

Child Care and
Counties



Why Is This An Issue for Counties?

- Economic development
- Impacts on county programs
 - Mental health
 - Child welfare
 - Youth justice

Economic Development

- Talent attraction
- What do employers care about?
 - Taxes – not so much
 - Schools, child care, parks and recreation, infrastructure
- Child care is the “workforce behind the workforce”

Impact on County Programs

- Social-emotional development
 - Mental health
 - Child welfare
 - Youth justice

Mental Health

- Infant and early childhood mental health
 - Capacity to:
 - Form close and secure adult and peer relationships
 - Experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions
 - Explore the environment and to learn
 - Early adversity and trauma (ACES)
 - Social skills and school performance



Quality Early Education

- Impacts a child's ability to learn
- Impacts a child's ability to build healthy relationships
- Stimulates brain development
- Leads to better cognitive, behavioral, and social skills

Mental Health

- Parental mental health
 - Work performance
 - Child welfare issues

Richland County

- No large, group centers
- 2 licensed in-home family providers
- No certified daycares
- Creation of a local task force
 - County, city, pre-K, concerned citizens, WECA, WI Shared Services, Parenting Place, economic development
- Working on outreach efforts
 - Encouraging licensing, certification
 - Not only concerned about quantity but quality
 - Child Care Boot Camp/Summit

Door County

- Door/Kewaunee Legislative Days: Stabilize and Retain Child Care Providers
- 3 licensed group centers
 - 225 slots – if the right combination of kids
 - Waiting lists
- 1 certified home-based provider
- Over 500 children under 5
- Unmet need is about 200 children
 - Friend, relative, unlicensed facility
- “Finding affordable and quality childcare can be one of the biggest hurdles to getting and keeping a job in Door County.”

Dodge County

- 2019/early 2020
- Dodge County planning and economic development
- Employer-led solutions
- Includes Dodge County employees – skilled nursing facility

National Association of Counties

- January 2021
- Launched *Counties for Kids* public awareness campaign and website
 - <https://countiesforkids.org>
- In partnership with the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers (Pritzker)

National Association of Counties

- The COVID-19 Child Care Crisis
 - 1/3 of child care workers nationwide have been laid off or furloughed
 - 60 percent of the nation's licensed child care programs have closed due to the pandemic
 - Experts project the loss of 4.5 million child care slots
 - The industry faces an estimated shortfall of \$9.6 billion a month

National Association of Counties

- Why Counties Care?
 - Foundation to healthy development in young children
 - Boosts long-term educational and employment outcomes
 - Critical aspect of workforce development
- Dane County: approved \$3.5 million for a grant program to help 500 child care providers
 - Administered by the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

National Association of Counties

Investing in Prenatal to Age Three

Building a strong foundation for success in school and life.

A child's early experiences during the prenatal period and first three years after birth shape brain development and the healthy development of all other systems in the body. What happens during this early period can have substantial effects on both short- and long-term outcomes in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.

Parents play the lead role in their child's healthy development, but all parents are stretched in the earliest months and years of their child's life. Whether providing direct support or through a community-based network of organizations and programs, there is no doubt that government has a role to play in helping parents access needed services at this especially critical and stressful time. When we support them in their earliest years, infants grow into healthy kids who are confident, empathetic, and ready for school and life—and our communities, workforce, and economy become stronger and more productive.

PRENATAL TO AGE THREE IS CRITICAL FOR LIFELONG HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Reports from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University show the importance of the prenatal period and the first three years for lifelong health and well-being. The conditions and environments experienced by young children affect their bodies and brains—far better or far worse.

Supportive relationships, consistent routines, and positive experiences early in life are just as important for healthy brain and body development as good nutrition and protection from environmental toxins. These experiences build sturdy brain architecture, which becomes the foundation for core social-emotional skills, early executive functioning and self-regulatory skills, literacy skills, and the body's ability to cope with stress, battle illness, and overcome hardship.

Supportive relationships and positive learning experiences begin at home and can also be supported and provided through a range of effective programs and policies that help children succeed and prevent the need for more costly interventions later on.



To help children achieve healthy development by age three we must invest in national, state, and local policies and programs that:

- Increase the number of families with children prenatal to age three who are connected to essential health, development, and social emotional support services.
- Increase the number of low-income infants and toddlers receiving affordable, high-quality child care.