



Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition

Celebrate Children Foundation ♦ Disability Rights Wisconsin
Madison Area Accredited Early Childhood Association ♦ Milwaukee Child Care Alliance
Parents Plus ♦ School Administrators Alliance ♦ Supporting Families Together Association
Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health ♦ Wisconsin Association of School Boards
Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association ♦ Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Council for Exceptional Children - Division for Early Childhood
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association ♦ Wisconsin Family Child Care Association
Wisconsin Head Start Association

Working Together to Advocate for All Wisconsin's Young Children to Get a Great Start
...by providing all Wisconsin children access to high quality early learning experiences and
nurturing care so they are happy, healthy, eager to learn and prepared to succeed.

The Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition supports the following options on child care issues:

1. Child Care Subsidies - LFB Paper #216

We support Alternative E: This alternative deletes all of the Governor's recommendations regarding cost saving measures to child care and provides additional funding of \$800,000 FED in 2011-12 and \$3,600,00 in 2012-13.

Rationale: Wisconsin Shares expenditures have dropped dramatically due to frozen payment rates since 2006, efforts to reduce fraud, and other cost-saving strategies. Further reductions are unfair to child care programs and families struggling economically. The Coalition believes that Wisconsin Shares child care assistance is crucial to low-income working families that have been hit hard by the recession, and makes it possible for parents to stay in the workforce.

2. Child Care Quality Rating and Information System - LFB Paper #217

Early Learning Coalition top priority is Alternative C1: This alternative implements the tiered reimbursement plan under the YoungStar five-year plan approved by the Joint Finance Committee last year.

Early Learning Coalition strongly supports Alternative D1 or D2: If Alternative C is not approved, the Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition supports Alternative D as a compromise proposal. The proposal was developed by the Coalition in an effort to find common ground between the original 5-year plan reimbursement schedule and the Governor's proposal. This compromise costs significantly less than the original five-year plan, but provides modest fiscal incentives for child care programs that meet higher quality standards.

Rationale: YoungStar is just getting off the ground as a quality improvement program, and will help meet a goal that Governor Walker endorses: to make sure that taxpayer dollars fund only child care programs meeting reasonable quality standards. The right incentives in this first year of implementation would have a dramatic impact on child care program efforts to improve quality early learning opportunities, with immediate positive impacts for some of Wisconsin's most vulnerable children.

We also support Alternative E1: It requires DCF to promulgate rules on the severity index tool and its implementation. This index could have serious consequences for programs and needs careful review.

Thank you for your consideration. The 15-member Early Learning Coalition believes that Wisconsin has a great opportunity to help low-income families go to work with confidence that their children are in child care settings where they are well cared for and getting ready for school and beyond.

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