



First Children's Finance

Dream Up! Grant Summary

The Playing Field

Dane 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

The Playing Field – Madison, WI

The Playing Field 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 Abbi Kruse, from The Playing Field, 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 The Playing Field’s Core Team in efforts to increase its supply of high-quality child care.

Community Information

The Playing Field is based in Madison, Wisconsin. Madison is an urban community in the Southern Region of Wisconsin. They applied for the Dream Up! Strategic Supply Planning Process and were awarded participation in 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 Playing Field included the zip codes and corresponding communities listed in Figure 1 as their geographic region and defined community. This geographic region has an approximate population of 300,000 residents and is the focus of the Strategic Supply Plan.

Cities	Zip Codes
Madison	53703
	53704
	53705
	53711
	53713
	53714
	53715
	53716
	53717
	53718
	53719
53726	

Figure 1: The Playing Field Defined Zip Codes | Community Application Process

Core Team

The following people participated in the Core Team meetings to address the child care supply needs in The Playing Field’s defined community. The primary contact for this project is Core Team Lead, Abbi Kruse, Executive Director at The Playing Field.

Name	Organization Affiliation
CORE TEAM LEAD: Abbi Kruse	Executive Director The Playing Field
CORE TEAM MEMBERS:	
Tracie Boos	Administrator The Playing Field
Monty Marsh	Early Care and Education Manager City of Madison
Michelle Henner	Program Director The Playing Field
Julie Knade	Site Director The Playing Field
Emily Pink	Early Childhood Education Program Director Madison College
Chuck Olsen	Apprenticeship Outreach Representative Department of Workforce Development



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 their community's child care challenges.

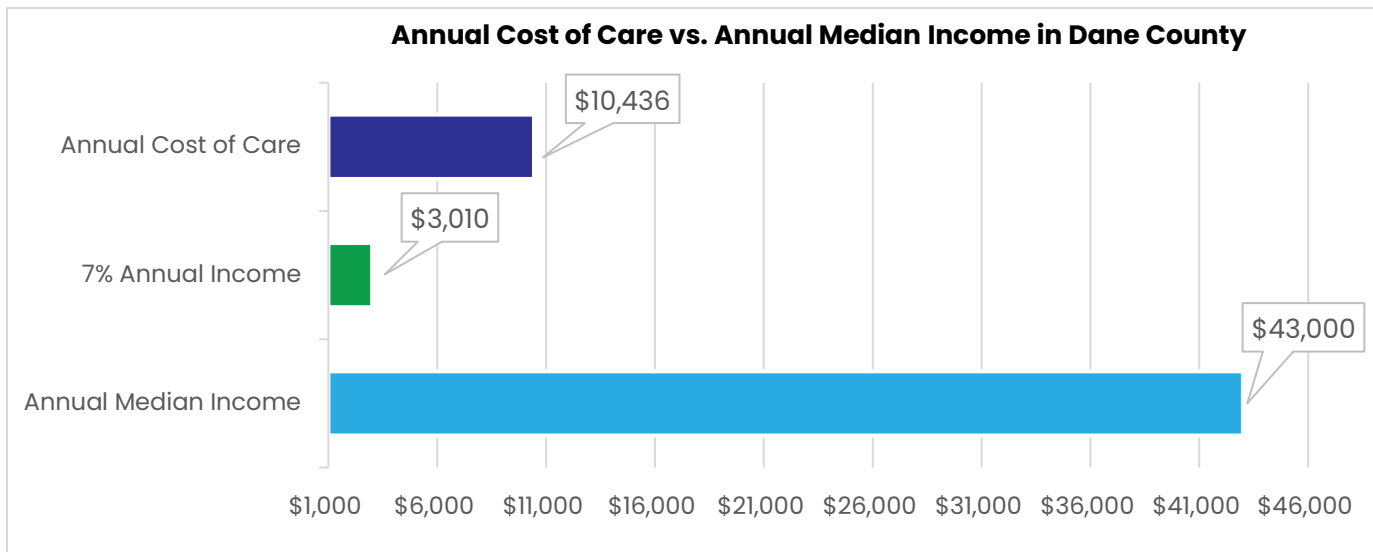
The Playing Field provided data in their initial application that highlighted the community's need for affordable child care solutions.

The reported data included:

- *The City of Madison has a gap in child care of 11,610 Slots or 34.8%. This leads to an economic impact of \$424,486,520 within the metropolitan area (<https://childcaregap.org/>).*
- *The early childhood workforce is shrinking with 80% of programs reporting staffing shortages.*
- *Nationally, an estimated 250 preschool aged children are suspended or expelled each day.*

*Excerpt from Dream Up! Application

Figure 2: Annual Cost of Care vs. Annual Median Income in Dane County | PDG Sandbox Data



During the Strategic Supply Planning process, First Children's Finance shared with the Core Team the data regarding the annual median household income in Dane County compared to the annual cost of care. Figure 2 shows that the annual cost of care in Dane County is \$10,436. This is over double what is affordable according to the Federal Government but is still under what the true cost of providing high-quality care would be for a program. True cost of care is defined as the dollar value of all resources used to provide high-quality early childhood care and education. In Wisconsin, research conducted has the true cost of care at \$1,800 a month for an infant. Families simply cannot afford the true cost of care, leaving providers required to charge 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 the 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 The Playing Field dated August 2022, shows a deficit of 2,123 slots for children birth to 5 living in households where all available parents are in the workforce. As a result, First Children’s Finance found capacity of licensed and regulated full day year-round care in Madison at only 8,219 children. Results showed multiple zip codes within the defined community with zero child care family providers available.

Figure 3: The Playing Field 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
53703	Madison	0	6	0	397	166	231
53704	Madison	9	17	4	850	1825	975
53705	Madison	0	15	1	567	970	403
53711	Madison	15	20	10	1471	2327	857
53713	Madison	6	10	7	601	641	40
53714	Madison	7	7	4	435	571	136
53715	Madison	0	7	1	342	115	227
53716	Madison	12	7	4	507	694	186
53717	Madison	1	7	1	494	460	34
53718	Madison	4	6	4	598	479	118
53719	Madison	12	22	8	1894	2054	160
53726	Madison	0	1	0	64	42	22
TOTAL		66	125	44	8,219	10,342	2,123

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 Dane County.

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.

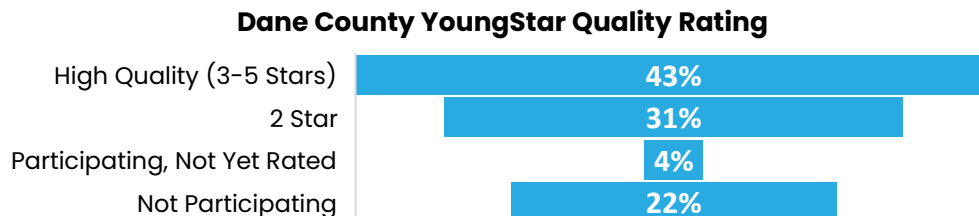
Out of Area Care

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: Dane 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 Southern Region of Wisconsin and shows 24.1% 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

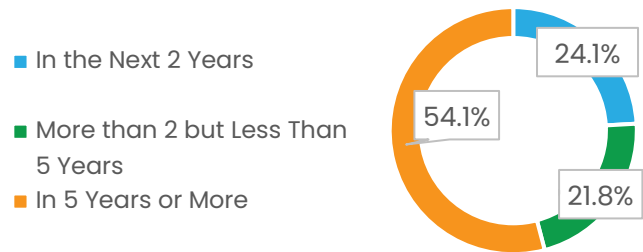


Figure 5: Survey of Center-Based Teachers | Institute for Research and Poverty

Primary Industries

Additionally, First Children’s Finance examined the top industries in Dane 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 Dane County, one of the top industries is health care and social services. 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. Professional / Scientific / Management / Administrative & Waste Management Services

3. Retail Trade

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

Data Overview

44 Certified Family Child Care Programs (*DCF Licensing Information)	66 Licensed Family Child Care Programs (*DCF Licensing Information)
125 Licensed Group Child Care Programs (*DCF Licensing Information)	43% of providers have a 3–5 Star Rating (DCF Sandbox Data)
11% of zip codes are considered child care deserts (DCF Sandbox Data)	10,342 children under 5 with all parents in the workforce (*ACS 5 Year Estimates)
8,219 *current expected child care capacity (*FCF Calculation May 2022)	2,123 birth to age 5 slots needed (*FCF Calculation)
\$1,513 average monthly cost of care (DCF Sandbox Data)	303,145 The Playing Field's defined zip code 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 Dane 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.

Partnerships

Workforce

Compensation

After discussing these core topics, 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



SMART Goal:

Goal 1: By January 2024, increase the capacity of available high-quality early childhood slots. This will be completed by building a clear path for “earn as you learn” training for early care educators through partnership with Madison Area Technical College (MATC), and local high schools. This will ensure that trained and qualified educators and care givers are employed to create sustainable operations and classrooms.

Project Team Members: Abbi Kruse, Tracie Boos, Michelle Henner, Julie Knade, Emily Pink - MATC, Chuck Olson - DWD, Monty Marsh - City of Madison

Objective of the Goal: Apprentices will be successful in progressing towards a technical diploma and ‘Lead Teacher’ qualifications. Additionally, qualified, trained professionals will be available to provide high-quality care and learning experiences for children. An ‘apprenticeship’ program process will be established to ensure continued success and sustainability of the apprenticeship program for all interested in the child care industry.



SMART Goal:

Goal 2: By July 2023, establish a partnership with consultant for grant oversight, All Children Thrive, to distribute funds as needed.

Project Team Members: The Playing Field staff

Objective of the Goal: All Children Thrive will provide oversight/monitoring in completing project action steps: (1) create 3 surveys to be distributed to ECE students at MATC (2) review survey data and provide detailed reports indicating outcomes and progress towards goals (3) serve as fiduciary, verifying the expenses meet grant requirements, as well as provide timely payments for approved expenses.

Project Recommendations

Madison, Wisconsin is a vibrant area with opportunities for many partnerships that can help bring services to the area with an increased awareness. The Playing Field, located in Madison, Wisconsin, 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

Connect apprentices and potential providers to state and local resources, such as the Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), and other local small business organizations who can bring their expertise and resources for new programs to make the licensing and registration process easier for incoming professionals.

2

Engage the community in this project – many hands make light work.

The primary goal for this community is to create a pipeline of ECE workers for the community to ensure the workforce has qualified educators. Continue to partner with local schools and colleges and engage the local business community in supporting and increasing the child care workforce. Attention to workforce needs when expanding and creating child cares will be important for sustainability.

Broad investment by the community to support new child care facilities should be encouraged so center or home-based child care programs can maintain sustainability.

3

Involve existing providers – they are part of the solution.

Ongoing outreach and support to all types of existing child care programs in the area should be considered to retain existing providers. Solicit feedback from both center and home-based programs. Efforts should be made to provide support to current child care providers, so they feel valued and have access to resources they need to stay in the field. Use this information to support and attract members of the community to join the early childhood workforce.

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