



**Leadership Council on Early Years
Virtual Meeting Minutes**

April 21, 2021
10:00am - 12:00pm

YouTube link for the public: <https://youtu.be/GgyZGzUdKYU>

Members Present: Governor Tony Evers, First Lady Kathy Evers, Emilie Amundson (DCF), Peter Barca (DOR), Kathy Blumenfeld (DFI), Joel Brennan (DOA), Curtis Cunningham (DHS), Linda Hall (OCMH), Missy Hughes (WEDC), Mary Kolar (DVA), Rebecca Murray (CANPB), Amy Pechacek (DWD), Randy Romanski (DATCP), Carolyn Stanford Taylor (DPI), Kathy Still (DVA), Craig Thompson (DOT), Betsy Wood (WEDC)

Others Present: Mari-Kay Nobozny, CEO, NWIDC, Erin Arango-Escalante (DCF), Sheila Briggs (DPI), Kristen Burton (DCF), Andrea Cammilleri (DCF), Jared Hoy (DOC), Tracey Luber (WEDC), Nadya Pérez-Reyes (DCF), Colleen Rinken (DVA), Sarah Smith (OCI), Melissa Roberts (DOC), Stephanie Weix (GO), Danielle Williams (DWD), Mike Woicekowski (WEDC)

10:00 - 10:10am **Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Meeting Minutes**
Emilie Amundson, DCF Secretary

Welcome

Secretary Amundson- Call meeting to order and attendance

Carolyn Stanford Taylor and Sheila Briggs joining us for our LCEY meeting. This is likely their last LCEY meeting. Carolyn and Sheila are former colleagues from the Department of Public Instruction and two women that I am honored to call my friends. I wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge their passion for their work, commitment to improve the lives and education of Wisconsin children with innovation, collaboration, and equity at the center of their work. Carolyn and Sheila, thank you.

Superintendent Stanford Taylor- Thank you so much. The pleasure has been mine. The collaborative spirit in which you work and your passion for the work is co very evident that it makes it easy. I appreciate your leadership, Emilie. Thank you.

Recap and Introduction

Secretary Amundson- This is our fourth meeting today. We are looking at early childhood education but specifically child care through the lens of economic and workforce development for WI. I think that you would have had to be living under a rock to not know that this is absolutely a way we are talking about child care. Across the country we are seeing article after article and national press on this topic but I think that the pandemic highlighted it and brought to a point the essential component of child care at the heart of workforce and economic recovery.

Today, we will talk with Mari Kay-Nabozny, who pre-pandemic was leading the way around innovative partnerships to bring light to those issues of economic development and workforce development and show what it looks like when unlikely partners come to the table. We will also hear from our friend and colleague Missy Hughes as she provides an overview of the Wisconsin Tomorrow 2.0 plan, which again does such a great job of connecting the dots between economic well-being, community infrastructure and child care as one of the critical components of that. We really appreciate her leadership and her voice on that issue. It has been such a strong thing we can point to in Wisconsin of folks coming together and speaking from the same playbook. Then, we plan to protect some time to do a bit of a sandbox exercise with folks in the last half hour or so. You received some think tank scenarios and all three of these scenarios are pitches we have received at the department of children and families. They are real world questions and ideas that people have across the state and these are ideas that I'd love to spend a little bit of time looking at with all of you- brainstorming and thinking about questions and ideas. Again, seeing our landscape with new eyes. What do you know about your agency? They way that your funding works, grant opportunities, or simply just questions and ideas that you must push into these three scenarios. Think about how we would help bring those to light and make that our goal to today.

Approval of meeting minutes

Secretary Amundson- We shared the draft meeting minutes from the February 18, 2021 meeting, which we need to approve today. Perter Barca-motion to approve, Joel Brennan - seconds that motion. All in favor-Motion to approve February 18, 2021 minutes passes.

Secretary Amundson- Now, I'm excited to introduce DCF Division of Early Care and Education Administrator Erin Arango-Escalante to provide a Preschool Development Grant update which is really the impetus for bringing this work together.

Erin Arango-Escalante- I wanted to share briefly with folks the journey we have been on. As you remember, Wisconsin was awarded a \$10 million-dollar preschool development grant for year one in 2020. The purpose of the grant was to focus on the comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan. We developed that strategic plan in collaboration with communities all over with diverse voices, those with lived experiences, those who are in the field and quite frankly those that you all represent as well. Withing the strategic plan, which is bold, visionary, and innovative, we have really set the direction so that when this funding is gone, we will continue to have these collaborative relationships working together. This workgroup truly represents the ability to connect the dots across all our sectors to make sure that we are looking at access, affordability, quality and workforce in order to advance and promote equity and inclusion in our state. These are some of the activities that we have planned for in this next round of funding which was \$30 million that Wisconsin was awarded until 2023.

- Building state and local infrastructure for collaboration, coordination, innovation
- Expanding professional development activities and coaching
- Expanding programs to support families and connect them to resources
- Funding regional initiatives and sustaining ECE
 - Community Innovation Grants
 - Workforce Development Grants

As folks introduced themselves this morning, they talked about some of the things that they are doing and again this is an example of areas where we are really connecting the dots. In fact, we had community innovation grants that we launched this past year as well as workforce

development grants and some other conversations that you are going to hear today are very reflective of the work that we hope to see expand beyond just these initial community innovation grants. I am thrilled and excited to have you hear to hear the stories and ideas that are coming out of our communities and really begin to move the needle across our early care and education birth through five programs at the state, regional and local levels. With that, you will see a quick slide of programs that were awarded these funds and that there are going to be additional funds as we continue with our preschool development grant.

Community Innovation Grants Awarded, 2021

- Childcaring, Inc.
- Children's Service Society Black River Falls
- Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley
- First 5 Fox Valley
- Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan, Inc.
- The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- United Way of Green County
- Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health

Coming later in 2021-22: Workforce Grants

- **Purpose:** To support sustainable, innovative, public-private strategies that focus on enhancing new and existing ECE programs with improved workforce supports, wages and benefits for all ECE professionals within local communities.

Please note it is important that we are connecting our preschool development grant with all of the work that we are doing in our state as it relates to early care and education to make sure that it is aligned and that we are rowing in the same direction. Thanks to folks on this call and with our partners who are at this table.

Secretary Amundson- Thank you, Erin, for giving us a brief overview on PDG updates since our last meeting. I think that it is safe to say that the innovation grants that were just put up on the screen seed the idea that we had when we built the innovation grant idea. I would say the seed of it was planted when I had the pleasure of joining the Governor back in November 2019 to visit Evergrow, which is the program that we are going to be hearing about with Mari today. What I heard when I went up there is a real story about how to build a coalition, to get that coalition up to speed and leverage the assets of the different folks at the table to be able to do something that really, may have been collectively out of anyone's wheelhouse. I think that Mari does such a good job of talking about what they knew and what they did not know when they started having this conversation. When I thought about LCEY, I knew that there was going to be a moment where we learned a little bit more about Evergrow because it is such a wonderful example of what collective impact looks like and what that true eye toward the needs of a community looks like.

Now, I'm excited to introduce Mari Kay-Nabozny. Mari is a workforce development professional who collaborates with non-profit organizations, municipalities, and other entities to grow the regional economy and connect employers to workers and vice-versa.

After spending seven years working as the Chief Information Officer for the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association, Mari knows the hard work and creativity necessary to successfully implement local Workforce Board solutions across Wisconsin.

Mari has served as the CEO of the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board since 2012 and continues to pursue innovation and inspiration in every aspect of the Board's work.

As I mentioned, the Governor and I had the pleasure of visiting EverGrow back in November 2019 prior to their grand opening and look to their model as an example of a community connecting the dots across different sectors to address local child care strategies.

10:15 - 11:00am **Child Care Workforce Development, including Q&A, Discussion**
Mari Kay-Nabozny, CEO, Northwest WI Workforce Investment Board

Mari Kay-Nabozny- I have about 25 minutes to explain 5 years of work. If you will indulge me, I want to provide context of where we were and where we are going in order to answer the most common question on how we funded this or how we brought all the resources to the table. I have been with the workforce investment board in Ashland, and the CEO since 2012. We look at workforce as a whole. We look at that sort of three-legged community stool (workforce, housing and child care). You can't really balance it out without all three legs being available and having equitable access to all. One of the things that we started getting involved with early on was something called Family centered employment (also called 2 gen). We will never have a successful workforce if we don't have a safe place for children to go while families work. What we found is that we had a lot of child care deserts and less than ideal strategies being utilized for child care. How do you work with a family or individual and encourage them to additional training or to upskill but have them have that constant barrier in their mind that they don't know where their child is going to be or if their child is okay during the day? We started having conversations with WED board. 2015 UW extension assisted with the development and implementation of a survey to Ashland employers (keep in mind for us this is employers with 50 more employees). They sent the survey to the 'big' employers who then turn around and asked employees. What are the biggest barriers around child care? We knew we needed quantifiable data to be able to write grants so that it wasn't just a conjecture about daycare it was 'X # of adults said that they have trouble with infant care, X # of adults said this is an issue for them and why they are not able to work or that are missing this many day of work. We were able to get some of that data together. Right around this same time, Northland College did an assets and amenities comparison report for the region and so child care was part of that, too. It was clear that child care was an issue whether at the city, county or regional level. When you look at Bayfield County, who is our neighbor, they had three credentialed child care centers in the entire county at that time. It was clear that something that needed to be done.

The city of Ashland did a forum. I facilitated a group who talked about child care and there were a lot of employers said this was an issue for their employees but didn't want to start a child care but were willing to help fund a solution to the problem. This was a aha! moment that maybe this is an idea that we could pursue. At that same time a grant came across my desk from an unlikely source- the Catholic Campaign for human development did a grant for planning a child care cooperative and I passed it on to the Ashland Area Development Corp. because at that time that was where it lived and where it belonged. That board was doing a little bit more work than we were at the time. They wrote for the grant and got 25k to be a planning grant to do a business plan and feasibility study for a child care center in the City of Ashland. Their staff left right after they got the grant so they called us to see if we could take it on. We were able to come up with a business plan and a feasibility study that worked. We worked with the small business development center to do the pro forma so that we had the financial backing. We were able to figure out the ratio of students to employee needed to be in compliance. The biggest

part for us from the workforce board side was we needed to pay them a wage that was a livable wage in order to retain folks.

Right around 2017, we had the planning grant from the Catholic Campaign and wrote for the full grant but didn't get it. We knew that there was other funding out there and we had to get creative. What made this whole process successful was partnerships but it was also having a champion. The more we were told 'no' or 'you have to wait', we became angry. This worked to our advantage. WE had come this far and we were not going to stop. We started looking at what the demand was across the board. I was impassioned as I didn't have daycare for the first 5 months after maternity leave. I was blessed to have an employer that was very understanding and I could work from home but obviously this isn't the case for everyone. We conducted a survey on waitlists and started collecting names and child care needs based on age. Within a month, we had 73 responses and we knew that we had 80 children that potentially might need child care. We felt confident moving forward and the we would have a demand for services. The private sector was concerned we were going to steal slots. We met with them and addressed that and in the end it was fine but just an initial fear. Our business plan allows for 95 slots. 51% of these slots are reserved for low income. We are one of the only child care providers in the five counties that takes Wisconsin Shares. Many families didn't understand that process or know that this was available, so we have everyone fill out the application in case they may be eligible. As of this week, we have 14 FT employees and 5 PT. We know that about 19% of our county's population has incomes at or below the federal poverty line and that number increases when you go over to Iron and Bayfield counties. Also did a public fundraising campaign and a Go Fund Me. This helped get the community thinking about the program and its potential.

To recap, we had to start with the CCHD planning grant or we wouldn't have had the funds to get started. Then, we added 4 businesses in Ashland each contribute to Evergrow (three \$10,000 contributions and one \$100,000 contribution) to develop the architectural plans and start the corp. Then we got a private loan from the local hospital. Individual and civic contributions from the Rotary club who donated books and the Lions Club who sponsored the toys in the gym. Then we tried to get the community really involved as well. The landlord for the building that we are in held the building for 2 years rent free while we figured this out. Without his assistance and support we wouldn't have been able to make this work. It was the only feasible location to make this work. We had some material donations as well and we were trying to offset the initial costs as much as possible. We were also writing grants- Duluth funded all of our tangibles-furniture and materials in the classroom. Landlord wanted a 20-year lease but we weren't in a position to pay more. So we met with WEDC and US Bank loan for 300k and were funded for construction. Wrote to USDA and WEDC to help cover additional costs for construction. In Nov. 2019, we opened our doors. Covid hit but we were remained open and found ways to keep staff on payroll. Without Cares act funding we wouldn't have been able to make it through.

Today we are enrolled at 98%, demand for school age care (we were able to become a virtual site during COVID and now an Ashland SD 4K site). and summer care, Wisconsin Shares use Increasing, expansion for additional infant care. It took a lot to make this happen and funding from supporters. We get lots of calls from communities and employers asking about how we did this, so we have taken on a bit of a consulting role as well.

Gov. Evers- Not every community has superstars to help get this going. I am really happy for Ashland and Bayfield but we have to find a dedicated funding stream for child care in the state. That is the bottom line. At the end of the day we have to find a sustainable statewide source of

funding to help keep the doors open. The efforts on providers should be about how to provide the best programming as possible and not keeping the doors open. We need to keep talking about the economic development of the state and the impact of child care. Both Kathy and I are firm supporters of early care programming.

First Lady Evers- What are you feeling as others call you? Are you finding the dedicated people that are going to work as hard as you did to try to get things rolling in their area? How does it look to you when you are talking with people?

Mari- We are speaking to communities who have developed a coalition already and that are ready to move. They have an idea of where they want to go, they just need to execute it right. Anytime you have a planning grants where you can dedicate a portion of a staff because it is not something that can be done on the side or at night. It takes some time to do this and anything like that is helpful. But I think that there are a lot of communities that are ready. Barriers will pop up every day but knowing you have champions is critical.

Peter Barca- This is a wonderful case study Mari. Congratulations to your team and to your community. Certainly, if we can have a dedicated funding stream it would make a huge difference to the children of our state.

Secretary Amundson- in the absence of dedicated funding, I guess when you talk about those roadblocks that come up every other day, what are some of the barriers? You have a lot of folks on this call whose agency had a hand in some kind of the funding. Are there resources that the state could create that could make this process that you walk down easier for the next group of people or is there a consistent roadblock that everybody hits?

Mari- Two comments. One- you know there is an abundance of resources in terms of workforce and training so we were able to leverage our WIOA fund pretty heavily to do some. We did a cohort at the technical college and we are actually doing one again right now where by the time that they are done they'll be ready to go into any setting and you know once they get their hours they will be a lead pretty quickly in any classroom. I think that was a challenge that I think we have overcome now. We worked with Mark Keller a little bit in the tech college system. It wasn't credentialed in the past and so WIOA money could be spent but we would have to take a performance hit to do it. I didn't care because it was the right thing to do and so we needed to do it. The other piece, and this isn't a criticism by any stretch, is licensing. We ended up in a cycle of we need this before we can do this. Couldn't open the building until the licensing was done but if I was a private person it would be intimidating. Everyone (partners) have resources but critical to keep the conversations open and open table.

Secretary Amundson- When you talk about champions, that every project like this needs a champion, were you that person on this project and was it a fulltime job? What does it look like to take on the champion role?

Mari-It was my one staff's role. She worked a lot of nights. She needed to do her regular job during the day and then this piece at night but it's something that she was passionate about and wanted to do. Not everyone will be able to do this. The champion was AADC, the local development group, on their side and then us on our side. My staff member, Melissa, worked really hard and pulled together a lot of resources. We knew that if we could get it done, we became bulldogs. The more people said No, the more fun it became to try to figure out how to pivot and work around then. It wasn't a fulltime job but at least a third.

Secretary Amundson- One more question in terms of your funding. Hearing your story, it looks like private and public funding were absolutely critical. That braid of funding, I am imagining the unrestricted nature of your private funds was really helpful to expedite certain activities. Can you do this with all public dollars or do you need that fundraising arm?

Mari- I think you could do it with public dollars if your timelines lined up appropriately. We really needed that private money early on for things like the architectural layout of the building and looking at all that. Unless you have a grant that is specific to building, you at least need a small amount of funding that doesn't have strings attached. I think that there is enough public money out there if you are willing to go find it and write for it.

Curtis Cunningham (chat),- Are there any services you provide at the center that are currently unfunded? For ex. FoodShare, attendant care services?

Mari- Workforce is always a struggle. We are in a pay range where they get paid well for the region for what they do but child care workers are not in it for the money. So that's why we do that other cohort right now so we can continuously not only feed our own pipeline at Evergrow, but then also for those who want to do their own in-home. At least get them up and going. We have the struggle of finding and keeping them. Then we have the ones that go on maternity leave so it's the same story for any business. We would love to pay them all more. Maybe someday we will get to that space but right now our per week fee we won't do above what the maximum share subsidy reimbursement is so that we make sure that if a family is really in need, they can have child care. In terms of services that are unfunded services, no, they are doing a lot to figure it out. We are hoping to bring Wisconsin Job Center over to the same building, so it is a one stop shop. We do put quite a bit of outreach materials in Evergrow for those parents who might need access to any TANF services or things like that.

Secretary Amundson- Thank you Mari. We are all admirers for your tenacity.

We will keep that story in mind. That's about the best example of the realistic portrait of what it takes to do this in a community. I think that is so compelling for me about this story is you know you hear Mari, describe it stated with some organic conversations. They used data to build a bigger coalition, they started to just see what so people have to bring to the table, I think the compelling thing from a state perspective is that so much of Mari's story is incumbent on people knowing people and people understanding that there is this opportunity at WEDC or WHEDA or whatever so that you can advance this work. I think again from DCF's perspective, how do we demystify that in some way, shape or form? To hear that she gets a call a week to ask them how they do this, we know the interest is out there. If I am a fisherman, I've got the bobber on the water and we are feeling those pops all day long. People are popping on this issue. Business after business is coming to us and to folks like Mari, asking how do we get something like this going in our community? It is amazing that Ashland can support a center of 100 children. Having a better understanding of what it takes to have a collective impact to make it happen. Planning grant was key to build partnerships and coalitions to the table. With that I want to transition to our next section.

11:00 - 11:15am

Early Care and Education and Wisconsin's Economic Recovery Strategy

Missy Hughes, Secretary and CEO, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Secretary Amundson- I want to welcome our friend and colleague, Missy Hughes. She has been such a champion and a beacon in championing women in the workforce in child care and in their relationship of both those planks to economic development and to economic recovery. I am very excited about the work that WEDC put together in the form of The Wisconsin Tomorrow Report that came out just this month. It highlights child care as infrastructure and it's a topic that I feel is really seeing its moment right now. We asked Missy to spend just a bit of time talking about the report in general but also about how these different pieces fit together into a vision of what we see out in communities across Wisconsin.

Secretary and CEO Hughes

My goal for WEDC was to create more jobs and every program that we put out, every grant that we made was measured by how many jobs we created. As I talked to businesses and communities, I realized that jobs were not necessarily exactly what we needed. In fact, someone astutely said to me we are solving a problem we don't have. We are not short on workforce, we are short housing, broadband, child care, we are short jobs right now. Indeed you know at that point we had one of the job seeking websites you could find hundreds of thousands listings in Wisconsin. So we started the conversation at WEDC, how do we measure success, if it isn't jobs what is it? We started to realize the holes in the strength of our economy what we had seen before the pandemic-things like broadband and child care, became the gaping holes. We realized that everybody is measuring the success of a growing economy. Everybody was thinking about economic recovery and on a state level that connects the dots. Ultimately in June 2020, we issued the first Wisconsin Tomorrow Report. We really felt that we need to show that this was a disaster that impacted the entire state. We laid some crumbs in that report to start thinking about economic recovery in a different way. We came back to this in December, we began to think about this as economic well-being. It's a personal view. It means something different for your stage of life. Economic well-being became a really complex discussion. The Wisconsin Tomorrow Report is:

- A comprehensive strategy for investing in people to help Wisconsin recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Intended to help guide the state's use of the federal American Rescue Plan funds, as well as other public and private sector investments
- Focuses on the concept of economic well-being
- June 2020 report recommended three priorities for economic recovery:
 - 1) Fixing broadband
 - 2) Getting people back to work
 - 3) Supporting innovation
- The new April 2021 report identifies five elements as keys to every individual's economic well-being:
 - Financial stability
 - To participate in the economy, people need the financial means
 - Community Infrastructure
 - To participate in the economy, there needs to be good roads, child care, broadband, and other general infrastructure
 - Education
 - To participate in the economy, someone needs the education and skills to get the job they want.
 - Health
 - To participate in the economy, someone needs to be healthy with good health care

- Environment
 - To participate in the economy, people need clean air, water, and land and opportunities for recreation
 - If people don't have all of these, they can't live up to their full potential. If a community lacks them, it won't be able to thrive. Economic development doesn't exist in a vacuum and a lot of factors go into making people and business thrive.
 - We need to create communities where people want to live, create businesses, build families and bounce back better
 - The report encourages state and local leaders to find gaps and opportunities in these areas and then invest accordingly.
 - Specifically, the report recommends that the state, as well as public and private sector partners:
 - Invest in key areas that help remove barriers to participating in the economy
 - Invest in building a path to financial stability: child care, health care and stable housing
 - Expand access and reinvigorate our culture of education and innovation to fuel ideas, businesses, people and the next generation for future prosperity
 - Respect our environment as it plays a key role in keeping our children safe, our economy healthy and our communities thriving
- **Child care is infrastructure.** Communities rely on it just like they do water, electricity, transportation, and Internet. Without strong child care infrastructure, Wisconsin's economy cannot recover.
- **Women and entrepreneurship is a major economic engine** in our state. Small businesses like child care centers are essential to our economy.
- Make the **connection about the work of state agencies and many sectors of our economy** to creatively partner and grow together as we recover from the pandemic.
- Consider the opportunities **where investment in infrastructure needs like child care support our state's economic development.**

Superintendent Stanford Taylor- Thank you for showing the relationship amongst our work and connectivity

Kathy Blumenfeld – Echo the same sentiments. Missy, you have done a tremendous job shepherding all the resources from throughout Gov. Evers' cabinet and the resources that the state brings whether it's economic development and showcasing how important child care is to the basic infrastructure of a well-being economic, well-being financial, well-being mental health, well-being of what is best for our kids is good for Wisconsin. I think that you really displayed that so well, so thank you.

Linda- Can you say anything more about your conversation with business people and where do you see opportunities to really engage with them and get them hooked into this thinking of child care as infrastructure?

Missy- Two things. One is pointing out that women are the ones to leave the workforce to take care of their children. If there isn't child care that's really important for top CEOs to think

about. Good starting point for the conversation. Second, businesses don't recognize how challenging the child care model is. They don't recognize how incredibly challenging and thin the margins are and the availability of workforce is really challenging and to be able to pay them sustainable wages. Once I sit down with them and talk about why it is so challenging and why they aren't seeing child care around their communities they realize how critical it is. Businesses need to buy slots and think about innovative ideas.

Secretary Amundson- The other opportunities that I see and some of the conversations with businesses that I have been having is number one, is in this virtual environment businesses are left with more space than what they know what to do with. Thinking about that space differently is one entry into the conversation. One step past convincing them that child care is infrastructure is that child care has something to do with workforce development. In areas where the workforce is just barely making a living wage, they know that their families won't meet the subsidy but know that child care is one of the largest expenses. How can we subsidize beyond Shares to create a sustaining model is an attractive proposition for business leaders?

Peter Barca- I wonder if there's any kind of application statewide or if there's a team we could be thinking about that we could bring together from different departments to think about ways to promote that from a marketing standpoint but then also maybe find a pathway where businesses could help to contribute to create child development centers? I think that there would be an interest. Think more creatively. What Mari found probably isn't unique to Ashland. How can we apply this across the state?

Secretary Amundson- The difficult part of Mari's story is the matching the model. Ashland built it from scratch but it could make the path easier if we could add funding from business leaders to 5 star centers could be low hanging fruit.

Missy Hughes- I appreciate Peter's idea of coming together to come up with a few great action items. Tons of momentum to keep this going.

Joel Brennan- I have been having a number of conversations at local level but we are looking for global solutions here. There are resources available and is felt by everyone who is feeling constrained by workforce and this recognition of child care as an infrastructure need. We are getting federal funds but don't know what to do with it. The more that we get some guidance from the federal government about the flexibility of those resources and what recovery looks like, there is potential for inclusion of them at the right level of the conversation. As we are thinking about this we can understand that there is will and knowledge at the local level.

Secretary Amundson- Fertile ground to think about opportunities that don't just live in one agency. PPE for example. Our child care industry is not looking for where those PPE loans go, and yet there was something that we were needing to do to help be ambassadors for our child care.

Peter Barca- Joel and I both have state and local finance operations so we do work with local governments. It is true that local governments are all over the map. Some of them feel like they are not getting nearly enough money and some feel like they got quite a bit of money. Taking Missy's idea, if a few of us got together to think about this a little bit maybe we could put together ideas for them. We could suggest they create matching grant funds for planning is one idea and another one about tax deductions for people wanting to invest in the development of the local child care fund. Maybe a third option that they could give matching grants to existing

certified child care centers who are just hurting especially those that serve children with disabilities. Creative ways to help if they want to make this a priority.

11:15 - 11:55am **Think Tank Discussion of Innovative Collaboration Scenarios**
Emilie Amundson, DCF Secretary

Secretary Amundson: We provided three scenarios that are true life scenarios. We have had these conversations with the past few months in different parts of the state and I'd like to talk about. Which one did you find you were most interested in and I just want to spend a little bit of time talking about your favorite scenario?

Linda- I don't know if I have a favorite but I guess the one that looked like it had the most possibilities was scenario 3. You are talking about an area of low income housing then facilitating access to child care centers. That seems like one that there are more options of things that you might do there.

Secretary Amundson- The setting of that one was in an urban low income apartment complex and a bus line facilitating parents access to education and employment. The proposal here is that they city entered into a partnership with a local philanthropist and small businesses that are located near the low income apartments. The philanthropist committed to paying five years of rent payments for parents living in the apartments who are willing to complete entry-level coursework and open family care for infants and toddlers. Small businesses would agree to contribute to purchase slots for young children also living there to attend the family child care startup at no out of pocket cost to the family. There is a family navigator built in. What are you wondering about a proposal like this?

Mary Kolar- Number three is the most intriguing to me and particularly that as you have mentioned there are people out there like this. So much about this proposal that could have tremendous dividends for all involved and a great way to contribute to society.

Linda- I think that this is intriguing that there are so many people involved. I still wonder about the feasibility of child care overall. We have philanthropist but how do we build a sustainable plan? Only way that we could get people involved is through a tax deduction or that it was contributing to the community. How do we measure that child care is contributing to the overall health and economic health of the community?

Secretary Amundson- What is missing from this scenario to help make this sustainable for everyone?

Carolyn Stanford-Taylor- I love this example. I am thinking of a project that I know of in Madison and Milwaukee areas. This is the same philanthropist who is doing this work. How do we scale this? The philanthropist reaps benefits because it creates this community environment for the tenants of the apartment building as well it's all around security and knowing neighbors and pride of property and pride of being there and working. The person offers jobs and after-school tutoring so they connect it to the work of the K-12 or pre-k 12 schools. How do you get the word out and get more people vested in doing something like this so you can scale up?

Missy- WEDC wrote a study about the Sherman Phoenix project. We could use this to get the word out that could show how it's done.

Mary Kolar- Will that philanthropist be the long-term solution? Donor to applied to VA. What happens when that philanthropist isn't there? The county was able to pick this up but not every county can do that.

Kathy Blumenfeld-I think that this is an innovative approach. I know that DCF has a robust program to teach people how to run a program and on financial literacy/equity. I think that this would be helpful for success maybe even create a roadmap or a plan to where the philanthropist was not the funding source forever but trying to build a roadmap to independence through successful operations.

Randy Romanski I liked Scenario 1 as a small town that is the population center for the county describes a lot of WI. I was thinking about Emilie's presentation to our board. There are child care deserts. This one grabbed my attention to provide potentially reasonable priced rural housing opportunities and child care. Could be a big thing in a small community.

11:55am - 12:00pm Wrap-up and next steps

Emilie Amundson, DCF Secretary

Secretary Amundson: Thank you for your participation and continued support as members of the Leadership Council on Early Years. As a reminder, the dates and topics for our upcoming meetings for 2021:

- Tuesday, July 20 – Workforce
- Thursday, September 30 – Parents and Families

We will also send a survey to collect responses from the follow-up questions we discussed at the end of the February 2021 meeting:

- How are you meeting the needs of children and families?
- What data do you collect and analyze to evaluate this?
- How does your agency evaluate whether its work promotes equitable outcomes for children and families?

– Meeting adjourned

12:00pm Adjourn