



We're **c**ommitted  
to changing the  
lives of young  
children by  
empowering  
early childhood  
teachers.

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

2013 Annual Report

## We're committed to eliminating obstacles children face so they can reach their potential.

Too many children face obstacles that they have no control over.

In Wisconsin, **22% of children under age 6 are living below the federal poverty threshold.** When it comes to being ready to learn, **10% of Wisconsin children lack basic literacy skills** needed in the classroom when they enter kindergarten. Even worse, in Milwaukee County alone, **this figure doubles to nearly 20%.**

Early childhood education can help by laying the groundwork for children to excel.

## We're committed to supporting the professionals who care for and teach our children.

We do this by **creating opportunities for early childhood teachers** that strengthen their skills and build their knowledge.

By building a skilled early childhood workforce, WECA is changing the lives of children.

## We're committed to engaging others and talking publicly about solutions for children and families.

Again and again in 2013, **early childhood education came to the forefront** of national news.

Hundreds of business leaders have signed the **ReadyNation Pledge** to promote early learning.

Early education initiatives have been debated in the **New York Times, The Huffington Post, Fox News, and CNN.**

And here in Wisconsin, **WECA hosted "Invest in US," a national travelling exhibit funded by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.** Visitors, including Wisconsin legislators and their staff attended the exhibit.

# Diverse leaders are joining in support.

“Quality early childhood education programs are a critical tool for preventing the achievement gap, boosting school achievement, reducing the need for special and remedial education, building stronger families, and preparing our future workforce of highly productive adults.”

Excerpted from a letter to the United States Congressional Budget Conference Committee sent from **500 legislators nationwide, 21 from Wisconsin.** (December 2013)

“Investing in early childhood education is a practical, not partisan issue... Republican and Democratic governors are employing early childhood education as a solution for great achievement...”

A message from **120 business leaders** in a letter to the chairs of the United States Congressional Budget Conference Committee (November 2013)

“...The solution is paying attention to early education, making sure families are engaged, and ensuring that those educational settings are of high quality...”

**Secretary Eloise Anderson** of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families in a testimony to the Wisconsin Joint Committee on Finance (March 2013)

## At the Tipping Point: Doing what it takes.

### **Tipping Point:**

The point at which an issue crosses a certain threshold and gains significant momentum triggered by some minor factor or change.

# Letter from the Executive Director.

There have been decades of advocacy. Years of research. Months of outreach and coalition building. And on the 28th of January, 2014, the President of the United States called out early learning as a key federal priority saying:

*“Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child’s life is high-quality early education. Last year, I asked this Congress to help states make high-quality pre-K available to every four-year-old. As a parent as well as a President, I repeat that request tonight.”*

**Are we at the tipping point?** Will quality early learning be understood and embraced as essential and beneficial for all children, and the communities of which they are part?

For those working on behalf of young children and those who care deeply about them we’ve long wondered “what’s it going to take?” A Nobel Prize winning economist saying it was the best investment of public money? Done. The chairman of the Federal Reserve echoing the benefits of quality early learning programs? Done. The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute reporting on the economic power of early childhood education in Wisconsin? Done. Perhaps a report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce delineating why business should support early childhood education? Also, done.

NBC News and the Wall Street Journal released a survey in January 2014. In it, respondents were asked to rank 15 possible priorities for President Obama and Congress to address in 2014. The possibilities ranged from creating jobs to reducing income inequality and passing immigration legislation. Ensuring all children have access to

pre-school education ranked third with 63% of respondents indicating it should be the top priority. Only creating jobs and reducing the budget deficit ranked higher.

**We are oh so close.** There are days I am convinced we are just on the edge of that tipping point. People across the nation, from both sides of the political aisle, from education and industry, from pediatrics and public policy, from law enforcement and the military are bringing attention to the importance of strong early learning for our youngest citizens.

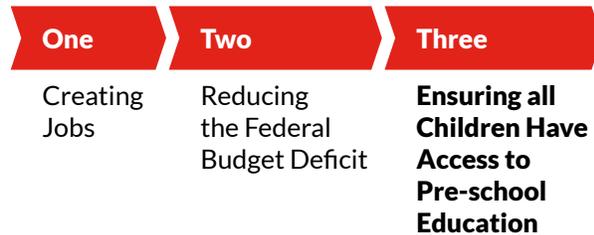
And now, as always, WECA is committed to working with child care providers across the state of Wisconsin to help prepare them to meet the developmental needs of infants, toddlers and preschoolers in their care. WECA is committed to ensuring that early childhood educators have access to educational scholarships, financial stipends, trainings, technical assistance, and much more.

A growing and diverse group of people are voicing their support for solutions that work for the long-term. The tide is turning for early learning in the United States. Join us in making Wisconsin a model of quality early education.

Your commitment is so important. Children are counting on you. We invite you to make a commitment by donating, joining us on social media, or simply talking about the importance of early learning with your friends and family.

**After all, it may be you who pushes early learning across the tipping point.**

## Public Opinion Poll Finds that Early Learning is One of America's Top 3 Priorities in 2014



*Access to pre-school education ranked above 12 other initiatives, including addressing climate change, immigration legislation, and national security efforts.*

“People across the nation, from both sides of the political aisle, from education and industry, from pediatrics and public policy, from law enforcement and the military are bringing attention to the importance of strong early learning for our youngest citizens.”



**Ruth Schmidt**  
Executive Director

We empower  
and inspire early  
educators with  
services, tools,  
and support.

Through the **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin** program, we provide scholarships to support credit-based higher education for early childhood teachers, directors, and family child care providers who work in regulated settings. In 2013, we **awarded 1,090 scholarships, totaling over \$3.2 million.**

Our **REWARD Wisconsin** program encourages retention by providing salary stipends to early childhood educators who have advanced their education. At an average wage of \$23,000 per year, child care professionals are among the poorest paid workforce in America. Stipends contribute to filling the gap between low wages and the value of the work. In 2013, **almost \$850,000 in stipends were awarded to over 1,400 child care professionals.**

Staying healthy is fundamental as children develop in the first few years of life. Through the **WECA Food Program**, we reimburse family child care providers who serve nutritious meals to the children in their care. In 2013, **1,169 family child care programs served nearly 3.6 million meals and snacks** that were supported through the WECA Food Program.

**We are the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children**, which makes us the largest professional association in Wisconsin for the early learning workforce. In 2013, **more than 2,500 WECA members received benefits** including discounts to conferences, professional resources, and local networking.

We're com

**YoungStar** is Wisconsin's child care quality rating and improvement program. As a partner in YoungStar, we provide professional development counseling, training, program ratings, and Micro-Grants across Wisconsin. In 2013, we **awarded 2,613 Micro-Grants** to child care programs statewide, **made 1,375 technical consulting visits** to Milwaukee-area programs, and **worked with individuals from 2,213 programs on their professional development.**

**Wisconsin became a Race to the Top (RTTT) state in 2013.** As part of this initiative, we are helping child care programs improve their quality to ensure that more of Wisconsin's children are prepared to succeed in school and in life. RTTT has allowed us to **expand TEACH scholarships** in two-star child care programs along with **offering targeted professional development planning, coaching, and mentoring** to help programs implement model early learning standards.

**WECA conferences and trainings** offer early learning professionals hundreds of opportunities to learn new skills. **The 2013 WECA Annual Conference** in the Wisconsin Dells **offered over 50 workshops on a range of topics to over 600 attendees.** In addition to the WECA Conference, **WECA trainings helped 1,850 early learning professionals** grow in their careers. And for the second year in a row, we coordinated the **Pathways to Quality Conference** which gave **nearly 400 Milwaukee-area child care professionals inspiring training opportunities** they otherwise would not have had.

# Committed to early learning.

“I’m committed to making sure early childhood professionals have the latest knowledge from the field.”



**Olga Neira**  
Spanish Bilingual Professional Development Counselor, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin

“I’m committed to supporting the early childhood workforce in the important work they do every day.”



**Mary Babula**  
Membership Services Director, WECA Membership

“I’m committed to providing early childhood professionals recognition for their dedication to the field.”



**Lissa Schwantes**  
Stipend Specialist, REWARD Wisconsin

“I’m committed to supporting child care providers in reaching their quality goals.”



**Kelly Matthews**  
Professional Development Counselor, YoungStar

“I’m committed to assisting providers to help make sure children’s bodies and minds are properly fueled!”



**Pam Polenz**  
Claims Coordinator, WECA Food Program

“I’m committed to helping child care providers run successful businesses and develop throughout their careers.”



**Carrie Holden**  
Training Coordinator, WECA Conference & Trainings

# Our Financials.

## Consolidated Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

	2013	2012
<b>Revenue</b>		
Food Program	\$5,486,990	\$6,026,067
YoungStar	\$3,867,547	\$2,200,040
T.E.A.C.H. & REWARD	\$2,630,646	\$5,387,654
Race to the Top	\$1,500,000	\$0
Other:	\$238,140	\$260,483
Other Contracts	\$46,941	\$74,339
Contributions	\$27,300	\$34,578
Membership	\$31,280	\$29,861
Annual Conference	\$62,436	\$55,044
Training Events	\$48,804	\$48,242
Interest	\$2,554	\$3,696
Miscellaneous	\$18,825	\$14,723
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$13,723,323</b>	<b>\$13,874,244</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Direct: Operations	\$10,395,409	\$10,315,717
Direct: Personnel	\$2,903,566	\$3,137,033
Indirect: Administration	\$415,763	\$373,728
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$13,714,738</b>	<b>\$13,826,478</b>
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$8,585</b>	<b>\$47,766</b>
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$198,387</b>	<b>\$150,621</b>
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$206,972</b>	<b>\$198,387</b>

# Board of Directors.



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Kidspace Learning Center  
Beloit, WI



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Acelero Learning  
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## Affiliate Leadership Group and Member Advisory Council

The Member Advisory Council identifies services and benefits to support members in the delivery of quality early childhood experiences and advises WECA on their implementation. The Affiliate Leadership Group serves as support for WECA's local affiliates across the state, planning events and providing resources to WECA members.

**Michelle Brown**, Kimberly  
**Lisa Bucher**, La Crosse  
**Cindy Devereaux**, La Crosse  
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**Colleen Dvorak**, Edgar  
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**Dorothy Young**, Appleton

# Our Donors.

## **Individuals:**

Mary Babula  
Amber Barnes  
Patrick Becker  
Shelley Beere  
Jessica Benson-Donald  
Dan Bergs  
Ruth Bernick  
Gabrielle Blood  
Rebecca Breda  
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Linda Tuchman-Ginsberg  
Derrick Van Mell  
Sharon Weber  
Henry Wilde  
Diane Wilkinson  
Martin Zietlow  
Judy Zimmer

## **Donations Made In Honor Of:**

Carol Anderson  
*in honor of Pam Tester*  
Veronica Britt  
*in honor of Developing Minds Family Child Care*  
Amanda DeHaai  
*in honor of Summer Moudry*  
Rachel Galloway  
*in honor of Miss Summer at the Play & Grow Learning Center*  
Jonita Sims  
*in honor of Jump Start Learning Place*  
Ann Terrell  
*in honor of Jessye N. Adams*  
Christina Volkman  
*in honor of Summer Moudry*  
Jill Welker  
*in honor of Summer Moudry*  
**Organizations:**  
American Family Insurance  
Applied Tech  
Batch Bakehouse  
Bunky's Cafe  
Choles Floral  
Davis Love Foundation  
Discount School Supply  
First Business Bank  
Full Compass  
Ground Zero Coffee  
Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin  
Gordan Flesch Company  
Kaplan Early Learning Company  
M3 Insurance  
McGladrey LLP  
Michael Moore Photography  
Rotary Club of Madison South  
The Printing Place  
UW Health & Unity Health Insurance

## Three ways you can commit too.

### 1. Donate

Visit [wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate](http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/donate) and give a gift in honor of a special early childhood teacher or program.

### 2. Advocate

Join the WECA Advocates list to receive updates and action alerts on key early childhood education advocacy issues. To join, visit [wisconsinearlychildhood.org/advocacy](http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/advocacy).

### 3. Get Social

Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. Share your thoughts and join the conversation.

 [facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood](https://www.facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood)

 [@EarlyEdMatters](https://twitter.com/EarlyEdMatters)

Each one of these children has benefited from the commitment of their early childhood teachers. At WECA, we'll always be committed to making sure that early learning professionals have the support they need to provide children with the best care and education possible.



Your **c**ommitment helps give children the early learning experiences they need to grow.

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*Because small lives get bigger*

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