

# Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future

## Recommendations to the Governor

Dear Governor Walker:

On behalf of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), we are pleased to provide the council's 2017 report.

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

In 2015, the council identified three smart investments to build Wisconsin's future. We are pleased that the most recent biennial budget included \$3.9 million for each year toward our recommendation of doubling the number of families served in evidenced based Family Foundations Home Visiting Programs.

Throughout 2016 and 2017, the ECAC continued its commitment to promoting evidence-based, high impact, smart investments that improved outcomes for Wisconsin children now and in the future. The council remains committed to the three smart investments. In 2017 the council continued its evaluation of the state of early childhood in Wisconsin by monitoring the three smart investments and conducting an analysis of additional gaps and needs.

The following report provides an update on the state of the three smart investments.

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 2017 Report

## 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 1,698 more children from families receiving Wisconsin Shares were served in 4 or 5 Star program in September 2017 than in September 2016.
- A greater percentage of children in high quality child care: The percentage of children from families receiving Wisconsin Shares and attending 4 or 5 Star program increased from 23.2% in September 2016 to 26.0% in September 2017.
- A greater percentage of child care programs meet high quality standards: The percentage of child care programs at 4 or 5 Stars increased from 16.4% to 20.5% over the past year.
- For more information on YoungStar go to: <https://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.

- Program reach expands: Home visitors completed 18,303 visits with 1,477 families in 24 Wisconsin counties and 5 tribes. Seven counties (Clark, La Crosse, Rusk, Taylor, Walworth, Washburn, and Waukesha) received Family Foundations services for the first time in 2017. An additional \$3.9 million in TANF funds dedicated to home visiting ensure the program will expand further in 2018.
- Home visiting promotes early language development: 62% of families enrolled in home visiting report reading, singing, or telling stories to their child every day in a typical week. Programs are currently engaged in a continuous quality improvement project to raise this percentage by early 2018.
- Home visitors assess families early for potential risks: 75% of caregivers were screened for depression within 90 days of giving birth (for those who enrolled prenatally) or enrolling in services (for those who enrolled postpartum), and 91% of women were screened for intimate partner violence in their first 6 months of service.
- Children receive needed services for potential delays: 71% of children who screened positive for a development delay using a validated tool received appropriate follow-up services in a timely manner.

## 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 by a better educated and more skilled workforce.

- The Children's Empowerment through Education (CETE) Network continued to operate: The Network offers a variety of mechanisms for individuals in Wisconsin to become engaged on the importance of early childhood in their communities.
- Professional development: Opportunities were offered to CETE Networks that strengthen their connection to each other and their skills around community engagement and fundraising.
- Significant progress continues in CETE Networks: Two additional grants were awarded for new CETE Networks while the six original grant recipients collaborated with their communities in order to ensure sustainability of the work after their funds run out. Many were able to receive additional grant dollars and support from their lead organizations.
- For more information on the tool kit and grant recipients: <http://cetewisconsin.org/>



“For governors, early childhood education and child care has been more than just a smart strategy for school readiness. It has been a significant investment of resources and political capital to increase economic growth in states and ensure the prosperity for all Americans.”

*Preamble, National Governors Association Education and Workforce Committee Policy Position, Winter Meeting 2017 - Winter Meeting 2019*