

Wisconsin's Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5

Doing What's Best for Our Kids

January 2021-June 2022



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families



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Introduction

In 2020, Wisconsin was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 (PDG B–5) Renewal, totaling \$30 million and spanning three years (2021–23). The PDG B–5 Renewal Grant activities are based on the strategic plan developed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and other partners, and includes feedback and guidance from Wisconsin’s early care and education (ECE) stakeholders.

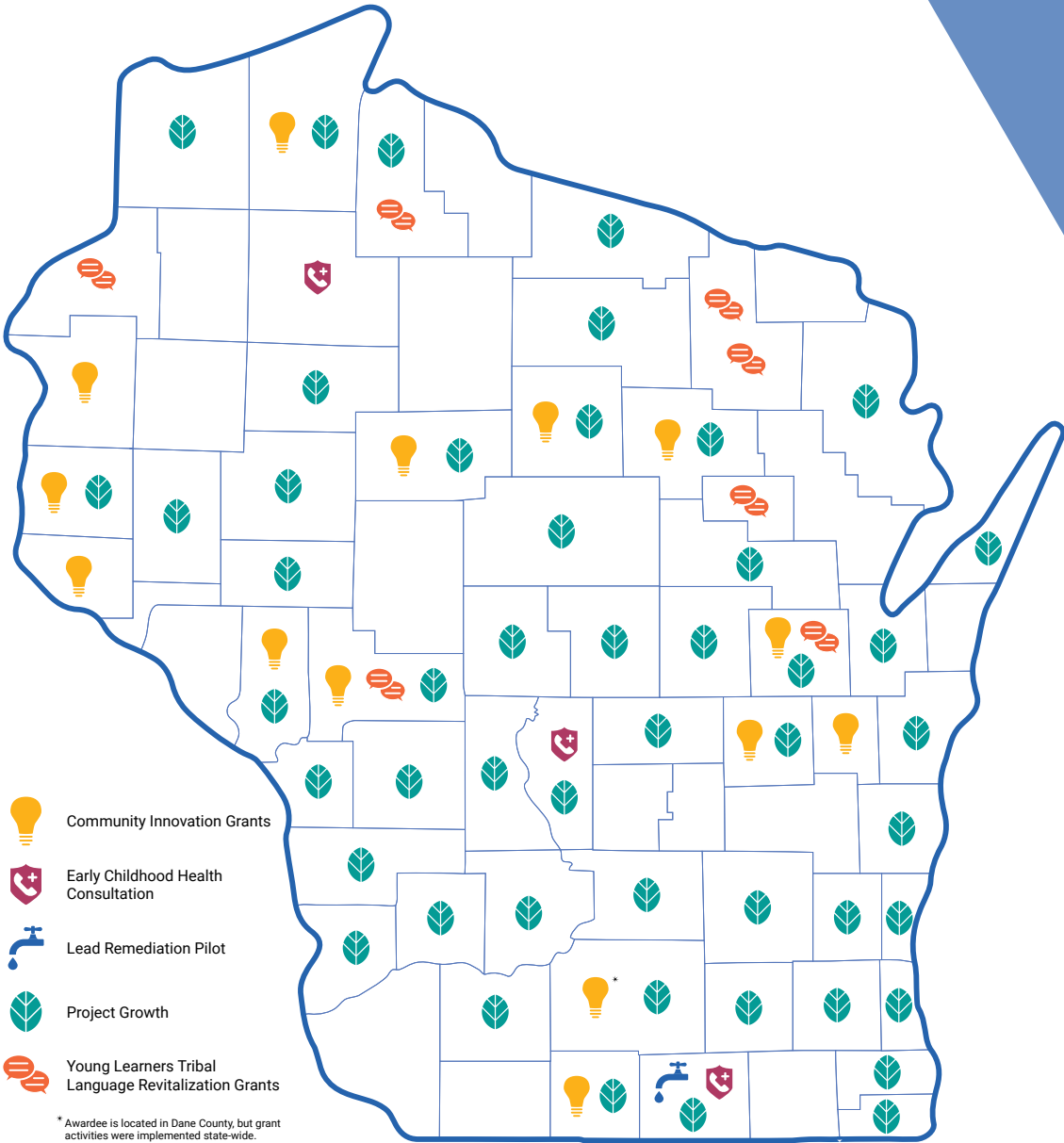
Our Vision

By 2023, all Wisconsin families will have access to high-quality, affordable, local early care and education opportunities. By working together—intentionally aligning and improving how we support and serve our youngest children and families—we will help every child succeed and help Wisconsin thrive.

This report details activities funded in whole or in part by Wisconsin’s Preschool Development Grant between January 2021–June 2022.

PDG: Making a Difference Across Wisconsin

Through the Preschool Development Grant, DCF, in collaboration with various partners, has been able to offer numerous grant programs and other activities that span all regions of Wisconsin. We've used some of our research outlined in this report to discover areas of need and come up with approaches to address those needs. The work has therefore focused on areas in Wisconsin that are identified as a child care desert, counties that need more support in access to health services, or places that need assistance with lead remediation. Read more about each program below.





\$800K
were awarded to
seven organizations



Community Innovation Grants

Grant program to support locally-driven efforts that address the needs of communities and increase the collective impact of early care and education (ECE) for young children ages birth to 5 and their families.

Program launch – November 2020

Grant program wrap up – April 2022



Health Consultation

The new Early Childhood Health Consultation website is part of multi-phase project addressing the quality of and access to ECE programs in WI. Funded by PDG, this program was created by UW-Madison School of Human Ecology (SoHE) and the School of Medicine and Public Health's Department of Pediatrics. Phase 1 involved a comprehensive health policy scan of ECE programs across WI to develop the Child Care Health Consultation Needs Assessment. This next phase of the program provides free health consultations, on-demand training, and tailored resources to ECE providers and is being piloted in Adams County, Rock County, and for the La Courte Oreilles Tribe. Anyone outside of these areas can still access the [Resource Library](#) for free.



Lead Remediation Work

The Department of Health Services (DHS) and DCF, in collaboration with the Rock County Public Health Department, is carrying out pilot lead remediation activities in licensed group child care programs in Rock County. The pilot tested water in the facilities for lead contamination and based on test results, is implementing remediation services. The pilot is funded through the Preschool Development Grant and Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) Grant.

Pilot launch – October 2021



Project Growth

Project Growth provided \$30 million in grant programs designed to build relationships between early childhood, businesses, and communities, and aims to make high-quality, affordable child care more accessible and sustainable across Wisconsin. Project Growth is funded through the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Planning and development – summer and fall 2021

Program launch – February 2022



\$11 million

in PDG funds were used to support the **Dream Up!** and **Partner Up!** grant programs



Young Learners Tribal Language Revitalization Grants (YLTLRG)

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and DCF collaborated to launch the YLTLRG. This grant program is designed to support tribal early childhood education and tribal Head Start programs to support American Indian language revitalization.

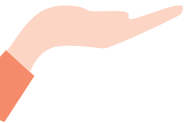
First round program wrap up – December 2021

Second round program launch – February 2022



\$290K

were awarded to support **American Indian language revitalization**





PDG Research Activities

The Preschool Development Grant funded several research initiatives between January 2021 and June 2022. Read about each completed initiative below and browse the [PDG Sandbox](#) to see more data, research, and reports.

Risk and Reach

The interactive [Risk and Reach website](#), developed in partnership with UW-Madison's Applied Population Laboratory (APL) is available as a tool to better understand areas of need around Wisconsin by assessing risk factors that can impact the needs of young children, birth to 5, as well as potential gaps in services delivered by state and federal programs.

Released – March 2022

WI Employer Perceptions Research

In the fall of 2021, DCF surveyed nearly 1,000 Wisconsin employers from every county in the state, across a wide range of industries. The

goal was to better understand their perceptions about early care and education (ECE) for children between birth and age 5, as well as what barriers businesses face in supporting employees' child care needs. Their perspectives informed the strategic planning for Project Growth and can guide further conversations between Wisconsin business owners, child care, and community-based resources they—and their employees—need. DCF published both the [comprehensive findings](#) and a [snapshot](#) of this research.

Findings released – April 2022

Workforce Study

In 2020 and 2021, partners at UW-Madison Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP), Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), and the UW Survey Center conducted a series of surveys with Wisconsin's ECE workforce to gather information about their working conditions, wages, and future plans. This ECE workforce study is an update to the 2015 Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce study. The results of this workforce study help paint a picture both of the challenges the ECE sector continues to face and its resilience in the stress of the global pandemic. An [executive summary](#), an [at-a-glance infographic](#), and reports on the surveys of [program directors](#), [center-based teachers](#), and [family providers](#) were published. Additionally, the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) published a [recommendations brief](#) and Milwaukee Succeeds published a [snapshot of Milwaukee data](#) alongside this research.

Findings released – December 2021





Ongoing and Completed PDG Supported Programs/Resources

PDG funding helped cover or expand many other ongoing activities, all supporting Wisconsin's early childhood programs, young children, and their families. These activities, along with others mentioned throughout this review document, were tracked and submitted to our federal partners through our Performance Progress Evaluation Plan (PPEP).

Business-Child Care Partnership Tool Kit

The Project Growth initiative led to the development of a business-child care partnership tool kit that provides information and best practices on establishing ECE partnerships with businesses. This includes insights into how to coordinate across programs and leverage multiple funding sources. DCF partnered with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) on the creation of the online tool kit, which the business community cited as a need.

Business Child Care Advocates

Business Child Care Advocates (BCCAs), housed at Child Care Resource and Referral agencies statewide, conduct outreach to businesses for Project Growth, mainly about the Partner Up! program; connect businesses and regulated child care providers; and serve as a technical assistance resource for businesses and child care stakeholders. PDG funded 10 BCCAs, with the positions onboarding in the first half of 2022.

Child Care Finder Advancements

The [Child Care Finder](#) website was launched in Spanish.

Literacy Lab Leading Men Fellowship

To strengthen the ECE workforce, PDG partnered with Leading Men's Fellowship to extend educational and workforce supports to young adult males, influencing interest in the education of Wisconsin's youngest learners. Six active fellows in four different schools participated in the program.

Ready4K

Ready4K is a family-engagement text messaging service that provides parents with age-appropriate facts and tips to turn everyday moments into teachable moments. The curriculum is currently available in English, Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Burmese. There is also a language versioning available in Potawatomi. PDG funds makes this resource available for free to all families with children 0–14 in Wisconsin. As of June 30, 2022, 20,127 children benefited from Wisconsin's Ready4K program.

T.E.A.C.H.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood WISCONSIN provides higher education scholarships to professionals who work in regulated early childhood and school-age care settings. PDG funds helped expand the scholarship program to eligible child care providers.

WIDA Early Years

WIDA Early Years focuses on advancing the language development of multilingual children in ECE settings. WIDA Early Years provides online professional learning courses and resources to ECE professionals in Wisconsin. PDG funds provides access to the suite of eLearning modules

20,127

Children currently enrolled in Ready4K

287

individuals have received scholarships

and support for policy work, outreach, and technical assistance in PDG initiatives focused on multilingual children and families.

Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH)

PDG funds also supported the quality of social-emotional supports available in Wisconsin’s Early Learning and Care Programs. Partnerships with WI-AIMH built the infrastructure for increased integration of the state’s infant and early childhood mental health and Pyramid Model work into YoungStar, the state’s QRIS system. WI-AIMH worked to get more providers Pyramid Model certified, and to deliver new social-emotional trainings.

Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB)

CANPB utilized PDG funding to establish a Family Resource Center (FRC) network, which is an improved, coordinated network of services, and increased opportunities for FRCs to communicate across data systems. It better equips FRCs to help families navigate the complex system of resources and services available to address their children’s needs.

Wisconsin Registry

Wisconsin Registry is Wisconsin’s Recognition System for the Early Childhood Care and After-School Education Profession. Wisconsin Registry ensures a consistent standard for: recognizing and celebrating professional achievements; promoting and supporting personal growth; and designing and aligning career pathways. PDG funds provide coupons for free membership to Wisconsin Registry for ECE professionals.

8K–9K
annual renewals before 2021

13.7K
renewed profiles in 2021 with PDG funds



Leadership Bodies

There are multiple leadership bodies that support and guide DCF and PDG activities. Two of them are direct results of PDG investments: the Governor’s Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY) and the Parent/Caregiver Equity Advisory Cabinet (PCEAC). Learn more about the role of each of these bodies below.

Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY)

The [Governor’s LCEY](#), created under PDG, functions as a children’s cabinet of state agency executives. LCEY strengthens strategic connections across state government agencies to better serve and improve outcomes for all of Wisconsin’s children and their families, particularly those who are most vulnerable and underserved. Between January 2021 and June 2022, LCEY met six times.

Parent/Caregiver Equity Advisory Cabinet (PCEAC)

The PCEAC was established to ensure that family perspectives are included in the development process for the state’s early childhood programs, policies, and services. The PCEAC met for the first time in early 2022 and will initially focus on the needs of three communities—Adams County, Beloit, and the Lac Courte Oreilles tribal nation.

