



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH IN THE 2025-27 STATE BUDGET

Gov. Evers has declared 2025 the Year of the Kid and has included multiple measures to expand access to mental and behavioral health in his 2025-27 Executive Budget. Among the proposed provisions, the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health identifies the following priorities as especially important to create access to and sustain provision of a full array of quality mental health treatment services that Wisconsin's kids need.



Food insecure children are more likely to be **bullied** and **feel they don't belong** at school.

Children from the **poorest 20%** of households are **4X as likely to have serious mental health** issues by age 11 as those from the wealthiest 20% of households.



Lowering everyday costs for families, reducing poverty, and meeting basic needs are the most impactful preventative actions to take.

1 INVEST IN PREVENTION THAT WORKS

- **TAX RELIEF FOR FAMILIES.** Increase to parents the percentage of the federal earned income tax credit Wisconsin provides. Earned Income Tax Credit: \$58.4 million 2025-26; \$58.5 million 2026-27 funded partially by TANF
- **HEALTHY MEALS, HEALTHY KIDS.** Create a new categorical aid to pay for breakfast and lunch for K-12 students with no stigma and at no cost. Supplemental Nutrition Aid: \$147.7 million 2026-27
- **FIREARM SAFETY.** Firearm Safety. Enact "red flag" laws to give law enforcement and loved ones critical tools to help keep people safe. Require a secure container or trigger lock with firearm sales. Establish minimum safe storage requirements, including in homes where a kid is present. Reinstate Wisconsin's 48-hour waiting period to purchase a handgun, which previously existed from 1976-2015. Require firearm transfers to be done through federally licensed firearm dealers with background checks. Create a Self-Assigned Firearm Exclusion (SAFE) Program for individuals to voluntarily and temporarily choose to limit their ability to purchase a firearm. Firearm Safety: No GPR Cost.
- **FAMILY FOUNDATIONS.** Expand home visiting services for pregnant women and families with a kid under age 5 to more counties and Tribes, which has been proven to be effective at improving child well-being. Home Visiting Expansion \$1.2 million 2025-26; \$3.9 million 2026-27

► *meet kids' basic needs*

84% of public schools

provided individual-based mental health treatment to students last year.

Less than half say they can effectively provide mental health services to all students in need.

2

INVEST IN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- **SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT.** Funding for the reimbursement of costs incurred by school districts and independent charter schools that provide in- and out-of-school time mental health services and programs for students. Aid for Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems: \$83.9 million 2025-26; \$83.9 million 2026-27
- **MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL STAFF.** Funding to support school mental health professionals, including social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, and school nurses. Aid for School-Based Mental Health Professional Staff: \$62.8 million 2025-26; \$67.2 million 2026-27
- **STUDENT-LED SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS.** Increase support for peer-to-peer suicide prevention grants and increase the maximum grant amount from \$1,000 to \$6,000: \$250,000 2025-26; \$250,000 2026-27.
- **OFFICE OF SCHOOL SAFETY.** Provide the Office of School Safety with funding for programs, such as the Speak Up, Speak Out tipline. Office of School Safety: \$.7 2025-26; \$.9 2026-27 and 12 positions

▶ *help kids at school and help kids help their peers*

3 INVEST IN TREATMENT

- **QUALIFIED TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS.** Increase the number of available mental health professionals by facilitating the licensure and certification of those in the process of obtaining or those who already have a graduate degree in psychology, counseling, marriage and family therapy, social work, nursing, or a closely related field, to help address a shortage in the behavioral health workforce. Qualified treatment trainee grant program: \$1.5 million 2025-26; \$1.5 million 2026-27
- **PSYCHIATRIC RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT.** Establish a 25-bed psychiatric residential treatment facility to provide psychiatric care to kids and youth under the age of 21 with complex behavioral health conditions so they can receive treatment in Wisconsin and close to home. Allow coverage of this treatment by expanding Medicaid benefits. Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility Grant Program: \$1.8 million 2026-27
- **CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM.** Develop a federal Medicaid waiver to create a statewide children's behavioral health specialty managed care program for community-based coordinated treatment for kids with complex behavioral health conditions. Wisconsin Wraparound: No GPR Cost.

▶ *increase access and keep kids closer to home*

4 INVEST IN FAIRNESS

- **MEDICAID SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES.** Allow school districts to retain 100 percent of federal funding received for Medicaid school-based services. This will result in school districts receiving approximately an additional \$50 million in federal funding in 2026-27. Medicaid School-Based Services: No GPR Cost.
- **QUALIFIED TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS.** Require health insurance plans offered in Wisconsin to cover services provided by qualified treatment trainees if those services are covered under the plans through any other providers to increase insured youth access to treatment. Qualified Treatment Trainee Coverage: No GPR Cost.

▶ *address system barriers*



Wisconsin Office of
Children's
Mental Health



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