

Region 9 Discussion Notes Champaign, Ford

General Comments

- The number of children in the Champaign-Urbana community living below 200% FPL is striking.
- As discussed in some of our other meetings, there are not enough services in the areas of the county outside of the population centers.
- I think we have lost a lot of child care spots during the pandemic. We have had to turn away more families than we have for years in Champaign-Urbana.
- Staffing is difficult to maintain, and the pool of staff disappeared during the pandemic.
- Families need transportation support, specifically for those in rural areas and in Rantoul.
- Families are not able to get child care assistance because they are now over-income. Working families struggle with the expense of child care.
- Copayments are too high for families receiving child care assistance.
- Before and after school care for school-age children is difficult for parents in getting their children to the child care provider.
- We need more opportunities for people to increase their qualifications and work at centers.
- Some sort of statewide training program for early childhood would be helpful for families and staff.

Strengths/Assets

- We have strong collaborations and home visiting programs in the region.
- There are a variety of resources to support families of young children in the region.
- There are a variety of options for care: Head Start, daycares, and Preschool For All (PFA) in the area.

- Our Child Care Resources & Referral Agency is amazing.
- We have a very rich cultural and ethnicity/diversity population.
- The University of Illinois is a great resource in our region.

Needs/Challenges

- Even with a variety of options in our area, there is not enough for all children to be successful.
- There are not enough spaces/openings for children younger than 30 months.
- There are limited options for Infant/toddler center-based care in the area.
- No affordable nature-based preschool options can be found in this region.
- We need more licensed teachers and staff to service the children in this region.
- We desperately need increased quality and additional members of the early education workforce to service children who live here.
- Transportation and transportation costs are barriers for many families in this area.