

Kids Forward: Wisconsin awarded \$10 million to improve outcomes for young children

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The following is a statement by Ken Taylor, Executive Director of Kids Forward, about the Preschool Development Grant.

Madison, WI — *“Kids Forward is excited to work with Wisconsin’s early childhood community to improve the well-being of our youngest children, particularly children of color and those furthest from opportunity, through the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) that was announced earlier today.*

Study after study shows that the best public investment we can make is in high quality early learning for young children. Leadership from the top is very important, so it is great that this work to improve equity and quality in early care and education will be led by Governor Evers, The First Lady, State Superintendent Stanford Taylor and Secretary-designee Amundson. It is also good to engage broader stakeholders, like business, healthcare and higher education.

At the same time, it is also essential that this effort to connect the dots on behalf of children, families and communities includes the voices of those families and communities, particularly those who tend to get shut out of the policy making process. Parents are the experts on their children and families, and early learning educators are the experts on service provision and what they need to better support the families they serve. The process embarked upon through the PDG must listen to their voices and learn from their expertise and their experiences.

It is also important that we center communities of color and those furthest from opportunity in our efforts. Unfortunately, the children, families and communities of Wisconsin experience some of the deepest and broadest [racial disparities](#) in the nation. The causes are complex, and the components of the solution are many. And we know that better supporting our youngest children and their families is a key part of the solution, and this is exactly what the Preschool Development Grant is designed to do.

A friend of mine often says “Let’s be smart enough to do the smartest thing we can do for our kids.” This grant can be a catalyst to help us create a system that is more coordinated, higher quality, and better able to meet the needs of Wisconsin’s children more equitably and more affordably.”

About Kids Forward

Kids Forward aspires to make Wisconsin a place where every child thrives by advocating for effective, long-lasting solutions that break down barriers to success for children and families. Using research and a community-informed approach, Kids Forward works to help every child, every family and every community thrive, notably children and families of color and those furthest from opportunity.

For more information visit www.kidsforward.net