



# Ready for Today.

**weca** | Wisconsin Early  
Childhood Association  
*Because small lives get bigger*

2012 Annual Report



Ruth Schmidt  
Executive Director

Today, there are over 350,000 children in Wisconsin under the age of five.

Today, these children cannot wait. For teachers that support the explosive growth of their young brains; for healthy food that helps build strong motor skills; for books, blocks, puzzles, and play that stimulate just the right development; for lessons in caring and sharing that lead to socially and emotionally sound lives.

These children cannot wait.

For tomorrow will arrive all too soon, bringing with it the consequences of our inaction. Tomorrow we pay the costs of remedial education when quality early education today can ensure children are prepared to learn when they begin kindergarten.

Tomorrow holds the threat of climbing delinquency costs when quality early education today can ensure a strong social-emotional foundation for all children. Tomorrow we pay the price of youth dropping out of school when quality early education today holds the promise of more and more children graduating from high school. Tomorrow we absorb the escalating cost of government assistance programs when quality early education today is a proven indicator of future wage earnings.

Tomorrow is too late.

And so WECA stands ready, today.

Ready with scholarships for child care teachers going back to school to become more prepared

to meet the needs of our children, ready with stipends to say "thank you" to dedicated teachers working for very low wages, ready with Micro-Grants to help pay for materials and training to improve child care programs, ready with visits to the Capitol to advocate for strong public policy supporting children and families, ready with professional staff to consult on best practices, ready with publications and research to advance the early childhood field.

We invite you to stand with us, today. Become a supporter, become a member, become an advocate. As Mr. Rogers once said, "Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me." I couldn't agree more.

Be a hero. Today.

**"Many things we need can wait.  
The child cannot. Now is the time his  
bones are formed, his mind developed.  
To him we cannot say tomorrow, his  
name is today."**

-Gabriela Mistral, poet and educator



**6:47 am**

**Wisconsin, U.S.A.**

## **Ready to give children a good start in life.**

Today, on their way to work, thousands of parents across Wisconsin entrust the most important thing in their lives—their young children—to a child care provider.

They can be confident that their sons and daughters are learning,

growing, and playing with guidance from skilled, nurturing adults. And the companies and organizations that parents work for have a focused, productive workforce as a result.

Early childhood educators in every corner of the state make this possible every working day. They're ready to help children get a good start—today, and every day.

In Wisconsin, about 70 percent of children—infants to age five—receive child care of some sort.





8:06 am

La Crosse, WI

## Creating healthy bodies and active minds.

Today, children in La Crosse are getting a healthy breakfast at a family child care program. The eating habits children develop when they're young remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Family child care providers from nearly every county

in Wisconsin participate in the WECA Food Program which reimburses providers who serve healthy meals.

In 2012, 13,511 children were served healthy meals and snacks that were subsidized in part by the WECA Food Program.

When children get the nutrition they need, they can learn, play, and be their very best.

Who benefits from the WECA Food Program?



Children who get the nutrition they need.



Providers who receive financial support.



Parents who know their children are well nourished.

10:21 am

Milwaukee, WI



## Achieving quality care and education together.

For teachers at a child care center in Milwaukee, quality is more than simply caring. This morning, their WECA YoungStar technical consultant met with them to discuss ways to improve lesson plans and integrate physical activity into the day.

From the center director to the assistant teachers, the program is dedicated to high-quality child care.

YoungStar is Wisconsin's child care quality rating and improvement program. Through YoungStar, WECA provides professional development counseling, training, program ratings, and Micro-Grants across Wisconsin. WECA also provides one-on-one technical consulting with programs in Milwaukee County.

Improving child care in Wisconsin through the YoungStar program:



As of October 2012, WECA technical consultants made over 4,200 visits to programs in the Milwaukee-area.



Through Micro-Grants, WECA helped 1,918 child care programs get educational resources they need to provide higher quality care.

# 12 Noon

Green Bay, WI



## Supporting children and those who care for them.

Lunch is over and children in Green Bay are listening to a story before their afternoon nap.

While the lead teacher is reading, the assistant teacher prepares afternoon activities to promote

language development and social skills. But first, she took a phone call from a mom concerned about her daughter's cough. The teacher has been checking on the young girl all morning and assures the mother that her daughter is feeling much better. Mom goes back to work relieved.

Every day in Wisconsin, thousands of early childhood teachers work to make sure children and families have the support they need.

WECA works to support Wisconsin's estimated 36,500 early educators.

The infographic features a central black silhouette of the state of Wisconsin. Inside the silhouette, the number '36,500' is written in white. Surrounding the silhouette are several rows of small black stick figures, representing the estimated number of early educators in Wisconsin.



2:07 pm  
Clinton, WI

**Rewarding educated and dedicated teachers.**

Naptime is over. The children at an early education center in Clinton now have enough energy to run 10 miles, or so it seems. But their early childhood teacher adeptly directs their energy, implementing practices she learned at a WECA training over the weekend. She paid for

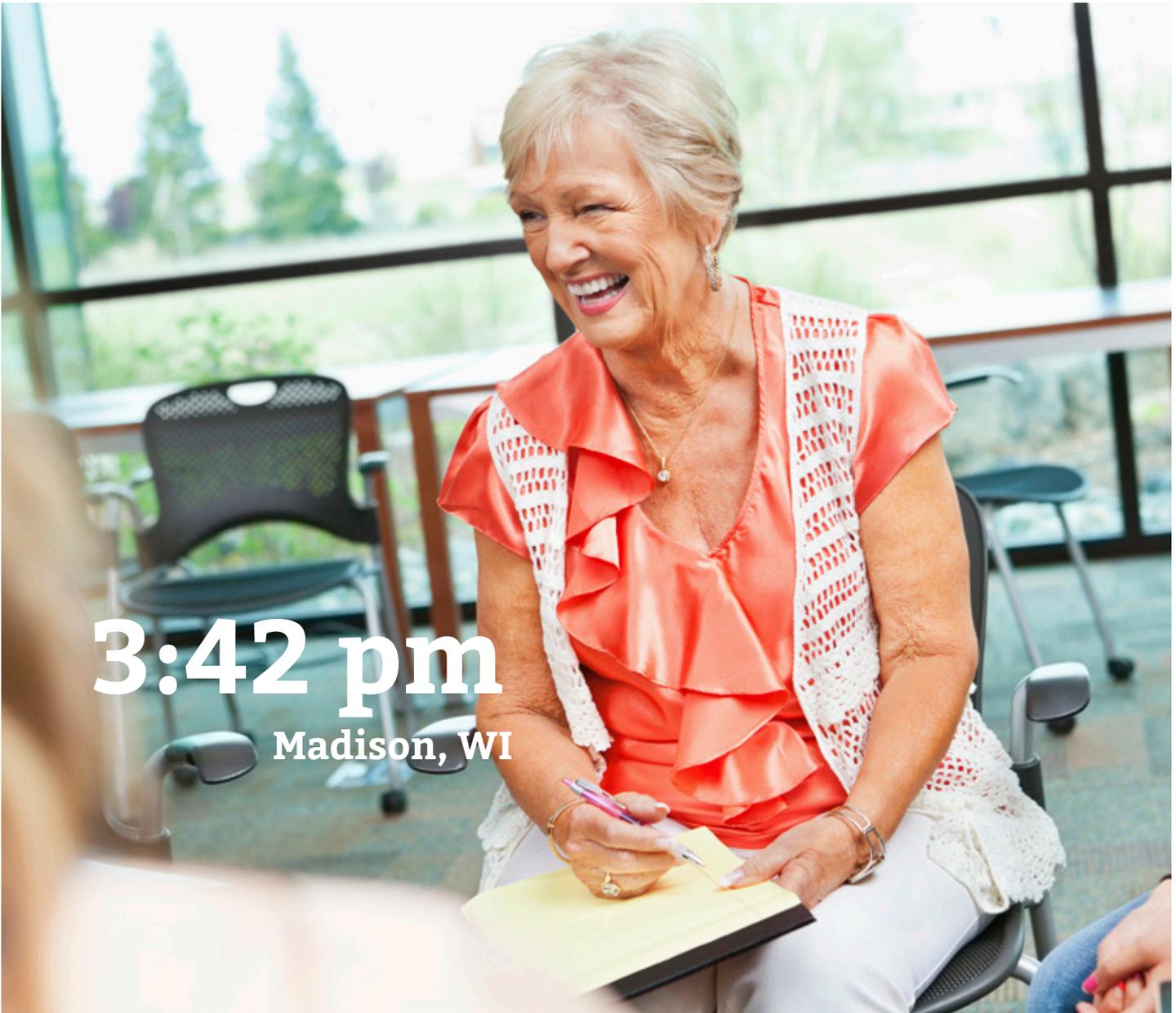
the training with her REWARD Wisconsin stipend.

REWARD Wisconsin promotes teacher commitment and longevity by providing salary stipends to early educators.

In 2012, almost \$750,000 in stipends were awarded.

Stipends cushion the low wages of child care providers (about \$23,000 per year) and help keep the best teachers working with children.





3:42 pm  
Madison, WI

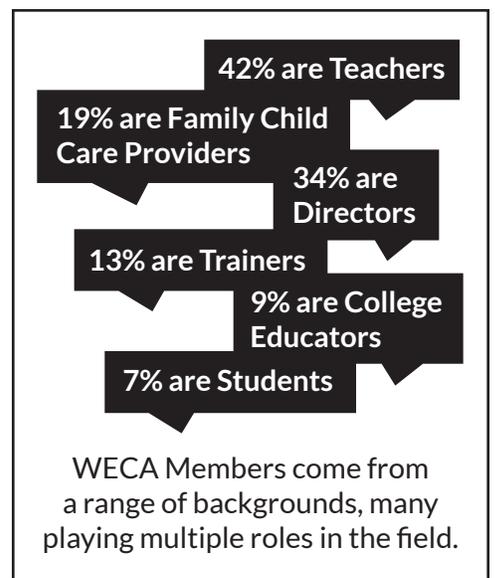
## Building a community of opportunity.

This afternoon, a family child care provider renewed her WECA membership. She's been a member for over 10 years and has taken part in WECA's advocacy campaigns, making sure the early education workforce gets the necessary funding to support progress within the field. She also has

built a professional network through her WECA local affiliate.

WECA is Wisconsin's leading early childhood education professional member association, with 15 local affiliates across Wisconsin and a national affiliation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

In 2012, over 2,500 members received benefits including discounts on classroom resources and access to professional development opportunities.





6:27 pm

Appleton, WI

## Developing businesses that shape the future.

As the last child leaves, the child care center director is getting ready to attend a business practices training. Like thousands of small business owners across Wisconsin, she must apply sound financial and management practices for her business to thrive.

Beyond business practices trainings, in 2012 WECA provided 139 trainings on a range of topics including early literacy, child development, special needs, family relationships, and more.

In 2012, WECA facilitated 100 workshops at the Annual Conference in Waukesha and the Pathways to Quality Conference in Milwaukee.

This year, through conferences and trainings, WECA helped nearly 2,000 early education professionals get the skills they need to grow in their careers.

Nearly 500 attendees from across the state met in Waukesha for the 2012 WECA Annual Conference.





**9:43 pm**  
**Wisconsin Rapids, WI**

**Growing an educated workforce.**

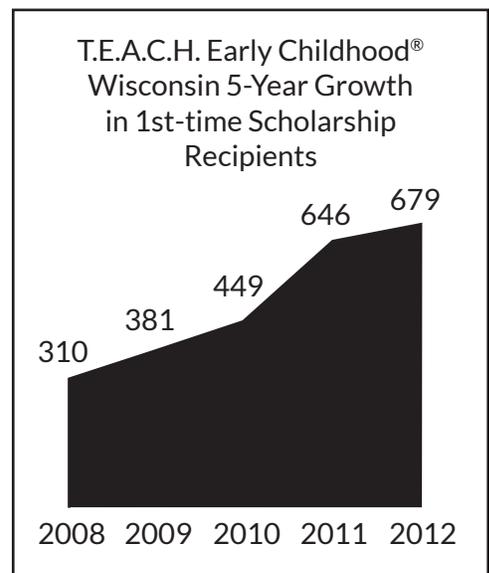
It's getting late, but a teacher in Wisconsin Rapids is also a student.

As part of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship program, she's on track to receive her degree in Early Childhood Education this spring.

Through T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin, WECA provides credit-based, higher-education scholarships to early childhood teachers who work in regulated settings.

In 2012, WECA awarded 1,148 scholarships, totaling nearly \$3 million.

T.E.A.C.H. recipients had an average GPA of 3.59 and completed 4,448 courses at technical and four-year colleges.



# Today...

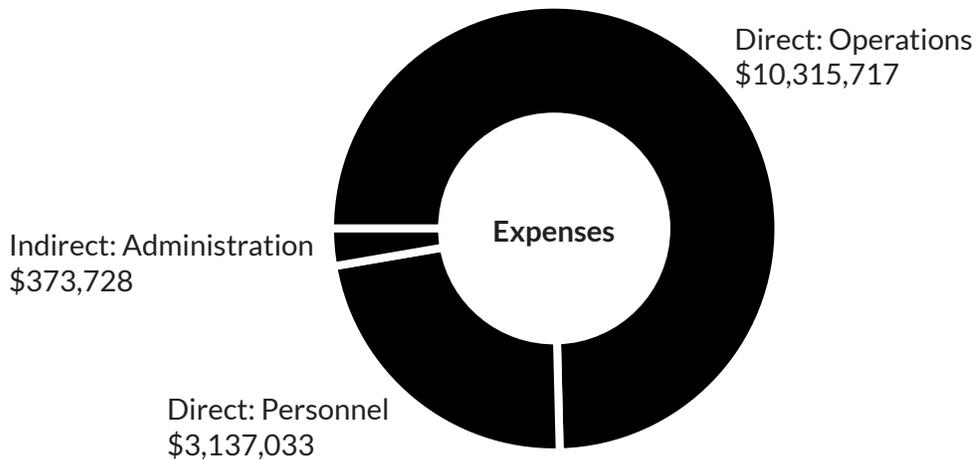
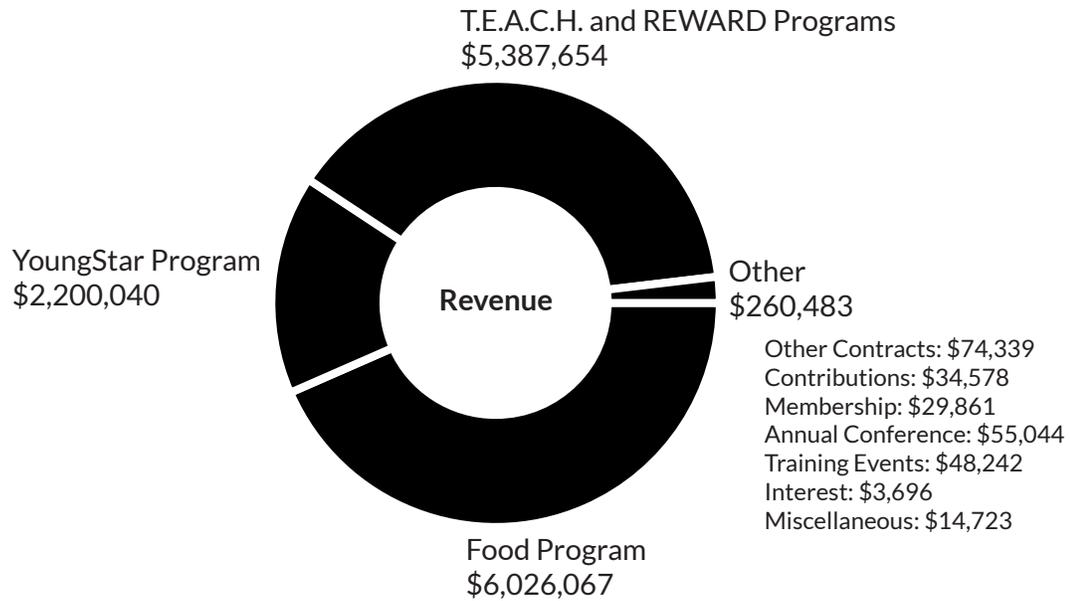
**is so important  
in the lives of Wisconsin's  
young children.**

When children get what they need, they undergo extraordinary development, especially in their first five years of life.

WECA impacts the professionals who work with Wisconsin's youngest children to ensure that children get what they need.

# Today, by the numbers.

Remaining dedicated to investing the most resources in program services, WECA kept administrative expenses to only 3.1% of the total budget.



**Net Assets**  
\$198,387

# Today's leaders.

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## Today's supporters.

WECA thanks everyone who contributed in 2012 to help give children a strong start in life.

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# Today...

**you can make  
a difference in  
the lives of  
Wisconsin's children.**

Your donation is vital to our mission of supporting the teachers of Wisconsin's youngest learners.

Your gift enables us to provide scholarships and training for child care providers throughout Wisconsin. Your generosity benefits not only the providers but the many thousands of young children they care for and teach.

Donate online today at  
**[wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate](https://www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate)**

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*Because small lives get bigger*

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