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### **Governor Walker Declares April 12-18 “Week of the Young Child” in Wisconsin**

(MADISON) -- Governor Walker has signed a proclamation in honor of the National Week of the Young Child, April 12-18, 2015. Early childhood care and education programs throughout Wisconsin are celebrating the Week of the Young Child to underscore how important the early years are for children and for Wisconsin. The national theme of this year's Week of the Young Child is “Celebrating Our Youngest Learners.”

The Week of the Young Child allows Wisconsin to highlight two important themes: the importance of providing high-quality early childhood education, and the importance of developing early childhood social, emotional and physical well-being for all children.

“In honor of the Week of the Young Child, we thank and recognize our hard working early childhood educators and the parents of young children that make a difference for all children in Wisconsin. Research on brain development affecting children's learning shows the importance of high-quality early childhood education,” said Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson.

Finding quality early child care education has just been made easier, through an expanded website featuring the [YoungStar](#) program. YoungStar gives parents a valuable tool for rating and choosing a child care center; they can access a one- to five-star rating and licensing history of providers as well as easy to understand guides about what to look for in determining the right fit for their child. Parents can even speak to child care expert in their community for information.

YoungStar is also working with child care providers to deliver quality of care.

To date, the YoungStar program has provided over 36,000 onsite visits to nearly 6,000 child care programs for coaching, mentoring and assistance. It has provided over \$6.5 million in grants to programs to assist with quality improvement.

In addition to YoungStar, Wisconsin has invested in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Wisconsin program to provide scholarships for credit-based education for child care providers and the REWARD program to provide stipends to well-educated providers who remain in the field at nearly \$4 million per year. The Department funds the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies throughout the state.

Improving the quality of early childhood development will pay dividends for all Wisconsin citizens and future generations and ensure better outcomes in education, health and workforce development.

Visit the Visit the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families website at [www.dcf.wi.gov](http://www.dcf.wi.gov).