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To: Wisconsin Legislators and Staff
From: Charity Eleson, Executive Director
Re: WCCF's 2009-2011 Policy Priorities

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) is committed to ensuring that every child in the state is able to grow up in a just and nurturing family and community. We bring about that change through education, outreach and advocating for state and federal policies and investments that produce better outcomes for children and their families in health, education, economic security and safety and healthy development. Each legislative session we offer state policy makers our recommendations on for policy changes and investments that, based on the research we have done, will result in significant improvements in the health, well-being and economic independence of families and the children they raise.

For the 2009-2011 legislative session, WCCF's board and staff recommend a mix of policy changes and investments that recognize the significant economic challenges families across the state face and the considerable fiscal difficulties confronting state policy makers as you begin to work together to craft a biennial budget that balances the needs of citizens for critical services with tax fairness.

While these times demand fiscal constraint, they also call for the state to continue to pursue policies that improve academic achievement for all children, invest in the workforce, create conditions for all citizens to be healthy and keep communities safe. This means that we need to apply cost containment where it's prudent to do so, but commit to helping families meet their basic needs and invest in education, health and other areas of public infrastructure that our communities need to thrive.

WCCF's policy briefs, attached, offer policy makers recommendations, background and information on:

- Achieving an equitable tax structure and targeting revenue growth strategies to meet families' needs
- Delivering on the promise of high quality early childhood programs to improve children's achievement and meet the needs of low-income working families
- Investing in Wisconsin's workforce to help low-income adults retool their skills and meet the needs of Wisconsin's employers
- Completing the job of extending health care coverage to all children
- Ensuring that 17 year olds who get into trouble with the law have the opportunities they need to become successful, contributing adults

WCCF works extensively with coalitions, other organizations and individual child advocates on these issues. We are also available to discuss with you and your staff additional detail on research, cost and the experience of other states in each of these policy areas.

If you should need additional information at any time during the legislative session, please do not hesitate to contact us. Sabrina Gentile is our governmental relations manager and she can be reached at 608-284-0580, ext. 306 or at sgentile@wccf.org I can be reached at 608-284-0580, ext. 302 or at celeson@wccf.org Additional information on our policy priorities can be found at our website at www.wccf.org where you can also sign up for a range of different e-newsletters that provide timely information on a range of state and federal policy issues that affect children and families.

We look forward to working with you over the course of the legislative session.