

THE WISCONSIN INFANT TODDLER POLICY PROJECT (WITPP)

Advancing a robust policy and legislative action plan to expand high quality, affordable child care and promote optimal child development and wellbeing of Wisconsin's infants and toddlers.



A CHANGING CHILD CARE LANDSCAPE: EARLY CHILDHOOD IN WISCONSIN

- Pre-COVID-19, 54% of our state's population lived in a child care desert and in the last decade, 9% of group child care and 70% of family child care programs closed.
- Working families with infants and toddlers struggle with child care costs, availability, geographic disparities and waiting lists. Businesses have a hard time filling vacant positions due to potential employee's inability to find child care, while child care programs continue to shut their doors due to low wages for early child educators.
- Today, 15% of our pre-COVID-19 group child care slots are now in temporarily or permanently closed programs, which translates to a loss of approx. 25,000 regulated child care slots.
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recently released a [survey](#) showing that without a major federal relief package, up to 80% of child care programs will be closed by or before Summer of 2021.



WITPP PROJECT BUDGET PRIORITIES

As Governor Evers and the Wisconsin State Legislature craft the 2021-23 budget, it is essential to invest in the child care sector so that parents can participate in the workforce. Wisconsin leads the nation in its percent of mothers of young children working outside the home. Prior to COVID-19, child care was in crisis in Wisconsin with over 50% of state residents living in child care deserts. In rural Wisconsin, this number jumps to 80% of residents. In order to have strong, vibrant communities and local economies throughout the state, our child care infrastructure must be a priority.

We support an investment of \$106 million in new state revenue into child care over the biennium. This investment should support high quality, affordable care for young children with a significant focus on infants and toddlers. Additionally, this funding should support early childhood educators' wages and benefits. We further support an annual increase for the REWARD program and early childhood social emotional training and technical assistance.

For more information on the WITPP visit: wisconsinearlychildhood.org/WITPP

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