



Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition

Disability Rights Wisconsin ♦ Milwaukee Child Care Alliance ♦ Wisconsin Association of School Boards ♦ Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Assn ♦ Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Network ♦ Wisconsin Council on Children and Families ♦ Wisconsin Council for Exceptional Children - Division for Early Childhood ♦ Wisconsin Early Childhood Assn ♦ Wisconsin Education Association Council ♦ Wisconsin Family Child Care Assn ♦ Wisconsin Head Start Assn ♦ Wisconsin Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Assn
Stand Together for Quality Early Care and Education

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Madison – Economic investments in business today help our economy now, but investing in early education for children builds Wisconsin tomorrow.

The Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition supports efforts to improve early care and education in the Governor's budget. We are pleased to see proposals to increase scholarships and salary stipends for early childhood teachers and family child care providers, establishment of a child care quality rating system, and start-up funds targeted to collaborative four-year-old kindergarten.

The Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition and the Governor share the goal that every child should have access to high quality early learning opportunities. These budget measures provide a good start, but are insufficient to achieve that goal. Additional support is needed so that programs have qualified staff, to provide incentives for high quality, and to ensure that children with disabilities are able to fully participate in early care and education programs.

The creation of the new Department of Children and Families offers a great opportunity to provide coordination and improvement of child care services and increase the focus on young children.

While we are pleased at efforts to cover most of the shortfall in the Wisconsin Shares child care assistance program for working families, we are concerned about the harmful impacts from proposed cost-cutting measures including: increased co-pay requirements, lowered eligibility levels for families, and lower payment rates to child care providers. We plan to work with the Governor and the Legislature during budget deliberations to find a way to avoid those penalties for parents and providers. Wisconsin Shares is an essential program that helps low-income working families afford good child care, and provides a stable funding base for quality programs.

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