



First Children's Finance

Strategic Child Care Supply Plan

City of Sun Prairie
Dane County, Wisconsin



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Strategic Supply Planning

The Strategic Child Care Supply Planning Process is a facilitated community planning process designed to engage a Core Team of community leaders to support and expand the child care capacity in their community. First Children’s Finance works with the Core Team to understand the current child care landscape and create goals to address child care needs.

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BACKGROUND

City of Sun Prairie

The City of Sun Prairie was selected by First Children's Finance to engage in community consultation around the supply of child care through the Dream Up! Child Care Strategic Supply Planning Process. Funding for this work is provided by a *Preschool Development Grant* received by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. In this process, a Core Team led by Kristin Grissom, Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry for the City of Sun Prairie participated in a process that included:



- 8 hours of facilitated meetings by First Children's Finance National Team Staff
- Identification of goals to increase high-quality child-care slots
- Planning support, facilitation, and technical assistance from First Children's Finance
- A Strategic Child Care Supply Plan that guides the City of Sun Prairie in efforts to increase its supply of high-quality child care.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

The City of Sun Prairie, located in Dane County, lies within the Southern Region of Wisconsin. They applied for the Dream Up! Strategic Supply Planning Process and were awarded participation with the 2022 Spring Dream Up! Strategic Supply Plan Cohort. As stated in the application, Sun Prairie is the second fastest growing city in Wisconsin. The 2021 census data shows the population at 36,394. 38% of households have children, and a staggering 30.5% earn less than the city's median income of \$79,566. 6.5% of the population is living in poverty.

Cities	Zip Codes
Sun Prairie	53590

Each application included a geographic region the Core Team planned to focus on, referred to as 'the community'. The City of Sun Prairie and the corresponding zip code is the defined 'community' and is listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Dane County Defined Zip Codes |
Community Application Process

Core Team

The following people participated in the Core Team meetings to address the child care supply needs in the City of Sun Prairie. The primary contact for this project is the Core Team lead, Kristin Grissom, Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry for the City of Sun Prairie.

Name	Organization Affiliation
Core Team Lead:	
Kristin Grissom	Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry—City of Sun Prairie
Core Team Members:	
Barbara Behling	Outreach & Events Coordinator—Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce
Janet Rosseter	Assistant Superintendent of Operations—Sun Prairie Area School District
Luann Williams	Child & Family Programming Director—Reach Dane
Mike Beale	Economic Development Strategist—City of Sun Prairie
Jake King	Communications & Diversity Strategist—City of Sun Prairie
Katey Kamoku	Executive Director—Explore Children’s Museum
Janelle Vreugdenhil	Community Social Worker—Joining Forces for Families (JFF)
Melissa Wayland	Director—Just for Me Family Center, LLC
Katie Neuman	Owner—Goddard School of Sun Prairie
Hope Ballentine	Assistant VP of Operations—Boys & Girls Club of Dane County
Seth Brody	School Age Childcare Director—Sun Prairie YMCA
Jen Tooley	Branch Manager—Sun Prairie YMCA
Salman Ahmad	Owner of Goddard School
Jake Brown	Assistant Vice President of Operations—Boys & Girls Club of Dane County
Jamie Racine	Director of Community Schools
Michelle Jones	Director of Heartland Preschool
Paul Esser	Mayor of Sun Prairie
Christine Bright	Founder of Parenting Game, LLC

Community Insights

Research by the Core Team was conducted and provided as part of the application process (see Figures 2 and 3). First Children's Finance provided additional research and statistics regarding child care needs and sustainable child care solutions. Through surveys the City of Sun Prairie conducted with the local community, they found four major factors impacting child care availability.

- 1.) Availability for non-traditional hours (healthcare workers, shift workers, First Responders) Very few reliable options outside of 9-5pm M-F schedule...
- 2.) It's basically like working to pay for childcare. This cause for ends to not meet in other areas like food and rent...
- 3.) According to a survey distributed to Sun Prairie child care providers, collectively, respondents are only able to provide space for 65% of full capacity due to staffing shortages...
- 4.) Additionally, we understand that transportation is a major barrier for many Sun Prairie families, even if they are able to secure a child care slot, they must also overcome the transportation barrier...

*Excerpt from Dream Up! Application

According to Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families Preschool Development Grant Sandbox Data, 25.3% of a family's income in Dane County is spent on child care with the average monthly cost of care being \$1,513. The Sandbox data shows that in Dane County, a family with a child aged 0-1 receiving care in a licensed group child care will pay 3.6 times the affordable amount. The Federal Government defines affordable child care as spending no more than 7% of a family's yearly income.

Figures 2 / 3: Dane County Regulated Child Care | Community Application

Figure 2: Child Care Provider Regulation Type

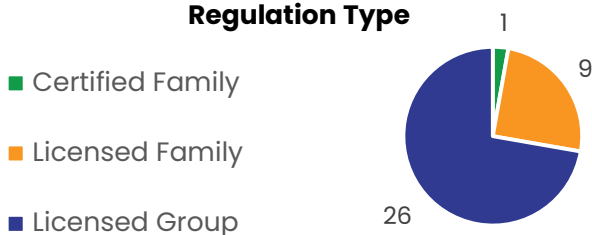


Figure 3: The City of Sun Prairie: Provider Offerings



71% of children in Dane County participating in Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy are served by High Quality Providers.

Supply Demand Gap Analysis

As part of the Strategic Supply Planning, the Core Team was provided with information to help them understand factors that contribute to child care challenges. First Children's Finance leveraged different data sources to pull together an illustrative picture of the impact of child care in the local area. These data sources include US Census Information, Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families Data, and other internal research tools including First Children's Finance calculations.

First Children's Finance completed a Supply Demand Gap Analysis which provided a view of potential child care needs (see Figure 4). The analysis was conducted in May of 2022 and showed a deficit of 1,029 slots within the City of Sun Prairie's defined community.

Figure 4: Dane County Supply Demand Gap Analysis | FCF Calculation

Zip Code	City	Licensed Family Child Care	Licensed Group Child Care	Certified Child Care	Expected Child Care Capacity	Anticipated # of Children Under Age 5	Expected Child Care Need
53590	Sun Prairie	8	12	1	974	2003	1029



How Is the Need Supported Today?

When there is a gap in the licensed and regulated child care slots available in a community, compared to the children potentially needing care in the community, families find unique ways to meet their needs outside of licensed or regulated child care. The following are common ways parents may fill their need for child care that may be present in the City of Sun Prairie.

Legal Unlicensed (unregistered) Care / Family, Friends, & Neighbors

Friends, family, and neighbors may provide care for up to three (3) children without a license; however, under Wisconsin law, no person may provide care and supervision for four (4) or more children under the age of seven (7) for less than 24 hours a day. Care for four (4) or more children under the age of seven (7) would require a provider to obtain a license to operate a child care center from Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families.

Illegal Unlicensed/Unregistered Care

Care is provided in a setting that requires licensing or regulation, but the provider has chosen to provide care without the proper license or following regulatory guidelines.

Under-Employment / Shift Alignment

Parents may work split shifts, work part-time, or limit their work hours to stay home with their children. There may be children in the community whose parents have left the workforce and are not looking for employment because of child care challenges. These families are not included in the data in this report, but parents may enter the workforce if viable child care options are available.

Out of Area Care

Parents who have children in the region studied may take their child to care outside of the area in this report. This may be due to parents' work location, access to care, or other reasons.

Quality Rating and Improvement System Overview

First Children's Finance examined information about the number of child care programs participating in the YoungStar Program (see Figure 5). YoungStar is Wisconsin's child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that identifies programs that go above and beyond the general licensing requirements to obtain higher quality in their child care programs.

Dane County YoungStar Participation

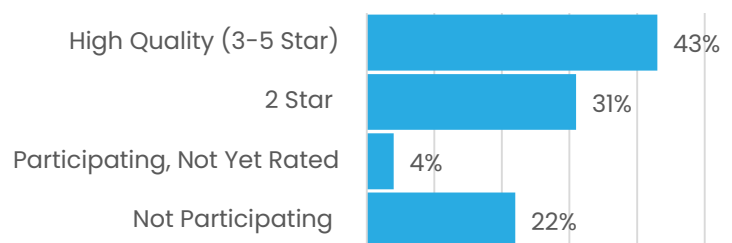


Figure 5: Dane County YoungStar Rating | PDG Sandbox

Workforce

Child Care Workforce

First Children's Finance examined the child care workforce in Wisconsin. Many individuals in the child care workforce have formal education backgrounds and more than a decade of experience. However, more than half of early childhood educators rely on some form of public assistance and do not receive benefits. The Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison reported a 40% turnover rate in the Early Childhood Education field. Figure 6 shows data collected for the Southern Region of Wisconsin. 24.1% of the workforce anticipates leaving the field within the next two years. The cost of care is high for families, and the cost of delivery is high for providers. Often time, this impact is reflected in child care worker wages. The First Five Years Fund researched the average compensation rate for child care workers and found in Wisconsin; the average hourly rate is \$10.66. This annual salary of \$22,170.00 is below the poverty line.



Figure 6: Wisconsin's Early Care and Education Workforce:
Summary Report on the Survey of Center-Based Teachers |
Institute for Research and Poverty

Early Education Workforce Survey



Primary Industries

Additionally, First Children's Finance examined the top industries in Dane County within available census data, as shown in Figure 7. Top industry can impact child care needs based on shift work needed, and the beginning and end time of employee shifts. In Dane County, the top industries in the community are

1. Educational Services and Health Care and Social Assistance

2. Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services

3. Retail Trade

educational services, health care and social assistance. For example, the health care industry often calls for second and third shift employees, as well as employees who are able to work extended hours. Without viable child care available during these shifts, continued employment or hiring new employees for health care can quickly become a challenge. During Strategic Supply Plan meetings with First Children's Finance, the Core Team was challenged to brainstorm ways to address the need for non-traditional hour child care within their community.

Figure 7: Top Industries in Dane County | U.S. CENSUS 2021

Data Overview

1 Certified Family Child Care (DCF Licensing Data of Sun Prairie)	8 Licensed Family Child Care (DCF Licensing Data of Sun Prairie)
12 Licensed Group Child Care (DCF Licensing Data of Sun Prairie)	43% Have a 3-5 Star Rating (DCF Sandbox Data of Sun Prairie)
11% Of zip codes are considered child care deserts in Dane County (DCF Sandbox Data)	2,003 Children under 5 with all parents in the workforce in Dane County (*ACS 5 Year Estimates)
974 *Current Expected Child Care Capacity in Sun Prairie (*FCF Calculation May 2022)	1,029 Birth to age 5 Slots needed in Sun Prairie (*FCF Calculation)
\$1,513 Average Monthly Cost of Care in Sun Prairie (DCF Sandbox Data)	1,662 County residents are employed within the city of Sun Prairie

Core Team Planning Meeting

Throughout the summer of 2022, the Core Team, a group of community stakeholders interested in the supply and sustainability of child care, met to discuss the child care shortage in the City of Sun Prairie, and to develop strategies to increase the number of high-quality child care slots. Below are the primary topics that were addressed in the conversations.



After discussing these core topics, the focus was placed on primary areas of need, where current resources should be directed, and where additional resources are needed. The Core Team created the following goals to support the child care needs in the community.



Goals



SMART Goal: By May 1, 2023, establish a grant program with rolling deadlines, to be administered by the City of Sun Prairie, aimed at increasing and retaining child care providers in Sun Prairie.

Project Team Members: Kristin Grissom, Hope Ballentine, Mike Beale, Christine Bright, Jen Tooley

Objective of the Goal:

- To increase child care slots in Sun Prairie.
- Reduce barriers for those wishing to become child care providers.
- Retain existing providers by reducing stress and costs needed for licensing and higher quality certification/accreditation programs.



SMART Goal:

By June 1, 2023, develop a consortium of child care providers in Sun Prairie and align regional child care resources to help support the local child care industry while encouraging more regulated child care options in the community.

Project Team Members: Katey Kamoku, Mike Beale, Kristin Grissom, Katie Neuman, Jen Tooley, and Luann Williams

Objective of the Goal:

- Define the local needs of child care providers and develop connections with other providers to address the needs collaboratively within the industry.
- Reduce operating costs for existing providers through supply/equipment libraries and resource pooling.
- Retain child care providers by reducing isolation and increasing socialization and networking opportunities with other local providers.
- Increase awareness and advocacy for regulated child care by providing support, resources, and pathways for certification and licensure.



SMART Goal:

By September 2023, build the child care workforce in Sun Prairie through advocacy and partnerships and increased community awareness.

Project Team Members: Barbara Behling, Jen Tooley, Christine Bright, Hope Ballentine, Mike Beale, Nancy Everson, Kristin Grissom, and Katie Neuman

Objective of the Goal:

- Create a direct pipeline of college students, with a special focus on Sun Prairie Area School District and Madison College, to the existing child care workforce.
- Reduce barriers and increase training opportunities for child care workers to receive the necessary credentials.
- Increase awareness of child care career opportunities within Sun Prairie and increase community advocacy for the child care sustainability need.

Project Recommendations

The City of Sun Prairie is a flourishing, economically vibrant area invested in the child care landscape, along with a committed Core Team, First Children's Finance recommends that the Core Team engage in the following activities:

1

Be clear about the outcomes hoped to achieve with community partnerships. Determine the impact this will have on the supply of child care within the community. Ensure any partnerships developed have a written agreement with consistent communication for all parties involved.

2

The City of Sun Prairie's population has consistently increased in recent years and the city projects continued growth. To address the current shortage and future child care needs, include current child care business owners in plans for expanding child care options; their experience and insight will be essential.

3

Through increased community awareness and advocacy activities, the need for sustainable child care will become a common goal for the City of Sun Prairie to embrace positive social and economic growth.

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