



Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

For Immediate Release

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New Grant Supports Initiative to Strengthen Early Care and Education Opportunities in Milwaukee

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association is proud to announce the launch of The Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN) in Milwaukee, thanks to a grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The \$1 million Community Impact Grant, distributed over five years, will advance brain and behavioral health equity for children and families in the most under-resourced areas of Milwaukee by strengthening the quality and capacity of local child care providers.

The initiative will work to stabilize child care by connecting family and group child care programs to pool resources and capitalize on economies of scale and expertise. By sharing resources, knowledge, and staffing, child care programs can build capacity in their caregiving and improve outcomes for young children and their families. WEESSN-Milwaukee will promote and sustain more accessible, high-quality early care and education opportunities, ultimately benefiting children, working parents, child care providers and their communities.

“Although children and families from low-income communities have access to child care within the neighborhoods in which they live, the data shows they don’t have the same access to quality that their more affluent peers might enjoy,” Jeanette Paulson, WECA’s Director of Workforce Initiatives shared. “The shared services network in Milwaukee will be customized based on direct feedback from local child care providers and families. We see the community as the greatest asset and will work to make accessing supports for families second nature by linking them to child care programs that families intersect with daily.”

WECA’s strong community partners will offer programming that directly connects child care programs and families to a wider swath of supports, such as:

- **United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties** will offer linkage support to neighborhood K-12 schools as part of the Milwaukee Community Schools Partnership. This will include early childhood resource fairs, bridges to Kindergarten in the partnering community schools and linkages to community partnerships that exist with the Milwaukee Community Schools.
- **Milwaukee Public Library** will provide monthly book drop and visits from a local librarian, individualized professional development for staff and meeting space for WEESSN activities.
- **Milwaukee Area Technical College** will provide access to adult education to support business and early education needs identified for the participating programs.
- **The Clinical & Translational Science Institute at the Medical College of Wisconsin (Vroom)** will offer parent engagement Science Cafés on topics like brain development, immunizations and literacy.

WEESSN – Milwaukee is poised to serve as a catalyst for stabilizing the child care market and elevating the quality of care for Milwaukee’s children and families, ultimately ensuring lasting and scalable change. This initiative is one of [six grants](#) funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health through its Community Impact Grants program. The initiatives were selected for their potential to create conditions, systems and policy solutions that lead to equitable and sustainable improvements in health.

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High-quality early care and education sets a foundation for lifelong learning and success. **Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA)** advances positive change for children by focusing on the professionals who provide child care for well over 70% of Wisconsin’s youngest children. Simply put, WECA exists to support the well-being of children and the early education workforce by investing in programs and policies that improve teacher retention, enhance the education level of early childhood professionals, and increase wages for the workforce.