



Co-presented by Center for the Humanities  
and Kids Forward

# CHILD CARE TALKS (BACK)

"They have no idea what we do every day and how we do it."

"I never closed."

Join us for a virtual discussion with Wisconsin family child care providers.

Saturday, May 1st  
9 - 10:30 a.m.

Sponsored by:

Who cares for your children?

What do you know about them and their struggles?

Join us to learn more about child care providers, their profession, challenges, and goals to help us imagine a brighter future for wisconsin's child care providers, kids, and families.



Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies  
SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Prenatal to Five  
SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Registration link **HERE**:  
<https://tinyurl.com/5936uvtt>

Questions??  
Contact Kate MacCrimmon at  
kmaccrimmon@kidsforward.org

[00:00:00]

**MODERATOR:** Okay, all right, just a couple of tech things. Maybe before we get started, it sounds like some people are not able to mute yourselves. So host has muted. I'll give Martin(?) a minute, our tech person. Thank you, Martin. I'll just give you a second to see if we can get that sorted out.

In the meantime, welcome, everyone. Choose your language channel, and make sure you click mute original audio. Happy May Day, okay. And I'll just read one last chat. For some reason, one of the attendees can't change her video or microphone. But I'm going to let our tech people take care of that, and I'll go ahead and get started.

So all right, so welcome to our virtual roundtable, called Child Care Talks Back. We're so excited to have you here. I think if you haven't chosen your language channel, you can find it at the bottom. Click the globe, and make sure to say mute original audio. If you would like registry credit, make sure you put your first and last name into the chat with your registry number and also if you're a family provider or if you're a center provider.

Okay. So my name is Kate Maccrimmon. My pronouns are she and her. As a visual description, I am a white woman with short, gray hair and glasses. I'm wearing a light-green blouse, and I have bookcases in my background and some flowers on the side because it's May Day. I was a family childcare provider for eight years, and I'm now a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at UW Madison. I'm trying to speak a little slower for our interpreters because I tend to speed up. So I'll give them a second.

So thank you so much to our UW Madison sponsors, the Center for Research on Early Childhood Education, Community and Nonprofit Studies, and Preschool to Five. Thank you to Aaron Fai at the Center for the Humanities and to Daithi Wolfe with Kids Forward for co-presenting this event, and, of course, for my fellowship opportunity. Thank you to our interpreters, Barbara and Chutchel(?) Alvarado(?), our technology support person, Martin Alvarado, and Angel Garcia, Kids Forward intern and project support team member. Many thanks to our two distinguished guests, Professor Janean Dilworth-Bart and State Senator LaTonya Johnson.

[00:03:24]

Finally, a huge thank-you to all of the providers who made time to be on our panel today, Silke O'Donnell, Corrine Hendrickson, Fernanda(?) Leperase(?), Denise Merkin(?), and Abby(?) Abersham(?). Thank you so much.

I'd like to begin by offering a land acknowledgement. We acknowledge the Ho-Chunk nation and the other 11 First Nations residing in the boundaries of present-day Wisconsin. We recognize and respect the inherent sovereignty of these 12 First Nations. The history and presence of colonization informs our work and vision for a collaborative future.

So next up is Daithi, who is going to talk about the significance of May 1st, which is a very special day for providers, followed by Professor Janean Dilworth-Bart, and then State Senator LaTonya Johnson. We are thrilled to have all of you here. So, Daithi, take it away.

**WOLFE:** Thank you very much, Kate. My name is Daithi Wolfe. I'm at Kids Forward, which is . . .

**MODERATOR:** Daithi, can you speak just a little louder? It's a little low for me, thanks.

**WOLFE:** Sure. Hi, my name is Daithi Wolfe. I'm at Kids Forward here in Madison, Wisconsin. And I'm just going to speak for a couple of minutes about May Day, going way back into history and bringing it up to the present time. So I'm going to actually talk about four different aspects of May Day. And I will also provide a little bit of musical accompaniment to two of those.

So the very first one is that May Day, also called Beltane, is an ancient pagan Celtic holiday that's been celebrated for thousands of years in the British Isles and elsewhere. It represents, in many cultures, the beginning of summer. And in the calendar, it actually falls exactly halfway between what we know as the first day of spring, the Autumnal Equinox, and the, let's see, the Summer Solstice, which is June 21st.

[00:06:01]

It's very similar to Halloween or to Groundhog's day. So it's that place that's in the middle of these other things, the Equinox and the Solstice in terms of the seasons. So it's a holiday that was a celebration of fertility and kind of the joy of spring and the flowers and nature coming back to life.

It was chosen in 1886 in Chicago to be the center of the fight for the eight-hour day. So it became very symbolic of the Labor Movement. Now I forgot to play something. On Beltane in Ireland, you would be dancing around a May pole. And in fact, I'm actually going to be going to play for a May pole celebration with a bunch of kids and families a little later this morning.

[Music played]

It would be something like that. So back to 1886, in Chicago was the Haymarket Affair. And it was the beginning of the fight for the eight-hour day to respect labor. The idea was everyone in a 24-hour day, you should have 8 hours of work, 8 hours of, you know, pleasure or on-your-own time, and 8 hours of rest. And that should be the standard. Obviously, for family childcare providers, I don't think that that's how it works. But it's aspirational, let's say.

So May 1st became associated with workers' rights and then actually spread throughout the world, South America, Europe, Asia, all over. And it's funny because we don't actually celebrate May Day very much in the United States around labor. We have our own Labor Day that comes in September. But around the world, May Day is International Workers Day. It's a holiday in many places. There are marches. There are celebrations. And in fact, there's a, I'm going to play one more little bit of a song here. So let's see here, this is kind of the anthem of the International Workers.

[Music and singing]

So that's called *The Internationale*. So that's all the music. So now to bring it up to closer to the present, I believe that 1992, so almost 30 years ago, was the first time that Worthy Wage Day was celebrated on May 1st. And I know if Peggy Hack(?) is on the call, she could tell us lots more about it because I know she was there.

[00:09:13]

So for about 30 years, May 1st has been associated with childcare and the need to improve wages, so Worthy Wage Day. And many years up at the Capitol on May 1st, providers and supporters have come with kids and families and balloons and signs and celebrated that day. So want to give a shout-out to all the folks that have done that. My kids went to family childcare with Oma(?) Vick-McMurray(?), and I know she was always very active in that.

And then lastly, the fourth thing that I'm going to mention is that starting in 2006, May 1st became associated with immigrants and the rights of immigrant workers, refugees, etc. And so that was the first time there was the Day Without Immigrants. And in Chicago, over half a million people marched, and they were supported not just Latina and Latino marchers but folks from all different cultures, Polish and Irish, I don't know. Chicago is a very multi-ethnic place, so lots of people came out and said immigrants are important, and their work is valued. And that continue to this day because there's marches and events going on to celebrate immigrants right now.

So a little bit of the history of May Day, and it just happened that it's on a Saturday this year. And Kate and I thought what a great day to celebrate family childcare and the work that they do.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you so much, Daithi. That's wonderful. Would we like to, Professor Janean Dilworth-Bart, are you ready to share a few words?

**DILWORTH-BART:** I am.

**MODERATOR:** Okay. Thanks.

**DILWORTH-BART:** I am. Thank you, Kate. And as a very quick aside, I will say that for a brief while, I played bluegrass fiddle because I think I heard Daithi on Simply Folk. And I said, that would be cool. And so I played for a little while. So . . .

**WOLFE:** We're still going to get together and jam sometime, I promise.

**DILWORTH-BART:** But I'm so terrible. Well, thanks for having me with you this morning, and it's really a pleasure. Thank you, Kate, for inviting me and letting the School of Human Ecology and the Prenatal to Five initiative be involved.

Prenatal to Five began in 2017 with the goal of identifying how the School of Human Ecology and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and hopefully the whole

University of Wisconsin system, can contribute to promoting the well-being of young children and their families.

[00:12:20]

At our first event in the summer of 2017, we brought together multiple people from across the state from across multiple sectors. We had legislators there represented, childcare providers, university professors, pediatricians, business owners, all there for the purpose of talking about how can we join together and identify the low-hanging fruit that we all want to grab on to promote the well-being of children and families.

We followed up with five regional meetings in 2019. Our final report is now available. And if you don't have that, Kate, I can pass that along so the participants can have it. It's a two-pager. And then COVID happened. And now you are joining me in my kitchen if you see behind me my baking stuff. But it threw a monkey wrench into all of our plans, my plans, your plans. But it also taught us some lessons.

So I'm thrilled that I'm able to be here today to be a part of the conversation. And I thought a lot about this, and I feel very strongly that as we have this conversation about the world opening up, our challenge is to remember those that we lost and the lessons that we've learned.

And so one very important lesson is the absolutely critical role that childcare professionals play in the lives of children and families, but also just in the functioning of our communities.

So our challenge, in my view, is not to go back to the way things were because a lot of the things that were, were not good. But we have an opportunity now to learn from our collective experiences and to better serve our families and communities. On that note, I'll stop speaking. I'm excited to hear what everyone has to say. And again, thank you for allowing me to join you.

**MODERATOR:** Well, thank you so much, Janean. We would love to have that two-page report if you want to share it. We can share it out when we send out the recording and with the other resources that we can put into the chat too. So wonderful to have you. And next up is State Senator LaTonya Johnson if she's ready to share. Senator, are you ready? I think we see her. Okay, Martin, you can spotlight her. Thank you, Senator, for being here. And I can't hear you. If you haven't chosen your language channel, you have to find the globe at the bottom of your screen, and click on the globe. Choose English, and then choose mute original audio. And then that should work. Not yet.

[00:15:43]

**WOLFE:** Kate, I can hear her. I don't know if other folks can. I don't know why you can't, but I think everybody else, no?

**ABERSHAM:** I cannot hear it either.

**MODERATOR:** I think, did you click mute original audio under the globe? Nope, can't hear you yet. We'll figure it out. If we didn't have tech issues every single time we had something, it wouldn't be a webinar.

**WOLFE:** Martin, is there anything you could do to help us?

**MODERATOR:** Have you, did you find the globe on your screen? Oh, that's probably the issue. It's usually on the bottom of your screen.

**WOMAN:** LaTonya, if you, LaTonya?

**MODERATOR:** Let's see, someone says when you click on the video, click more, or try dragging . . .

**WOMAN:** Click the three dots.

**MODERATOR:** Nope, still can't hear. Try dragging your cursor to the bottom, and it might appear. Oh, are you on a phone, Senator? Oh, no, okay. Give it another minute.

**WOLFE:** So it's the last icon after live transcript. If you click on that one.

**MODERATOR:** We don't have a, okay, okay, so we can't hear you. Sometimes like as a last resort, sometimes we'll have people leave and then come back in. Do you want to give that a try? Okay.

**WOLFE:** Thanks.

**MODERATOR:** Thanks, Senator, sorry. I think she's on a computer, but we'll give her a minute. Maybe as we're waiting, Daithi, do you have any thoughts? Do you think we should go ahead and start with our first question or maybe give it another couple minutes?

[00:18:18]

**WOLFE:** I think let's just give it another minute. And if we successfully get Senator Johnson back, then we'll proceed with her. And if not, we'll go to the first question.

**MODERATOR:** Mm-hmm, yeah, that sounds good.

**WOLFE:** Musical interlude. Oh, gosh, Janean is so smart.

[Music played]

**MODERATOR:** All right, super, thank you. Boy, we didn't expect that.

**WOLFE:** Sure, yeah.

**MODERATOR:** Great way to bring in May Day. So, Senator, you ready to give it a try? Shall we see?

**WOLFE:** I can hear you. Kate, can you hear her?

**MODERATOR:** I can't, I can't for some reason. Maybe it's me. Can everyone else hear her?

**WOMAN:** I cannot hear.

**MODERATOR:** Okay. So Abby can't hear. Senator, have you . . .

**WOMAN:** I can't hear either.

**MODERATOR:** Okay.

**WOMAN:** Maybe you should mention to have her . . . at the bottom of the screen, and then you'll be able to see the little world icon.

**JOHNSON:** Can you hear me now?

**MODERATOR:** Yes.

**JOHNSON:** Okay, okay.

**WOLFE:** Nice work, Senator Johnson, thank you.

**JOHNSON:** So it wasn't on my, on my iPad, it wasn't a globe. It was like something at the top, and, yeah, I'm sorry.

**WOLFE:** You got it.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah, no worries.

**JOHNSON:** If my 23-year-old would have been here, it would have been a lot easier. So good morning, and thank you for having me. I'm really, really honored to be here. I was a childcare provider for ten years and president of my local, along with Silke, we were all involved, heavily involved in the union here in Wisconsin and helped to start the first childcare union.

I'm so happy to be able to talk about a happier subject than I normally get to talk about and interact with on a daily basis at the State Capitol. I just want to say that we all know the importance of early childhood education. But we all know the importance of daycare, especially now, of childcare and early childhood education. And the State realizes the importance of early childhood education and the role that our childcare providers play.

[00:21:28]

Because we all know that if this state is to bounce back, we need quality childhood education options, and that has been one of the biggest challenges for this state. Fifty four percent of Wisconsin residents live in what's known as a childcare desert. And that's defined under the census tract with more than 50 children under the age of 5 that contains either no childcare provider or so few options that there are more than 3 times as many children as licensed childcare slots.

And, you know, to deal with some of those childcare deserts, we've seen individuals pop up unlicensed and unregulated centers for whatever reason. But the State is now starting to figure out that sometimes those options, unregulated options, are not because people don't necessarily want to deal with the paperwork, but because there's something on their background that would prevent them from being a licensed or regulated center, which is another concern for the state because not only do we want children in quality settings, we want them in safe settings because that's equally as important.

A lack of equitable childcare access and quality early childhood options across the state is having a fundamental negative impact on Wisconsin families, on the workforce and on the economy as a whole. Clearly, even before the pandemic, the childcare industry was under stress, and we were struggling in terms of quality early childhood education.

The childcare rates paid under the shared program have fallen significantly behind market rates. And that played a huge role in those not being able to access quality centers because who wants to work in what's a very difficult field when you can work, get paid more working in fast food restaurants or something that's far less challenging? And unfortunately, that's affected our ability to retain quality childcare providers in the system.

[00:24:13]

Between March 1st and May 1st of 2020, Wisconsin saw 54% of its large licensed group centers close compared to only 18% of licensed family providers. In the past year, knowing that the state's economy and economic recovery is dependent on the existence of quality childcare centers, the governor invested \$131.5 million of new federal funds in the childcare industry in an effort to save, in an effort to save quality early childhood education, but also to stave off some of the worst effects of COVID-19's pandemic on one of the largest investments in our country and providing those funds for early childhood education.

In addition, the governor recently announced an additional temporary rate increase of \$10.2 million in the physical year 2020 and 2021. That will provide a 21% rate increase for families with children zero to three, making childcare more affordable for families while providing additional support for childcare centers at a time when it's greatly needed, until there is a wider distribution of vaccines and the budget passes.

The state was also awarded \$148.8 million in federal childcare and development block grant funds. And this money was provided to provide additional responses to the



ongoing effects of the pandemic and what those effects have had on the childcare industry in this state.

The budget proposal under Governor Evers' budget directs \$140 million over the biennium toward a program to continue to address quality, affordability, access, and equity for children within the childcare industry.

**WOLFE:** Senator Johnson, I just need to stop you for one sec. We're doing a simultaneous translation, so if you could just speak a little bit slower, you're doing great, but just please slow down a little bit for the translators. Thank you.

**JOHNSON:** Sure, I'm sorry about that.

**WOLFE:** No problem.

**JOHNSON:** So Governor Evers' budget directs \$140 million over the biennium toward a program to continue to address quality, affordability, access, and equity for children within the childcare industry. And one program that I was truly happy to help initiate was to expand childcare in 53206.

[00:27:22]

I represent parts of 53206 in Milwaukee, which is one of the hardest-hit zip codes economically in the entire state. The median resale value of a home in 53206 is just \$4,300. And 70% of that zip code's population consists of convicted felons, either currently on paper or previously on paper for felony convictions. The one thing that that zip code lacked and needed more than anything was at least one five-star daycare center.

I went to the governor. We had a conversation, and it was so easy to have a conversation with him about the quality and the need for quality childcare because he was the state superintendent. After our conversation, probably about three to four weeks later, he came to me and said, I've put \$1.6 million in the budget for 53206. It's your job to keep it there.

I went to my Republican colleagues and said that this was my one ask, that those children deserved quality childcare in that zip code. My Republican colleagues basically took out everything, almost, that the governor had in his budget, except for one thing, and that was the \$1.6 million in the budget for 53206.

I'm happy to say that this budget, the governor is expanding on that. So he's expanding the 53206 early childcare and education initiative, which was a pilot program that supports childcare facilities in Milwaukee, to neighboring zip codes in his budget. It worked so well in 53206 that they wanted to find a way to provide extra incentives to help improve quality childcare throughout the state.

The other thing that his budget does, it allows direct care workers to disregard 10% of their income for Wisconsin Shares eligibility, which is huge. We want to make sure that childcare becomes affordable without having to take away the pay from our providers. It also allows the education of child support payments from income eligibility for Wisconsin Shares.

[00:30:30]

The other thing that it does is delinks Young Star ratings and subsidy rates, replaces it with the Childcare Strong Grant Program. Quality care for quality kids would then pay monthly payments and monthly per-child payments to providers that are certified, licensed, or established by a school board.

Childcare Strong increases quality and affordability. It would annually provide \$53 million in GPR and repurposing \$17 million in TANIF funds by delinking Young Star initiative payments to providers for Shares authorizations. And for me, this is huge, and this is personal. And I know Silke feels the same way because when Young Star was first created, in other states, it wasn't a punitive program.

Other states, they provided additional funding to help childcare providers reach the Young Star quality ratings. But in Wisconsin, when it was implemented, it was implemented as a way to punish providers for providing lower-quality care, rather than helping to provide additional funding to help all providers reach a level of quality.

The governor's budget also provides \$3.3 million in social emotional learning initiatives to provide training and technical assistance for child development issues. And I'll stop right there because this list goes on and on.

I do want to say that on Friday, we got new papers for the budget. The way that it works is that the governor creates his budget with the things that he wants to see implemented for the state. But it's up to the joint finance as to what we are willing to keep or take out of the budget. And so there was conversations that Republicans were going to start from base and not necessarily accept many of the things that Governor Evers has in his budget.

Well, on Friday afternoon, at about 2:30, we received the budget from our Republican colleagues, and it pretty much takes out a lot, a lot of the governor's budget items. So this weekend, with a very large glass of watermelon soda, I will be reading that budget to see what's in there for childcare providers.

[00:33:23]

I will say that I did have a conversation with my Republican colleagues, and they talked about how happy they were that Young Star was going to be replaced because, apparently, they never liked that program either. Figures, they could have done something about it a long time ago, but anyways, but they were saying, and they had a conversation with me and asked the question, and their question was, would it be better for the rates to just mimic marketplace overall and get rid of a rating system all together?

And my answer was, that's the most important thing to make sure that the rates reflect market rate rates because that's how providers get their money to improve the quality in their centers but also find a way, you know, to help providers obtain that quality without providing punitive measures because you want to make sure that the quality of care is improving, just like the rates are.

So I'm really interested to see what the parts for childcare looks like, and I'll be reading that a little bit later today. But I was super excited to hear them say that they wanted to try and get the rates up to market rate. That's huge.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you so much, Senator. That's a lot of information to digest, and we're excited to hear what comes next. So I think we can move on to our questions. Thank you to everyone for joining us today. We have a marvelous panel of providers here for our virtual roundtable, who reflect the rich diversity of family childcare across varied cultures, languages, races, ethnicities, and more. We have shared a link to the fact sheet, or soon will, in the chat, which further shows that family childcare is the most diverse segment of the early childhood workforce.

It would be great if we could start just with a really brief go-around with our panel. If everyone wouldn't mind just saying your name, you're welcome to share the name of your program, how many years you've done childcare, whatever else you'd like to share. Denise, would you want to start us off?

[00:36:10]

**MERKIN:** Hi, good morning, everybody. It's been so inspirational to hear everybody thus far, and I look forward to sharing with you as well. I am an early childhood educator and have been in the field for over 39 years. I had my own family childcare for 36 years and love the profession. So happy to hear that people are moving forward, and people are starting to understand what it entails to have a quality program. And is there anything specific you wanted me to say, Kate?

**MODERATOR:** No, just brief introductions before we get into the questions that we have, just so people know who you are, so that's perfect.

**MERKIN:** Okay, thanks.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Denise. Do you want to tag somebody next?

**MERKIN:** Sure, I see Silke next to me on my screen.

**O'DONNELL:** Good morning, everybody. My name is Silke O'Donnell, and I'm a family childcare provider from Madison, Wisconsin. I have been doing family childcare for over 27 years, and I've been in the field of caring for children since I was about 15 years old. Started as a nanny in Germany, actually. I look forward to getting to know more about everyone here and listening and just thinking about all the things that affect our field. Thank you and welcome.

**MODERATOR:** Thanks, Silke. Do you want to tag somebody next? You were muted. Who did she say, Abby, I think? Abby, do you want to go?

**ABERSHAM:** Good morning, everybody. Happy May Day, happy Worthy Wages Day, and happy International Workers Day. What a beautiful day to be here. I am privileged to be here with you and honor to talk about family childcare.

My name is Abby Abersham, and I've been in the field of early childhood over three decades and have other education experience prior to that too. So here we go, two grandchildren I have, and I am helping their homeschooling as well. I am a teacher for children, registered . . . for teachers, trainer for teachers, and a consultant for parents. So very happy to be here, and I give it to Fernanda.

**LEPERASE:** Good morning, everyone. For this one, I would like to speak in Spanish if that's okay. I will switch channel. Okay. I'm just going to speak in Spanish for this part. [Spanish] Can you hear me? My name is Fernanda Leperase. I was born in Argentina. I am a family childcare provider from 2007. I live in Madison, as you see. I'm in my home. It's right here. It's full of things for children. And this is where I spend most of my day. I don't know anything else I'm supposed to say. I think that's all, thank you.

[00:40:05]

**MODERATOR:** That's perfect, thank you, Fernanda. Corrine, would you like to go next?

**HENDRICKSON:** Sure, I am Corrine Hendrickson. I have been a family childcare provider in New Glarus since 2007 as well, so 14 years. I have a 14-year-old son and a 12-year-old son. So I started when my oldest was ten months old, and had three pregnant friends who could not find childcare. So I said, if I quit my job, would you come to me? And they said yes. So I basically had . . .

**WOLFE:** Corrine, can you, Corrine, can you slow down just a little?

**HENDRICKSON:** Yep.

**WOLFE:** Sorry.

**HENDRICKSON:** I am also a consultant trainer and currently am mentoring some other providers here in Green County through a professional development block grant that we just received. So thanks.

**MODERATOR:** All right, thank you so much for those introductions. So to go ahead and get started, there are a lot of people from different sectors attending today. There's parents, policymakers, childcare providers, academics, and other people. All of you operate and own a small business, which is a lot. Can you talk about the different kind of roles that you play? In other words, can you describe the family childcare work, the tasks that you do every day, maybe a typical day? So that's our first question. And, Abby, would you like to start us out with that?

**ABERSHAM:** Sure, I would be delighted to. Well, it is not possible to tell you what a day looks like. But for those who are in center, family, in daycare centers, as teachers and administrator, as cook, as janitor, as program director, a teacher assistant, we are all of that in family daycare, all of those roles. We have, we wear many hats throughout the day.

[00:42:14]

And if I want to describe a day of family daycare, I have to describe the night before. It starts the evening, after the day. You clean up. You have to keep up with your emails, business emails. If you advocate, you have three times as much work to do that. If you are part of support group, you have another dedication there. So you have to be passionate. You have to be dedicated. You have to be flexible. You have to have a lot of sense of humor to do this business. You have to be strong business woman, and you have to have a very good sense of business. And you have to know how to budget, how to juggle. So you do all these things.

But the night before starts with that is shopping. Either you're doing training or workshops, or you are doing trainings. You are preparing for that. You have to keep up with the newsletters, with different organizations. You are licensed. You are accredited nationally, locally, state, city, all those standards, you have to be in compliance with them. So you look at these.

And then on top of it, the most important thing is that in the morning, you have to open your heart. You open the door. You open your heart because it's your home. And depending, it's so unique, it's so diverse, as Kate said, that you'd never know how it is each family daycare unless you enter one. And that's how you be amazed.

And then the morning, depending how early you open, there are providers open at 6:00 to 6:00. There are providers open, that myself, 8:00 to 5:00. So I have to start at 6:00 for 8:00 because I have to make sure my arrival area, if it's shared with my home, it's changing. I have to make changes in the environment, physical environment for arrival, and then get myself prepared for that. And if like you share like your home area, you don't have separate area for daycare in your home, you have to convert it for daycare, put things that is not safe for children away. And then you make yourself ready for arrival.

For arrival, you're another person now. You're a social, you're a communicator, a relation builder with parents. Now you open your door, welcome. And then you're problem solvers because at the same time another parent comes, two children, three children. So you have to have planning. You have to have areas. It's not like a center that you have another staff take them, and you just greet them. Or you don't even see the parents. So it's very intimate. It's relationship with parents you build, and you are together.

[00:45:23]

So they come, and at the same time, child has needs, so you have, then your roles is teacher, and you're adult for adult communication. And you are a teacher for children, and you have to be role model. How you juggle, how you're flexible, how you

interact depends how you model as early childhood professional for parents, your interaction. That's the time parents can really see how you do it.

So then you settle children. Then you welcome. And how it is, they come in, and you invite them to sit down. And then the same story happens throughout the rest of the day.

But then the best part of it for me, individual, is being a teacher with children. I discover with them. I explore with them. I play with them. I'm active with them. And that's the whole story that goes ahead.

And then I need, during that time, my full attention is with children, so I forget about the whole advocacy, regulatory agencies, everything. I'm just with children, focusing on their learning, on standards, where they are. I have to meet them, how to plan for them, what type of skills they are learning. Am I focusing on enhancing sensory needs, or am I focusing on early language and literacy, how I'm teaching them self-help, how I'm teaching them self-regulation, problem solving. And the list goes on and on. But I give it to my other panelists here. I don't know if I used my time or not. I don't have timer. But I give it to my other panelists.

**MODERATOR:** That's perfect, Abby, thank you so much, yeah. Would anyone else like to chime in about what your typical day is, what this work is? Denise, go ahead, or Silke, either one.

**O'DONNELL:** Go ahead, Denise.

**MERKIN:** Okay. Thank you, Silke. I just want to say, Abby, I agree with everything that you've said. I don't know how you put it all into such a small time period, but you did a beautiful job. I also want to say the many hats we wear is the love and passion that we have for the children and also assessing how the children are feeling that day. I mean, sometimes we do the diagnosing of illnesses. And, you know, parents will come to us to ask us to do that. And, you know, it is unbelievable how much we have to go through during the day.

[00:48:14]

We not only open our hearts and our homes to the children, but, as Abby said, the families as well. They look to us for so much guidance and help. They often come in, and they need a lot of information and help and support. And we can't turn them away. We have to create boundaries too but in a very loving way. Children are watching us, and parents are watching us all the time. And so we always have an effect on what we do. We're very much out there.

I also want to say my program was an inclusive program. And, you know, if a child came to me and it was discovered that they were deaf and could not hear or had allergy problems, we dealt with that too. We served them food. My program was organic and vegetarian. It goes on and on. But I'll hand it over to Silke now.

**O'DONNELL:** Yeah, both of you really covered a lot of what we do. And the only thing I can think about is I think a lot of people, through the pandemic, got a little bit of a taste

of what we do as far as balancing work and family. When you're working from home, our families are there. We have to make sure, you know, that our kids have what they need to go off to school. Or if the doorbell rings, we're still doing our job and doing all of these other things.

But we need to know that our programs always come first, so sometimes our families do come second. And I think, you know, through the pandemic, everybody working at home, maybe you got a little bit of taste of what that's like to have all these other distractions throughout the day and still remain focused on your job.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Denise and Silke. Corrine or Fernando, would you like to, okay, Fernando, did you want to share anything?

**LEPERASE:** I second what Abby, Silke, and Denise say. They put it out very well out there, and I appreciate your passion. I'm glad to be one of us. Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah, thank you. It's clear from everything all of you have said that this is an enormous, complex job. And it's a profession. It's not just a job. It is clearly a profession that has immense complexities to it. And all of you are managing multiple hats all throughout the day. And oftentimes, like you said, starting at 6:00, ending at 5:00 or 6:00. So it's a long day, ten hours or more. Sometimes you're juggling your own family. And there's just many, many things that you do that people don't realize.

[00:51:13]

In the interest of time, because we have a couple more questions, I'd love to get to the next question, which is, the pandemic has hit providers really hard and has also shown that they too are essential workers, taking care of our children. Can you describe your experience of going through, or trying to make it through, the pandemic?

You might consider how things have changed during COVID or how it has exacerbated problems that have always been there. Maybe you took on new things, or things got harder. Also, I welcome you to share what you did that you're really proud of and how you feel appreciated or not for all of your hard work. And, Corrine, since you didn't have a chance, would you like to start us off?

**HENDRICKSON:** Sure. So the pandemic definitely was mind boggling and stressful. We were included in with schools for all communication until March 16th. And then on that day, we were on our own. We were no longer included with schools. However, we didn't know this until Sunday evening when some of us received an email from DCF saying we were expected to stay open. I say some because they didn't have all of our email. So then we told other people, I guess we're open. And parents, it was difficult because parents didn't know, we didn't know what we were supposed to do.

So immediately, it shone the light that the communication needed to change. Several of us took it upon ourselves then to communicate that, you know, frustration with those in power. Some complained and didn't feel comfortable speaking up because they were afraid of retaliation because that is something too, that you're afraid

to speak up because then are they going to come in and shut my business down? And therefore, it affects everything else.

So I found that this administration was very welcoming to that feedback, and very appalled that that's what we got out of it, and immediately started trying to work to rectify that. There are still some relationship repairing that needs to be done. And again, it's based off of history, not just this administration, previous administrations and things like that.

Rollout of Young Star is an example of that. So as far as that goes, immediately, several of us found our voices. We found other people to talk to. We found other people to work with. And we worked together really hard with each other in our small networks, formal networks, informal networks. Wisconsin Early Childhood Association immediately started working, you know, to try and figure out contracts because how do we get paid if we're closed? This is something brand new. But if we don't get paid anything, how do we start back up? What is it that we need to do next?

[00:54:06]

So I feel like those were some of the better things because we did realize that we are important. Parents realized we are important. Other business owners realized we are important, and that just it kind of became a stepping stone for a much greater, I say collection of all of us working together, you know, not just in our little siloes anymore, which is also very important because, as everybody said, we are everything to these families. And we also are that first line.

And we need to be able to work with Department of Children and Families, Department of Public Instruction, Department of Health and Human Services, the USDA for the food program. Like people don't realize how many different people we actually interact with, you know, in a typical, I would say, day or week even sometimes.

So I feel like those are some of the great things that have come out of this, and also just laid bare what it is we need. And, you know, all of us are willing to put that work in, but we need help, and we need everybody who is on this call to also be helping figure out ways to talk to people. If you're not comfortable speaking up, writing is great. Find somebody who can read, know what you're writing, like give you some feedback and tweak it and make it sound great.

And don't be afraid to tell people, this is good, but I think you need to add more here, because you're afraid of insulting that person. No, they asked you for help. They want you to help them. So remembering, you know, those types of things.

And as far as with my children and, you know, in my program, it's been hard. I haven't, luckily, had to close at all, but it's always there, you know. People are getting vaccinated, which is fantastic, but our children are not. So adults are getting together, and the children are getting together and not continuing to hold that space. So they're, now you're seeing that it's the younger children that are now getting COVID. And with all of those things, we have to, you know, stay vigorous, I guess, with everything and hold the line until those vaccines come out for those youngest kids. So really working on those things.

And just this whole time, I've also really been looking more at my program, how to meet those kids' needs, their behavioral and mental health needs. Been working with



my county to try and get some of that support so that I can ask questions and get these kids, you know, the support that they need and deserve. We've gone mostly outside, so that has been fantastic for their behavior. I've never had kids behave better in my entire career.

And I honestly think it's because we're outside in nature, and they're, you know, I've always been very play based, but I'm really, besides the virtual learning that I have to get done with the kids, because I do support virtual learning, I have a child here with special needs who gets her therapy via computer as well, besides that, it's whatever the kids need and want. I'll get supplies out there, materials out there for them and do all those types of things. So I guess I would say it's been an experience. It's been stress. I would never want to do it again. But I would want all of the good things that are coming out of it to have some . . . thank you.

[00:57:14]

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Corrine. Go ahead, Silke, did you want to add, or Denise?

**O'DONNELL:** Yeah, I did. A lot of what Corrine said really was going through my mind. I was nodding my head a lot. For me, probably the most shocking is our home is our sanctuary for our own family. And when that pandemic hit, I felt that my family was no longer safe in our own home. And that was really, really scary to me because most people then closed their bubble, stayed home, but for me, that didn't work. So we're fortunate enough we have a second vacation home.

I had my husband and my daughter move 100 miles away to our vacation home immediately so that I knew they were safe because that was really a big burden on me, and just constantly thinking about all the children and the families that we care for. Are we doing the right thing by, are we keeping them safe? Are these children going to get sick? What's going to happen if they get sick? That burden, I think, the mental weight of that was so, so, it wasn't the cleaning. It wasn't the paperwork. Yeah, we had to come up with where were we going to get PPE, you know. Here are all these policies we have to rewrite. We have new licensing rules we have to keep following even during this pandemic. We have to, you know, be creative and flexible.

I always run my program outside, so that part was easy for me. But my teacher and I split up, and we became nannies for two of our essential worker families. And am I keeping my teacher safe? That part, for me, was the hardest. And that was probably the most deciding factor to actually drive me to close my business now because it was such a stressful year. I am closing at the end of May. And it saddens me because I had a couple more years to go. But that part made it the toughest, I think, for me is just the responsibility I feel towards the children I care for.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you. Thank you, Silke. Denise, did you want to add?

**MERKIN:** Yes, can you hear me? Yes, okay. So I did want to add, you know, my last day was also March 13th. And who would have known that that would have been my last day in my program? I continue to teach virtually, via Zoom, to all ten of my children. And it was unbelievable. I mean, never did I ever think that my early childhood career

would end up being kind of like on television, because that's what it felt like. But I've started to feel like an entertainer. But it was so important to the children and families for me to continue to have contact because I couldn't see them.

[01:00:00]

I also had to think of my family. Because of underlying health conditions, I could not continue my program. And I then decided to close at the end of the year, even though my last day with the children was March 13th, which is so hard to imagine last year of 2020. I never thought that that would happen. It was a huge decision and very difficult. Ended up selling my home and donating all of my equipment from the last 39 years. But I'm still in contact with the families, and, you know, the connection is unbelievable. And then I agree with everything that Silke and Corrine has said too. I mean, yeah, it's, the work that has had to be done is enormous.

**MODERATOR:** Mm-hmm. Abby, did you want to add?

**ABERSHAM:** Yes, I wanted, yes, all of these, everybody said. Like Denise, I had to close my doors for my age category, so close my doors to physical entrance of children. But I never closed my heart, and I stayed open to the community. I started giving even more, back more to my community. Been always advocate, like what Daithi was talking about, Worthy Wages Day, I was there with my kids making banners, visiting the senator's office, Worthy Wages Day gathering. And yes, I'm thankful that Oma was mentioned. We had very good leaders in this community and have it.

And I saw things in my community, and nationally, the connection. We got closer during this pandemic, participating in a lot of virtual webinars through national, local, state. And we received a lot of support from ECE(?) organization VICO(?), VISEN(?), Satellite(?), DCF, NAEYC, NAFIC(?). They stayed very up to date.

They shared information. They sent so many emails, so many supportive webinars, free webinars, trainings. So I did stay connected, and I did, myself did many virtual training nationally and locally. I formed a supportive group, support group for providers to include all satellite providers with my friends of . . . providers who are a supportive group of satellite family childcare.

And we reached out, and we helped each other virtually. We miss all those hugs. Unlike Corrine and Fernanda and Silke, who had the connection with kids, we miss those connections as physically connection. So that was missing. That was hard.

[01:03:14]

But I stayed connected with my community. We had people like . . . that he played music that connected us through music. And also, Daithi's music kept me going. And my battery is dying, I'm sorry. I have to . . .

**MODERATOR:** That's okay. We have one more question. And I'm conscious of time, but I also, Fernanda, would you like to say anything about the last question?

**LEPERASE:** Yes, thank you. I wanted to add to all of what my colleagues say that I didn't close my business. We've had great communication with the families and took care of each other. And I love them for that. But I did hurt my back for all the extra bending for cleaning that I had to do. And at a point, I thought I should hire somebody because I won't be able to do this for more longer, for longer.

And when I did my numbers, like I can't hire anyone, you know, that I could pay a decent wage. So I kept doing the work, didn't close. I'm doing therapy for my back now and hoping, hoping there is a change somehow so we can get those funds to have, to hire people. I would like to hire another teacher and fill my house with all the children I can have in here, which I cannot have working on my own, if that makes sense. Hiring another teacher will open spots for new, for families who are in need. Yeah, so we are helping each other.

But for that, we need funds, funds to be able to pay a decent wage to other teachers and ourselves because we pay for healthcare. We pay for so many things that, yeah, other people get through their jobs. Like I had to pay for, save money for retirement, for example. I do it with my income. And I just wanted to add that.

[01:06:15]

**MODERATOR:** Thank you so much, Fernanda, and everyone. Thank you for sharing some of the profoundly difficult things that many of you have had to endure this past year. Even though lots of benefits also happened, it sounds like so much more kind of collective work is being done with one another, and that's a real benefit and something to be really proud of, how everyone has done it in their own way. And it's clear that we need to recognize all of you from a societal point of view.

I think we have time for our last question if we can squeeze it in because we want to have questions at the end. So we'll try to maybe, we just need another webinar to share more because, obviously, we all have so much to say. And I'm so excited that all of you are sharing from your hearts. And again, thank you so much. Those are hard things to share, and I just want to be very, very appreciative of those difficult things that you've shared today with us.

So the last question is that it's clear providers are truly essential, pandemic or not. Providers are a public good. However, family childcare providers are in crisis. These brilliant providers are not recognized as the professionals and experts as they are. To our audience, we made this a public event because this is a crisis that we all must address collectively. And it's our responsibility. So providers, I wanted to ask you about your typical workday. And then I wanted to ask you to consider your ideal workday.

What can we, as society and taxpayers, provide for you to make you feel appreciated, like the essential workers you are, improving your quality of life and quality of work? In other words, what do you need, and what do you want? And I know that's a big question, and we only have a few minutes left, but I would love to hear your answers. So, Silke, did you raise your hand? Did you want to go? Go ahead.

**O'DONNELL:** I actually have a very, very simple answer. I would like society, as a whole, to look at childcare or daycare, or whatever we call it, and think of it as the most

important early childhood education their children could ever have. And in that, I think the workforce needs to be supportive that they earn a decent living wage, have retirement opportunities, and have health insurance opportunities, like all other workers in this world.

[01:09:20]

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Silke. Go ahead, Denise.

**MERKIN:** Well put, Silke. I also want to say that early childhood is the foundation of the start for these children and our next generation. And there's so much brain research study that has been done about the early years and the formative years and how important that is. We know all this now, and it's time for us to do things. Most of us are inclusive programs because we have a child from a young age and don't know what their needs will be until it starts to unfold. And having resources for parents, you know, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language. Those things cost a fortune.

And often, when you have children with special needs, you need another adult with some early childhood experience to help you do your best for the child and the other children and the families. And some of us who were able to take an exact half cut in salary to hire those staff did it because that was our way of contributing to society because it's such an important need. But on a state level and a federal level, that's something that needs to be included as soon as possible. Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** Thank so much, Denise. Abby, did you want to go?

**ABERSHAM:** Yes, I wanted to say this is, what we want is not just for childcare workforce. We want it for families. It's together, whatever we are doing for community, it has to include childcare and families as this. I'm so excited about the new, the Childcare and Working Family Act. I'm very excited and hopeful, hopeful for our President's American Family Plan. It is wonderful. It is wonderful. Even if it gets a little cut by other party, we still get that. And I'm very hopeful.

But I want to give you something. 60.7% of women were in the workforce in 2018, 62.7%. And then during pandemic, 2.3 million women lost their job because of childcare, linked to childcare, most of it, part of it. And in compare it, men who were only 1.8 million. And even before pandemic, it cost the revenue \$700 billion for working families lack of adequate childcare. That's how much was costing the country, the revenue, \$700 billion inadequate childcare.

[01:12:30]

And then so many left the childcare field. And here we are with this plan. This is what I want. I want that this plan that they have, first of all, I hope, I hope that federal and state, they bring a team of experts, not just the business owners, not just the corporate owners, not just the policymakers, not just the politicians, but also childcare experts throughout the country, state, federal, all those administrators, all those

teachers, young, and students, and teachers, family daycare, center administrators, NAEYC, NAFIC(?), state organization.

Bring them all, all these stakeholders, and then not to look at ECE as an isolated challenge, as an isolated problem. It has to be comprehensive. It has to be jobs for families. It has to be health insurance for families, housing for families. And all of this has to come . . . unless we do this, we never get anywhere. And when they are doing this universal preschool, we have to look at the existing trend, what we have, and then bring different perspective from different groups, and look at the other models in other countries, developed countries, who were successful, and they are doing it.

We just use that model in, in also . . . and then we try to craft a new progress. Then we craft it with all these input of these experts. Bring them in, and then we put it, then we also include other existing programs, just not universal preschool . . . and wipe out the others. So bring them all together. And I hope that happens in this various perspective and resources, bring it to . . . address the adequate childcare availability, access, and quality childcare be available to all. Thank you.

[01:15:02]

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Abby. We have, we have a little bit of time at the end for questions, but I really want to hear from Corrine and Fernanda, if you would like to share a little bit about your vision.

**LEPERASE:** Adding to what my colleagues say again because they're on the point. That's it. What I'm missing, as a child, as a family childcare provider, is somebody asking me what to do, how can I help you? I am missing . . . I'm missing hours for self-care. I'm missing hours for professional development. I am going to stop. I'm working on my bachelor's degree.

But I'm going to stop because I'm exhausted, and I cannot keep going doing the work I'm doing, with all the extra work. So an extra teacher would be so much appreciated. And this will also help me and the families and children I work with. And what else do I want to add? I think health insurance, retirement benefits, and, yeah. I'll leave it like that. So much more, but I'll leave it.

**HENDRICKSON:** Yes, exactly what everybody else had said, especially what Fernanda has said, because it is true. We feel guilty if we take a day off because we know our families then have to take a day off. So respite care would be amazing and, you know, even the funds to be able to pay someone. So what I'll just kind of say, respect is the number-one thing that I want, respect for what we do, respect for the professionalism, respect for our knowledge, respect for our expertise, respect for everything that it is we do, from the smallest, tiny thing of putting a Band-Aid on a child who fell, to the big, huge thing of ensuring that they're developing, developmentally appropriate practices and environment and that they're developing how they should be, could be.

You know, and then if they're not, knowing how to talk to those parents about that, knowing where to go, how to refer a child to Birth to Three, how to refer a child to the school district, and then having the respect from those places to come in and

acknowledge and understand and use our facility as the place for them to get their services.

[01:17:55]

Because I can watch, the child I have right now is doing phenomenal because I sit with her for her therapy session. I know what they're doing. I then do that with her all the time. Her parents, I talk to her parents at pickup, and I show them the same things. So she has just excelled beyond all of our wildest imagination. And it's 15 minutes a day that she's getting, that's it. But it's because we're all working together as equals, as professionals who understand and want what's best for these kids and their families.

And, you know, as others were saying, we put a dollar in now, or we pay 16 later for higher incarceration rates, for higher health costs, because that brain development and that stress of anything happening in these little lives turns into other healthcare problems as they age. So really, we are number one in what's happening in this society. And if our families want to choose to stay home, that is amazing and awesome, but we need to then have these same types of programs that are available to . . . visits so that their parents get that same sort of support because if you're, we're isolated as family childcare, you stay home with your own child, you are really isolated because so few do it.

So you need that support too, even if, you know, so it needs to be comprehensive and looked at as from the child, what systems do we need to put into place? How can we do that? Make sure everybody is at the table and respected at that table, listened to at that table, and just go from there and create what it is we need because it will cost our society so much less in the long run. Our society will be happier. The mental health and everything, which will tremendously go down in those costs and things like that too. So we definitely, that's my dream. That's what I'm going for. That's what I'm pushing for.

And in the form of that universal childcare, you know, preschool does not have to be in K-12 because, just because we think K-12 is free. No, childcare should also be free because it's education. They start learning the minute, you know, they come out of the womb, basically. You know, they learn if they cry, they get held. You know, they learn all of those things. And they learn by watching others. And when we put kids in the K-12 systems, even some group centers, they're only within age group, and they move along with that age group. They never see kids older and younger.

Our society, humans are social. We learn by watching and interacting with others. So those babies learn by watching those others. I have kids that are like two and three, and if I have an infant who starts to crawl, parents are like, they're regressing, they're crawling. I'm like, no, they're teaching those little ones how to crawl. They're teaching them how to go up the steps and down the steps. And, you know, they learn patience. They learn all kinds of different things from each other.

So really looking at how we're creating environments and making sure that they are, you know, play based, which means the teacher stays out of the way and supports those kids in what they need. And, you know, it's like a play buzz, kind of happy kind of

going on, like a bee hive type thing. But making sure that those things happen. But number-one thing is we have to get the respect. Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** Oh, thank you so much to all of you for sharing your vision with what you need and being so specific. It's so clear that we need to invest in all of you, invest in our early childhood systems. And like Abby said, look to other models. And, of course, this is where I'm going to say Denmark has a model that's been going for over 50 years. It's there, and it includes family childcare as part of the public system.

[01:21:23]

And so we need to look at systems that are working, and we need to invest early because also, like Corrine said, if we invest early, we save money later. And just quickly, a child with subsidies who's four years old might get \$70 from the state. We look at what a prisoner costs the state. It's \$750 a week. So \$70 versus \$750, we have to collectively reprioritize where we're putting our dollars. And if we put them in systems of care, we learn how to care about each other early. We take care of problems early, nip those things in the bud.

And so, so important, so thank you so much for all of you. We could talk so much longer. There's so many important things that we all said. We only have a few minutes left for questions.

**WOLFE:** Kate, there's a few things in the chat if I could share, in terms of comments and questions.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah, let's get to questions.

**WOLFE:** Yeah. So first of all, I'll just read a comment. This is from Maime(?) Thomas. She is a mentor in the Family Childcare Program. And she says, I am in strong agreement with all the comments, providers, and educators. This is a great profession, working with children and families, one of the most rewarding professions. It's the most important part of a child's life, and all workers in this field should be respected in all ways, including benefits, physical, emotional, and financial.

And then a couple people, both Peggy and Heidi, asked about health insurance and healthcare. So I know it's something Fernanda mentioned. So the question is, do you have adequate healthcare? Do you have health insurance? Do you buy health insurance, or how do you have access to healthcare? So I don't know if anybody wants to address that one. Fernanda, you talked about it a little bit.

**MODERATOR:** Go ahead, Silke, and we'll see how many questions we can get to.

**O'DONNELL:** Since my husband was also self-employed, we have had to pay out of pocket. In the last couple of years have been between \$1,639 and \$1,776 a month with a lot of out of pocket and copays on top of that.

**LEPERASE:** I would like to share that I . . . for many years. And while paying a . . . I had to pay for insurance. I'm . . . too, so now that I am a citizen, I get insurance from the government. But before, I had to pay because I did not meet the citizenship.

[01:24:11]

**MODERATOR:** Thank you for asking that.

**LEPERASE:** A lot of people don't know these things. Yeah, it was very expensive because I had to pay for me and my son.

**HENDRICKSON:** I'm fortunate. My husband has great insurance because he's a full-time firefighter.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you.

**WOLFE:** There's another comment in the chat from Judy. Thank you so much. You're champions and advocates for all of us. I'm working with an organization in Pittsburgh that is trying to better meet the needs and advocate for home-based providers. Your stories are essential, so thank you. And, Kate, we are at 10:30, so just want to think about wrapping up.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah. I hate to wrap up. I will stay on longer, and anyone else is welcome to stay along with us. I guess out of, to respect the time that we did have allotted, I guess I would just wrap things up and say a giant thank-you to all of you for sharing from your hearts. And it's just amazing to have all of you here today. And I hope that people take away the fact that we have to collectively do this as a society to make changes.

Corrine made some suggestions of what you can do, but it takes all of us. It's everybody's problem to solve. So I hope if there's one take-away, that's one of them. And just a giant thank-you to everyone for being here today. And hopefully, we can have more talks like these and learn more from all of you. So thank you for all of your work. I will stay on.

**ABERSHAM:** I just wanted to thank Kids Forward Organization for putting this together. Thank you, Kate, Daithi, and others. And thank your State Senate and Janean, LaTonya, thank you.

**WOLFE:** Well, and I just want to give a big shout-out and thank you to Kate, who's been our public humanities fellow through the UW at Kids Forward for this past year and this wonderful project. And look for more because all of the providers on here have participated in interviews with Kate that will be turned into a podcast that is coming up. So lots of, more, this is just, there's lots to come.

**MODERATOR:** That's right. The blog that I wrote is just now published. I think you shared it in the chat.



**WOLFE:** Yep.

**MODERATOR:** It's the first three interviews with three of you, just beautiful, beautiful stories. And there will be another one coming out, and, like Daithi said, transcripts and recordings will also be on the website, so keep posted. Lots of gratitude in the chat.

[01:27:16]

**WOLFE:** Janean, did you want to say anything?

**DILWORTH-BART:** I was just writing in the chat just a thank-you. My husband just came in and has muffins for breakfast. So but thank you for having me. It was great to hear this really important information. And so just thank you. I was just realizing just how wonderful it is to be able to hear and the gift that you've given by allowing us to listen to your stories and your perspectives. So thank you.

**WOLFE:** Thanks, everyone.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, everybody. Lots of wonderful comments, all of you.