



IOWA WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

Improving the lives of Iowa's women & girls

2021 Policy Brief - Talking Points

Without child care there is no economic recovery for Iowa's families, businesses and communities. Child care is an essential workforce support. A core economic issue that impacts both workers and employers.

The following policy recommendations will help increase the availability of quality affordable child care, strengthen the child care workforce, increase businesses success, strengthen Iowa communities and ultimately support Iowa's economic recovery.

The Iowa Women's Foundation and community partners are working together to improve the availability of quality affordable child across Iowa through increased awareness, feasible community-specific solutions and targeted public policy.

Public Private Partnership

Request: Provide funding for public private partnership with the purpose of stabilizing and growing the child care industry

- A Public Private Partnership (PPP) dedicated to the promotion of child care is a strategy coordinated by a diverse group including the ECI State Board, ECI area boards, the Iowa Women's Foundation, members from the business sector and other interested philanthropic organizations. The PPP strategy uses private and public funding to support creative partnerships at a local level that directly impact child care and indirectly support the local business sector and the overall economy in a community.
- Appropriate \$500,000 to a public private partnership account to support increasing the availability of quality affordable child care
- Funds will also be provided through corporate and philanthropic donations
- Funds would support community efforts to build child care capacity and support the child care workforce
- Access to affordable, reliable high-quality child care can help increase work availability for parents, limiting instances in which parents must choose between their work and their family. It helps businesses by reducing employee turnover and absenteeism, factors that impact their bottom line.
- Funds will be distributed through a grant process coordinated by a state-level committee that is created by the ECI State board.
- Matching dollars will be required from local contributions at a percentage set by the committee created by the ECI State Board.

Child Care WAGE\$®

Request: Increase funding to adequately support and expand WAGE\$® statewide

- Child Care WAGE\$® IOWA (WAGE\$) is a salary supplement program.
- WAGE\$ offers salary supplements (also called stipends) to the early care and education workforce, based on the individual's level of formal education and commitment to their program.
- Currently WAGE\$® is offered in 38 counties, supported through Early Child Iowa local boards, and supplements the wages of 280 providers
- WAGE\$® supplements are direct workforce support that address the key identified workforce issues; 1) education, 2) low compensation, and 3) high turnover. Supplement awards are based on education achieved and continued employment as a home-based child care business owner or a child care center staff person.
- Expanding statewide would support the child care workforce addressing key issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover.
- Increased support would add more than 1,500 providers to the program
- \$5,000,000 would support WAGE\$® statewide and enable Early Child Iowa Local boards to support additional local programs (approximately \$270,000 of currently allocated funds)
- Funds would be managed by the Child Care WAGE\$® IOWA Program at Iowa AEYC who maintains the sole source license for WAGE\$ in Iowa.
- Funds would support salary supplements to qualifying members of the early care and education workforce, staffing costs, outreach and recruitment efforts and administrative program costs.
- **The \$7 million included in the Governor's proposed budget is a one-time commitment with the use of CARES dollars.**
- **WAGE\$ is an ongoing program that needs to be sustained and not funded just once**

Before and After School Grants Program

Request: Reinstate the Before and After School Grants program that was established in 2007 to create a state funding stream for before and after school, and summer programs

- Afterschool programs keep children safe, inspired to learn and offer parents peace of mind and child care while working
- Children in afterschool programs are building life skills, getting help with homework, engaging in STEM and/or computer science learning opportunities, taking part in physical education, receiving healthy snacks or meals, and interacting with peers and building social skills
- In Iowa in 2020, America After 3PM found that for every child in an afterschool program, 4 are waiting to get in, with 127,592 children alone and unsupervised after school
- The number of children left without afterschool in Iowa is on the rise. There are now 195,758 children (41%) in Iowa who would be enrolled in an afterschool program if one were available
- Many rural communities around Iowa, have no afterschool programs and children are home alone, hanging out on the streets or going to the local libraries
- Many states across the country, including neighboring states around Iowa (Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska) have designated appropriations for afterschool programs, but Iowa does not.

- \$500,000 would create a much needed funding stream for before and after school, and summer programs
- Like the previously funding Before and After School Grants program, these funds would be managed and awarded by the Iowa Department of Education with support from the Iowa Afterschool Alliance to provide technical assistance and professional development to grantees.
- Funds would support grants of \$30,000-\$50,000 to public and private organizations to create and expand before school, after school, and summer programs. Applicants would be required to have a match for these funds.

Child Provider Reimbursement Rate

Request: Increase child provider reimbursement rates to the 75% percentile of the 2020 Market Rate Survey (MRS) for all providers participating in the QRS program

Child Care Assistance

Request: Increase Child Care Assistance entrance limits to the 185% incrementally at 5% annually

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