



THE WISCONSIN INFANT TODDLER POLICY PROJECT (WITPP) LEGISLATIVE TALKING POINTS

The Ask

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. 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 would support high quality, affordable care for young children with a significant focus on infants and toddlers. Additionally, this funding would 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.

Background

- Quality child care is vital to our communities. It allows parents to participate in the workforce and is one of the best investments we can make in our children's social and emotional learning and future academic success. Families across the state struggle to access quality, affordable child care. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation worse.
 - Over half of Wisconsin residents live in child care deserts where there is not enough child care. For rural Wisconsin, this number jumps to 80% of residents.
 - Where child care is available, it's too expensive. The average Wisconsin family has to spend 20% of its income just on care for one infant; a single parent is spending close to half their income on child care.
- When working parents don't have access to child care, or when the cost of child care is out of reach, they are forced to make difficult choices including working fewer hours, changing jobs, or dropping out of the workforce altogether.
 - Nationwide, 1.1 million workers dropped out of the workforce in September 2020 alone; 80% of these workers were women.
 - In Wisconsin, 70.2% of infants have mothers in the workforce compared to the national average of 61.6%. Working mothers are critical to our economy.
 - Over half of Wisconsin counties are losing population and nearly every county is losing people in their prime working years (25-54). As a result, many employers struggle to fill vacancies. We need to make sure we have enough labor in our state if we want to grow our economy.
- Over the last year, Governor Evers and the Legislature have been essential in directing federal relief funds to the child care sector to enable families to access child care. The proposed state budget investment will help to transition Wisconsin's child care infrastructure from surviving to thriving.

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

Jackie Anderson, WITPP Project Manager:
608-729-1069
email: janderson@wisconsinearlychildhood.org

Kimber Liedl, Business Engagement Director
608-729-1062
email: kliedl@wisconsinearlychildhood.org