

September 20, 2023 – an important day! Governor Evers has called a special session of the Wisconsin Legislature

Governor Evers is calling on legislators to make the substantial long-term investments necessary to stabilize the state's child care industry in order to keep parents in the workforce.

During the Pandemic, federal funds kept childcare centers open. This program, known as the **Child Care Counts Program** will end in December. Those funds supported our childcare industry. (There are other problems addressed in the Special Session, but this one is dire)

In the State of Wisconsin pre-pandemic, parents paid an average of \$10,000 a year for childcare. The teachers were paid on average \$11/hr without health insurance or retirement benefits. **This was a broken business model on the way to collapse.** When the pandemic hit, childcare workers had many better paying options for employment. Because so many of our workers are parents and depend on childcare, the Federal government stepped in and subsidized childcare businesses.

Childcare workers are the workers behind the workforce!

Soon that funding (about \$340 million for 2 years statewide) will end. Without this funding, the consequences to the industry are dire. **Statewide 86% of providers plan to raise their fees.** 32% are considering closing their businesses. Almost half of the workers are considering leaving the field.

The core problem in the childcare industry is the lack of workers. Can you guess why? \$11/hr without benefits is not a job anyone can sustain for long. Turnover in this industry is constant because the workers cannot afford to take care of their own families on these low wages. **The Child Care Counts Program raises the wages of the workers so they can stay at the jobs they love.**

Here is what it means in FDL County.

We have 29 childcare providers in FDL County. 95% of them receive Childcare Counts funding. (It is over \$1 million pumped into our local economy)

In an August survey:

76% of them said they will raise their 20% tuition when the funding ends.

30% will reduce their teacher's pay

2 of them will close – both in the city of Fond du Lac

35% will decrease their operations – this includes taking fewer children, reducing their days and hours of service and eliminating services like after school care.

It is estimated statewide that without Childcare Counts 2,110 child care programs are projected to close, leaving more than 87,000 kids in Wisconsin without child care.

Gov. Evers notes in his executive order this would be “catastrophic” with “broad, cascading effects across Wisconsin's economy.”

We cannot let our childcare industry collapse.

We have a record budget surplus in Wisconsin. Billions of dollars! The Republican legislature tried to give tax breaks to rich people instead of supporting our hard working parents and childcare workers. Thankfully Governor Evers vetoed those tax breaks.

We need you to call, email, write a snail mail letter to your elected representatives.

- The FDL County Board will have a Resolution on Sept 12th**
- The FDL City Council will have a Resolution on Sept 13th**
- The Legislative Special Session is Sept 20th**

Tell them to Fund the Child Care Counts Program for 2024-2025.

For County and City Officials:

Ask them to vote for the Resolution asking the Wisconsin Legislature to fund the Child Care Counts Program in the Special Session.

Go to www.fdl.wi.gov/city-council/contact-us/ to find all FDL City Council members emails and phone numbers.

To find your County Supervisor, Go to myvote.wi.gov/My-Voter-Info. Fill in the info and hit search.

Click on MY ELECTED OFFICIALS.

Scroll down and you will find the name of your County Board Supervisor and your District #

Now go to : <https://www.fdlco.wi.gov/government/county-board-supervisors> to find their email, phone number and mailing address.

For Assembly and State Senate:

Ask them to vote to fund the Childcare Counts Program in the Special Session

Assembly District #52 Jerry O'Connor

email: Rep.O'Connor@legis.wisconsin.gov

telephone: (608) 237-9152

Room 17 West

State Capitol

PO Box 8953

Madison, WI 53708

State Senate District #18 Dan Feyen

email: Sen.Feyen@legis.wi.gov

telephone: (608) 266-5300

Room 306 South

State Capitol

PO Box 7882

Madison, WI 53707

Guidelines for contact with your Elected Representatives

For Emails or Letters – Always identify yourself with your first and last name.

- Be concise: State your reason for contacting the office.**
- Be specific: Include the issue and clearly state your opinion on it and why.**
- Be direct: Include an ask – call on the legislator to support the program**
- Be passionate: Include personal stories and impacts that directly relate to the legislation.**
- Be knowledgeable: Share relevant supplemental information, like research or news articles**

Sample letters:

Message #1

Dear ([Elected Representative](#)),

My name is (first and last name), and I am a constituent of your district. I'm writing today to urge you to support our families, businesses and child care professionals **by supporting the Child Care Counts Program. (or resolution)**

I live, work and am involved in many organizations in (community). In our area, we see parents and caregivers of young children struggle with the cost and availability of child care, and businesses continue to experience workforce implications as a result.

Child care is essential for the healthy development of our youngest children and, importantly, it's also a critical tool for thriving businesses, economies and our communities.

Thank you in advance for your time, consideration and support of investments into our child care infrastructure. Please feel free to contact me if would like additional information.

Sincerely, (First and Last Name) (address)

Message #2

Dear (Elected Representative)

I urge you to support the Child Care Counts Program in the (Special Session on September 20th) or (Resolution before the FDL City Council on Sept 13th) or (Resolution before the FDL County Board on Sept 12th)

We all want our kids to thrive. Parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and neighbors. We all want what is best for our kids. Our kids are Wisconsin's future.

Many Wisconsin families cannot find childcare and they struggle with long waiting lists. Those who have care will face a steep rise in cost when the current Child Care Counts Program ends in December. When parents have no one to look after their children they cannot work. We cannot let our childcare industry collapse.

Helping each other and the joy of being in a community is who we are in Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, we chose each other. We know we are stronger together. We have a large budget surplus that can be used to help our childcare industry.

Again, please support the Child Care Counts Program.

Thank you,

Name first and last
Address

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUED FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE COUNTS,
TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN THE WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE
CONVENES IN SPECIAL SESSION ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

Whereas, the majority of licensed child care centers across Fond du Lac County were allocated funds by the state of Wisconsin through the pandemic-era Child Care Counts program; and
Whereas, Child Care Counts funding partially offset child care center expenses for wages, rent, utilities, and personal protective equipment, which allowed child care centers across Fond du Lac County and the state of Wisconsin to maintain staff, avoid raising rates for working families, and avoid closures; and

Whereas, at the beginning of May 2023, Child Care Counts funding was cut in half, and is set to fully expire in January 2024; and

Whereas, in July 2023, Envision Greater Fond du Lac surveyed 29 licensed child care centers in Fond du Lac County, and of the 21 respondents, the loss of Child Care Counts funding will lead 76% to raise tuition at an average of 20% for families, 29% will reduce teacher wages, 12% may close their centers, and 35% will decrease operations by reducing hours or days of operations, and/or eliminate before and after care for school-aged children, and/or close classrooms or decrease capacity; and

Whereas, a Fond du Lac County 2023 Workforce Profile compiled by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development assessed Fond du Lac County's child care capacity as relatively low in comparison to the state average, as they found ten child care slots for every one hundred children under the age of fourteen in Fond du Lac County compared to fourteen statewide; and

Whereas, with already historically low unemployment and high workforce participation, coupled with a shrinking labor pool, Fond du Lac County's small businesses, farmers and producers, hospitals and healthcare sectors, schools and local governments, and other critical employers and industries continue to face significant, generational challenges filling jobs; and

Whereas, without legislative action to address the child care industry's looming fiscal cliff, The Century Foundation estimates 2,110 child care programs statewide could close, resulting in a loss of 4,882 child care jobs, leaving 87,425 kids without child care, and resulting in approximately half a billion dollars in economic impacts; and

Whereas, a loss of access to affordable, quality child care in Fond du Lac County will exacerbate workforce challenges, which would have calamitous consequences for Fond du Lac County's already-strapped workforce and future economic success.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fond du Lac County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that when the state legislature convenes in special session on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, they act to continue funding the statewide Child Care Counts program. This funding is necessary for Fond du Lac County and counties across the state to avoid the catastrophic economic impacts of parents leaving the workforce and reduced employer activity.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the County Clerk to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, State Senators and State Representatives representing Fond du Lac County, the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Administration, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.