

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 16, 2023

For more information, contact:

Ruth Schmidt, WECA Executive Director | 608-729-1042 | ruschmidt@wisconsinearlychildhood.org

Cassie Perenchio, Communications Director | 608-230-8000 | cperenchio@wisconsinearlychildhood.org

WECA applauds Gov. Evers for commitment to early care and education with funding for Child Care Counts

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association applauds Gov. Tony Evers' allocation of \$170 million in available pandemic relief funding to continue Child Care Counts payments through June 2025, a measure which will provide some stability and welcome relief to the early childhood field that has been struggling while planning for the original anticipated end of the program in January.

"This is an incredibly welcome and important development for early care and education in Wisconsin," said WECA Executive Director Ruth Schmidt. "We know early childhood programs and educators will breathe a small sigh of relief as they take in this news, as it represents critical support while they grappled with raising parent fees and possibly closing their doors in anticipation of the end of the program. We appreciate the Governor's leadership and willingness to step up during this incredibly important and challenging time for child care."

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association has long been a steadfast advocate for significant public funding for early care and education, most recently helping lead the Raising Wisconsin initiative, which continues to advocate for significant funding for Child Care Counts. The \$170 million as a result of Evers' action will allow programs to continue at their current level of reduced payments. While the continuation of payments at the lower level is incredibly necessary and beneficial, it still is not enough to provide the level of funding and sustainability needed over the long term to ensure stability for early childhood programs, early childhood educators, and the working families and communities they serve.

It is important to note that the Governor's action comes just as new state surplus figures were announced, which show Wisconsin will end the year with a more than \$7 billion in available surplus – of which \$300 million to continue the Child Care Counts Program would represent a mere 4 percent. In short, state Legislators have the funding available to provide a significant investment of general purpose revenue into payments for child care programs over the long term.

"It is also important to note the early childhood field has, for a long time, needed long-term investment," Schmidt said. "Child care needs to be recognized by state Legislators for the vital public good it is."

###

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.