



## Rural Child Care Innovation Program

Bemidji, MN

Progress Update – August 28, 2020

The Bemidji, MN community completed the Rural Child Care Innovation Program in June 2020. The community has made progress on all 7 of their Community Solution Action Plan goals.

The team secured funds for the launch of a website as a vital tool for area parents, businesses, the education community, providers and future providers to utilize for all things related to child care. Website address is [www.bemidjichildcare.org](http://www.bemidjichildcare.org).

A legislative Panel was held Thursday, September 26, 2020 in the Beltrami County Boardroom. In direct response to this panel, and follow up that was done by Core Team members, Senator Utke, Lang, Mathews, Eichorn, and Rarick introduced Senate File 3292 which provides flexibility within age group classifications allowing providers to serve more young children. This has passed through the first committee phase and was pending a hearing on the senate floor. (Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the bill will be introduced again in the future)

Options for businesses to support parents have been compiled to create marketing materials and include: Paid Parental Leave policies, Telecommute Options for employees, "Bring Your Baby to Work" Program, Job Sharing/Work Experience Options, Family Child Care Business Owned License, Dependent Care FSA, and Child Care Subsidies for Employees. Other options for businesses to consider are Consortium Models, Child Care Vendor Plans, and Voucher or Reimbursement Systems.

Beltrami County website has been updated with information on becoming a licensed provider within the county.

Bemidji Early Childhood Collaborative implemented Gather and Grow, a networking and training group for child care providers in Beltrami County and surrounding areas. A committee

was formed to plan future events. Four Gather and Grow events have been held to date with the next scheduled for fall 2020.

Bemidji Early Childhood Collaborative and members of the Bemidji Area RCCIP will work together to host an annual appreciation event for child care providers in 2020. With the current CDC recommendations for the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unknown what the event will look like. If the in person event cannot be held, gift baskets will be sent to all providers as resources are available.

Mentor network for Family Child Care Providers was created with 7 confirmed providers acting as mentors for current and potential child care providers entering into the profession.