



First Children's Finance



Wisconsin Dream Up! Strategic Child Care Supply Building Summary Report

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Project Background

In 2022 First Children's Finance (FCF) partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to deliver Project Growth's Dream Up! Child Care Supply Building Grant program to support and expand the supply of child care throughout the state. Through this program, FCF worked with communities, using a collaborative community-led approach, to evaluate, plan, sustain existing care, and expand child care in areas with a need. Child care businesses located in Dream Up! Communities had the opportunity to apply for and participate in a Business Leadership Cohort (BLC) to gain valuable business knowledge specific to the child care industry.

Project Overview

Beginning In the spring of 2022, communities across Wisconsin were invited to apply for the Dream Up! Child Care Supply Building Program. Through a competitive process, 37 communities were selected to participate in a Strategic Child Care Supply Building process facilitated by FCF.

Successful applicants had a cross-sector of dedicated individuals who could bring time, talent, resources to support their projects, and teams that displayed strong collaboration. The child care business model is the reflection of a broken system; without systemic, ongoing sustainable resources, dedicated and creative community-based solutions are needed to fill the gaps.

Communities were broadly defined but needed to fall into one of the following categories:

- Native and Indigenous communities
- Neighborhoods with defined boundaries in urban areas
- Rural areas no bigger than a county
- Suburban/exurban community
- An area like a zip code, school district, or 4 small cities that join together



Priority was given to communities who were able to express one or more of the following criteria in their application.

- Child care desert status
- Lack of infant/toddler care
- Need for expanded care during non-traditional hours
- Show the readiness to collaborate across sectors to identify short- and long-supports for sustainable child care business models
- Evidence of commitment to equity and inclusion in the community's core team engagement and stated goals for the grant

Each community provided specific zip codes within their defined geography; these zip codes were the basis of the data analysis for the Core Teams.

Communities

- Bad River Band of Lake Superior
- Calumet County
- Central Sand Child Care Alliance (Adams County)
- City of Sun Prairie
- City of Superior
- City of Waupaca
- Community Related Training (Milwaukee)
- Crown Jewel
- Driftless Development
- Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation
- Indianhead Community Action Agency
- Ithaca School District
- Jackson County Child Care Alliance
- Langlade County Economic Development Corporation
- Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Latino Entrepreneurial Network
- Lincoln County Social Services
- Marathon County
- Medford Area Public Schools
- Oneida County Child Care Coalition (Grow North)
- Oshkosh Area United Way
- Osseo-Fairchild (Augusta)
- Progress Lakeshore
- Royall School District / Children's Cottage
- Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce
- School District of Mauston
- Stockbridge Munsee Community
- The Hmong Institute
- The Playing Field
- United Way of Greater Chippewa Valley
- United Way of Portage County
- United Way of St. Croix Valley
- United Way of Sheboygan County
- Village of LaFarge
- Viroqua Area Schools



- Wood County Health Department



Core Team Members

During the application process applicants were required to establish a Core Team from a cross-sector of community leadership positions. Over 537 community leaders engaged to discuss, plan, and address the child care needs in their communities. Core Teams had an average of 14 members. Representation included city, county, and state elected officials, local government units, school districts, early care and education staff and business owners, faith organizations, and employers. Banking, healthcare, economic development, parents, and civic organizations were all represented.

Best Practice: Key Voices to Include

- Local Business Leaders
- Community and Civic Organizations
- Economic Development Programs
- Child Care Programs
- School Districts
- Local Government Units
- City and County Administrations
- Parent Groups
- Faith-based Organizations
- Volunteers

Best Practice: Ensure Community Representation

- Cultures
- Ethnicities
- Languages
- Socio-economic status
- Family structures



Research and Data

Best Practice: Gather Community Specific Data

- Number of Children Under Age 5
- Current Child Care Capacity
- Child Care Slots Needed
- Parent/Guardian Preference
- Employee/Employer Perspective
- Current Child Care Challenges

Information-Gathering Opportunities

- Town Halls/Community Events
- Focus Groups
- Round Tables
- Surveys
- Data and information gathered should reflect everyone in the community.

FCF completed a deep dive into child care data for each community including a Supply Demand Gap Analysis, a unique data review designed by FCF's years of experience working with communities to support their child care needs (community Supply Demand Gap Analysis results are found on page 6).

The Strategic Supply Plan Process reviewed each community's school district data, workforce data, and child care licensing requirements. FCF gathered and evaluated this community information and presented it to the Core Team. After the data was reviewed, the Core Team identified their community's unique assets and resources that could support the child care supply. This process, facilitated by FCF, supported Core Teams in developing goals and

creating budgets for their project. The community issues were similar, but the solutions were unique to their community's assets and resources.

Gathering community information helps support informed decisions that address the needs of child care businesses, families, and children that are culturally, linguistically, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive.

83% of the child care workforce have a college education or a college degree and 27% have a bachelor's or post-graduate degree

\$10.66 Average child care worker hourly wage

More than half of the child care workforce in WI rely on some form of public assistance

More than 25% of the child care workforce hopes to find a new job in the next 2 years



Gap in Child Care Availability by Community

Central Sands Community Alliance (Adams County)	1283	Ithaca Schools	290	Progress Lakeshore	2478
Osseo-Fairchild (Augusta)	788	Jackson County Child Care Alliance	462	Royall School District (Children's Cottage)	98
Bad River Band of Lake Superior	287	Langlade County Economic Development	447	Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce	1317
Calumet County	536	Latino Chamber of Commerce	3120	Sheboygan	3341
City of Sun Prairie	1029	Latino Entrepreneurial Network	2185	Stockbridge Munsee	325
City of Superior	1101	Lincoln County Social Services	513	The Hmong Institute	*6048
City of Waupaca	152	Marathon County	4078	The Playing Field	2123
Community Related Training (Milwaukee)	-2614	School District of Mauston		United Way of Greater Chippewa Valley	731
Crown Jewel	1899	Medford Area Public Schools	237	United Way of St. Croix Valley	1422
Driftless Development	391	Oneida County Child Care Coalition (Grow North)	1077	Village of LaFarge	1141
Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation	1444	Oshkosh Area United Way	2556	Viroqua	236
Indianhead Community Action Agency	460	United Way of Portage County	945	Waupaca County	1063
				Wood County Health Department	2763

*Hmong population data in Dane County, specific census and child care data are not available for this demographic.



Community Driven Solutions

As Dream Up! Core Teams discussed the best ways to support their community's child care challenges, they were encouraged to use the community's strengths and easily accessible resources to address needs that could be solved with the available resources and timeline.

Activities like providing training, creating community awareness, building partnerships, and supporting current provider needs were all discussed.

As teams developed goals, they evaluated the following:

- Child care licensing rules and regulations
- Options for families (family and center-based care)
- Community business operation hours versus available child care hours
- Leveraging existing facilities
- Business partnerships
- Expansion of existing child care programs
- Funding options
- Child care workforce pipeline

Topics such as child care regulations and state-supported funding initiatives were explored, but because creating change to regulation and state funding takes longer time than the Dream Up! project allowed, communities were encouraged to create Dream Up! Goals that could be accomplished during the project timeline. These state wide changes can be explored and advocated for through long-term project plans.

Best Practice: Engage Your Community!

- Identify community child care advocates and business leaders to lead efforts
- Promote the child care conversation utilizing multiple outlets
- Plan opportunities for community members to share experiences
- Share Information with the community on the state of child care
- Reflect on shared feedback and experiences
- Build partnerships with leaders in the community to assist in solutions
- Develop a plan to address child care challenges
- Follow up with community members on progress
- Continue to welcome feedback and reflect on efforts as plans move forward



Challenges & Successes from Dream Up! Communities

As FCF partnered with communities across the state, child care challenges were identified and were used as opportunities to create goals to support their community's most urgent child care priorities. The following challenges were reported across the state and became the starting point for project goals.

The following sections include the common challenges, community-supported solutions and successes communities have already experienced. The successes listed below are just a sample of the many activities that have led to positive outcomes for the child care industry in Dream Up! Communities.

Access to Child Care Subsidy Programs

Child care businesses reported struggling to apply for or qualify for subsidy programs in the initial phases of Dream UP!. The price of child care is high for families, and the cost to operate quality programming is high. The average cost of care for an infant in center-based programming is over \$11,900 a year, approximately 16% of the median household income in Wisconsin. The true cost of care would be closer to \$33,000 if programs were able to pay their staff living wages and cover all expenses of operating their business. The federal government recommends no more than 7% of a family's income be spent on child care. Although changes to subsidy programs take more time than Dream Up! projects had, they partnered with government leaders to share their stories and advocate for resources for their communities.

Child care subsidies are an issue that – although addressed in most meetings – involve changes in legislation, which would take more time than the Dream Up! project would allow to address directly. Core Teams, however, gained a better understanding of the subsidy resources available, such as Wisconsin Shares and the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP), arming them with the knowledge to advocate for these programs. Core Teams were presented with data regarding the true cost of care, and the gap between what is considered affordable. (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2022)

Wisconsin has implemented and updated many programs to support access to funding for programs to support families and programs. Recent investments



include an increase to the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program, as well as increased support for children with developmental delays, child care tax credits, and partnerships with businesses are all strategies implemented to support the child care infrastructure. (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2024)

Workforce

Child care businesses across the state expressed their inability to operate at full licensed capacity due to a lack of staffing. Employee recruitment and retention was echoed as a challenge in all community processes. Family child care programs which are vital, especially in rural areas, are not opening as quickly as programs are closing. In 2024, it was reported that programs were operating under capacity by 33,000 slots but still had waitlists. The lack of staffing is causing programs to close classrooms and operate at less than licensed capacity. (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2024)

Solutions to address the workforce shortage include offering training, access to degree programs and certificates such as the Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA) and developing networking opportunities for child care businesses. All communities provided opportunities for local child care businesses to provide feedback on their needs through conversations, surveys, or other forms of outreach. Core Teams used this information to create solutions that best fit child care business needs in their communities.

One of the most common solutions identified was providing access to training and educational opportunities at no cost to those interested in early care and education. Providing education through high school curriculum, apprenticeship programs, or through local colleges and universities were options many communities explored. Core Team members supported access to the CDA curriculum as part of high school course work where students would learn the value of high-quality early care and education, and gain exposure to the child care career field. Communities felt this was a two-fold success, supporting the workforce through educational opportunities and sending more young adults into the world with knowledge of child development and resources to support future families.



Successes:

The United Way of St. Croix Valley worked with local early care educators to increase their WIRegistry levels, leading to increased wages, and providing programs they work in the opportunity to increase their capacity by 32 slots.

The Royall School District had three providers obtain their associate's degree, increasing their program's YoungStar Rating.

Indianhead Community Action Agency completed a survey and identified three people interested in starting child care programs. These individuals were connected to licensing and community resources, resulting in more than 70 potential slots as a result of Dream Up! initiatives.

The Latino Chamber of Commerce established a mentorship program. 21 child care entrepreneurs were paired with mentors, who started 12 new businesses, adding 52 slots in Dane County.

The Playing Field supported the enrollment of 6 candidates into an apprenticeship program.

The United Way of Portage County surveyed providers to understand their training needs, and they responded to the results by offering training to over 30 providers.

The United Way of Sheboygan County developed a mentorship program and worked to support currently unregulated programs through the licensing process.

The United Way of Greater Chippewa Valley supported the creation of a Family Child Care Network. This group has successfully been meeting monthly to provide resources and support to participants.

Viroqua Area Schools met with students in Vernon County schools to talk about early care and education careers.

Wood County worked with Childcaring Inc. to provide an opportunity for local child care program directors and administrators to network, build relationships and learn about shared services.



Compensation

Low wages and the inability to provide benefits are a struggle for child care businesses. The influx of Covid-era funding to support child care wages provided many employees with relief, but for other child care educators, accepting any raise would make them ineligible for the subsidy programs they rely on. The increased investment did not provide enough financial support for these staff members to invest in private insurance or make up the gap to pay for groceries or heating bills after losing their subsidy eligibility. Raising Wisconsin states that wages for providers average between \$11-\$13 per hour. Over half of the child care workforce reports they rely on public assistance programs. (Raising Wisconsin, 2022)

Community understanding of child care finances, the small profit margins, and the constraints of charging parents more to make up the funding gap were evaluated. This understanding led to business partnerships funding programmatic needs and child care opportunities for their employees. Local Business Child Care Advocate staff supported new relationships and helped to make vital connections between child care entrepreneurs and local business owners.

Successes:

The Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce worked with a local child care business to create a balanced budget, allowing for an increase in staff wages and access to benefits.

Calumet County was able to invest in programs to support the retention of current staff and increase two staff positions allowing for the expansion of 18 new slots.

Access to Care

In all Dream Up! communities, access to infant and toddler child care programming - especially, high-quality care - was reported as a significant challenge. Child care businesses reported waitlists of over 18 months with many businesses reporting they did not keep waitlists due to the high volume of need. The lack of qualified staff was the number one reason that programs reported having unfilled spots, this is supported by research from the Institute for Research on Poverty (Shager, Bauer, & Hostetter, 2024).



Addressing access issues came through a variety of community-supported solutions. The funding Dream Up! communities received was vital in opening slots and increasing access to care. Core Teams allocated resources to support the retention of staff. Investments also included the purchase of curricula and assessment tools, hiring resources, and staff retention incentives. Communities developed child care awareness campaigns, which resulted in more individuals expressing interest in the field. The investment in curricula and assessment tools allowed for the increase of YoungStar quality ratings.

Successes:

The City of Superior invested in 10 local child care businesses and added 30 child care slots to their child care supply. The grant program implemented through Dream Up! received over \$41,000 in requests and the city matched funding to allow the Core Team to fund all projects.

The Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation supported the expansion of a local program, increasing slots by 75. Another program expanded to 38 slots, and an additional 40 slots are anticipated by the end of 2024.

Grow North added 61 slots and created a webpage: [Advocate – Oneida County Childcare Coalition](#) and [video](#) to support the local child care industry.

Medford Area Schools expanded 3- and 4-year-old program models for children with disabilities.

The Sauk Prairie Chamber of Commerce advocated for a new housing development to include and require space to be allocated for a child care center to be developed.

Calumet County was able to support two providers through the regulation process.

The United Way of Sheboygan County had 7 programs commit to using ASQ, a development screening tool. This will support an increased YoungStar Rating.

The Latino Entrepreneurial Network supported 7 programs in accessing Bi-lingual Creative Curriculum® and training to increase their YoungStar Rating.



Oshkosh United Way was able to provide funding to 16 child care businesses to keep their program fully operational and supported 2 new businesses in opening their doors.

Osseo-Fairchild Area invested in local child care businesses to meet licensing regulations that supported new programs, and the increase in quality ratings.

Community Awareness

Child Care businesses reported feeling underappreciated for the vital services they provide to their communities. The lack of child care availability is a community issue “costing Wisconsin \$1.1 billion per year in lost economic productivity, earnings, and revenue” (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2024). Through data review, particularly from child care entrepreneurs, Core Team members were made aware of the challenges of dire low wages, waitlists, cost of care, and other key challenges for the first time. Communities recognized the need for outreach and networking to share the vital importance that child care has on their communities.

Networking and outreach activities created during the Strategic Child Care Supply Plan Process piqued the interest of community investors, potential child care entrepreneurs, parents, and business leaders. The outreach created a broad community understanding of the need for high-quality child care options, which benefits working parents, the local economy, and community vitality. This new found understanding resulted in new investors and the community-wide support and recognition of the child care workforce.

Successes:

Adams County expanded Central Sands Child Care Alliance. The Alliance’s networking and outreach led to the county exploring child care as an employee benefit.

Progress Lakeshore developed resources and a video to support interested educators in starting a child care business.

<https://www.progresslakeshore.org/start-a-child-care-business/>



The Jackson County Child Care Network held a Kids Art Gala and Traveling Art Show to bring awareness to child care needs and raise funds to support child care businesses within their community. They also created a website to highlight resources and programs. <https://www.jcchildcarenetwork.org/>

The Stockbridge Munsee Community completed a community survey and created resource materials that allowed families to receive information regarding child care opportunities.

The Bad River Band of Lake Superior held meetings for people interested in providing child care. Six people attended these meetings. It was discovered that there is a need for AHT/SUIDS & CPR training in the community. Northwest Connection provided information and resources for those interested in starting care.

The Crown Jewel Academy held a community event and training that supported mental wellness resources for child care businesses in the community.

Community Related Training provided outreach to over 300 child care providers to share resources available through Dream Up!. 60 providers showed interest in a training event to learn about increasing their quality.

Driftless Development created advertising to increase awareness of child care needs. They were able to adapt as their team changed, create new partnerships, and bring on new team members as the project evolved.

Partnerships

Historically, partnerships and supplemental community support for child care businesses have been limited. Child care businesses have been asked to operate as any other business, relying primarily on private tuition payments from families. Tuition alone does not provide enough funding for child care businesses' full investment in their staff and programming. Child care businesses scraped by with the limited resources accessible to them, including small grants to cover the cost of equipment or free training. Obtaining business loans is challenging due to the slim profit margins. Core Team members expressed the desire to support child care businesses but did not know what support was needed. During Core Team



meetings, child care businesses expressed details regarding their operations and articulated the various resources that would benefit them. Without partnerships and supplemental support, programs cannot reach income to cover the true cost of care, leaving wages low and benefits impossible to provide.

Child care leaders who were members of Core Teams expressed never using partnerships or requesting community support. Meetings allowed child care programs space to express their needs. They shared how support could create a lasting impact on their businesses. Connections to an accountant, a contractor, or a landscaping company would allow them to make needed updates to enhance their infrastructure. Business partnerships and investments allowed them to complete projects they put on hold due to costs.

Successes:

Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce developed community partnerships and has worked closely with 4C and the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to educate the community on investing in early learning and child care workers.

Jackson County Child Care Network worked with local businesses to achieve certification as a Family Friendly Workplace. Being a Family Friendly Workplace means supporting families and providing financial support to early childhood education and other supporting programs. (Family Friendly Workplaces, 2024)

Waupaca County has invested 1.5 million dollars toward child care.

The Hmong Institute worked to network with Hmong providers in Madison, they discussed the development of a network for Hmong providers. They also discussed developing culturally responsive training materials. Collaboration city officials allowed for coordinated efforts to reduce barriers to opening culturally responsive child care programming.

Langlade County worked with Northcentral Technical College to establish a community fund to support education for certified child care providers. Additional Quest dollars were invested.



City of Sun Prairie worked to initiate partnerships with Madison College and the local school district to expand training for those interested in going into the child care field, this conversation included engaging high-school students in child development coursework and certification.

Marathon County worked to develop partnerships with organizations throughout the county and secure additional funding to provide ongoing support.

The Village of La Farge worked to develop community partnerships to offset local child care costs.

Child Care Funding

Core team members shared their experience with funding opportunities for child care. Pre-pandemic public funding for child care programming primarily included child care support for low-income families through the Wisconsin Shares subsidy programs and CACFP. Occasionally programs were able to access small grants to purchase equipment and supplies. Covid era funding changed that, as child care was deemed an essential workforce. The influx of funding supported keeping doors open and staff paid, often including small raises or monthly bonuses. As the pandemic ended and this supplemental funding was set to conclude, programs expressed they would need to increase their tuition by 20-40% just to keep their doors open and provide current-level wages. The State of Wisconsin has been able to keep subsidy payments operating, although not at the same level, funding was vital for programs to keep their doors open.

When child care businesses shared their needs and financial situations, Core Teams quickly decided that financial investment directly supporting programmatic and staffing needs would be a smart use of Dream Up! dollars and a vital resource allowing programs to keep operating. Communities took many approaches, including mini grants for current programs and investment in start-up programming.

Successes:

The city of Waupaca used Dream Up! resources to provide mini grants for start-up programs, this allowed local organizations to lower their cost of entry into child care, a vision to support the community inside their buildings.



The School District of Mauston provided two rounds of funding to support local child care programs and invest in their quality. Through the process of offering funding support, three people came forward and are interested in opening programs.

Outcomes



Sum of Regulated Capacity for Children	Before Dream Up! 7/31/2022	Most recent capacity numbers 9/30/24	Change
Adams	109	123	14
Ashland	371	430	59
Bad River Tribal	12		-12
Brown	6474	7574	1100
Calumet	943	905	-38
Chippewa	1299	1662	363
Crawford	132	180	48
Dane	22040	24063	2023
Dodge	1543	1740	197
Douglas	797	1076	279
Eau Claire	3546	4370	824
Jackson	283	308	25
Jefferson	1400	1871	471
Juneau	452	475	23
Kenosha	4429	5330	901
Langlade	197	226	29
Lincoln	324	469	145
Manitowoc	1133	1274	141
Marathon	2848	3062	214
Monroe	558	566	8
Oneida	560	637	77
Pierce	792	973	181
Portage	1513	1684	171
Racine	4743	4799	56
Richland	31	261	230
Rusk	129	169	40
Sauk	1002	1083	81
Shawano	401	506	105
Sheboygan	2288	2657	369
St. Croix	2897	2884	-13
Taylor	247	251	4
Trempealeau	455	518	63
Vernon	266	441	175
Waupaca	921	1093	172
Winnebago	3486	4346	860
Wood	2015	1983	-32
Grand Total	70636	79989	9353

Project Funding Allocations by Allowable Cost



Administrative costs directly related to Dream Up! grant implementation, such as a percentage of the core team lead's salary for time spent on the project (not to exceed 10% of the total grant/\$7,500)	\$192,534
Administrative expenses	\$8,025
Building a pipeline for training future early care and education professionals	\$186,243
Building peer support networks	\$65,845
Classroom supplies	\$9,329
Cleaning/PPE materials	\$2,850
Compensation/bonuses and benefits for educators and other direct service personnel (e.g., transportation, food services)	\$360,335
Curriculum materials	\$51,302
Diapers, formula, food, and other items for children	\$4,775
Dream Up! related marketing/communications to engage the community, promote events, etc.	\$158,747
Dream Up! related outreach and/or community events (may offer food and non-alcoholic refreshments at a cost of less than \$7 per person, including tips/fees)	\$3,572
Equipment that is not technology or transportation equipment (e.g., a lawn mower, rake, tools for facility maintenance, washer and dryer)	\$7,600
Family engagement activities	\$6,100
Furniture and furnishings	\$22,203
Installation of a radon mitigation system	\$2,500
Installing energy-absorbing playground base (wood chips, rubber)	\$4,000
Kitchen updates (cabinets for proper food storage, fix plumbing issues)	\$6,900
Maintaining or enhancing high-quality care	\$337,358
Materials for the learning environment (indoor and outdoor)	\$266,228
Minor repairs or renovations such as new railings, a new sink, adding a door, a new countertop	\$83,405
Professional and community events	\$29,000
Professional development activities	\$222,484
Recruitment, hiring, and retention costs	\$205,507
Relief from tuition payments for families	\$19,865
Removing barriers to child care success in the community, reducing operating costs, and ensuring families' access to programs	\$90,550
Removing or adding non-load-bearing walls to create additional space	\$24,752



Renovating bathrooms to ensure age-appropriateness and child safety	\$8,450
Replacing or repainting walls with non-toxic paint	\$200
Research/data collection activities to support future planning	\$134,581
Safety fence	\$11,583
Safety improvements (electrical outlet replacement, gates)	\$7,900
Screening and assessment tools	\$11,213
Staff meeting materials (excluding food and beverage)	\$7,427
Start-up of new programs and/or transitions from unregulated to regulated	\$144,720
Technology, such as tablets and computers	\$45,698
Updating windows and doors	\$4,500
Upgrading playgrounds (not to exceed \$5,000 per site)	\$6,720
Utilities	\$20,000
Total	\$2,775,000



Summary

Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families has worked diligently to support and update programs that provide resources to the child care supply. These supports and resources complemented and enhanced the work of communities throughout the Strategic Child Care Supply Plan Process. Through the Dream Up! Strategic Child Care Supply Planning Process communities were able to increase awareness of state programs and develop local solutions to support the child care industry. (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2024)

Community work takes time, diverse investment, and adaptability. Selected communities achieved many successes, including increased community awareness, community investment, and an increase in the overall child care supply.

These successes did not come easily or without hard work and dedication from Core Team members. Challenges faced included turnover in Core Team membership, delays causing the need to abandon or adjust project goals significantly, funding restrictions, and timelines that didn't accommodate some activities. Core Teams experienced a lack of interest from potential partners and investments that did not materialize. In the end, Core Teams overcame these challenges, engaged new partners, and developed projects and plans that had better outcomes. Teams strengthened child care networks, alliances, and advocacy groups, which still meet even after their Dream Up! project closed.

The child care crisis is not over yet: communities that participated in Dream Up! have learned valuable lessons and can serve to be vital resources to other communities working on their child care challenges. All communities looking to support child care must continually assess the current state of child care businesses to meet their unique cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, and health needs.

First Children's Finance recommends the following advice to all communities considering engaging in ideas to increase the supply of child care:

- When developing child care projects make sure the solution is a right-sized solution, meaning that it meets current needs but can be adjusted to support the ongoing sustainability of child care supply.
- Don't get fixated on a particular property or solution. The feasibility of some projects is just too costly to achieve ongoing sustainability.



- Involve existing providers in your community; they are part of the solution. The retention of current child care businesses is vital for the industry to grow.
- As groups convene and develop solutions, confirm that the group is working to address the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, medical, and mental health needs of children, families, and providers.
- Always model child care specific financial projections before committing to a project. Search for a broad base of support. Child care financing is unique, and staffing patterns and licensing regulations must be considered to ensure long-term viability of a business.



Initiatives In the News

Below are some of the many newspaper and online articles initiated through Dream Up! Projects.

<https://waupacanow.com/2022/06/07/big-boost-for-child-care/%20%20https://waupacanow.com/2023/05/16/child-care-crisis-in-waupaca-county/>

<https://rivernewsonline.com/news/2023/jul/18/forward-rhinelander-group-discusses-affordable-child-care-as-a-workforce-issue/>

https://www.wjfw.com/news/oneida-county-addresses-childcare-issues/article_0860b1d4-d40c-11ed-8a6e-8709a8c2ce16.html

<https://www.wxpr.org/business-economics/2023-08-09/childcare-centers-say-state-program-helps-lower-costs-to-families-gov-evers-wants-it-renewed>

https://www.wjfw.com/news/oneida-county-addresses-childcare-issues/article_0860b1d4-d40c-11ed-8a6e-8709a8c2ce16.html

https://www.wmtv15news.com/2023/07/28/gov-evers-visits-playing-field-six-apprentices-sign/?fbclid=IwAR1swzgnfAHxolybgmjFNLVsIT8iO08gykSvjxkkSarcFbjQEbCVZsfh_gM

[Mobile lab teaches children about farming and agriculture](#)

<https://www.weau.com/2023/08/15/mobile-lab-teaches-children-about-farming-agriculture/>

[DCF Secretary meets with area grant recipients](#) <https://www.wiproud.com/news/local-news/dcf-secretary-meets-with-area-grant-recipients/>

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Core Team Organizations, Leads, Corresponding Counties and Zip Codes

<u>Community Affiliation of Core Team Lead, Core Team Lead)</u>	<u>County:</u>	<u>Community Defined in Application</u>
Bad River Band of Lake Superior - Lynn Wiggins	Ashland	54514, 54517, 54527, 54546, 54806, 54856, 54850, 54855, 54861
Calumet County - Candy Hall	Calumet	53014, 53088, 54129, 53061
Central Sands Childcaring Alliance Adams County- Erin Schiferl	Adams	53965, 54457, 54613, 54646, 54921, 54930
City of Sun Prairie - Kristen Grissom	Dane	53590
City of Superior - Rebecca Scherf	Douglas	54820, 54836, 54838, 54842, 54849, 54864, 54864, 54873, 54874, 54880, 54890
City of Waupaca - Gregory Grohman	Waupaca	54981
Community Related Training - Gershia Coggs	Milwaukee	53209, 53216, 53218
Crown Jewel Academy - Crystal McCollum	Racine	53405, 53403, 53402, 53401
Driftless Development - Amanda Griswold	Crawford	53802, 53821, 53826, 54624, 54626, 54628, 54631, 54655,
Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation - Susan Mejchar	Dodge	53039, 53063, 53094, 53098, 53579, 53916
Grow North Regional Economic Development Corp - Lauren Sackett	Oneida	54521, 54529, 54531, 54538, 54539, 54563, 54543, 54548, 54562, 54564,
Indianhead Community Action Agency - Jennifer Shearer	Rusk	54526, 54530, 54563, 54563, 54731, 54766, 54819, 54848, 54895
Ithaca School District - Chelsea Wunnicke	Richland	53581
Jackson County Child Care Network - Marianne Torkelson	Jackson	54611, 54615, 54635, 54642, 54643, 54754
Langlade County Economic Development Corporation - Angela Close	Langlade	54409, 54435, 54491, 54428, 54418, 54175, 54428, 54462, 54430, 54465, 54485, 54464



Latino Chamber of Commerce - Kat Klawes	Dane	53508, 53515, 53523, 53527, 53528, 53729, 53575, 53589, 53590, 53590, 53597, 53598
Latino Entrepreneurial Network - Nelson Soler	Milwaukee	53207, 53210, 53219, 53221
Lincoln County Social Services - Renee Krueger	Lincoln	54452, 54487
Marathon County - Lance Leonhard	Marathon	54401, 54402, 54403, 54408, 54411, 54426, 54427, 54429, 54440, 54448, 54455, 54471, 54474, 54476, 54479, 54484, 54488,
Medford Area Public Schools - Joseph Greget	Taylor	54433, 54451, 54470
Oshkosh Area United Way - Beth Oswald	Winnebago	54927, 54963, 54964, 54980, 54985, 54901, 54902, 54904, 54906
Osseo-Fairchild School District- Madeline Williams	Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, and Trempealeau	54611, 54722, 54741, 54742, 54746, 54758, 54768, 54770, 54771
Progress Lakeshore - Jamie Zastrow	Manitowoc	53015, 53042, 53061, 53063, 54220, 54227, 54228, 54230, 54241, 54245, 54247
Royall School District Children's Cottage - Kari Preuss	Juneau	53929, 54638
Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce - Tywana German	Sauk	53561, 53578, 53583, 53901, 53579
School District of Mauston - Lynda Oleinik	Juneau	53944, 53948, 53950
Stockbridge-Munsee Community - Linda Katchenago	Shawano	54416, 54128
The Hmong Institute, Inc - Peng Her	Dane	53590, 53704, 53711, 53713, 53714, 53715, 53716, 53718
The Playing Field - Abbi Kruse	Dane	53703, 53704, 53705, 53711, 53713, 53714, 53715, 53716, 53717
United Way of Portage County - Mae Nachman	Portage County	54481, 54482, 54467, 54406, 54407, 54921, 54423, 54443, 54458, 54473
United Way of Sheboygan County - Ryan Wilinski	Sheboygan County	53001, 53011, 53013, 53015, 53020, 53023, 53026, 53031, 53044, 53070,



		53073, 53075, 53081, 53082, 53083, 53085, 53093
United Way of St. Croix Valley - Betsy Byker	St. Croix, Pierce	54002, 54011, 54022, 54023, 54028, 54767, 54740
United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley - Isabella Hong	Chippewa & Eau Claire	54742, 54722, 54757, 54745, 54732, 54748, 54727
Village of La Farge - Frank Quinn	Vernon County	54619, 54634, 54639, 54664, 54667
Viroqua Area Schools - Sharon Engh	Vernon	54665, 54667, 53063
Waupaca County - Ryan Brown	Waupaca	54486, 54922, 54926, 54929, 54933, 54940, 54945, 54949, 54950, 54961, 54962, 54969, 54977, 54983
Wood County Health Department - Sue Smith	Wood	54410, 54412, 54413, 54420, 54466, 54441, 54443, 54449, 54454, 54457, 54469, 54475, 54489, 54494, 54495

