

Region 1 Discussion Notes

Adams, Brown, Cass, Morgan, Pike, Scott

General Comments

- Our region appears to be a large mostly rural area by mass with a small population.
- I'm surprised at the number of children in the Quincy area who are below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL).
- It's interesting how many small communities were below the FPL – many of these communities have also had to combine services and school districts.
- You can definitely see that there is a need in some areas of the region that is not being met because there are not enough slots for everyone!
- Many 0 to 5 children are watched by their "older" siblings, sometimes children just a few years older. I wonder if a 0 to 5 program would relieve some of this responsibility by extending the 0 to 5 day beyond 3 or 3:30pm.
- Need child care slots and funding to pay for the care.
- Lack of options for rural families.
- Need transportation options and Wi-Fi.
- It would be great to see social services or some family support in a 0 to 5 setting. Our S.A.M.'s (Social-Emotional Staff) are invaluable.
- We need to help families who may not know the services that are available to them.
- Need for wraparound services for families.
- It would be helpful if we had food that follows the child home on the weekend for some families. For example, Our KidzPacks (a food service program for beyond school) is used fully.
- It would be good to know how many children come from homes where both parents are working and what shifts the parents work. How are they dealing with child care?
- As one of the only ISBE Funded- Prevention Initiative Home Visiting Programs in the county (Early Years Program- Jacksonville School District #117), we hope to be able to collaborate as we work closely with at-risk families, children, and providers in our community. We are under the direction of the local school district and housed in the ISBE funded Preschool for All building that serves 240 preschool aged students in our community.

Strengths/Assets

- Community groups coming together to support children and families and having discussions about what more can be done for families.
- A large matrix of social service agencies; a regional, county-wide cooperative for special needs; and several county Vo-tech schools shared by several areas.
- A huge needs assessment just done by our area United Way.

Needs/Challenges

- Rural families under the Poverty Guideline face transportation issues on a routine basis.

- Support for low-income families; better understanding in race relations with more opportunities for Black leaders; and better rental housing.
- More support for chronically truant children.
- Wi-fi access.
- More community support needed for families new to the Quincy areas with limited English.
- Finding ways to reach families who are not using services.
- Staff turnover and long-standing staff vacancies are crippling the Early Childhood world.
- More opportunities for families to access early childhood education.
- A strong need for supporting essential workers in their need for child care - especially low income families as they try to hold multiple jobs to make ends meet.
- Affordable child care.
- More child care options available/finding child care.
- Qualified staff.