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## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF MEMORANDUM

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Memo No. 1

TO: MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE SYMPOSIA SERIES ON SUPPORTING HEALTHY EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

FROM: Rachel Letzing, Senior Staff Attorney, and Jessica Ozalp, Staff Attorney

RE: Policy Suggestions for Supporting Healthy Early Brain Development

DATE: September 29, 2014

This Memo sets forth policy recommendations that have been submitted by Steering Committee members or presented to the Steering Committee at the June 19, July 24, and September 9, 2014 meetings of the committee. The policy suggestions are grouped by category. Some of the suggestions could be placed in more than one category but we attempted to place each suggestion in the most appropriate category rather than placing a suggestion in more than one category. Following each individual suggestion in parentheses is the name of the legislator or member of the public who submitted it.

### **INVENTORY AND DATA SHARING**

- Develop an integrated data system allowing data sharing across state agencies and divisions; increase the scope of data collected by Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) from various systems; proactive approach using a system like the SAS Institute. (OCMH; Senator Lassa; Senator Darling)
- Develop a database to track progress and weaknesses in the early childcare system; track assessments and benchmarks in early childhood development; and track health and other determinants of early brain development. (Representative Rodriguez)
- Adopt a universal application for public benefits. (Senator Lassa--refers to Colorado)
- Compile an inventory of current state and county trauma-informed care programs. (Representative Ballweg)

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**

### **YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System**

- Make continuity of care a factor in the YoungStar rating system. (Senator Lassa)
- Request business and community leaders to help market child care centers with high YoungStar ratings. (Representative Rodriguez)
- Provide incentives to parents for choosing higher quality childcare centers, instead of the providers. (Representative Rodriguez)
- Implement scholarships or tax credits that will encourage parents to choose childcare centers with a 4 or 5 star rating. (Representative Rodriguez)
- Change YoungStar reimbursement tiers so that there is no penalty to 1-star programs; a 5% bump for 2-star programs; a 15% bump for 3-star programs; and a 30% bump for 4-star programs. (Senator Miller)

### **Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program**

- Adopt two-tier eligibility for child care assistance to avoid a cliff effect and cap co-payments. (Senator Lassa--refers to Colorado)
- Increase reimbursement rates for Wisconsin Shares and reduce co-payments. (Representative Wright)
- Expand childcare subsidy eligibility to ensure continuity of care for the child regardless of changes in the parent's income. (Senator Lassa--refers to Washington)
- Pilot a pre-school nutrition program for providers caring for Wisconsin Shares participants. (Senator Miller)

### **Childcare and Preschool**

- Increase reimbursement rates for infant and toddler care. (Senator Lassa--refers to 10 other states)
- Adopt an infant and toddler quality grant program. (Senator Lassa--refers to Colorado)
- Build executive functioning skills into early childhood programs. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)
- Provide state grants of \$1,500 per child to early childhood programs that commit themselves to quality improvement. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

## **Head Start**

- Expand Head Start and Early Head Start. (Senator Lassa; Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP**

- Create an early learning scholarship program with the following components: Multi-county; full scholarship; reimbursement does not depend on child attendance or parent work schedule; public-private funding match; 185% poverty to be eligible; provider must be 4-5 star quality; parent mentoring element. (Representative Genrich)
- Provide child savings accounts for recipients of early learning scholarship. (Representative Genrich)
- Establish a public-private funding board as suggested by the Governor's Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care; solicit involvement of economic development entities, as well as business and community leaders. (Representative Rodriguez)

## **CHILDCARE TEACHERS AND STAFF**

- Integrate the Pyramid Model with coaching in the classroom into requirements for teacher, childcare provider, and home visitors. (Senator Lassa; Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health)
- Expand funding for TEACH and REWARD. (Senator Miller; Representative Wright; Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)
- Require continuity of care at regulated childcare facilities so the teacher moves with the child (Senator Lassa--refers to Infant Mental Health and to Illinois).

## **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES SURVEY (ACES) AND RESILIENCE**

- Instruct school districts, early childhood learning centers, teachers, and parents in the science of ACEs and resiliency as a preventive and recovery tool. (Senator Darling)
- Increase the use of the ACE questionnaire. (Representative Berceau)
- Invest in additional research on resilience to better understand how to help some individuals and communities thrive under difficult and traumatic circumstances. (Senator Lassa; Children's Trust Fund)
- Ensure that existing advisory boards to state agencies dealing with children have members with lived experience to give better direction on policy development. (Senator Lassa)
- Increase public awareness of ACEs. (Children's Trust Fund)
- Enhance ACE-related data in Wisconsin. (Children's Trust Fund)

## **HEALTHCARE**

- Make the following changes to Medicaid (MA): create a benefits package specific for individuals with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma; provide reimbursement for evidence-based prevention initiatives, including home visitation; and provide reimbursement for in-home didactic counseling for both child and parent. (Senator Lassa; Children's Trust Fund)
- Expand the knowledge and use of ACE data with MA and Badgercare. (Children's Trust Fund)
- Require hospitals to present information to parents of newborns at birth about the importance of nurturing, parenting skills, and effects of trauma on brain development. (Representative Berceau)
- Support the further development of parent peer specialists (ombudsmen) and provide reimbursement under MA. (Senator Lassa)
- Train and require pediatricians and family doctors to screen child and parent for ACEs; provide MA reimbursement, and require an appropriate referral. (Senator Lassa--refers to Vermont)
- Encourage public health nurse home visits after newborns and their families go home from the hospital. (Representative Ballweg)
- Ensure access to basic medical care, including prenatal and early childhood nutrition and screening for maternal depression, for pregnant women and children. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)
- Protect pregnant mothers and young children from environmental toxins, such as lead and mercury. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

## **FAMILY AND PARENT SUPPORT**

- Utilize parent mentoring and person-to-person contact so parents can make better-informed decisions. (Representative Rodriguez)
- Pilot whole-family support services in selected counties (urban and rural) for families accessing economic support programs or encountering the legal system because of juvenile delinquency or family abuse. (Senator Miller)
- Look for ways to expand Project GAIN (Gaining Access to Income Now) beyond Milwaukee to other low-income areas. (Children's Trust Fund; Senator Lassa)
- Require co-parenting education for divorcing parents. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

- Direct public schools to use their Title 1 funds to operate centers for low-income parents and their children, beginning at age three. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

## **HOME VISITING**

- Expand grant coverage for home visitation to counties that have the most ACEs. (Senator Lassa)
- Mix home visiting programs with trauma informed parenting. (Senator Lassa)
- Create a cost-sharing grant program for home-visitation and parenting outreach, possibly through the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board. (Senator Miller)
- Evaluate home visiting programs to ensure Wisconsin has effective programs that target those at high risk, employ highly skilled and supervised staff, and are able to effectively engage families. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

## **TRAUMA INFORMED CARE (TIC) TRAINING**

- Create a larger grant pool at the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Trauma Project to help facilitate TIC training and adoption by counties. (Senator Lassa)
- Require a TIC curriculum as part of the educational requirements for any profession dealing with children, including criminal justice. (Senator Lassa--refers to Texas; Representative Berceau--refers to the list of professions we have for reporting of child abuse and neglect)
- Require schools to adopt the trauma informed schools model developed by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). (Senator Lassa)
- Require DPI to develop a unit to be taught in school to encourage students to connect with a counselor about any issues like abuse, alcoholism, etc., in the family. (Representative Berceau)
- Require TIC training for county social services. (Senator Lassa)
- Train caregivers in TIC. (Anu Family Services; Senator Lassa)

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONS**

- Prohibit waiver of juvenile abuse and trauma victims into the adult justice system. (Representative Berceau)
- Design and pilot prevention and intervention strategies with children and parents involved in corrections. (Children's Trust Fund; Senator Lassa)
- Address the co-occurrence of ACEs among children of incarcerated parents. (Children's Trust Fund)

## **CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

- Provide parental supports and tools for parents at risk of losing custody of their children with the goal of reducing out-of-home placement. (Senator Lassa)
- Strengthen and expand Kinship Care and care by known and trusted adults as an alternative to foster care. (Anu Family Services; Senator Lassa)
- Implement on-the-spot licensure and background checks to get children into relatives' care whenever a need arises any time of day or night. (Senator Lassa)
- Enhance supports for the transition from foster care to independence when "aging out" of foster care. (Senator Lassa)
- Evaluate the use of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool, and revise to better consider child's psychological safety as well as physical safety. (Anu Family Services; Senator Lassa)
- Issue out a request for proposals (RFP) for innovation in child welfare. (Anu Family Services; Senator Lassa)
- Request that the Legislative Audit Bureau update its 2008 audit of child welfare services. (Representative Ballweg)
- Create a new ground under the children in need of protective services statute under which the juvenile court may take jurisdiction over a child if a child is born drug-addicted, unless the mother agrees to accept services. (Representative Ballweg)
- Support passage of 2013 Assembly Bill 150, relating to adoptions and posttermination contact agreements. (Representative Ballweg)
- Support multidimensional treatment foster care. (Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief)

## **TWO GENERATION FRAMEWORK**

- Explore Colorado and Connecticut two-generation strategies. (Senator Lassa)

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