

July 20, 2021

Milwaukee Common Council
City Hall Room 205
200 E Wells St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Honorable Council Members:

On behalf of the Milwaukee Early Care and Education Civic Response Team, we urge the Common Council to adopt Council File Number 210547, Mayor Tom Barrett's first allocation of American Rescue Plan funding. This Stronger Summer Plan includes critical initial investments in early care and education (ECE) for Milwaukee's children and families.

ECE is a powerful two-generation economic development strategy. It allows the parents of young children to participate in the workforce and is a proven high-impact investment in children's readiness for school, work, and life.¹

But even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Milwaukee's Black and Brown families struggled to access quality, affordable ECE, especially for infants and toddlers.² The pandemic has dramatically exacerbated these inequities and stressed the ECE sector to the breaking point.³ In particular, ECE programs are struggling to recruit and retain educators, in large part due to insufficient pathways into the profession, poverty-level wages, and inadequate support. This is a matter of equity for the ECE workforce, which is comprised largely of Black and Brown women. And it leads directly to the gaps in access to quality, affordable care that Milwaukee's families experience.

The Milwaukee ECE Civic Response Team has worked to support Milwaukee's ECE sector, including raising and allocating philanthropic funds, informing and advocating for state policy the benefit the sector, and providing direct supports and services to child care programs. As important as this support has been, much more is needed meet the profound needs in the ECE sector.

With American Rescue Plan funds, City of Milwaukee leaders have a historic opportunity to invest directly in the ECE sector, thereby enabling the parents of young children to participate in the workforce and ensuring that Milwaukee's Black and Brown children and families reap the economic, academic, and social benefits of quality ECE. The Stronger Summer Plan is an important first step toward that goal. Specifically, the plan includes:

¹ U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, [The Business Case for High-Quality Childcare](#); The Heckman Equation, [Perry Preschool: Intergenerational Effects](#)

² Greater Milwaukee Foundation, [A Seat at the Table: Ensuring Equitable Access to Early Childhood Education in Milwaukee](#)

³ National Association for the Education of Young Children, [State Data: Child care providers are sacrificing to stay open and waiting for relief](#)

- An investment of \$1.2 million for Fellowships that place young men of color in ECE classrooms and increase opportunities for students of all races to reap the benefits of having teachers of color, which include experiencing higher levels of academic challenge and support, higher reading and math performance, increased high school graduation rates, and increased aspirations to attend college.⁴
- An investment of \$310,000 for an MATC-led ‘Grow Our Own’ Early Childhood Education program to grow Milwaukee’s talent pool of educators sourced directly from Milwaukee Public Schools and placed back into the Milwaukee education system.

Together, these programs represent an important pipeline of diverse Milwaukee residents into the high-impact career field of ECE. We urge the Council’s support for these investments as represented in the Stronger Summer Plan.

Moreover, as City leaders consider subsequent American Rescue Plan allocations, we urge the Council to build on the investments in the Stronger Summer Plan through additional investments in the ECE workforce, including increased compensation, credentialing and professional development, and access to dedicated affordable housing. The Milwaukee ECE Civic Response Team has recommendations for each of these priorities, and we look forward to working with the Council to advance them.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Milwaukee’s children and families.

Sincerely,

Danae Davis, Co-Lead
Milwaukee Succeeds

Daria Hall, Co-Lead
Milwaukee Succeeds

Terri Alexander
4C For Children

JoAnne Anton
Office of Herb Kohl

Charlotte Y. Cannon-Sain
COA Youth & Family Centers

Lisa Coombs-Gerou
YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee

Latasha Dawson
Little Leaders Learning and Literacy Academy

David Espinoza
Milwaukee Area Technical College Early
Childhood Education Program

Kayla Fellows
St. Joseph Academy

Ellen M. Gilligan
Greater Milwaukee Foundation

⁴ Wisconsin Policy Forum, [A Teacher Who Looks Like Me](#); Learning Policy Institute, [Teachers of Color: In High Demand and Short Supply](#)

Martina Gollin Graves, MSW

Mental Health America of Wisconsin

Leah Jepson

Milwaukee Coalition for Children's Mental Health

Kristin Kappelman

Milwaukee Succeeds

Ann Leinfelder Grove

SaintA

Dr. Vicki J. Martin

Milwaukee Area Technical College

Jeanette Paulson

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Tracey Sparrow, Ed.D.

Next Door

Terryl Wheelock

4C For Children

Kelly Hook

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Tamara Johnson

Malaika Early Learning Center

Karrie Krueger

St. Joseph Academy

Calvin Lewis

We Will All Rise

Maria O'Neal

Magical Moment's Enrichment Center LLC

Bernard Rahming

The Literacy Lab

Carrie Wall

YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee

Annette Wilburn

Providers Taking Action Support Group