

Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future

Two Smart Investments



Home Visiting Expansion

Expand evidence-based home visiting services in areas that are still underserved, including rural and tribal communities without access to the service and communities where the need outpaces the availability.



Early Education Workforce Tax Credit

Offer a refundable tax credit to the early education workforce in order to strengthen Wisconsin's current workforce and prepare the future workforce.

For more information on the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council and the detailed budget papers that support these recommendations go to:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac>



Smart Investment 1: Home Visiting Expansion

Expand evidence-based Family Foundations home visiting program in areas that are still under-served, including rural and tribal communities without access to the service and communities where the need outpaces the availability. Currently, this effective, high impact service is only reaching a small portion of eligible families.

Evidence Based:

Nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting models provide high-quality training for professionals, evidence-informed curricula, and monitoring, reporting and accreditation processes that ensure local programs are implementing critical service elements with fidelity to research and best practices.

High-Impact:

Home visiting services are focused on Wisconsin's most vulnerable families, including those experiencing poverty, low education levels, substance abuse and a history of child maltreatment and trauma. Benefits include:

- Services that are individualized, trauma-informed, and family-led
- Improved parenting skills
- Strong parent-child relationships
- Support for early brain development
- Connections to other resources and support

A home visiting participant from the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe's Mino Maajisewin (A Good Beginning) program recently remarked about the impact that the service had on her, stating "I made it a point to stick with this program because... I have gained emotional support for parenting as well as learning new parenting skills during my home visits. I have gained educational support for myself."

Smart Investment:

Research has shown that high quality programs targeted to highest risk families have a return of up to \$5.70 for every dollar invested in home visiting, through savings in child protection, K-12 special education and grade retention, and criminal justice expenses. (1)

1. National Conference of State Legislatures. "Home Visiting: Improving Outcomes for Children." April 26, 2018.

2. Olds, D., Kitzman, H., Cole, R., et al. (2010). Enduring effects of prenatal and infancy home visiting by nurses on maternal life course and government spending: Follow-up of a randomized trial among children at age 12 years. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 164(5): 419-424.



Each family enrolled in home visiting results in government savings of more than \$1,000 per year from reduced costs of food stamps, Medicaid, and cash assistance. These savings persist throughout childhood, long after a family completes services.²

Smart Investment 2: **Early Education Workforce Tax Credit**

Goal: Strengthen Wisconsin's workforce now and prepare our future workforce

For a strong Wisconsin workforce, we need to increase the labor market pool. Early education is the most effective way to achieve this. When access to stable, high-quality early education increases, more of Wisconsin's talent can join the workforce. Access to early education increases by growing a stable, qualified workforce of early educators. A refundable tax credit for the early education workforce can incentivize early educators to stay in the field.

Evidence Based:

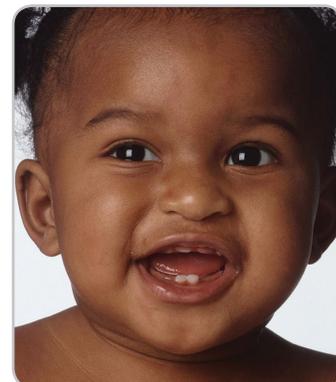
Working parents demand high-quality early education yet it is unaffordable or even unavailable. Focusing on early education maximizes our investment because quality early education prepares the next generation of workers. Louisiana and Nebraska have implemented refundable tax credits with outcomes including a more qualified early education workforce and increased levels of quality in early education.

High-Impact:

- With a turnover rate of 36%, Wisconsin faces a serious shortage in early childhood educators (ECE).¹ Early education programs have closed classrooms due to a lack of early educators.
- Rural communities have particularly struggled with the lack of early education options.
- ECE with an associate degree makes \$10.00 to \$13.00 per hour, versus workers in other industries, with the same education level who make \$18.57 per hour. The gap widens with bachelor's degrees.²
- An early education workforce tax credit would increase the take home pay of hardworking early educators, a strong step forward.
- Increased options for early education introduce the potential to increase the labor market pool by 50,000 or more.³

Smart Investment:

About 80% of businesses report difficulty in finding workers.⁴ A lack of available child care is a significant challenge to workforce development.⁵ Investing in early education will grow a strong workforce now and in the future. In the words of economist James Heckman, "Either way, we are going to pay...Investing early allows us to shape the future; investing later chains us to fixing the missed opportunities of the past."⁶



By laying the crucial groundwork for tomorrow's workforce and supporting a strong workforce today, high-quality childcare builds our nation's human capital two generations at a time.⁷

1. Dresser, L., Rodriguez, J. & Meder, M. Wisconsin Early Childhood Association. (2016). Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce: Wages, Benefits, Education and Turnover of the Professionals Working with Wisconsin's Youngest Children.

2. Ibid

3. U.S. Census Bureau. Employment Characteristics of Families, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

4. Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (December 2017). State, National Economies are Strong; Labor Availability is Weak.

5. Wisconsin Economic Development Association. (October 2017). The Convening on Workforce: Tabletop Discussion Feedback Report.

6. Heckman, J. (2011). The Economics of Inequality: The Value of Early Childhood Education. The American Educator.

7. Stevens, K. US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Center for Education and Workforce (2017). Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High-Quality Childcare.

Building Blocks for Wisconsin's Future

Recommendations to the Governor

Dear Governor Walker:

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is pleased to recommend these two smart investments to build Wisconsin's future and invest in the health and wellbeing of Wisconsin's youngest citizens. These recommendations build upon the 2015 recommendations and represent a multi-year effort that included council members and stakeholders reviewing community need, research on best practices, and high-impact systems that support families and young children.

The most recent biennial budget included \$3.9 million each year toward the previous recommendation of doubling the number of families served in evidenced based Family Foundations Home Visiting Program. The current home visiting recommendation will build on that success by continuing to increase the capacity of home visiting to reach even more children and families in Wisconsin. A refundable tax credit for the early childhood workforce will increase the labor market pool as well as the take home pay for many Wisconsinites.

The ECAC is committed to promoting evidence based, high impact, smart investments, that can improve outcomes for Wisconsin children now and into the future. Members of the ECAC include key leaders in early learning and care, health, child welfare, family support, and mental health as well as state agencies, community organizations, business, and higher education remain committed to the goals of the ECAC. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations that will help us all to meet the goal of ensuring that all Wisconsin children are healthy, nurtured, safe, and successful.

Sincerely,

The Wisconsin Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council

