees have reported good support. UW-Stout allocates a portion of Access to Learning fees (Fund 131) to support its center through Fund 102 budget authority, which functions similarly to segregated fee allocations. Several of the UW Colleges also allocate a portion of student activity fees to reimburse student parents for private-sector child care costs.

**Some UW centers do not maintain documentation to support that segregated fees are fully used to subsidize student parent fees.**

FAP G38 indicates that segregated fees may be used to reduce the cost of child care for student parents only and may not be used to subsidize faculty/staff or community users. We found that while each center (with the exception of UW-Madison) provides a discounted rate for student parents, there is often no assurance that the segregated fee is fully used to subsidize student parent fees. Most of the UW institutions deposit the segregated fee to the Fund 128 children's center accounts to meet general operating expenses.

Several center directors noted that a formula had been established years ago to ensure that segregated fees were used to support student parents, but some directors were not familiar with how to use this formula. However, UW-Milwaukee reports that it has established a process to ensure that all segregated fees are used in support of student parents, and UW-La Crosse performed a rate study in 1997 to substantiate segregated fee usage. To ensure that segregated fees are used only to support the child care fees of student parents, *we recommend that the UW children's centers maintain documentation to support student parent subsidies.*

UW-Madison has established a process to separately account for segregated fee awards to student parents. The Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP) awards student-parent subsidies to eligible students based on number of credits, income levels, and other factors. The award is made to any regulated provider in the state of Wisconsin selected by the student parent. The program served 361 families in fall 2001, and UW-Madison reports this program has become a model for use by peer institutions. A portion of the fund is also used to provide for sick-child care. The Family Child Care Training Program, also at UW-Madison, was implemented in collaboration with community providers to increase the number of high-quality regulated family child care providers who reside in student housing.

**A UW-Madison program separately accounts for segregated fee awards to student parents.**

### **GPR and In-kind Support**

FAP G38 notes that funding sources should reflect the mix of activities at children's centers and identifies GPR funding as the preferable funding source for instructional/academic support, as well as public service/outreach activities. Additionally, Regent Resolution SG 18 suggests that academic departments using child care centers as educational sites should assume education-related costs. We found that most UW children's centers report using the center for instructional

and research purposes; however, UW institutions do not always contribute GPR support to the centers, such as for salaries or for supplies and expenses.

**Some UW institutions do not use GPR to support child care centers, even when the centers are used for instruction or research.**

The level of direct support the UW institutions provide to the children's centers in the form of salary and supply budgets varies widely. We found that eight of the UW institutions contributed to the funding of the children's center through GPR support of salaries, fringe benefits or supplies and expenses, as shown in Table 4. For example, UW-Platteville began contributing GPR to the director's salary in order to allow for the building of a new facility, since the debt repayment was not possible without this support. UW-Madison contributes over \$58,000 (from Fund 136) annually for facility rental for one of its lab schools housed in an off-campus location.

UW System policy (FAP 42) defines child care operations to be non-auxiliary student services; as a result, they are to receive GPR support in the form of utilities, custodial and maintenance costs, and other administrative support. We found that utilities are provided to all children's centers. However, three UW institutions do not provide custodial support, and many centers also assume responsibility for certain maintenance costs that are not assessed to other non-auxiliary areas, such as carpet replacement and repainting. In-kind support is provided in the form of facility space to most of the children's centers, except where program revenue funds have been used to construct a new facility, such as at UW-Platteville and UW-La Crosse.

### **Grants, Gifts and Other Revenue Sources**

Many of the UW children's centers have been resourceful in identifying other sources of revenue to supplement their resource base in order to keep parent fees affordable. We reviewed the efforts of the UW children's centers to seek additional funding support through federal, state and local grants, as well as through fund raising efforts.

**Child Care Access Means Parents in School funds** -- The most significant source of federal funding available to campus-based child care operations, CCAMPIS funds, was authorized in 1998 to support low-income parents pursuing postsecondary education. In general, any institution awarding Pell grants in excess of \$350,000 per year may submit a proposal and receive funding of one percent of the Pell Grant disbursements for each year of a four-year period. Funds can be used for a variety of purposes. The pilot funding in 1999 was limited to \$5 million, and 87 awards were made in that year. The Chronicle of Higher Education notes that funding increased by 400 percent in December 2000 to \$25 million. However, funding for 2003 was decreased to \$16.2 million and new awards are currently not being accepted.

Three UW centers, at UW-Madison, Oshkosh, and Stevens Point, received funding for the pilot-year period and three others received funding in subsequent years. These funds are being used in various ways, including: subsidizing the cost of infant/toddler care for low income undergraduate students, participating in a music program for children of Pell-eligible student parents, providing staff development, helping employ future teachers, funding scholarships, remodeling a new site to accommodate infants and toddlers, and providing families in the program with reduced tuition.

All UW children's centers are eligible for CCAMPIS funds based on Pell grant disbursement totals. Using FY 2002 Pell Grant disbursement data, eligibility for CCAMPIS funds would range from \$19,050 per year at UW-Superior to \$94,731 per year at UW-Milwaukee for a four-year period. The children's centers that have not completed a proposal for CCAMPIS funds cite lack of time and/or grant-writing expertise. To provide additional revenues for child care operations, *we recommend that all UW institutions provide grant-writing expertise to the centers to assist them in completing CCAMPIS proposals.*

**Some UW institutions have not taken advantage of federal funds for campus-based child care, even though all would be eligible.**

**Child and Adult Care Food Program** -- Another opportunity available to children's centers to offset costs is participation in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Licensed programs are required to ensure that children eat balanced meals while at the center, even when parents provide the food. This federal program subsidizes a portion of food expenses and ensures compliance with minimum nutrition guidelines. Based on parent-reported information of family size and household income, centers are reimbursed for meals for eligible children. Six UW children's centers participate in this program and several have been "audited" by DPI and highly commended for their programs.

However, many UW centers have elected not to participate in the program. Reasons directors cited include: 1) lack of information about the program; 2) lack of staff support to complete necessary paperwork; 3) an international population of children that would not be receptive to the meals served; or 4) parents who would be hesitant to provide financial information. Since the CACFP offsets the cost of food and ensures that children will receive nutritional meals and snacks selected in accordance with federal and state guidelines, *we recommend that all UW institutions work with the children's centers to maximize participation in the CACFP program.*

**More UW children's centers could participate in a federal food program.**

**Other grants** -- Licensing requires that each teacher complete a required number of continuing education credits, and the UW children's centers had previously offset professional-development costs through quality improvement grants. However, the Legislature eliminated the quality improvement grant program in the 2001-03 budget and shifted this funding to one project in Racine County. The loss of these funds will significantly affect the cost of meeting continuing education licensing requirements.

Some UW children's centers are actively pursuing other available federal, state, or private grants. UW-Milwaukee, for example, reported receiving federal funding administered by the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association for the TEACH program by offering classes for credit for infant/toddler credentials. Several centers also enrolled at least one teacher in a mentoring program through the TEACH program. UW-Eau Claire noted that staff took part in the Reaching for

**Children's centers may be able to identify additional grant funding.**

Excellence grant; conference attendance resulted in various funds for the center. Other centers report little or no other grant activity. In order to assist in meeting necessary costs, *we recommend that UW System Administration provide information to children's center directors regarding funding sources in order for the centers to seek and expand funding support from federal, state and other sources.*

### **Fundraising Efforts**

Another possible revenue source is fundraising. Fundraising efforts are usually limited to the occasional event run by center parents. However, several centers have explored additional opportunities to make child care a higher priority on fundraising agendas. These include:

**Fundraising efforts have benefited some UW children's centers.**

- UW-Madison has formalized a partnership between the UW Foundation and the University Child Care Committee to analyze opportunities for attracting private resources and developing a long-range plan for major gifts. A June 2000 White Paper on UW-Madison Campus Child Care recommends that priority projects be specified and broadly publicized through the UW Foundation web site and other means. The UW-Madison OCCC is developing a database of student parents who have received assistance dating back to 1985 in order to target potential donors.
- The Friends of the Waisman Center initiated a fundraising drive in fall 1998 and were able to support the establishment of the Discovery Garden, which will serve as a national prototype for outdoor environments in early education.
- The UW-Milwaukee Foundation allows the children's center to use their phone bank once a year for a phone-a-thon.
- The UW-Milwaukee center's Friends organization arranged to participate in a "We Care" program sponsored by a major grocer, where one percent of receipts would be donated to the center.

Other centers may be able to work with their university foundations or parents to organize similar events.

### **Fee Payment and Billing Practices**

Fee policies and practices vary widely among the UW children's centers, some dictated by community practices or established at the inception of the center. Some UW centers rely on a manual system for billing and collection, while others have software packages to assist with records management. Two UW institutions provide billing for student-parent fees through the institutions' student accounts receivable system, while another UW institution provides billing services for all customer accounts through an auxiliary accounting function. Billing periods range from weekly at some centers to four installments a semester at others. While all the

centers maintain a record of parent fees assessed and paid, several children's centers do not maintain accounts receivable totals for the semester or on a cumulative basis.

Although most centers require payment prior to providing child care services, several prefer to bill after the service is provided in order to invoice any additional hours of service or other charges. The Wisconsin Childcare Improvement Project recommended advance payment as a best practice. Various other procedures and assessments established by the UW children's centers to better manage the fee process, including required termination notices, an initial registration fee, fines for late pick-ups, and bad check fees, are also considered best practices.

Due to the small size of the centers and limited administrative support staff, we noted a lack of internal controls at several of the children's centers. For example, receipts were deposited and posted to customer accounts by the same individual; payments were not deposited in accordance with state requirements, and payments were not adequately secured. Although the FAP G38 provides that children's centers shall be subject to periodic internal audit, we found that several centers had not been reviewed in recent years. In order to ensure that adequate accountability measures are implemented, *we recommend that UW institutions provide appropriate accounting support for assessing and collecting children's center fees and that UW institution internal auditors conduct periodic audits.*

**Practices for billing parents vary among the centers, and some centers lack adequate internal controls.**

### **Financial Position**

UW children's centers must balance the objectives of ensuring quality and providing access against maintaining an adequate financial position. With state licensing and accreditation requirements mandating certain staffing levels, there is little flexibility over the salary and fringe benefit costs that comprise the major portion of centers' expenditures. The age groups served, flexibility of enrollment options, and staffing patterns may also affect the financial position of the children's centers.

Evaluating the financial position of the children's centers is difficult because fluctuations may occur due to circumstances beyond the control of the centers, such as periods of low enrollment, wage increases, or program expansions. Additionally, record keeping systems at some of the centers do not provide adequate financial information. As Table 5 indicates, four centers had deficit cash balances as of the end of FY 2002, and several others had marginal financial positions that may not be adequate to meet existing salary needs or cover periods of financial difficulty. Other centers appear to have adequate balances.

**Four UW children's centers had deficit cash balances at the end of FY 2002.**

**Table 5**  
**UW System Campus-Operated Children's Centers**  
**Fund 128 Cash Balance**

<b>UW INSTITUTION</b>	<b>FY 2000 CASH BALANCE</b>	<b>FY 2001 CASH BALANCE</b>	<b>FY 2002 CASH BALANCE</b>
<b>Eau Claire</b>	\$50,758	\$122,375	\$181,466
<b>La Crosse</b>	(13,167)	(5)	19,109
<b>Madison</b>			
<b>Preschool Labs</b>	102,421	96,708	82,655
<b>Waisman</b>	1987	16,551	(63,968)
<b>Eagle's Wing *</b>	(69,824)	(92,330)	(97,367)
<b>Milwaukee</b>	79,458	19,591	156,305
<b>Oshkosh</b>	7,211	8,217	(14,947)
<b>Parkside</b>	22,306	(9,186)	895
<b>Platteville</b>	86,554	56,765	51,465
<b>River Falls</b>	(4,427)	18,941	6,451
<b>Stevens Point</b>	36,242	45,001	(35,169)
<b>Stout</b>	50,005	47,480	22,342
<b>Whitewater</b>	28,809	30,791	41,605
<b>Fox Valley</b>	52,736	71,250	84,662

Source: WISDM reports or PeopleSoft Query. This table excludes centers operated by private vendors.

\*Annual net loss. UW-Madison Eagle's Wing is supported by the Fund 128 university housing accounts.

Although the children's centers are not considered to be auxiliary operations, as program revenue operations they are subject to reserve policies and procedures in FAP F43, "Financial Management of Auxiliary Operations," based on the amount of revenue generated annually. We found that directors generally develop reserve plans for the children's centers through the auxiliary budget process and closely monitor financial position. While only one UW center has debt service requirements at this time, future program revenue (PR) construction will result in higher costs at several other centers.

## **CONCLUSION**

UW System child care policy recognizes the importance of access to child care for students, faculty and staff. A major challenge facing UW children's centers is balancing model, high-quality programs with affordable fees. Also, the centers are asked to respond to parents' interest in flexible child care hours, as well as a fluctuating demand for services. We found that many UW children's centers have worked to both address parents' needs and manage staffing and funding issues so as to offer reasonably-priced care.

At the same time, we identified some strategies that centers have adopted to enhance services, adopt creative enrollment management strategies, or seek additional funding. We found that centers do not consistently document the full array of functions they perform, including academic or instructional support. Some centers may be able to substantiate a greater GPR contribution. Also, some centers may be able to take greater advantage of available federal

grants, parent subsidies, or fundraising opportunities. In addition, in some instances children might benefit from increased efforts to collaborate with other departments or agencies. We have recommended that UW children's center directors:

- document the children's center's role in functions such as instruction/academic support, research, public service, and other activities, and verify the appropriate funding mix and assign costs proportionately;
- explore opportunities for establishing partnerships with both campus departments and off-campus agencies;
- summarize and assess parent survey results to determine whether corrective actions are necessary, meet periodically as a group in order to share information about quality programming, and consider using additional evaluation tools to further assess and improve program quality; and
- maintain documentation to support student parent subsidies.

In addition, we have recommended that UW institution administrators:

- develop plans for determining the appropriate service level to meet the needs of the university community and explore opportunities to expand services to meet needs;
- establish procedures for assessing child care needs on a regular basis and consider compiling parent data to target assessments and meet federal grant requirements;
- ensure that all UW children's centers or private campus vendors seek accreditation, as GAP G38 requires, and ensure that accreditation is maintained;
- provide grant-writing expertise to the centers to assist them in completing CCAMPIS proposals;
- work with children's centers to maximize participation in the CACFP program; and
- provide appropriate accounting support for assessing and collecting children's center fees and ensure that UW institution internal auditors conduct periodic audits.

Finally, we have recommended that UW System Administration:

- explore ways to be represented in various legislative initiatives concerning child care, such as extending eligibility to post-secondary students, providing quality improvement funding, or creating additional scholarship funds; and
- provide information to children's center directors regarding funding sources in order for the centers to seek and expand funding support from federal, state and other sources.

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