

Business-Child Care Partnership Tool Kit

MODULE 2

Building Successful Business-Child Care Partnerships



My Business is Wondering About Child Care Availability in my Community; What Should I Consider?

While the need to increase child care capacity exists across Wisconsin, that need looks different from community to community. **Understanding the current context of child care in your area will help determine the needed course of action for your business to best support local child care needs.** National, state, and local early care and education stakeholders offer resources for gathering and assessing data, knowledge of the child care landscape, and expertise to assist in determining how to best meet current needs.

The Bipartisan Policy Center in 2019 identified a 40.6 percent gap of the potential need in Wisconsin's child care from what care was available, almost 10 percent higher than the 35-state average found in their study. This means that more than 117,000 children in Wisconsin who may be in need of care were not able to access it purely because there are not enough child care spots available in our state; given the impact of the COVID pandemic on the child care field, it can only be presumed this gap has increased since the time of the study.

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Tool kit modules will be released on a rolling basis. For a full list, visit www.ProjectGrowth.WI.gov.



There are several types of early care and education programs which can help a community meet its child care needs; these include:

- **Certified Family Child Care** providers can provide care in their home for up to 3 children under age 7 unrelated to the provider.
- **Licensed Family Child Care** providers care for between four and eight children with care typically offered in the provider's home.
- **Licensed Group Child Care Centers** provide care for nine or more children, typically somewhere other than a residence.
- **Licensed Day Camps** are seasonal programs which provide care for four or more children 3 years of age and older. These programs usually operate in an outdoor setting.
- **After School Programs** can be offered by schools or by community organizations such as YMCAs or Boys and Girls Clubs. Some family and group child care providers also offer after school care to school-age children.
- **Four-Year-Old Kindergarten and 4K Community Approach (4KCA).** Publicly funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) is offered in almost every Wisconsin school district. School districts may deliver 4K in their own facilities and/or partner with child care or Head Start to provide 4KCA programming for part of the day within their setting and wrap around care for the remaining portion of the day.
- **Head Start and Early Head Start** are federal programs for children under the age of 5 from low-income families. In Wisconsin, Head Start programs are operated by non-profit organizations, schools, community action commissions, or other local grantees.

It is important to not only focus on the number of child care spots available in a community, but that the type of care that is offered matches the needs of the community. For example, the child care gap is higher in Wisconsin's rural areas than it is in its urban areas; while licensed group child care facilities can care for a greater number of children than a family child care provider, rural areas may not be able to support a large group child care center in one location and instead may need to focus on family child care providers which can support children and their families across a broader geographic reach. **Other areas of need which are critical to consider** when assessing how to increase child care capacity in your community:

- **Supports for children with disabilities:** Child care shortages disproportionately impacts families with children with disabilities. National Survey of Child Health data demonstrates that parents of children with disabilities are three times more likely to experience job disruptions because of child care issues. Find more information on these barriers, and ideas for investment: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-disproportionately-affects-children-disabilities>.
- **Non-traditional hours of care:** Most child care programs operate within the standard, Monday-Friday work week, but many sectors operate outside these hours. Consider how you can support providers in expanding their offerings.

- **Dual language learning:** Wisconsin communities are diverse, but children whose primary language is not English may lack some of the support they need. Consider how you can sponsor dual language training for child care providers in your community, or help multilingual community members open child care programs, or become early childhood educators.
- **Care which supports and reflects children's culture:** Culture is a key aspect of a family's identity; similarly to language development, programs need training on how to support family cultural identity and practices.
- **Care which supports families experiencing housing, food, and/or economic insecurity:** As business leaders, you may have relationships with organizations that serve your community. Consider how you can use your network to build these connections between these organizations and child care programs.
- **Trauma-informed care:** The pandemic highlighted the need for mental health services for all, including very young children. Trauma-informed care is an approach to services that recognizes and responds to the needs of children and families who experienced trauma.

A number of Wisconsin child care stakeholders can provide local, regional, and statewide context regarding child care needs in Wisconsin; they include:

- [Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies](#)
- [Wisconsin Early Childhood Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Family Child Care Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association](#)

These organizations can also connect you to other community groups working on initiatives to support child care needs in your area.

Map Key

(click links for more information)

Region 1: [4-C](#)

Region 2: [The Parenting Place](#)

Region 3: [Child Care Partnership](#)

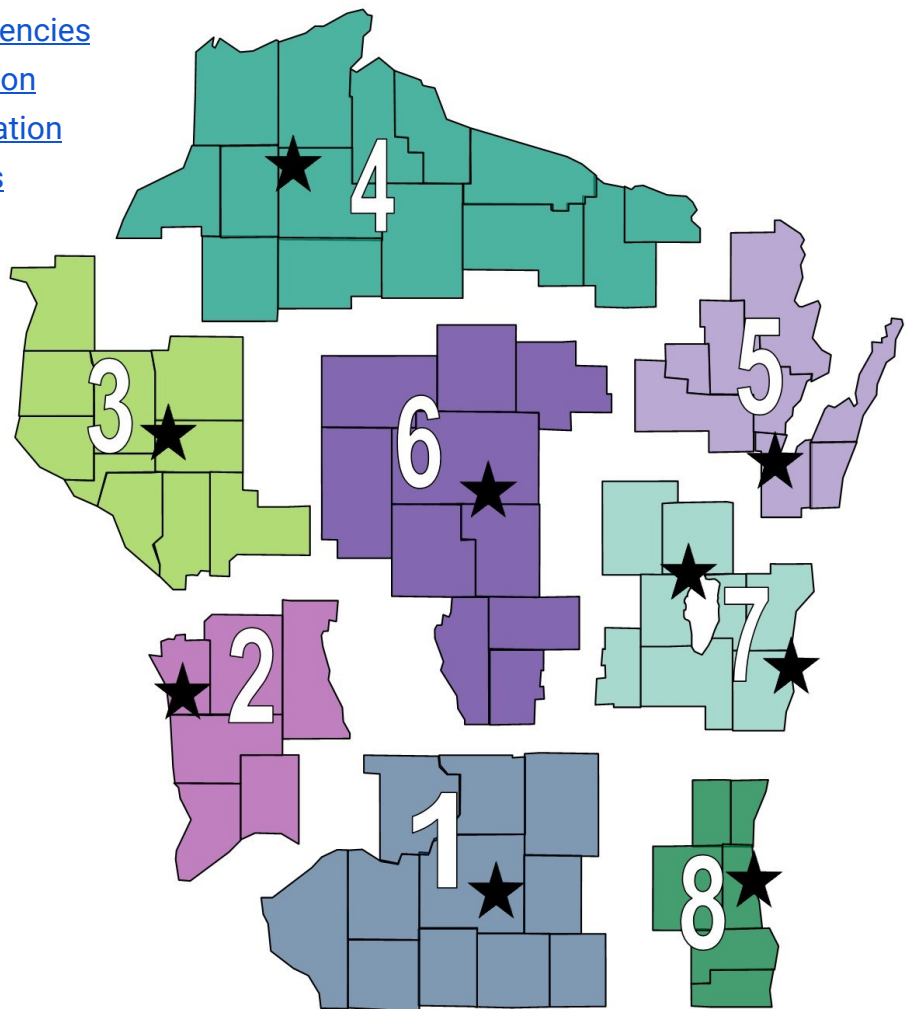
Region 4: [Northwest Connection Family Resources](#)

Region 5: [Family & Childcare Resources of N.E.W.](#)

Region 6: [Childcaring, Inc.](#)

Region 7: [Child Care Resource & Referral](#) and [Family Connections, Inc.](#)

Region 8: [4C for Children](#)



Source: [Supporting Families Together Association \(SFTA\)](#)

Read

- [Child Care Gaps in 2019: Wisconsin](#) and the accompanying [interactive map](#) from the Bipartisan Policy Center quantifies the supply of, potential need for, and gaps in child care in Wisconsin
- [Child Care Data Center: Wisconsin](#) from Child Care Aware of America provides data on accessibility and affordability of care
- Wisconsin's Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 [2021 Needs Assessment](#)
- [The Unique Benefits of the 4K Community Approach](#) from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Watch

- [Our Center is Very Important in Our Community](#), a short video of Tricia Peterson, owner of Future All-Stars Academy in Juneau, WI

Do

- Talk with employees who are parents of small children - ask about their current child care situation, preferences for care, challenges, opportunities, what support do they need to find and maintain quality care for their child(ren).
 - Utilize the Project Growth [Sample Survey on Employee Needs for Child Care](#) to gain better insight into the child care needs of your employees.
- Meet with local child care providers to better understand their challenges, need for supports, and opportunities they would like to see in the community, including potential partnership with local business(es).
- Search [Child Care Finder](#) or directories for [Certified](#) or [Licensed](#) Child Care Providers in Wisconsin to see who is currently providing care in your community.
- You can also learn more about the current child care landscape and opportunities for growth in your county or region in the [Preschool Development Sandbox](#). The PDG Sandbox is made up of two data dashboards:
 - [Background indicators](#) on health, employment, education, and poverty by Wisconsin region or county.
 - [Early care and education data](#) on accessibility, affordability, quality, and workforce in your county.

Our Community Identified a Need for Business-supported Child Care: What Are Examples of Models That We Can Implement or Support?

Child Care Start-up with Business and Community Collaboration

When businesses and community stakeholders join together to support a child care start-up, each party can contribute time, money, expertise and/or other assets toward the shared goal. Businesses can contribute necessary start-up funds, space, technology, human resources, or other assets to help the project move forward. County officials, community economic development organizations, extension offices, and other partners can help with zoning, business planning, and research. Child care stakeholders can contribute expertise to navigate administrative and regulatory requirements and knowledge needed to get the facility staffed and running. In this scenario, decision-making and management responsibilities are shared among the partners.

Impact

- Collaborative efforts can capitalize on more assets, expertise, and public appeal.
- These partnerships bring more care to communities as a whole.

Considerations

- Parties will need to have clearly established agreements around things like oversight of funds, potential conflicts of interest, and roles, and responsibilities.
- Wages must be high enough to retain quality early educators.
- Time is needed to form the coalition and set up the organization.

Where is this being done in Wisconsin?

- [Ever Grow Learning Center](#) in Ashland

On-site Child Care

Businesses could choose to create space within their campus or grounds to open a child care program onsite. In this scenario, businesses often supply space, utilities, and back-office functions to support child care programming. Businesses may gain an edge in attracting and retaining employees by providing on-site childcare. Child care stakeholders can contribute expertise to navigate administrative and regulatory requirements and knowledge needed to get the facility staffed and running. Third-party child care agencies could be brought in to run the child care site.

Impact

- Research shows businesses with on-site child care have higher employee retention and engagement, more women in management roles, and strong workplace culture. Companies like Patagonia, Cisco, and JPMorgan have even shown ROIs of 90-115%.

Considerations

- Child care is a highly regulated industry with slim profit margins. Businesses entertaining on-site child care must be fully aware that the benefits gleaned from the project will come from employee retention and productivity and not necessarily excess revenue from the child care program.

Where is this being done or explored in Wisconsin?

- [Tri-North Builders](#)
- [Organic Valley](#)
- [Specialty Cheese Company](#)

Employer Purchase of Child Care Slots

Businesses can contract directly with child care programs to purchase slots of care dedicated to serving their employees. Businesses and child care programs would agree on the number of slots, the rate of pay, and eligibility of use.

Impact

- Similar to on-site child care

Considerations

- Contracts for care ensure an agreed upon amount of child care slots will always be available to the business, which also provides stable revenue for the child care program. However, this model does not allow for parent choice (the values parents place on care programs based on a variety of contextual family factors).

Where is this being done?

- Your business can get started in 2022 with match funding and support from a [Partner Up! child care partnership grant](#).

The Community Program and Services (CPS) Fund 80 for Child Care

Local school boards can vote to use Community Program and Services [Fund 80](#) to provide funding for child care. The school board must establish a Community Service Fund, a budget for the Community Service Fund must be adopted, and any tax necessary to operate the Community Service Fund is considered an "operation" levy. Over 200 child care programs use this funding mechanism, blending Fund 80 school funding with Wisconsin Shares subsidies and private-pay tuition to offer child care for the community.

Impact

- This has been used in communities that have had little to no child care.
- Some of these programs serve the majority of the children in a small community (145 children or more).

Considerations

- Requires a vote by the local school board
- Child care slots must be available to anyone in the community
- Potential increase in taxes across the school's property tax base

Where is this being done?

- Amery
- Cambria-Friesland
- Frederic
- St. Croix Falls
- Wausaukee

Shared Services Networks

Shared services networks allow individual child care programs to pool resources, share staff, and reduce administrative burden. Utilizing technology, back-office functions like tuition billing and receiving can be automated and centralized. Child care programs continue to operate as individual small businesses but enjoy added layers of support and efficiencies.

Impact

- Over time child care programs save time and money that can be dedicated back into quality programming.
- Networked child care programs in Wisconsin have had a lower closure rate during the pandemic.
- Networks can help to facilitate community conversations around opportunities and challenges facing the child care sector and parents.

Considerations

- Technology can play a key role in creating deep administrative efficiencies through networks. Child care networks work best when staffed with experienced individuals with a deep understanding of the child care sector. Additionally, networks thrive when local stakeholders are also involved and able to contribute resources towards the whole. A child care network can also serve as a mechanism to purchase child care slots amongst a larger pool of programs providing greater choice for parents.

Where is this being done?

- The Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN) has been operating in Wisconsin since 2019. WEESSN has a tiered level of services that are offered across the state. Check out [their website](#) for more information.
- Jackson County has a task force of area businesses working to address child care shortages in their area. In 2020, they partnered with WEESSN to launch a shared services network. Learn more on the [DCF website](#) or visit the Jackson County Child Care Network, Inc. [Facebook page](#).

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