



The Future of Child Care in Fond du Lac County

Numerous child care centers across the state, including those in Fond du Lac County, were allocated funds through the pandemic-era Child Care Counts (CCC) program, to keep the child care industry afloat. These funds partially offset expenses for things like wages, rent, utilities, and personal protective equipment. With those funds set to expire at the beginning of 2024, Governor Evers proposed \$340 million in the next biennial budget to continue the program.

What most don't realize is that starting in May of this year, CCC funding was cut in half and the impact on child care businesses have already been felt. According to data from Wisconsin Early Childhood Action Needed (WECAN), 109 child care businesses closed throughout the state between January 1 - May 30, 2023. Over 40 additional businesses closed between June 1-16, 2023. What does this mean for the future of child care in Fond du Lac County?

With the decision by the Joint Committee on Finance to not allocate any state funds for CCC in the next biennial budget, Envision Greater Fond du Lac and Family Connections partnered to gather critical information regarding the future of child care in the region. A survey was developed and distributed to child care providers on July 5th and remained open for 2 weeks. Below is a summary of the findings:

- The survey was sent to 29 providers and 21 responded = 72% response rate.
 - Zip Codes Represented
 - 10 in 54935
 - 3 in 54937
 - 3 in 54971 (Ripon)
 - 1 in 54974 (Rosendale)
 - 1 in 53010 (Campbellsport)
 - 1 in 53065 (Oakfield)
 - 1 in 53919 (Eden)
 - 1 in 53963 (Waupun)
 - Type of Facility
 - 4 Family Licensed Child Care
 - 17 Group Licensed Child Care Center
- 95% of respondents received CCC funding.
- 17 respondents provided information on what adjustments will be made once the CCC program is discontinued on January 1, 2024. Respondents could select all options that applied:
 - 76% will raise tuition. The average increase will be 20%.
 - 29% will lower teacher wages. Most would reduce teacher wages 2%-25%.
 - 12% stated closed the center was an option.
 - 35% will decrease operations by reducing hours or days of operation, eliminating before and after care for school-aged children, closing classrooms, or decreasing capacity.

The findings of this survey will help Envision Greater Fond du Lac and Family Connections in their continued advocacy efforts surrounding this topic.