



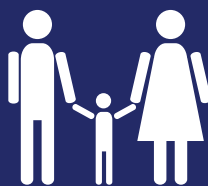
Are We at the Crossroads for Wisconsin Child Care?

A Look Into Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar

How Do Quality Early Care and Education Programs Help Children?



They prepare children for school and beyond.



They support working families.



They provide a significant return on investment.



They strengthen Wisconsin's economy.

Wisconsin has two programs to support access to affordable, high quality child care:

Wisconsin Shares

Helps families pay for child care



Wisconsin Shares provides subsidies to help low-income families afford child care while parents work. The intent of the program was to offer fair parent co-pays, reasonable income eligibility policies, no waiting lists, and adequate payment rates for participating child care providers. The program now serves more than double the number of families and children than it did in 1997.

YoungStar

Quality rating and improvement system



YoungStar provides incentives for child care programs to improve their quality through awards for quality advancement and quality sustainability. The program focuses on improving educational qualifications for teachers, early learning environments, and child health and well-being. Since the creation of YoungStar, the number of children in higher-rated programs has increased to 72%.

YoungStar child care programs rely on funding from Wisconsin Shares to improve the quality of programs.

But as YoungStar **increases** its demand for high quality programs...



Wisconsin Shares subsidies are **decreasing**.



Conflicting Policies

YoungStar shows promising trends in improving the quality of early care and education in Wisconsin, but a major disincentive for programs to meet high quality standards is the steady decline of the core funding through Wisconsin Shares. YoungStar is heavily dependent on Wisconsin Shares funding, which has been steadily declining. Reduced payments create major challenges for those striving to meet and sustain high quality levels (4 or 5 Star).

How can Wisconsin's early care and education programs be fixed so more kids have access to the high quality programs they deserve?



Adopt the Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council recommendation to provide direct support to high-quality programs.



Help programs attract and maintain a quality child care workforce.



Improve child care payment rates.



Support on-going research.