

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Grant Announced to Explore Community Based 4K**

*Penfield Children's Center and Mary Lindsmeier Schools Partner to Explore 4K Charter Program*

**Madison** – Penfield Children's Center and Mary Lindsmeier Schools will partner with other local early education leaders to explore creating a charter school program to offer community based four-year-old kindergarten (4K) with the help of a \$10,000 grant from the Early Education Matters Project of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

“The benefits of offering high quality early educational opportunities like 4K to children are well documented,” said Charity Eleson, executive director of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. “Using the resources and expertise that already exist in the early education community, community based 4K offers rich potential for children, parents and communities to help children get prepared to succeed in school and beyond.”

In 1984, Wisconsin reinstated 4K in state statute but did not make the program mandatory in Wisconsin schools. Currently, well over half (56 percent) of Wisconsin's elementary school districts have 4K programs, but 182 do not.

Community based 4K has become an increasingly popular way to offer 4K and address some of the problems associated with starting a new 4K program like start up funding, space issues in schools, minimizing transitions between programs for children and concern by local early education facilities about competition.

“Through our Early Education Matters planning grant we will explore an exciting new collaboration between child care programs and schools. The proposed charter school would provide full-day, year round programs where the difference between kindergarten and child care would be transparent to the child and family. The Charter will focus on high quality programs designed to meet a family's need for both education and daily care, and which will eliminate the need for a child to be transported between kindergarten and the child care center. The charter will collaborate with Penfield Children's Center for special education services,” said Patti Grede, Penfield Children's Center.

Since 2004 the Early Education Matters Project has given out 21 grants to communities from every corner of Wisconsin. In addition to Waupun, grants were given to Janesville, Pecatonica Area, Manitowoc, Stevens Point and Milwaukee.

*Early Education Matters is a project of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families in collaboration with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, the University of Wisconsin- Extension, Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership and Milwaukee Public Schools. The project is funded through the generous support of the Joyce Foundation.*