



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

555 West Washington Ave, Suite 200

Madison, WI 53703

www.wccf.org

☎ 608-284-0580

✉ 608-284-0583

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Contact: Bob Jacobson, (608) 284-0580, ext. 303

WCCF Commends Leaders on Budget Compromise

Like other groups and individuals across the state, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is relieved and delighted that the difficult budget process has finally come to a conclusion. The Council's reaction to the budget, however, goes beyond relief that the agonizing standoff has been resolved. We believe the outcome represents a compromise that genuinely prioritizes the well-being of Wisconsin's children and families.

"Tough decisions were made, but in the end those involved in the negotiations made sure kids were taken care of in this budget," said WCCF Executive Director Charity Eleson. "We applaud leadership in both houses of the legislature, and thank Gov. Doyle for his role in crafting a budget that the people of Wisconsin can not only live with, but can thrive with."

In particular, Eleson pointed to the inclusion of **BadgerCare Plus**, an expansion of the state's health care program for low-income families, as a triumph of the new budget. BadgerCare Plus will make coverage available to nearly all of the state's uninsured children. Eleson also highlighted increased funding for the **Wisconsin Shares** child care subsidy program; increased **Youth Aids** funding; and funding to help school districts launch **4-year-old kindergarten** programs as other budget items that will contribute to the well-being of the state's children and families.

The compromise package was not without disappointments for child advocates, however. For example, a proposed change in the Homestead Tax Credit formula to adjust for inflation was not included in the final budget. This omission will result in a \$13 million decline in funding for that crucial support for the state's neediest households.

Nevertheless, taken as a whole, WCCF is satisfied with this budget and commends all those who worked hard to bring about a reasonably happy ending to a very long, sometimes exasperating story.

A more detailed summary of provisions in the final budget relating to children and families can be found on the WCCF website at: http://www.wccf.org/2007-09_statebudgetessentials.php