



## Rural Child Care Innovation Program AUSTIN, MINNESOTA

### Initial Progress Update – March 16, 2018

The next meeting for the Austin Core Team is scheduled for early April. The Core Team has been busy working to keep projects moving forward to address the local child care challenges. The Community Solution Action Plan has been completed and is due to be released by March 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Additional highlights:**

1. There are three parties interested in opening new child care centers in the Austin area. While discussions are preliminary and in the earliest stages, this is a promising development to help support development of new capacity. These efforts could create over 200 new slots.
2. Members of the Core Team have identified over 20 spaces, with many in the faith community that may be appropriate for family child care licenses. The team is working to meet with each to determine interest and suitability. Once all have been reviewed, the team will work to build initial agreements and promote these opportunities to existing providers and those interested in beginning a child care business.
3. First Children's Finance is launching its popular Business Leadership Cohort program for local providers on April 2, 2018. This program provides basic training on several business principles including marketing, finance, and planning for the future. It also includes individual consultations for each participant. Typically, graduates from the Business Leadership Cohort increase confidence, profitability and long term sustainability as a result of the training.
4. First Children's Finance is providing support for the DEED funded project through Parenting Resource Center to expand shift care to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shifts. This could create over 20 new slots during some of the hardest to find times for child care.