

# Opportunity Wisconsin: COVID-19 and childcare

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GREEN BAY, Wis. — As President Trump claims COVID-19 “affects virtually nobody,” Opportunity Wisconsin, joined by Milwaukee Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic, [convened a group of parents and childcare providers](#) to discuss how the Trump administration’s failure to lead has created an unnecessary crisis for so many across the Badger State.

“Everyday we’re just trying to get through each day on top of the fear of the pandemic itself, the fear of finances,” said Alderwoman Dimitrijevic. “We were promised time and time again to get funding or relief from the federal administration, and quite frankly we just feel completely forgotten about, even to this date. Nothing has gotten better – it’s actually gotten worse. It just feels like there’s no end in sight.”

“The economic impacts of COVID-19 have disrupted the lives of Americans across the country, but the crisis didn’t have to be this bad,” said moderator Kyra Swenson, a Fitchburg early childhood educator and Opportunity Wisconsin steering committee member. “The Trump administration has mishandled both the health and economic response to the pandemic, and deaths continue to rise daily. Schools reopening this fall have brought renewed spikes of the virus, while federal aid to workers and families has been slow and minimal, especially compared with the bailouts to huge corporations.”

President Trump and his allies have already pushed our country into a completely unnecessary crisis and have refused to allow critically-needed support for workers and families to pass. The House passed legislation more than four months ago to protect the incomes of unemployed workers and extend key lifelines for workers and families.

“I did luck out and got a PPP, but 6% of family childcare centers [across the country] got a PPP, and only around 20% of group centers. We definitely did not get enough,” said Corrine Hendrickson, a New Glarus childcare provider. “There was a \$50 billion Child Care is Essential Act that was going to strengthen and subsidize and get our industry going. It passed the House, but it’s not even seeing the light of day in the Senate. The latest bill from the Senate had \$0 for child care in it. I’m really feeling quite hopeless that we’re not going to get anything.”

President Trump and Majority Leader McConnell have done nothing but delay and obstruct. If they continue ignoring these crises and spend the coming weeks focused solely on a Supreme Court seat that should be left for the next administration to fill, these crises will only get worse.

“Our income has been cut in half since this started,” said Charli Sevrin, a Green Bay parent. “I am still waiting on my unemployment, which I filed for in March. It’s really unfortunate because we pay taxes and we do our duties as Americans, and I just don’t feel like I’m worth anything during this scary, scary time.”

Even before the pandemic, access to quality child care was largely dependent on economic status. When COVID-19 hit, newly unemployed Wisconsinites were forced to reassess their childcare needs. Many families faced impossible and incredibly difficult decisions around the health, safety, and education of their children. With schools and childcare centers beginning to reopen, these difficult decisions are not going away.

“The dehumanization of the situation – of knowing that you are electing people who are literally ok with letting you die just so they can get money – is infuriating,” said Christin DePouw, a Green Bay parent. “It’s incredible and it’s disgusting. And so many people don’t have the choice to stay home like I do.”

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