



Team Lead: Lincoln County Government

Active Team Members:

- Lincoln County Administration
- Lincoln County Social Services
- Merrill School District
- Tomahawk School District
- Childcaring, Inc.
- Redeemer Learning Center
- Trinity Merrill Lutheran Early Learning Center
- Merrill Chamber of Commerce
- Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation
- Children's WI
- WI Department of Children & Families
- Community Members & Parents
- Prairie River School for Young Learners
- St. John's Lutheran Church & School

Mission: Creating unique opportunities to increase child care capacity in rural communities

The Lincoln County Dream Up! Team is excited to share the work of this group and the benefits to Lincoln County as we wrap up the *Child Care Supply-Building Grant*. Lincoln County was selected by the Department of Children and Families for the 2022 fall cohort and the Lincoln County Board through resolution approved acceptance of this grant. Over the last 12 months, agencies throughout the county have come together to assess Lincoln County child care capacity, the economic impact to the county due to child care shortages, and work to support current and aspiring child care providers. On November 10th, the team was able to showcase their efforts to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Emilie Amundson, who toured Trinity Childcare and heard from the team members about the successes of community collaborative efforts, barriers to building the childcare supply and future hopes.

Through the support of this grant, Lincoln County Dream Up! was able to:

- Provide \$41,000 in retention and sustainability grants to current Lincoln County providers. These funds helped obtain quality and safe equipment providers otherwise couldn't afford, provided staff bonuses, purchased large motor skills equipment (tricycles), outdoor playground toys and met other essential needs.
- Partner with Trinity Childcare to support training needs of staff to meet regulations to support obtaining licensure. This will allow greater access to those who receive WI Shares, the state child care assistance.
- Support both Tomahawk and Merrill Schools who are working toward providing high school students curriculum where students can receive college credit and training towards Early Childhood Education.
- Collaborate with the Chambers of Commerce in Merrill and Tomahawk to provide educational outreach to multiple non-profit organizations and businesses to support increasing childcare capacity. This included sharing information from a locally conducted survey.
- Support the Lincoln County Health Department in providing a *Community Baby Shower* that provided care packages and access to community resources that address childcare, child safety and healthy development.
- Partner with Langlade County Dream Up! Team to develop marketing and support our shared childcare resource agency, Childcaring Inc., who now hosts a landing page for our teams. Childcaring can provide information regarding how to become regulated, funding available to support the process of becoming regulated, information for people looking for childcare, and more.

While the grant is wrapping up, the Lincoln County Dream Up! Team will continue to work with our community to support our current and aspiring providers

DID YOU KNOW? Lincoln County Residents participated in a recent survey regarding childcare.

Of those participants

- 14 have multiple children at different locations for childcare
- 39 currently use a family member or friend for childcare
- 26 left the workforce in the last 5 years because of childcare issues
- 11 more had a significant other or another family member leave the workforce
- for a total 49% surveyed; 60% of the participants had challenges within the last 2 years accessing childcare

According to the WI Department of Children & Families – Preschool Development Grant Sandbox Data:

- 75% of zip codes in Lincoln County are considered child care deserts (areas with little or no access to quality childcare).
- There are only 15 regulated (certified or licensed) child care options with a capacity to serve 429 children in Lincoln County as of July 2023!
- The Median Household Income in Lincoln County according to the 2020 census was \$59,152.
- The Median Income is \$56,645.

A family with a child age 0-1 in a group child care setting will pay an average of \$9,392/year which is 2.4 times the affordable amount (16.6% of income is spent on child care). The Federal Government defines affordable care as no more than 7% of a families yearly income should be spent on child care.

Data last updated: [2/7/2022](#)

Childcaring, inc www.childcaring.org