

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raising Wisconsin: Proposed legislation fails to address systemic child care funding challenges, needs

MADISON, WIS. – The Raising Wisconsin coalition is concerned with the package of child care bills proposed in the state Legislature because they lack significant investment required to stabilize a long-challenged early childhood industry.

“We know providers, parents and employers already are experiencing the effects of the reduction in Child Care Counts payments,” said Director of Raising Wisconsin Jackie Anderson. “Without significant state funding to continue the program, the challenges are going to go from bad to worse. Unfortunately, the bills do strikingly little to address the longstanding child care cost and supply challenges that are affecting every corner of Wisconsin.”

In July, the Legislature failed to allocate any state funding to continue Child Care Counts past January 2024 when it finalized the state budget. Child Care Counts has been funded by federal pandemic-relief funding that was allocated by the Legislature in 2020. The budget decision came even after a significant and record-setting advocacy push of nearly 100,000 letters in support of continuing the program from a broad coalition of early childhood educators, families with young children, and employers.

Advocates recognized the immediate and long-term ripple effects on communities and the economy that will result from a lack of significant state investment in child care.

“Survey results from providers and parents already show the consequences of not funding Child Care Counts,” said Ruth Schmidt, executive director of Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, which leads Raising Wisconsin. “The bill package will have no notable impact and, in fact, risks creating more challenges for child care in Wisconsin.”

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Raising Wisconsin is an advocacy initiative powered by organizations and partners from across Wisconsin who are working together to advocate for investments into young children and families through focuses on early care and education and optimal health and well-being. For more information on Raising Wisconsin, visit www.raisingwisconsin.org.