

Child Care Initiative

North Central Michigan College

A HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT IS SUPPORTED THROUGH COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS.

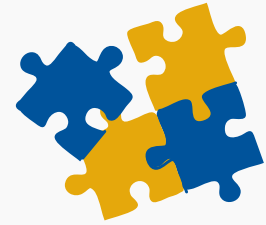
CCI PROJECT UPDATE

The NCMC Child Care Initiative team has completed data analysis and the final report. This work is a culmination of the data collected from three online surveys and seven focus groups, gathering the perspectives of parents and future parents, employers of varying sizes and spanning many different sectors, and child care providers who are at the forefront of this initiative.

Key findings include:

- Most employers (73%) recognize the struggle their employees face finding child care and approximately half reported their business struggling to recruit qualified staff as a result of inadequate child care.
- The majority (66%) of business leaders reported an interest in learning about ways to better support the child care needs of working families in the area.
- A lack of availability is the paramount child care issue facing parents. Parents shared that they had been on waitlists for years, sometimes without ever hearing back.
- Parents are seeking higher quality care than they can find with the available options.
- Most child care providers (73%) in Emmet County are motivated by their passion for working for children, considering child care as their “true calling.” Yet on current salaries, many providers struggle to pay their bills. Most providers (87%) are earning between \$13-21 an hour and few (14%) receive health insurance through their employer. This shows a significant pay gap compared to the \$38/hr median wage for a kindergarten teacher in Michigan.

Collecting insights from employers, parents/prospective parents, and child care providers has been a key step in helping our team narrow down, with the help of our Advisory board, the most relevant potential innovations to those most likely to support a more viable and sustainable child care system in Emmet County. In phases two and three, we will implement and evaluate a selection of strategies reflecting the needs we heard from the community in this first phase of work. A full data report will be ready for distribution in June.



NCMC PLAY GROUP

In March we began hosting a playgroup in the ECE Building on Wednesdays for children ages 0-5 with their caregiver. The playgroup has been a wonderful way for parents to connect with other parents while offering children an opportunity to socialize and explore art, music and other sensory experiences. This has also been a great opportunity for NCMC students to gain experience engaging with children and families.



THE ACCESS & IMPACT ANALYSIS PROJECT UPDATE

The Access & Impact (A&I) Analysis Project team is just wrapping up final interviews with our five child care businesses, where we are asking pointed questions about the innovations, resources, and tools (IRTs) that were utilized over the course of the project. Specifically, we are looking at how easy/difficult the IRTs were to access, and how great/small the IRTs were in terms of impact on the businesses.

Some of the themes that are emerging from data analysis include:

- **TIME:** It takes time for child care providers, owners, and operators to understand and access innovations that could support their business operations -- time they do not have.
- **FUNDING:** A lack of external funding for child care means providers are unable to charge rates reflective of the true cost of child care, resulting in an undersized child care workforce, a shortage of child care compared to the need, and reduced quality of care.
- **SUPPORT:** Providers require authentic relationships and human connections in order to navigate the myriad of supports available to help their businesses thrive.

While we have been able to accomplish a great deal of what we set out to do during the grant project, there are a few things left to carry forward in subsequent work at NCMC, including a further exploration into the true cost of providing high-quality child care in Emmet County. Stay tuned for more information on next steps!

Our Leadership Team:

- Laura Tuthill, CCI Grant Coordinator
- Jen Harris, AIA Grant Coordinator
- Karen Kling, Data Analyst - UM Poverly Solutions
- Jennifer Wixson, NCMC Faculty Advisor

Our Advisory Team:

- Nikki Devitt, Petoskey Chamber of Commerce
- Susan Chowan, NW Great Start to Quality and NW United Way
- Savannah Cool, NW Great Start Collaborative
- Jill Haan, GSRP and Char-Em ISD
- Duffy Johnson, LTBB of Odawa Indians
- Anne Morningstar, Bear Creek Organic Farm and parent representative
- Candice Case-French, MI Child Care Bureau
- Scott LaDeur, NCMC and parent representative
- Carolyne Stolzenfels, former child care owner
- Lynn Eckerle, NCMC Human Resources Director
- Reg Smith, Stafford's Hospitality Chairman

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Our team continues to spread the word about the Child Care Initiative and the Access & Impact Analysis with several business and community groups. Jennifer Wixson recently presented to Zonta in Petoskey and is scheduled to speak at the



Harbor Inc. annual meeting in August. The team presented at the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference in April. We also hosted a recruitment booth at the conference, which had close to 4000 attendees. Please let the team know if you have groups you think should hear about our work.

BUILDING WORKFORCE

Great news! The ECE program is experiencing an increase in summer enrollment, and fall enrollment is also looking promising. Our CDA Cohort currently consists of 5 students, but we plan to welcome 5 more between the summer and fall semesters. Two of our students were recently recruited to work for the YMCA of Northern Michigan, while two others were hired as substitutes at Boyne City Early Learners and Char-Em ISD Early Childhood Special Education after completing their practicum experience. To give you an idea, out of the eight practicum students, 6 are currently employed in ECE programs while 2 are still looking for employment in the field. It's exciting to see our NCMC-ECE program not only improve the quality of the existing workforce but also contribute to adding more skilled workers to the field.



NORTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN COLLEGE CHILD CARE INITIATIVE

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CCI PROJECT UPDATE

The NCMC Child Care Initiative is wrapping up data collection! Our team has collected data from three online surveys, gathering the perspectives of parents and future parents, employers of varying sizes and spanning many different sectors, and childcare providers who are at the forefront of this initiative. We have received 94 Employer Surveys, 371 Child Care Assessment Surveys, and 31 Wage and Benefit Surveys. The next phase of our data collection will be conducting parent focus groups that will take place both virtually and in-person, at NCMC's campus and the Petoskey Library. Data analysis is currently underway and we are on track to share our results with the community this spring. The data collected will guide our planning for Phase 2, the implementation of the Child Care Initiative.

THE ACCESS & IMPACT ANALYSIS PROJECT UPDATE

Over the past three months, we have worked towards achieving the first three of our four objectives:

Objective 1: Create an accessible and easy-to-understand catalog of current innovations, resources, and tools that serve child care businesses *The catalog has been created and includes around 50 different business innovations, resources, and tools categorized by their purpose: business supports, funding opportunities, professional development, partnership opportunities, and resources for best practices.*

Objective 2: Engage 4-6 Emmet County child care businesses to be part of the pilot.

We recruited five child care business owners/operators, representing multiple regions of the county, to participate in this pilot program.

Objective 3: Analyze the impact various innovations, resources, and tools have on family child care, group child care, and center-based programs.

Using both survey and interview data from our participants, we have been able to help clarify goals for each child care business owner/operator and have done some preliminary work to understand what is available to them in terms of innovations, resources, and tools that could support them in working toward those goals.

Objective 4: Inform future innovations and policies related to supporting child care businesses in Emmet County.

PARENT FOCUS GROUPS

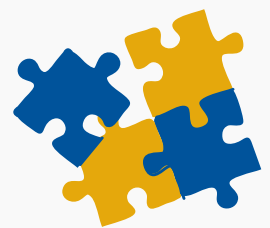
Over the next several weeks we will be hosting open focus groups to gather more input from current and future parents. Please help us spread the word to those who might be interested. We have also done targeted outreach to students that are parents. The focus groups will last up to an hour and participants will receive \$25 for their time and input.

Jan. 23rd 11am | NCMC

Feb. 7th 11am | Zoom

Feb. 20th 5:30pm | Petoskey Library

Feb. 21st 10am | Petoskey Library



GETTING THE WORD OUT

Our team has taken advantage of spreading the word about the Child Care Initiative to several business and community groups in November and December. Jennifer Wixson spoke at the following meetings:

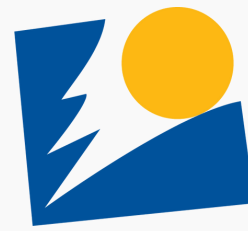
- Kiwanis Club of Petoskey
- Sunrise Rotary of Petoskey
- Noon Rotary of Petoskey

Pending sessions include Zonta and the Harbor Inc. board. Please let the team know if you have groups you think should hear about our work.

We have also engaged in some outreach related to CCI with a presentation to the Boyne City Downtown Economic Vitality Committee and a meeting with McLaren Northern Michigan CEO. We have also been in the news! WCMU, UpNorth Live, and Petoskey News-Review all highlighted our great work! Finally, in April, we plan to present at the Annual Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children conference.

MAKING CONNECTIONS UPDATE

- Networks Northwest awarded a Regional Child Care Planning Grant. Jennifer Wixson will be part of the team.
- Regional Apprenticeship grants applications open up soon!
- ECE Professionals Networking Nights to be held in Otsego County (January), Cheboygan County (February), Emmet/Charlevoix Counties (March or April)



**New CCI logo
& branding
is on the way!**

CREATED BY OUR OWN
ANN MORNINGSTAR

BUILDING WORKFORCE

57 students are currently registered in the AA-ECE (27) and AAS-ECE (30). In addition, we have 18 additional students taking classes, most of whom are high school students. This is great news! It looks like we are starting to onboard new young professionals, adding to the pool of a much-needed workforce.

The Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) Cohort is off to a great start! We have 7 students enrolled in the CDA Pathway. We have started marketing for a summer cohort. These students are all working in programs and have received scholarships, mainly from the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEYC). The CDA will improve the quality of programs and will potentially increase the Great Start rating of programs, which comes with perks!

Our Leadership Team:

- Laura Tuthill, CCI Grant Coordinator
- Jen Harris, AIA Grant Coordinator
- Karen Kling, Data Analyst - UM Poverty Solutions
- Jennifer Wixson, NCMC Faculty Advisor

Our Advisory Team:

- Nikki Devitt, Petoskey Chamber of Commerce
- Susan Chowan, NW Great Start to Quality and NW United Way
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CCI PROJECT UPDATE

The NCMC Child Care Initiative is underway! The team has been building the data collection tools that will help us to understand better the child care experience for parents, providers, and employers in Emmet County. Our tools include::

- The Emmet County Child Care Assessment - a survey for parents and future parents employed in Emmet County
- The Emmet County Employer Survey - a survey for employers of all sizes in Emmet County
- The Wage and Benefit Assessment - a survey for all Emmet County child care providers and early childhood education program employers, and
- An interview protocol for parent focus groups

We plan to begin data collection in the first week of November. The data collection process will last through November and December. This granular data will help us start to focus on the best innovations and solutions to support a sustainable and viable early care and education system in Emmet County. Our goal for sharing our data with the community is March 2023. Then we move into Phase 2 of the Child Care Initiative...implementation!

GETTING THE WORD OUT:

Over the next several weeks we will be making our work known. Some upcoming meetings we will be at and publication drafts submitted include:

- NCMC Aspire Magazine
- NCMC Blog Posts
- Rotary Meetings
- Kiwanis Meetings
- Char-Em ISD

Superintendent's Meeting
If you would like us to talk with your organization or group, please reach out at the email below.

OUR TEAM

Our summer was spent crafting an amazing team to lead the Child Care Initiative (CCI) and our Access and Impact Analysis Project (AIA). Our team includes:

- Laura Tuthill, CCI Grant Coordinator
- Jen Harris, AIA Grant Coordinator
- Karen Kling, Data Analyst - UM Poverty Solutions
- Jennifer Wixson, NCMC Faculty Advisor

We are also supported by an amazing Advisory Team. Already, they have provided us with incredible guidance on our work. The Advisory Team includes:

- Nikki Devitt, Petoskey Chamber of Commerce
- Susan Chowan, NW Great Start to Quality and NW United Way
- Savannah Cool, NW Great Start Collaborative
- Jill Haan, GSRP and Char-Em ISD
- Duffy Johnson, LTBB of Odawa Indians
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- Carolyne Stolzenfels, former child care owner

THE ACCESS & IMPACT ANALYSIS PROJECT

In June we received a grant from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) to work with 6 area child care owners and operators to determine the impact new innovations, investment, and resources have on reaching a true cost fiscal model that supports worthy wages and benefits for child care workers. We are in the process of recruiting our 6 pilot programs. There is a lot of enthusiasm around this project!

**We will soon have a
new CCI logo
& branding.**

CREATED BY AN
NCMC ART STUDENT



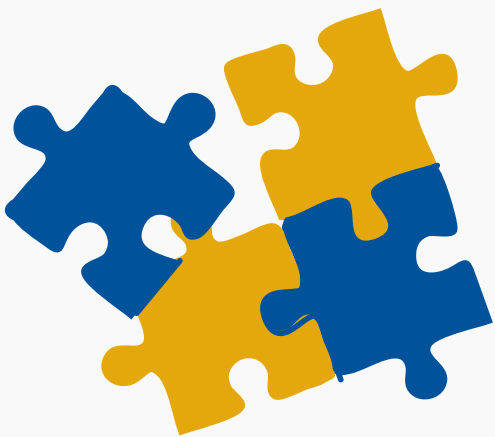
MORE GREAT WORK BEING DONE FOR THE CHILD CARE COMMUNITY

We hosted the first Early Childhood Professional's Networking Night in partnership with the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children. Over 40 folks attended, making connections with other professionals and learning about work happening, on their behalf, in the community.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The team is making connections throughout the region to support the current and future work of CCI, the AIA Project, and area child care programs. Recent connections and partnerships formed include:

- Engagement with area economic development organizations to consider strategies for their support of child care business development in Emmet County.
- Meeting with IFF, the grantee for the Child Care Facilities Fund. We want to be sure our area providers are 'on the ready' to capture funds that can support their capacity building.
- Working in partnership with Networks Northwest and other northern stakeholders to craft a regional planning effort. This effort aims to engage economic development entities in supporting, aligning, and accelerating the early care and education capacity-building work currently underway in various northern counties.
- Consideration of a regional partnership to design a Registered Apprenticeship Program. An apprenticeship program, that overlays with an educational pathway is a great way to support folks entering the field of child care. A Registered Apprenticeship program aligns well with the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential and is a great way to leverage federal funds to support wage growth in the child care sector.



CDA WINTER COHORT

NCMC will add to its ECE Program enrollment by offering a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential path, starting in the Winter of 2023. The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEOYC) awarded NCMC a \$12,000 stipend to create the path. The funds will be used to employ a CDA Cohort Mentor that will support student success. The CDA requires 3-4 ECE courses, all of which can be taken online.

The CDA is an entry-level workforce credential. While someone can work in the child care sector without a CDA, the CDA is a quality indicator that increases a program or child care owner's quality rating in the state of Michigan, leading to greater reimbursement rates and increased income, and it makes a person employable in state and federally-funded preschool programs.

Our NCMC CDA courses are all credit-bearing, applied to a future associate of arts or associate of applied science degree, and will come with the support of a mentor and resource days.