

Wisconsin Child Care Providers Face Closure

Written by WisDems Press

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/childcare-s451.jpg>



Republicans in State Legislature threaten continued funding for Child Care Counts.

MADISON, Wis. — Ahead of Gov. Evers' special session to address Wisconsin's workforce challenges, child care providers across the state are sounding the alarm about the end of Child Care Counts and the devastating impact it will have on Wisconsin's workforce.

Without continued funding for Child Care Counts, [more than a quarter](#) of Wisconsin's child care centers could be forced to close their doors, threatening the care that thousands of Wisconsin families rely on. Gov. Evers' special session will give Wisconsin Republicans the opportunity to do the right thing and give child care providers the immediate resources they need to continue providing quality care to Wisconsin children.

Read more from Wisconsin child care providers about the importance of Child Care Counts:

[WXPR](#) : "Linda May is the CEO of the YMCA of the Northwoods. She says this issue is not unique to Oneida County. 'I will tell you that I'm approached by rural communities since I've been here and they are looking for the Y to come in and open child care centers and support the gap. It stops workers from working. When you create high prices, when a large percentage of income is based in childcare, you're asking a parent to stay at home,' said May. May says Wisconsin's Child Care Counts program has helped keep costs down for families. At the same time, it's helped pay childcare employees better so they stick around."

[WKOW](#) : "Courtney Hoffmann, owner-administrator of Kids First Preschool and Child Care in Poynette, described a near future in which the entire state economy suffers due to a lack of adequate child care. 'You'll see more centers closing, and, therefore, you'll end up seeing more

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families leaving the workforce,' she said."



[The Washington Post](#) : "With relatively little notice, Wisconsin slashed its monthly payments to providers in half in May. That helped drive Fredrick's decision to close the following month. She had been receiving about \$15,000 per month from the state's Child Care Counts program, which she primarily allocated for raises and bonuses, yet still struggled to retain staff. To make up for the lost public funding, she calculated, she would have had to raise rates for infant and toddler care from an already steep \$280 per week to \$400 per week. She knew this wasn't feasible for the families she served."

[Wall Street Journal](#) : "Gov. Tony Evers's 2023-25 budget proposal included a provision to make Child Care Counts a permanent program through an appropriation totaling over \$340 million. Republicans in the state legislature rejected the governor's proposal, and the program is set to end in January 2024. [...] Already, the Child Care Counts program has halved its monthly payments to providers as relief funds dwindle. Julie Stoffel, owner and administrator of Cradle to Crayons Learning Center in Kimberly, Wis., has said her payments have fallen from at least \$20,000 a month to around \$14,000. As a result, Stoffel said she had to raise tuition in June, and she anticipates another possible increase once the payments stop completely."

[Tomahawk Leader](#) : "According to a report from the Century Foundation, without continued financial support, 2,110 child care programs in the state are projected to close, resulting in more than 87,000 children without child care in the state and the loss of over 4,880 child care jobs. Further, the report indicates the lack of access to child care could impact Wisconsin's economy by half a billion dollars in lost revenue."

[NBC 15](#) : "Holman-Steffel and her staff currently oversee 29 children. With the daycare center closing at the end of August, the parents of those children will have to find a new childcare provider. [...] The government-funded Child Care Counts program had provided Giggles and Wiggles nearly \$4,000 per month since begin created during the COVID-19 pandemic. In July, the check was cut in half. [...] With diminishing funds and operating on a short staff, Holman-Steffel [said] she had to make the decision to close."

[La Crosse Tribune](#) : “Cradles to Crayons Cashton will close its doors on Aug. 25, a change initiated after Republicans voted in June to defund Child Care Counts, a Wisconsin child care subsidy program. ‘Child Care Counts was a huge part of our budget,’ said Morgan Meyer, one of the co-owners of Cradles to Crayons. ‘So financially, we’re not able to do it anymore.’ Child Care Counts distributed hundreds of millions of dollars in federal support to thousands of child care providers across the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money helped subsidize provider wages and maintain costs for parents. In his budget, Gov. Tony Evers proposed spending \$340 million to make Child Care Counts permanent. Since the funding was not approved, program dollars have shrunk and will expire entirely by February 2024.”

[Wisconsin Examiner](#) : “But Billings and other Democrats on the committee, along with several providers and their advocates who testified at the hearing, said again and again that only an expenditure approaching the size of Child Care Counts could reverse the skyrocketing hikes in child care fees that parents face and program closures across the state. ‘Without the ongoing support to recruit and retain educators, rates are already going up for parents and providers are considering closing or leaving the field,’ Ruth Schmidt, executive director of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), said in her testimony.”

[News 8000](#) : “Sheri Betz, the co-owner of Little Feet & Helpful Hands, explained what the funding meant for the centers. ‘It’s helped us with payroll. It’s helped us give bonuses to our staff, and just keep our doors open basically,’ she said. Without it, Betz said the center’s income from tuition is less than what they have going out for payroll. To make up for the loss of funds, the center is set to raise tuition prices. Other childcare centers have followed suit and decided to increase tuition to cope with the loss, while some have decided to completely shut down.”

[The Washington Post](#) : “Back in Wisconsin, Lexie Monigal is hoping to hire a nanny even though that means her monthly child-care costs could double to \$3,200. It’s a last-ditch effort, she said, before she considers leaving the workforce until her youngest child enters kindergarten. Quitting her job would be less than ideal: She would have to pay back a substantial signing bonus if she leaves before her two-year contract ends and would lose her family’s health insurance. ‘I’m really trying to keep working, but if this doesn’t work, or it ends up being too astronomical, there’s literally nothing else I can do,’ she said. ‘We don’t have any other option.’”

[19th News](#) : “Parents are putting their kids on waiting lists for care in neighboring cities. They’re considering reducing their work hours or asking grandparents to watch their kids. One family is going to try to care for their child indefinitely while they work from home. A mom told Holman-Steffel she was putting her plans for another child on hold. She had expected Giggles & Wiggles could care for them.”

[NBC 26](#) : “Jillian Walker is a mother of three. She works full-time and says she has felt the struggles of finding affordable childcare in Door County. ‘Our only other options, affordable options are in-home daycare. You only find those through word of mouth,’ said Walker. Walker says she has friends who are afraid of having to find childcare in Door County if they decide to have children, they don’t want to experience the struggles they see so many others going

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through.”

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) , [Callie Colbo Opinion](#) : “Lack of access to quality early childhood education makes that a reality for more Milwaukeeans than you might realize. Long waitlists and high costs of tuition (with the first years being as much as in-state college tuition) are what pushed me into becoming a stay-at-home mom. [...] It’s disappointing to be out of Milwaukee’s workforce because I could not find high-quality, affordable child care in a timely manner to accept a job. The impact is far greater than many people realize, and I hope my story can shed light on how these issues in our child care system create family and financial stress for so many. Let’s prioritize building a state that values the development of young lives early on, continual career growth for parents, and economic growth for all families in our vibrant community.”