

Child Care Strong

Making critical investments in Wisconsin's early care and education field to support families, communities, and the economy



Child Care Strong has two goals:

1. Targeting the high cost of infant and toddler care, and
2. Lifting wages of the early care and education workforce to retain top talent.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing structural problems in the child care industry and laid bare its critical importance to Wisconsin's communities and economy. Throughout the public health emergency, Wisconsin led by prioritizing the needs of the early care and education community and we need to continue those vital investments.

The centerpiece of the Governor's early care and education budget, **Child Care Strong** is a \$106 million investment over the biennium in our early care and education system that provides bonus payments and per child stipends to providers to address quality, affordability, accessibility, and equity for children both in Wisconsin Shares and unsubsidized childcare.

Child Care Strong consists of three separate programs:

Base payments of up to \$250 per month, providing resources for providers to meet regulatory and quality requirements

A bonus payment of up to \$150 per month for providers who serve at least 25% infant and toddlers, incentivizing the provision of care to infants and toddlers

Per child monthly stipends for YoungStar 3, 4, and 5 Star programs, with higher stipend amounts for infants, toddlers, and Wisconsin Shares recipients, helping providers maintain and increase their quality

All programs require providers to allocate more than half of the total monthly payments towards staff salaries and benefits

