



## Important Budget Updates for Children with Disabilities

The 2019-2021 budget is moving forward. The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) voted on the Department of Health Services' budget on June 4. **This includes items that impact families who have children with disabilities.** Family Voices will continue to watch what's happening at the capitol closely and keep you updated on the progress on Wisconsin's State Budget.

### Following are the actions JFC has taken:

**Ending Wait Lists:** JFC approved funding to serve children who are currently waiting for Children's Long-Term Supports and who are already in the program. But it did not include a provision to ensure that in the future eligible children will not have to wait for services.

**Single point of entry:** JFC voted to fund a single, statewide eligibility and enrollment process for the Katie Beckett, Children's Community Options and Children's waiver programs. The funding for these programs, though, will not be provided immediately.

**Family Support and Disability Resources:** JFC rejected the governor's proposal to create a **front door** to help families navigate through complex systems. The plan would have included a children's ombudsman program, family navigators and benefits counseling.

**Direct care workforce:** JFC acted on addressing the direct-care workforce crisis by approving a **9% pay increase** for Medicaid personal care workers in 2019 and a **3%** increase for 2020.

**Expanding Birth-to-3 Eligibility:** JFC rejected the governor's recommended expansion of Birth-to-3 Program eligibility to include children with high levels of lead in their blood. Instead they called for a **onetime transfer** of \$2.2 million from the current Children's Community Option Program funds to cover Birth-to-3 Program costs.

**Improving Dental Access:** JFC partially funded the governor's proposal to set aside money for dentists who serve Medicaid recipients with physical or intellectual disabilities. They approved \$2.5 million—half of the governor's original proposal. Last month, the committee also removed a provision from the budget that would have allowed dental therapists to perform additional services, while expanding access to dental services to Medicaid recipients.

To learn more, see [the Survival Coalition Press Statement](#) and the [Joint Finance Committee motions](#)