

## **Region 12 Discussion Notes**

### **Clay, Crawford, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland**

#### **General Comments**

- The area is spread out, which can be misleading; it looks like a low percentage but it's spread out over a broad radius. Local people can better interpret these maps because they know their area and its demographics.
- There are larger areas of poverty in the counties, located outside of towns that have more accessibility.
- Great need exists for more child care facilities. Care is difficult to find, and there are not as many Head Start programs as may be expected.
- There's a lack of care for the amount of children that could be served. Existing child care programs have long wait lists and many children/families are not reached (ex. there are currently 131 kids on wait lists between two programs).
- Programs are concerned for families seeking care due to the lack of options in the region.
- Transportation from rural areas to services is a must. Families that don't have transportation are being left out. Those who can't make two trips a day are not being served well.
- There is a large discrepancy between the number of children under 6 living in the region vs. program slots available.
- Parent resources and information are not as easily accessible as they could be. Parents are often told to contact their Child Care Resource and Referral Agency to help find care.
- Families use certain services when they are income eligible for a different service, which prevents additional families from using the appropriate services.
- Crawford County industries are in need of a workforce but are unable to meet their needs due to the lack of child care available. This is also an economic issue for communities.

#### **Strengths/Assets**

- So many people from smaller communities are here tonight; the method to collaborate is already formed, and the relationships are there. This is a huge strength for us.
- Collaboration among different types of providers. Motivation to create a better support system for families.
- There are lots of people willing to work on this.

#### **Needs/Challenges**

- Challenge: big sprawling region with each county doing things a little differently; trying to get everyone on the same page will be challenging given the large geographical area
- Needs: one stop shop for families to access services (IDPH, child care, etc.) especially 0-3 care.
- Challenges: costs of child care for families.
- Needs: more qualified staff.