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May 15, 2008

The Honorable James Doyle
Governor of Wisconsin
115 East State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Governor Doyle:

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) urges you to support the entire Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy funding package, including the language that would end the emergency rule absence policy, in the budget adjustment bill passed by the legislature. We also ask that you end the Under-Utilization policy (UU50) Emergency Rule.

The Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program is a critical support for low-income working families and ensures that providers receive the payment they need to supply this valuable service. The change proposed by DWD in the absence policy flies in the face of good child care business practices. Child care programs incur the cost of serving a child regardless of their absence. They must staff for expected enrollment and cannot simply reduce staff because some children are absent on a given day. Fee-paying parents are required to pay the full cost for their child's slot, regardless of usage.

This change is especially harmful when it comes on top of payment rates that have been frozen since 2006 (and are expected to remain frozen for another year or more), and a proposal to raise family co-payments again. The combination of these policies is resulting in serious consequences for families and child care programs.

Please sign a budget adjustment bill that includes \$18.6 million for funding the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. We also ask that you keep the language that would prohibit the department from implementing the absence policy that hurts kids and their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Jacklitz
Acting Director