

Business-Child Care Partnership Tool Kit

MODULE 5 — Sustaining Child Care in My Community



Child care is a vital need for working families; without child care, parents and caregivers – especially women – are unable to stay in or enter the workforce. Ensuring a robust supply of child care in every community requires a strong focus on not only growing the number of spots available, but sustaining new and existing child care options. The experience, expertise, and support of the broader community, including businesses, is critical to the long-term sustainability of child care.

Developing a Sustainability Plan

Developing and implementing a task force within the community to take on sustainability in child care is an important first step. Bringing together stakeholders who have multiple perspectives and a common interest in developing and maintaining quality child care will help drive engagement and investment in determining the best path forward for the community. Be sure to engage unique voices to hear diverse perspectives from your community. Consider including an individual who is a trained facilitator to join the task force.

A task force should include key partners such as:

- Public, private, or parochial school personnel
- Current child care providers
- City officials and/or Tribal Executive Councils
- Non-profit organizations
- Established community development groups or committees
- Other interested businesses
- Social service and/or pediatric health providers
- Realtors
- Local trade unions
- Parents

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Tool Kit Modules

- Module 1 — High-Quality Child Care: Why It Matters and How We Achieve It
- Module 2 — Building Successful Business-Child Care Partnerships
- Module 3 — Best Business Practices for Child Care
- Module 4 — Moving Forward: Rules and Regulations for Opening or Expanding a Child Care Site
- **Module 5 — Sustaining Child Care in My Community**
- Module 6 — Why Should Businesses Partner with Child Care?

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





Assessing the needs of the community through town halls, surveys, and other information gathering efforts can help the task force determine its mission. If sustaining the entire child care industry in your community feels like a big initial step for the task force, is there a smaller project within the larger picture that can be developed first? Prioritizing goals such as bringing unregulated care into regulation, contracting for slots between businesses and current providers, or creating options for night or second shift care can help make the process more manageable and targeted to specific community needs.

Another activity for the task force is assessing current financing for child care in their community, as well as identifying other financing opportunities to help ensure sustainability. Determining how child care is currently funded can provide a picture of what is working and where there are gaps for families and the community, which may be filled by identifying other financing opportunities. One example of this kind of assessment is the work First Children's Finance (FCF) performed in partnership with the Nebraska Early Childhood Collective to [analyze child care financing in the state of Nebraska](#). By determining what was working, as well as obstacles, FCF was able to offer recommendations to the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative to support their goal of creating effective, equitable pathways to capital for child care businesses.

Once goals and financing opportunities have been identified for the community, the task force can begin building a sustainability plan. The plan should name the goals, the roles of community stakeholders, a timeline, and what additional resources may be needed to achieve success.

In Wisconsin, grant opportunities may be available to your community to support the child care infrastructure:

- The [Partner Up!](#) grant program will provide funding to support partnerships between businesses who contract for slots at existing regulated child care providers. The funding will be awarded based on existing community child care needs throughout Wisconsin. The funding from this program can be used to increase staff compensation, pay operation expenses, reserve child care slots for local business employees, improve the quality of a child care program, and more.
- The [Dream Up!](#) grant program will offer funding to support communities around the state over two years. Through a collaborative community approach, teams will work to evaluate, plan, sustain existing child care, and expand it in areas where needed.
- The [Workforce Innovations Grant Program](#) is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). The program provides up to \$10 million grants to regional organizations to design and implement innovative plans that help solve the workforce challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in their regions.



Financing Strategies

For businesses wanting to ensure sustainability of child care in their community, assessment of financing should be done at both the individual business and the community levels.

Questions for your business to consider include:

- How much can my business afford to invest in this effort in the coming years?
- Should I subsidize my employees' child care as an added benefit? If so, at what cost (i.e. 10% of care, 50% of care, up to a certain dollar amount per month or year)?
- Will my business contract with local child care programs to secure slots and subsidize those slots for some of my employees?

Questions for communities to consider include:

- What local businesses are willing to invest in this plan?
 - The local Chamber of Commerce or United Way may be able to help you identify other interested partners in the community.
- Is there an already existing community development committee or department to partner with?
- Is grant funding available for which the community can apply to support child care sustainability efforts?
 - Federal, state, and local elected officials and their staff may be able to assist in identifying potential sources of funding for your community.
 - Many local and regional philanthropic organizations have identified child care as a priority for their giving.
- Are there businesses, individuals, or other community partners that may be able to provide additional sources of support?
 - Consider the need for building space (for services or storage), administrative support, and items such as kitchen equipment or electronics. Current child care providers and your local [Child Care Resource and Referral Agency](#) (CCR&R) can offer insight into what current needs are as well as what would be helpful to sustain existing and new child care.



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Read

- The [Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide](#) from the Child Care Technical Assistance Network provides several key resources for sustainability, including:
 - [Planning and implementation](#)
 - [Timeline](#)
 - [Building a team](#)
 - [Overcoming challenges](#)
- Review [Module 2: Building Successful Business - Child Care Partnerships](#) to ensure you and others are familiar with different types of care, questions to consider, and models and opportunities which may be a good fit to explore for your community.
- Review the [Key Points about Wisconsin's New Comprehensive Planning and "Smart Growth" Law](#) article.
- The [UW-Madison Community Economic Development](#) program promotes economic well-being in Wisconsin communities and has several important resources.

Watch

- Webinars from the [Investing in the Future of Child Care](#) series held by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the Low Income Investment Fund, including:
 - [Child Care as a Community Investment](#)
 - [Supporting Small Business Providers](#)

Do

- Work with partners to develop a community survey to determine current child care needs; DCF has [a template](#) which can be edited to meet the needs of different communities, including assessment of current and desired financing options.
- Learn about what communities across the country are doing to support child care sustainability; many states and communities are becoming more creative with utilization of public and private funding to develop and implement child care sustainability plans. Two examples include:
 - [Renville County, Minnesota](#), where one goal was to partner with the county to create and promote a forgivable loan fund to help start new child care businesses, and to engage community partners to raise donations for teacher training and employee scholarships.
 - [Fairmont, Minnesota](#), which established a goal to increase quality slots over the course of one year by creating a \$150,000 fund to incentivize new providers, invest in quality for existing providers, and create access to training and professional development.



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