



Child Care Market Analysis & Strategic Plan for Child Care Clayton County, Iowa

Key Findings from the Child Care Market Analysis

Finding 1: The Percentage of Families with All Parents in the Labor Force is

Increasing- As of 2016, 70% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 77% with children ages 6 to 17 living in Clayton County had all parents in the labor force. In 2021, those percentages had increased to 80% and 79%, respectively.

Finding 2: Parents Want Center-Based Child Care that is Available Full-Time and Year-Round-

Through a recent survey, 61% of parents indicated they prefer a licensed child care center, to use care Monday through Friday, year-round, to drop-off children 7:00-7:59 am and pick-up 4:00-4:59 pm.

Finding 3: Parents that Look for Child Care are Having Difficulty-

In the last 12 months 67% parents that had looked for care for children ages 0 to 5 (not in kindergarten) experienced difficulty, and 52% of those that looked for care for children ages 5 to 12 experienced difficulty.

Finding 4: Median Family Income is Higher than the Child Care Assistance

Threshold- The median annual income for families in Clayton County with children under the age of 18 is \$80,392. To initially qualify for the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program as of 2023, the income limit for a family of 3 is \$39,776, and for a family of 4 it is \$67,500.

Finding 5: There is a Shortage of Child Care Spaces Among All Age Groups-

First Children's Finance estimates there are 1,559 children in Clayton County whose families prefer and would likely use HHS regulated child care. As of November 2023, there are 581 regulated child care spaces available during the school year and 613 spaces available during the summer.

Finding 6: Over One-Quarter of Parents are Experiencing Limited Employment Due to Child Care Challenges-

Through a recent survey, 26% of parents indicated their or their spouse's or partner's employment is limited due to child care challenges, such as working part-time instead of full-time, or not working within their preferred field.

Finding 7: Parents Indicate Child Care Challenges are Affecting Their Job-

The adverse effects most experienced over the last 12 months were: had to leave work early (48%), missed a day of work because their child care provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (39%), arrived late to work (29%), and unable to work overtime (26%).

Finding 8: Local Businesses Indicate Child Care Challenges are Affecting Their Employees-

Through a survey conducted as part of this study, 60% of employers indicated they had employees miss a day of work because their child care provider was closed, on vacation, or not available, 53% had employees arrive late to work, and 50% had employees have to leave work early.

About this Project

In 2023, this study was commissioned to better understand the supply and demand for child care and to develop a plan to address child care challenges in Clayton County. This document is a summary of two reports, *Child Care Market Analysis* and *Strategic Plan for Child Care*.

This project was made possible in part by a Rural Child Care Market Study grant received by Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque in partnership with Clayton County Foundation for the Future through the Empower Rural Iowa initiative, a program administered by the Center for Rural Revitalization, a division of Iowa Economic Development Authority. Additional partnerships and funding were provided by Alpine Communications, Aureon, Clayton County Board of Supervisors, Clayton County Development Group, Guttenberg Municipal Hospital & Clinics, and the Roger and Connie Halvorson CCFF Fund for Entrepreneurship.



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Finding 9: Child Care Providers are Willing to Expand– When asked if they would wish to expand their current child care program to serve more children, 6 out of the 8 child care programs that participated in the child care needs survey said yes.

Goal and Strategies from the Strategic Plan for Child Care

GOAL 1– Increase the number of regulated child care spaces in Clayton County by a minimum of 48 spaces by 2029.

- Strategy 1– Increase the number of registered child development homes across Clayton County.
- Strategy 2– Establish a child care committee with representatives from Monona, Farmersburg, and Luana to lead efforts to increase the number of spaces within Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) registered child development homes within the three communities.
- Strategy 3– Establish a child care committee for the community of Guttenberg to lead efforts to increase the number of spaces within Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) registered child development homes within the community.
- Strategy 4– Explore options to expand Kids Kampus Community Child Care in Guttenberg.

GOAL 2– Increase the current and future child care labor pool of Clayton County through training and partnerships.

- Strategy 1– Explore establishing a Clayton County Child Care Wage Enhancement Program.
- Strategy 2– Explore options for offering the required training and work experience needed for child care staff and high school students to obtain a Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™.
- Strategy 3– Develop a child care staff pipeline by offering part-time employment, work-study opportunities, and internships for high school and college students.

GOAL 3– Increase awareness of the need for regulated child care in Clayton County by engaging local employers and other community partners in child care solutions.

- Strategy 1– Establish the Clayton County Child Care Steering Committee to implement this strategic plan.
- Strategy 2– Inform employers and other community partners about recent child care efforts including the *Child Care Market Analysis and Strategic Plan for Child Care*.
- Strategy 3– Provide resources and information about child care related benefits, child care partnerships, and employer sponsored child care models to local employers.
- Strategy 4– Develop and implement a campaign to increase community awareness of, and appreciation for, regulated child care.
- Strategy 5– Provide parents access to information that will assist them in understanding, identifying, and choosing child care.

First Children's Finance, a national nonprofit organization, believes access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities, and that early care and education is the foundation of individual success and the engine of regional economic growth. First Children's Finance provides financing, training, and business-development assistance to child care businesses. First Children's Finance also provides consulting and planning assistance to communities, government agencies, intermediaries, and regional child care organizations. For more information on these and other topics, contact InfoA@FirstChildrensFinance.org.