

# Preschool Development Grant - Frequently Asked Questions

## Overview

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## PDG Needs Assessment

### What is the PDG Needs Assessment?

The PDG Needs Assessment was developed through a systematic process for determining “needs.” Needs are defined as the "gaps" between baseline conditions impacting the lives of Wisconsin’s children and families and the desired conditions or "wants." WI took a multi-pronged approach with our PDG Needs Assessment by reviewing existing baseline data (pre-COVID-19), hosting public listening sessions for all regions and tribes and conducting targeted interviews with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and more.

The final Needs Assessment components will consist of:

- Interactive Sandbox dashboards with information available by Region and County:
  - Background indicators (poverty, health, education, employment)
  - Early Care and Education indicators (Access, Affordability, Quality, Workforce)
  - Child care desert mapping dashboard
- COVID’s Impact:
  - Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Emergency Payment Program data
- Voices of ECE Stakeholders:
  - Listening Sessions Summary Report
  - Interview Summary Report for Wisconsin rural, Black, Hmong, and Latinx community members, as well as tribal members
- Additional Needs Assessment documents:
  - The Needs Assessment Summary Report identifying themes and key findings across all Needs Assessment components.
  - Snapshot documents summarizing the Sandbox Needs Assessment dashboards (state and regional data is presented)
  - PowerPoint Virtual Toolkit slide deck with Sandbox Needs Assessment statewide data

These Needs Assessment components are all found online in the [PDG Sandbox](#).

## PDG Listening Sessions

### How were interactive aspects of the Needs Assessment like the Listening Sessions completed during the global pandemic?

An important component of the PDG is hearing from the people involved in the field of early care and education. In the original grant application, the Department hoped to host in-person regional listening sessions, focus groups, key informant interviews and several surveys. COVID-19 impacted the ability to host these events in our originally planned format. The Department modified its plan in several ways: regional listening sessions became virtual, surveys of providers and families were postponed and key informant interviews were scaled down and delayed. Listening sessions

provided key stakeholders the opportunity to provide insight and expertise and local experience into the Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning process.

### **I wasn't able to participate in a Listening Session, can I still provide feedback?**

Stakeholders will have various opportunities throughout the grant cycle to provide feedback on the PDG Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. Be sure to sign-up for the [PDG Newsletter](#) so you can be alerted when opportunities arise. If you have specific questions or concerns, you can email [WIPDG@wisconsin.gov](mailto:WIPDG@wisconsin.gov).

## **PDG Sandbox**

### **What is the PDG Sandbox and why is it called that?**

The PDG Sandbox is the interactive website display for all of the components of Wisconsin's Needs Assessment. It includes a series of data dashboards and reports allowing early care and education professionals, community leaders, and policy makers the opportunity to "play with data in a virtual sandbox." This research:

- Describes the range of programs and services that make up Wisconsin's ECE landscape.
- Can be used to support strategic planning, draft realistic and measurable goals, and drive objectives for local and statewide innovation projects.

The Sandbox includes the raw source data for the PDG Needs Assessment to allow others to interact and engage with data to pursue local or regional goals, in addition to PDG's statewide efforts.

### **How did DCF decide what to put in the Sandbox?**

DCF's approach the PDG Sandbox was designed to ensure that the unique needs of each of the five PDG regions was captured and reflected in the data. The following steps were taken:

1. Regional Workgroups comprised of community business leaders, legislatures, DCF staff and other community partners were asked to gather and submit data and information on their region.
2. DCF and the PDG team evaluated and reviewed all the information gathered from the regional workgroups as well as needs assessments conducted by other partners such as Family Foundations Home Visiting Program (FFHV), Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant as well as DCF administrative data.
3. The PDG team created the PDG Sandbox using the information gathered.

### **Where does the PDG Sandbox data come from?**

The PDG Sandbox uses data from a variety of sources, including both DCF data systems and public data sources. The Department of Children and Families administrative data systems include:

- Data on all regulated active providers serving children age 5 years and younger.
- Associated characteristics including location and YoungStar rating.
- Wisconsin Shares Child Care subsidy rates and market rate price of care.
- *All active regulated provider data is from February 2020.*

Public Data Sources:

- The American Community Survey
- 2020 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps A Robert Wood Johnson Foundations program
- Department of Workforce Development
- Department of Health Services
- Department of Public Instruction

Use the info icon  in the PDG Sandbox for specific source information for each dashboard.

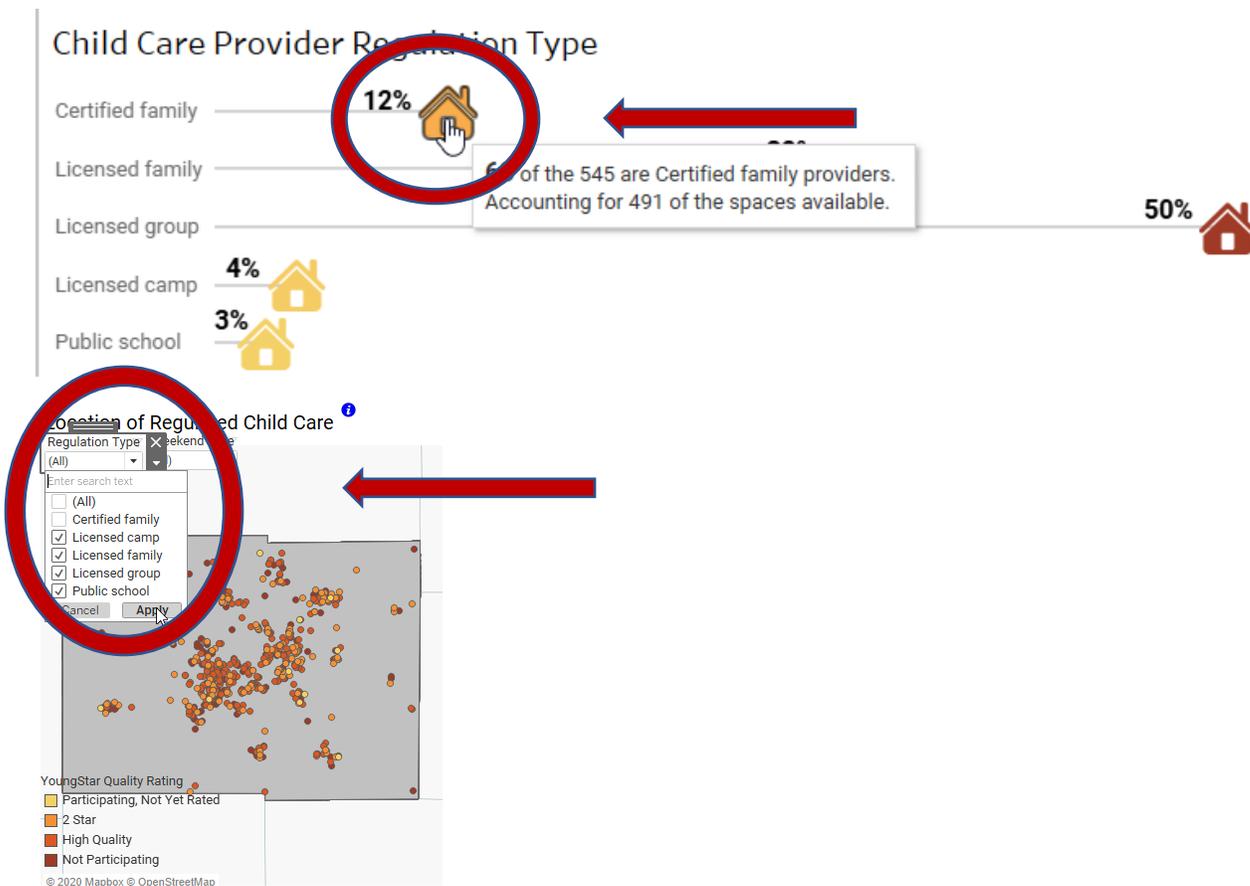
## Can I use the PDG Sandbox as a tool in my meeting?

Yes! PDG created a variety of tools that can be used to help support the use of the PDG Sandbox.

- **Statewide and Regional Snapshots:** These “Snapshots” are PDF versions of data from the interactive dashboards that that can be efficiently shared, printed, and used by partners and stakeholders along with the web-based PDG Sandbox.
- **PDG Sandbox Toolkit PowerPoint slides:** A presentation of statewide and regional data that can be used by partners and stakeholders along with the web-based PDG Sandbox. This PowerPoint can be customized to meet the needs of your meeting and stakeholders.
- **PDG Sandbox:** includes data presented in interactive dashboards, reports on the PDG Listening Sessions as well as a summary report on focused interviews.

## What if I don't want to see information on certain active providers?

To view information on specific subsections on active providers use either the hover over data to manually calculate provider information or the drop down on the county map to find the view you are interested in. For example, if you do not want to include providers such as licensed camps, uncheck the box to remove that data.

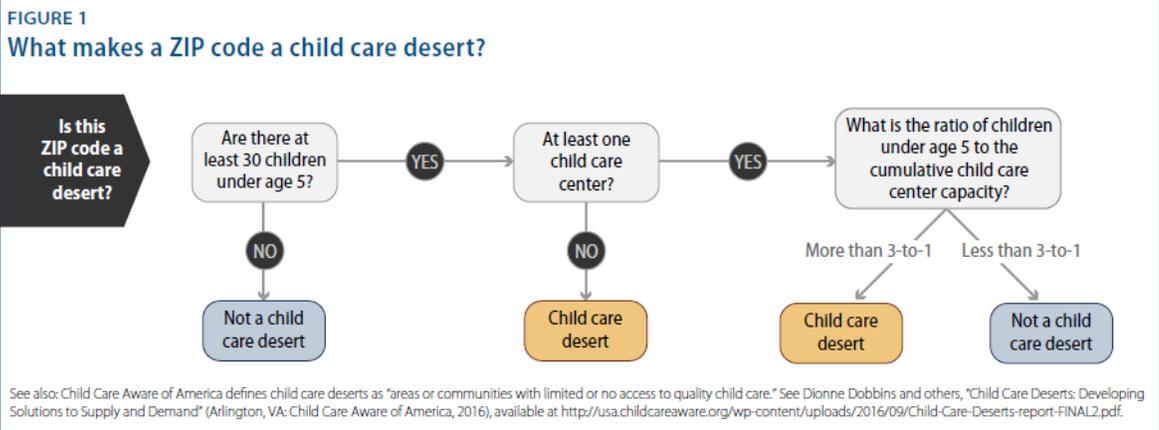


## What is a child care desert?

The Division of Early Care and Education uses the following definition for child care deserts per the Center for American Progress “Child Care Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Centers by ZIP Code in 8 States” (Malik et al., 2016):

- *A child care desert is a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers (see Figure 1 below).*

- The Sandbox uses “slots” instead of regulated capacity. Slots are defined as regulated capacity multiplied by 1.3. This accounts for part-time care and providers whose hours of operation span more than one shift of care. ZIP codes with a child to slot ratio of 3.0 or higher (i.e., where there are 3 or more children for every 1 child care slot) are considered a child care desert.



Child care deserts are a proxy to understanding access to child care in a specific ZIP code. ZIP codes are arbitrary boundaries that families can move between to access child care. Child care providers on the border of a ZIP code may serve as adequate access for families in both ZIP codes. Families also have access to Early Head Start, Head Start, Public School, private child care, 4-k programming, in addition to other child care options that may not be reflected in the child care desert formula. Only programs that are active and regulated by the Department of Children and Families are included.

Child care desert status should not be used as the sole factor in determining if family child care needs are being met. Child care desert status, in combination with a variety of other factors, including actual provider location, poverty level, YoungStar rating, location of major employers, etc. should be considered when determining if an area is in need of additional child care spaces.

**What criteria must an active provider meet to be included in the Child Care Desert formula?**

A child care provider must be present in the Department of Children and Families administrative data sources, in active status (to be included in the PDG Sandbox data displays, February 2020) and serve children at least 5 years of age or younger. This data is included regardless of the number of months per year the program typically serves children, their regulation type and their YoungStar standing.

**Why are public schools, Head Start programs and licensed camps included?**

Public schools, Head Start programs and licensed camps are included if they are active providers per the Department of Children and Families administrative data. For more information on which programs need to be regulated by the Department of Children and Families, please visit: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation>.

**COVID-19 has greatly affected my County, why is this not reflected in the Sandbox?**

The Sandbox includes data from February 2020, prior to COVID-19 impact on the child care market. The lasting impact of COVID-19 is unknown. For this reason we are using data directly prior to the global impact of COVID-19. The Listening Session summary report is PDG’s first attempt to gather widespread anecdotal data on the impact of COVID-19, but it is not comprehensive and will require further validation in the future. The PDG Sandbox also provides a link to the Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Emergency Payment Program so that users can see the scope of emergency funding support offered to providers in 2020.

**There have been significant shifts in poverty and unemployment in my County, impacting the child care workforce and affordability of child care; however, the PDG Sandbox appears to show a moderate picture of these measures.**

The PDG Sandbox includes data from February 2020, prior to COVID-19 impact on the child care market. The lasting impact of COVID-19 is unknown. For this reason we are using data directly prior to the global impact of COVID-19. The [Department of Children and Families](#), [Department of Workforce Development](#) and [Department of Health Services](#) feature data reflecting the impact of COVID-19.

**The data I see does not match what I think is true in my county/region.**

At any given month throughout the year an active provider may or may not be actively serving children for their full regulated capacity, regulated age ranges or regulated hours of operation. For this reason, the PDG Sandbox includes all providers who are considered active and meet the regulation criteria for inclusion. All data should be supported with additional measures, including your personal experiences to evaluate the needs of your area. As experts in your area, please use the PDG Sandbox as a starting point for identifying the needs of your area. Keep in mind, it's important to always ask critical questions of data, such as:

- Does the data confirm or challenge my prior beliefs?
- What information surprised me that I was not aware of?
- Why might this data differ from other data I have seen on similar topics?
- Could my experiences or biases be influencing my interpretation of the data?
- (If working in a group) What did others notice about the data that was different than my observations? What could explain those differences?
- What further investigation is needed to support this data and/or my beliefs?

**How will the PDG Needs Assessment inform the Strategic Plan?**

The Needs Assessment Summary Report will include analysis of data themes and findings that emerge from all components of the Needs Assessment found in the PDG Sandbox. These high-level findings and evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the future of Wisconsin early care and education will be used by PDG, DCF, and DPI staff charged with developing the statewide Strategic Plan and future funding proposals.

**How can local or regional uses of Needs Assessment data support the Strategic Plan and advancement of PDG goals?**

Later in 2020, additional stakeholders such as regional workgroups and standalone agencies in Wisconsin will have opportunities to give input on whether the strategic goals and objectives are consistent with what they see in the data and experience in their regions. Additionally, they will be invited to submit proposals for PDG Regional Innovation grants to fund projects that are aligned with the PDG Strategic Plan. This process allows for regional input, customization and application of the PDG data to complement the statewide goals and objectives.