



FIRST CHILDREN'S FINANCE

Building stronger child care businesses

Child Care Market Analysis for Dickinson County, Iowa

Prepared by First Children's Finance
April 2018

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Introduction

In 2018, YMCA of the Okoboji's commissioned First Children's Finance to conduct this *Child Care Market Analysis* for Dickinson County. This Child Care Market Analysis provides a collection of data and analysis, along with First Children's Finance's findings and recommendations for meeting the current and future child care needs of the residents of Dickinson County.

The data in this report has been collected from the US Census Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, Iowa Department of Education, and two original surveys developed by First Children's Finance. This analysis is First Children's Finance's professional interpretation of the data available as of the date of this report. The information and analysis presented in this document are intended to provide a basis for sound business decisions, but no warranty as to completeness or accuracy is implied.

First Children's Finance, a national nonprofit organization, believes access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities, and that early care and education is the foundation of individual success and the engine of regional economic growth. First Children's Finance assists local, state and regional organizations, colleges, nonprofit organizations, child care programs, and others by providing consulting and technical assistance including financial and market analysis, feasibility studies, financial modeling, and business planning. For more information, contact Heidi Schlueter, Regional Director Heidi@FirstChildrensFinance.org.

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Executive Summary

Dickinson County is located in Northwest Iowa, along the Minnesota border. Unlike many counties across Iowa, Dickinson County has experienced growth almost every decade since its founding in 1857. The county seat, Spirit Lake, is home to many of the area's employers and has the largest population in the county. Also in the county are the communities of Arnolds Park, Lake Park, Milford, Okoboji, Terril, Superior, Wahpeton, and West Okoboji.

For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they can make, as the child care environment has lasting effects on the child. In Dickinson County, parents are having a hard time finding child care. Options that meet their preferred needs and that are considered quality are even more challenging.

As a growing county, Dickinson County had a net increase of 622 residents from 2000 to 2016. However, at the same time there was a net decrease in the number of children ages 0 to 12 (-108). Despite the decrease, some communities are growing and are even gaining children. As of 2016 there were 5,010 family households in the county, and 1,789 of those had children under the age of 18. The average family size is 2.6 people and the median income for families with children under 18 is \$74,138 and increasing.

In Dickinson County, top industries based on the number of employees are Manufacturing (1,874) and Accommodations & Food Service (1,873), followed by Retail Trade (1,579) and Health Care & Social Services (1,038). The average weekly wage of those working within Dickinson County was \$665 per week. However, average weekly wages vary greatly by industry, from \$309/week for Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation to \$1,352/week for Utilities. According to the US Census Bureau, most residents of Dickinson County that are in the labor force work within the county. Seventy eight percent (78.3%) are employed in Dickinson County and 21.7% are employed outside the county. Those that out-commute from are working in Spenser, IA, Jackson, MN, and Estherville, IA.

According to data from Iowa Department of Human Services and Child Care Resource & Referral, the supply of child care in Dickinson County has declined over the past five years. Between 2012 and 2017, the county lost a net total of 19 regulated child care providers and 191 child care spaces. As of March 2018, data indicates there are a total of 715 child care spaces available. In Dickinson County, a high percentage of households that have children under the age of 18, also have all parents in the labor force. Of the 2,352 children ages 0 to 12 living in the county, First Children's Finance estimates 2,030 of them have all parents working. With only 715 child care and preschool spaces available, there is a shortage.

A key part of this analysis was a parent survey to gain input on child care needs. Of those that participated in the parent survey, 374 reported that they currently have children age 12 or younger and another 38 responded that they do not have children age 12 or younger but do plan to have/adopt children in the next 5 years.

The majority of respondents that currently have children age 12 or younger are female (82%), married (85%), live in Spirit Lake (59%), have 4 people living in their household (41%), are between the ages of 26 and 35 (54%), and have a household income of \$84,401 or higher (52%). They work first shift Monday through Friday (70%) and are employed full time (78%). They work in either healthcare and

social services (22%) or professional, scientific, technical (12%). Of the 374 parents that currently have children age 12 or younger, 127 (34%) indicated they plan to have/adopt more children in the next 5 years. Additionally, 51 indicated that the availability of child care in Dickinson County has affected their decision to have/adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family.

The majority of respondents that currently do not have children but plan to in the next 5 years are female (86%), married (58%), live in Spirit Lake (47%), have 2 people living in their household (76%), are between the ages of 26 and 35 (57%), and have a household income of \$84,401 or higher (32%). They work first shift Monday through Friday (83%) are employed full time (97%). They work in the professional, scientific, technical industry or are self-employed. Additionally, 7 indicated that the availability of child care in Dickinson County has affected their decision to have/adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family.

Parents participating in a child care needs survey completed as a part of this project confirmed there is a shortage of child care spaces. When asked if they had difficulty finding child care, 57% indicated they had. The most common obstacles noted were no openings for infants and school age children and not being able to find providers that offered hours that fit the parent's schedule.

After First Children's Finance's Key Findings for Dickinson County are:

- Growing County Population, Some Communities Gaining Children. From 2000 to 2016, the population of Dickinson County increased from 16,424 to an estimated 17,046. During that time, the communities of Lake Park, Milford, Okoboji, and Superior gained children ages 0 to 12. The total net gain for these communities was 244 children.
- Most Parents are in the Labor Force. Eighty eight percent (88%) of households that have children under the age of 6 and 85% with children ages 6 to 17, have all parents in the labor force. These are higher than the state averages of 75% and 80% respectively. That means approximately 2,023 children ages 0 to 12 have all parents in the labor force.
- Median Family Income is Higher than Child Care Assistance Thresholds. In Dickinson County, the average family size is 2.60, and the median income for families with children under the age of 18 is \$74,138. The maximum household income for a family of 3 to qualify for the Iowa Child Care Assistance program is \$30,131.
- Declining Child Care Supply. From July 2012 to July 2017, Dickinson County lost 19 DHS regulated Licensed Child Care Centers and Registered Child Development Homes, which accounted for 191 child care spaces. Since July, another 6 Registered Child Development Homes and 1 Child Care Home (non-registered), which accounted for 38 spaces have been lost.
- Shortage of Child Care Spaces. As of 2016 (the most recent year available), there were 2,354 children ages 0 to 12 living in Dickinson County. Based on the percentage of households that have all parents in the labor force, approximately 2,030 children have all parents working. With only 715 DHS regulated child care spaces available, the deficit of quality child care spaces could be as high as 1,419.
- Parents Have Difficulty Getting into Quality Care. Fifty seven percent (57%) of parents participating in the child care needs survey indicated they had difficulty enrolling their child in child care. The most common obstacles named were no openings--especially for infant and school-age care, and provider's hours not working with parents work schedules.

- Parents Highly Satisfied with Their Current Care Provider. Even through getting a space is a challenge, once enrolled in care, parents are highly satisfied with their current provider. Eighty two percent (82%) indicated they are satisfied.
- Parents Prefer Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschool. The most common preference of both parents that currently have children ages 0 to 12, and future parents (plan to have/adopt in the next 5 years), is a DHS Licensed Child Care Center. This preference was chosen by 36% of current parents and 48% of future parents.
- Dickinson County Worker Productivity Affected by Child Care Challenges. Nearly half (45%) of employers that participated in the child care needs survey indicated that their company had experienced challenges related to productivity or absenteeism due to employees' child care challenges. Additionally, 20% indicated they had problems hiring new employees due to the candidate's child care challenges.

First Children's Finance's research provided valuable information that can help shape what the future of child care looks like in Dickinson County. Based on this research, it can be concluded that more quality child care spaces are needed. First Children's Finance has come up with the following recommendations, which are described in detail in the "Meeting the Community's Needs" section of this report, starting on page 45.

- Make Use of this *Child Care Market Analysis* for Decision Making
- Add DHS Licensed Center Spaces
- Recruit Registered Child Development Home Providers
- Add School Age Spaces to Existing Licensed Centers
- Consider Space Options for Additional Year-Round Care
- Encourage Employers to Provide Child Care Information to Employees

Market Description

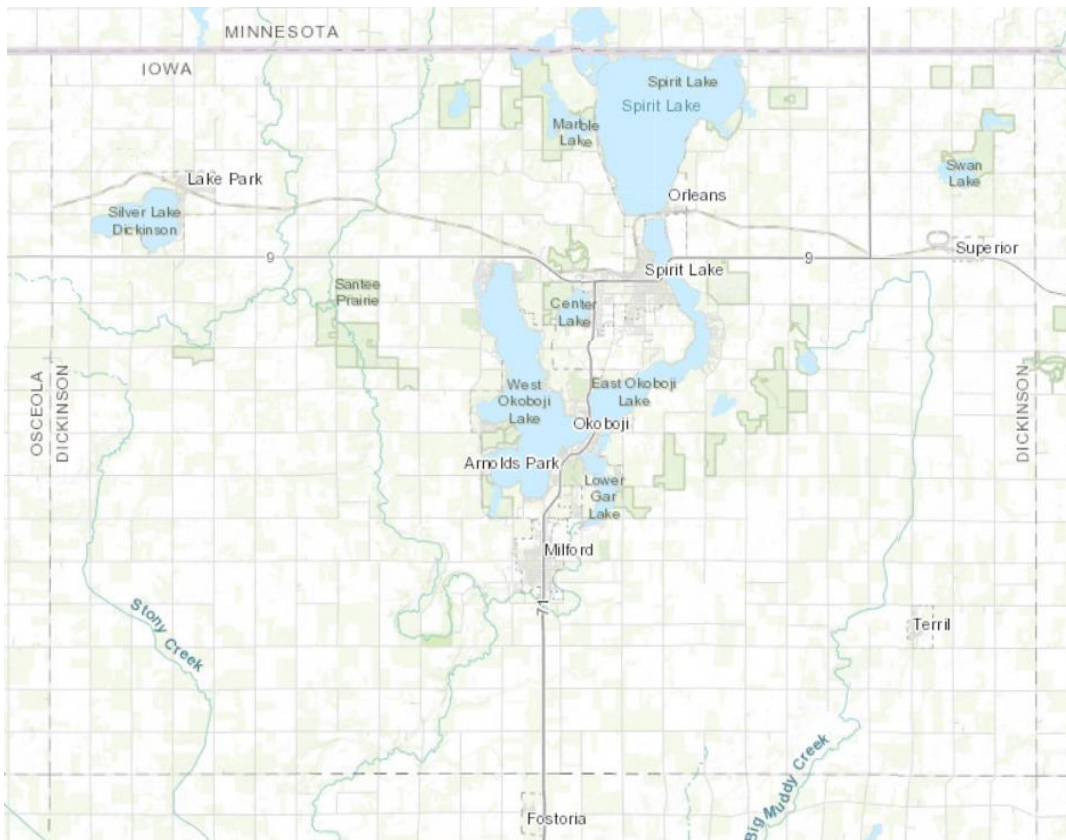
Market Area

Dickinson County is located in Northwest Iowa, along the Minnesota border. For the purpose of this report, data referenced as a city includes only the city limits. The surrounding rural areas are included in the unincorporated portion of the county.

The county seat of Dickinson County is Spirit Lake, which is home to many of the area's large employers and the population center of Dickinson County. Also in the county are the incorporated towns of Arnolds Park, Lake Park, Milford, Okoboji, Orleans, Terril, Superior, Wahpeton, and West Okoboji.

There are two major transportation routes in the county, U.S. 71 and Iowa Highway 9. U.S. 71 runs north-south, a portion of which is 4-lane, providing an ideal route for the manufacturers that call the area home. Iowa Highway 9 runs east-west across the state, just south of the Minnesota border. The two routes intersect in Spirit Lake.

Figure 1: Dickinson County Map



Source: US Census Bureau. Retrieved, April 2018.

Population and Demographics

Unlike many counties across Iowa, Dickinson County has experienced growth almost every decade since its founding in 1857. According to data from the US Census Bureau, the only time the county

showed a decline in population was between 1980 and 1990, from 15,629 to 14,909. In 2000 the population was 16,424, in 2010 it had grown to 16,667, and it was estimated to be 17,046 as of 2016.

Many of the communities in the county have experienced the same pattern. Spirit Lake, Lake Park, Arnolds Park, Terril and Superior also experienced a decline in 1990 followed by a rebound; and Orleans, West Okoboji, and Superior experienced a decline in 1960 followed by a rebound. In contrast, Milford, Okoboji and Wahpeton have experienced continual growth since their founding.

Figure 2: Population Change by Community, 1920 to 2016

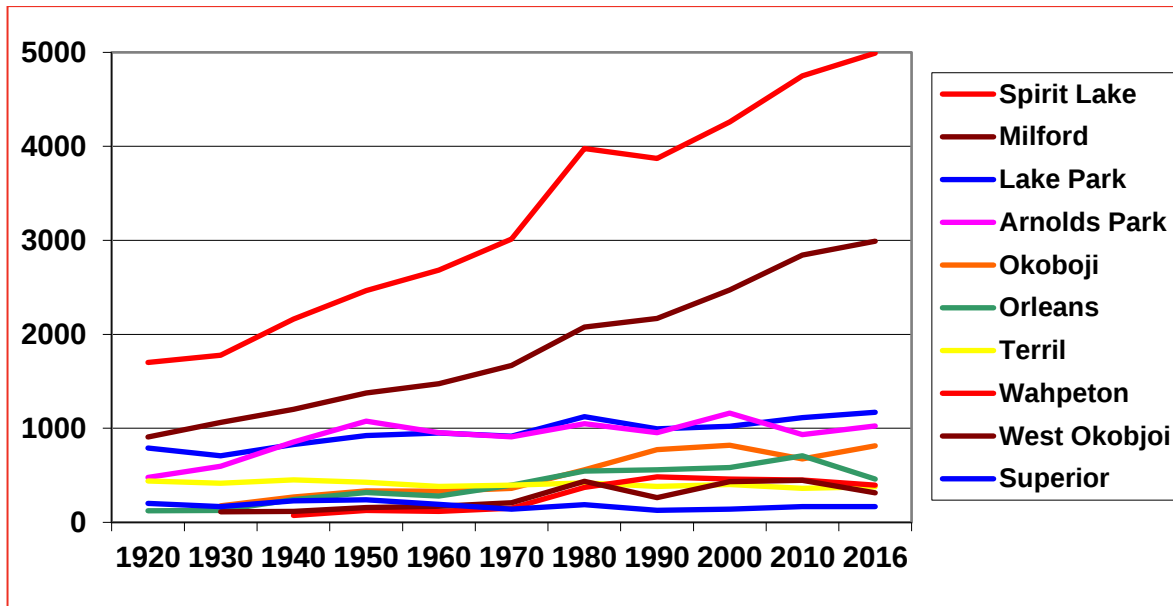


Table 1: Population change 2000 to 2016, Dickinson County

	2000	2010	2016	Net Change
Arnolds Park	1,162	1,126	1,024	-138
Lake Park	1,023	1,105	1,171	+148
Milford	2,474	2,898	2,991	+517
Okoboji	820	807	814	-6
Orleans	583	608	459	-124
Spirit Lake	4,261	4,840	4,992	+731
Superior	142	130	168	+26
Terril	404	367	379	-25
Wahpeton	462	341	394	-68
West Okoboji	432	289	314	-118
Balance of County	4,661	4,048	4,340	-321
	16,424	16,667	17,046	+622

Children Ages 0 to 12

From 2000 to 2016 the county saw a net decrease of 108 children ages 0 to 12. The communities of Arnolds Park, Orleans, Spirit Lake, Terril, Wahpeton and the unincorporated portions of the county lost children, while Lake Park, Milford, Okoboji, and Superior gained children.

Table 2: Population Ages 0 to 12 by Location, 2000-2016

	2000	2010	2016	Net Change
Arnolds Park				
Under Age 5	44	37	18	-26
Age 5 to 9	53	33	16	-37
Age 10 to 12	32	19	16	-16
Total Ages 0 to 12	129	89	50	-79
Lake Park				
Under Age 5	49	69	52	+3
Age 5 to 9	53	76	56	+3
Age 10 to 12	40	40	43	+3
Total Ages 0 to 12	142	185	151	+9
Milford				
Under Age 5	145	175	203	+58
Age 5 to 9	161	201	293	+132
Age 10 to 12	101	111	114	+13
Total Ages 0 to 12	407	487	610	+203
Okoboji				
Under Age 5	26	26	42	+16
Age 5 to 9	26	17	24	-2
Age 10 to 12	18	16	16	-2
Total Ages 0 to 12	70	59	82	+12
Orleans				
Under Age 5	22	22	16	-6
Age 5 to 9	19	23	9	-10
Age 10 to 12	8	13	10	+2
Total Ages 0 to 12	49	58	35	-14
Spirit Lake				
Under Age 5	283	299	234	-49
Age 5 to 9	274	308	275	+1
Age 10 to 12	203	209	215	+13
Total Ages 0 to 12	760	816	725	-35
Superior				
Under Age 5	9	4	21	+12
Age 5 to 9	11	6	20	+8
Age 10 to 12	6	5	6	0
Total Ages 0 to 12	27	15	47	+20

	2000	2010	2016	Net Change
Terril				
Under Age 5	33	21	33	0
Age 5 to 9	22	29	20	-2
Age 10 to 12	21	14	15	-6
Total Ages 0 to 12	76	65	68	-8
Wahpeton				
Under Age 5	20	10	4	-16
Age 5 to 9	23	4	7	-16
Age 10 to 12	7	3	4	-3
Total Ages 0 to 12	50	17	15	-35
West Okoboji				
Under Age 5	43	9	4	-39
Age 5 to 9	21	11	6	-15
Age 10 to 12	8	5	5	-3
Total Ages 0 to 12	72	26	15	-57
Balance of County				
Under Age 5	204	145	206	+2
Age 5 to 9	281	221	212	-69
Age 10 to 12	194	137	136	-58
Total Ages 0 to 12	679	503	554	-125
Total	2,460	2,320	2,352	-108

Fertility

As of 2016 there were 2,917 women ages 16 to 50 living in Dickinson County. The US Census Bureau estimates that 213 of them gave birth in a 12 month period. Among those, 204, or 96% were in the labor force and will likely need some form of child care. When broken down by community, both the number of women having births and those that have given birth and are in the labor force varies. Table 4 shows the number of women ages 16 to 50 living in the city limits of each town in Dickinson County, how many of those women gave birth and of those giving birth, how many are in the labor force.

Table 3: Fertility, 2016

	Women 16-50	Gave Birth	In Labor Force	% In Labor Force
Arnolds Park	205	0	0	0%
Lake Park	222	12	12	100%
Milford	511	97	90	93%
Okoboji	156	4	4	100%
Orleans	57	7	7	100%
Spirit Lake	989	28	28	100%
Superior	33	3	3	100%

Terril	66	3	1	33%
Wahpeton	31	1	1	100%
West Okoboji	29	0	0	0%
Balance of County	618	58	58	100%
	2,917	213	204	96%

Working Families

In 2016 there were 8,008 total households and 5,010 family households in Dickinson County. The average size of all households is 2.1 persons while the average family household is 2.6 persons. Well over half of all households are family households (62.5%), yet only 35.7% of family households have their own children under the age of 18 (1,789).

Children need quality care while their parents are working or attending school. According to the US Census bureau, 88% of families living in Dickinson County that have children ages 0-5 have all parents are working, while 85% of families that have children ages 6-17 have all parents working. That means if there are two parents living in the home both work, or if the child lives with a single parent that parent is working. These are higher than the state averages of 75% and 80% respectively.

The median income¹ for all households in Dickinson County as of 2016 was \$57,914, while the median income of families with children under the age of 18 was \$74,138. Over the last five years, the median income for all households increased just slightly, while median income for families with children under the age of 18 increased significantly.

Table 4: Household Types and Characteristics, Dickinson County

	2011 Total	2016 Total
Total Households in County	8,126	8,008
Average household size	2.02	2.10
Median household income	\$56,033	\$57,914
Family Households	5,232	5,010
Average family size	2.45	2.60
Family Households w/children under 18	1,802	1,789
<i>Married couples</i>	1,291	1,247
<i>Male householder (no wife)</i>	174	236
<i>Female householder (no husband)</i>	337	293
Median income for families w/children under 18	\$64,833	\$74,138
<i>Median family income married couples</i>	\$66,654	\$80,464
<i>Median family income male (no wife)</i>	\$45,296	\$56,842
<i>Median family income female (no husband)</i>	\$28,133	\$36,850

¹ Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. Mean income (average) is the amount obtained by dividing the total aggregate income of a group by the number of units in that group.

Economy in the Area

According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of the 4th quarter of 2017, there were 10,642 people employed by companies located in Dickinson County. Top industries based on the number of employees were Manufacturing (1,874) and Accommodations & Food Service (1,873), followed by Retail Trade (1,579) and Health Care & Social Services (1,038).

The average weekly wage of those working within Dickinson County was \$665 per week. Average weekly wages vary greatly by industry, from \$309/week for Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation to \$1,352/week for Utilities.

Table 5: Employment by Industry, Dickinson County, 2017 3rd Quarter

	Average Employees	Average Weekly Wage
Agriculture, Fishing & Hunting	139	\$1,214
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	--	---
Utilities	56	\$1,352
Construction	583	\$782
Manufacturing	1,874	\$893
Wholesale Trade	264	\$996
Retail Trade	1,579	\$572
Transportation & Warehousing	191	\$734
Information	84	\$577
Finance & Insurance	247	\$1,174
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	93	\$410
Professional, Scientific, Technical	246	\$865
Management of Companies	59	\$1,002
Administrative & Waste Management	870	\$572
Educational Services	425	\$759
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,038	\$725
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	504	\$309
Accommodations & Food Service	1,873	\$351
Other Services (except Public Admin.)	183	\$499
Public Administration	334	\$790
Total	10,642	\$665

According to the US Census Bureau, most residents of Dickinson County that are in the labor force are working within the county. As of 2016, there are 8,929 residents age 16 or over that are in the labor force. Of those, 78.3% are employed in Dickinson County and 21.7% are employed outside the county. The 2015 Spirit Lake Labor Shed Study by Iowa Workforce Development indicates those that out commute from Spirit Lake to other areas for work are working in Spenser, IA, Jackson, MN, Estherville, IA and Milford, IA.

In Dickinson County 33.5% of workers age 16 and over, leave home between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. There are also large numbers that need child care starting slightly earlier and slightly later. A

comparison of 2011 and 2016 shows that over the past 5 years, the times workers leave home have changed. As of 2016, more workers were leaving home between 5:30 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. than were in 2011; however, 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. is still the peak time.

Table 6: Time Leaving Home to Go to Work, Dickinson County

	2011	2016
Total workers 16 years and over	8,817	8,929
Workers who did not work at home	8,279	8,300
12:00 a.m. to 4:50 a.m.	2.6%	3.3%
5:00 a.m. to 5:29 a.m.	2.8%	2.4%
5:30 a.m. to 5:59 a.m.	5.7%	6.8%
6:00 a.m. to 6:29 a.m.	6.7%	11.1%
6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	11.4%	11.0%
7:00 a.m. to 7:29 a.m.	14.3%	14.9%
7:30 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.	20.3%	18.6%
8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	10.5%	12.4%
8:30 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.	5.9%	3.8%
9:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.	19.8%	15.7%
Mean commute time (minutes)	16.7	15.8
<i>Location of Employment</i>		
In Dickinson County	78.8%	78.3%
Outside Dickinson County	16.3%	16.6%
Outside Iowa	5.1%	4.9%

Child Care and Preschool Labor Force

Within the Iowa Workforce Development's Region 3/4² there are 420 child care workers³ (this does not include home-based child care providers that are classified as self-employed). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this occupation is defined as those who "Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and childcare institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play." The entry wage for this occupation is \$8.31/hour, while the mean wage is \$9.26, and the wage for experienced workers is \$9.74/hour.

Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education⁴ is another classification of worker that is common in the child care and preschool labor force. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics defines this occupation as "Instruct preschool-aged children in activities designed to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth needed for primary school in preschool, day care center, or other child development facility." The total number of workers in this classification within the Workforce Development Region is not

² Workforce Region 3/4 consists of the following counties: Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, and Sioux.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics occupation classification 39-9011 Childcare Workers. Excludes "Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education" (25-2011) and "Teacher Assistants" (25-9041)."

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics occupation classification 25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education. Excludes "Childcare Workers" (39-9011) and "Special Education Teachers" (25-2050)."

reported, however the wages are. The entry wage is \$9.34/hour, while the mean wage is \$14.06/hour, and the wage for experienced workers is \$16.42/hour.

The region also has 40 “Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare Center/Program”⁵ workers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this occupation is defined as those who “Plan, direct, or coordinate the academic and nonacademic activities of preschool and childcare centers or programs”. The entry wage for this classification is \$11.45/hour, while the mean wage is \$16.58/hour, and the wage for experienced workers is \$19.14/hour.

Unemployment

A competitive job market can make it hard for child care and preschool programs to attract and retain quality staff. According to Iowa Workforce Development, the unemployment rate for Dickinson County as of March 2018 was 4.2%, down just slightly from 4.6% one year earlier. Dickinson County’s unemployment rate is higher than the state rate of 3.5% as of March 2018.

⁵ .S. Bureau of Labor Statistics occupation classification 11-9031 Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare Center/Program. Excludes “Preschool Teachers” (25-2011).

Early Care and Education

Early Care and Education Environments in Iowa

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences.

- Licensed Child Care Centers/Preschools
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Registered Child Development Homes
- Non-Registered Child Care Homes
- School-Based Programs
 - School-Age Care
 - Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for 4-year-olds
- In-home Nanny or Au Pare
- Family, Friend or Neighbor

The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care available.

Iowa Department of Human Services

In Iowa the Department of Human Services oversees programs that fall into three categories—Licensed Child Care Centers, Registered Child Development Homes and Child Care Homes (nonregistered homes). The level of regulation placed on the provider varies based on the type.

Licensed Child Care Centers

Licensed Child Care Centers can care for larger groups of children and includes child care centers (including child care programs operated by school districts), Head Start programs, and preschools. In a Licensed Child Care Center are separated by age groups and a specific staff to child ratio is followed. All centers are required to have an Iowa DHS and a fire inspection prior to opening and again every two years when they renew their license. Centers can participate in the voluntary Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS).

Registered Child Development Homes

These homes can provide care for up to 8, 12 or 16 children at a time depending on their registration level. Registration levels A, B, or C are based on the providers experience and if there are any assistants or co-providers present. Registered homes are inspected by the Department of Human Services and can participate in Child Net and the Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS), both voluntary quality measures.

Child Care Homes (Non-Registered Homes)

These homes can only care for a maximum of 5 children at any given time. These homes are not required to register but have the option to do so. These homes are not subject to inspection unless they chose to offer Child Care Assistance.

The table below shows a comparison of the requirements of child care centers and homes that have some oversight by Iowa Department of Human Services.

Table 7: DHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa

	Non-Registered Home	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
State Regulated	•	•	•	•	•	•
Maximum Capacity ⁶	5	8	12	8	16	Varies by license
Facility & Records Inspection	Once per fiscal year	Once per fiscal year	Once per fiscal year	Once per fiscal year	Once per fiscal year	Full review every 2 years
Minimum age of caregiver	18 years	18 years	20 years	21 years	21 years	Lead teacher 18 years
Iowa child abuse registry check	•	•	•	•	•	•
Iowa criminal records check	•	•	•	•	•	•
National criminal records check	•	•	•	•	•	•
Experience required			2 years or 1 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 year w/child related degree	Combination of experience and education
Minimum education required			High school or GED	High school or GED	High school or GED	Lead teacher High school or GED
Non-smoking environment	•	•	•	•	•	•
Fire-extinguishers and smoke detectors	•	•	•	•	•	•
2 direct exits			•	•	•	•
Space requirements			•	•	•	•
Quiet area for sick children			•	•	•	•
Reference letters		3 letters of reference				

Source: Iowa Department of Human Services. Retrieved April 2018

Iowa Department of Education

Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) for Four-Year-Old Children is to provide an opportunity for all young children in the State of Iowa to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to quality preschool curricula for all four-year-old children. School districts that have been approved to participate receive funding to offer 10 hours of preschool per week during the school year for four-year-olds. Districts may provide the preschool directly or contract with a community partner to provide preschool on their behalf.

⁶ A home provider's own preschool age children are included in their legal capacity. Their school-age children are not unless they are being home-schooled.

Until January 2016 some schools that offered child care, preschool, or before and after/school age care were exempt from being licensed under DHS as a child care center because they were instead overseen by the Iowa Department of Education. Due to legislation changes, today many of those programs need to be licensed as a child care center under DHS. Statewide Voluntary Preschool is still exempt as long as it remains within the 10 hours per week and only serves four-year-olds.

Unregulated Care

In Iowa, parents may choose unregulated care such as “family, friend, or neighbor care” or having an unrelated caregiver such as a nanny or au pair care for their children. This type of care is not regulated or tracked unless the caregiver is approved to receive tuition reimbursement through the Iowa DHS Child Care Assistance program, at which time they become a “Child Development Home” as described above.

Regulation changes that went into effect July 1, 2017 may have influenced some providers previously operating as Child Development Homes to discontinue accepting child care assistance but continue offering care, making them now unregulated. The data in this report does not include unregulated providers.

Early Care and Education Supply

Since 2012, the total number of child care providers and child care spaces in Dickinson County has decreased. According to data compiled by Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral as of July 2017, there were 26 child care programs with 757 spaces in the county. This data shows that between 2012 and 2017, there was a net loss of 28 child care providers and 187 child care spaces.

Industry changes that occurred during this time that may influence the numbers are:

- As of January 2016, child care, preschool other than Statewide Voluntary Preschool, and before and after/school age care operated by a school district is no longer automatically exempt from DHS licensing. In some communities, this resulted in a shift of spaces being counted under Department of Education Programs to being counted under Department of Human Services Centers and Preschools.
- Starting in September 2016, all child care center staff, Registered Child Development Home operators, and Child Care Home (non-registered) operators that accept Child Care Assistance were required to take the 12 hour “Essential Child Care Preservice” training.
- As of July 2017, Child Care Home (non-registered) operators that accept Child Care Assistance were required to start having their home inspected at least once a year, and meet non-smoking environment and working smoke detector requirements. As a result, some Child Care Homes are no longer accepting child care assistance and are dropping off the radar even though they are still providing care.
- From 2012 to 2017, participation of school districts in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Olds increased significantly. Overall participation of Iowa school districts increased from 90% of districts participating to 97%. During that time enrollment increased by 3,618 children from 19,900 to 23,518. Some districts rely on community partners such as Licensed Child Care Centers to provide some or all of the spaces, while other districts offer the preschool directly through the school district.

In Dickinson County there has been an increase of 143 child care spaces within DHS Licensed Child Care Centers. Some of the increase could come from programs or spaces that were previously exempt because they were operated by a school district having to become DHS licensed. During the same time, the number of Department of Education programs and spaces show a net decrease of 3 programs and 200 spaces.

Over the last five years, there has been a significant decrease in the number of Registered Child Development Homes and Child Care Homes (non-registered). From 2012 to 2017, there was a loss of 9 registered homes and 6 Child Care Homes, creating a loss of 104 spaces and 30 spaces respectively.

Table 8: Total Regulated Spaces in Dickinson County, 2012-2017

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Net Change
Total Programs	45	42	33	30	31	26	-19
DHS Centers & Preschools	13	13	13	13	12	12	-1
Dept. of Ed. Programs	4	4	3	3	2	1	-3
Registered Child Dvmt. Homes	16	7	6	6	8	7	-9
Child Care Homes	12	18	11	8	9	6	-6
Total Spaces	948	920	856	870	777	757	-191
DHS Centers & Preschools	500	630	633	725	632	643	+143
Dept. of Ed. Programs	208	116	96	37	16	8	-200
Registered Child Dvmt. Homes	180	84	72	68	84	76	-104
Child Care Homes	60	90	55	40	45	30	-30

Source: Dickinson County Annual Data Sheets, 2011-2017. Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

More recent data from the Iowa Department of Human Services shows that as of March 2018, there are now 18 programs offering 715 spaces in Dickinson County. These providers offer a variety of services including child care, preschool, before and after school care, and programs for school age children. They breakdown as follows:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools- There are 12 DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools that collectively offer 647 spaces. There has been no change since July 2017.
- Registered Child Development Homes- There are 6 DHS Registered Child Development Homes collectively registered for 68 spaces. This is down from 7 offering 76 spaces as of July 2017.
- Child Care Homes - There are no Child Care Homes (non-registered homes) listed for Dickinson County. This is down from 6 offering 30 spaces as of July 2017.

Table 9: DHS Licensed Child Care and Preschool Spaces in Dickinson County, March 2018

	Hours	Capacity	Child Care Assistance	QRS ⁷ Level	Ages	Year-Round
Carousel Preschool and Daycare Spirit Lake	6:00 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	53	Yes	---	Ages 2 & older	Yes
Harris-Lake Park Preschool Lake Park	8:30 - 11:30 am, M-F Or 12:15-3:30 pm, M-F	21	No	---	Ages 3 to 5	No
Joyful Journeys Daycare/ Preschool, Spirit Lake	7:00 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	112	Yes	---	Infant to age 5	Yes
Little Hands Childcare & Preschool, Milford	5:45 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	53	Yes	---	Infant & older	Yes
Little Hands Childcare & Preschool, Spirit Lake	5:45 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	72	Yes	---	Infant & older	Yes
Little Sprouts Daycare Milford	5:45 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	45	Yes	3	Infant & older	Yes
Milford Head Start Milford	8:15 am- 3:00 pm, M/T/Th/F 8:15-11:15 a.m., W	20	N/A	---	Ages 3 to 4	No
Okoboji Y Kids Milford	5:30 am- 6:30 pm, M-F- School 6:00 am- 6:00 pm, M-F Summer	81	Yes	---	School Age	Yes
Safari Child Care Center Milford	6:00 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	47	Yes	4	Infant to age 6	Yes
Spirit Lake Y Kids Spirit Lake	5:30 am- 6:30 pm, M-F- School 6:00 am- 6:00 pm, M-F Summer	73	Yes	---	School Age	Yes
Terril Preschool Terril	8:00 am- 4:00 pm, M/W/F- 4 yr 8:00 am- 4:00 pm, T/Th- 3 yr	21	Yes	4	Ages 3 to 5	No
Time-Out Nursery Okoboji	Drop-in only 8:30- 11:30 am, T, F 6:00- 8:00 pm, Th	49	No	---	Infant to age 5	No

Table 10: Home-Based Child Care Spaces in Dickinson County, March 2018

	Hours	Registration Type	Capacity	Child Care Assistance	QRS Level
Emily Jackson, Spirit Lake	7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., M-F	Reg. A	8	Yes	
Alice Anderson, Lake Park	7:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m., M-F	Reg. B	12	Yes	
Laura Fiebig, Lake Park	7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., M-F	Reg. B	12	Yes	4
Marcia Bibler, Terril	7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., M-F	Reg. B	12	Yes	
Sally Kness, Spirit Lake	7:00 a.m.-4:45 p.m., M-F	Reg. B	12	Yes	
Tammy Werner, Spirit Lake	6:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., M-F	Reg. B	12	Yes	3

As of March 2018 there are a total of 715 spaces within DHS Licensed Child Care Centers, school district preschool programs, and Registered Child Development Homes. The following table shows a

⁷ Quality Rating System (QRS) is voluntary rating system for Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, Head Start programs, and child care programs that are operated by school districts. Participating providers achieve a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, by meeting key indicators of quality in the areas of professional development, health and safety, environment, family and community partnership, and leadership and administration.

breakdown of the regulated child care spaces in the county by age group according to the Iowa Department of Human Services licensing and regulations.

Table 11: Child Care and Preschool Spaces by Age in Dickinson County, March 2018

	Infant/ Toddler	Two- Year-Old	Three- & Four-Years	School Age ⁸	Total Capacity
Alice Anderson (Registered Home B)	2	2	2	6	12
Carousel Preschool and Daycare	0	10	43	0	53
Emily Jackson (Registered Home A)	2	2	2	2	8
Harris-Lake Park Preschool	0	0	21	0	21
Joyful Journeys Daycare/Preschool	31	16	65	0	112
Laura Fiebig (Registered Home B)	2	2	2	6	12
Little Hands Childcare & Preschool, Milford	11	6	36	0	53
Little Hands Childcare & Preschool, Spirit Lake	19	20	33	0	72
Little Sprouts Daycare	11	12	22	0	45
Marcia Bibler (Registered Home B)	2	2	2	6	12
Milford Head Start	0	0	20	0	20
Okoboji Y Kids	0	0	0	81	81
Safari Child Care Center	10	7	30	0	47
Sally Kness (Registered Home B)	2	2	2	6	12
Spirit Lake Y Kids	0	0	0	73	73
Tammy Werner (Registered Home B)	2	2	2	6	12
Terril Preschool	0	0	21	0	21
Time-Out Nursery	12	12	25	0	49
Total	106	95	328	186	715

Residents of Dickinson County are served by 7 different public school districts. Some are located entirely within the county, while others stretch over the county line into other counties, or are centered in a neighboring county and only serve a small portion of the county. The following school districts serve Dickinson County:

- Clay-Central- Includes a small unincorporated area in the extreme southwest corner of the county. The district has no buildings operating in Dickinson County.
- Estherville Lincoln Central- Includes a small area on the eastern border of the county including the town of Superior. The district has no buildings operating in Dickinson County.
- Graettinger-Terril- Serves the town of Terril and the surrounding unincorporated areas. The district houses elementary students at Terril Elementary in the town of Terril.
- Harris-Lake Park- The district is based out of Lake Park in Dickinson County, and stretches west into Osceola County. The elementary and middle/high school buildings are in Lake Park.
- Okoboji- Serves the residents of Arnolds Park, Milford, Wahpeton, and West Okoboji, and a portion of Okoboji. At this time, the elementary and high school buildings are located in Milford, and the middle school building is in Arnolds Park.⁹

⁸ Many programs have flexible space that can be used for preschool or school age children. Some spaces that Child Care Centers use for their school age programs may be reflected under the Preschool totals reported by Iowa DHS.

⁹ On April 3, 2018, residents of the Okoboji School District passed a bond referendum that will be used in part to build a new middle school building in Milford.

- Spirit Lake- Serves the residents of Orleans and Spirit Lake, and a portion of Okoboji. The district's elementary, middle school, and high school are all located in Spirit Lake.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) is available at 4 locations in Dickinson County. All sites are operated by the local school district. According to certified enrollment numbers reported to the Iowa Department of Education for the 2017-18 school year, there are 164 students enrolled in SWVPP.

- Graettinger-Terril- Terril Elementary. Certified SWVPP enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is 10. This space is also licensed under DHS to provide preschool to 3 and 5 year olds.
- Harris-Lake Park- Lake Park Elementary. Certified SWVPP enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is 24. This space is also licensed under DHS to provide preschool to 3 and 5 year olds.
- Okoboji- Milford Elementary. Certified SWVPP enrollment for the 2018-18 school year is 71. This program is entirely under the Department of Education for oversight, and is not licensed under DHS.
- Spirit Lake- Spirit Lake Elementary. Certified SWVPP enrollment for the 2018-18 school year is 59. This program is entirely under the Department of Education for oversight, and is not licensed under DHS.

Price Point

According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, as of July 2017, the average weekly rates for full time care in a DHS Licensed Child Care Center in Dickinson County ranges from \$173.25 for an infant to \$128.50 for four- and five-year-olds and school age children when there is no school. Part time care for before and after school in a DHS Licensed Child Care Center averages \$57.00 per week. In 2016 there was a significant increase in the average weekly rates for infants, toddlers and two-year-olds in a DHS Licensed Child Care Center, going from \$149.85 to \$173.25 for an infant, \$139.95 to \$173.25 for a toddler, and \$129.60 to \$158.40 for a two-year-old. While there were also increases for older ages, they were not as large.

Meanwhile, full time care in a DHS Registered Child Development Homes averages \$130.00 per week for all ages, and \$65.00 for part-time before and after school care. Average weekly tuition rates in registered homes decreased in 2014 and increased significantly in 2017.

Changes in average tuition rates can be the result of providers going out of business, new providers coming into the market, or providers that no longer reporting their tuition rates to the state if they decide to stop accepting child care assistance or letting their registration expire (centers cannot let their registration expire, if it does they will be shut down).

Table 12: Average Weekly Tuition Rates of Licensed Centers in Dickinson County

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Infant	\$156.72	\$147.60	\$149.85	\$149.85	\$173.25	\$173.25
Toddler	\$156.72	\$147.60	\$139.95	\$139.95	\$173.25	\$173.25
Two Year Old	\$140.92	\$134.55	\$129.60	\$129.60	\$158.40	\$158.40
Three Year Old	\$127.55	\$125.55	\$125.10	\$125.10	\$128.25	\$128.25
Four & Five Year Old	\$127.55	\$125.55	\$125.10	\$125.10	\$128.25	\$128.50
School-Age (full time)	\$123.75	\$120.15	\$121.50	\$121.50	\$128.25	\$128.25
Before & After School	\$55.00	\$55.80	\$54.00	\$54.00	\$57.00	\$57.00

Source: Dickinson County Annual Data Sheets, 2012-2017. Child Care Resource & Referral

Table 13: Average Weekly Tuition at Child Development Homes in Dickinson County

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Infant	\$120.33	\$120.15	\$116.25	\$116.10	\$117.08	\$130.00
Toddler	\$119.77	\$120.15	\$116.25	\$116.10	\$117.08	\$130.00
Two Year Old	\$118.62	\$116.10	\$116.25	\$112.50	\$113.47	\$130.00
Three Year Old	\$118.62	\$116.10	\$116.25	\$116.10	\$115.42	\$130.00
Four & Five Year Old	\$116.95	\$116.10	\$116.25	\$116.10	\$115.42	\$130.00
School-Age (full time)	\$115.00	\$116.10	\$116.25	\$116.10	\$115.83	\$130.00
Before & After School	\$55.42	\$51.60	\$50.00	\$51.60	\$55.00	\$65.00

Source: Dickinson County Annual Data Sheets, 2012-2017. Child Care Resource & Referral

With a portion of residents out commuting to other counties and school districts boundaries that cross county lines, the rates of providers in neighboring counties can be informative. The average rates for full time care in a DHS Licensed Child Care Center in Dickinson County are higher than the rates in the neighboring counties, however the median family income is also higher. Meanwhile the average full time rates of registered home providers in Dickinson County are in line with Clay and Emmet Counties, but higher than O'Brien, Osceola, and Palo Alto Counties.

Table 14: Average Weekly Tuition at DHS Licensed Centers and Preschools, 2017

	Clay	Dickinson	Emmet	O'Brien	Osceola	Palo Alto
Infant	\$153.00	\$173.25	\$126.00	\$136.80	\$135.00	\$142.50
Toddler	\$135.00	\$173.25	\$126.00	\$136.80	\$135.00	\$139.13
Two Year Old	\$129.60	\$158.40	\$126.00	\$131.40	\$124.20	\$139.13
Three Year Old	\$116.10	\$128.25	\$126.00	\$129.60	\$124.20	\$131.88
Four & Five Year Old	\$116.10	\$128.50	\$126.00	\$129.60	\$124.20	\$131.88
School-Age (full time)	\$108.90	\$128.25	\$117.90	\$129.60	\$124.20	\$131.88
Before & After School	\$48.40	\$57.00	\$52.40	\$57.60	\$55.20	\$62.50
Total Providers	7	12	5	13	2	5
Total Spaces	646	643	229	608	148	244
Median Income w/Children	\$62,024	\$74,138	\$63,153	\$70,129	\$64,250	\$65,272

Source: Created by First Children's Finance with data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral and the US Census Bureau.

Table 15: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Child Development Homes, 2017

	Clay	Dickinson	Emmet	O'Brien	Osceola	Palo Alto
Infant	\$130.00	\$130.00	\$132.20	\$107.10	\$126.00	\$123.75
Toddler	\$130.00	\$130.00	\$131.85	\$107.10	\$126.00	\$123.75
Two Year Old	\$130.00	\$130.00	\$128.70	\$107.10	\$112.50	\$116.10
Three Year Old	\$128.33	\$130.00	\$128.70	\$107.10	\$112.50	\$116.10
Four & Five Year Old	\$128.33	\$130.00	\$128.70	\$107.10	\$112.50	\$116.10
School-Age (full time)	\$127.00	\$130.00	\$128.25	\$107.10	\$112.50	\$116.10
Before & After School	\$63.50	\$65.00	\$57.00	\$47.60	\$50.00	\$51.60
Total Providers	17	7	11	7	1	8
Total Spaces	196	76	124	80	12	100
Median Income w/Children	\$62,024	\$74,138	\$63,153	\$70,129	\$64,250	\$65,272

Source: Created by First Children's Finance with data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral and the US Census Bureau.

Demand for Early Care and Education

There are 2,352 children ages 0 to 12 living in Dickinson County. If 88% of households with children ages 0 to 5, and 85% of households with children age 6 to 17 have all parents in the labor force, approximately 2,030 children need some form of care while their parents are at work.

Table 16: Population Ages 0 to 12, 2016

	Children	<i>With parents in Labor Force</i>
Under 1	153	134
1 Year Old	188	165
2 Years Old	170	149
3 Years Old	170	149
4 Years Old	153	134
5 Years Old	205	180
6 Years Old	188	159
7 Years Old	170	144
8 Years Old	170	144
9 Years Old	205	174
10 Years Old	188	159
11 Years Old	188	159
12 Year Old	205	180
Total	2,352	2,030

Child Care Needs Survey

In March 2018, two electronic surveys were distributed in the community for the purpose of studying the need for more child care spaces in the area. One survey focused on gaining input from local employers while the other focused on input from current and future parents.

Employer Survey

A total of 19 employer surveys representing 16 different employers were completed. Responses from the duplicate surveys were compared and appear to represent different departments within the company. All responses were used to represent the needs that employees may experience working in different departments.

Companies that responded represented the following industries: Manufacturing (3), Retail (2), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (2), Health Care & Social Services (2), Education (2), Administrative & Waste Management (1), Finance & Insurance (1), Accommodations & Food Service (1), Professional, Scientific, Technical (1), and other (1).

When asked about their normal hours of operation, of the 16 different employers represented, nearly all reported different hours and different days of the week of their operations. All 16 operate Monday through Friday, 7 operate on Saturday, and 3 operate on Sunday. Two operates 24-hours a day; one operates 7 days a week and the other Monday through Friday. Two others operate all 7 days per week; one 4:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and the other 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Seven others operate Monday through Friday with varying hours; 6 of those operate 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and one 5:30 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. The remaining 4 operate Monday through Saturday; two operate 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., one 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and one 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Most companies indicated that their schedules are steady. Those that said they have changes or fluctuations stated that their schedules are influenced by weather conditions such as thunderstorms or cold weather, summer versus winter hours, slow times of the year when fewer hours are worked, and being closed during the summer.

The number of employers that stated their company has challenges related to productivity or employee absenteeism due to child care challenges was split; 32% said they have no problems, 21% were unsure, and 47% said yes they had problems. In a separate question, 21% indicated they had experienced difficulty hiring employees due to child care options or challenge in Dickinson County.

Employer Comments:

- Employees are not able to come to work because of no day care.
- Child care options are needed for shift work—opportunity for 24 hours of child care would help assist our employees, along with child care options for those days that there are unexpected 2 hour late start to schools, cancelled school days or drop in options for those who have gaps in current child care coverage.
- If there is no daycare my employee has to go home.
- Can be a challenge when kids are sick and daycare won't take them. Daycare during 2nd shift hours and when working overtime.
- During summer, some parents must stay home with their children from time to time based on their babysitter's schedule.

- Hours were a conflict when we got very busy.
- Employee only available to work during the day hours i.e. 6 am to 5 pm but the company only has an evening position available. Daycare is not available past 5:15 pm.
- We have had a number of good applicants that we were unable to hire due to lack of child care in the area. There weren't options of child care available before 7 am or after 5 pm and/or on weekends. This is still an ongoing problem in the entire NW Iowa region.
- The cost benefit of work vs. child care makes people not work.

Employers were asked if they offer benefits to their employees or supported existing child care programs. The most popular benefit offered is a cafeteria plan or flex spending for dependent care (62.5%), followed by flexible schedules or work-from-home options when a families regular child care arrangement is not available. One-quarter of the employers indicated they do not offer any benefits or support related to child care.

Table 17: Child Care Related Benefits Currently Offered

Cafeteria Plan or Flex Spending for dependent care	62.5%
Employee financial assistance or subsidy to pay for child care	0.00%
Child care information included in orientation or employee handbook	12.5%
Donation to a child care program for scholarships for your employees	0.00%
Donation to a child care program for scholarship for all children	0.00%
Donation to a child care program for general operating	6.25%
Flexible schedules or work-from-home options if an employee's regular child care arrangement is temporarily not available	31.25%
None of the above	25.0%

When asked what prevents their company from offering some of these benefits, answers were related to the decisions not being made locally, financial costs, or not feeling there is a need for their employees. Employers were asked to share any other ways their company assists employees with child care or directly assists child care programs. The following responses were received:

- We are flexible if someone needs to be gone temporarily.
- Flexibility with schedules when possible.
- We are very flexible with our employees having to leave early or arrive late to work based on their child care needs.
- Flexible schedules in every department, as needed.

The final question asked employers to provide any additional thoughts about their employees needs related to child care, the supply of child care in Dickinson County, and how it affects their company and/or employees.

Employer Comments:

- Very expensive, everyone over the years has had to figure out how to provide care for children, whether it has been through family arrangements, day care, flexible hours, etc.
- In a 24-hour facility, it is difficult to cover all options/needs. Many times a spouse or family member will step in to help or we will find new parents choose to move to a lesser FTE if they are able to care for small children. It does seem to be less of an issue when children become

school age. We have had requests at times for more resources with child care- on site care or referrals for providers.

- There is a major lack of affordable childcare facilities specifically in Spirit Lake. And especially ones that offer extended hours. There are so many people that work...24 hour shift work type jobs, but no 24 hour day care options.
- The entire NW Iowa area would benefit greatly from a registered child care service that could offer quality, safe, child care 24 hours a day 7 days a week, or an evening/overnight with weekend care option care center would be greatly beneficial as well. It would not only offer our employees the options for shift work but also the large industry demographic in our area as well.
- I hear there is a lack of individuals offering in-home infant care.
- Current child care is extremely pricey and our coworkers need another option so they may continue working full-time.
- Cost of Child Care in our area is expensive. Some of our employees pay as much as \$10,000 for child care.
- We haven't had employees mention lack of child care options, and in general, changes in supply/demand of child care in the county would not significantly impact our employees.

Parent Survey

Of those that participated in the parent survey, 374 reported that they currently have children age 12 or younger and another 38 responded that they do not have children age 12 or younger but do plan to have/adopt children in the next 5 years.

The majority of respondents that currently have children age 12 or younger are female (82%), married (85%), live in Spirit Lake (59%), have 4 people living in their household (41%), are between the ages of 26 and 35 (54%), and have a household income of \$84,401 or higher (52%). They work first shift Monday through Friday (70%) and are employed full time (78%). They work in either healthcare and social services (22%) or professional, scientific, technical (12%). Of the 374 parents that currently have children age 12 or younger, 127 (34%) indicated they plan to have/adopt more children in the next 5 years. Additionally, 51 indicated that the availability of child care in Dickinson County has affected their decision to have/adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family.

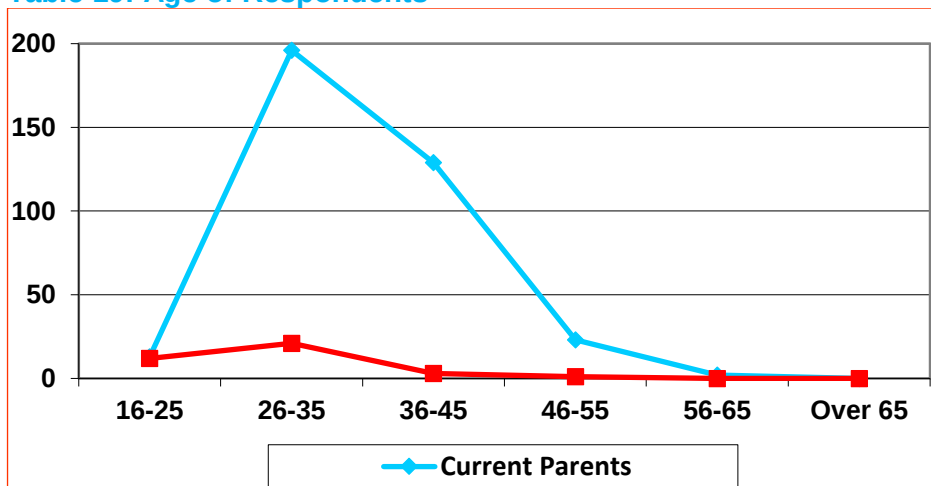
The majority of respondents that currently do not have children but plan to in the next 5 years are female (86%), married (58%), live in Spirit Lake (47%), have 2 people living in their household (76%), are between the ages of 26 and 35 (57%), and have a household income of \$84,401 or higher (32%). They work first shift Monday through Friday (83%) are employed full time (97%). They work in the professional, scientific, technical industry or are self-employed. Additionally, 7 indicated that the availability of child care in Dickinson County has affected their decision to have/adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family.

Table 18: Respondents Place of Residence

	Respondents w/Children Under Age 12	Respondents w/no children but Plan to in Next 5 Yrs.
Arnolds Park	2.96%	18.42%
Lake Park	2.96%	5.26%
Milford	15.90%	21.05%
Okoboji	5.66%	2.63%
Orleans	1.89%	0.00%
Spirit Lake	59.30%	47.37%
Superior	0.81%	0.00%
Terril	1.35%	2.63%
Wahpeton	0.81%	0.00%
West Okoboji	0.54%	0.00%
Unincorporated County	0.27%	0.00%
Outside County	7.55%	2.63%

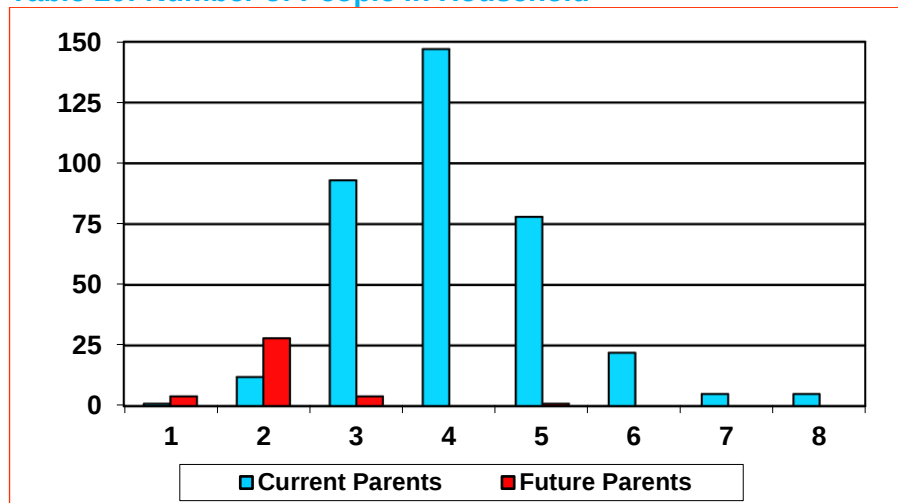
When those that live outside of Dickinson County were asked if the availability of child care in Dickinson County has prevented them from living the county, 3 current parents responded yes. Reasons given were the availability of spaces in child care centers, the cost of child care, and the preference for their child attending a preschool program that is available in the community where they currently live.

For both the current parent survey and the future parent survey, the largest group of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35. The second largest group for current parents was ages 36 to 45, followed by 46 to 55, and 16 to 25. Among future parents those ages 16 to 25 was the second largest group, followed by 36 to 45. No one over the age of 55 responded to the current parent survey, and no one over the age of 45 responded to the future parent survey.

Table 19: Age of Respondents

The most common household size among respondents that current have children was 4 people, followed by 3, and then 5. Among future parents, the most common household size was 3 people, followed by 2, and then 1.

Table 20: Number of People in Household



Current parents were asked to indicate how many children are living in their household among the following age groups: infants, toddlers, 3 to 5 year olds, and school age children (ages 5 to 12 years). The “Total Responses” line of the table below shows how many respondents indicated they have at least one child in each category, while the line “Total Children” indicates how many children are represented in the survey. The closer the together these two numbers are, the more households there are with only one child within that age category. For example, 53 infants are represented and they live in 52 households, therefore 1 parent that completed the survey has 2 infants.

Table 21: Total Children Represented by Age Group

	Infants	Toddler	3 to 5 Year Olds	School Age (5 to 12 Years)
Total Responses	52	88	124	194
Total Children	53	95	136	285

When it comes to household incomes, the two largest groups of responses were on opposite ends of the scale. However the percentage of households with annual income of \$84,401 or higher was much larger than the percentage on the lower end \$44,800 or less. Over 50% of all current parents said, their household income exceeds \$84,401 per year, and over 32% of future parents.

Table 22: Annual Household Income

	Respondents w/Children Under Age 12	Respondents w/no children but Plan to in Next 5 Yrs.
\$0-\$44,800	10.19%	16.22%
\$44,801-\$51,200	7.99%	8.11%
\$51,201- \$57,600	2.75%	5.41%
\$57,601- \$63,900	3.86%	13.51%

\$63,901- \$69,100	4.41%	2.70%
\$69,101- \$74,200	7.71%	5.41%
\$74,201- \$79,300	6.06%	5.41%
\$79,301- \$84,400	4.68%	10.81%
\$84,401+	52.34%	32.43%

The majority of all respondents indicated that they work first shift (days) Monday through Friday (71%), while 24% have a fluctuating schedule that could cause them to work all days and shifts, 3% work second shift (evenings) Monday through Friday, 1% work weekend evenings or nights, 0.5% work third shift (overnight) Monday through Friday, and 0.5% work weened days. Current employment by industry of the person completing the survey. The following table shows the industry that the person who completed the survey is currently working.

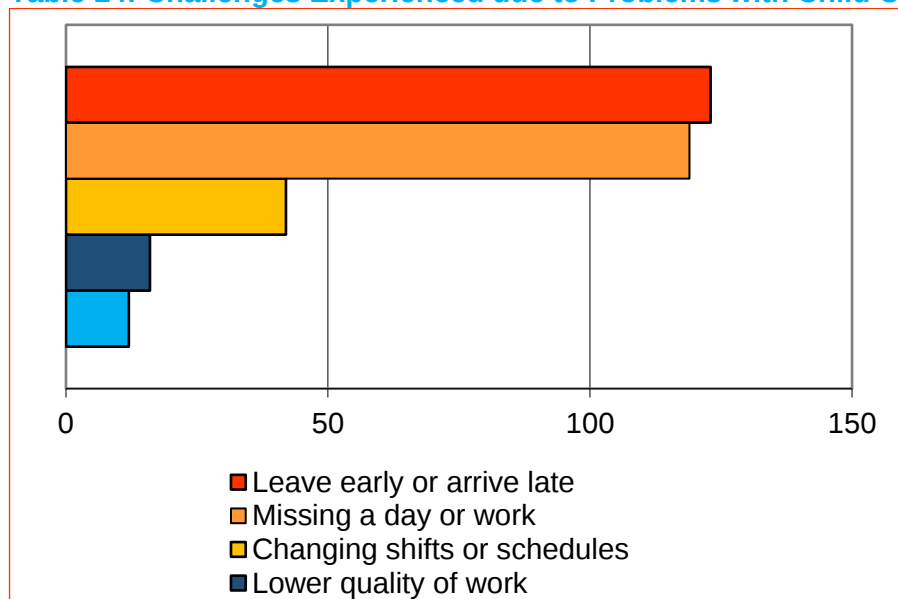
The top industries of employment for current parents are health care and social services; professional, scientific, technical; and education. The top industries of employment of future parents are professional, scientific, technical; self-employed; and education.

Table 23: Current Employment by Industry

	Current Parents	Future Parents
Agriculture, Fishing & Hunting	2	0
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	0	0
Utilities	1	0
Construction	0	0
Manufacturing	29	1
Wholesale Trade	9	0
Retail Trade	25	1
Transportation & Warehousing	6	1
Information	1	0
Finance & Insurance	18	0
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	2	0
Professional, Scientific, Technical	41	16
Management of Companies	0	0
Administrative & Waste Management	1	1
Educational Services	39	4
Health Care & Social Assistance	71	3
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	9	2
Accommodations & Food Service	7	0
Other Services (except Public Admin.)	13	2
Public Administration	17	0
Self Employed, not specified	25	5

Parents that currently have children age 12 or younger were asked if they or their spouse/partner had had their job or schooling affected in the last 12 months because of child care challenges. A list of possible affects were presented and parents were instructed to select all that apply. The most common problems resulting from child care challenges were leaving work early or arriving late, missing a day or work, challenges changing shifts or schedules, lower quality of work, and not keeping or accepting a job. Overall 34% of parents indicated they had not experienced any of the listed challenges because of child care challenges.

Table 24: Challenges Experienced due to Problems with Child Care



Parents were also asked if there are changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow them to perform better at work or school. Only 20% indicated that there were changes that could help them. The top explanations provided were longer hours, open earlier and close later; a program that does not close when the schools close, most parents still have to work; more options for school age care, both after school care during the school year and summer programs; transportation to and from school/preschool, especially on Wednesdays; and lower prices/tuition rates.

Out of the parents that currently have children the most common primary form of child care being used are DHS Licensed Child Care Centers. These programs include full- and part-time preschool programs (except Statewide Voluntary Preschool for four-year-olds through a school district) and school age programs, like before and after school. The second most popular form of care currently being used is spouse/partner or I stay home, followed by Registered Child Development Homes. Those three are also the three most preferred among current parents.

The table on the following page compares the types of care currently being used by families with children versus the types they prefer. When comparing the order of the rankings, the biggest difference between is that Child Care Homes (non-registered homes) are currently used by 9% of families making it the fourth most common, however only 2% prefer this setting, which would make it last out of all 8 options.

When parents were asked why their children are not in their preferred type of care, 136 said their children are not. The reasons given were cost/affordability (24%), no openings/waiting list (19%), hours (13%), children not right age (12%), location too far away (5%), not conveniently located (4%), don't know where services are offered (4%), language differences (1%), and cultural differences (1%).

Table 25: Child Care Preferences of Current Parents

Currently Using		Most Preferred	
Licensed Center	38%	Licensed Center	36%
Spouse/Partner or I stay home	18%	Spouse/Partner or I stay home	20%
Registered Child Development Home	10%	Registered Child Development Home	14%
Child Care Home (non-registered)	9%	School District Program	13%
School District Program	8%	Relative in my home	6%
Relative in my home	8%	Relative in their home	5%
Relative in their home	7%	Unrelated caregiver or nanny	4%
Unrelated caregiver or nanny	2%	Child Care Home (non-registered)	2%

Preferences for future parent look similar to the preferences of current parents, however there are some differences. A DHS Licensed Child Care Center is still the number one choice, but it is preferred by a larger percentage (48% vs. 36%). The second, third, and fourth preferences are ranked in a different order by future parents than they are by current parents. After Licensed Child Care Center, future parents prefer Registered Child Development Homes (28%), school district operated programs (12%), and then for themselves or their spouse/partner to stay home with their children.

Table 26: Child Care Preferences of Future Parents

Most Preferred	
Licensed Center	48%
Registered Child Development Home	28%
School District Program	12%
My spouse/partner or I stay home	8%
Relative in their home	4%
Relative in my home	0%
Unrelated caregiver or nanny	0%
Child Care Home (non-registered)	0%

The most preferred communities for child care by both current and future parents are Spirit Lake and Milford. When compared to where current and future parents live, responses indicate that individuals living in other communities also prefer to bring their children to these communities for care. Among those that live outside of Dickinson County, those that currently have children under the age of 12, a small portion indicated their preferred location for child care is in Dickinson County. Meanwhile future parents that live out of Dickinson County plus some that do currently live in the county indicated their preferred location is outside of the county.

Table 27: Preferred Location for Child Care

	Current Parent Preferences	vs. Place of Residence	Future Parent Preferences	vs. Place of Residence
Arnolds Park	1.97%	2.96%	0.00%	18.42%
Lake Park	1.57%	2.96%	8.00%	5.26%
Milford	17.32%	15.90%	36.00%	21.05%
Okoboji	3.94%	5.66%	0.00%	2.63%
Orleans	0.39%	1.89%	0.00%	0.00%
Spirit Lake	66.14%	59.30%	52.00%	47.37%
Superior	0.00%	0.81%	0.00%	0.00%
Terril	0.39%	1.35%	0.00%	2.63%
Wahpeton	0.79%	0.81%	0.00%	0.00%
West Okoboji	0.39%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
Unincorporated County	0.39%	0.27%	0.00%	0.00%
Outside County	6.69%	7.55%	4.00%	2.63%

The majority of parents currently using child care indicated they want to drop off their children for care between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., and pick them up between 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. A few parents also indicated a start time between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., showing their need for after school care. Most parents indicated they currently use care Monday through Friday (ranging from 86% to 93% per day), while 5% say they use care on Saturdays and 3% on Sundays.

When asked what times they would prefer, the most common preferred drop off times are 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., and the most preferred pick up time is 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. While it is not the majority of parents, there are still a significant number that prefer care starting at 5:30 a.m., and ending at 6:30 p.m. Most parents prefer care Monday through Friday (ranging from 91% to 94% per day), while 8% would prefer care on Saturdays and 5% on Sundays. Additionally, most parents need year-round care (74%), followed by school year only (15%), and summer care only (11%).

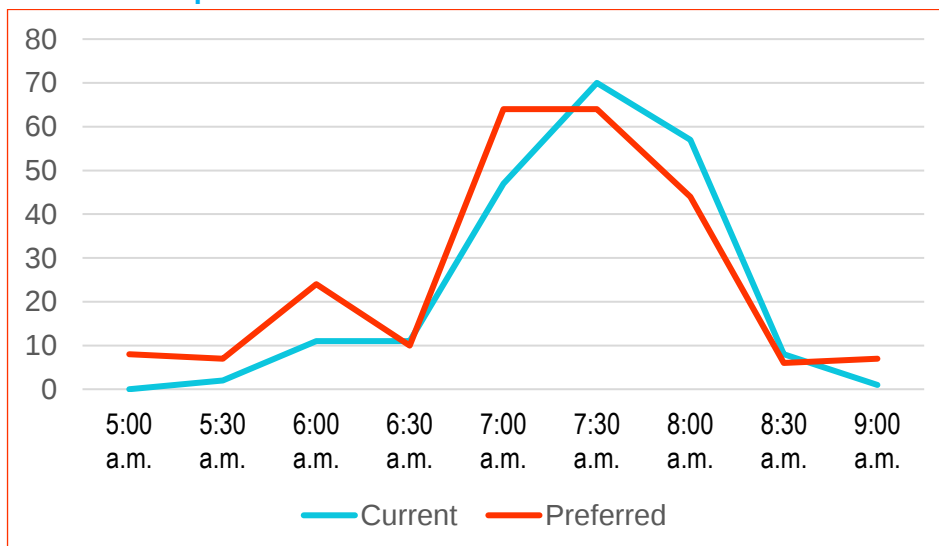
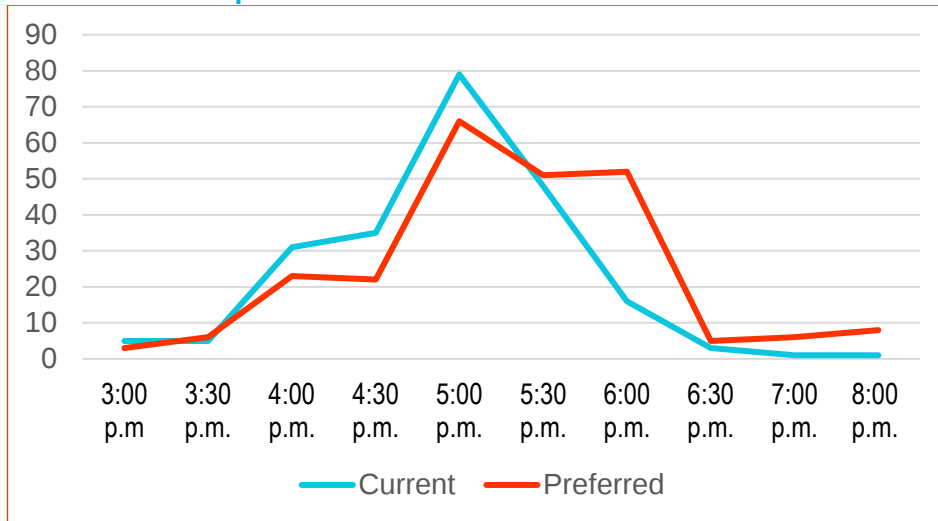
Table 28: Drop-off/Start Times of Current Parents

Table 29: Pick-Up/End Times of Current Parents



Current parents were also asked if their child care needs ever fluctuate. Thirty eight percent (38%) indicated they do. The most common reasons given were changes to work schedules, specifically named were working in health care and reduced hours during winter or summer months. The next most common reasons for fluctuations was care when there is no school, including on snow days when school is canceled but parents still work. Several parents also indicated their needs change during the summer, but many did not indicate if they need more or less care.

When future parents were asked what times they would prefer, most preferred a drop off time between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. while the most preferred pick up time is 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. Eighty three percent (83%) of future parents indicated their work schedules are first shift Monday through Friday; which was followed by those whose schedules fluctuate all days and shifts (14%), and second shift (evenings) Monday through Friday (3%). No future parents indicated they work third shift or weekends. When asked when they will need child care in the future, the majority selected year-round (83%), followed by school year only (13%), and summers only (4%). Specific days selected were Monday through Friday with each day ranging from 92% to 100%.

Table 30: Preferred Drop-off/Start Times of Future Parents

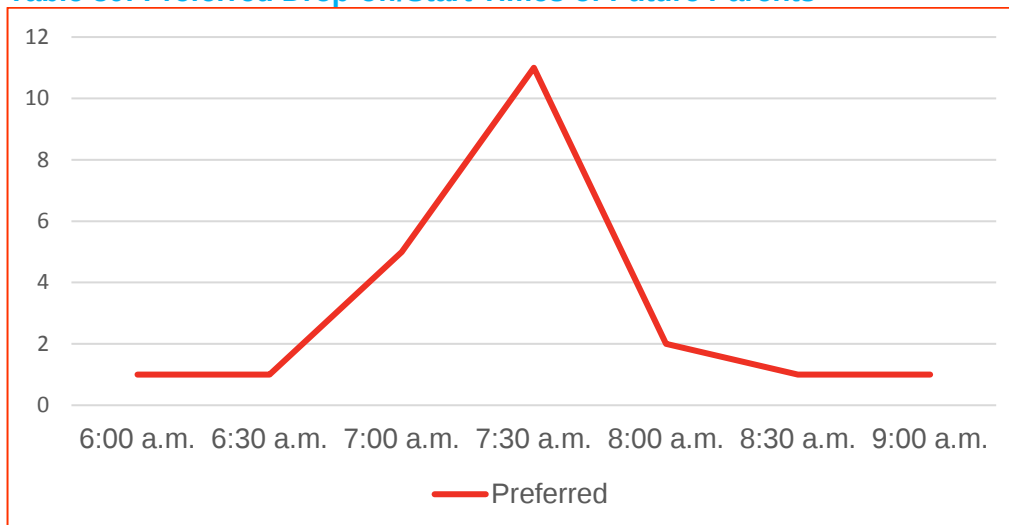
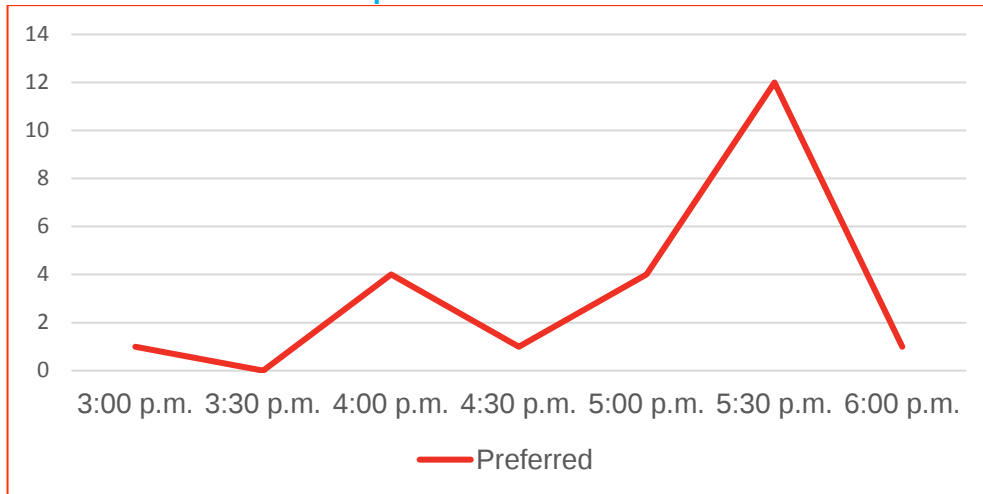


Table 31: Preferred Pick-Up/ End Times of Future Parents



Future parents were asked if they thought their child care needs would ever fluctuate. Only 5 indicated that they would. Two different causes were named their or their spouse/partners work schedules and occasional changes due to meetings.

Both groups were asked to pick the one factor that is/will be most important to them when choosing child care. The top answer for both groups was dependable provider/staff. Positive interactions between staff and children, the educational curriculum use, tuition rates or price, and drop-in or occasional care round out the top 5 factors.

Table 32: Most Important Factor to Parents When Selecting Child Care

	Current Parents	Future Parents
1. Dependable provider/staff	35.83%	34.78%
2. Positive interactions between staff and children	28.35%	26.09%
3. Educational curriculum used	5.12%	13.04%
4. Tuition rates or price	5.12%	4.35%
5. Drop-in or occasional care	3.94%	4.35%
6. Location	3.54%	4.35%
7. Part-time options	2.76%	0.00%
8. Care includes preschool	1.97%	0.00%
9. Second-shift care	1.97%	0.00%
10. Upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground	1.97%	4.35%
11. Ages served	1.57%	4.35%
12. Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating	1.57%	4.35%
13. Provider/staff share my culture	1.18%	0.00%
14. Special needs care	1.18%	0.00%
15. Transportation to/from school or preschool	1.18%	0.00%

16. Payment assistance or scholarships	0.39%	0.00%
17. Provider/staff speak my primary language	0.39%	0.00%
18. Secured entrance	0.39%	0.00%

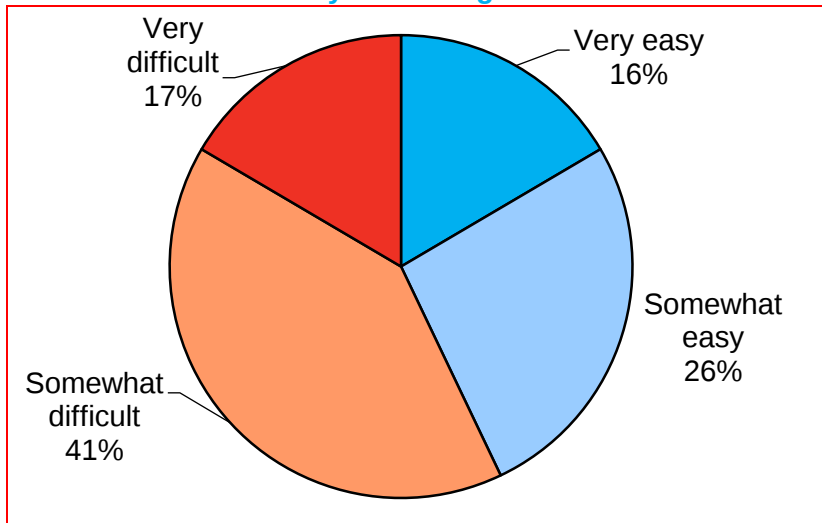
After identifying their most important factor, respondents were given the same list and asked to check all other factors that are important to them. The top 5 factors were the same in both groups, although they were ranked in a slightly different order. For current parents the 5 most important factors are dependable provider/staff (63.39%), positive interactions between staff and children (54.72%), location (50.79%), upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground (19.21%), and educational curriculum used (41.73%). For future parents, the order of preference is positive interactions between staff and children (77.27%), dependable provider/staff (68.18%), upkeep of the facility and playground (63.64%), educational curriculum used (59.09%), and location (54.55%).

Table 33: Additional Factors that are Important to Parents

	Current Parents		Future Parents	
Dependable provider/staff	161	63.39%	15	68.18%
Positive interactions between staff and children	139	54.72%	17	77.27%
Location	129	50.79%	12	54.55%
Upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground	125	49.21%	14	63.64%
Educational curriculum used	106	41.73%	13	59.09%
Part-time options	81	31.89%	10	45.45%
Drop-in or occasional care	78	30.71%	6	27.27%
Tuition rates or price	74	29.13%	2	9.09%
Ages served	73	28.74%	6	27.27%
Care includes preschool	71	27.95%	6	27.27%
Transportation to/from school or preschool	59	23.23%	5	22.73%
Secured entrance	53	20.87%	10	45.45%
Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating	36	14.17%	6	27.27%
Provider/staff speak my primary language	29	11.42%	8	36.36%
Provider/staff share my culture	28	11.02%	5	22.73%
Payment assistance or scholarships	19	7.48%	2	9.09%
Second-shift care	16	6.30%	0	0.00%
Tuition assistance	15	5.91%	2	9.09%
Special needs care	3	1.18%	0	0.00%

The majority of current parents (58%) indicated they had had some challenges finding child care in Dickinson County. When asked what obstacles they experienced, the top comments were related to lack of openings/waiting lists, cost/affordability, quality of care, hours, and lack of part time care.

Table 34: Ease/Difficulty of Finding Care



Eighty two percent (82%) of current parents are satisfied with their current child care arrangements. Reasons given by those that are not satisfied were hours of care (staying open later in the day), options for school age care, cost, and having to take children of different ages to different providers.

Similarly, parents were asked if there were any changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow them to perform better at work or school. The most common themes were hours and costs. A few others mentioned transportation, care for school age children on snow days, and before school options.

The final two questions on the survey were open-ended to allow both parents and future parents to share their concerns on the availability or quality of child care in Dickinson County.

Sampling of comments from current parents:

- When kids were infants we essentially had only 1 option for daycare center because only 2 centers accepted infants and of the two, only one had operating hours that worked with our schedules.
- Cost is the only thing that has impacted our decision to have another child. Our relative could not handle two, and we could not afford to pay \$2000 in child care each month.
- Space and need override any quality concerns usually.
- Next year, I will have a child too old for his previous day care but my younger child is too young for what my older child is eligible for. It would be nice if more licensed centers took older or younger kids so 2 day cares would not need to be used.
- There needs to be some options for children with special needs.
- Need more QUALITY options that are for working families. Not all families are able to pick up children by 5:00.
- I think there is a need for more registered day care in Spirit Lake and in Dickinson County.
- Very limited if wanting in home.
- Not many options for school age children.
- I think there is a shortage all over Dickinson County as well as surrounding counties. It puts a lot of stress on families.

- Concerned on the quality, reliability, and curriculum.
- Not many options for quality day care. I feel there isn't enough dependable workers that would work for a daycare for the wage the daycare would provide.
- We tried very hard to find a daycare provider in Lake Park and there were never openings anywhere. We also checked Spirit Lake, Okoboji, etc. It was very difficult to find anyone who could take twin infants.
- Need more licensed centers that take infants and hours that accommodate parents that work out of town.
- The quality and available centers/in home places are always full or not taking infants which is hard for a family with infants or wanting to have more kids.
- Because this area is full of tourist attractions that have different hours than typical jobs, child care should also reflect that. Being a single parent makes it difficult to make good money while having options for your child.
- Many of the current providers aren't registered with the state, which is fine, but then there isn't a good location or resource to see who is in the business other than word of mouth.
- Daycare is limited and I would say quality daycare is even harder to find. Daycare facilities also have a hard time keeping their good employees because they can't pay very much.

Sampling of comments from future parents:

- I've heard it's hard to find a good place for child care.
- There isn't much around for daycare options.
- The availability of quality, affordable care is lacking. I am concerned about the lack of child care. It is also a concern that centers are charging for days that children don't attend.
- There simply isn't enough options. I do not want to pay while I am pregnant just to hold a spot at a daycare.
- Both (availability and quality), most daycares do not have availability or long wait lists and others are not highly spoken of.

Market Analysis

Key Findings

These key findings are based on research and conditions of the child care market in Dickinson County at a specific point in time. If the community or the child care environment experience changes, current challenges may be resolved or these findings may no longer be relevant.

Growing County Population, Some Communities Gaining Children

Dickinson County has experienced growth almost every decade since its founding. In 2000, the population of the county was 16,424, in 2010, it had grown to 16,667, and the US Census Bureau estimates that it hit 17,046 in 2016. According to Census data, the communities of Lake Park, Milford, Orleans, and Spirit Lake have been growing in total size, while the communities of Lake Park, Milford, Okoboji, and Superior have gained children ages 12 and younger. To keep the county growing, there needs to be an adequate supply of child care.

Most Parents are in the Labor Force

Most families that live in Dickinson County have all parents in working. For the county as a whole, 88% of families with children under the age of 6, and 85% of families with children ages 6-17 have all parents working. That means if a family is headed by a couple both parents are working and if it is a headed by a single parent that parent is working. These are higher than the state averages of 75% and 80% respectively.

When looking at individual communities, some have an even higher percentage of parents working. As of 2016, the breakdown by community is:

Table 35: Percentage of Households with All Parents Working

	With Children Under the Age of 6	With Children Ages 6 to 17
Arnolds Park	39%	87%
Lake Park	81%	93%
Milford	87%	91%
Okoboji	81%	93%
Orleans	53%	100%
Spirit Lake	96%	78%
Superior	100%	92%
Terril	71%	66%
Wahpeton	100%	33%
West Okoboji	100%	72%
Dickinson County	88%	85%
State of Iowa	75%	80%

Median Family Income Higher than Child Care Assistance Thresholds

The median income for families with children under the age of 18 for Dickinson County is \$74,138. To be eligible for tuition assistance under the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program according to the 2018 eligibility criteria, a family of 3 must have an annual household income below \$30,131 and a

family of 4 must have an annual household income below \$36,395. While many households with children in Dickinson County exceed these thresholds, it is possible they still struggle to pay child care expenses out of pocket.

Declining Child Care Supply

Over the last 5 years Dickinson County has lost 19 child care providers and 191 child care spaces. According to data from the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), as of March 2018, there are 715 DHS regulated spaces in Licensed Child Care Centers, Registered Child Development Homes, and school district programs. This is down from 757 in July 2017. Since that time the county has lost 1 Registered Child Development Home that could care for 8 children at a time and 6 Child Care Homes that could collectively care for 30 children at any given time.

Communities with DHS regulated care as of March 2018 are Lake Park (45 spaces), Milford (246 spaces), Okoboji (49 spaces), Spirit Lake (342 spaces), and Terril (33 spaces). Lake Park, Milford, Okoboji, and Spirit Lake also have preschool programs located within their local schools. The programs in Lake Park and Okoboji are licensed with DHS, therefore their spaces have been accounted for above; Milford and Spirit Lake school districts offer Statewide Voluntary Preschool for four-year-olds, therefore their programs are exempt from being licensed by DHS and therefore are not included in the 715 spaces.

Shortage of Child Care Spaces

There were 2,352 children ages 0 to 12 living in Dickinson County as of 2016. Based on the percentage of families that have all parents working, approximately 2,030 children have all parents working. With only 715 spaces in DHS regulated child care and preschool programs, there is a deficit of child care spaces across Dickinson County

Table 36: Child Care and Preschool Spaces in Dickinson County

	Children Needing Care	Total Spaces ¹⁰	Total Surplus/ Deficit	Part-Time/ Seasonal Spaces	Child Care Only Deficit
Infant/Toddler	300	106	-194	-12	-206
Two-Year-Old	149	95	-54	-12	-66
Three to Four-Year-Old	284	328	+44	-87	-43
School-Age (5-12 Yrs.)	1,290	186	-1,104	0	-1,104
Total	2,023	715	-1,308	-111	-1,419

Breaking down the same information of children, families with all parents working and available child care spaces, by community can help give a more detailed picture. Some communities may have a greater shortage than others, and some communities with a shortage of their own will also serve families from neighboring communities.

Arnolds Park has approximately 34 children that have all parents working. Currently there are no regulated child care or preschool options in the community. As part of the Okoboji School District,

¹⁰ Includes all DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools and Registered Child Development Homes.

children ages 5 to 12 do have access to the Okoboji Y Kids Program, which is offered at the elementary school building in Milford.

Arnolds Park, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	7
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>27</u>
Total	34

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
None	0		

Lake Park has approximately 134 children that have all parents working. Currently there are 3 options for regulated child care and preschool in the community, with 2 operating year-round. Combined those programs offer a total of 48 spaces during the school year and 24 spaces in the summer.

Lake Park, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	42
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>92</u>
Total	134

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
Alice Anderson	12	Infant & up	Yes
Harris-Lake Park Preschool	21	Ages 3 to 5	No
Laura Fiebig	12	Infant & up	Yes
Total child care spaces	48		

Milford has approximately 546 children that have all parents working. Milford is where the Okoboji Elementary school is located; therefore, families from surrounding communities also depend on the preschool and school age programs for their children. Currently there are 5 options for DHS regulated child care and preschool, with 4 operating year-round. Combined those programs offer a total of 246 spaces during the school year and 226 spaces in the summer.

Milford, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	176
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>370</u>
Total	546

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
Little Hands Daycare/Preschool	53	Infant & up	Yes
Little Sprouts Daycare	45	Infant & up 5	Yes
Head Start	20	3 & 4 Years	No
Okoboji Y Kids	81	Kindergarten & up	Yes
Safari Child Care	47		Yes
Total child care spaces	246		

Department of Education Programs	2017 Certified Enrollment		
Okoboji Statewide Preschool	71	4 Year Olds	No

Okoboji has approximately 71 children that have all parents working. Currently there is 1 option for regulated child care and preschool in the community. That provider can care for a maximum of 12 children at one time.

Okoboji, March 2018

Children under age 5 with all parents working	34
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>37</u>
Total	71

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
Laura Fiebig	12	Infant & up	Yes
Total child care spaces	12		

Orleans has approximately 27 children that have all parents working. Currently there are no regulated child care or preschool options in the community. Although, as part of the Spirit Lake School District, children ages 5 to 12 do have access to the Spirit Lake Y Kids Program and Spirit Lake Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program which is offered at the elementary school.

Orleans, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	8
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>19</u>
Total	27

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
None	0		

Spirit Lake has approximately 607 children that have all parents working. Spirit Lake is where the elementary school is located; therefore, families from surrounding communities also depend on the preschool and school age programs for their children. Currently there are 7 options for DHS regulated child care and preschool, which all operate year-round. Combined those programs offer a total of 342 spaces.

Spirit Lake, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	225
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>382</u>
Total	607

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
Carousel Preschool & Daycare	53	2 & up	Yes
Emily Jackson	8	Infant & up	Yes
Joyful Journeys Daycare/Preschool	112	Infant to age 5	Yes
Little Hands Childcare & Preschool	72	Infant & up	Yes
Sally Kness	12	Infant & up	Yes
Spirit Lake Y Kids	73	Kindergarten & up	Yes
Tammy Warner	12	Infant & up	Yes
Total child care spaces	342		

Department of Education Programs	2017 Certified Enrollment		
Spirit Lake Statewide Preschool	59	4 Year Olds	No

Superior has approximately 44 children that have all parents working. Currently there are no regulated child care or preschool options in the community.

Superior, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	21
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>23</u>
Total	44

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
None	0		

Terril has approximately 46 children that have all parents working. Currently there are 2 options for regulated child care and preschool in the community. Combined those programs offer a total of 33 spaces during the school year and 12 spaces in the summer.

Terril, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	23
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>23</u>
Total	46

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
Marcia Bibler	12	Infant & up	Yes
Terril Preschool	21	Ages 3 to 5	No
Total spaces	33		

Wahpeton has approximately 7 children that have all parents working. Currently there are no regulated child care or preschool options in the community.

Wahpeton, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	4
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>3</u>
Total	7

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
None	0		

West Okoboji has approximately 11 children that have all parents working. Currently there are no regulated child care or preschool options in the community.

West Okoboji, March 2018

Children with Working Parents

Children under age 5 with all parents working	4
Children age 5 to 12 with all parents working	<u>7</u>
Total	11

DHS Regulated Providers	Capacity	Ages	Year-Round
None	0		

Parents Having Difficulty Getting into Quality Care, Would Like Earlier Hours

When asked if they had difficulty finding care, 57% of current parents participating in the survey indicated they had. The most common obstacles cited were no openings especially for infants and school age, not open early enough/late enough, lack of part-time options, and costs.

The majority of parents indicated they need child care Monday through Friday, year-round. However, many would prefer to drop their children off earlier in the mornings than what many current providers currently offer. Today 10% of parents drop their children off 5:00-6:59 a.m. and 71% drop-off 7:00-

8:29 a.m.; while 19% would prefer to drop-off 5:00-6:59 a.m., and 68% would prefer to drop-off 7:00-8:20 a.m.

Parents Highly Satisfied with Current Care

Even though many parents had problems finding care, once they do find care they are satisfied.

Eighty two percent (82%) of current parents participating in the survey said they are satisfied with their current arrangements; and 59% indicate that their children are enrolled in their preferred type of care.

Parents Prefer Licensed Centers and Preschools

The most preferred child care setting of current parents is DHS Licensed Child Care Center, with 36% of current parents that participated in the survey selecting this option. An even greater percentage (48%) of future parents that participated in the survey indicated a DHS Licensed Child Care Center will be their top choice when they have children.

Current parents also indicated preferences for spouse/partner or I stay home with my children, Registered Child Development Home, and then school district programs. Future parents selected the same choices, but ranked them in a slightly different order.

Table 37: Child Care Settings Preferred by Parents

Current Parents	Future Parents
36% DHS Licensed Center or Preschool	48% DHS Licensed Center or Preschool
20% Spouse/Partner or I stay home	28% Registered Child Development Home
14% Registered Child Development Home	12% School District Program
13% School District Program	8% Spouse/Partner or I stay home
6% Relative in my home	4% Relative in my home

Worker Productivity Affected by Child Care

Nearly half (45%) of the employers that completed the survey indicated that their company had experienced challenges related to productivity or absenteeism due to employees' child care challenges; while 20% indicated they had had problems hiring new employees due to the candidate's child care challenges.

In addition, 50% of parents with children age 12 or younger answered that child care challenges had caused them to arrive at work late or leave early, 49% had missed an entire day, and 2% said child care is preventing them or their spouse/partner from working.

Meeting the Community's Needs

First Children's Finance's research provides valuable information that can help shape what the future of child care looks like in Dickinson County. Based on this research, it can be concluded that more quality child care spaces are needed. To meet demand and provide the services desired by parents, First Children's Finance has the following recommendations.

Make Use of this *Child Care Market Analysis* for Decision Making

There is not a "one size fits all" solution when it comes to child care. Each community has different needs, and each family has different preferences for their child's care. The research collected for this analysis, along with both the employer and parent survey results can guide future decisions when addressing the child care gap in Dickinson County. Information in this report can help make decisions related to what ages to provide care for, hours of operation, what factors are important to parents when selecting child care, and what child care settings are most preferred by parents.

Add DHS Licensed Center Spaces

Based on the preferences of parents for child care setting and location, along with local population growth, employment centers, and school district boundaries, the child care markets in both Milford and Spirit Lake could add more spaces in Licensed Child Care Centers. These new spaces could be a combination of current programs expanding by adding more spaces at their current or a second location, or new child care centers opening.

While there is a great demand in these communities, before more spaces are added or new centers are started, interested individuals or organizations should take time to do careful business planning. Child care centers are a great way to provide a service to families; however, there are many regulations that has to be carefully balanced with a good business model to be financially sustainable. Iowa Department of Human Services provides information on the requirement of becoming a Licensed Child Care Center at <http://dhs.iowa.gov/licensure-and-registration/center-licensure>.

Recruit Registered Child Development Home Providers

According to the parent survey, there are residents providing care that is sometimes referred to as friends, family, and neighbor care. Child Care Resource & Referral is available to assist these residents through the process of becoming a Registered Child Development Home, which could benefit both them and the community. By becoming registered, the provider gains access to resources and training, becomes listed on the Iowa Department of Human Service's "Child Care Families: Provider Search" database so they can easily be found by parents, is included when parents contact their local Child Care Resource & Referral office for a list of area providers, and the provider becomes eligible to receive direct pay from the state for families they care for that are eligible for tuition assistance. Families benefit because there are additional providers they can feel secure sending their child to for care.

To increase the number of Registered Child Development Homes in Dickinson County, local communities should reach out to those they know that are currently providing care but are not registered and encourage them to become registered. Data in this report and from the parent surveys can be used to show potential providers the need and to help them make decisions about their future child care operations. Providers that are interested can get more information through Iowa Department of Human Services (<http://dhs.iowa.gov/licensure-and-registration/registered-home>) or contact the local Child Care Resource & Referral staff (<https://iowaccrr.org/>).

Add School Age Spaces to Existing Licensed Centers

Parent feedback from the child care needs survey shows that more school age care within licensed centers is in demand. While there are some school age programs currently available, there are not enough spaces to meet demand. The most efficient way to meet demand is for existing centers and school age programs to expand. Programs currently offering school age care should consider adding more spaces, as well as assuring parents care can be provided year-round on any days when there is no school but parents still have to work, such as school holidays and most snow days. Existing centers that do not currently offer school age care could also add spaces to help alleviate the problem and give parents additional options, especially in communities where there are not existing school age programs.

Consider Space Options for Additional Year-Round Care

With the majority of parents and future parents that participated in the child care needs survey indicated they need year-round care; 75% and 83% respectively. Yet, during the summer months, there are 111 fewer spaces in Licensed Child Care Centers in Dickinson County. Most of these spaces (62) are intended to provide preschool for three- and four-year-old children during the school year, however, may provide opportunities to expand care for summer months. More options for year-round care are needed.

Several local school districts, churches and other entities have spaces licensed by Iowa DHS that are used only during the school year. Opportunities to offer programming in these spaces during the summer months should be considered.

Encourage Employers to Provide Child Care Information to Employees

To help the workforce be more productive, employers can help by simply providing information to employees on where to find information about child care, such as a link to the Iowa DHS “Child Care Families” Provider Search (<https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/clientportal/providersearch.aspx>) or information to contact the local Child Care Resource & Referral Office (<https://iowaccrr.org/>). Including information in new employee orientation, in an employee handbook, or other internal information sharing locations such as Human Resources can be beneficial for both the employee and employer.

Additionally, employers may consider how they can partner with local child care providers to benefit their employees and support these programs, which are often either nonprofit organizations or small locally-owned (often women owned) businesses. Partnerships can range from child care providers agreeing to offer a discount to employees of a partner company, to employers providing scholarships for tuition assistance, and do not always have to cost the child care provider or the employer money.