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Madison, IN - Madison Consolidated Schools awarded a \$750,000 grant.

The district was notified on Monday that the application for the Employer-Sponsored Child Care Grant submitted earlier this fall was awarded the maximum grant amount of \$750,000.

“This grant will be life-changing for residents of Jefferson County,” shared Dr. Teresa Brown, Superintendent. “We saw an opportunity, contacted some of our closest community partners, and will work together to bring early child care for children ages 0-3 years old to our community as quickly as possible.”

Governor Holcomb released news of the awards on January 31, 2024. In his [release](#), he announced that the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration’s Office (FSSA) of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning is awarding another \$6.9 million in employer-sponsored childcare grants to an additional 22 businesses, community groups, and school corporations - bringing the total investment to \$25 million to create or expand child care offerings that address the needs of working Hoosiers. Madison Consolidated Schools is the only district in the regional area and the only rural school corporation in the state to be awarded the full amount available.

“This was a true collaboration on the part of many community employers,” Brown continued. Representing approximately 4,474 employees, partners involved in bringing the initiative to reality are Ivy Tech - Madison, Arvin Sango, Inc., SuperATV, Royer Corporation, Norton King’s Daughters Health, Grote Industries, City of Madison, Madison Precision Products, and Vehicle Service Group. The Madison Area Chamber of Commerce and Community Foundation of Madison Jefferson County also provided letters of support on behalf of the initiative. “As we talk with our community partners, we know that

everyone is struggling to find employees. A specific, and frequently noted barrier for all of us has been a lack of early childhood care facilities. Not having sufficient daycare has made it difficult to retain employees and contributes to absenteeism. We knew we had to do all we could to make this happen for our families and employers so that we can continue to build a thriving local and regional economy.”

Madison Consolidated Schools offers discounted preschool tuition to its employees for their children to attend an FSSA Level III Paths to Quality Certified preschool housed within each elementary school of the school corporation. Other employer partners offer their employees tuition benefits for two weeks of emergency childcare through www.care.com. Although these employers are offered emergency childcare, there is no guarantee that this childcare meets FSSA Paths to Quality regulations. The most recent childcare needs assessment conducted by our Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) service center, SDA 5 Building Blocks, revealed that Jefferson County, Indiana, is only able to serve 10.7% of its child care-dependent population in a high-quality setting. This dictates that even in the event of providing childcare benefits, there is extremely limited capacity in our community to support such a critical need.

Of the 2,190 children who are in need of high-quality childcare services, 16% of whom live in poverty, Madison only has service capacity for 235. This leaves 1,955 children in a state of vulnerability. The nearest licensed infant and toddler provider to Madison, Indiana, is The Vanguard Academy, which is located over 30 miles, or 54 minutes away from Madison in Prospect, Kentucky. Even when employers and individuals in our community partner with our CCR&R service center to identify and locate Indiana Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) providers there are no options for almost 90% of our community. This lack of facility capacity places our most vulnerable children in the care of unlicensed professionals who are not adequately trained in early childhood education, child development, and natal care. Through this grant, the Madison Consolidated Schools and the employers who partnered with Madison Consolidated Schools in this application, hope to be able to provide quality daycare options and expanded childcare benefits. “We value our employees and their families and want to be able to provide a resource that supports our workforce and community. Our children deserve every opportunity,” Brown stated.

Timeline

MCS and its partners will meet soon and form an advisory board to begin making decisions for our community daycare. Facility spaces will be constructed over the next three years until full capacity is reached. Our goal is for the center to open in January 2025, with a first phase grand opening taking place on February 1st, 2025.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with our partners to create a solution that will improve the quality of life for the families of Jefferson County,” Brown stated. “Our

partners indicated they share a need for quality daycare for their employees too. The advisory board will collaborate to make decisions regarding the infrastructure and operations of the facility. We will work together to create a business plan that provides sustainable quality child care for ages 0-5 for Jefferson County residents. This has huge economic implications for Jefferson County. The mayor has also indicated that new housing is being constructed and families need to have options for child care so they are able to move to Jefferson County for jobs. We are excited that we will be working toward the common goal of improving opportunities for our children.”

[A full list of grant recipients is linked here.](#)