

Region 20 Discussion Notes

Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope, Saline, Wabash, Wayne, White

General Comments

- Pope and Hardin Counties – Family income data may not be correct. Most Harding families are over-income and Pope has lower income families. The totals for these two counties appear to be reversed.
- Wayne County - County may not have large sections that are in the higher income bracket. 60% of children are on the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Other sections are very rural and not in the higher income bracket.
- The data seems accurate.
- The Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start numbers are low. EHS numbers are almost more than the total here without counting the Southern 7 Head Start.
- With the increase in wages, children will be forced into unlicensed care, and there will be collateral damage.
- Having information that tracks staffing needs, parent/family participation, income level, etc. across the counties in the region would be helpful.
- Need support to get more qualified teachers.

Strengths/Assets

- Wayne County –there is a complete county-wide early childhood system (Head Start, Preschool For All with the school district and in child care centers, etc.)
- We have Head Start, Early Intervention, and child care with wrap around services, as well as a county-wide Early Childhood Council.

Needs/Challenges

- We are losing staff and parents because of wage increases. Parents are falling off the CCAP roll. As the minimum wage increases, we will lose more CCAP and private pay parents.
- Centers are struggling to find families in the poverty guidelines because of pay raises.
- The CCR&R struggles to find child care options for families. Every child care program is full and has a waitlist. There are not enough options to support working families.
- Many centers have not been able to raise CCAP rates. A lot are still trying to operate at 2018 CCAP rates. There are devastating financial challenges for center owners.
- The region has lost over 430 slots and over 63 child care centers in the last 5 1/2 years.
- Struggle to find qualified teachers.
- Local community college programs have closed early education programs, so individuals have to go travel further for early childhood education training.
- Saline, Gallatin, and Edwards Counties - transportation is always a challenge.
- Many centers do not have access to mental health specialists.

