

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **WECA thanks Governor Evers for commitment to early care and education in Executive Budget**

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association applauds Gov. Tony Evers' support of early childhood educators and early care and education in his Executive Budget announced yesterday.

The investment is historic for Wisconsin, which has never placed this overwhelming an emphasis on early childhood as a budget priority.

"This is a tremendous day of recognition of the early childhood workforce and early care and education in Wisconsin," said WECA Executive Director Ruth Schmidt. "The work that early childhood educators do every day to care for and educate our youngest children is essential – and this investment will be essential for early childhood professionals and supporting healthy families and communities."

Evers' child care priorities, including more than \$300 million to fund the continuation of the Child Care Counts program, is vital as Wisconsin approaches a looming January 2024 fiscal cliff when federal pandemic relief funding for Child Care Counts will expire.

Federal relief funds for child care, allocated by the governor and approved by the Joint Finance Committee, have helped child care programs stay afloat since early 2020. However, as the end of that funding nears, the economic and labor pressures will cause the already tight child care supply to shrink to new levels and prompt the continuation of a child care workforce staffing exodus.

"Significant state investment into child care will be critical to avoid even more serious implications," Schmidt said.

WECA founded and continues to lead Raising Wisconsin, a statewide advocacy initiative powered by a broad multi-sector coalition, which has priorities focused on young children and families, including affordable and accessible high-quality child care. Continued coalition-focused advocacy about the importance of child care investments will be essential as the budget season continues, Schmidt said.

"We join the Raising Wisconsin coalition in applauding the child care budget investments in the Executive Budget," Schmidt said. "We are optimistic about the future of early care and education in Wisconsin."

## **About Wisconsin Early Childhood Association**

*[Wisconsin Early Childhood Association \(WECA\)](#) is a leading state non-profit organization, founded in 1971, that supports and advocates for the early childhood workforce and early care and education in Wisconsin. It is the state affiliate of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). A statewide organization with local reach, WECA administers and leads several key programs for child care providers and programs. Most recently, it launched [Raising Wisconsin](#), a multi-sector statewide advocacy initiative calling for significant public investment in child care and optimal child health and well-being.*

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