

July 20, 2020

Governor Evers,

On behalf of the Milwaukee Early Childhood Education Civic Response Team, we're writing to request state support in procuring personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies for Milwaukee's child care providers, especially those in the Black and Brown communities that have been hardest-hit by COVID-19.

Our team is comprised of diverse leaders from across Milwaukee's early childhood community and is working together to identify and collectively respond to pressing needs in light of the COVID-19 emergency. We've secured local and national philanthropic dollars to help stabilize providers in Black and Brown communities and have procured and distributed critical supplies such as infrared thermometers, masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant. We've also worked in close partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) to inform and communicate about the Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Emergency Payment Program, which has been a vital short-term lifeline for the sector.

As valuable as these public and private resources have been to-date, they are not nearly sufficient to meet the ongoing, pressing needs of the child care sector. Despite declining revenue, increased costs, and profound health and safety concerns, 2 of every 3 Milwaukee child care providers heeded your call and stayed open from the beginning of the public health emergency to provide care for the children of essential workers.¹ Now, more providers are re-opening, but the situation is highly tenuous with providers struggling to cover expenses while meeting increased health and safety demands. Without additional support, DCF projects that 25 percent (or more) of child care providers could close permanently.² And, national polls suggest that these closures will disproportionately impact Black and Brown-led providers.³

Such closures would devastate Milwaukee's fragile economic recovery and would exacerbate the already profound gaps in access to quality, affordable child care in our communities of color.⁴ To prevent this, we need sustained support from the state, starting with procuring and distributing urgently-needed personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies. For example, we were glad to see that K12 schools will be receiving 2 million face masks and 4,200 infrared thermometers from the Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Emergency Management.⁵ We're respectfully requesting the same kind of state investment and support for the child care sector.

¹ Wisconsin Policy Forum, [Wisconsin's Child Care Sector Needs Care Itself](#)

² Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, [Wisconsin Tomorrow: An Economy for All](#)

³ National Association for the Education of Young Children, [Holding On Until Help Comes](#)

⁴ Greater Milwaukee Foundation, [A Seat at the Table: Ensuring Equitable Access to Early Childhood Education in Milwaukee](#)

⁵ State of Wisconsin, [Gov. Evers Announces Statewide Efforts to Distribute PPE to Schools, Food Processors, Businesses](#)

We know, as you do, that child care is essential to our economic recovery and the wellbeing of our children and communities. Milwaukee can't recover if child care doesn't recover, and the same applies to communities across Wisconsin. We're asking that the state make critical investments to keep this essential sector functioning, starting with much-needed supplies.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Wisconsin's children and families.

Sincerely,

Danae Davis, Co-Lead

Milwaukee Succeeds

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