



Support the Child Care Workforce Through Expanded Training and Increased Resources

Root Cause Addressed

Market failure and underinvestment

Challenges Addressed

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

Rationale

Staffing shortages are a central driver of many of the region's child care challenges. The current licensed slots are not all available due to lack of staff. Providers are not able to increase their available slots because of challenges recruiting staff. They are also not able to offer care at different times of day and different days of the week because they do not have the staff to do so. Even if public investment drastically increases in the form of scholarships for families or capital funds to build new or expand existing centers, the lack of available child care slots will persist if the challenges facing child care workers, who cannot afford to live in the region, continue.

Community Objectives

1. Increase visibility and public funding for area training programs to increase the number of child care workers
2. Support expanded resources and partnership to improve salary and benefits for child care workers

Increase Visibility and Public Funding for Area Training Programs to Increase the Number of Child Care Workers

Priority: Medium-high | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

As listed in the previous action area, there are many training programs in the region, as well as financial assistance programs to support them. However, to adequately train the number of staff required to fill the immediate staffing shortage and be able to staff an increase in the number of licensed slots in the region, there will need to be a significant increase in the number of people completing training programs.

Key Parties

- Michigan Works! Southeast
- 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 best to communicate availability of training programs to prospective students
- Identify how local funders could help supplement existing programs to increase capacity
- Conduct outreach to local funders to generate buy-in and support for these local programs
- Support ECIC's and other statewide policy efforts related to continuing and expanding existing training programs and resources

Opportunities for Statewide Coordination

As ongoing and new advocacy efforts advance that include bolstering support for child care training program, this coalition and other local partners should amplify those state-level efforts and identify ways that local advocacy could be beneficial.

Key Considerations

Both this and the "Providing Resources and Supports to Enable Child Care Providers to Thrive as Businesses" action area related to connecting providers and training institutions. Partners could explore how they could pursue both of these simultaneously given the overlap between involved parties.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of child care workers able to pursue training opportunities as a result of increased supports

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of child care workers in the region
- Increase in the number of available licensed child care slots in the region
- Reduction in the number of families that do not have care that meets their needs

Support Expanded Resources and Partnership to Improve Salary and Benefits for Child Care Workers

Priority: Medium-low | Time frame: 2025 and beyond

Description

As long as average child care wages are so low relative to the regional cost of living, the ability to increase the number of child care workers in the region is going to be an exceptional challenge. To that end, any advocacy efforts toward increased funding for child care centers must ensure that those funding increases result in higher wages. Beyond wages, improved benefits are needed to communicate to future generations that becoming a child care worker can not only be a fulfilling career, but one that is financially feasible.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Child Care Network
- Child care providers

Potential Activities

- Engage a local convener, e.g., Ann Arbor SPARK, Child Care Network, or another organization, to assist interested providers in developing a shared-service network
- Incorporate language that prioritizes child care worker salaries when advocating for increased funding locally and statewide
- Support ECIC's and other statewide policy efforts related to increasing funding and protections for child care workers

Opportunities for Statewide Coordination

As ongoing and new advocacy efforts advance that include expanded resources to improve salary and benefits of child care workers, this coalition and other local partners should amplify those state-level efforts and identify ways that local advocacy could be beneficial.

Key Considerations

This objective should coexist with other action areas, as child care worker compensation needs to be part of the conversation related to increased funding or supporting child care providers to succeed as businesses.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- Inclusion of child care worker wage increases on local and state advocacy priority lists
- Inclusion of fostering collaborations to improve child care worker benefits in the regional resource hub

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of child care workers in the region
- Decreased turnover of child care workers
- Increase in the number of available licensed child care slots in the region