



Proposed Elimination of Head Start Would Devastate Wisconsin Families, Including Hundreds Served by Reach Dane

Statement from Reach Dane Director, Jen Bailey

Madison, WI – On Friday, April 11, [*USA Today* reported that President Trump's upcoming budget will propose a full-scale elimination of the nearly 60-year-old, highly effective Head Start program.](#) This alarming proposal threatens to dismantle one of the most impactful investments in children, families, and communities nationwide—and the impact would be devastating in Dane and Green Counties.

If enacted, this proposal would strip away essential early childhood education and family support services from more than 15,000 children in Wisconsin alone—including over 800 children and families served by Reach Dane each year. Additionally, more than 4,300 people across the state could lose their jobs—including teachers, family service workers, bus drivers, and health staff—many of whom are employed at Reach Dane.

At Reach Dane, we see the power of Head Start every day. Our programs provide children with high-quality early education, nutritious meals, developmental screenings, and health and dental care. We also work closely with parents—many of whom are working or attending school—offering goal setting, family support, and stability. The loss of Head Start would not only rob children of vital learning and care opportunities; it would force many parents out of the workforce or job training due to lack of affordable childcare.

This would lead to widespread economic instability: families unable to afford rent or purchase groceries, employers losing valuable workers, and communities absorbing the consequences. The long-term costs—from increased need for public assistance to missed educational opportunities—far outweigh the short-term savings proposed in the budget.

Reach Dane operates Head Start and Early Head Start programs across Dane and Green Counties, serving families in Madison and surrounding areas. Without legislative intervention, this proposal could dismantle a system that helps working families thrive and gives young children the best possible start in life.

This budget is not yet law—but we must act now. For the sake of our children, families, staff, and the future of Dane and Green County, we urge our community to speak out and tell Congress: protect Head Start.

About Reach Dane:

Reach Dane provides high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services to over 1,000 underserved children and families across Dane County through Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Learn more at www.reachdane.org.