

# **Gov. Evers, DCF Secretary Amundson: Announce \$50 million for additional child care counts payments for early care and education**

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today with Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Emilie Amundson announced \$50 million in funding for an additional round of Child Care Counts payments for early care and education.

“Throughout our public health emergency, Wisconsin has been a leader in prioritizing the needs of the early care and education community,” said Gov. Evers. “We know what’s best for kids is best for our state, and we have to connect the dots by making sure our families have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality child care so more people can remain in our workforce.”

Wisconsin has now set aside over \$130 million of its Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding for early care and education, one of the highest rates of CARES Act dollars invested in early care and education. These critical investments of CARES funding continue to help Wisconsin stabilize the early care and education system, allowing child care providers to offer high-quality child care for Wisconsin families. They also helped counter an alarming loss of available child care. This March, roughly 40 percent of providers (1,729) reported to DCF they had closed their doors. That figure now stands at 5.3 percent (237 providers).

“I want to thank the governor for his commitment to Wisconsin’s children and families,” said DCF Secretary Amundson. “And I also want to thank the thousands of early care educators who have provided a safe, high-quality home for children to learn and grow during these unprecedented times. You’ve helped families like mine and allowed women like me to remain connected to the workforce and their careers.”

The Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Supplementary Payment Program - Round 2 has identical criteria to the most recent awards. It consists of two programs targeted at the current challenges early care and education providers face. Applications and program eligibility details will be available starting October 26, 2020, on [DCF’s website](#), with the application window closing November 6, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Payment notifications will be issued on November 14, 2020.

The individual payment programs are detailed below.

### **Providing safe, healthy, and high-quality child care opportunities**

This program is intended to support the costs of maintaining or enhancing compliance status, quality level (YoungStar rating), and increasing health and safety practices. Funds will help ensure high-quality care is available across state, specifically at younger ages where reasonable alternatives to child care do not exist.

### **Funding staff recruitment and retention efforts**

As providers move back to regular operations, many have struggled to bring back staff due to depressed wages. This program is designed to support the costs associated with recruiting and retaining high-quality staff.

NOTE: DCF recently launched an initiative to connect families with local child care, including [an interactive map](#) that displays open, available care.