

Northern Regional Snapshot of the Early Care and Education Landscape (Pre-COVID-19)



Background Indicators

The overall health and well-being of Wisconsin impacts the needs of children and families and the providers caring for them.

Disparities (racial/ethnic, geographic, socioeconomic) exist across all measures

Health	Employment	Education	Poverty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Uninsured: 8.5% • % Uninsured ranges from 5% in Wood County to 12% in Forest and Sawyer Counties • % Vaccination: 67% • % Vaccination ranges from 56% in Taylor County-79% in Marathon County • Florence County had the highest rate of child abuse in the state with 23 per 1000 compared to 4 per 1000 statewide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Unemployment: 3% • % Unemployment ranges from 2.6% in Marathon to 6% in Iron County • Median Household Income: \$51,905 • Median Household Income ranges from \$44,130 in Iron to \$63,442 in Marathon County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Graders Reading Proficiency, Percent Proficient: 45% • Reading proficiency ranges from 27% in Forest County to 57% in Iron County • High School Completion: 92% • High School Completion ranges from 88% in Sawyer to 97% in Vilas County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Poverty: 12% • % Poverty ranges from 8% in Marathon to 16% in Ashland County • % Child Poverty: 17% • % Child Poverty ranges from 9% in Marathon County to 24% in Sawyer County • Households Struggling to Make Ends Meet: 39% • Households Struggling to Make Ends Meet ranges from 34% in Portage to 46% in Ashland

Early Care and Education (ECE)

Wisconsin Departments of Children and Families (DCF), Health Services (DHS) and Public Instruction (DPI) all support families and young children along the continuum of care from 0-5. Through public, non profit and private partnerships, Wisconsin strives to provide a seamless system of support during this critical period in a child's development. Programs include **home visitation, parent support, early intervention, Head Start, 4K and child care.**

Home Visiting

In 2019, the NR accounted for 8% of families participating in [Family Foundations Home Visiting Program](#) (FFHV) programs. Other non-FFHV programs available include Start Right in Marathon County, Childhood Home Visits in Taylor County and Strong Start from Children's Wisconsin.



Parent Support & Service Navigation

Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Family Resource Centers, Wisconsin Well Badger, 2-1-1 and the [Northern Regional Center](#) for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs all support NR families.

Health Programs

Every county has a [WIC](#) office. County Health Departments offer [Prenatal Care Coordination](#) and/or other pregnancy support.

Early Intervention

Qualifying children have access to public early intervention Part C ([Birth to 3 Program](#)) and Part B ([Early Childhood Special Education](#)) programs.

Head Start

Early Head Start programs serve children 0-3 and Head Start 3-5 year olds in every county in the NR.

4K

Publicly funded 4-year-old kindergarten is available through schools and community approaches to 4K through child care programs, preschools and/or Head Start.

Child Care

The **Preschool Development Grant** uses [Access](#), [Affordability](#), [Quality](#) and [Workforce](#) through the [Lens of Equity and Inclusion](#) as a framework for evaluating early care and education across the state.

Access



There are 25,000 children in the NR but only 15,500 child care spots. As of February 2020, there were only 373 regulated providers in the NR.



Wisconsin Shares requires enrollment in a YoungStar-participating provider—79% of providers are participating in YoungStar.

Affordability



The federal government defines affordable child care as no more than 7% of yearly income. In the NR, this would mean spending \$2,800 in Iron County-\$4,000 in Marathon County. Care actually costs far more. The average cost in Marathon County is \$7,400-\$9,500.



In the NR, half as many children received WI Shares in 2019 as 2018.

Quality



Quality is defined as a YoungStar rating of 3-5 Stars- 50% of NR providers are high quality.

Workforce



Information specific to the NR is currently unavailable. See the statewide report for more information about child care workforce.

As part of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Wisconsin is building a comprehensive Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan to provide a [holistic picture of Early Care and Education in WI](#).