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**Wisconsin's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Launches New Website**

MADISON – Follow Wisconsin as we “Race to the Top” with the new website dedicated to the state’s innovative efforts in the area of early childhood development. The [website](#) features information on Wisconsin’s The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (ELC) and the ten collaborative projects aimed at enhancing quality early childhood education.

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.

“Providing a quality educational foundation, starting in early childhood, is an important priority to help our children succeed in school,” said Governor Scott Walker.

The Race to the Top program builds on the state’s historic commitment to high quality early learning and development programs. Race to the Top-ELC is a cross-departmental grant utilizing collaboration among three state agencies: Children and Families (designated lead); Public Instruction; and Health Services. Investment in early childhood is cost-effective. Researchers have found that helping children succeed early in life leads to adults who are less likely to need future public services and estimate that for every \$1 spent on high-quality early childhood programs, we see \$8 to \$16 dollars returned to society.

“The Race to the Top grant is helping ensure that all children have the educational foundation they need in life,” said Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Eloise Anderson. “Making sure families are engaged and that educational standards are high will pave the way for children to be better prepared for school and life.”

“High quality early learning opportunities are important, not only to prepare students for success in school but also to reduce achievement gaps before they start,” said Tony Evers, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Added Kitty Rhoades, Secretary of the Department of Health Services, “We know, too, that an educated Wisconsin is a healthier Wisconsin, and it’s important to reach children at an early age.”

Expanding on early childhood education includes some main initiatives within ten projects:

- Ratings of early childhood education centers with incentives for improvements
- Business and educational components, including scholarships for child care workers
- Engagement of parents and families in the educational, social and skills development of children
- Researching data correlations to improve programs and target resources most efficiently.

Read more at: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/rttt>.