

Blazing the Trail to Solve Child Care Challenges in Fairfield, Iowa

Local Economic Development Meets Early Childhood Iowa

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FEELING THE PAIN & ASKING THE QUESTION
 In 2017, Fairfield Economic Development Association (FEDA) & Early Childhood Iowa Iowa/Jefferson/Keokuk Counties (ECI) pulled together 50 Business and Community leaders from 30 organizations for a facilitated dialogue to determine whether access to child care, was an issue for employers. The consensus was resounding YES.

STEP 01 ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- 22 person Jefferson County Child Care Steering Committee was formed. It included executives from business, economic development, the school district, child care agencies and elected officials.
- The purpose of the Steering Committee was to provide oversight for assessing the need, implementing the Strategic Plan, ongoing evaluation of the plan, provide approval of ECI expansion/startup grants and share updates with community.

STEP 02 ASSESSING THE NEED

- The Steering Committee recommended a child care market study be conducted. First Children's Finance was contracted to conduct the study. ECI funded the study – giving the Steering Committee oversight of the design and implementation.
 - o Surveyed 438 employees/parents and 10 businesses
 - o Findings were 538 child care spaces short in Jefferson County
 - o 70% of employers identified issues with productivity and or absenteeism related to child care
 - o 40% of employers identified having challenges hiring employees related to child care challenges
 - o 60 % of parents identified having trouble finding child care and 66% have reported missing work related to child care

STEP 03 STRATEGIC PLAN – DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS

- Assist current center-based providers in expanding
- Assist new and existing home-based providers with startup and expansions
- Add another child care center to Fairfield



STEP 04 INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Startup and Expansion Grant Program Created for Center-Based Providers. Funded by ECI, oversight by the Steering Committee, and administered by CCR&R
- Registered Home Provider Incentive Program Created – New and Current Home providers. Funded by ECI, oversight by the Steering Committee and administered by CCR&R
- Form and independent Non-Profit Corporation – Led by FEDA, ECI, and Business Executives– Plans to Add a new child care center to Fairfield.

STEP 05 MEASURABLE RESULTS

- Assisted 3 Child Care Centers in Expanding with ECI Funds- \$21,000/ impacted 50 spaces \$450/per space
- New Child care home provider incentive program, 5 new providers (56 new spaces)
- Current Child care home provider incentive program, 3 new providers (40 new retained)
 - o Adding a 185-space new child care center – aimed to be funded by the business community. \$3.5M Capital Campaign for construction and \$1.75M currently pledged
 - o 3.5-acre site donated.

STEP 06 FUTURE

- February -April 2020 Fundraise/Complete Final Design
- July 2020 Begin Construction
- July 2021 Child Care Facility Open/Begin Operations