

## **Region 40 Discussion Notes**

### **Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin**

#### **General Comments**

- There aren't a lot of dots on the "Locations of Child Care Homes and Centers" map - there should be more. The care available is scarce.
- For center based programs – there's only one. It was like this pre-COVID, too.
- Some communities might not have child care anymore. There's not a lot of industry (large corporations and workers) in these counties, which means a lot of people commute.
- There's a large need for child care or programs other than the state-funded programs, which play a huge role with working families.
- It all begins with workforce development, building the capacity for programs, and having a full staff.
- There aren't any programs for school readiness.
- We need resources to be marketed better and available in one spot that is accessible to everyone.
- It would be helpful to figure out how much family, friend, and neighbor care is in the region. It's been hard to figure this out because they aren't counted unless they accept the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Some people may qualify for the program but don't apply for it because there's a family, friend, or neighbor providing child care.
- Defining "access" to child care is important. It includes geography, costs, hours of care, transportation. Access means different things to different people.

#### **Strengths/Assets**

- Springfield has the best Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (CCR&R).

#### **Needs/Challenges**

- Losing child care capacity; there's a challenge to meet the needs of working families because there's not enough child care in the region.
- CCR&R has not hired a behavior specialist.
- Access to child care is a struggle, especially with the pandemic circumstances.
- Hiring is hard throughout the State.
- Large waiting list for programs/centers - need extra funding.
- Rural communities don't have good Wi-Fi connection or internet. Things urban areas take for granted are not available in rural areas.