



# **First Children's Finance**

## **Dream Up! Grant Summary**

### **Oneida County Child Care Coalition**

Oneida County, WI

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## Strategic Supply Planning

The Strategic Child Care Supply Planning Process is a facilitated community planning process designed to engage a Core Team of community leaders to support and expand the child care capacity in their community. First Children’s Finance works with the Core Team to understand the current child care landscape and create goals to address child care needs.

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# Background

## Oneida County Child Care Coalition – Oneida, WI

The Grow North Regional Economic Development Corporation was selected to engage in community consultation regarding the supply of child care, through the Dream Up! Child Care Strategic Supply Planning Process. Funding for this work is provided by a *Preschool Development Grant (PDG)* received by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. In this process, a Core Team lead by Lauren Sackett, Chamber Director of the Rhinelander Chamber of Commerce, participated in a process that included:



- 8 hours of facilitated meetings by First Children’s Finance National Team Staff
- Identification of goals to increase high-quality child care slots
- Planning support, facilitation, and technical assistance from First Children’s Finance
- A Strategic Child Care Supply Plan that guides Oneida County Child Care Coalition in efforts to increase its supply of high-quality child care.

# Community Information

Figure 1: Grow North Defined Zip Codes | Community Application Process

Cities	Zip Codes	Cities	Zip Codes
Eagle River	54521	McNaughton	54543
Harshaw	54529	Minocqua	54548
Hazelhurst	54531	Rhinelander	54501
Lac Du Flambeau	54538	Saint Germain	54558
Lake Tomahawk	54539	Three Lakes	54562
Pelican Lake	54463	Tripoli	54564

The Oneida County Child Care Coalition is based in Oneida County, Wisconsin. The Oneida County is a rural, quaint community in the Northern Region of Wisconsin. They applied for the Dream Up! Strategic Supply Planning Process and were awarded participation with the Fall Dream Up! Strategic Supply Plan Cohort. Each application included a geographic region the Core Team planned to focus on, referred to as ‘the community.’ The Oneida County Child Care Coalition included the zip codes and corresponding communities listed in Figure 1 as their geographic region and defined community. This geographic region has a population of approximately 47,000 residents and is the focus of this Strategic Supply Plan.

## Core Team

The following people participated in the Core Team meetings to address the child care supply needs in Oneida County Child Care Coalition’s defined community. The primary contact for this project is Core Team Lead, Lauren Sackett, Chamber Director at Rhinelander Chamber of Commerce.

Name	Organization Affiliation
<b>CORE TEAM LEAD:</b> Lauren Sackett	Chamber Director   Rhinelander Chamber of Commerce
<b>CORE TEAM MEMBERS:</b>	
Nancy Sattler	Executive Director   Northwoods United Way
Elsa Duranceau	Worker Advancement Initiative Coordinator   North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development
Lori Garber	Economics Support Supervisor   Oneida County Department of Social Services
Robin Mainhardt	Business Child Care Advocate   Northwest Connection Family Resources
Courtney Smith	Associate Executive Director   Rhinelander Area Food Pantry
Abbie Cline	School Age Child Care Director   YMCA of the Northwoods
Kelly Matthews	Director   Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network
Eric Burke	Superintendent   Rhinelander School District
Krystal Westfahl	Chamber Director   Minocqua Chamber of Commerce
Fred Hauser	Chief Operating Officer   Jackson YMCA
Sandy Stetzer	Visitation Program Coordinator   Children’s Wisconsin
Tom Wartman	Interim Executive Director   Grow North Regional Economic Development Corporation
Jennifer Thomas	Early Childhood Specialist   Northwest Connection Family Resources
Jeff Verdoorn	Executive Director   Oneida County Economic Development Corporation

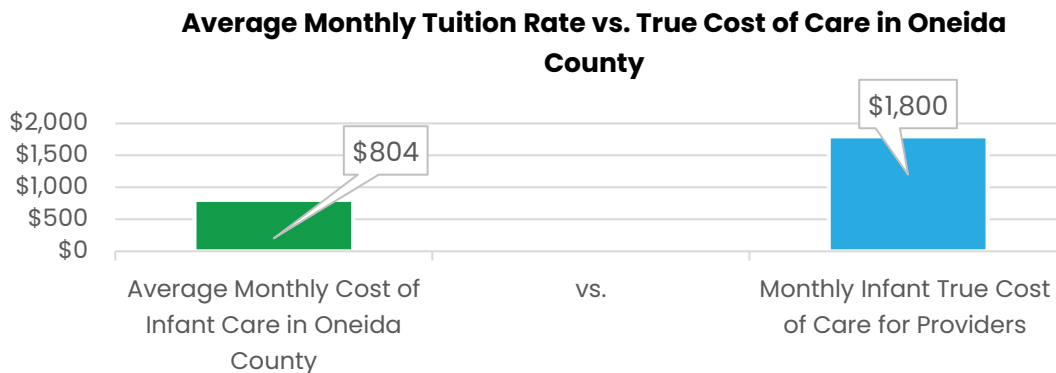
## Community Insights

Research by the Core Team was conducted and provided as part of the application process. First Children's Finance provided additional research and statistics regarding child care needs and sustainable child care solutions. During Strategic Supply Plan meetings, this data was reviewed with the Core Team to better understand the community's child care challenges.

- *This problem is evident with the general population of Oneida County growing by nearly 7% but childcare slots are disappearing*
- *Oneida County has 24% of its population under the ALICE threshold and living within extreme financial constraints*
- *Oneida County is 67% small businesses with 10 or fewer employees. Therefore, it is difficult for them to offer a real incentive package to their employees*
- *The area has lost several childcare facilities recently due to a lack of staff. There are currently 465 child cares available in the county...compared to the 824 reported in 2012.*

*\*Excerpt from Dream Up! Application*

Figure 2: Average Monthly Tuition Rate vs. True Cost of Care in Oneida County | PDG Sandbox



During the Strategic Supply Planning process, First Children's Finance shared with the Core Team the data regarding the average cost of child care in Oneida County compared to the 'true cost of care'. Figure 2 shows that the average monthly cost of infant care in Oneida County is \$804. This is less than half of what the true costs to provide high-quality care would be. True cost is defined as the dollar value of all resources used to provide high-quality early childhood care and education. True cost is not just what a provider charges a family or receives in the state child care subsidy; true cost is what it costs to provide high-quality early learning experiences—the value of personnel and non-personnel resources used to manage a program, including resources that are actual expenditures or donated or volunteered, as well as resources that last for multiple years. Families simply cannot afford the true cost of care, leaving providers charging less than what it truly costs to provide high quality care.

## Supply Demand Gap Analysis

As part of the Strategic Supply Planning Process, the Core Team was provided with information to help them understand factors that contribute to child care challenges. First Children’s Finance leveraged different data sources to create an illustrative picture of the demand for child care in the community (see Figure 3). These data sources include U.S. Census Bureau, Wisconsin’s Department of Children and Families Data, and First Children’s Finance research and data.

The Supply Demand Gap Analysis completed by First Children’s Finance for Oneida County Child Care Coalition dated August 2022, shows a deficit of 1077 slots for children birth to 5 living in households where all available parents are in the workforce. First Children’s Finance found capacity of licensed and regulated full day year-round care in the community at only 256 children. Results show 64% of zip codes within the defined community had zero child care slots available.

Figure 3: Oneida County Supply Demand Gap Analysis | First Children’s Finance Analysis

Zip Code	City	Licensed Family Child Care	Licensed Group Child Care Center	Certified Child Care	Expected Child Care Capacity	Expected Number of Children Under Age 5	Expected Child Care Need
54521	Eagle River	0	0	0	0	211	<b>211</b>
54529	Harshaw	0	0	0	0	24	<b>24</b>
54531	Hazelhurst	0	0	0	0	58	<b>58</b>
54538	Lac Du Flambeau	0	1	0	17	78	<b>61</b>
54539	Lake Tomahawk	0	0	0	0	19	<b>19</b>
54543	McNaughton	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
54548	Minocqua	0	1	0	50	68	<b>18</b>
54463	Pelican Lake	0	0	0	0	16	<b>16</b>
54501	Rhineland	2	2	0	94	697	<b>603</b>
54548	Saint Germain	0	0	0	0	44	<b>44</b>
54562	Three Lakes	0	1	0	30	12	<b>18</b>
54487	Tomahawk	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
54564	Tripoli	0	0	0	0	8	<b>8</b>
54568	Woodruff	0	1	0	65	98	<b>33</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>1077</b>

## How Is the Need Supported Today?

When there is a gap in the licensed and regulated child care slots available in a community compared to the children potentially needing care in the community, families find unique ways to meet their needs outside of licensed or regulated child care. The following are common ways that parents may fill their need for child care and may be present in the Grow North Economic Development Corporation community.

### Legal Unlicensed (unregistered) Care / Family, Friends, & Neighbors

Friends, family, and neighbors may provide care for up to three (3) children without a license; however, under Wisconsin law, no person may provide care and supervision for four (4) or more children under the age of seven (7) for less than 24 hours a day. Care for four (4) or more children under the age of seven (7) would require a provider to obtain a license to operate a child care center from Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families.

### Illegal Unlicensed/Unregistered Care

Child care is provided in a setting that requires licensing or regulation, but the provider has chosen to provide care without the proper license or following regulatory guidelines.

### Under-Employment / Shift Alignment

Parents may work split shifts, work part-time, or limit their work hours to stay home with their children. There may be children in the community whose parents have left the workforce and are not looking for employment because of child care challenges. These families are not included in the data in this report, but parents may enter the workforce if viable child care options were available.

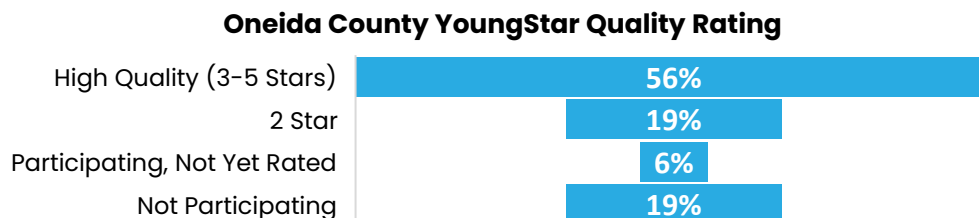
### Out of Area Care

Parents with children in the region studied may take their child to care outside of this report's area. This may be due to parents' work location, access to care, or other reasons.

## Quality Rating and Improvement System Overview

First Children's Finance examined state-wide information about the number of child care programs that are participating in the YoungStar Program (see Figure 4). YoungStar is Wisconsin's child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that identifies programs that go above and beyond the general licensing requirements to obtain higher quality in their child care program.

Figure 4: Oneida County YoungStar Rating | PDG Sandbox



## Workforce

### Child Care Workforce

First Children's Finance examined the child care workforce in Wisconsin. Many individuals in the workforce have formal educational backgrounds and more than a decade of experience. However, more than half of early childhood educators rely on some form of public assistance and do not receive benefits. The Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison reported a 40% turnover rate in the Early Childhood Education field. Figure 5 shows data collected for the Northern Region of Wisconsin and shows 34.5% of the workforce anticipates leaving the field within the next two years. The cost of care is high for families, and the cost of delivery is high for providers. Often, the impact is reflected in child care worker wages. The First Five Years Fund researched the average compensation rate for child care workers and found in Wisconsin; the average hourly rate is \$10.66. The annual salary of \$22,170.00 is below the poverty line for a working family.



#### Early Education Workforce Survey

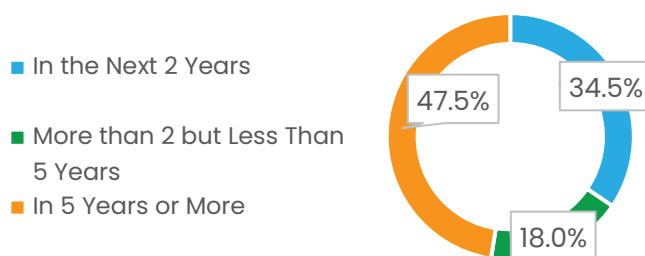


Figure 5: Survey of Center-Based Teachers | Institute for Research and Poverty

### Primary Industries

Additionally, First Children's Finance examined the top industries in Oneida County using available census data. The top industries (see Figure 6) can impact child care needs based on when shift workers are needed, as well as beginning and end time of employee shifts. In Oneida County, two of the top industries are educational / health services and retail trade. Often, these industries call for second and third shift employees. Without sustainable child care options during these shifts, hiring new employees and retaining current employees in fields such as manufacturing can quickly become a challenge. During Strategic Supply Plan meetings with First Children's Finance, the Core Team was asked to brainstorm ways to address the need of child care for all types of working families within their community.

1. Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance

2. Retail Trade

3. Manufacturing

Figure 6: Top Industries in Oneida County | U.S. CENSUS 2021

## Data Overview

<b>0</b> Certified Family Child Care (*DCF Licensing Information)	<b>2</b> Licensed Family Child Care (*DCF Licensing Information)
<b>6</b> Licensed Group Child Care (*DCF Licensing Information)	<b>56%</b> of providers have a 3-5 star rating (DCF Sandbox Data)
<b>33%</b> of zip codes are considered child care deserts (DCF Sandbox Data)	<b>1,333</b> children under 5 with all parents in the workforce (*ACS 5 Year Estimates)
<b>256</b> *current expected child care capacity (*FCF Calculation May 2022)	<b>1,077</b> birth to age 5 slots needed (*FCF Calculation)
<b>\$804</b> average monthly cost of care (DCF Sandbox Data)	<b>47,190</b> Oneida County population

## Core Team Planning Meeting

Throughout the winter of 2023, the Core Team, a group of community stakeholders interested in the supply and sustainability of child care met to discuss the child care shortage in Oneida County, and to develop strategies to increase the number of high-quality child care slots. Below are the primary topics addressed in the conversations and the goals developed to address the child care shortage.



After discussing these core topics, the focus was placed on primary areas of need, where current resources should be directed, and where additional resources are needed. The Core Team created the following goals to support the child care needs in the community.



## Goals

The Oneida County Childcare Coalition will facilitate a three-pronged community education plan to educate, drive conversation, advocate, and facilitate partnerships within the child care realm.



### **SMART Goal:**

Goal 1: The first component of this approach is to survey employers and employees at businesses in the area, followed by hosting round-table discussions with businesses educating them on the impact child care has on them.

**Project Team Members:** Lauren Sackett and Robin Mainhardt

**Objective of the Goal:** Educating area businesses on how child care effects them to drive partnerships and collaboration between child care providers and local businesses within the community.



### **SMART Goal:**

Goal 2: The second component to the three-pronged approach is to expand support for our existing child care providers to increase and sustain capacity by implementing a grant cycle for childcare businesses within the next six months.

**Project Team Lead:** Lauren Sackett

**Objective of the Goal:** Increase capacity of child care businesses that are not yet fully open, as well as support existing centers at full capacity so their sustainability is achievable.



### **SMART Goal:**

Goal 3: The third and final component of the three-pronged approach is to advocate to the community to educate them on the importance of child care. We will also develop resources for families looking for child care, host a town hall meeting and implement a multi-pronged marketing plan to promote child care.

**Project Team Members:** Abbie Cline, Lauren Sackett, Robin Mainhardt and Sandra Stetzer

**Objective of the Goal:** Educate the community on the importance of child care to promote additional efforts for employers to develop partnerships with child care providers. Also, encourage community members to join the child care field as well as have updated and consistent place for families to learn more about their child care options in the community.

## Project Recommendations

Oneida County, Wisconsin is a rural area with a long history of community partnership in bringing needed services to the area. The Oneida County Child Care Coalition has a committed Core Team of individuals that are heavily invested in the child care landscape of their community. First Children's Finance recommends that the Core Team engage in the following activities:

1

Continue educating and promoting the child care profession throughout the community. Promoting and raising awareness of the benefits of being in the child care field can gain interest of unregulated providers and/or interest new members within the community to join the field. In the data shown, the community is facing a shortage of roughly 1,077 full day/full year child care slots. Continuing to invest in existing providers within the community to support their sustainability is crucial, however without an increase in providers, there will continue to be a shortage of available child care slots in the community.

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2

Always run financials first before committing to a project – look for a broad base of support. As new and expansion child care projects are discussed, run financials and feasibility reports specific to child care programming. These reports will provide an accurate understanding of what type of enrollment numbers, staffing needs and tuition rates are needed to create sustainability in the current child care climate. Information presented during meetings has shown that providers cannot afford to pay teachers a livable wage. With the creation of new child care programs, these workforce challenges may be highlighted. Community investment will be critical to ensure that new child care centers can maintain proper staffing and providers can pay staff a livable wage.

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3

Continue to involve existing providers – they are part of the solution. Ongoing support to all types of existing child care centers in the area will be vital to retain the current existing providers. Solicit the feedback of current providers to ensure current they continue to feel supported and have access to resources they need to stay in the field now and in the future. The information can also be used to support the needs of potential providers. Involving current providers encourages an environment where the professionals in the child care industry feel respected and valued.

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