

# Child Care Rate Setting Task Force

Report to Secretary Roberta Gassman

Department of Workforce Development

November 2006

November 21, 2006

Secretary Roberta Gassman  
State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
201 East Washington Ave.  
P.O. Box 7972  
Madison, WI 53707-7972

Dear Secretary Gassman:

It is with great pleasure that we thank you for creating the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force and for providing us with the wonderful opportunity to co-chair such a dynamic group of concerned citizens.

The Child Care Rate Setting Task Force has worked hard since its inception in August to understand the complexities of the Wisconsin Shares child care program and to develop some strategies to the challenges that are facing our blue-ribbon program in Wisconsin. We have learned that there are no easy solutions. Therefore, kindly consider these recommendations as short-term, partial solutions that will require additional problem-solving efforts over the next biennium.

To assist with future problem-solving efforts, the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force would like to see the Child Care Council re-established to continue the conversation for the development of a quality indicator system and further monitoring of the Wisconsin Shares rates setting policies.

We thank you again for the development of the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force and for providing us with the opportunity to co-chair the group's efforts.

Sincerely,



Rose Smits,  
Executive Director  
Encompass Early Education and Care, Inc.



Angela Lampkin,  
COA Youth and Family Services

## Child Care Rate Setting Task Force Recommendations

### Mission:

To provide options to the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) in establishing rate setting policy within the current child care budget for 2005-2007. To provide suggestions for the Wisconsin Shares Program.

### Recommendations:

1. Re-establish the **Child Care Council**, with sub committees established based on needed policy review (including a reimbursement rate policy development and child care quality indicators policy development committee) to monitor and review the child care subsidy program, program integrity and quality improvement efforts of the Department.
2. Child Care programs should receive further orientation and training on the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, including information on attendance reporting, eligibility and authorization. Child care programs need annual training and this training should be required in order to participate in Wisconsin Shares. Training materials should be developed and delivery formats should include face to face, web based, and creation of newsletters. The materials should be appropriate for center and family based programs.
3. Local agency workers **and DWD** must be aware of current child care program policy, including eligibility and authorization. DWD must partner with agencies in order to provide workers access to various forms of training. Increased training opportunities will help to assure that program integrity is met, and that accurate administration of the program takes place. Agencies must assure that workers respond timely to parents and to providers.
4. Increase GPR funding for the child care subsidy program, Wisconsin Shares. Need infusion of new dollars to support the child care budget including increased GPR and TANF that has gone to other purposes in state budget.
5. TANF funding should not be used to fund the Wisconsin EITC, and instead should be used to fully fund Wisconsin Shares.
6. The Task Force recommended to establish the 2007 maximum child care payment rates to be set at the 2006 rates for a time limited basis. All authorizations for school age children, age six and older should be established as attendance based authorizations. The vote was 17 yes votes and 1 no vote with much discussion. The vote was seen as a compromise of the Task Force members and was understood that it would not "fix" the budget deficit problem, but it is hoped this motion would be viewed by the Legislature as work of the Task Force to move towards change. **The recommendation will result in \$12.2 million in savings**

The Child Care Task Force voted on these scenarios presented by DWD. There was no consensus.

- Authorize child care payments based on attendance – (no longer authorize on enrollment basis). Task Force Vote – 10 Yes votes.
- Implement a Wisconsin Shares Waiting List for 2007. Task Force Vote – 8 Yes votes.

## Child Care Rate Setting Task Force Members

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**21. Intertribal Child Care Council**

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**Staff Support for the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force**

Bill Clingan, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) Administrator

Laura Saterfield, DWS Child Care Section Chief  
Rebecca Brueggeman, Child Care Section  
Pirkko Zweifel, Child Care Section  
Jim Bates, Child Care Section  
Kath McGurk, Child Care Section  
Sue Mathison, Child Care Section

Sita Bhasker, Bureau of Information Technology, Division of Administrative Services

Jason Bierbrauer, Data Analysis Specialist, UW-Extension

## Secretary Roberta Gassman's Child Care Rate Setting Task Force

August 24, 2006

**Task Force Members Attendance:** \*Task Force Chair: Angela Lampkin-COA, Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association, \*Task Force Chair: Rose Smits-Encompass Child Care, Dave Edie-Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Liz Green-Human Services Department-Dane County, Steve Hagman-Marathon County Social Services, Tammy Hammel-Knowledge Learning Corporation, Christie Howell-Yrios-Dane County United, Animal Crackers, Laura Klingelhoets for Beverly Anderson, Diane Ladwig-Gunderson Lutheran Child Care Center, Carol Maurer-Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Laurie Meyer-Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, Mary Motquin-Intertribal Child Care Council-Oneida, John Pawasarat-UW Milwaukee, Mike Poma-Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, Wendy Rakower-Dane County United, Red Caboose, Jane Robinson-The Registry, Harmony House Child Care, Mary Roach-UW-Extension Child Care Research Partnership, Ruth Schmidt-Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Pat Schult-Pat's Preschool and Learning Center.

**Task Force Members Absent:**

Beverly Anderson-Ebenezer Child Care, Krisan Mauritz-ABC Child Care Center, Wanda Montgomery-Maximus, Former operator of Gray's Child Care

**Call To Order**

Task Force Chairs Rose Smits and Angela Lampkin called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. Bill Clingan and Laura Saterfield provided the charge to the Task Force: to bring together community and statewide early care and education partners to review the child care subsidy program and to problem solve and develop options for short term and long term solutions. Bill highlighted Governor Doyle's commitment to quality child care, and provided background information on the challenge of federal funding leveling off, and state demand for child care assistance increasing in number of eligible recipients and increased costs. Laura provided background information on the process that was used to develop the 2006 child care reimbursement rates. National and state experts in the field were used. A review of regional rates was completed. 2005 and earlier maximum rate setting policies did not capture the true private market price in all areas of the state. Policies will be reviewed with this Task Force in an effort to obtain advice on establishing 2007 maximum reimbursement rates that can be provided within the budget established by the legislature. Staff are available to the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force to provide information, and analysis when necessary. Rose reviewed the mission of the Task Force and Angela covered the Ground Rules for Task Force members.

**Presentations**

The following presentations were made to the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force:

- Pirkko Zweifel: Subsidy 101
- Jason Bierbrauer: Options for Determining Maximum Rates
- Dave Edie: Other State Policies
- Rebecca Brueggeman: Developing the 2006 Rate Policies
- Jim Bates: Child Care Budget
- Laura Saterfield: Report from Rate Setting Advisory Group

## Discussion

### Co-payment:

- It is difficult for programs to demand co-payment and/or other additional charges from customers when other programs do not collect these payments.
- Some programs in Milwaukee and other areas advertise and/or market their program to parents as a program that does not request any additional payment above what is received from Wisconsin Shares.
- Task Force members indicate that the word co-payment should not be used when creating authorizations for parents. Simply indicate what amount will be paid to the child care program for the care of the children by Wisconsin Shares and all other costs are the responsibility of the parent.
- Several Task Force members indicated a desire to revisit policy to have the parent co-payment responsibility be a requirement of eligibility to receive additional authorizations- the parent would need to pay the co-payment in order to continue to be eligible. In the past, the county/tribe could be a partner to help child care programs pursue the collection of co-payments.
- Family child care providers are impacted by family co-payment responsibilities. Quality family child care programming is more expensive.

### Milwaukee:

- Some child care programs are currently providing a \$1,000 bonus to families that are eligible for a Wisconsin Shares authorization when they register/sign up for child care at a program.
- It was indicated that it is a wide-spread problem in Milwaukee that co-pays are universally not collected.
- Some Milwaukee child care providers are of very low quality yet they receive the Milwaukee County maximum rate.
- Family child care providers are receiving better training opportunities than group center programs for child care attendance reporting, and child care policy. Group center programs would like to receive these training opportunities.
- The current rate setting policies are not working in Milwaukee. Establishing rates for licensed group programs should be different than licensed family programs.
- Licensed family child care programs should be in one home only, not run as group centers at several homes.
- Enrollments are dropping at high quality programs that collect co-payments, parents instead are choosing lower quality care that does not charge above the reimbursement paid by the state.
- Some of the child care programs that receive the highest amount of Wisconsin Shares reimbursement for caring for large numbers of subsidized children do not put the dollars back into the program to improve quality. The teacher salaries have not increased at the same rate as the reimbursement rate at these centers.

### Quality Programming:

- The cost of quality child care is out of reach for low income and some middle income families in most areas of the state.
- The cost for high quality child care is out of reach for many families that are not eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares.

- Quality child care programs generally pay higher salaries to staff, and provide benefits including pension and health insurance to staff.
- Several Task Force members indicated interest in developing policy and reimbursement related to a quality rating system, similar to what was proposed by Governor Doyle during the last biennium.
- Families need to understand what quality child care looks like, and why it is important.

#### Authorization:

- Establishment of eligibility and creation of child care authorizations must be completed timely in order for parents to access quality child care programming. Programs can not take families on that do not have paperwork that indicates eligibility. Waiting for retro-active payment, and back-dated authorizations is not good business practice. Families that think they may be eligible, and begin at a child care program without an authorization for several weeks can quickly become responsible for many hundreds of dollars of payment responsibility if eligibility is ultimately denied.
- Child care programs need to have information on parent review dates. Programs can then encourage parents to make appointments and attend appointments with appropriate income and eligibility verification information. *This information is currently available on the CCPI screen.*
- Child care programs need to receive policy change information in writing. *DWD currently sends policy change information in check stuffers to authorized child care providers.*

#### Training:

- Child care programs need more information on the child care subsidy program payment policies, including information on reporting attendance, reporting changes, and information on who to contact with questions regarding payment (for the child care program) and eligibility (for the parent).
- Local agency child care workers need better training. Due to turnover of staff, Task Force members have indicated that child care workers at the W2 and county/tribal agencies need training on child care eligibility policy and reimbursement policies.

#### Payment rate survey:

- The annual payment rate survey should be completed for the same time period/same date annually. The date should not change each year. *DWD has requested that the rate survey be completed by local agencies during September for many years. The more recent change in the survey process was to ask for the "current" rates for the child care program, instead of the anticipated rate for January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year.*
- How can we measure market price? Can quality indicators be used instead to determine a market price?
- Education is one key indicator of quality, other indicators exist as well. Make payments based on quality, not on a regional rate.

#### Budget:

- Task Force members indicate that increased funding to the child care subsidy program is necessary for on-going eligibility policies to remain in place.
- Without increased funding, waiting lists may become necessary.

- Slight adjustments can continue to be made to the child care subsidy reimbursement rates, but funding level changes are necessary for ongoing eligibility and increased participation. Payment rates can not continue to be decreased.
- Programs may choose to no longer serve Wisconsin Shares families if payment rates continue to decline.
- Several Task Force members indicated that they would rather see additional changes to payment rates vs. the establishment of a waiting list. This would become an avenue for access to the reimbursement system at a reduced rate.

**Information Requested by Task Force Members:**

1. Jason Bierbrauer's PowerPoint presentation "Options for Determining Maximum Rates"
2. Data calculation and cost savings for various maximum rate options described
3. Governor Doyle's Quality Care for Quality Kids Task Force Recommendations
4. John Pawasarat's Milwaukee child care program payment rate information

The next meeting of the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force is set for Monday, October 2, 2006  
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Rate setting TF Mgt Minutes 8 24 06

## Secretary Roberta Gassman's Child Care Rate Setting Task Force

October 2, 2006

**Task Force Members Attendance:** \*Task Force Chair: Angela Lampkin-COA, Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association, \*Task Force Chair: Rose Smits-Encompass Child Care, Beverly Anderson-Ebenezer Child Care Centers, David Brooke-Mary Linsmeier Schools, Dave Edie-Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Liz Green-Human Services Department-Dane County, Steve Hagman-Marathon County Social Services, Christie Howell-Yrios-Dane County United, Animal Crackers, Diane Ladwig-Gunderson Lutheran Child Care Center, Laurie Meyer-Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, Wanda Montgomery-Maximus, former operator of Gray's Child Care, Mary Motquin-Intertribal Child Care Council-Oneida, Silke O'Donnell for Wendy Rakower-Dane County United, DCAEYC, Family Child Care Provider, John Pawasarat-UW Milwaukee, Mike Poma-Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, Jane Robinson-The Registry, Harmony House Child Care, Mary Roach-UW-Extension Child Care Research Partnership, Ruth Schmidt-Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Pat Schult-Pat's Preschool and Learning Center.

**Task Force Members Absent:**

Carol Maurer-Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Krisan Mauritz-ABC Child Care Center

**Call To Order**

Task Force Chairs Rose Smits and Angela Lampkin called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. Angela reviewed the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force Ground Rules. Rose reminded Task Force members and substitute members that it was previously indicated that all attendees were expected to have reviewed materials prior to the meeting in order to have general knowledge of materials previously shared.

**Presentations**

The following presentations were made to the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force:

Laura Saterfield provided information on the Illinois Child Care Program Accountability and Efficiencies Work Group Final Recommendation Report. Cost saving measures that have been reviewed in Illinois were shared. A brief summary comparison of Illinois and Wisconsin child care subsidy program models was disseminated. Children served, total budget appropriation, administration costs, application process and contracted child care process were compared. Through 2005, Illinois had been utilizing payment rates that had been held at the same level for the past five years. Additionally in Illinois, waiting lists for child care subsidy were in place. Task Force members recognized that Wisconsin child care reimbursement rates have been surveyed for each year, with maximum reimbursement rates increased annually based on the market rate survey, that initial parent eligibility is at 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and that there is not a waiting list for services.

Rebecca Brueggeman provided information on Child Care Subsidy Program Integrity. Rebecca provided detail on the DHHS, Child Care Bureau Program Integrity vision. Emphasis has been placed on Federal and State Child Care Administrators to demonstrate that child care programming is effective. Concern has been identified at the federal and state level that the error rate in child care administration requires further review. At the federal level, tools have been identified to assess a program's effectiveness. Wisconsin will need to demonstrate that child care administration is meeting

identified goals. Wisconsin has developed several software tools and data exchange policies that verify eligibility. Exception reports have been created and will need to be used by local agencies in a more comprehensive manner to assist monitoring efforts. Rebecca described future efforts that will take place to increase monitoring practices. Exploration of enhanced automation efforts, draft statute and administrative rule language changes, and clearer policies and procedures for defining, calculating and communicating overpayments will be pursued. Task Force members discussed options for further monitoring of attendance reporting practices, utilization of DHFS licensors and DPI food program staff site visitors, and identification of child care provider training needs related to child care attendance reporting. Task Force Members also discussed the option of an “Accountability Report and/or Outcome Review” to be completed by child care programs that receive reimbursement above a set level of funding.

Jim Bates and Pirkko Zweifel provided a presentation on Options for Maximum Reimbursement Rates Development. The legal requirements for establishing reimbursement rates include:

- Federal Requirements: Ensure parental choice of child care programming. Determine the price at which 75 percent of the child care slots can be purchased. Complete a survey of child care provider prices at least every two years.
- Statute Language: County/Tribal agency establishes the price at which 75 percent of the child care slots in the geographic area can be purchased. Set Regularly Certified provider rates at 75 percent of the maximum licensed family child care rate. Set Provisionally Certified provider rates at 50 percent of the maximum licensed family child care rate.
- Administrative Rule Language: Conduct an annual survey of licensed group and licensed family child care programs. Establish maximum rates at which 75 percent of the child care slots can be purchased. DWD may determine the maximum rates if a multi-county area is established.

Through 2005, maximum reimbursement rates were established for each individual county and tribal area. Beginning in 2006, Wisconsin developed four tiers of rates based on percent urban county/tribal groupings. A hold-harmless level for increase or decrease of rates as compared to 2005 rates was also instituted. A brief review of options for establishing reimbursement rates was discussed:

Freeze Rates – rates held at a previously set level for an extended period of time.

Statewide Rate – one rate set for reimbursement for all programs in the state. Iowa has established a single statewide rate.

Geographical Regions – set rate is based on each specific geographical area of the state.

Metro/Rural County Grouping- two rates established for the state, with individual counties/tribes placed in the metro or rural grouping based on population.

Percent Urban County Grouping- 2006 maximum reimbursement rates were based on this practice. US census data is used to determine set levels of percentage of urbanized areas. Four categories have been established: 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, and 76-100%. The 2006 rates also included the 10 percent hold harmless – decrease or increase level.

Price Grouping – county rates are stacked from lowest to highest and set reimbursement rates are established based on the number of groupings that will be made – Illinois utilizes this method with three groupings: urban, suburban and rural.

Jim provided the Task Force with information regarding the Emergency Rule process. The Department must publish the Emergency Rule in newspapers across the state. After the release of

the newspaper announcement the Emergency Rule can then take effect, but the Department must complete a Public Hearing on the Emergency Rule and Legislative Action must take place within three months for the Rule to become permanent. Jim and Pirkko concluded the presentation by indicating that other reimbursement rate calculation formulas and options could be reviewed by the Department, or components from within the above options could be examined. The Task Force was invited to provide further rates development formula suggestions for review.

Task Force members discussed the dilemma in Milwaukee in developing a true market rate for child care reimbursement. Not all Milwaukee child care programs complete the maximum reimbursement rate survey.

- Of 1,038 licensed family child care programs in Milwaukee, 19 licensed family child care programs qualified to be included in the maximum rate survey process. Programs must serve at least 25 percent private pay families to be included in the survey process. This amounts to less than 2 percent of the programs in Milwaukee County being included in the market rate analysis.
- Of 475 licensed group child care centers in Milwaukee, 46 licensed group centers qualified to be included in the maximum rate survey process. Programs must serve at least 25 percent private pay families to be included in the survey process. This amounts to less than 10 percent of the licensed group centers being included in the market rate analysis.

Task Force members discussed the issue of determining the true cost of care, including developing policy that requires all child care programs to submit their fee schedules and complete the survey in order to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares subsidy. In Milwaukee, the maximum reimbursement rate has increased annually above the consumer price index and the inflation rate for many years. Discussion included the question of how rates could be increasing so dramatically in the Milwaukee area when the area has the largest low income population of the state. Concern was indicated that private pay families can not afford to pay for child care providers at the Milwaukee County maximum rate. Task Force members indicated that programs in Milwaukee serve a higher percentage of subsidized children because of the concentration of low-income families in Milwaukee. This is not a negative action caused by programs, but instead is a reality of serving families in a low-income area – task force members were reminded to remember this.

Task Force members discussed freezing current rates for a short term solution in order to provide time to develop a long term rate setting solution, but members were concerned that if a freeze took place, it would be viewed by the legislature as a possible option for on-going freezing of rates. Additional conversation took place regarding utilizing 2006 rates, and then add-on a set percent increase. Utilizing consumer price index and/or inflation as an add-on was also discussed.

Task Force members discussed components of child care programming cost, and labor was the highest component identified in addition to facility financing. Educated staff and directors were high cost items. Salary costs are identified as the highest budget line item for individual programming in addition to rent/mortgage. In an urban area, labor costs are further increased.

Task Force members described quality rating indicators multiple times throughout the day. The question continued to surface on how to measure quality in both group center and family child care. A goal of the day was identified to: Provide high quality programming and increase monitoring of programming to decrease program inaccuracies for the Wisconsin Shares program.

### **Task Force Member Discussion**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Task Force Member Comment</b>	<b>Priority Area</b>
<b>Survey Collection</b>	<p>Make it a requirement for all licensed group and licensed family child care programs to complete the survey and submit it with verification to the county/tribe.</p> <p>Link to the Child Care Resource and Referral NACCRRAware provider rate information that is submitted to individual Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.</p> <p>Sample statewide child care market prices by choosing four urban areas and use incentives to receive completed survey tools from child care programs.</p> <p>What options can be developed for calculating a true market rate for programs that serve a majority of Wisconsin Shares authorized children?</p>	Priority
<b>Rate Setting</b>	<p>Rates should support quality child care programming. Establish a lower base rate and increase payment based on verified quality indicators.</p> <p>Parents may look for child care programs that do not charge above the authorized reimbursement rate, allowing parents to not be responsible for co-payment.</p> <p>Freeze 2006 payment rates for 2007 as a cost savings mechanism.</p> <p>Freeze 2006 payment rates for 2007 as a cost savings mechanism, but increase rates a set percentage such that programs receive a minimal increase for 2007.</p> <p>Accredited programs policy language change should allow increased payment regardless of what the program charges.</p> <p>Use current Child Care Resource and Referral collected price data for developing maximum reimbursement rates.</p> <p>Rural areas of the state face distinct issues when a single program establishes the reimbursement rate for that rural area.</p>	Priority
<b>Child Care Slots</b>	<p>The rate structure should be based on quality programming. Currently 80 percent of the regulated child care programs serve Wisconsin Shares authorized children. Reimbursement policies developed should encourage and support quality, but not jeopardize parent choice.</p>	
<b>Program Integrity</b>	<p>Utilize the DPI Child and Adult Care Food Program staff site visits to child care programs to monitor attendance and quality of programming.</p> <p>Utilize the DHFS child care licensor staff site visit to child care programs to monitor attendance and the quality of programming.</p>	

	<p>Child care programs- directors, teachers and administrator’s need “orientation” training on the child care subsidy program policies regarding attendance reporting, eligibility and authorization.</p> <p>What does “fraud” really mean? Child care programs that receive Wisconsin Shares should be required to submit a signed verification form indicating that they are aware of child care program policies and that they will not submit false records of attendance, and will work cooperatively with local agencies to assure accurate reporting of change.</p> <p>Child care programs can not be responsible to know if a parent is attending work, they are responsible to provide care for the children in a safe environment.</p>	
<b>Co-Payment</b>	<p>A requirement of Wisconsin Shares eligibility should be that families are responsible to make payment timely for all costs above the authorized reimbursement level.</p> <p>Child care programs should be required to charge all families the same costs (private pay and Wisconsin Shares authorized families). Programs should not be allowed to waive additional parent responsibility costs in order to market their program, and fill their slots.</p> <p>Materials should be developed for parents and providers regarding collection of payment for child care services provided above the Wisconsin Shares reimbursement amount.</p> <p>Language and policy should be further developed for parents to clearly understand their monetary responsibility for receiving child care services. The language and concept of co-payment responsibility is not clearly understood. Information should be transmitted that a sliding fee scale is used to calculate the reimbursement to providers, but that the final cost of the child care is negotiated between the provider and the family based on the actual cost of care.</p>	
<b>Quality Indicators</b>	<p>Task Force members agree that NAEYC Accreditation is of the highest quality, but new requirements may make it unattainable for some programs to continue to pursue. National Accreditation Commission (NAC) Accreditation is a step towards higher quality. NAC Accreditation should be accepted for meeting higher quality standards in order to receive increased reimbursement for serving low-income children.</p> <p>Program Accountability- Child Care programs that receive a set level of reimbursement must provide verification that reimbursement is used to support high quality indicators, including education of staff and a salary scale.</p> <p>Reimburse programs based on quality indicators that can be tracked, including center director and center staff family child care provider education. Lower the base rate of funding, and increase funding based on</p>	Priority

	<p>quality indicators.</p> <p>Measurable quality indicators include educational levels of staff, environment, family involvement, and business practices.</p>	
<b>Wisconsin Shares Funding</b>	<p>Significant GPR must be increased in the Child Care Budget in order for the Wisconsin Shares program to adequately support high quality programming.</p> <p>TANF dollars should not be used to support EITC. TANF dollars should be used to support the child care subsidy program.</p>	
<b>Milwaukee</b>	<p>Rate survey data is not valid as there is not a private pay market in the Milwaukee area. The majority of Milwaukee County programs are serving a 75 percent and higher enrollment of subsidized children.</p> <p>Utilize a polling service to survey child care programs and parents to determine the current cost of child care in the Milwaukee market. Work with the University to determine a significant sample size. Utilize incentives to receive an increased return rate of data for the needed sample size.</p> <p>High quality child care programming, specifically group center programming is losing children and has vacant slots due to families utilizing low quality licensed family child care programming that does not request payment above the Wisconsin Shares reimbursement made to the program.</p>	
<b>Unionization</b>	<p>It is anticipated that the Governor will sign executive orders for AFSCME and SEIU to allow child care provider organization in Wisconsin. There is concern that AFSCME is obtaining signatures from the family child care workforce, but that a significant percentage of those signing are without early childhood education, and provide lower quality child care programming.</p> <p>Family child care providers were under the impression that unionizing would provide for health care benefit opportunities.</p>	

**Long Term Recommendations:**

- A long-term reimbursement rates task force should be convened to further review the reimbursement practices for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program and to review program integrity policies.
- Address Milwaukee County rate setting policies, and the need to determine a true local market rate.
- Develop a program integrity system to ensure accurate administration of child care funding.
- Consider NAC as an Accrediting body in Wisconsin eligible to receive a higher reimbursement level.
- Revise language to allow increased payment to accredited programs regardless of the price that they charge.
- Pursue a Quality Indicator Rating System. Develop mechanisms to support higher rates for higher quality programming.
- Re-visit the policies of parent co-payment requirements – develop policies and language to support child care programs to receive payment from parents for charges for costs above the

Wisconsin Shares Reimbursement. Eligibility for continued subsidy would be linked to payment of additional charges.

- Support DHFS proposed Licensing Rule language change regarding licensed family child care programming in one home provided by the licensee holder.
- Increase funding for the child care subsidy program, Wisconsin Shares.
- TANF funding should not be used to fund the Wisconsin EITC, and instead should be used to fully fund Wisconsin Shares.
- Freeze, or limit child care reimbursement rates for 2007, based on current 2006 maximum reimbursement rates.
- Limit 2007 maximum payment rate increases to a set percent increase, such as the consumer price index or the social security cost-of-living-adjustment increase. Ensure that any rate increase is moderate.
- Explore eliminating the 10 percent hold harmless clause for the 2007 maximum payment rate policies.
- Re-establish the Child Care Council to continue the conversation for the development of a quality indicator system and further monitoring of the Wisconsin Shares rate setting policies.

#### **Short Term Recommendations:**

- Child Care programs should receive further orientation and training on the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, including information on attendance reporting, eligibility and authorization.
- Local agency workers must be aware of current child care program policy, including eligibility and authorization. Agencies must provide training to workers to assure that program integrity is met, and that accurate administration of the program takes place. Agencies must assure that workers respond timely to parents and to providers.
- New policies and incentives for capturing/surveying market rate prices must be developed.

#### **Information Requested by Task Force Members:**

1. Rate Survey Data as collected from the fall 2006 survey identifying individual county/tribal rates utilizing the various maximum rate options described above.
  - A. What rates would look like in 2007 as compared to the same structure used for 2006
  - B. What rates would look like in 2007 utilizing the same structure as used for 2006, but removing the hold-harmless structure.
  - C. Document how urban area maximum rates differ across the state.
2. Child Care Budget request for FY07-09
3. Estimated need for cost-saving measures for the FY07-09 child care budget.
4. Determine if freezing rates with a percent increase is a cost saving measure.
5. Explore policy change of mandatory payment of co-payment responsibility as a requirement of eligibility for parents.
6. Explore the development of resource materials to provide more information to parents regarding Wisconsin Shares payment to providers and parent payment responsibilities

based on individual provider rates and hours of care provided. Explore eliminating the terminology of co-pay.

The next meeting of the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force is set for Tuesday, November 14, 2006.

## Secretary Roberta Gassman's Child Care Rate Setting Task Force

November 14, 2006

**Task Force Members Attendance:** \*Task Force Chair: Angela Lampkin-COA, Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association, \*Task Force Chair: Rose Smits-Encompass Child Care, Beverly Anderson-Ebenezer Child Care Centers, WCCAA, Deb Gorman for David Brooke-Knowledge Learning, Liz Green-Human Services Department-Dane County, Steve Hagman-Marathon County Social Services, Christie Howell-Yrios-Dane County United, Animal Crackers, Diane Ladwig-Gunderson Lutheran Child Care Center, Laurie Ann Meyer-Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, Wanda Montgomery-CFCP, Maximus, former operator of Gray's Child Care, Mary Motquin-Intertribal Child Care Council-Oneida, Silke O'Donnell-Dane County United, DCAEYC, Family Child Care Provider, John Pawasarat-UW Milwaukee, Mike Poma-Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, Wendy Rakower-Dane County United, Red Caboose, Jane Robinson-The Registry, Harmony House Child Care, Mary Roach-UW-Extension Child Care Research Partnership, Ruth Schmidt-Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Pat Schult-Pat's Preschool and Learning Center, Mary Sue Voights for Carol Maurer-Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

### **Task Force Members Absent:**

Dave Edie- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Krisan Mauritz-ABC Child Care Center

### **Call To Order**

Task Force Chairs Rose Smits and Angela Lampkin called the meeting to order. Introductions were made.

### **Presentations**

**Bill Clingan** provided an overview of the child care budget and the competing demands for TANF funding in Wisconsin. Task Force members received information on the letter that was sent September 15, 2006 to Governor Doyle from Roberta Gassman highlighting the need for additional attention to the TANF/Child Care budget that is as yet not balanced. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Bill provided the following child care budget information to the Task Force members:

- 1.) Annual child care subsidy expenditures continue to rise.
- 2.) CCDF and TANF federal grant awards have not continued to increase at the same levels, and instead remain at a flat funding level.
- 3.) The number of children served by the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program has increased dramatically during the last decade, from 18,000 children served in 1997 to 55,000 children served in 2006.
- 4.) The average cost per child served by the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program had increased annually until 2006 when new rate setting policies were established due to a projected deficit.

### **Discussion**

In September 2006, 61,000 children were served. Task Force members asked if this increase in number of children served was due to more families being eligible for services, or if information regarding Wisconsin Shares was becoming available to more families.

"Take-up rate" was discussed for Wisconsin families, and it is believed that more families are accessing the subsidy program as compared to the mid 1990's. During the 1990's the take-up rate

was believed to be in the 20-25 percent range. Now the take-up rate is believed to be in the 40-45 percent range.

Most families who receive Wisconsin Shares are well below the 185 percent federal poverty level upper application eligibility limit.

Pirkko Zweifel provided information on the 2007 Rate Setting Survey that was completed this fall. Licensed programs serving children 5 or more hours per day, 5 days per week are sent the rate setting survey. Licensed program mailing labels, survey materials, and soft copy spread sheets are sent to each county and tribe. County agencies are responsible to send out materials to licensed programs, and the completed surveys are to be returned to the local agencies. County agencies enter the information into the developed spread sheets, and the spread sheets are then returned to Pirkko for her review and then this data can be used to calculate and establish rates.

The return rate of surveys to local agencies is at a low rate, and it is anticipated that local agencies will work with the licensed providers in their areas to encourage the return of the completed survey.

Current licensed group survey information includes:

- 2,271 centers were mailed a rate setting survey to be completed.
- 1,317 centers returned the survey (58 percent).
- 838 centers were included in the final rate calculation process (36.9 percent).
- 84 centers were excluded from the survey process because they did not provide information on providing care for private pay families/children.
- 315 centers were excluded from the survey process because they did not serve 25 percent private pay families/children.

Current licensed family survey information includes:

- 3,109 family child care programs were mailed a rate setting survey to be completed.
- 1,705 family child care programs returned the survey (54.8 percent).
- 1,287 family child care programs were included in the final rate calculation process (41 percent).
- 47 family child programs were excluded from the survey process because they did not provide information on providing care for private pay families/children.
- 371 family child care programs were excluded from the survey process because they did not serve 25 percent private pay families/children.

Pirkko identified several concerns regarding the current survey collection process:

- Inaccurate provider data reporting
- Inaccurate local agency data entry
- Providers submitting hourly rates instead of weekly rates
- Providers submitting part time rates instead of full time rates
- Private pay family information not provided
- Low return rate for the survey

Laura Saterfield and Rebecca Brueggeman provided information on Program Integrity. Greater emphasis on program integrity has been placed in the Child Care Section and County/Tribal Administration contract language. This will be an area where future emphasis will be placed on program integrity monitoring and assurance of accurate eligibility determination and reimbursement

payment rate accuracy. Task Force members received a handout describing the Child Care Section efforts.

### **Discussion**

#### Variable Work Schedule/Under-utilization

Non-traditional work week hours, the need for a flexible schedule to meet the demands of an unpredictable work week schedule, and the need for a full time authorization were discussed. Child care providers provided information on general payment practices and the purchase of a “slot”. If a family can not predict when the care will be needed, the child care provider may hold the slot for the family for a full time price. This slot would not then be offered to another family, and the provider would need full weekly payment for this slot. Under-utilization reports have been created by the Department and identify that a significant number of children are authorized for full time payment based on enrollment, but actual attendance patterns are far short of full time.

With competing factors of decreased funding and increased numbers of children served, what can be viewed as a compromise? The needs of the child care industry, the needs of child care providers and the needs of low income families may not all be the same.

Several child care providers indicated that they would not take subsidized children on an authorized attendance basis. Solid child care administrative business practices require a set payment per child, regardless of the actual attendance per week in order to create budgets.

Laura Saterfield provided information to the Task Force on Co-payment issues and also on NAC accreditation and its equivalency to NAEYC accreditation.

Task Force members had requested that further information be shared with families and with providers indicating that families are responsible for payment above the Wisconsin Shares reimbursement rate, and this amount is based on a sliding-fee scale.

Discussion took place regarding the requirement of child care programs to receive the co-payment from families. While all Task Force members agree that there is a significant program integrity issue when child care programs advertise or market that they do not require the collection of the co-payment, some Task Force members believe that it is up to the child care program to determine if a parent is able to provide the full payment, based on the specific needs of that family.

Laura also provided information to the Task Force on NAC accreditation and its equivalency to NAEYC accreditation.

Laura Saterfield reviewed child care rate options with the Task Force.

### **Discussion**

Task Force members indicated that it would not be as devastating for child care programs if payment practices and policies stayed the same, vs. having additional payment rate reductions. Task Force members asked if payment rate decisions would be for the time frame through June 2007, or would any decisions made run through the next biennium (June 2009). Task Force members were concerned that if payment policies were further reduced, it would be a negative perception to the child care workforce. Task Force members did not want to establish policies that would impact the child care system in a negative manner. Several Task Force members indicated that they would prefer to

request that the Legislature add additional dollars to the child care budget to fully fund the program and to not establish payment reduction policies.

Before-and-after school rates in Milwaukee were discussed, and it was estimated that this was an area where cost-savings could be established by creating policy that these authorizations should be established as attendance base only for reimbursement.

**Recommendations**

The following decisions were made by the Rate Setting Task Force:

<b>Proposed Language</b>	<b>Comment/Discussion</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.) Recommend a long-term reimbursement rates task force should be convened to further review the reimbursement practices for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program and to review program integrity policies.		<b>Combine with number 2</b>
2.) Re-establish the Child Care Council to continue the conversation for the development of a quality indicator system and further monitoring of the Wisconsin Shares rate setting policies		Re-establish the <b>Child Care Council</b> , with sub committees established based on needed policy review (including a reimbursement rate policy development and child care quality indicators policy development committee) to monitor and review the child care subsidy program, program integrity and quality improvement efforts of the Department.
3.) Pursue a Quality Indicator Rating System. Develop mechanisms to support higher rates for higher quality programming.	Need: Resources for child care providers to pursue quality enhancements.	<b>Combine with number 2</b>
4.) A requirement of Wisconsin Shares eligibility should be that families are responsible to make payment timely for all costs above the authorized reimbursement level.	Some Task Force members felt that individual programs determine the additional costs the family is responsible for based on a case-by-case need.	<b>No</b>
5.) Child Care programs should receive further	Agencies Need: Annual training provided to local agencies with	<b>Yes</b>

orientation and training on the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, including information on attendance reporting, eligibility and authorization.	required participation. Training materials should be developed and delivery formats should include face to face, web based, and creation of newsletters. Materials for agency workers and for child care programs – center and family based.	
6.) Local agency workers must be aware of current child care program policy, including eligibility and authorization. Agencies must provide training to workers to assure that program integrity is met, and that accurate administration of the program takes place. Agencies must assure that workers respond timely to parents and to providers.	Income Maintenance funding must be increased to support this and to provide for increased customer satisfaction. State agencies must have a role and responsibility in the development and dissemination of training. “Timely” is a relative term based upon the service delivery area and the needs of the customers. Individual agencies must determine what timely is. Providers need to know what resources are available.	<b>Yes.</b> Local agency workers <b>and DWD</b> must be aware of current child care program policy, including eligibility and authorization. Agencies must provide training to workers to assure that program integrity is met, and that accurate administration of the program takes place. Agencies must assure that workers respond timely to parents and to providers.
7.) New policies and incentives for capturing/surveying market rate prices must be developed.	Child Care Section has a responsibility in this. Additional statute and rule language should be developed. Need to identify what the true market rate is for Milwaukee. How can CCRR data be used for this collection of rates?	<b>This becomes part of the Child Care Council -Sub Committee – Reimbursement Rate Policy Development Number 2.</b>
8.) Consider NAC as an accrediting body in Wisconsin eligible to receive a higher reimbursement level.		<b>This becomes part of the Child Care Council -Sub Committee –Quality Indicators Policy Development Number 2.</b>
9.) Revise language to allow increased payment to accredited programs regardless of the price that they charge.	Task Force had discussion on this option throughout the day, but ultimately did not feel they could increase funding when the deficit was so large.	<b>This becomes part of the Child Care Council -Sub Committee work – Number 2.</b>
10.) Support DHFS proposed Licensing Rule language change regarding licensed family child care programming in one home provided by the licensee holder.	Task Force Member Vote: Yes – 11 No – 8  Strong opinion was indicated during the voting process.	<b>No Consensus</b>

11.) Increase GPR funding for the child care subsidy program, Wisconsin Shares.	Need infusion of new dollars to support the child care budget including increased GPR and TANF that has gone to other purposes in state budget.	<b>Yes</b>
12.) TANF funding should not be used to fund the Wisconsin EITC, and instead should be used to fully fund Wisconsin Shares.	Need infusion of new dollars to support the child care budget including GPR and TANF that went to other purposes in state budget.	<b>Yes</b>
13.) Freeze, or limit child care reimbursement rates for 2007, based on current 2006 maximum reimbursement rates.	Discussion identified below: See Steve Hagman proposal below.	See Below
14.) Limit 2007 maximum payment rate increases to a set percent increase, such as the consumer price index or the social security cost-of-living-adjustment increase. Ensure that any rate increase is moderate.	Discussion identified below: See Steve Hagman proposal below.	See Below
15.) Explore eliminating the 10 percent hold harmless clause for the 2007 maximum payment rate policies.	Discussion identified below: See Steve Hagman proposal below.	See Below
16.) Authorize child care payments based on attendance – (no longer authorize on enrollment basis).	Task Force Vote – 10 Yes votes Task Force members indicated that there was not a guarantee of savings because it is dependent upon actual attendance. Attendance based payment will provide payment for full time care when the child attends full time. Providers can not predict when children will be in care. If a child is sick the provider would not receive payment. This could cause programs to go out of business, or to no longer accept subsidized payments. Low-income parents may no longer	<b>No Consensus</b>

	be able to access child care if payment is based only on attendance.	
17.) Implement a Wisconsin Shares Waiting List for 2007.	Task Force Vote – 8 Yes votes Waiting lists would be devastating for child care programs. Low income families would not be able to attend work without authorized child care support. The budget shortfall should not be a burden placed on low-income families, nor on child care programs that serve low-income families.	<b>No Consensus</b>
18.) Surplus child care funding should be used for quality initiatives.		<b>Yes</b>
19.) Develop a statewide maximum reimbursement rate.	Task Force members were not able to agree to this statement	<b>No Consensus</b>

Task Force Members also voted on the following options provided by the Department:

**Steve Hagman developed the following motion as a compromise of the Rate Setting Task Force: to establish the 2007 maximum child care payment rates to be set at the 2006 rates for a time limited basis. Steve also developed the motion that all authorizations for school age children, age six and older should be established as attendance based authorizations. This motion was seconded by John Pawasarat. The motion will result in \$12.2 million in savings. The vote was 17 yes votes and 1 no vote with much discussion.**

**The vote was seen as a compromise of the Task Force members and was understood that it would not “fix” the budget deficit problem, but it is hoped this motion would be viewed by the Legislature as work of the Task Force to move towards change.**

Further Discussion by Task Force Members:

The Task Force members discussed advocacy and the development of a political strategy. Task Force members discussed the establishment of a waiting list vs. the establishment of further reducing payment rates.

Other topics that the Task Force mentioned:

- 10 percent hold back of payment until it was verified that child care programs collected co-payments.
- Concern that the child care budget deficit “fix” should not be at the expense of child care programming. Child care programs can not be expected to reduce their prices further to serve low-income children.
- Automate the under-utilization report to develop attendance based payments to programs where children are not in regular attendance.

- Link EITC payment and Dependent Care Tax Deduction to verification of co-payment responsibility.
- Link employer flex plan to co-payment responsibility.
- Development of advocacy and political strategies to increase funding of the child care budget.
- Consider establishment of a waiting list and the political voice of families as a leverage tool.
- Review provisionally certified child care provider eligibility, should grandparents receive subsidy?
- Collect and automate individual child care program payment policies, (including multiple child discount, vacation weeks, payment discount for staff, etc) to assure that reimbursement is not above the provider price for the family.
- Link economic development, business involvement, and community awareness in Milwaukee.

#### Overall Prioritization of Task Force Members

- 1.) Request additional funding of the Wisconsin Legislature to fully fund the Wisconsin Shares program.
- 2.) Advocacy efforts of child care organizations, families and communities on the value of quality child care programming.

Rose Smits and Angela Lampkin thanked the Child Care Rate Setting Task Force for their hard work and full engagement to the Rate Setting process and attention to quality child care programming.

Rate setting TF final Mtg Minutes 11 14 06  
11/20/06

