

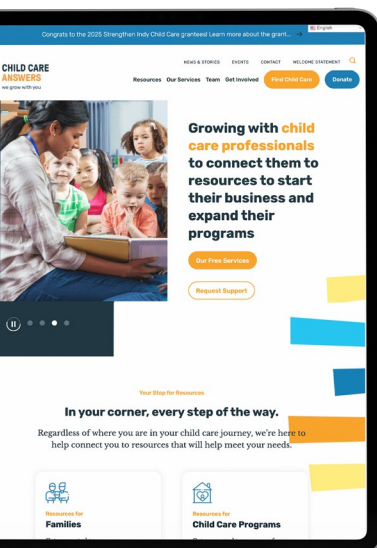
Bridging the Gap Between Child Care and Community & Economic Development

Case Studies



Child Care Answers, Indiana

Child Care Answers (CCA) is a Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) organization focused on creating quality care and education for children in central Indiana. CCA supports families by offering enhanced services and educational resources to help them access high-quality child care. In addition, they empower child care providers through connections to valuable resources, peer networking opportunities, and dedicated support from a team of program specialists.



CCA was selected by Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) as one of five organizations to participate in the Bridging the Gap Between Child Care and Community & Economic Development Community of Practice (CoP). This Community of Practice supported organizations in developing and implementing locally driven projects that address the intersection of child care and broader community and economic development.

CCA launched a targeted project in response to limited awareness and engagement

around child care issues in a neighboring Indiana county. Despite the county's economic growth and the availability of quality employment opportunities, a common misperception persisted that sufficient affordable child care options were readily available.

To address this gap, CCA adapted and replicated successful strategies previously implemented in another Indiana county. These strategies focused on building a coordinated response to early childhood challenges, strengthening relationships with key stakeholders, raising public awareness, and influencing local policy. CCA partnered with local programs, chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations, and community coalitions to identify the true barriers families faced in accessing child care. Together, the group conducted surveys, facilitated community conversations, and analyzed economic data to assess needs and identify service gaps, with a particular focus on rural areas.

A key learning from this initiative was the importance of tailoring messaging to specific audiences. For instance, CCA developed targeted materials for employers and partner organizations to help illustrate the tangible value of investing in child care access and emphasized the importance of child care as a workforce and economic development issue.

Initial efforts in the target county encountered engagement challenges, leading CCA to strategically pivot to a different region where they had stronger existing relationships. This shift allowed the team to make more rapid progress by leveraging local champions, aligning messaging with economic priorities, and refining communications for clarity and impact. Collaboration remained central to the project's success. CCA prioritized maintaining partnerships through regular communication, provider support, advocacy efforts, and strategic use of media to boost public awareness.

Through this work, CCA demonstrated the value of persistence, adaptability, and strategic communication in expanding its reach beyond the child care sector. The organization actively engaged business leaders and policymakers while continuing to contribute to early childhood committees. CCA sustains its efforts through quarterly presentations to employers, collecting ongoing feedback to ensure messaging remains relevant and responsive. CCA's impact included significant success in two specific counties:

Hamilton County

- CCA was Invited to join the Hamilton County Child Care Steering Workgroup to bring the **strategic plan** to fruition.
- They received a small grant from Invest Hamilton County to support CCA's continued participation in the Hamilton County Chambers, provider engagement, and the overall participation in the strategic plan.

Hendricks County

- Hendricks County hosted their Workforce Coalition Debut in May with 45 people in attendance to learn about the taskforces and work—child care, housing, and transportation.
- In partnership with the Hendricks College Network, the child care taskforce received a \$30,000 Child Care Innovation grant to work on research, engagement, and implementation of goals, including economic development groups and employers.
- A Staffed Family Child Care Network will start in June.
- Continued offering Employer Information sessions every six weeks to engage with employers.
- CCA started attending town council meetings and other organized meetings to increase awareness, engagement, and understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Presented at chambers, rotary clubs, and have developed new connections for potential employer survey engagement.

By adopting a thoughtful, strategic approach to outreach and relationship-building, CCA has successfully elevated the importance of child care within the broader community and economic development conversation, thereby ensuring local voices and needs remain central to solutions.

CCA created a **promotional video** to share across platforms to reach a broader audience and further promote the message of support for businesses facing child care challenges.



For more information please visit the [Bridging the Gap](#) digital hub.