

Wisconsin Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



WIAAP

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Sen. Feyen, Chair

Sen. Stafsholt, Vice-Chair

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Technical Colleges

Written Testimony

Early Care and Education Provisions in SE3SB 1

Honorable Senators Feyen, Stafsholt, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WIAAP), we write today to encourage your support of the child care funding provisions in the SE3SB 1 bill, relating to the fall workforce package. WIAAP represents over 800 pediatricians and other primary care pediatric providers, who are dedicated to the health and well-being of infants, children, youth, adolescents and young adults and their families.

These provisions include payments to child care programs and the child care partnership grant program, meant to ensure a stabilized child care industry that promotes Wisconsin's economic growth. Providing incentives for child care quality is a commitment to our children, our providers, and the economic growth of our state.

Simply stated, without funding supports for early care and education, child care businesses face closure. Those who don't close are very likely to raise prices for families, who are already paying a large price for care.

According to a National Association for the Education of Young Children Survey, about 61% of Wisconsin child care providers said that they anticipate they'll need to raise costs for families without this funding.

Families can't afford to pay more for child care. The Economic Policy Institute reports the average annual cost of child care for a single infant in Wisconsin is \$12,567, or over \$2,000/month. When parents are paying upwards of one-third its income on child care when they have two children, the economic effects are devastating. Parents of young children may choose to leave jobs because they can't find or afford care for their children, and business productivity will decline as a result.

Child care workers, those spending time with children playing, caring, and providing stable learning environments day after day – carry a tremendous responsibility in the success of any program. They have a critical influence on a young child’s brain development. Yet, a full-time, year-round educator makes an unlivable wage of between \$11 and \$13 per hour. Only 52 percent of child care programs offer health insurance.

If this funding is not passed, and programs close, quality is sacrificed, or wages suffer, educators may need to leave child care to work in a different field to make ends meet for their own families. They themselves may face increased costs of child care. One in five report worrying about their own access to food may run out during the month.

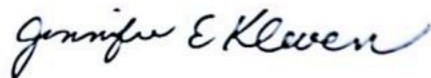
In our primary care offices, parents tell us there are long wait lists even in areas not considered “child care deserts.” It’s not uncommon to hear that you should put your name on a waiting list the minute you know you are going to have a child, and our own members report having the same problems finding care.

Wisconsin needs to take responsibility for valuing the stable, ongoing care of its children and supporting those provide that care. The alternatives are unacceptable.

Please take the actions needed to adequately fund these provisions.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
Wisconsin Chapter



Jennifer Kleven, MD, MPH, FAAP
President