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Child Care Owners and Administrators to Highlight State's Child Care Workforce Crisis at State Capitol This Week

Owners and administrators of group child care centers across the state will descend upon the State Capitol this week in conjunction with the Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association's (WCCAA) annual conference at the Madison Concourse Hotel. It will be an opportunity for WCCAA members to discuss the child care workforce crisis confronting the state and ways the state can address the crisis through the state budget.

On Wednesday, many conference attendees will go to the Capitol for a tour and photograph. That afternoon, the conference agenda will include a panel discussion that includes a key legislator who has worked on child care issues, a Joint Finance aide who has also been a leader on child care in the Legislature, and WCCAA's two lobbyists. On Thursday, many attendees will again go to the Capitol for meetings with their legislators.

In their meetings with legislators, WCCAA conference attendees will discuss WCCAA's key legislative priorities, which include:

- 1) **Opposition to the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) plan to expand 4K/3K.** The DPI budget is proposing full-day funding for 4K across the state, and 3K startup grants for the five largest Wisconsin school districts. WCCAA opposes these proposals because they will take students from the current child care sector. Child care centers desperately need three- and four-year-olds in order to make their centers sustainable going forward. In addition, centers would lose employees to public schools with the 4K/3K expansions.
- 2) **Support for a significant increase in funding for the Wisconsin Shares subsidy rates,** which have essentially been frozen for more than 10 years. State law and federal guidelines say that rates should be at the 75th percentile of the market. But, according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, rates were at the 23rd percentile of the market at the start of the 2017-19 biennium and dropping. A modest increase was approved last year by the Legislature. While greatly appreciated, the increase will probably not have a significant impact on the rates' market standing.
- 3) **Support for the Early Education Workforce Tax Credit** that was recommended by the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, co-chaired by Governor Tony Evers, who was State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time, along with former DCF Secretary Eloise Anderson.

WCCAA members look forward to making the case for a strong and vibrant child care industry in the state.