



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Lawmakers Announce Launch of Children’s Caucus**

*Bipartisan group will focus on evidence-based policy*

MADISON – To mark National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a group of bipartisan legislators headed by State Senator Julie Lassa (D-Stevens Point) and Representative Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) announced the organization of the first Wisconsin Legislative Children’s Caucus.

The goal of the caucus will be to research and advocate for promising, evidence-based public policy that will improve the quality of life for all Wisconsin’s children, the lawmakers said.

“The Wisconsin Legislative Children’s Caucus was developed over several months and with the input of several legislators and community stakeholders,” said Rep. Ballweg. “On behalf of Sen. Lassa and myself, we’d like to thank everyone who has collaborated with us to bring this important issue to the forefront.”

“Children are our most precious resource, and their well-being has a tremendous impact on the health of our entire society,” Sen. Lassa said. “That’s why I’m pleased that the Children’s Caucus will bring legislators together to meet with well-respected researchers and economists, and explore how to translate their latest findings into model public policy.”

In preparation for launching the caucus, members have met with expert researchers in such areas as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the economics of investing in early childhood education, and the science of early childhood brain development to explore what public policies will make a difference in addressing these issues. The lawmakers aim not only to help Wisconsin’s children succeed but to better prepare our future workforce.

Along with Sen. Lassa and Rep. Ballweg, eight bipartisan legislators representing both chambers contributed to the development of the Wisconsin Legislative Children’s Caucus: Sen. Alberta Darling, Sen. Nikiya Harris Dodd, Sen. Chris Larson, Sen. Luther Olsen, Rep. Jill Billings, Rep. Eric Genrich, Rep. John Jagler, and Rep. Jessie Rodriguez.

April was first declared Child Abuse Prevention Month by presidential proclamation in 1985. Since then, organizations such as the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and other partners dedicated to protecting children and strengthening families, have used this time each year to raise awareness of the importance of families, communities, and policy makers working together to prevent child maltreatment.

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