F O R   I M M E D I A T E   R E L E A S E

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DCF Announces Community Innovation Grant Recipients
Childcaring Receives $150,000 to Expand GSG Program to Three Rural Counties

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has awarded roughly $850,000 in Community Innovation Grants (CIG) to eight organizations across the state to expand available early care and education opportunities for young children ages birth to five and their families.

The grants, which are funded from the state's Preschool Development Grant – Birth to 5 (PDG B-5) award, ranged in size from $50,000 to $150,000 and support innovative programs and partnerships that address areas of equity, access, affordability, quality, and workforce as highlighted in the state's Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan. The grants are also being utilized to develop stronger public-private partnerships that will serve as models for future community investments in other parts of the state.

"Having access to high-quality early care and education opportunities is critical for our communities to thrive," said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. "These grants are a deliberate step to begin engaging community businesses and organizations to connect with their early care and education system to learn about their role in supporting a healthy local economy."

"Childcaring, Inc. is extremely pleased to be one of the eight organizations across the state awarded the Community Innovation Grants (CIG) from the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Childcaring is assisting families in gaining access to high-quality, affordable early care and education by expanding its Good Start Grants (GSG) program to three new counties (Langlade, Lincoln, Taylor)," said Childcaring Assistant Director Micki Krueger.

The GSG program provides personalized assistance to families by helping them find care that best meets their needs, as well as funding to cover the costs. Additionally, Childcaring will be providing local programs with stipends to help achieve or maintain a YoungStar rating.

"To date, in Marathon and Portage County GSG has helped 279 families (a total of 427 children). Expanding GSG to more counties is a great financial resource for families," said Childcaring GSG Coordinator Rachele Johnson. Families struggling to pay for child care costs in Langlade, Lincoln or Taylor County are encouraged to contact Childcaring or reach out to their current child care program for more information.

Through local investment activities like the CIGs, the department is working to connect the dots across state and local programs to better serve all Wisconsin children and families. New opportunities for funding will be available in the coming year and beyond as the state continues its work to improve Wisconsin's early childhood system. DCF encourages anyone who could be a stakeholder to apply.

Eight organizations are receiving grants in this first round of funding. The full list of recipients can be found in the DCF press release. To learn more about DCF's efforts to improve the state's early childhood system and upcoming opportunities to participate, visit DCF's PDG webpage or follow @WisDCF on Twitter and Facebook. This release is also available via PDF file.

Contact Childcaring to learn more about the Good Start Grant program and other services available to help pay for child care. Call 1-800-628-8534, email info@childcaring.org, or follow @ChildcaringInc on Facebook.

About Childcaring Childcaring's mission is to enhance and support a quality early childhood education system by providing resource and referral services to families, child care programs, and communities in Adams, Clark, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marquette, Portage, Taylor, Waushara, and Wood counties. To learn more about Childcaring visit: www.childcaring.org and like us on Facebook @ChildcaringInc

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