

Providing all Families with Access to Quality Early Care and Education Opportunities

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

Investing in the early childhood workforce and system infrastructure



The budget begins to address the structural problems in the child care industry laid bare during the pandemic with a historic **\$106 million** investment of state dollars and a delinking of [YoungStar](#) and [Wisconsin Shares](#). These items combined create [Child Care Strong](#), a **\$140 million** dollar fund to provide bonus payments and per child stipends to providers to address quality, affordability, accessibility, and equity for children both in Wisconsin Shares and unsubsidized child care. The budget also transfers the Head Start State Supplement to DCF, consolidating early care and education programs to help providers. Finally, additional funding is provided to the Milwaukee Early Care Administration – the state's largest Shares authorizer – for staffing to help improve customer service and wait times.

Expanding evidence-based programs

We know evidenced-based programs and supports are needed to ensure the early care and education workforce is prepared to support the needs of all children. This budget invests over **\$3 million** in social emotional training and technical assistance with the goal of reducing instances of children being removed from care settings due to behavioral challenges. This money will be used in coordination with similar initiatives from the Pre-school Development Grant and other sources to meet the ask made by the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council. Additional workforce support is provided through an expansion of funding for the REWARD program. The budget also expands the 53206 Initiative to adjacent zip codes and brings two new Boys and Girls Clubs into the Be GREAT: Graduate program.



Increasing access for vulnerable families

Many Wisconsin families live near the margins of qualifying for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, causing them to gain and lose access based on circumstances. When they fail to qualify, many cannot afford the cost of care. This budget proposes two changes to Shares qualifications to stabilize Wisconsin families. The first deducts child support payments from qualifying income. The second provides a disregard of **\$10,000** for direct care workers when evaluating whether they qualify for Shares – an ask of the [Governor's Task Force on Caregiving](#).

