

Region 8 Discussion Notes

Carroll, Jo Daviess, Stephenson

General Comments

- There is a high amount of poverty in the region compared to the rest of the State.
- Attendees were not surprised by the data.
- There are many rural areas where there are no services for children and it's difficult.
- Second and 3rd shift care is something they've been working on. I hope that people looking at this data can help solve these problems.
- There are special needs kiddos not being considered when schools have days off.
- We have so many more children than spots available in the region.
- Not near enough care education spots, especially for birth-3.
- There is a lack of care providers and centers in Jo Daviess county.
- Our county is large, spread out, and very rural.
- The data illustrates the link between the region's economy and our suffering education system(s). In the past few years, there has been movement out of the area.
- Businesses move out and then families move out.
- There are lots of areas that look underserved in our region.
- Lots of families that are underserved. Factories in the area are 12 hour shifts and child care isn't set up to support those hours. Families need to take kids to multiple providers because there is no 2nd or 3rdshift care.
- Families don't have what they need, especially 0-3 care. Waiting lists for 0-3 or infant rooms are always at 30+ kids. Slots are an issue and so is transportation.
- Tried in the past to get 2nd or 3rd shift care, but assistance from communities and businesses is needed.
- Lack of child care in smaller communities is an issue.
- Families can't access close supports so they are going to Rockford, Chicago, and Madison for specialties.
- Need more people wanting to teach in early childhood. Compensation and benefits for our field needs to increase tremendously.
- We need more resources/special education teachers for early childhood centers. Even with more centers, we don't have enough people in our field.
- Without a workforce, we are only talking about problems and not taking action. Children must be served, but we need people to serve them. We have each other as strong collaboratives, and that's it. We are it for each other and we all know each other. We've been trying to solve these problems on our own, but we can't do it on our own. It's for lack of resources, not lack of trying.
- Our region has grant funding coming but they come from counties not in our region so we can't access it to build a new child care center. There are so many pieces to it; we don't need more information, but we need more help.

Strengths/Assets

- Strong early childhood collaborative focused on kindergarten readiness.
- Collaboration and discussions with other centers and educators.

Needs/Challenges

- Geography and distance to resources.
- 0-3 quality care, lack of early childhood educators, child care.
- Child care for 2nd and 3rdshift workers.
- Challenge of getting key players to work collaboratively versus us working in silos.
- Services have moved out of Stephenson County and families are expected to travel to Rockford.