

Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future

Recommendations to the Governor

Dear Governor Walker:

On behalf of the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), we are pleased to provide the council's 2016 report. This report reaffirms the three smart investments presented in the ECAC 2015 report.

The ECAC, as guided by Executive Order #6 (2011), was charged with advising the Governor on improving Wisconsin's comprehensive early childhood system. The ECAC is comprised of key leaders in early learning and care, health, child welfare, mental health as well as state agencies, organizations, business, higher education, and others that serve young children and families. Together, council members strive for the common goal that every child will be healthy, nurtured, safe, and successful.

In 2015, the council identified three smart investments to strengthen Wisconsin's early childhood system. Throughout 2016, the ECAC continued its commitment to promoting evidence-based, high impact, smart investments that improved outcomes for Wisconsin children now and in the future. These investments are critical in building a comprehensive, sustainable early childhood system.

The following report is an update from council members. The ECAC stands by the three smart investments identified in our 2015 report. These investments are summarized on the next page.

Sincerely,

Eloise Anderson, *Secretary*, Department of Children and Families

Tony Evers, PhD, *State Superintendent*,
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council 2016 Report

The ECAC continues support for these **smart investments** that were identified in our 2015 report. The report and information on fiscal implications can be found at: dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac

SMART INVESTMENT 1: YoungStar Program

High quality and culturally responsive programs have well-trained teachers as well as supportive, safe, and nurturing environments that foster lifelong learning.

- More children in high quality child care: An estimated 1,729 more children were served in 4 or 5 Star care in Sept 2016 than in September 2015.
- A greater percentage of children in high quality child care: The percentage of children attending 4 or 5 Star care increased from 30% in September 2015 to 32% in September 2016.
- A greater percentage of child care programs meet high quality standards: The percentage of child care programs at 4 or 5 Stars increased from 14.3% to 16.4% over the past year.
- For more information on YoungStar go to: dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar.

SMART INVESTMENT 2: Home Visiting Program

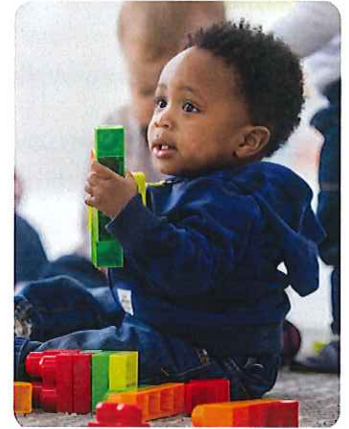
Research has shown that high quality programs targeted to highest need families have a return on investment up to \$5.70 for every dollar invested in home visiting.

- The percentage of families receiving home visits increased: Families receiving at least three of their four expected visits increased from 59% to 73% between January and September 2015.
- Programs increased the percentage of mothers screened for domestic violence. Between April and September 2016, screening within two months of enrolling in home visiting increased from 80% to 85%. In cases of domestic violence, the percentage of mothers with safety plans in place increased from 42% to 77%.
- Family Foundations programs achieve model fidelity: Three agencies achieved accreditation for the first time, and all other state-funded programs remain in good standing with their national, evidence-based home visiting models.
- Federal funding for home visiting programs changed: Wisconsin received a 20% reduction in federal funds for 2016 compared to the previous year, resulting in a reduction in the number of families enrolled in the program.

SMART INVESTMENT 3: Public-Private Partnership

Partnership of public leadership and private sector resource is a win-win. Public education benefits by having children prepared to learn and the private sector is rewarded after by a better educated and more skilled workforce.

- The Children's Empowerment through Education (CETE) Network was created: The Network was created to offer a variety of mechanisms for individuals in Wisconsin to become engaged on the importance of early childhood in their communities.
- A toolkit was created: The CETE Network developed a toolkit for local coalitions when speaking with their communities and it is available on the website.
- Significant progress has been made: All six original grant recipients have made significant progress on their projects, which included reaching out and engaging business partners in their communities, creating data systems, and creating structures for collaboration.
- For more information on the tool kit and grant recipients: cetewisconsin.org.



"The benefits of investing in children's early years is becoming more and more evident, and those early years in a child's life are crucial in the overall development, health, and success of a child for the rest of their life."

Forward- Assembly Republican Agenda, WI Assembly GOP 2016, page 28.
