



Providing Resources and Supports to Enable Child Care Providers to Thrive as Businesses

Root Cause Addressed

- Challenging regulatory and business environment
- Lack of community coordination and engagement

Challenges Addressed

- The care families need is not available
- Providers face challenges recruiting and retaining qualified staff

Rationale

Even with high demand for child care services and a high cost of care, child care providers are still struggling to succeed as businesses due to several factors. With the staff, tools, and resources to succeed, new and existing providers will not only be able to fully operate and offer care for the total number of slots they are licensed for, but they will also be able to scale their programming to serve more families. While many of the resources connect to funding, there are other partnerships and resources that can be developed and leveraged to support providers in the current funding environment and set them up for success should funding increase.

Community Objectives

1. Develop a regional resource hub to support child care providers
2. Connect providers with training institutions to address staff capacity issues

Develop a Regional Resource Hub to Support Child Care Providers

Priority: Medium | Time frame: June 2024

Description

A resource hub is essential for regional child care providers, as it centralizes access to crucial information, tools, and support services, enabling providers to efficiently navigate business challenges and regulatory environments. This facilitates improved service quality, sustainability, and growth in the region's child care sector.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK (co-lead)
- Child Care Network (co-lead)
- Entrepreneurship Center at Washtenaw Community College
- Michigan Works! Southeast

Potential Activities

- Host a meeting with area organizations that offer small business supports, along with child care providers and Child Care Network, to identify how best to organize, share, and manage a resource hub
- Review existing resources to understand what is currently available and what can be included in the local regional resource hub
- Develop and maintain the resource hub to ensure entities that offer small business support are aware of the resources and how to help child care providers access support and navigate operating a child care center or home
- Communicate directly to child care providers to ensure they are aware of available resources to help them operate
- Identify gaps in the resource hub to locate additional resources, or request the development of new resources, that can be added to the hub in future years

Opportunities for Statewide Coordination

Many of the technical assistance resources needed will be consistent with those needed throughout the state. SPARK and other local partners should continue to track, organize and share state-level resources to make regional resource hubs and lists even more effective and easier to maintain and keep relevant to the changing needs of child care providers.

Examples of Resources

- Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) technical assistance and navigators
- Child Care Network technical assistance supports
- Wonderschool
- TOOTRiS
- List of child care-friendly developers to assist with construction projects
- A list of other child care providers willing to share lessons learned or partner to create shared service networks

Key Considerations

For a resource hub to be successful, it must be maintained, which will require some level of ongoing resources beyond the initial work to develop the resource list. Identifying local funding that can help support the maintenance of the resource list can ensure the sustainability of this activity as an effective mechanism for helping child care providers.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The development of a resource hub that is easily available to current and prospective child care providers
- The number of technical assistance or navigation services rendered by child care providers

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of available licensed slots in region by reducing the number of providers not able to fully staff or expand their program
- Reduction in the number of owners who identify business management practices as a challenge



Connect Providers with Training Institutions to Address Staff Capacity Issues

Priority: Medium-high | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

Strengthening the connection between providers and training institutions is crucial, as it can help address immediate capacity concerns of child care providers through fully funded apprenticeship and work study programs or volunteering. Collaboration will also promote a well-trained workforce, directly impacting the success and sustainability of child care businesses.

Key Parties

- Michigan Works! Southeast
- Area school districts
- Local community colleges
- Eastern Michigan University
- University of Michigan
- Child Care Network

Potential Activities

- Host a meeting with area organizations that are involved in the training of child care workers to identify how those organizations can best connect with child care providers
- Develop a process or identify a key organizational partner that can serve as a connection between child care providers and training organizations
- Create a centralized list of training and financial assistance programs that child care providers can access to connect with training institutions effectively

Opportunities for Statewide Coordination

While these connections will most commonly occur within region, understanding training institutions willing to make these partnerships in other regions, as well as local training institutions willing to support providers in neighboring regions will increase the effectiveness of this model.

Existing Resources

There are a variety of child care training programs locally, as well as programs that can assist employers with onboarding new hires and associated training costs. These include:

Michigan Works! Southeast programs:

- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Program](#)
- [Going PRO Talent Fund program](#)

Child Care Network's [Early Care and Education \(ECE\) Registered Apprenticeships](#)

Key Considerations

Several organizations are already doing work in this area, which sets this objective up for immediate success if they are able to coordinate and communicate effectively. Entities that can bridge training institutions and providers, such as Child Care Network and Ann Arbor SPARK, can play a key role in ensuring that these efforts to connect the two groups are sustained over time.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of new child care provider and educational institution partnerships
- The number of child care workers able to pursue training opportunities as a result of partnerships

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of available licensed slots in the region by reducing the number of providers not able to fully staff their program, or who identify staffing as a barrier to expansion
- Increase the number of child care workers in the region by getting individuals who attend local training programs to stay by fostering connection with child care providers as prospective employers

