



Closing the Gap

An Assessment of Indiana's Early Learning Opportunities

Using the Closing the Gap report, community stakeholders, leaders and early care and education providers can equip themselves with the data needed to make informed and strategic choices to expand access to high-quality child care in their communities.

Approach: Local Leaders Championing Access

Elected officials and local economic leaders are supporting actions to increase access to high-quality early learning opportunities. By increasing access, communities will see immediate benefits to businesses and their local economies. This approach addresses gaps in access that impact abilities to recruit and retain the highest quality of employees for businesses.

By investing in high-quality learning environments, the needs of the community are met as well as those of their own employees. The long-term benefits to children, families and the community goes beyond the first five years and engrains itself into the community it benefits.

Questions to Consider:



What local resources can be leveraged?

Businesses, local government and community stakeholders can offer their expertise, space, funding, etc. to support increasing access.



What are the greatest and most immediate needs?

Data from the Closing the Gap report can help local leaders prioritize their efforts to improve capacity, quality, affordability and choice.

“The challenge is great, but the opportunity to build a system of more equitable access for Hoosier children is even greater.”

Spotlight: Tipton County

Biggest Challenge: Choice

Tipton County is a growing community and they are embarking on adding 62 new child care seats to support families in their community, as well as attract new families to the area. After conducting a listening session with Ball State University, child care came out to be one of the community's top five needs. Working with West Street Christian Church, the community is one step closer to having access to high-quality child care for families.



“As we strive to attract young families to the City of Tipton, we field regular inquiries about where to secure quality childcare services. I am really excited about the possibility of being able to advertise that we have a fully licensed high-quality child care center in our community. I expect it will encourage all the providers in Tipton to strive for providing an even higher level of learning experience.”

Tom Dolezal, Mayor of Tipton

Spotlight: Adams County

Biggest Challenge: Quality

The Adams County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC), in partnership with MERIT Early Learning Center and Kings Kingdom, has set out to add 58 new child care seats across the two child care centers. Behind the drive to create these new child care seats is the current workforce shortage in the county. The ACEDC decided to dive into what was causing the shortage and traced it back to the need for child care. With these additional seats, parents can re-enter the workforce without having to worry about child care.



“We understand that child care is a barrier in our community. More parents would be able to join the workforce if they had access to quality child care. There is a very real and tangible economic outcome if we're able to open up more seats for more children.”

Colton Bickel, Executive Director, Adams County Economic Development Corporation

Early Learning Indiana's methodology, the Early Learning Access Index, combines the elements of capacity, quality, affordability and choice to offer a more robust assessment of Hoosier families' ability to access early learning opportunities that suit their needs. Scan the QR Code to learn more about the Closing the Gap report.

