

# Optimal Health and Well-Being

## 2023-25 State Budget Request Key Talking Points

People who work with and on behalf of Wisconsin babies, toddlers, young children, and their families call for the State Legislature to prioritize children's health and well-being in the 2023-25 biennium by:

**Supporting young children's mental health - \$8.79 million (\$2,330,094 in FY1, \$6,467,306.62 in FY2) to support and enhance training and coaching, Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, and endorsement work.**

- Early investments are proven to pay dividends long into adulthood.
- The pandemic significantly worsened mental and physical health challenges of young children and families.
- People of all ages, including infants, experience mental health challenges. No one is too young, including infants and young children.
- If untreated, challenges start early, worsen, and create roadblocks for learning, social competence and difficult behaviors (i.e. aggression and bullying, anxiety, depression, social withdrawal).
- Challenging behaviors are the No. 1 reason children and families are asked to leave a child care program.

**Expanding Family Foundations Home Visiting Programs - \$10 million to increase tribes and counties served and number of home visitors.**

- Home Visiting is evidence-based and completely voluntary.
- Six of the 11 federally recognized tribes currently have FFHV programs, leaving 5 tribal communities unserved.
- Links pregnant women with prenatal care, and new mothers receive tools to promote strong parent-child attachment and activities, which foster their child's development and their role as their first and most important teacher.
- Proven to foster educational development and school-readiness and play a role in preventing child abuse and neglect over the long-term.

**Extending Medicaid coverage to 12 months in the postpartum period.**

- The current mandate covers mothers for 60 days while their babies are covered for a year.
- Medicaid extension reduces maternal and infant mortality and decreases uninsured rates for pregnant and new moms.
- Wisconsin has an infant mortality crisis.
  - The state's Black babies are three times more likely to die before their first birthday than white babies.
  - Native infants are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday than white babies.

