



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON
**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count



FRANKLIN-RANDAL

Growing Together

Creciendo Juntos



Dear Friends,

We kicked off 2007 with a gala celebration in January at the Monona Terrace Convention Center, where 550 of the Council's friends and supporters gathered to celebrate our 125th anniversary. WCCF Board President Marcia Engen looked back at the substantial changes this organization has helped bring about in its 125 years of existence, and our guest speaker, Bertice Berry, helped us look forward to a time when all children are safe, economically secure, healthy, and prepared to reach their potential. We also recognized the dedication and hard work of four individuals who "stuck their necks out for kids" by presenting them with Giraffe Awards, and we were thrilled to award for the first time \$1,000 college scholarships to two teenagers making a difference in their communities.

As the year progressed, we worked closely with coalitions committed to extending health care coverage to all children and creating a high-quality early education system. This work contributed significantly to the creation of BadgerCare Plus, and was instrumental in securing an additional \$68 million to help low-income working families pay for child care. With a generous seed grant from the DeAtley Foundation, we launched an adolescent brain training initiative, helping social workers, teachers and attorneys who work with youth to understand the magical—and sometimes perplexing—chemistry of the teenage brain. We advanced understanding on the part of policy makers and other key stakeholders of the changes we need to make to help low-skilled, low-income parents become more competitive in today's job market by acquiring the skills they need for higher paying jobs. And we made steady progress toward our goal of changing the age of jurisdiction so 17-year-olds—juniors and seniors in high school—who get into trouble with the law receive the treatment they need to become productive, contributing adults. We also launched Vision 2020: Ending Childhood Poverty in Wisconsin, an ambitious multi-year initiative to raise awareness and engage child advocates in working for tangible, research-based policy changes that will lead to the reduction and elimination of child poverty in the state.

It was a good year, punctuated by celebration, success and progress that we will continue to build on as we move forward in our mission to ensure that every child grows up in a just and nurturing family and community.

Sincerely,



Charity Eleson
Executive Director



Marcia Engen
Board President

WCCF: Renewing Our Commitment to Kids with Ongoing Resolve and New Initiatives

Introduction

As the Council advanced into the second quarter of its second century of operation, we sharpened our focus on eliminating childhood poverty through our Vision 2020 campaign; expanding health care coverage to all children; creating a high-quality early childhood system accessible to children and families throughout the state; helping people understand the value of providing developmentally appropriate services to teenagers who get into trouble; and modifying the state's workforce development system to create better pathways to economic success for low-skilled, low-income parents.

These strategic priorities are fundamental to improving outcomes for children and their families. Consider the following findings:

- About 187,000 Wisconsin children live at or below poverty. The number of poor children in Wisconsin increased between 2000 and 2007.
- An estimated 110,000 children go without health care every year because their families do not have access to health insurance coverage.
- Over 70 percent of all children under 6 have all parents in the workforce, yet the majority of early childhood programs aren't delivering the kind of outcomes high-quality programs can bring—particularly to low-income children—because they don't have the capacity to offer well-educated teachers, small group sizes and a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Over 30,000 17-year-olds—juniors and seniors in high school—are arrested every year, leading to thousands of kids ending up in adult jails or prisons. Evidence shows that adolescents have different needs than adults, and that developmentally appropriate treatment, delivered in the juvenile justice system, is what teenagers in trouble need to become productive, contributing adults.



- 400,000 adults in Wisconsin don't have a high school diploma, and nearly 2 million have no post-secondary experience. Not everyone needs to go to college to succeed, but evidence shows that adults with at least technical college experience are much more likely to have higher earnings. If we want to get at poverty, we need to give low-income parents the tools they need to succeed, and that means creating more opportunities and better pathways for them to obtain the job skills required by today's competitive labor market.

Our work in 2007, generously supported by a number of foundations and friends and guided by our board of directors, helped us advance this ambitious agenda for change for children. Following are some of the year's highlights in each of these areas.

Health Care

On the health care front, the most exciting development was the inclusion in the 2007-09 budget of BadgerCare Plus, an expansion of the BadgerCare program to cover nearly all children in the state. WCCF worked hard in support of BadgerCare Plus, and our efforts were rewarded. The communications aspects of that work came under the auspices of our participation in the Narrative Communications Project, funded by the Packard Foundation. The Narrative Project informed our messaging on health care, and resulted in a positive, forward-thinking framing of the issue that emphasized Wisconsin's national leadership on health care and the reality that we are edging closer to the ultimate goal of covering all kids. We received substantial attention for our 10-part series "Stories of the Uninsured in Wisconsin," which shared real-life stories of the effects that lack of coverage has on Wisconsin families. BadgerCare Plus was scheduled to begin in February of 2008. Going forward, the Council will continue to work on monitoring BadgerCare Plus implementation to ensure that all populations eligible are covered. Additionally, we will learn more about effective policy solutions to address health care disparities and dental health access for children, so we can assess whether there is an effective role for us to play in proactive policy change in those areas.



Early Childhood and Early Childhood Brain Development

In 2006 the Council played a lead role in forming the Early Learning Coalition, a 12-member group working to promote measures to improve the quality of early childhood programming in the state. In 2007, the Coalition was instrumental in educating policy makers on the value of investing in improving the quality of early childhood programs and preserving access to the Wisconsin Shares program for thousands of low-income, working families. The Coalition reached out to over 1,800 parents and early educators who let the Governor and legislators know that investments in early childhood programs are a priority to them. We sponsored an art show in the Capitol Rotunda featuring the "tree art" of dozens of pre-school children around the state to emphasize that young children need the "roots" of an accessible, high-quality early childhood program in order to thrive. We brought a similar message to over 50,000 people across the state through e-action alerts, advocacy training and conference and forum presentations, helping them understand what was at stake, how state early education policy affects children, and how they can get involved. This work was generously supported by the Herzfeld Foundation, the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the Joyce Foundation. These efforts resulted in an increase of \$68 million in funding for Wisconsin Shares in the 2007-2009 biennial budget and new investments in quality improvement initiatives and expansion of 4-year-old kindergarten. We also worked with the Coalition to meet with and educate over 40 policy makers on why access and quality matter to young children and their families, setting the stage for future collaboration to bring about systemic, statewide change aimed at ensuring that we can deliver on the promise that high-quality early childhood programs have to offer.

Additionally, with generous support from the Faye McBeath Foundation and the Herzfeld Foundation, we continued our technical assistance and training work with early childhood programs in the greater Milwaukee region. This initiative brought technical assistance and training to child care providers and parents of children birth to 5 through six different centers, helping them understand early childhood brain development and how young children can benefit from interaction and early childhood programs that engage them in ways that lead to healthy development.



Juvenile Justice/Adolescent Development

WCCF spent much of 2007 gathering support for legislation to return 17-year-olds to the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court, and working with a coalition of statewide groups committed to raising the age. We appreciated the ongoing support of the Campaign 4 Youth Justice and the Butler Family Foundation and new support from the Public Welfare Foundation for this work. Research evidence supporting the policy change mounted throughout the year, including a report by the Centers for Disease Control suggesting a need for the change. In March the Legislative Audit Bureau agreed to study the impact of prosecuting 17-year-olds as adults, and in July WCCF staff testified on the matter before the Governor's Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities. That Commission decided to recommend to the Governor that Wisconsin change the age of jurisdiction. One way the Council raised awareness of the issue was to collect artwork created by incarcerated youth, and organize public exhibitions of the work. Much of our case for raising the age of adult criminal jurisdiction is based on current research on adolescent brain development. By the end of the year, over 50 organizations had joined the Raise the Age Coalition, registering their support for changing the age of jurisdiction.



In 2007, with support from the DeAtley Family Foundation, we began work on development of a curriculum on that subject, emphasizing recent scientific breakthroughs in our understanding of how the brain develops through adolescence, particularly the parts that govern sound judgment and regulate impulsive behavior. Moving forward we will continue to work on this policy change, with a continued focus on helping individuals and organizations understand the success that teens who get into trouble can have with services that are tailored to fit their developmental needs.

Revenue and State Budget

Creating and passing the 2007-09 state budget was a grueling ordeal, and the final product was not signed into law until late October, 117 days behind schedule. As the process unfolded, the Council held budget briefings across the state to help the public understand what was at stake. In the face of immense fiscal pressure, WCCF and its allies were successful in helping protect funding for the most important programs that serve vulnerable children and families in Wisconsin. Health care and early education were areas in which we battled hard, and our efforts were rewarded with the passage of BadgerCare Plus and the protection of funding for Wisconsin Shares. Meanwhile, the Council sought ways to address the growing structural imbalance in the state budget by identifying potential ways to enhance state revenue, such as closing corporate tax loopholes, reinstating Wisconsin's estate tax, and supporting the hospital assessment proposed by the Governor, which would draw more federal dollars into the state. This work was generously supported by the Open Society Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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Work and Economic Security

Though our funding from the Joyce Foundation, WCCF continued to develop ways to address low-income workers' need to command higher wages through greater access to post-secondary education and job

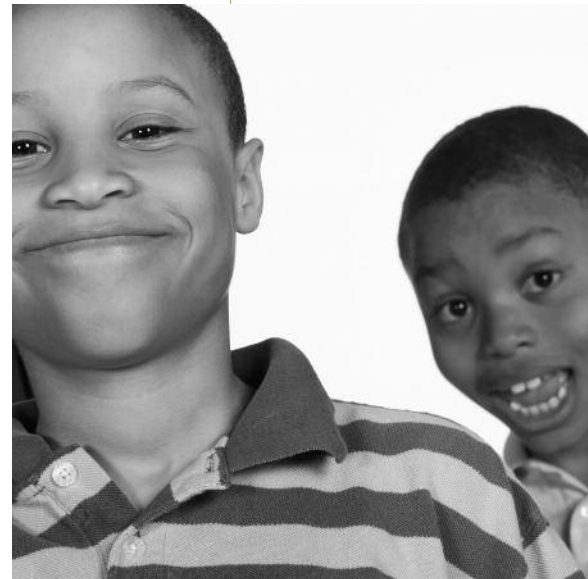
training services. Council staff served on the Legislative Council Study Committee for Strengthening Families, and presented findings to the committee on how the state could create better pathways for low-income parents to access financial aid and technical college programs. We also worked to help policy-makers understand the value of improved connections for low-income adults to job skill training, and explored policy options with them. In all, we met with nearly 50 legislators and their staff to discuss these issues. While legislation was introduced in 2007 that would have improved policies in this arena, we could not reach final agreement on how the legislation needed to be crafted to both meet the needs of low-income adults and address the concerns of the technical colleges. However, the improved understanding that policy-makers have of these issues will be invaluable as we move forward. Our July 2007 publication “Bridges, Pathways & Leadership” laid out a framework for closing the gap between the needs of employers for a better-skilled workforce and the ability of workers to obtain good-paying jobs. The key is access to the kinds of training and education that lead to the skills and credentials needed to fill the jobs being created by a changing economy. This means committing sufficient resources to financial aid and changing eligibility rules to better reflect the realities of workers juggling school, job and parenting responsibilities.

Vision 2020

One of the most exciting developments of 2007 was the launch of the Vision 2020 Campaign to end child poverty in Wisconsin by the year 2020. Along with our partners WISCAP and the Wisconsin Head Start Association, WCCF kicked off the campaign with the publication of a “Vision 2020 Report Card,” which graded the state on its progress in four key issue areas related to poverty: access to family-supporting jobs; safe and affordable housing; health care; and early care and education. By the end of 2007, 250 individuals and 30 organizations had signed on as supporters of the campaign, and there were active local groups working in association with Vision 2020 in the Fox Cities, Milwaukee, La Crosse and Eau Claire. In addition, county boards in Dane and La Crosse counties passed resolutions officially affirming their support of the project’s goals. Presentations and forums focusing on poverty were conducted in several communities, as we worked hard to raise awareness of poverty issues—and policy-oriented solutions to them—throughout Wisconsin.

Kids Count

The Council continued to collect and distribute data on the most important indicators of child and family well-being through our Kids Count project. Our 2007 WisKids Report, “Safer, Happier, Healthier,” highlighted the long-term consequences of child maltreatment. This work was supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation. We echoed the theme of prevention of maltreatment in our November 2007 Child Policy Forum, which featured a luncheon presentation, “What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love and Healing,” by renowned neuroscientist and child trauma expert Dr. Bruce Perry. The Forum was attended by 300 people. The Council also actively promoted the Casey Foundation’s 2007 National Kids Count book, which focused on poverty reduction and the need for greater access to family-supporting jobs, a theme closely tied to the launch of our Vision 2020 campaign.



Selected WCCF Publications, 2007

- *Priorities for Congressional Reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)* February 2007



For decades researchers have been aware of the extraordinary development of a child's brain during the first years of life. Recent advances in neuroscience have helped crystallize earlier findings, bringing new clarity and understanding to the field of early childhood brain development. Children are born ready to learn. They cultivate 60 percent of their intellect, personality and 90 percent of the amount of synaptic connections that are made. Synaptic connections begin prior to birth and are created at a rapid rate through age three. The brain operates on a "use it or lose it" principle. Only those connections and pathways that are activated frequently are retained. Other connections that are not consistently used will be pruned or discarded as the child's experiences and interactions expand.

What do we know about staff quality in early care and education settings and the link to child outcomes and school readiness?

To address this question, we reviewed research from a variety of sources, including the National Research Council's most extensive national studies, longitudinal research, and the work of the National Institute on Early Childhood Research. The research findings are strikingly similar. All of these studies conclude that the education of the teachers and caregivers is a key ingredient in the quality of the program, and contributes to important outcomes for children.

Why do we think teacher qualifications are the key to quality? Researchers have found that education and training of the adults who guide children's development in out-of-home settings changes the way they relate to children. They are more responsive to children, provide active learning experiences, interact more, focus on each child's progress, and intentionally design their programs to enhance healthy development and learning.

It makes sense to expect that better educated teachers have more knowledge and skills to individualize lesson plans and analyze and solve problems. Better educated teachers are likely to expose children to a richer vocabulary and to provide more stimulating learning activities and environments. Most studies have found that teachers with two- or four-year degrees, combined with specialized training in early childhood development, provide significantly higher levels of quality for children in their care, as measured by positive interactions with children and stimulating learning environments.



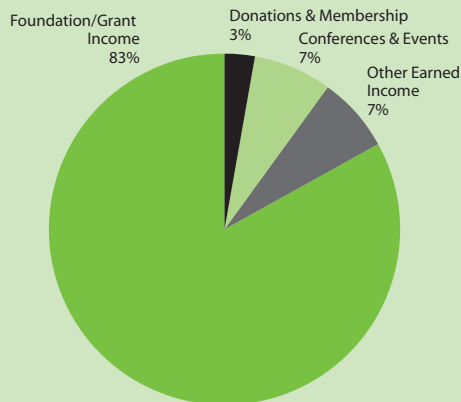
- *The BadgerCare Plus Plan: Who Would Be Affected?* March 2007
- *Brain Development and Early Learning* March 2007
- *Boom(ers) and Bust: The Aging of Wisconsin's Population and Tax System* April 2007
- *Bridges, Pathways, and Leadership* July 2007
- *In Their Own Words: Wisconsin Health Care Story Series* September 2007
- *Making the Grade: Making the Case for Well-educated, Well-trained Teaching Staff in Early Care and Education* Fall 2007
- *WisKids Count Data Book: Safer, Happier, Healthier* Fall 2007
- *Will the Budget Ease the Property Tax Burden for Low-Income Households?* October 2007
- *Comparative Summary of the Different Versions of the 2007-2009 Budget Bill*
- *Brain Development and Early Learning* Winter 2007
- *Financial Aid Leads to Economic Security* December 2007
- *Data and Analysis, Early Care and Education in Wisconsin: 2007 updated* December 2007



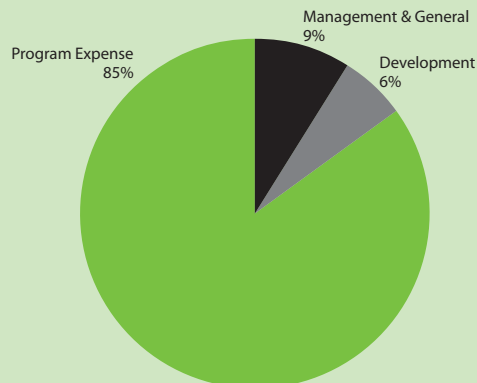
Financial Information

2007 Income

Total 2007 WCCF Program and Admin income=\$1,230,304



2006 Expenses



2007 Statement of Activities

Note: The following audited income and expense figures exclude fiscal agent activities.

Income	
Foundation/Grant Income	1,027,265
Donations & Membership	32,492
Conferences & Events	82,077
Other Earned Income	88,470
Total Income	1,230,304

Expense	
Program Expense	1,120,791
Management & General	123,442
Development	71,776
Total Expense	1,316,009

Loss on Disposal of Equipment (5,703)

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets (91,408)*

decrease in temporarily restricted net assets (87,753.00)
decrease in unrestricted net assets (3,655.00)

*Notes: decrease in temporarily restricted net assets due to satisfaction of time and purposes restrictions received on contributions and decrease in unrestricted net assets.

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2007

Assets

Current Assets	
Cash	343,292
Receivables	75,698
Promises to give	18,532
Inventory	1,320
Prepaid expenses	21,788
Prepaid grant awards	0
Equipment - net	1,358
Unemployment reserve fund	12,040
Investments	192,875
Total Assets	666,903

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	33,329
Provision for UC claims	21,040
Accrued vacation and related liabilities	18,273
Deferred revenue	269,610
Custodial account	19,000
Total Liabilities	361,252

Net Assets

Total unrestricted net assets	287,442
Temporarily restricted	18,209

Total Net Assets 305,651

Total Liabilities and Net Assets 666,903

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Family thanks the foundations who generously support us, the organizations and corporations who underwrite the cost of public education events and publications, and individuals who give generously to ensure that WCCF has a strong and vibrant voice for children and families in the state.

Foundations

Annie E. Casey Foundation
Butler Family Fund
Campaign 4 Youth Justice
Center on Budget
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Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
Education Fund, Inc.
David and Lucile Packard
Foundation
The DeAtley Family Foundation
The Faye McBeath Foundation
The Herzfeld Foundation
The Joyce Foundation
Open Society Institute
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Public Welfare Foundation

Organizational and Corporate Underwriters

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Boardman Law Firm
Children's Hospitals of Wisconsin
Children's Trust Fund
CUNA Mutual Group Foundation
Custer Financial Services
Department of Health
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WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

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& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

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