

Implementation & Budget Details

2022 ECAC Recommendation to Governor Evers

Recommendation Name:

Investing in Early Care and Education Workforce through Child Care Counts

Recommendation:

Wisconsin’s early education providers have faced significant obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet continue to provide high-quality care for families, due, in part, to the investment of federal COVID-19 relief funding known as Child Care Counts. This temporary investment has provided financial stability for providers to stay open, recruit, and retain qualified staff. This investment is set to end in January 2024, and a state investment is urgently needed to continue the positive benefits that have helped over 275,000 children remain in care and 48,000 staff remain employed. We recommend the Governor dedicate \$300 million in the biennial state budget to support recruitment and retention of early childhood educators to maintain and expand access to high-quality early education programs and avoid a “fiscal cliff” that would have devastating effects and likely lead to educator shortages, fewer available classrooms, closed child care centers, and more families without access to high-quality care.

Implementation Details:

Regulated early care and education providers would be eligible to apply for monthly funds that would primarily be used to support high-quality care and supplement compensation for their educators, including recruitment and retention efforts.

The \$300 million fund would be administered using the current Child Care Counts system created by the Department of Children and Families to distribute American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal assistance. Wisconsin has been a national leader in getting support directly out to the industry. The infrastructure already exists to administer this funding.

Financial Commitment:

We recommend that the Governor include an additional \$300 million in state General Purpose Revenue (GPR) to support his 2023-2025 State Budget Proposal.

Initiative	Amount
Investing in Early Care and Education Workforce through Child Care Counts	\$300,000,000 biennial total *ARPA funded through January 2024
Total Recommendation for Biennial Budget	\$300,000,000