

Preschool Development Grant

Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan for 2021-23



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Dear Reader,

We're honored and grateful to have you as a partner. The Strategic Plan that follows represents the collective wisdom gathered through research, reflection, and dreaming by many individuals and organizations who are deeply committed to strengthening and transforming the Wisconsin Birth to 5 Early Childhood State System. We are grateful to all who have contributed to this plan. We are equally grateful to all who will tirelessly work to reach its lofty goals and objectives in the months and years to come.

This Strategic Plan was drafted for you, to assist you in fulfilling the goals and dreams you have in making positive change in your family and community. This document is meant as a guide for you to build upon. Print it, carry it with you, and write all over its margins. Use it to talk with a friend or ask a colleague about your vision for the future of ECE.

Each of us is one small dot of color in a bright, complex picture. The Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 Strategic Plan for 2021-23 is Wisconsin's opportunity to connect our dots to improve Wisconsin's Early Childhood State System. The Strategic Plan will require us to forge new relationships and expand existing ones to overcome common challenges. Some of these challenges are new – like those related to the global pandemic – and some have been simmering for years. The work that lies ahead will require unprecedented ingenuity, commitment, coordination, and energy. In doing that work, we cannot lose sight of the future picture we hope to create: that young children are recipients of loving and nurturing support for their health, safety, development, and learning.

Thank you for taking the time to engage with us. We look forward to working together to build future in which all Wisconsin children and families have access to high quality, affordable, local early care and education opportunities.



Emilie Amundson
Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

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Introduction & Development Process

The Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 (PDG B-5) is a federal grant administered by the Department of Children and Families in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the Department of Health Services (DHS), and additional partners. PDG staff consulted a wide body of research and a range of stakeholders through a comprehensive Needs Assessment process, which was used to guide development of the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is the culmination of a collective review of data and experiences shared by families and professionals who are influenced by the B-5 Early Childhood State System (ECSS), including the Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY), Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), PDG Statewide Leadership Team, Regional Workgroups, educators, parents/caregivers, community and business leaders, and others. Wisconsin engaged in multiple public outreach efforts to ensure that the voices of families and the early care and education (ECE) workforce were central to PDG planning and each phase of draft review.

The Strategic Plan directly addresses the findings from the [Wisconsin PDG Statewide Needs Assessment](#). The Needs Assessment was developed in partnership with several key stakeholders between February and September 2020. The Needs Assessment utilized ECE indicators specific to birth to 5 programs, child care, Head Start, and 4K/4K Community Approach, along with key health, employment, education, and poverty data. In addition, 17 listening sessions (both in-person and virtual) were held to gather ideas on challenges impacting families of children birth to 5, ECE program staff, and communities. This included two tribal listening sessions and one Spanish language listening session. At least 600 unique participants attended the listening sessions, mostly in their professional capacity. Finally, 52 qualitative interviews were conducted with primary caregivers and child care providers from four demographic populations in Wisconsin—Hmong, Latinx, Black, and rural White. At the time of this publication, additional interviews were underway with Wisconsin tribal citizens.

A draft of this Strategic Plan was released in October 2020 for public input. The purpose of the draft release was to gather feedback from the ECE field in Wisconsin, as well as adjacent fields, and all other interested individuals, including parents and families. After all, the PDG vision is for all and will require hard work from many. Feedback from more than 240 survey respondents, as well as a formal memo from the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, was incorporated into the final plan. Survey respondents expressed strong support for the plan while offering numerous suggestions to clarify and strengthen it. Some even expressed concern that the plan may be too ambitious, but PDG partner agencies are committed to bold and decisive action. In pursuit of success, Strategic Plan implementation will be nimble and dynamic to overcome future hurdles that may emerge. In the coming months and years, Wisconsin will continue to gather new data and update the Needs Assessment to guide additional activities and measure progress on the Strategic Plan, adjusting as needed along the way.

The Strategic Plan is also intentionally aligned with the [Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project \(WITPP\)](#), a Pritzker Children's Initiative funded coalition of state and community advocates, state agency, and program leaders. Further, the Strategic Plan addresses the requirements of the Preschool Development Grant 2020 Renewal Funding Opportunity Announcement, for which Wisconsin will submit an application within days of publishing of this Strategic Plan. This November 2020 proposal seeks funding for three years of up to \$10 million annual funding to implement the Strategic Plan (extending through December 31, 2023). Table 1 contains a timeline of activities to continually revisit and build on the Needs Assessment and strategic planning processes already completed.



TABLE 1: Timeline of Wisconsin Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning Activities, 2020-25

Year	Activities
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish Statewide Needs Assessment Summary (September 2020)• Publish 2021-23 B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan (November 2020) and implementation begins<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on urgent workforce needs and creation of infrastructure to support Wisconsin’s comprehensive B-5 Early Childhood State System (ECSS), including ECE programs (child care, 4K/4K community approach, early intervention, home visiting, etc.) and programs and services that support young children and their families (health, wellness, nutrition, etc.)• Continue Needs Assessment work funded under initial PDG
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of 2021-23 Strategic Plan continues• Update Statewide Needs Assessment Summary to include new elements and research results that were previously delayed due to COVID-19• Update 2021-23 B-5 Strategic Plan as needed based on updated Needs Assessment (late 2021)
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of 2021-23 Strategic Plan continues• Update Needs Assessment with new research findings• 2023-25 strategic planning process begins using updated Needs Assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on strengthening and sustaining Wisconsin’s comprehensive B-5 Early Childhood State System (ECSS)• Hold stakeholder listening sessions and conduct interviews• Publish 2023-25 B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan (late 2022)
2023-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of 2023-25 B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan



PDG Needs Assessment Findings

The following is a brief summary of multiple research efforts completed by PDG and its partners in 2020 as part of the initial Needs Assessment process. To review and interact with the full Needs Assessment reports and data dashboards, please visit the virtual [PDG Sandbox](#).

The four major Needs Assessment findings outlined in the Preschool Development Grant Statewide Needs Assessment Summary are

- The Wisconsin early care and education **WORKFORCE** is lacking professional respect, adequate pay, benefits, and diversity. ECE programs are unable to retain their best workers. Members of the workforce seek opportunities to meaningfully connect with one another, receive coaching/mentorship, peer-to-peer support, and to engage in professional learning.
- Wisconsin families struggle to **ACCESS** early care and education, particularly in child care deserts, predominantly located in rural areas. Access to care for infants, toddlers, during non-standard hours, and for children with special needs is a void that impacts families across the state.
- Wisconsin families struggle to **AFFORD** early care and education. This is especially true for single-parent families and families of color. Families who qualify for child care financial subsidies often experience additional barriers to accessing them and are unable to take advantage of supports. The cost of providing quality care far exceeds families' ability to pay.
- **QUALITY** early care and education exists in Wisconsin, but families may not be able to access or afford it. Families and communities also have varying definitions of quality. ECE professionals and stakeholders expressed a need to systemically address equity, inclusion, trauma, mental health, social emotional learning, family engagement and other best practices to support quality ECE programs.

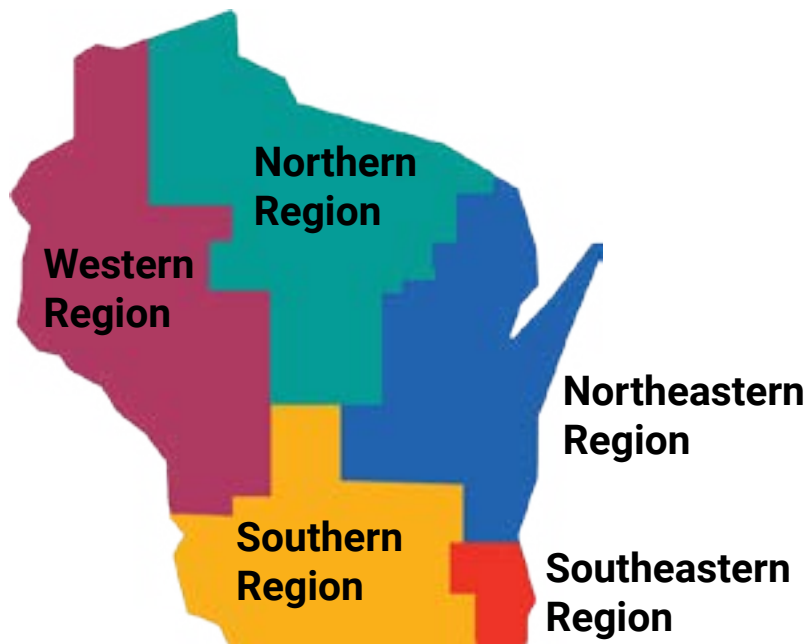
The Strategic Plan addresses these findings in pursuit of our overall vision.

FIGURE A: The Wisconsin Preschool Development Grant Vision



For this vision to become reality, state, regional, local and tribal partners, including community leaders, educators, parents, and families from across Wisconsin must take part in enacting the Strategic Plan. The PDG Statewide Leadership Team is comprised of state employee leaders who work with each of the Wisconsin regions shown in Figure B.

FIGURE B: Map of Wisconsin Regions



The Statewide Leadership Team is poised to facilitate activities with the five Regional Workgroups, who will bring cross-sector ideas and perspectives to the table in forming regional action plans that are aligned to this Strategic Plan. This collaboration is depicted in Figure C.

FIGURE C: PDG Statewide Leadership Team and Regional Workgroup Collaboration



Upon release of the Strategic Plan, Community Innovation Grant funding applications will be accepted from all who wish to complete work to strengthen the B-5 Wisconsin ECE programs. The Regional Workgroups and other local/tribal organizations are invited to bring forth proposals that address equity and inclusion within ECE as well as strong outcomes among children entering kindergarten. Proposals incorporating collaborative efforts across multiple ECE programs, with K-12 local education agencies, and/or with public and private community partners will receive priority consideration. More information on the Community Innovation Grants is available on the [PDG Get Involved web page](#).



Equity and Inclusion for Priority Communities and Populations

The PDG Statewide Strategic Plan places a strong and unwavering emphasis on equity and inclusion as a central requirement for accomplishing its overall vision. All other goals and objectives will be pursued in service of our values of equity and inclusion.

Wisconsin's Commitment to its Values of Equity and Inclusion:

- All Wisconsin children will be safe and loved members of thriving families and communities.
- All Wisconsin early care and education professionals will engage in equitable, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices.
- Wisconsin will actively work to undo systemic discriminatory practices that negatively impact children, families, and early care and education professionals based on their identities (including race, ethnicity, and gender) or abilities.
- Collaboration and advocacy at the state, regional, local, and tribal levels will help to overcome all barriers to equity and inclusion.

To live out these values and act on this commitment, PDG and its partners are focused on reducing racial and ethnic disparities and improving outcomes of DCF, DPI, and DHS' programs and services for several priority communities and populations. Further, the Strategic Plan aims to address the needs of all vulnerable and underserved children.

It is important to keep in mind that different population groups have different needs and priorities. All stakeholder groups across Wisconsin at the state, regional, local, and tribal levels are invited to align their work with this Strategic Plan by choosing to focus on the particular goals or objectives that their members identify as the most relevant and/or pressing for them. Together, through all of our contributions, we will make meaningful progress toward achieving our vision for Wisconsin's children and families.

For purposes of PDG, vulnerable and underserved children include:

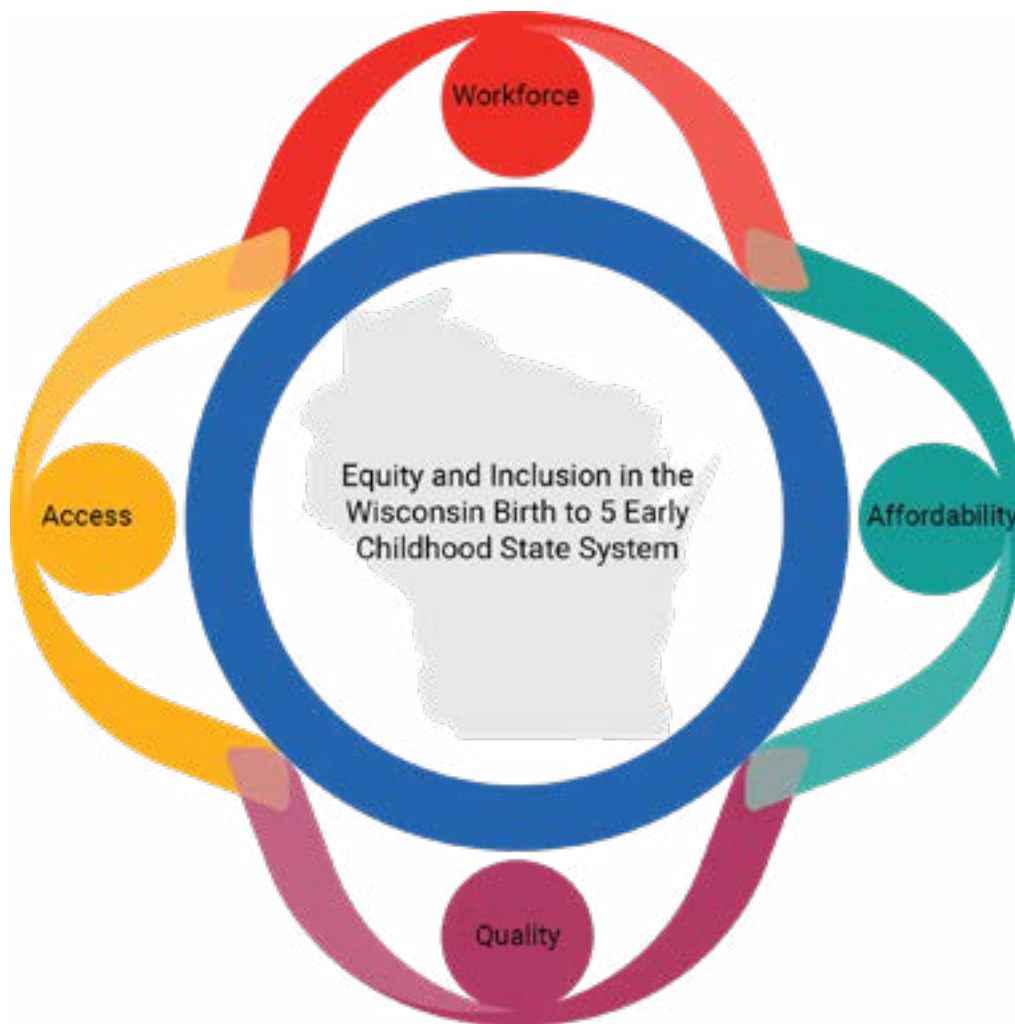
- Children experiencing poverty
- Children of color, including children from the 11 federally recognized sovereign tribal nations within Wisconsin's borders
- Multilingual children
- Children with disabilities or experiencing developmental delays
- Children in foster care (including kinship care)
- Children receiving in-home safety services and supports
- Children experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity
- Children whose parents are accessing workforce programs
- Children experiencing food insecurity
- Children from migrant, immigrant, and refugee families
- Children from military families
- Children with an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parent
- Children who have experienced abuse or neglect



The Preschool Development Grant Framework

The Preschool Development Grant uses the areas of workforce, access, affordability, and quality as a framework for evaluating and transforming ECE in Wisconsin. Efforts in each of these areas must always be focused on Wisconsin's commitment to achieving equity and inclusion in the B-5 ECSS. While examining and working toward progress in each framework area, Wisconsin stakeholders will engage in collaboration, seek innovation based on excellent research, and ensure sustainability of their efforts over the long term. **In 2020, workforce has been identified as the first goal and top priority, as the success of all other framework areas depends on Wisconsin's ability to support and maintain its ECE workforce.**

FIGURE D: The Wisconsin Preschool Development Grant Framework



Definitions of the major concepts in the PDG Framework are listed in Table 2.



TABLE 2: Wisconsin PDG Framework Definitions

Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of unfair, unjust differences among groups of people in a system, particularly among vulnerable populations. Equity in ECE means that children, families, and the ECE workforce experience culturally and linguistically responsive interactions that nurture their full range of social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and linguistic abilities; that reflect and model fundamental principles of fairness and justice; and reduce inequity. (Adapted from NAEYC, WHO)
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the right of all people to involvement in a B-5 ECSS System that empowers all participants—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, or family circumstance—to achieve equitable outcomes across ECE. (Adapted from NAEYC)
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people working within the ECE system and its programs.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability for all children and families to identify, engage with, and participate without barriers in quality ECE programs that meet their needs.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which price is or is not a barrier to accessing and participating in the ECE programs and services that a family needs. ECE programs are affordable when their price does not jeopardize a participating family’s quality or standard of living. • The extent to which the WI B-5 ECSS and its programs and services have adequate funding sources to equitably serve the children, families, and communities that need them and support the workforce’s quality or standard of living.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability of ECE programs to meet the following attributes of quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research/evidence-based • Meet industry standards • Meet individual program requirements • Data-driven • Responsive to children, families, community, and workforce needs • Able to provide measurable and observable indicators of their success, including outcomes among children entering kindergarten
Wisconsin Birth to 5 Early Childhood State System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy and infrastructure components that support and influence the well-being of children and families across core ECE programs, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care • Early Head Start and Head Start • Part C of IDEA (Birth to 3 Program) • Local education agency-sponsored early childhood programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part B, Section 619 of IDEA (Early Childhood Special Education) • 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) and 4-Year-Old Kindergarten Community Approach (4KCA) • Title I Preschools • In addition, it encompasses a wide range of ECE programs and services that strengthen, engage, and stabilize families and their infants and young children, including supports that target health and wellness.

The Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan is organized into three main sections for each strategic goal, as described in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3: Organization of the B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan

Section	Description
Goal	These four statements are directly aligned to the framework components described in the previous section (Workforce, Access, Affordability, Quality) and are also intended to demonstrate the overarching commitment to the values of Equity and Inclusion.
Objectives	These commitment statements offer further information on specific outcomes we will pursue to meet each goal. They will be routinely measured to determine the impact of our efforts.
Strategies*	These tactics and best practices will be pursued by DCF, DPI, DHS, and a range of collaborating partners to take concrete <i>action</i> steps toward accomplishing each goal and objective. The strategy statements detail what they will do to implement the Strategic Plan. There may be many strategies tied to each objective.

***Global Strategies:** Prior to the four main goal sections, there is one unique section entitled “Global Strategies.” These strategies are not tied to a single goal and are prominently featured because they have the potential to promote significant progress across multiple strategic goal areas and in relation to many different objectives. These strategies will be pursued with the intent of transforming the Early Childhood State System in enduring ways by establishing relationships, processes, procedures, policy, and infrastructure. Throughout Strategic Plan implementation, the entities and people engaged in realizing these global strategies will ensure that the other strategies within each goal area stay connected, not isolated or in competition with one other.

Goal, Objective, and Strategy Reference Codes: The sections of the Strategic Plan are labeled with a nomenclature system to allow individuals and organizations to reference sections of the Strategic Plan in their work. Objectives within each goal area are coded with the Goal area number followed by a letter (A, B, C, etc.). Goal area strategies are labeled with the Goal area abbreviation (WF for Workforce, AC for ACCESS, AF for Affordability, QU for Quality), followed by a number (1, 2, 3, etc.). Global strategies begin with the letters “GS” followed by a number.

The purpose of Wisconsin’s PDG Program Performance Evaluation (PPE) is to build a rigorous evaluation infrastructure that will inform continuous quality improvement (CQI) for WI’s ECE programs to measure the success of implementation of the Strategic Plan, and to extend beyond the duration of this Strategic Plan. The PPE relies on existing DCF cross-agency expertise capacity to monitor progress and impact. PDG will also obtain an external evaluation of certain activities within the Strategic Plan. The PPE will leverage and add capacity to deepen and broaden the efforts in systematic, meaningful data collection; regular examination of key progress indicators; and timely policy and practice modifications informed by empirical evidence.

The PPE will measure the success of the Strategic Plan goals and objectives while creating data-informed measures for short, medium, and long-term progress toward improved recruitment, retention, and support of a high-quality, effective ECE workforce; improved access, quality, and affordability for the state’s children and families; and improved outcomes among children entering kindergarten. Evaluation activities will be grounded in a broad and culturally informed framework, and informed by diverse perspectives and methodological lenses, to build evidence needed to understand the impact of strategies in diverse communities, and across populations aligning with the Strategic Plan. As data reveals the Strategic Plan’s progress toward identified targets and any areas for concern, PDG will adjust plans as needed to accomplish the vision. Table 4 summarizes the key objectives of the PPE related to evaluation of the Strategic Plan’s implementation.

TABLE 4: Wisconsin Preschool Development Grant Performance Plan Evaluation Objectives Related to Implementation of the Statewide Strategic Plan

Analyze existing ECE data infrastructure, identify gaps and make recommendations that enhance alignment between ECE data systems, and support improved decision-making
Build data, staff, and methodological infrastructure to measure intended Strategic Plan outcomes and build evidence-informed policymaking and practice into the state ECE system
Use results from the Needs Assessment and the Strategic Plan to develop and refine the research/evaluation agenda going forward
Complete a process and implementation analysis of grant activities, goals, and objectives
Increase state ECE Continuous Quality Improvement capacity

An alignment of the Strategic Plan’s goals, objectives, and strategies to support Performance Plan Evaluation is shown in Appendix C.

Global Strategies Addressing Multiple Goals (1-4)

The following tactics and best practices will help us to pursue several of the goals and objectives on pp. 15-21.

GS1. All state agencies will collaborate on the [Governor's Leadership Council on Early Years \(LCEY\)](#) to identify areas for collaboration, resource allocation, and advocacy within their work.

GS2. Wisconsin's core ECE program administrators, content experts, and policy advisors that reside across different divisions within DCF, DPI, and DHS will collaborate on the Interagency Cooperative on the Early Years (ICEY) to improve coordination, efficiency, effectiveness, and, ultimately, delivery of services to children B-5 and their families.

GS3. Under the direction of LCEY and the [Early Childhood Advisory Council \(ECAC\)](#) and as a collaborative effort between PDG and the Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITPP), form a statewide ECE Equity Advisory Council to develop a shared framework and process to be used to ensure a dedicated focus on equity during policy development, review, and revision.

GS4. Continue communications campaigns to promote innovation, strategic partnerships, public awareness of children and families' needs for quality ECE, and community-based opportunities to contribute to the work of ECE.

GS5. Develop and promote innovative, collaborative ECE business models (see examples in Appendix D).

GS6. Engage business leader ambassadors in promoting retention and expansion of ECE programs in their region, utilizing business models such as the examples described in Appendix D.

GS7. Expand availability and promote participation in shared services networks.

GS8. Continue to promote family engagement practices, starting with parent/caregiver involvement in the creation of a shared vision, updating of connected resources, policies and requirements, and measures to ensure equitable access by all providers and families.

GS9. Increase the availability of translated materials into all relevant languages to support equitable access to information among children, parents, families, and the workforce.

GS10. Collaborate with K-12 local, tribal, and regional education systems to ensure young children are well-prepared for K-12 education and all programs adhere to best practices.

GS11. Continually conduct targeted needs assessments, program performance evaluation, and outreach to gauge demand for new/enhanced services and measure the success of ongoing activities.

GS12. Collaboratively engage in data-informed strategic planning and decision-making related to ECE programs.

Goal 1: The Wisconsin early care and education WORKFORCE will be diverse, fairly compensated, and supported.

Objectives Related to WORKFORCE

We will...

- 1A.** Increase the size of the ECE workforce and its diversity (i.e., its inclusion of members from underrepresented populations by race, ethnicity, language, and gender).
- 1B.** Increase job satisfaction and retention among members of the ECE workforce.
- 1C.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to address workforce issues.

Strategies Related to WORKFORCE

The following tactics and best practices will help us to pursue the objectives above.

We will...

- WF1.** Develop a robust compensation strategy for the early childhood workforce that results in higher pay and increased benefits.
- WF2.** Reduce or waive fees for necessary steps to enter into the ECE profession (e.g., health and background checks) for eligible candidates who serve in priority communities and/or are bilingual/people of color.
- WF3.** Explore development of group benefits packages for ECE programs.
- WF4.** Develop loan forgiveness programs for teachers who have completed educational degree programs and spend at least three years working in regulated programs; develop differential (shorter) loan forgiveness timelines for teachers working in priority communities or with priority populations.
- WF5.** Support high school, college, and career guidance programs with information and materials to promote ECE career opportunities.
- WF6.** Enhance early credentialing activities for high school and college students interested in entering ECE careers.
- WF7.** Enhance networking systems to connect ECE professionals to their peers who have similar questions or interests.
- WF8.** Increase the range and accessibility of ECE professional learning offerings, including coursework, workshops, modules and other non-credit offerings, coaching and mentoring (see Goal 4 Strategies Related to QUALITY for more detail on planned professional learning activities).
- WF9.** Facilitate collaboration among the workforce of local ECE and K-12 local education agencies (LEAs) to learn from each other, evaluate each other's assets and offerings (e.g., professional learning, facilities, funding, wages, and benefits), and determine how they can collaboratively address workforce issues.

- WF10.** Bring affordable broadband and technology to ECE programs that lack adequate access for their work.
- WF11.** Improve the comfort, safety, and design of work environments for ECE professionals.
- WF12.** Tailor and enhance support systems for Family/Friend/Neighbor care providers transitioning into the regulated system, ensuring their eligibility for and access to workforce supports and development.
- WF13.** Offer signing bonuses to hire new ECE professionals, with added provisions for males, people of color, and those working in priority communities.
- WF14.** Implement higher and more frequent wage supplements through REWARD with an added provision for bilingual educators and educators of color.
- WF15.** Increase T.E.A.C.H. funding with an added provision for bilingual educators and educators of color.
- WF16.** Make Registry membership and renewal free and required for all regulated programs and Head Start/Early Head Start allowing for better data collection on recruitment and retention.
- WF17.** Continue to invest in communications campaigns to honor the ECE workforce and educate the public about the significance of the work.
- WF18.** Engage in continuous improvement work related to state government policies, systems, resources, and communications based on authentic engagement with members of the ECE workforce.
- WF19.** Ensure that ECE professionals who work in family support or other related services (beyond child care) are informed about and included in communication, collaborative development, and implementation of the workforce strategies above to the greatest extent feasible.

Goal 2: Wisconsin children and families, including rural and vulnerable populations, will have equitable ACCESS to early care and education programs that meet their needs.

Objectives Related to ACCESS

We will...

- 2A.** Build awareness of the amount and type of B-5 local ECE that is available and/or needed in each region (i.e., for certain age groups, populations, and/or non-standard hours of service).
- 2B.** Increase the number of children and families served by B-5 ECE programs by opening new programs, expanding existing programs, and preventing closure of current programs; prioritize programs meeting targeted needs, particularly in rural areas.
- 2C.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to address needs for expansion of ECE programs.

2D. Enhance a statewide system of information and referral for families and family-supporting programs that includes connections to services and programs that support optimal health, development, and care.

Strategies Related to ACCESS

The following tactics and best practices will help us to pursue the objectives above.

We will...

- AC1.** Enhance awareness, functionality, and user-friendliness of DCF's child care finder website; add translations, culturally and linguistically relevant information, and more timely results.
- AC2.** Enhance collaborative regional, local, and tribal workgroup activities to share current data, continuously evaluate needs for expansion of ECE offerings, and strategize around solutions.
- AC3.** Develop and implement sustainable models to increase availability of child care in deserts, for infants and toddlers, and during non-standard (evening, overnight, and weekend) hours.
- AC4.** Facilitate collaboration among ECE, K-12 local education agency, and community partners (i.e., Head Start, Early Head Start, school-based and community approach 4K) to maintain and/or increase child care slots (where needed).
- AC5.** Collaborate across public and private entities, including B-5 ECSS agencies, LEAs, businesses, and community organizations to develop and implement innovative business plans for expanding ECE programs through a mixed delivery system.
- AC6.** Enhance access to programming for infant/early childhood mental health consultation (e.g., Wisconsin Pyramid Model) available to professionals across all infant/young child and family serving disciplines including child care, home visiting, child welfare, Early Head Start, Birth to 3 early intervention, and pediatricians.
- AC7.** Expand healthy eating and access to nutrition supports for low-income Wisconsin families and ECE programs through Farm to ECE, SNAP-Ed, and other programs that help families make healthy choices.
- AC8.** Expand Family Resource Centers' services to parents, families, and ECE professionals across regions, communities, and tribes.
- AC9.** Increase participation in a statewide texting program for parents to help them learn how to access Wisconsin ECE programs, services, and resources.
- AC10.** Evaluate parent/guardian satisfaction with processes of learning about, accessing, and navigating programs and services in the B-5 ECSS and devise a plan to address any identified barriers/needs.

Goal 3: Early care and education will be AFFORDABLE for Wisconsin families, including vulnerable and underserved populations.

Objectives Related to AFFORDABILITY

We will...

- 3A.** Reduce the percentage of families' income spent on ECE.
- 3B.** Decrease the cost of operating ECE programs without reducing quality through innovative cost-sharing models and economies of scale.
- 3C.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to increase the affordability of ECE programs.

Strategies Related to AFFORDABILITY

The following tactics and best practices will help us to pursue the objectives above.

We will...

- AF1.** Develop and implement sustainable models to decrease price of child care, particularly for infants and toddlers, while ensuring programs maintain adequate funding.
- AF2.** Facilitate collaboration among members of local ECE and K-12 local education agency (LEA) workforces and other community partners (e.g., Head Start, Early Head Start, school-based and community approach 4K) to offer additional low- or no-cost options to qualifying families.
- AF3.** Expand shared services networks across the state and/or explore other systems or collaborations to reduce program operation costs.
- AF4.** Enhance focused, culturally competent communication and guidance to build awareness among families about the existence of child care subsidies; particularly among populations that currently underutilize Wisconsin Shares.
- AF5.** Review and consider revisions to the Wisconsin Shares application, participation criteria, and processes with a focus on ensuring equitable opportunity to participate in the program.
- AF6.** Explore increasing Wisconsin Shares payment amounts to reduce the gap between subsidy payments and the price of care.
- AF7.** Simplify the subsidy application process across various family support programs like FoodShare and BadgerCare; allowing for automatic subsidy eligibility for families receiving SNAP without additional verification; and implementing automatic eligibility determination at income maintenance offices. Also, provide guaranteed, short-term subsidy (presumptive eligibility) for when parents are waiting approval for Wisconsin Shares eligibility.

AF8. Develop and implement a Wisconsin Shares financing model that utilizes contracts for high-quality care instead of reimbursements with a focus on priority populations and communities. Require programs receiving contracts to use an approved salary scale for teachers. Provide a differential reimbursement rate for priority populations and communities, including infants and toddlers.

AF9. Offer a monitoring period after a family no longer qualifies for Wisconsin Shares to ensure they successfully transition off of subsidies (sustain access to quality care and access resources as needed).

AF10. Explore two-generation approaches and partnerships to interrupt poverty and increase resources for families (e.g., job training, education, financial counseling, housing programs) and thus, the affordability of ECE programs.

AF11. Explore creative policies to address community challenges (e.g., lack of transportation, vacant facilities) to increase resources for families and decrease operating costs for programs.

Goal 4: Wisconsin early care and education will be high-QUALITY and responsive to all families' needs.

Objectives Related to QUALITY

We will...

4A. Increase participation among current and future ECE professionals in a range of enhanced professional learning opportunities.

4B. Increase child care programs' participation in the YoungStar quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).

4C. Increase movement of YoungStar-participating programs from 2 Star ratings to 3 Stars or higher in the QRIS.

4D. Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS to facilitate parent, family, provider, and community engagement in quality improvement efforts.

4E. Expand research-based programs that ensure parents/guardians have the supports they need to promote optimal health and development for their children.

4F. Reduce preschool suspension and expulsion rates, particularly among Black boys.

Strategies Related to QUALITY

The following tactics and best practices will help us to pursue the objectives above.

We will...

- QU1.** Expand professional learning on standards-based ECE, including expectations for multilingual learners, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Head Start Program Performance, and other relevant sets of standards.
- QU2.** Collaborate with institutions of higher education to review and consider enhancing the curriculum for pre-service ECE professionals in degree programs while increasing equitable access to degree programs.
- QU3.** Increase the capacity of all programming to support children with special needs and train staff on the referral process to available programs and services, including Part C and Part B of IDEA.
- QU4.** Increase professional learning, capacity, and awareness of programming to support trauma-informed care and social and emotional learning.
- QU5.** Expand systems that give people who touch the lives of infants and very young children support through high-quality infant and early childhood mental health consultation to promote healthy social and emotional development.
- QU6.** Enhance trainings and a consultation system for early childhood teachers around health care topics.
- QU7.** Offer anti-bias professional learning around equity and inclusion to all ECE professionals statewide.
- QU8.** Expand multicultural/multilingual practices to honor and support the traditions of families and communities in ECE.
- QU9.** Create or expand Spanish, Hmong, and other language acquisition/bilingual activities in ECE programs.
- QU10.** Increase community engagement in ECE by individuals and organizations (e.g., farmers, conservationists, linguists, artists, musicians, chefs, story-tellers) who possess valuable skills to enrich ECE.
- QU11.** Develop pathways to bring friend/family/neighbor unregulated child care programs into the regulated system, supporting their transition and advancement within the YoungStar QRIS.
- QU12.** Facilitate parent/caregiver, provider, and ECE family services/support program staff participation in a formal review of YoungStar quality definitions, rubrics, and program features listed in the Provider Portal through the lens of equity and inclusion with an intent to maintain rigorous expectations while acknowledging alternative definitions of quality.
- QU13.** Explore enhancement of peer-to-peer mentorship to support providers wanting to advance their Star ratings; explore financial reimbursement for mentors' involvement.

QU14. Create a promotional campaign to ensure that information about quality and YoungStar is clearly and effectively communicated in multiple languages to parents and families.

QU15. Explore alternative methods to formally and objectively measure and recognize additional competencies within the YoungStar QRIS to honor the experience and desired characteristics of thriving programs that have not attained high quality ratings.

QU16. Explore adding linguistic and cultural responsiveness acknowledgements or badges to accompany YoungStar quality ratings.

QU17. Engage with YoungStar participating providers to identify how to incentivize and facilitate their star rating advancement, then implement findings. Incentivize longevity of participation and maintenance of high ratings.

QU18. Support tribal language revitalization efforts.

QU19. Increase participation in a statewide texting program for parents/caregivers to help them enhance their child(ren)'s development.



4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K/4K Community Approach): In Wisconsin, 4-year-old Kindergarten (4K) is offered two different ways—at the local school or through a community approach partnership (4KCA). The 4K Community Approach provides 4K services through local child care, Head Start, preschool or other community programs. When a district offers 4K or 4KCA, it must be open for all age-eligible children in the district. Wisconsin is one of the few states in the U.S. that maintains state funding for 4K/4KCA. School districts offering 4K services receive state funding for half-day programming (or its equivalent). Some districts choose to offer parent outreach and receive additional funding for these efforts. dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/4k

access: the ability for all children and families to identify, engage with, and participate without barriers in quality ECE programs that meet their needs.

affordability: the extent to which price is or is not a barrier to accessing and participating in the ECE programs and services that a family needs. ECE programs are affordable when their price does not jeopardize a participating family's quality or standard of living. Also, the extent to which the WI B-5 ECSS and its programs and services have adequate funding sources to equitably serve the children, families, and communities that need them and support the workforce's quality or standard of living.

Birth to 5 (B-5) Early Childhood State System (ECSS): See Appendix B.

blended/braided funding models: Blended funding combines multiple funding streams for one purpose without continuing to differentiate or track individual sources. Braided funding pools multiple funding streams toward one purpose while separately tracking and reporting on each source of funding. www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NPT-Blended-Funding-Toolkit.pdf or www.agacgfm.org/AGA/Intergovernmental/documents/BlendedandBraidedFunding.pdf

child care desert: a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers (Malik et al., 2016). "Child care deserts" is a term used to determine the level of access to child care in a specific ZIP code. ZIP codes are arbitrary boundaries that families can move between to access child care. Child care providers on the border of a ZIP code may serve as adequate access for families in both ZIP codes. Families also have access to Early Head Start, Head Start, Public School, private child care, 4K programming, in addition to other child care options that may not be reflected in the child care desert formula. Child care desert status should not be used as the sole factor in determining if family child care needs are being met. Child care desert status, in combination with a variety of other factors, including actual provider location, poverty level, YoungStar rating, location of major employers, etc. should be considered when determining if an area needs additional child care spaces.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): a deliberate, defined process that is focused on achieving measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality for state and local programs.

culturally- and linguistically-responsive teaching/learning/care or culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS): a culturally responsive system values diversity, understands differences and develops services and supports to meet the unique needs of people, families, and communities. Culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of teaching, including classroom decorations, books and stories, holidays, food, language, etc. Culturally/linguistically responsive teaching strengthens a child's sense of identity, promotes equity and inclusivity, supports critical thinking, and recognizes and values a child's or family's experiences and knowledge. thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov dpi.wi.gov/families-students/programs-initiatives/responsive

culture: can be described as a blend of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, language, experiences and behavior patterns that are shared by a group of people. Groups of people may share common characteristics such as race, ethnicity, geography, family structure, history, nationality, class, religion, politics, sex, age, etc. Each person's identity is made up of multiple characteristics and they may ascribe to more than one culture. Language can be viewed as a fundamental part of a person's culture, heritage, community, family, or identity.

Department of Children and Families (DCF): DCF's vision is that all Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities. DCF is responsible for administration of programs including Wisconsin Works (W2), Child Support, Refugee Services, Child Care Licensing and Certification, Milwaukee County Child Care Administration, the YoungStar Program, Wisconsin Shares, Family Foundations Home Visiting, Child Protective Services, Child Welfare and more. DCF houses many of the core ECE programs. dcf.wisconsin.gov/about-us

Department of Health Services (DHS): DHS's vision is protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people of Wisconsin, making sure everyone can live their best life. Many programs administered by DHS support families and children, including: Newborn Screening programs, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs, Birth to 3 Program (Part C of IDEA), Family Foundations Home Visiting (in partnership with DCF), Maternal Child Health, Immunizations, Oral Health (dental sealants), Lead remediation, Medicaid (BadgerCare, Children's Long Term Support Waiver, Katie Beckett), FoodShare, WIC and more. Most DHS programs fit in the category of ECE Mixed Delivery System. www.dhs.wisconsin.gov

Department of Public Instruction (DPI): The Department of Public Instruction is the state agency that advances public education and libraries in Wisconsin. It is headed by the state superintendent of public instruction, a nonpartisan, constitutional officer elected every four years. Programs housed within DPI include Part B of IDEA (Early Childhood Special Education), 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) and 4-Year-Old Kindergarten Community Approach (4KCA), community-school programs. dpi.wi.gov

desert: See child care desert.

disparity/inequity: Many dimensions of disparity exist in the United States and in Wisconsin. Disparity is generally defined as an outcome or status that is seen to a greater or lesser extent between populations—a difference. Inequity is an avoidable, remediable difference in outcomes. Disparities and inequity may occur across race, ethnicity, sex, LGBTQ, family structure, age, disability, socioeconomic status, geographic location, etc. Disparity is a difference in health/economic/well-being status between population groups while inequity is the variation in status/outcomes due to differences in social/economic/environmental factors, and/or resource allocation.

diversity: In general, diversity refers to the vast range of differences and variety present in everything. Diversity incorporates all of the elements that make individuals, communities, countries, ecosystems, etc. unique from one another. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity and gender—the groups that most often come to mind—but also age, origin, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, ideas, perspectives, experiences, etc. The word "diversity" has its critics who caution that diversity is frequently talked about in terms of "non-dominant" groups. www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#diversity

early care and education (ECE) programs: Child Care, Early Head Start, Head Start, Part C of IDEA (Birth to 3 Program), and the following local education agency-sponsored programs:

- Part B, Section 619 of IDEA (Early Childhood Special Education)
- 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) and 4-Year-Old Kindergarten Community Approach (4KCA)
- Title I Preschools

See Appendix B for relationship to the Birth to 5 Early Childhood State System.

early care and education: all ECE programs.

Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC): The Governor’s ECAC was formed as a result of the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 with the mission to help ensure that all children and families in Wisconsin have access to quality early childhood programs and services. The ECAC is co-chaired by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and the Department of Public Instruction State Superintendent. Other ECAC members include:

- Individuals with early childhood expertise who represent ECE, health care, child welfare, and mental health programs.
- Members of state agencies, advocacy organizations, and foundations.
- Others involved in the provision of services to children and families.

dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac

Early Childhood State System (ECSS): See Appendix B

equity: The absence of unfair, unjust differences among groups of people in a system, particularly among vulnerable populations. Equity in ECE means that children, families, and the ECE workforce experience culturally and linguistically responsive interactions that nurture their full range of social, emotional, cognitive, physical and linguistic abilities; that reflect and model fundamental principles of fairness and justice; and reduce inequity. (*Adapted from NAEYC, WHO.*)

Family Resource Centers (FRC) Network: FRCs offer a two-generation strategy to connect families to a variety of family-supporting programs including housing, food, training/employment programs, income support, health and mental health supports, and child care. FRCs provide services and supports that emphasize and build on family strengths and offer a wide range of services to meet the individual needs of each family and community. Depending upon their location in Wisconsin, FRC services are inclusive and responsive to communities with a significant Tribal presence or whose primary language is not English. WI’s Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) provides state-level infrastructure and oversight for FRCs. Family or community navigators are housed in FRCs and provide direct assistance to families to help problem solve, navigate, and access services tailored to meet family needs. Family navigators are current or former beneficiaries of WI’s ECE and/or other family supporting systems.

Farm to Early Care and Education/Farm to ECE: a natural extension of farm to school that offers increased access to healthy, local foods, gardening opportunities, and food-based activities to enhance the quality of the educational experience in all types of ECE settings (e.g., preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, programs in K-12 school districts). dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition/cacfp/farm-2-ece

family engagement: Family engagement describes the process of actively working to build genuine relationships with families. Family engagement is recognized as a foundation for success across the human services and education fields. In Early Childhood Education, the federal definition is “the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning and wellness, including in planning, development and evaluation. For family engagement to be integrated throughout early childhood systems and programs, providers and schools must engage families as essential equitable partners while providing services that encourage children’s learning and development, nurture positive relationships between

families and staff and support families. Family engagement is the shared responsibility of all those who want children and families to succeed in school and life. A true partnership honors a family's strengths, culture, mutual respect and shared goals for the child. Learn more at www.childwelfare.gov/FEI

Family Foundations Home Visiting (FFHV): Home visiting programs serve pregnant women and families with a child under age 5. Generally, home visitors are nurses or social workers. The family and home visitor build a strong relationship and work together to meet the family's goals related to child and family well-being. Home visiting programs are voluntary and use intensive, nationally proven, evidence-based models and strategies. FFHV is led by DCF in partnership with DHS. The target population for FFHV is pregnant and post-partum women and their families residing in at-risk communities. Home visiting programs prioritize services to families with: low incomes, pregnant women under age 21, history of child abuse or neglect, history of substance abuse, tobacco use in the home, low academic achievement, children with developmental delays or disabilities, and family members that are serving or have served in the armed forces. FFHV and home visiting agency staff are involved in activities related to improving maternal and child health, enhancing early childhood education, reducing child abuse and neglect, promoting social and emotional development of infants and toddlers and creating opportunities for more meaningful parent engagement in program and policy decision-making. dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/homevisiting

Head Start/Early Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start programs are federally funded programs through the Office of Head Start. In Wisconsin, counties and communities receive funding to provide services locally. Head Start programs were developed to promote and reduce disparity in school readiness of infants, toddlers and preschool-aged children from low-income families. Head Start programs serve children 3-5 years old. Early Head Start programs serve children from birth to 3. Early Head Start programs may be center-based or one of the evidence-based home visitation programs. Head Start programs are available at no cost to eligible children. According to the Wisconsin Head Start Association, Wisconsin Head Start has more than 40,000 children from 3-5 years old and living in poverty enrolled in its programs. In Wisconsin, some Head Start programs also offer child care services or wrap-around care along with Head Start programming. whsaonline.org

home visiting: See Family Foundations Home Visiting (FFHV).

inclusion: Ensuring the right of all people to involvement in a B-5 ECSS System that empowers all participants—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, or family circumstance—to achieve equitable outcomes across ECE. (Adapted from NAEYC)

infant mental health (IMH): Zero to 3 defines IMH as “developing capacity from birth to 6 to experience, regulate and express emotions, to form close relationships and to explore the environment and learn all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children.” www.zerotothree.org/resources/110-infant-early-childhood-mental-health

infant/early childhood mental health consultation: An effective prevention/intervention strategy for building parent/caregiver capacity to support young children's social and emotional development and to identify and address mental health issues in the context of relationships across multiple settings and systems of care. wiimh.org

Interagency Cooperative on Early Years (ICEY): a planned working group to be formed in late 2020 consisting of the state's core ECE program administrators, content experts, and policy advisors that reside across different divisions within DCF, DPI, and DHS. This team will connect with the work of LCEY and ECAC to intentionally address the need for greater cohesion and proactively address areas of fragmentation and overlap to improve coordination, efficiency, effectiveness, and, ultimately, delivery of services to children B-5 and their families. ICEY's work will align with Strategic Plan implementation, CQI, as well as data management and use,

resource alignment, and internal accountability for milestones and deliverables. Envisioned outcomes would include:

- Greater policy cohesion across programs
- Alignment of best practices, innovative strategies, PD and training efforts, and funding opportunities
- Enhanced focus on successful transitions and school readiness
- Improved family engagement across systems

Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY): Formed in 2020 as part of PDG to facilitate strategic connections across state government agencies to better serve and improve outcomes for all Wisconsin's children and their families, particularly those who are most vulnerable and underserved. Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, the LCEY consists of leaders of state agencies that are charged to work together to harness collective strengths and resources; make strategic connections; streamline programs and services; and align best practices. The LCEY will develop the vision around, and provide direction for, implementing systems changes at the state level that can have a lasting benefit for children and families, and the state. They will collaborate to improve the well-being, healthy development, and kindergarten readiness outcomes among all children ages birth to 5. They contribute to an equitable B-5 state system that meets the needs of families and prepares Wisconsin children to succeed and thrive. LCEY is an interagency committee comprised of state agency leaders. dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/pdg/lcey

local education agency (LEA): A public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. Often commonly referred to as school districts.

Mixed Delivery System/ECE Mixed Delivery System: See Appendix B

Part C/Part B of IDEA: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that ensures all children, regardless of disability status, are entitled to a free appropriate public education and ensures special education and related services to those children. Children from birth until their third birthday may qualify to receive Part C of IDEA. In Wisconsin, this is the Birth to 3 Program. Children from their third birthday may qualify to receive special education through their local education agency under Part B of IDEA. In Wisconsin, children ages 3 to 5 receive Early Childhood Special Education. In Wisconsin, Part C is housed under DHS and Part B under DPI. dpi.wi.gov/sped/early-childhood www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm

Pyramid Model: The Wisconsin Pyramid Model is a framework for implementing a culturally responsive and equitable multi-levelled system of supports designed to enhance social and emotional competence of young children, promote the development of program policies and practices, and provide ECE providers with practice-based coaching to ensure that evidence-based practices are integrated and used with fidelity. waimh.org/pyramid-model

priority communities/priority populations: In general terms, priority communities or priority populations refers to the importance of certain areas, groups of people or people with a specific characteristic that may be underserved, negatively impacted by social, economic or health disparities, or experiencing some other factor that is negatively impacting health and well-being. For PDG, priority populations include children of color, children experiencing poverty, multilingual children, children with disabilities/developmental delays, children in foster care, children experiencing food insecurity, children from migrant, immigrant and refugee families, children who have experienced abuse or neglect. PDG also recognizes that a lack of access to child care is especially impacting rural areas of Wisconsin and families with infants and toddlers.

professional learning: high-quality professional learning is intended to produce system-wide changes in practices and outcomes. According to research (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Labone, & Long, 2016), professional learning

- Is tied to specific content and standards
- Incorporates active learning
- Is job-embedded
- Is collaborative
- Provides models
- Includes coaching
- Is sustained and continuous
- Is aligned with program goals, standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities

quality: The ability of ECE programs to meet the following attributes of quality:

- Research/evidence-based
- Meeting industry standards
- Meeting individual program requirements
- Data-driven
- Responsive to children, families, community, and workforce needs
- Able to provide measurable and observable indicators of their success, including outcomes among children entering kindergarten

quality rating and improvement system (QRIS): see YoungStar quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).

REWARD Wisconsin: A stipend program offered through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association and funded by the Wisconsin legislature to address the early childhood profession's low wages by providing salary supplements to eligible child care professionals. Child care professionals can receive salary supplements based on their educational attainments and longevity in the field. wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/reward/

shared services network: see Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESN).

slots: spaces for children in child care programs.

SNAP-Ed: an evidence-based program that helps people lead healthier lives. The Wisconsin Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) works with state and local partners to help Wisconsin residents with limited incomes make healthy food choices. SNAP-Ed also shows participants how to be physically active. SNAP-Ed works with people eligible for, or receiving, SNAP benefits, called FoodShare in Wisconsin. www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/nutrition/snap-ed.htm

social and emotional development/social and emotional learning: Social and emotional development means how children understand who they are, what they are feeling, and what to expect when interacting with others. It is the development of being able to form and sustain positive relationships, experience, manage and express emotions, and explore and engage with the environment. Social and emotional development or learning is important and influences a child's self-confidence, empathy, the ability to develop meaningful and lasting friendships and partnerships and a sense of importance and value to those around them. Children's social and emotional development influences all other areas of development. Children's development occurs within the context of their primary relationships and require consistent, responsive care. www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2018/promoting-social-and-emotional-health

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Wisconsin: Offered through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, T.E.A.C.H offers higher education scholarships to professionals working in regulated early childhood and school-age care settings. T.E.A.C.H Scholarships work to make credit-based education more affordable, improve teacher compensation and retain teachers in early childhood settings by making work more rewarding. wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/

trauma-informed care/approach/practices: A model for understanding and compassionately serving people who live with, or are affected by, the consequences of toxic stress or trauma. First, by acknowledging the role that trauma has played in their health, behaviors, and relationships. Secondly, by providing services and support in ways that do not blame or re-traumatize a person in need. Trauma-informed practices are rooted in empathy. Rather than thinking about a person's behavior in terms of "what is wrong with you?" a trauma-informed approach instead asks, "what has happened to this person, what has this person experienced?" children.wi.gov/Pages/Innovate/TIC.aspx www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/resilient/trauma-informed-practices.htm dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/prevention/trauma

two-generation/multi-generation approach (or whole family approach): efforts that focus on creating opportunities for and addressing needs of both children and their parents/families together to help break the cycle of poverty. They seek to help families develop both resilience and upward mobility. They also create linkages among the following key components for families: 1) Postsecondary Education and Employment Pathways; 2) K-12 education; 3) Early Childhood Education and Development; 4) Economic Assets; 5) Health and Well-Being; and 6) Social Capital. ascend.aspeninstitute.org/two-generation/what-is-2gen/ www.acf.hhs.gov/two-generation-approach/acf-two-generation-approaches

The Registry: The Registry's vision is to professionalize the Childhood Care and Education field by defining and promoting excellence. Professionals participating in The Registry System can record educational and professional contributions that surpass basic requirements, document entry level and ongoing training requirements of the licensing administrative code established by DCF, analyze training based on core knowledge areas referred to by the National Association of Young Children. Members receive a Registry Certificate of Achievement and other benefits. www.the-registry.org/Membership/Overview.html

workforce: the people working within the ECE system and its programs.

YoungStar quality rating and improvement system (QRIS): YoungStar is Wisconsin's child care QRIS. YoungStar objectively measures child care quality. They rate thousands of child care providers, awarding up to five stars for the best quality of care. YoungStar drives quality improvement in child care throughout Wisconsin by helping providers who want to improve the quality of their care, creating financial incentives that encourage providers to deliver better services to children and giving parents the meaningful information they need to make informed child care decisions. DCF selected Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) to administer YoungStar services. Families receiving Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy must receive child care from a YoungStar participating child care provider. dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar

Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN): Launched through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, WEESSN serve to stabilize the child care market and elevate the quality of care for children and families. WEESSN brings together family and group child care programs to pool resources and leverage economies of scale. By sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise, child care programs can build capacity in their caregiving, improve outcomes for young children and families and benefit the community. Their shared services include:

- Technological Advancements and Centralized Processing of information such as tuition, enrollment, and screeners
- Tailored Business Supports to increase program revenue
- Joint Purchasing to lower costs on goods and services
- A substitute teacher pool
- Access to professional learning communities and pedagogical supports

wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/weessn/

Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP): The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, in collaboration with governmental, non-profit and other partners, has received a grant from the Pritzker Children's Initiative to advance a "robust policy agenda to expand high-quality, affordable child care and promote optimal child development and well-being for low-income Wisconsin families with infants and toddlers." WITPP's goals are that all low-income families have equitable access to the information and supports they need to promote optimal early childhood development and well-being; all low-income families will have equitable access to a range of affordable, high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive child care options that meet their employment and family needs; the early childhood workforce will have the skills, training and support to deliver high-quality care with commensurate compensation. wisconsinearlychildhood.org/witpp/

Wisconsin Shares: Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program supports families by funding a portion of the cost of child care while caregivers are working or participating in an approved activity. Families must apply for assistance and meet income requirements. Families receiving Wisconsin Shares must enroll their children in a YoungStar participating child care provider. Families are still responsible for paying the difference between the price of child care and their child care subsidy. Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar are programs run by DCF. dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares

FIGURE E: Wisconsin B-5 ECSS



The B-5 ECSS is a multi-layered system that serves children and families. These are the various components of the system:

Birth to 5 (B-5) Early Childhood State System (ECSS): The policy and infrastructure components that support and influence the well-being of children and families across core ECE programs. In addition, it encompasses a wide range of ECE programs including supports that target health and wellness.

Mixed Delivery System of Supports and Services: the wide range of ECE programs and B-5 supports and services that strengthen, engage, and stabilize families and their infants and young children, including supports that target health and wellness and the infrastructure components that support these programs and services.

Early Care and Education Programs: Child Care, Early Head Start, Head Start, Part C of IDEA (Birth to 3 Program), and the following local education agency-sponsored programs

- Part B, Section 619 of IDEA (Early Childhood Special Education)
- 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) and 4-Year-Old Kindergarten Community Approach (4KCA)
- Title I Preschools

Children and Families: engaged participants in programs and services who shape the B-5 ECSS and make valuable contributions toward its continuous improvement.



APPENDIX C: Alignment of Goals, Objectives, and Strategies to Support Performance Plan Evaluation

The following mapping of goals, objectives, and strategies will support the process of data analysis to continually evaluate, develop, and refine the PDG research agenda and statewide Strategic Plan going forward.

Goal 1: WORKFORCE

Objective 1A. Increase the size of the ECE workforce and its diversity by increasing the number of members from underrepresented populations (i.e., by race, ethnicity, language, and gender).

Related WORKFORCE Strategies

WF1, WF2, WF3, WF4, WF5, WF6, WF7, WF8, WF11, WF12, WF13, WF14, WF15, WF16, WF17

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4, GS7, GS9

Objective 1B. Increase job satisfaction and retention among members of the ECE workforce.

Related WORKFORCE Strategies

WF1, WF3, WF4, WF7, WF8, WF9, WF10, WF11, WF14, WF15, WF16, WF17, WF18

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4, GS7, GS8, GS9

Objective 1C. Increase collaboration, coordination, and cooperation across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to address workforce issues.

Related WORKFORCE Strategies

WF7, WF8, WF9, WF12, WF18, WF19

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4, GS5, GS6, GS7, GS8, GS10, GS11, GS12

Goal 2: ACCESS

Objective 2A. Build awareness of the amount and type of B-5 local ECE that is available and/or needed in each region (i.e., for certain age groups, populations, and/or non-standard hours of service).

Related ACCESS Strategies

AC1, AC2, AC4, AC5, AC8, AC9, AC10

Related Global Strategies

GS4, GS5, GS7

Objective 2B. Increase the number children and families served by B-5 ECE programs by opening new programs, expanding existing programs, and preventing closure of current programs; prioritize programs meeting targeted needs, particularly in rural areas.

Related ACCESS Strategies

AC1, AC2, AC3, AC8, AC9, AC10

Related Global Strategies

GS11, GS12

Objective 2C. Increase collaboration, coordination, and cooperation across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to address needs for expansion of ECE programs

Related ACCESS Strategies

AC2, AC3, AC4, AC6, AC9

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4, GS5, GS6, GS8

Objective 2D. Enhance a statewide system of information and referral for families and family-supporting programs that includes connections to services and programs that support optimal health, development, and care.

Related ACCESS Strategies

AC2, AC4, AC5, AC7

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS5, GS10

Goal 3: AFFORDABILITY

Objective 3A. Reduce the percentage of families' income spent on ECE.

Related AFFORDABILITY Strategies

AF1, AF2, AF4, AF5, AF6, AF7, AF9, AF10, AF11

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3

Objective 3B. Decrease the cost of operating ECE programs without reducing quality through innovative cost-sharing models and economies of scale.

Related AFFORDABILITY Strategies

AF3, AF8, AF11

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS5, GS6, GS7

Objective 3C. Increase collaboration, coordination, and cooperation across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to increase the affordability of ECE programs.

Related AFFORDABILITY Strategies

AF2, AF3, AF7, AF10, AF11

Related Global Strategies

GS1, GS2, GS3, GS4

Objective 4A. Increase participation among current and future ECE professionals in a range of enhanced professional learning opportunities.

Related QUALITY Strategies

QU1, QU2, QU3, QU4, QU5, QU6, QU7, QU11, QU13

Related Global Strategies

GS2, GS3, GS7, GS9, GS10

Objective 4B. Increase child care programs' participation in the YoungStar quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).

Related QUALITY Strategies

QU11, QU12, QU13, QU14, QU15, QU16, QU17

Related Global Strategies

GS2, GS3, GS9

Objective 4C. Increase movement of YoungStar-participating programs from lower to higher star level ratings in the QRIS.

Related QUALITY Strategies

QU11, QU12, QU13, QU14, QU15, QU16, QU17

Related Global Strategies

GS2, GS3, GS7, GS9

Objective 4D. Increase collaboration, coordination, and cooperation across the B-5 ECSS to foster parent, family, provider, and community engagement in quality improvement efforts.

Related QUALITY Strategies

QU2, QU12, QU13, QU17

Related Global Strategies

GS2, GS3, GS4, GS7, GS8, GS9, GS10, GS11, GS12

Objective 4E. Expand existing research-based programs that ensure parents/guardians have the supports they need to promote optimal health, learning, and development for their children.

Related QUALITY Strategies

QU3, QU4, QU5, QU6, QU7, QU8, QU9, QU10, QU18, QU19

Related Global Strategies

GS2, GS3, GS8, GS9

Objective 4F. Reduce preschool suspension and expulsion rates, particularly among Black boys.

Related QUALITY Strategies

QU3, QU4, QU5, QU6, QU7, QU8

Related Global Strategies

GS2, GS3



APPENDIX D: Excerpts of Draft Business Models to Expand Access to Affordable, High-Quality Child Care

There are several ways in which employers can assist their employees with the critical need for safe, affordable, high-quality child care. This appendix lays out three potential models.

Option 1: On-Site Child Care

Model

Under this option, employers provide on-site child care using the model below:

- Employer provides unused space in current building and creates a Community Request for Proposal (“Community RFP”) for interested regulated child care providers to offer care in the space.
- Local providers respond to Community RFP, and employer selects a provider.
- Employer provides start-up funds to identified provider to support starting within an agreed upon time frame. Upon starting, provider begins paying rent to employer.
- Providers work with licensing and YoungStar staff to ensure a safe and high-quality environment and program for children and families.
- Employer subsidizes child care slots for employees to be paid to provider. Employer determines the number of slots it subsidizes and the amounts of the subsidies.

Impact

Employers: This is the most hands-on model for employers to support child care, and it can be especially impactful in communities where other high-quality child care options are not readily available. Providing on-site child care increases employee retention, and it reduces absenteeism to an even greater extent than using off-site child care. In addition, employers generate rental revenue from the child care provider for previously unused space. Finally, there are federal tax benefits associated with this option; a tax credit is available of up to 25% of all facility expenditures, up to \$150,000 annually.

Providers: Child care providers have stability in their business model by being co-located with an employer. In addition, the provider would receive various financial, professional development, and administrative supports. Financial stability and other supports help providers to retain staff and offer an affordable, high-quality environment for children.

Children and Families: Through this option, families have access to convenient, safe, high-quality child care. This is particularly significant in child care deserts, in which employees may not have other viable child care options. In addition, employer subsidies can make this child care option more affordable than what is generally available to families. When families have access to affordable, high-quality child care, parents can stay in the workforce.

For children, on-site high-quality child care has many benefits. For infants, on-site care may increase breastfeeding duration. High-quality ECE also has been proven to improve children’s health and future educational attainment.

Option 2: Employer Purchase of Child Care Slots

Model

Under this option, employers can work with community child care providers to purchase child care slots using

the following model:

- Employer selects one or more regulated child care providers in the community and purchases child care slots. Employer and provider together determine the number of slots and the purchase price.
- Employees would receive preference at selected child care providers. If the employer purchase price does not cover the entire cost of child care, employees would be responsible for paying the remaining tuition.

Impact

Employers: For smaller employers, this model may be a more practical option for assisting employees with child care than contracting with an on-site provider. As with all of these models, assisting employees with child care increases employee retention, reduces absenteeism, and increases employment of women.

Providers: This model gives providers greater predictability and stable income for child care providers. In addition, the provider would receive various financial, professional development, and administrative supports. Financial stability and other supports help providers to retain staff and offer an affordable, high-quality environment for children.

Children and Families: In communities where child care slots are limited, families who receive this employment benefit would have greater access to child care under this model. In addition, the cost of child care is subsidized by employers, making it more affordable. Finally, supports given to providers result in higher-quality child care for children. As with the other models, this option gives parents greater access to affordable, high-quality child care, which allows them to stay in the workforce.

One potential drawback of this model is that it limits parents' choices to the providers selected by the employer. However, parents can elect not to take advantage of employer-supported child care if they determine that it does not meet the needs of their family.

Option 3: Child Care Subsidies

Model

Under this option, employers could offer Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts ("FSAs") to employees and contribute up to \$5,000 annually into the FSAs. Employees could select any eligible child care provider of their choice, pay tuition, and receive reimbursement from FSA funds.

Impact

Employers: This model allows employers to tackle the employee child care issue without entering into a contractual relationship with specific providers. Benefits to employers would remain largely the same – increasing employee retention, reducing absenteeism, and increasing employment of women.

Providers: Although this model provides a benefit to child care providers, the benefit is arguably less than under the previous models. More families would be able to afford the care offered by providers, which will benefit the ECE provider community. However, families can easily switch providers under this model, resulting in less stability for child care providers than under Options 1 and 2. In addition, families are permitted to use these subsidies for unregulated child care providers. Finally, because providers are not directly receiving the subsidies, certain providers cannot be identified to receive the supports offered under Options 1 and 2.

Children and Families: This option offers the most flexibility for parents to choose a provider that meets their family's needs. With the subsidy, it also helps to make child care more affordable for families. A drawback of this model is that it may not directly spur the creation of additional child care slots the way that Option 1 would. If a family lives in a community that is a child care desert, subsidies alone may not solve the problem of limited access to child care.