Mapping the Future of Adams County Child Care Convening Session Two Results

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Making a Difference in Rural Illinois

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Adams County participants brainstormed 8 possible child care goals (BHAGs) to pursue through the MAPPING process. In order to identify the high priority goals, each participant prioritized the goals by placing stickers indicating a preference ranking of ‘1’, ‘3’, or ‘5’ next to the goal statements, with ‘5’ representing his or her highest priority for the future of child care in Adams County. The total votes for each BHAG are shown next to each BHAG and the top three goals that the group will be working on are indicated.

### Selected BHAGs

**BHAG #1**
- **73 Votes**
- Adams County has sufficient high quality child care providers that offer options to fill each family’s unique needs and priorities including weekend/night and emergency care as well as care for kids with special needs.

**BHAG #2**
- **32 Votes**
- Residents of Adams County understand the value of quality early childhood education for all children and are vocal advocates for providers.

**BHAG #3**
- **30 Votes**
- Low income families in Adams County have an abundance of affordable high quality care available.

### Other BHAGs

The remaining goals, which were not selected for the immediate action plan, are listed below along with the number of votes they received.

**12 Votes**
- Adams County child care providers have sustainable, financially secure businesses that are known for utilizing best practices in customer services, employee management, accounting, regulatory compliance, etc. and provide exceptional compensation and benefits for owners and employees.

**11 Votes**
- Child care providers in Adams County benefit from a readily available high quality workforce trained in providing exemplary child care.

**7 Votes**
- Many parents in Adams County enjoy employer provided child care thanks to programs to assist employers in offering onsite child care for the children of employees.

**6 Votes**
- Adams County child care providers are known for the region for the high quality education, social skills and discipline that the children receive to prepare them to begin school or for the next year in school.

**0 Votes**
- Adams County provides exceptional support, training and education to parents that has resulted in a very low rate of abuse and neglect.
**Goal 1** Adams County has **sufficient high quality day care/child care providers** that offer options to fill each family’s unique needs and priorities including weekend/night and emergency care as well as care for kids with special needs.

1. Partner with educational institutions to create/expand learning labs to provide more slots for children
2. Seek partnerships with businesses and churches to provide care
3. Provide support to providers to develop financially secure businesses that pay workers adequate pay and benefits
4. Work with school district to expand early childhood education to be universal
5. Partner with local entities/stakeholders to open crisis nursery
6. Coordinate current providers to offer emergency care
7. Launch an employer childcare co-op as a model
8. Offer workshop for those interested in providing home care, including real-time licensing guidance
9. Work with area governmental bodies to support and subsidize quality child care
10. Work with area businesses, organizations, foundations to create a grant fund for start ups
11. Identify appropriate spaces in the community that could be developed into lab space, child care centers, etc.
12. Develop support programs for home and center based child care providers to be able to provide care options to meet the needs of all children and families

**Goal 2** Residents of Adams County **understand the value of quality early childhood education** for all children and are vocal advocates for providers.

1. Develop a repository with all the facts on the impacts of quality early childhood education and care
2. Develop a marketing campaign to educate the community
   
   *Possible projects:*
   - Develop a message that focuses on positives
   - Educate on the need for investment
   - Develop a set of key messages
   - Collaborate with resources, businesses, agencies, etc. to create “wrap around” message delivery.
   - Target marketing to key segments by identifying benefits to them
   - Disseminate information on brain development in first three years of life and importance of trained/educated child care providers
3. Develop marketing campaign to educate businesses
   
   *Possible projects:*
   - Emphasize long term benefits of quality child care/education for future workforce
   - Educate employers that impact of investment/support will take time to materialize
   - Show link between access to child care and lower employee turnover
   - Employer support for child care leads to improved employee morale/appreciation
   - Promote how happy, health employees equals retention and productivity
4. Develop a coalition of employers to pool resources to provide child care

5. Research needs/attitudes towards child care by various stakeholders to better educate residents/businesses/organizations

   Possible projects:
   - Survey employees in Adams County on their wants/needs for child care
   - Investigate mobility of younger workers to determine impact of child care on mobility

6. Develop an advocate training program to teach residents how to be an advocate/child care ambassador

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**Goal 3** Low income families in Adams County have an abundance of affordable high quality care available.

1. Partner with local entities to provide monetary incentive to providers for taking subsidy clients

2. Develop a program to assist parents in fulfilling documentation requirements for subsidies

3. Work with area businesses and nonprofits/foundations to fund a grant program to encourage childcare startups to provide care for low income families

   Possible projects:
   - Encourage low income families to apply for funding to start in home child care
   - Develop points system to give priority to low income grant applicants

4. Offer classes/resources to assist parents and child care providers to navigate government assistance programs

5. Educate low income couples on child care (availability, subsidies, types, etc.) before they have children in need of care

6. Research possible existing grant opportunities to help with low income families with child care business startup costs

7. Develop a mentoring program for child care providers with low income clients

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