



Red Balloon Early Learning Centers, Inc.

1417 S. 13th St. La Crosse, WI 54601 608-784-9406	573 Braund St. Onalaska, WI 54650 608-781-8580	2910 Gillette St. La Crosse, WI 54601 608-781-3550	359 N. Leonard St. West Salem, WI 54669 608-786-3130
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2/27/17

Dear Red Balloon – West Salem families,

It is with a heavy heart that I am writing you this letter. Over the past 6 months, Red Balloon has seen a severe shortage in qualified teaching staff applying for positions. After speaking with other directors and people in the child care field, we have come to learn that we are not alone. Group child care centers all over the state are finding that the number of people going into this field has declined drastically. We are not completely sure why this is happening, but we do know that this is a field where teachers work very hard every day for very small wages. Many of our staff are highly educated and all of them are extremely dedicated to the work they do. As much as we would like to, we cannot afford to pay them the wage they deserve without raising rates for families that may already be struggling to make ends meet.

Our West Salem location has been hit the hardest by the decline in staff. It is because of this shortage of applicants that the Red Balloon board of directors has decided to close our West Salem location effective June 9th, 2017. This was a very difficult decision for our organization. Red Balloon made the decision to take over the West Salem building from ChildFirst in June of last year because we recognized the need for quality child care in the area. We know that there is still a great need and we truly wish that we were able to continue in our West Salem location, but without qualified staff, we can't enroll the number of children we would like to.

It is our hope that by giving enough notice, all of our families will be able to find alternate care. We also want all of you to know that we would be happy to hold spots for your children in any one of our other locations. All of the center office phone numbers are listed above. Please feel free to give one of them a call directly or call our main office at 608-784-9406 and we will be happy to help you if you have questions.

We want to thank all of you for being a part of the Red Balloon family. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at 608-784-9420 or email me at jennieb@redballoonelc.com.

Sincerely,

Jennie Buchholtz
Executive Director
Red Balloon Early Learning Centers, Inc.

Cc: Red Balloon Board of Directors

