

Region 30 Discussion Notes

Alexander, Jackson, Perry, Pulaski, Union

General Comments

- The area is very rural.
- High level of poverty - it's almost twice the percentage of the statewide average.
- Disability/special needs data is not included.
- Data was not surprising; what most expected.
- With such a high percentage of families who identify as white, understanding the strengths and needs of families of color may be a challenge.
- There is a significant gap - estimated over 3,800 children not receiving services.
- Doesn't include data for districts that fund programs themselves.
 - Shawnee doesn't use Preschool For All funds but has a preschool.
 - Herrin and Marion High Schools have child care centers.
- The data supports what people already know- we need more services and need transportation so children/families can access them.

Strengths/Assets

- Passion of people, professionals in the field.
- Existing collaborations and relationships.
- The Southern Illinois Coalition for Children and Families, who has already started working on these issues.

Needs/Challenges

- Transportation, which has gotten even worse as a result of the pandemic.
- Lack of other services, e.g. medical, social services, support, etc.
- Lack of child care.
- Lack of early childhood professionals to work in programs and not enough people and resources to do the work.
- Travel distances to what services are available, e.g. it is 35 miles to a special education class.
- Increases in minimum wage has made some families ineligible for services like Head Start.