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Partnership Improves Milwaukee Child Care, Prepares to Expand

A pilot program designed to increase the quality of Child Care in Milwaukee by offering low-cost, non-traditional educational opportunities to workers in child care centers rated a 2-Star by Wisconsin's YoungStar quality rating system will expand throughout Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Eloise Anderson announced that, based upon the positive early results, the program would be expanded into a three-year statewide initiative. "Expanding upon a very successful pilot program shows us that we are on the right track to transform early childhood education and develop the skills of our child care workforce," stated Anderson during an event on the MATC Campus.

Developed by DCF and the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), the program was originally expected to enroll 125 providers in child care coursework. The program greatly exceeded their goal, with more than 250 early childhood educators completing 3 or more credits and 59 completing the rigorous 12-credit certification process to support infants and toddlers. Much of the success of the MATC pilot program was due to their cutting-edge approach of looking at child care providers as both learners and workers, and adjusting the educational delivery methods to eliminate the obstacles that were preventing them from seeking additional professional development.

Secretary Anderson applauded MATC's efforts in designing a successful program. "MATC-Milwaukee was able to successfully provide access to child care providers, teachers and directors who had the desire to improve, but were facing barriers to continuing their education by designing a flexible, responsive and truly innovative program," said Anderson. "Thanks to your efforts, more children in Milwaukee will have a brighter future"

The Department plans to use federal Race to the Top supplemental funding to expand this program by working with several Institutions of Higher Education to reach a targeted 1,500 child care providers, teachers and directors throughout Wisconsin over the next three years.