



# THE WISCONSIN INFANT TODDLER POLICY PROJECT (WITPP) LEGISLATIVE TALKING POINTS

## The Ask

As Governor Evers and the Wisconsin State Legislature craft the 2021-23 budget proposal, it is essential to invest in the child care sector so that parents can participate in the workforce and our economy can recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Specifically, I ask you to encourage Governor Evers and the Legislature to invest in child care in the 2021-2023 budget as well as support the targeted and prompt distribution of additional federal stimulus funding.

## Background

- Quality child care is vital to our communities. It allows parents to participate in the workforce and is one of the best investments we can make in our children's social and emotional learning and future academic success. But families in [my community] and across the state struggle to access quality, affordable child care.
  - Over half of Wisconsin residents live in child care deserts where there is not enough child care. For rural Wisconsin, this number jumps to 80% of residents.
  - Where child care is available, it's too expensive. The average Wisconsin family has to spend 20% of its income just on care for one infant; a single parent is spending close to half their income on child care.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation much worse. Because of COVID-driven increased costs and decreased revenue, 1 of every 4 child care providers could close permanently. Without a state or federal investment, these closures could increase to 40% of programs closing by spring. These closures would devastate our fragile economy.
- When working parents don't have access to child care, or when the cost of child care is out of reach, they are forced to make difficult choices including working fewer hours, changing jobs, or dropping out of the workforce altogether.
  - Nationwide, 1.1 million workers dropped out of the workforce in September alone; 80% of these workers were women.
  - In Wisconsin, 70.2% of infants have mothers in the workforce compared to the national average of 61.6%. Mothers in our state are a critical part of our economy.
  - Over half of Wisconsin counties are losing population and nearly every county is losing people in their prime working years (25-54). As a result, many employers struggle to fill vacancies. We need to make sure we have enough labor in our state if we want to grow our economy.
- Governor Evers and the WI State Legislature have been essential in directing federal CARES Act funding to the child care sector to enable families to access child care and child care educators to stay employed.

For more information on the WITPP visit: [wisconsinearlychildhood.org/WITPP](https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/WITPP)