



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: Early Learning in School Districts

School districts are starting and expanding early learning programs to fill a need in their communities. By investing in high-quality learning environments, the needs of the community are met as well as those of their own employees. This approach addresses gaps in access that impact a school district's ability to recruit and retain the highest quality of staff. Early learning in school districts opens the door for increased capacity, and also supports kindergarten readiness and improves long-term outcomes for students.

Questions to Consider:



Who should run the early learning program?

A school district can start their own program or partner with a current early education provider.



What ages should be served?

While many schools start with a pre-K program, there is an increasing demand for high-quality infant and toddler care.

Spotlight: Union County

Biggest Challenge: Choice

Union County College Corner Joint School District is adding 24 new preschool seats to Union County. Expanding the current child care offerings is based off of the need of families in the community. There aren't many options for families currently, so by adding these new seats, families will have more options and greater access to high-quality child care.



“Early learning and child care is a need for our families, which is the primary reason behind our push for early learning and care. Socially, preschool helps our students get a start on their academic careers.”

Aron Borowiak, Superintendent, Union County-College Corner School District

Spotlight: Scott County

Biggest Challenge: Capacity

With an urgent need for more space and classrooms, Scott County School District 2 is adding 160 new child care seats to better serve the families of Scott County. The school district will not only add new classrooms, but also therapy rooms and indoor activity centers. In addition to providing more seats and high-quality care, the district will also obtain and maintain Paths to QUALITY™ Level 3 to continue providing the best care.



“In order to retain staff, we asked them what their needs were for child care, and we wanted to meet those needs.”

Emily Jordan, Preschool Coordinator, Scott County School District 2

Spotlight: Cass County

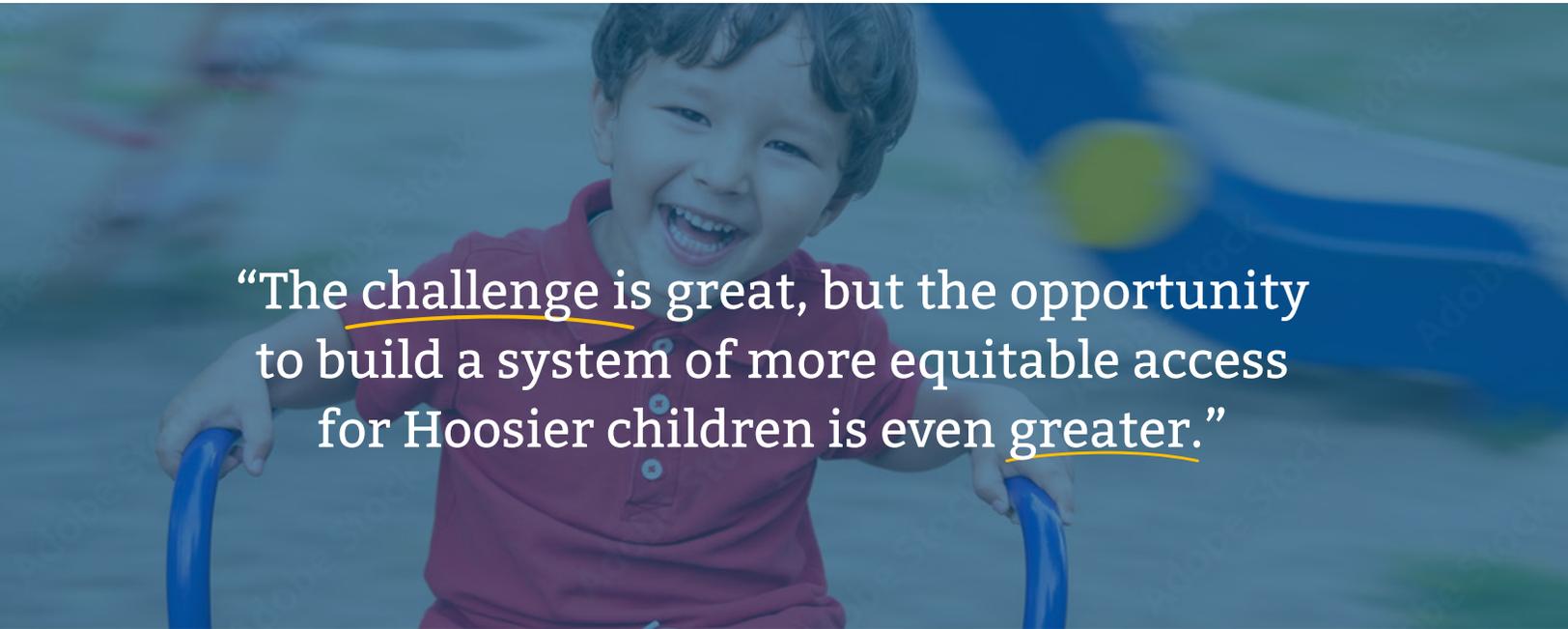
Biggest Challenge: Capacity

Before establishing a high-quality child care center, Cass County was a child care desert. To remedy this issue, Lewis Cass Schools (LCS) is expanding from traditional preschool offerings to include infant and toddler seats. Adding 38 new seats, more families will have access to high-quality child care. In partnership with Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy, LCS will also offer training for families on topics including safe sleep, fire safety at home and car seat safety.



“The greatest need we’ve seen since we opened in 2020 is for infant and toddler care. We are located in a child care desert, and we’re hopeful adding new seats is going to really help the community.”

Angela Johnson, Preschool Director, Lewis Cass Schools



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

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.

