

**JFC Presentation – April 4, 2025**

Hello,

My name is Maya Bass, and I am speaking on behalf of Ebenezer Child Care Centers. We are an agency that has provided quality early care and education for children and families since 1968. We currently have seven programs in Milwaukee, Waukesha and Fond du Lac counties and will be opening an eighth site this summer in the Bayview/South Milwaukee area. We are NAC Accredited and 5 star programs with YoungStar.

I am a preschool teacher and mother of two young girls who attend our West Allis location, and my family is also economically dependent on our services.

We are here to ask that you vote for the children, families and working staff with an investment of $480 million into child care in Wisconsin’s 2025-27 state budget. We have an industry wide teacher shortage due to our inability to compete with inflation and give our teachers livable wages. The past few years with additional funding coming from DCF we were able to pay our teachers more and keep tuition rates down. When that amount was reduced in 2023, things became harder. When it ends, we will have to raise tuition and most likely cap wages.

We currently have 13 open positions at our agency. Each opening here represents 4-13 spots for children that we cannot enroll. Our waitlists are up to a year in some of our programs. Without your help, we will be unable to operate at full capacity due to all the openings. This leaves families with fewer choices to find quality early education for their children.

Without an investment, employers will find their employees cannot access quality care and therefore cannot work. We cannot help local businesses keep their doors open if we cannot provide care for their children.

During the pandemic, our industry was considered as essential and we rose to that challenge. Now we need you! Our children, our staff, and families need this investment. We are essential. We are not going away until we have done all we can, and we have nothing more to give because Wisconsin’s young children deserve the very best. Families need quality early care and education accessible and affordable to be productive working members of our communities.

Please do the right thing for children and families in Wisconsin, invest in their futures!

Maya Bass Beverly J. Anderson

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