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## **Wisconsin Child Care Providers Receive Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Awards**

MADISON – Around 260 child care providers from around Wisconsin recently received monetary awards as part of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant the state received from the federal government to improve child development.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) distributed award checks to 263 child care centers in the YoungStar program for increasing the quality of early care and education they provided during 2014, thereby improving their star ratings.

“The hard work and commitment of these centers in providing the best care possible to Wisconsin’s young children deserves to be recognized and rewarded,” said DCF Secretary Eloise Anderson. “Every provider that improved their program and star rating is receiving an award.”

The awards – with the amounts tiered by program size, star increase and the number of children served in the program – will be used for resources for the child care centers.

The Race to the Top program builds on the state’s historic commitment to high quality early learning and development programs. Research shows that children who attend high-quality early care and education settings are more likely to succeed in school, graduate from high school and earn higher incomes when they enter the workforce.

The Early Learning Challenge Awards were presented once in 2014 and will be presented again in early 2016.

Wisconsin was selected to receive \$34 million in federal grant funding for education and early childhood development initiatives. The Race to the Top-ELC grant focuses on children between birth and kindergarten. The four-year grant runs from January 2013 through December 2016.

Counties with child care providers receiving incentives: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Brown, Burnett, Calumet, Chippewa, Clark, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Dunn, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green Lake, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Kenosha, LaCrosse, Langlade, Lincoln, Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, Oneida, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Pierce, Portage, Price, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Sawyer, Shawano,

Sheboygan, St. Croix, Taylor, Trempealeau, Vernon, Vilas, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago, and Wood.

Learn more about DCF and the Race to the Top program at: [www.dcf.wi.gov/rttt](http://www.dcf.wi.gov/rttt).

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