



Rural Child Care Innovation Program

Carlton County, MN

Initial Progress Update – September, 2020

Carlton County, MN joined the Rural Child Care Innovation Program in 2019. The community has completed the initial phases of the program which has included deep community investigation, a Town Hall meeting, and development of a Community Solution Action Plan to help guide the local area on solutions to the local challenges.

While work has just begun to implement the solutions developed through this process, initial successes have already been realized.

The local paper, The Pine Journal in Cloquet, carried the story of the Town Hall in January. The press release for the Community Solution Action Plan went out to the three local papers. KBJR News out of Duluth then did an interview with the Core Team Lead and talked with local child care, airing a story on June 18th. The news of the Northwoods Church of Esko's partnership with "Growing With Love Child Care" was in the local paper.

<https://www.pinejournal.com/business/small-business/6631886-New-day-care-center-addresses-need-in-Esko>. The Core Team continue to utilize social media to share resources and raise awareness. In addition, the City of Cloquet posted marketing and business resources: <https://www.cloqueteda.com/sites-buildings/daycare-business-opportunities>

Two organization in Esko, MN on the north end of the county, are moving forward with plans to add child care slots: Northwoods Church of Esko, whose pastor had attended the Town Hall meeting, is on schedule to open a preschool with 30 child care slots; North Country Ride plans to add afterschool care for 45-50 children. Saginaw Power & Automation, whose manager also attended the Town Hall, is working to add a child care space for employees in their facility as well, though they are located over the county line in St. Louis County. Northwoods Church of Esko opened their space for child care with "Growing With Love Child Care Center" opening in October and accommodating up to 68 children.

Core Team members advocated for pandemic relief funds to go to child care businesses as a part of the CARES Act monies received by Carlton County.

Communication is ongoing with Saginaw Power & Automation to learn from their experience in starting a business sponsored child care.

Resources and connections are being made to include in a resource forum for prospective and current providers. Plans include talking with a new provider to see how the process could be made more accessible. A tentative schedule of March 2021 is on the table to host the event. A child care provider resource pamphlet is being completed, to be printed and distributed and shared online. Providers have been contacted for input on their experience starting/expanding a child care business in Carlton Count