

# Christopher Wenz

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## UMass Donahue Institute – Applied Research and Program Evaluation

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100 VENTURE WAY, SUITE 5  
HADLEY, MA 01035

### Candidate for Research Manager (506904)

Dear Members of the Hiring Committee,

Despite choosing to pursue a doctorate in education, which *demands* specialization, I am also somewhat terrified by...specialization. My interests have always blurred the disciplinary boundaries set by academia; further, my objective has always been creating positive change in programs and in the lives of children and families. So, I write to you incredibly excited by the opportunity to work with a team of researchers committed to serving diverse clients AND "effecting social impact" through their work. In other words: this position is *exactly* how I would prefer to employ my skills as a researcher and educator.

Since leaving my position of Research Scientist at Landmark College in June, I have been caring for my 5 year-old son and volunteering my time overseeing a massive renovation of his non-profit preschool: Willow Blossom Learning Center. In my role as Board President, I have worked closely with the Center Director to secure funding for this much needed renovation. I have also volunteered hundreds of hours to complete the carpentry and painting necessary to create a safer and more functional space for the Program. I share this with you because my efforts at Willow Blossom are indicative of the diligence and dedication I bring to all of my work; in addition, it would be incredibly rewarding to apply the knowledge and connections I've gathered to the Early Child research conducted at the Donahue Institute.

I also believe that my knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods would make me an asset to the Institute and its clients. In particular, I am proficient in the R language for statistical computing. I have recently used R to analyze data for my dissertation study and to conduct preliminary analyses for a grant proposal submitted to the NIH (in collaboration with the Reading Recovery Council of North America). In these projects, I used a variety of complex techniques including latent profile modeling, multi-level modeling, as well as random effects and logistic regression models. I also have experience in designing survey research in Qualtrics, designing psychometrically sound instruments, conducting interviews, administering academic and psychological assessments, and analyzing a broad range of qualitative data. Although the breadth of my experience and knowledge is still developing, I do possess (what I see as) an incredibly valuable skill: the ability to recognize the limits of my own knowledge and abilities. Throughout my career, it's become clear to me that success is never about one individual's abilities, but rather the ability of an entire team to learn and grow together to meet the challenges they face. It's within this process and this type of environment in which I am at my best and the opportunity to learn alongside a team of researchers with diverse interests and backgrounds drives my interest in this position.

Finally, I have spent my entire career in education. I have been responsible for teaching and mentoring students from diverse backgrounds, with varying dis/abilities and ranging in age from 4 to 71. Often, my work

involved supporting students and families who were in crisis and desperately needed someone to help the tackle complex and daunting challenges. I've worked hard to hone my skills and I pride myself on my ability to listen to, connect and communicate with everyone I serve and work with. Thus, I believe that the years I have spent learning to be a more effective teacher would make me a valuable teammate and also benefit the clients served by the Donahue Institute.

I would be grateful to be considered for this position and for the opportunity to discuss my experience and qualifications with you in an interview. I look forward to hearing from you and hearing more about the work you do.

Sincerely,

Christopher Wenz