



Rural Child Care Innovation Program

Bemidji Area, MN

Initial Progress Update – July 24, 2019

The Bemidji, MN community joined the Rural Child Care Innovation Program in late 2018. 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. The Bemidji RCCIP has seven goal areas that they are working on during the implementation phase of the project. Each goal is being led by a member of the Bemidji RCCIP Core Team.

While work has just begun to implement the solutions developed through this process, initial successes have already been realized. The Bemidji RCCIP Child Care Business Leaders Cohort training took place for both center directors and family child care providers. There were a total of 16 participants, including 4 current centers and 1 startup child care center. Additional projects include financial modeling for a local business owner to review having a family child care program co-located with the business. Another positive development is that one of the Bemidji child care centers who participated in the Child Care Business Leaders Cohort training is moving forward on a new location and increasing the size of her center by 42 slots. For the first time, this center's license will include 8 infant slots. The need for infant slots in Bemidji is at a critical juncture, so increasing the number of infant slots by 8 at one time will be very beneficial for area families and children. A round table discussion around child care regulations and legislation is scheduled for September to bring the Bemidji Community together to continue the conversation around the important issues facing child care business owners.

Other projects in development include an annual Provider Appreciation Event and additional provider directed training choices.