



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.

August 24, 2011

Eloise Anderson
Secretary
Department of Children and Families
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Secretary Anderson:

Our Coalition is contacting you to strongly object to the new policy that would abruptly cut payments to licensed family child care providers serving low-income children subsidized by Wisconsin Shares without a public hearing or any other means of soliciting input. The directive to cut provider payments through an **“attendance-based-only policy”** threatens to undermine solid efforts to improve the supply of quality child care settings via YoungStar.

The new policy, which will go into effect on August 28, 2011, represents yet another action to reduce payments, on the heels of **6 years of frozen payment rates**. Overall Wisconsin Shares payments as well as per-child payments in Wisconsin Shares have been dropping dramatically over the last two years. We don't understand why additional cost-cutting is necessary.

Attendance-based-only payments unfairly punish providers who are serving low-income children in good faith. Research shows that preschool children attending child care setting are absent due to illness about 15 percent of the time, and infants and toddlers have even higher illness rates. Providers have fixed costs to operate in order to meet licensing rules; highly fluctuating and unpredictable revenue from payments make it difficult to operate a quality business, and is likely to cause many more licensed family child care providers to refuse to serve children funded by Wisconsin Shares.

We hope that your department rethinks this policy and finds a fairer way to pay for family child care services. We are ready to discuss the issues involved. As you may know, the Coalition requested a meeting with DCF staff on the attendance based payment policy a month ago, but did not receive a reply.

Sincerely,

Therese Ahlers
Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health

Beverly Anderson
Milwaukee Child Care Alliance

Joan Beck
Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association

Shelley Cousin
Wisconsin Head Start Association

Patricia Dischler
Wisconsin Family Child Care Association

Susan Donahoe
Wisconsin Council for Exceptional Children- Div. for Early Childhood

David Edie
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Lilly Irvin-Vitela
Supporting Families Together Association

Carol Keintz
Next Door Foundation

Jim Leonhart
Celebrate Children Foundation

Joanna Parker
Madison Area Accredited Early Childhood Association

Suzy Rodriguez
Parents Plus

Dan Nerad
School Administrators Alliance

Ruth Schmidt
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Jeff Spitzer-Resnick
Disability Rights Wisconsin

Contact: Dave Edie, WCCF
dedie@wccf.org 608-284-0580 x315

cc: Elaine Richmond, Jim Bates

