

# The Facts ...

- The Family Support Program provides a small amount of money, up to \$3,000/year, for families to meet the unique needs of a child with a significant disability.
- Approximately 3500 families are waiting for this support. (The program serves approximately 2400 families.)
- Many Wisconsin families will wait an average of seven years for support.
- 56% percent of families raising children with disabilities report financial hardship related to the care of their child.
- 54% of caregivers stopped working or reduced hours to care for a child.
- Dozens of families have been forced to place their children in foster care or other out-of-home situations due to lack of support.

- Wisconsin now has a Home and Community Based Waiver for Children. Each new dollar of state funding for Family Support brings an additional \$1.39 in federal funding for waiver eligible children
- There are approximately 1,900 children are on the wait list for the children's waiver. There are currently 80 slots available statewide.
- The 2001 Legislative Council Study Committee supported the system of long term supports for children with disabilities
- Supporting families raising children with disabilities at home is good for the children, good for the economy and good for Wisconsin!

**\$5.2 MILLION NEW STATE DOLLARS IN THE 2005-2007 BIENNIUM IS NEEDED TO SERVE APPROXIMATELY 3500 FAMILIES ON THE WAITING LIST.**



“We need an accessible entrance and mobility to get Taylor in and out of the car. Now that he weighs 75 pounds, it’s nearly impossible for me to carry him when he is having seizures.” – Taylor’s mom, (waiting for 6 years)



“We would like funding to remodel our bathroom. It is very difficult to bathe Abe now that he is 19 years old.” – Mother of Abe, (waiting 5 years for help with resources)

## Where Will We Get the \$?

We understand there is a severe budget crisis, but we also see a variety of ways to fund the Family Support Program...

Wisconsin now has an opportunity to capture federal dollars to assist families raising children with special needs. Wisconsin now has a Home and Community Based Waiver for Children. Each dollar of state funding for Family Support brings an additional \$1.39 in federal funding for waiver eligible children. For the first time we can maximize our Family Support dollars with federal match. For every waiver slot funded, 6 new families could potentially be served through Family Support.

It is important to keep the state funding in the Family Support Program to preserve the ability to serve non-waiver eligible children and to provide services which may not be covered under the MA waiver. Family Support and matching federal dollars, can serve more families in critical need.

We applaud the Governor's Kids First Initiative and encourage him to include children with disabilities. The Kids First Initiative includes a Family Support component, but does not include the unique needs of families who have children with disabilities. If any program is considered for an increase in this budget, we believe the Family Support Program should be a priority.