

# Bridging the Gap Between Child Care and Community & Economic Development

A ROADMAP FOR CCR&Rs & INTERMEDIARIES



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### Introduction

Child care is an essential part of our national and community infrastructure. Numerous <u>studies</u> have demonstrated the relationship between affordable child care, workforce participation and economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted the challenges caused by the absence of such care on the economic stability of families, businesses, and communities across the country.

While child care is critical to business and workforce needs, it is often left out of or under-represented in community and economic development agendas, activities, projects and investments. Federal, state and local public community and economic development agencies present significant opportunities for building public-private partnerships and optimizing revenue flows to stabilize, sustain and grow child care businesses as well as non-profit organizations, Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and other intermediaries who support the sector, and the child care field overall.

#### **Preliminary Analysis**

Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA) conducted a landscape analysis and released a report in 2024, Bridging the Gap Between Child Care and Community and Economic Development, that identifies and informs community and economic development funding and engagement opportunities for child care. The landscape analysis uplifts community and economic development examples that exist at local, regional, state and national levels as well as relevant funds these entities control (and their inputs).

This report of preliminary findings delves further into how this complex system currently supports early childhood education and possible new entry points for child care stakeholders into planning, conversations and funding opportunities. This report is targeted to CCR&Rs, child care stakeholders broadly, and community and/or economic development organizations.

The analysis from the preliminary report was completed by CCAoA with the advisory support of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

The intent of CCAoA's research is to further support organizations focused on elevating child care partnerships with a community and economic development focus. These organizations are perfectly positioned to collaborate and lead child care community and economic development initiatives. Their perspective can inform how community and economic development resources can be leveraged for child care supply building, strengthening the child care workforce, and supporting families and workers who utilize such care. In addition, qualified intermediary organizations, bridge-builders between child care, business and government agencies and in some places grantors or funders, are well-suited to lead such collaborative efforts, initiating real and necessary change.



#### **Roadmap Purpose**

Informed by the landscape analysis and report findings, *Bridging the Gap Between Child Care and Community & Economic Development: A Roadmap for CCR&Rs & Intermediaries* (roadmap) can be used by community organizations that support child care as a tool to inform outreach and cross-system engagement efforts and to help infuse child care into community and economic development conversations and efforts.

To provide a reflective voice in direct practice within the roadmap, CCR&Rs and financial intermediaries were actively involved in the formation of this resource to strengthen its lens and purview. Many of these organizations are engaged in innovative and promising community and economic development practices that can help inform and guide others.

The roadmap outlines how community and economic development are defined, the important role child care plays in our society, and steps to implement to create a plan to strengthen the child care landscape through community and economic development efforts. It includes information on developing and/or being involved in a community and economic development team. Embedded throughout this document, you will find promising practices, recommendations and spotlights from organizations on their work engaging in community and economic development efforts within the child care sector.

To deepen the impact of findings in the preliminary report, this roadmap aims to provide concrete steps to ready and equip CCR&Rs and other intermediaries to engage or partner within community and economic development efforts. The intent of this work is to launch a path for CCR&Rs and child care intermediaries to create outreach strategies and resources that prime community and economic development entities for engagement and consideration of child care in their planning and funding decisions.

#### Goals for the Roadmap

- 1. Inform important decisions pertaining to including child care in community and economic development.
- 2. Provide an understanding of the needs, existing work, key players, and funding streams in the community.
- 3. Share strategies and resources to assist in working with stakeholders.

Organizations may already be doing one or more of these actions in their work and may choose a priority area to focus on based on their specific needs. It may be necessary to revisit the actions throughout the process as the work, partners, and community needs evolve.

As you work through the roadmap, there are times when you should stop to gather more information or reflect. When you see the map icon ( ) take time to fill in the information for that section. The information captured along the way will help you with planning in the future. Additional planning space is available at the end of the roadmap that can be used if you are conducting this work in multiple communities or if you want a way to complete and print the information without printing the entire Roadmap.



## Section One: Understanding the Landscape The Foundational Basics

#### What is Community and Economic Development?

It is important to understand both community and economic development terms as we begin to make foundational connections and envision where community and economic development and child care may intersect to work together.

Community Development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community development activities are meant to promote economic growth and financial stability for low-and moderate-income communities (LMI). In addition, it aims to contribute to the overall well-being, creating a well-built, sound and diverse community seeking prosperity and longevity for the people.

Economic Development is the short- and long-term processes and practices designed to create jobs and economic activity, and efforts designed to address equity and create wealth at various levels (e.g., local, regional, state, national). Economic development aims to improve the living standards, health, well-being, and education level of the general population. Activities can include small business financing, commercial development, and improving conditions or investments in places. Housing, community development, and most education programs are considered major components of economic development planning.

#### The Importance of Child Care

<u>Child care</u>, the care or supervision of one or more children provided by a caregiver other than a parent, is an essential component of life for many parents. Access to quality child care remains one of the most critical issues facing families today. From birth to the age of 5, a child's brain develops more than any other time in life and a quality environment where their brains can grow and flourish provides cognitive and behavioral benefits which can set them up for success later in life. Caregivers and learning environments play a critical role in that development and growth.

Working parents need high-quality, affordable and accessible child care that will best meet their family needs. In fact, having access to affordable quality child care not only affects working parents but also proves to be a <u>business issue</u> and can help ensure a productive, healthy workforce and economy. demonstrates that both families and employers benefit from having access to child care, giving parents the ability to be productively employed. Meanwhile children benefit from positive environments filled with opportunity, preparing them for success in school and life. Child care also strengthens local economies, contributing \$152 billion and supporting 2.2 million jobs nationwide. Conversely, a lack of accessible, affordable child care has been shown to cost <u>national</u> and <u>state</u> economies billions of dollars, due to negative impacts on parents' work lives (missing work, lower productivity, leaving the labor force).



#### **Understanding the Role of CCR&Rs**

It is critical that child care has a seat at the table where decisions are made. This provides an opportunity to form and deepen relationships with key stakeholders engaged in planning and funding decisions. CCR&Rs and other child care intermediaries are the <u>eyes and ears of America's child care system</u>. As such, they engage and support child care programs, families, businesses and community stakeholders in strengthening and building connections that are essential in both community and economic development. CCR&Rs are positioned perfectly to inform local community work and influence agendas where child care is missing.

#### **Assessing the Landscape**

To effectively bridge the gap between child care and community and economic development, it is important to understand the local landscape, assess current efforts and identify ways to achieve the desired outcome. "Bridging the gap" refers to making a connection between two or more things and working toward making the difference between them smaller. Those with a vested interest in child care need further support to explore the potential opportunities that lie within community and economic development.

Often, with money flowing in so many directions, it can be hard to understand how funding works. This requires coordination, communication and relationship building. Having a solid understanding of the local and state landscape is the first step to learning how to navigate the important work being done and exposing the benefits that lie within this potential collaboration.

Child care and community and economic development initiatives have been happening for years, so it is important to learn about what others are already doing before getting started. There is variability in the work depending on the community, the priorities, the funding, and the partners. It is critical for leaders to assess the landscape of community, economic development and child care so they can have a sense of available funding sources, relevant agencies or organizations supporting these initiatives, and other key players on the ground. Often it is helpful to pinpoint existing areas of strength and then determine how to layer child care into the equation. Identifying stakeholders with common goals provides a solid foundation for informed decision-making and strategic planning. It also ensures that work is not duplicated, and the appropriate partnerships can be formed or strengthened to maximize effectiveness and support more families, businesses, and communities.

A landscape analysis is a strategic activity and an essential part of determining the current status of community and economic work, providing great insight and positioning CCR&Rs and intermediaries to become active participants in the work.

The **benefits** of conducting a landscape analysis include:

Assisting in spotting trends and collecting current data for goal setting and decision making.



- Helping to identify gaps.
- Identifying strengths, resources and needs.
- Laying the foundation and establishing goals for future action.
- Creating a tool to help understand what work is currently happening, who is doing it, and what might be missing.
- Providing information to help identify key players and develop strategies to engage.
- Assisting in providing a big picture analysis of the structure, dynamics and opportunities in local communities.

#### Identify the Problem You Are Working to Solve

It is helpful to start by naming the problem you are trying to solve with this work. Gather information to obtain a thorough understanding. Information can be gathered by reviewing data and talking to those impacted. As you work through this process, you will continue to refine your research into the problem. The way the problem is defined may evolve over time as you gain more insights and information.

The problem you are working to solve:

#### **Organizational Landscape**

Before you begin assessing your community landscape, it is important to think about your organizational landscape. Identify the geographic area your organization serves that you will include in your community landscape. Consider the existing organizational resources for this work, including the budget and staff time.

**∞** Geographic area served:

Existing organizational resources for this work (e.g., budget, staff time):



#### **Community Landscape**

The first step in assessing the community landscape is to identify the key players, stakeholders and decision-makers in child care and community and economic development in the community.

#### Identifying CCR&Rs and Other Child Care Intermediaries

Located in 47 states, CCR&Rs serve as resource hubs for families, child care professionals and communities. CCAoA offers a CCR&R search to locate CCR&Rs based on location.

In addition to state and local CCR&Rs, child care intermediaries/stakeholders may include:

- Child care health consultants
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) with a working knowledge of child care
- Local child care programs
- Local early childhood associations/coalitions/networks
- Local Head Start/Early Head Start programs
- Operating foundations (that conduct direct program support for child care)
- State advisory councils on early childhood education and care
- State Affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- State child care administrators
- State child care licensing offices

CCAoA has a <u>State by State Resource Map</u> that can help identify other child care information. Your local or state CCR&R can also help identify other child care intermediaries.

#### **Identifying Community and Economic Development Organizations**

There are a variety of community and economic development organizations at national, state, and local levels. Some are public entities, while others are non-profit organizations. States often have branches within their government structure to support community and economic development. Many regions, counties, and cities have this type of structure as well. For example, there may be Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and smaller community-based organizations. In some areas community development and economic development offices operate separately while in others the work is combined.

Community and economic development organizations may have different names based on the location. To identify community and economic development organizations in your area, think about the characteristics of each and the services they provide.



# Community Development

# Economic Development

Holistic focus on making the community a better place to live and work. Holistic focus on making the community a better place to live and work.

- Social
- Cultural
- Environmental
- Health

**Shared goals:** Aim to improve the well-being of a community and the overall quality of life for residents.

Assets creation: Community Development creates assets that enhance the community's quality of life, Economic Development mobilizes the assets to benefit the community

- Capacity/ skill-building
- Infrastructure development/improvement
- Local business support
- Policy/ advocacy
- Collaboration/ partnerships
- Finance and Investment

Geographic lens (Community Development: specific communities or neighborhoods, Economic Development: specific regions)

Focuses on economic factors that create wealth.

- Job creation
- Workforce development
- Regional competitiveness (business attraction and retention)

#### Tips to start locating organizations:

- Look at community and economic development organizations that have nationwide associations to see if they have connections with state or local organizations.
- Visit state, regional, county, or city websites to see what community and economic development
  resources and organizations are available. The public agency responsible for community and
  economic development is a great starting point. At the state level, that might be an Economic
  Development Authority or part of the Commerce department. Locally it might be an economic
  development agency or within a planning commission.
- Connect with community stakeholders through outreach or attending meetings. There could be a wide variety of community stakeholders, including those from community and economic development and child care. The names and types may vary by location, but the Chamber of Commerce and United Way are two examples.

#### Community and economic development organizations may include:

- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)
- Local community/neighborhood development corporations
- Local housing development corporations
- Local planning boards
- Regional/state <u>Chambers of Commerce</u>
- Regional/state <u>economic development organizations</u>
- Regional planning commissions



Some resources to start your search include:

- Economic Development
  - · National Economic Development Associations (U.S. Economic Development Association)
  - Economic Development Directory (U.S. Economic Development Association)
- Community Development
  - National Community Development Association

#### **Involving Other Key Organizations/ Entities**

There are other key organizations/ entities within cities, counties, and states that may work with child care and community and economic development to support this work. While the names may vary by location, these organizations/entities may include:

- Business leaders/owners
- City/county officials
- Community service-based organizations (e.g., Community Action programs, Rotary, Altrusa)
- Families
- Health departments
- Philanthropic organizations
- School districts

What community and economic development organizations work in your community? (For each type of organization below, check the ones that work in your community and add the name(s).)

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

Local community/ neighborhood development corporations

Local housing development corporations

Local planning boards

Regional Chambers of Commerce

Regional development organizations

Regional planning commissions

State Chambers of Commerce

State economic development organizations

Other

Other

Other



What child care stakeholders work in your community? (For each type of organization below, check the ones that work in your community and add the name(s).)

Child care health consultants

Local CCR&Rs

Local child care programs

Local early childhood associations/ coalitions

Local Head Start/Early Head Start programs

State Association for the Education of Young Children

State CCR&Rs

State Child Care Administrators

State child care licensing office

Other

Other

Other

#### **Existing Work/ Plans**

It is important to identify if any organizations/entities are doing the work and any plans that already exist within the locality you will be working in. Your city, county, region and/or state may already have a community and/or economic development plan or a consolidated plan. Many areas have a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS process is a national program sponsored by the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. You can often find plans through an internet search or by connecting with people and organizations already doing this work.

You can learn from past community and economic development work as you look to the future. For example, are there past tax incentives that worked to gain momentum in this area? If there are plans in place, even if they do not mention child care, they can help identify the key players/partners, funding streams and goals.



If you find making connections and identifying existing work at the state level challenging, it may be helpful to drill down to the local level.



Examples of state community and/or economic development plans that include child care:

- <u>Alaska</u>
- <u>Illinois</u>
- Maine
- North Carolina
- Washington D.C.

Examples of regional/local community and/or economic development plans that include child care:

- Denver, CO
- Indianapolis, IN
- Minneapolis, MN
- Seattle, WA
- Southeastern Massachusetts
- Southwest Tennessee



 ${\bf M}$  Are there any child care plans that include community and/or economic development?

Is there any work happening in the community that is not captured in a formal plan? If yes, what?



#### **Understanding Funding Streams**

There are many different funding streams that support community and economic development and child care. It is important to understand funding streams that are available, especially when looking for additional funding opportunities.

While there are exceptions, funding for community and economic development is most often either from public or philanthropic sources. Funding streams are often pieced together through blending and braiding.

Entities that direct or administer funding streams may include:

- Philanthropic (e.g., United Ways, community foundations)
- State/city/county funding/grants
- Workforce Development Boards
- Small Business Associations
- Faith-based Organizations
- Community Development Corporations
- Banks/Credit Unions
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)
- Tribal and Alaska Native Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- SCORE
- U.S. Economic Development Administration

When identifying funding streams and the entities that direct or administer them, think about the following:

- Is child care a focus area for the entity or funding?
- What opportunities are available with each funding source?
- Not all funding streams are tailored to the child care sector. If there is a funding source that might work in your community, but your organization is not eligible to apply, is there a partner that you can collaborate with that is eligible?
- Are there creative ways to connect with additional funding sources? (For example, can for-profit child care programs tap into small business resources? What resources might be available specifically for non-profit child care programs?)

Children's Funding Project offers a <u>database of Federal Funding Streams for Children and Youth Services</u> that catalogs more than 320 federal funding streams that support cradle-to-career initiatives. There is also a list of <u>Federal Funding Streams for Child Care and Early Childhood Education</u>.



Child care and community and economic development can have different local, state, and federal funding sources.



What funding streams are already in use in your area of focus that include/address child care?

What additional funding streams might be directed to include/address child care (e.g., small business supports that could include child care)?

#### **Identifying Data**

Data must drive the work for including child care in community and economic development. You should seek out data sources before developing new data collection efforts to avoid duplicating work. Take the time to identify data sources during the landscape analysis. As you identify potential or existing partners, discuss the data they have available that could support the work. Share the data your organization has available that can contribute as well. CCR&Rs, child care stakeholder organizations, and community and economic development organizations all have different data available about the populations they serve. Bringing this data together for planning purposes can strengthen the work.

If you are sharing data with or collecting data from other organizations, consider implementing a data use agreement. This document should outline the terms and conditions of sharing, such as what data is shared, how it will be used, stored and other important details.

Use quantitative data (information displayed using numbers) and qualitative data (non-numerical information that is descriptive and conceptual) to support decision-making.



Sharing local data about the needs of the populations you serve in the community can help demonstrate the need for including child care in community and economic development. For example, share data about the actual number of child care slots available in a community with stakeholders.



#### Data should be used to:

- Determine community needs and preferences (examples: child care supply/demand, availability of non-standard hours child care, employee needs/preference, employer needs).
- Address inequities by identifying where resources are most needed and allocating them accordingly.
- Recognize trends in communities.
- Identify and prioritize actionable solutions.
- Build support for the initiative.
- Encourage investment.
- Advocate for change.
- Meet funding requirements (if applicable).
- Share findings, lessons learned, and results.
- Evaluate the impact of activities.
- Inform future work.

Many states also have state child care economic impact studies that may be helpful in the process of completing the landscape analysis. This data can also be shared with stakeholders. Some states have child care data dashboards. The Committee for Economic Development Public Policy Center of The Conference Board has a searchable tool available. They also offer Child Care in State Economies - 2024: A Report Series. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis also shares the economic impact of child care by state. The local CCR&R may also be a good source of information about the economic impact of child care in your area.



# You need to tell the story, but you need to put it together with the data.



Examples of state child care economic impact studies:

- Alaska
- Indiana
- Vermont
- Washington

Examples of state child care data dashboards:

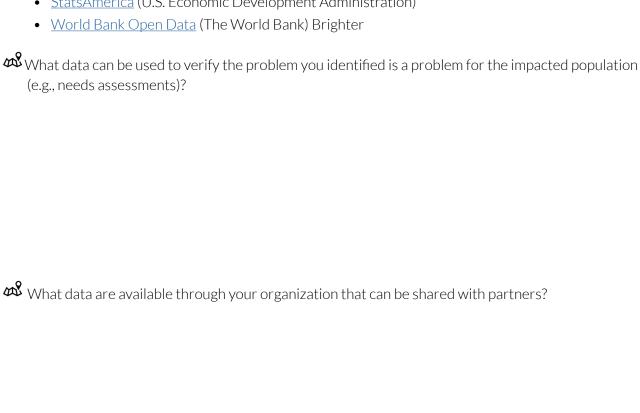
- Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center
- Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map
- Ohio Early Childhood Dashboard
- Early Learner South Dakota Data Dashboard
- Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families Child Care and Early Learning Need and Supply Data



Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco has a Community Development Data Guidebook that identifies available data resources.

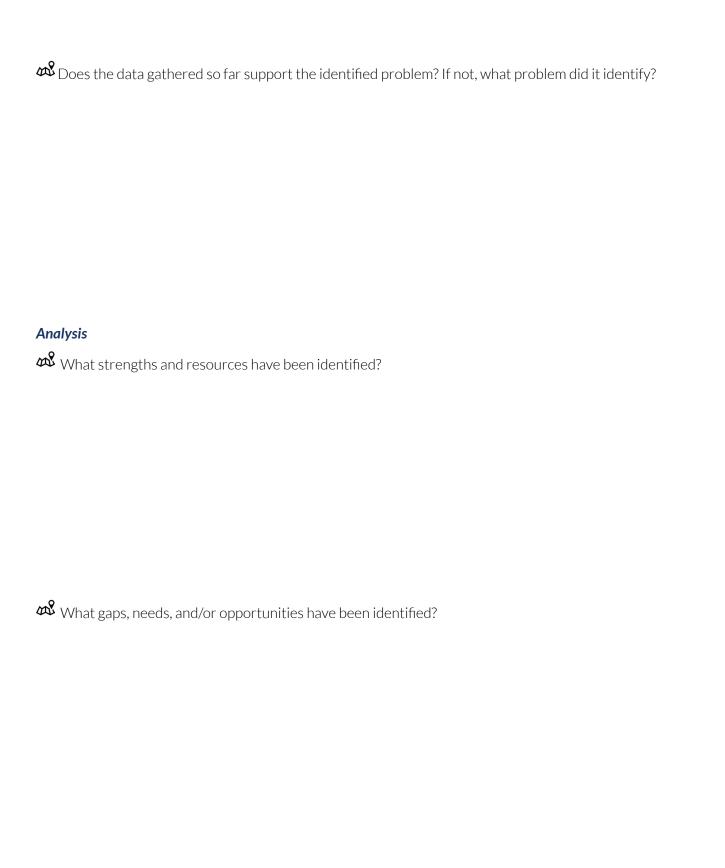
#### Other data resources:

- Black Wealth Data Center
- Community Development Data (Federal Reserve Bank Philadelphia)
- Financial Assets & Income (Prosperity Now Scorecard)
- Kids Count Data Center (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Policy Map
- <u>StatsAmerica</u> (U.S. Economic Development Administration)



What data are available through partners or community organizations?







## Section Two: Establishing Partnerships Investing in Strategic Collaboration

Collaboration, or the act of working together to achieve the same goal, is a valuable strategy when working towards achieving big-picture results. Collaboration is stronger when organizations partner with others who have varying skills, expertise and information while strengthening relationships and harnessing a collective strength behind the overall goal and work ahead. Aimed at powerful transformation, these partnerships are a valuable tool positioned to address shared challenges and create sustainable change. These strategic partnerships can aid multiple organizations by leveraging existing relationships, combining resources and assisting in achieving a shared vision and mission.

TIP

Bringing together a variety of organizations with priorities that are aligned allows for a variety of skillsets and creates a more holistic approach to the work.

Having strong leadership support who sees it as a priority is really crucial because they're the ones at the end of the day who can help move the needle from a regulatory perspective or legislative perspective to be able to carve out funds to continue to do the work.

-Intermediary

Relationships are vital to the success of collaboration. The foundation of any successful partnership is built on a mutual feeling of trust and respect. This work depends on having the right players at the table with a willingness to share ideas and opinions while also giving constructive feedback. Building trust requires open communication among members, an investment in active listening, shared dialogue and problem-solving among members. By being strategic in your collaborative approach, you can use diverse perspectives and complementary strengths.

Cross-sector collaboration is an important strategy for bridging the gap between child care and community and economic development and can help address these complex challenges. Often attempts to address complex problems can end up with fragmented or siloed solutions. Like any challenge you set out to tackle, there is not just one solution, one policy or one person or program to make a change. Instead, effective and sustainable change is more within reach with a multi-faceted approach, including varied individuals, perspectives and solutions to the problem. Think about how to bring people together to be a unified group working to solve the problem.

TIP

Bringing stakeholders together saves resources and helps everyone to work together instead of working on similar projects separately.



In summary, cross-sector collaborative partnerships bring together organizations ready to tackle complex problems by pooling resources and expertise. Creating a team made up of key players, who possess specific qualities and strengths, is essential in prioritizing this work through goal sharing, gathering information and aids in developing a strategic plan to meet the overall team objectives and goals. This collaborative work enhances the opportunity for positive change and is more apt to lead to a successful outcome.



Partnerships should be mutually beneficial.

Stanford Social Innovation Review has identified the <u>Five Cs</u> as an effective framework for efficient sustainable collaboration:

- 1. Clarifying Purpose
- 2. Convening the Right People
- 3. Cultivating Trust
- 4. Coordinating Existing People
- 5. Collaborating for Systems Impact

#### **Benefits of Collaboration**

Some benefits of effective collaboration are:

- Secure environment
  - Effective collaboration promotes a safe and secure place for freedom to share opinions, ideas, skills and acceptance of differences.
- Increased productivity
  - Diverse teams can lean on varied professional skills and perspectives to increase productivity in accomplishing collaborative goals.
- Problem-solving skills
  - · Various problem-solving skills lead to well-rounded and informed decisions.
- Increased opportunity for feedback
  - Working with others provides an opportunity for constructive feedback and strategic alternatives.
- Sustainability and efficiency
  - Innovative practices and solutions often lead to efficient long-term outcomes and collective impact

Really truly listen to the needs of the organizations and the groups you are working with. Put the relationship first and everything else can fall into place.

-CCR&R Staff



#### **Building the Team**

Building a strong team is critical to the success of the work. It is important to bring together people with diverse skills, knowledge and perspectives. Working to build a coordinated team ensures powerful collaboration with team members that complement each other, can fill gaps and enhance the big picture outcome. Working with the right people and maintaining a healthy productive team requires practical lanning and action steps.

Consider which organizations you currently partner with that can assist you in this work. The CCR&Rs, child care stakeholders, and/or community and economic development organizations identified in the landscape analysis that you are not already working with are potential partners as well. It is also important to think about the staff within your organization that can play a role in this work. Be sure to think about position funding and the time they can dedicate.

TIP

Having child care represented in groups that are not child-centered is important for cross-sector collaboration.

Key players and local stakeholders are critical to the success of working towards progress in this complex issue. Organizations like a <u>Community Development Financial Institution</u> (CDFI) or <u>Local or Regional Chamber of Commerce</u> are committed to improving local communities through various initiatives and incentives. It would be beneficial to have a collaborative partnership with these types of organizations, who have a vested interest in strengthening the child care sector.

Promoting <u>effective coordination strategies</u> within a team of dedicated organizations connected to the child care community, like CCR&Rs and CDFIs, who understand the complicated child care systems on many levels, can provide specialized support aimed at addressing this complex issue. This can also increase the potential to integrate additional resources and capital needed to promote the sustainability of child care businesses and further bridge the gap of community and economic development. Joining forces within a team, led by a shared vision, can provide powerful clear direction and purpose, aligning collaborative efforts toward a common goal and objective.

It is also important to reach out to organizations and businesses that do not normally include child care but can help with the issue. For example, are there meetings where businesses are represented that do not normally involve child care you can connect with? It can also be beneficial to reach out to organizations or businesses on an individual basis to make a strong connection.



m8	Internal key players necessary for this work:
m2	Existing partnerships with external key players necessary for this work (mark all that exist and add the name):
	Child Care:
	Child care health consultants
	Local CCR&Rs
	Local child care programs (child care centers, etc.)
	Local early childhood associations/coalitions
	Local Head Start/Early Head Start programs
	State Association for the Education of Young Children
	State CCR&Rs
	State child care administrators
	State child care licensing office
	Other
	Other
	Other



## $\infty$ Community and Economic Development:

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

Local community/neighborhood development corporations

Local housing development corporations

Local planning boards

Regional Chambers of Commerce

Regional development organizations

Regional planning commissions

State Chambers of Commerce

State economic development organizations

Other

Other

Other

## ₩<sub>Other:</sub>

**Business leaders** 

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

City and/ or county officials

Community service-based organizations (e.g., Community Action Program, Rotary, Altrusa)

Developers

Families

Health Department



School districts
Other
Other
Other
External key players to engage for this work:

For each external key player identified, think about:

• How you will engage with them.

Philanthropic organizations

- How you will learn about their work, funding streams, partners, data, areas of expertise, etc.
- Ways to make the partnership mutually beneficial.

#### **Memorandums of Understanding**

It can be useful to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with partners to outline roles, responsibilities, and expectations. This formal agreement lays the foundation for a smooth partnership. LISC has a <u>Sample Memorandum of Understanding</u> that can help get the process started if your organization does not have an MOU template already in use.



#### Making the Case for Child Care

Child care and community and economic development are well poised to partner and support one another. The child care and community and economic development sectors share common goals. Specifically, both are working to create and sustain healthy, thriving communities. The work of both sectors interacts and influences one another.

Child care is important for many reasons but when it comes to community and economic development it is an important tool to support the workforce. Reliable access to affordable, high-quality child care ensures families can participate in the workforce, making them more productive. It can also help communities attract and retain workers. When parents can work, communities benefit from their spending on goods and services. All of these help strengthen the economies of communities.

TIP

It is important
to remind these
stakeholders that they
do not have to find a
solution all at once.
It may be easier to
identify small steps
they can take over time.

While it can be helpful to talk about brain development and the long-term impact of quality child care, it is important to lead with emphasis on the economic impact for families and communities.

Below are examples of general messaging about why community and economic development must support child care. Messaging will need to be updated as new data is gathered.

- Communities and states benefit from an economic perspective when there is a strong and accessible child care system available to the workforce.
- Child care supports families and children, but it is also in the best interest of employers and economies to have quality child available for employees.
- The lack of quality child care options means that parents who need this service, primarily working mothers, are unable to participate in the workforce and advance their careers.
- Research shows that child care challenges, for infants and toddlers alone, cost the US economy \$122 billion every year. (\$122 Billion: The Growing, Annual Cost of the Infant-Toddler Child Care Crisis | Council for a Strong America).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation offers this <u>Employer Roadmap: Childcare Solutions for Working Parents</u> with helpful information about messaging.

Messaging may need to change based on the audience it is intended for. For the audiences below, consider tying the value of child care to:

#### • Local government officials/community leaders:

- Economic growth (e.g., boosts local businesses, strengthens the community's economy)
- Equity (e.g., supporting diverse family structures)

#### Community and/or economic development organizations:

- Economic growth (e.g., boosts local businesses, strengthens the community's economy)
- · Community well-being (e.g., contribute to the overall stability of a community)



#### • Businesses:

- · Workforce participation (e.g., parents can participate in the workforce)
- Workforce productivity (e.g., Reduction in absenteeism and turnover)
- Financial incentives (e.g., tax credits for employers and parents such as Dependent Care Assistance Plans, or the 45F Tax Credit for Employer-Provided Child Care <a href="https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12379">https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12379</a>).

#### • Developers:

- Easing the cost of construction (e.g., tax credits)
- Co-locating child care into larger developments (e.g., including child care in a mixed-use space)

You may face challenges. For example, to make the case for support for family child care providers to make facilities improvements to their home, consider these messages:

- The children and community benefit more in the long-term than the home owner.
- Any investment in someone's property is an investment in the community itself.

Example: "The family child care provider may get one-time grant funding for improvements to their home, but children will benefit from accessing the child care for many years."

The messengers delivering the messages can be as important as what is being said. Select messengers based on their connections and ability to reach your desired audience. Just as the messages may evolve, the messengers might also. It is important to recognize that the most appropriate messenger might change based on who the intended audience is. It can also be very impactful when various stakeholders come together to share a message. It does not hurt to have more than one person say the same thing.

#### **Setting the Vision**

Set key milestones and goals. Milestones and goals are the specific and measurable outcomes that you want to achieve in your collaboration. Setting key milestones and goals can help you clarify the purpose, scope, and direction of your collaboration. It can also help you track progress, evaluate the results, and celebrate the achievements of your team. To set key milestones and goals, you can use the <u>SMART</u> criteria, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

- **Specific** means that the goal should be clear and directly related to your work or your desired end objective. It should contain as much information as relevant including the: who, what, why and how of the objective. If it is not specific, you will never be able to focus on what is important.
- **Measurable** means that you should be able to objectively tell whether the goal has been achieved. A goal of winning a new client is measurable.
- **Achievable** means that there is a realistic chance of achieving the goal. Is it a possible goal that you can envision meeting?



- Relevant means that the goal set is reasonable and related to a
  person's skills, experience, role and ambition. It must be relevant to
  the person but also aligned with the general direction and overall
  objectives.
- **Time-bound** means that there is a designated timeframe to achieving the goal. When it comes to reviewing whether the goal has been achieved, it makes it much easier. Setting a deadline gives you the ability to stay on task and focused with timeliness in mind. Successful SMART goals take time and require a lot of conversation, planning and evaluating.



Maintaining regular contact with others doing this work helps you stay informed about what they are doing.

#### **Benefits of SMART Goals**

Using SMART goals is an effective and strategic approach to producing beneficial, achievable and measurable goals. This goal-setting formula can be used to amplify the process and produce meaningful and intentional results. Through action planning, you work together to set specific goals with clear expectations. The written action plan outlines specific activities and the actions necessary to carry out that plan. The action plan should include clear outcomes, goals and objectives, relevant resources, timelines and practices, along with roles and responsibilities. Define what progress looks like. Setting structured goals makes it easier to see progress. Incorporate meaningful strategies to help meet those goals and take time to note accomplishments and celebrate wins. Consider the application of SMART Goals, a useful tool designed to help you reach milestones and effectively accomplish these goals.

#### **Gathering Feedback**

Feedback is the information and opinions that you receive from others about your work and performance. Feedback can help you improve your collaboration, as it can help you identify your strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. It can also help you recognize the contributions, challenges, and needs of your team members. To gather feedback, you can ask for it regularly, openly, and respectfully. You can also give feedback to others in a prompt, specific, and constructive way. Using reflection and feedback throughout the process provides an opportunity to discuss current practices and adjust efforts, if necessary.

SMART goals:



Plan to gather feedback:



# Section Three: Bringing it Together Develop and Execute a Cross-Sector Data-Driven Plan

It is critical to have a plan in place to be successful in involving child care in community and economic development work. The plan should be cross-sector, including feedback and involvement from people and organizations from different sectors. It should also be data-driven, using data to make decisions.

#### **TIP**

If it is necessary to use jargon from the sector you work in, make sure you explain what it means.

#### Steps Toward Building a Cross-Sector Data-Driven Plan

#### Create an Internal Plan

Before engaging in a **cross-sector data-driven plan**, an organization may find it helpful to create an internal plan. This allows them to identify their goals for involvement, what resources they can put forth, and other important information to share with partners.

That internal plan should include details such as:

- Identify the problem you are working to solve.
  - Use the information gathered in the landscape analysis, including data collected, to identify the specific problem you are working to solve.
- Organizational SMART goals and objectives for the work.
- Which staff will be involved, including the number of hours they can dedicate as well as the funding that will be used.
- A list of partners to engage.
- Details about data, including the data available and a plan to establish data use/sharing agreements with organizations that have other data to support the work.
- Information about additional funding opportunities.
- Metrics for measuring progress.

#### TIP

Gathering data ensures you know what the people who are impacted want and need instead of making assumptions.

#### Create a Cross-Sector Data-Driven Plan

Just as approaches to including child care in community and economic development are unique to each community, there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to planning. There may be one plan that many organizations or entities work from, or different plans for each. This will vary based on the problem you are trying to solve, funding, participating organizations, leadership, and the systems in place. The cross-sector group must decide the best approach based on all the factors involved. This is a discussion and decision that should happen early in the process.



Be solution driven. Identify actionable steps that can be taken.



Some organizations may already have a plan that addresses some or all of the community's needs. The state government office responsible for community and/or economic development will often have a plan. Some state plans include child care. This is a good starting point for thinking about planning. It is important to identify plans in place, but those plans may not address the needs identified in your landscape analysis.

#### Suggested plan components:

- A list of participating organizations:
  - The role they will play.
  - Resources (e.g., data, funding, staffing) they will bring to the table.
- A summary of the problem the group is working to solve.
- Information about how the work will be funded.
- SMART Goals.
- The approach to the work.
- Data that will be collected.
- How you will monitor and measure progress.
- A process for continuous feedback and adjustment.
- How you will share your successes and lessons learned.
- Timeline for revisiting and updating the landscape analysis and the plan itself.

Consider the following questions when identifying how to approach building the plan:

- Is there already a plan in place? Does it address the problem you are hoping to solve? Can it be updated to include additional partners and goals?
- Are there any contractual or funding requirements in place that impact who participates and how the plan is built?
- What approach will work best for the structure of your cross-sector team?



Sharing your findings makes others aware of successes and challenges and highlights the need for child care to be included in community and economic development efforts.



Look for similar projects happening in other communities for examples. Identify where it is working well with longevity.



## Conclusion

Child care is an essential part of our national and community infrastructure with ample evidence that investment is critical to community development and economic growth. Consider using this roadmap as a tool to develop a plan, inform and create cross-sector system engagement through involvement in community and economic development agendas, activities, and projects. Through three areas of focus, a complete understanding of child care, assessment of landscape and cross-sector data, organizations can plot future strategic investment in supporting child care and coming together collectively to drive impactful change.

A careful review of the local landscape is beneficial to assess current efforts and identify ways to achieve the desired outcome. Those with a vested interest in child care need further education and support to explore the potential opportunities that lie within community and economic development. By bringing people together in coordinated partnerships, connection points about how they can collaborate will start to be made. CCR&Rs, child care stakeholder organizations, and community and economic development organizations all have different data available about the populations they serve. Bringing this data together for planning purposes can strengthen the work.

Bridging the gap between child care and community and economic development involves many factors including identifying barriers, seeking solutions and working collectively as change makers to foster positive change. Together, as a team, armed with strategies designed to accomplish and execute these carefully designed agendas, we can produce outcomes that strengthen communities while also invoking positive outcomes for families.



## Glossary

- **Chamber of Commerce**: An organization of businesses seeking to further their collective interests, while advancing their community, region, state or nation.
- **Child care health consultants**: Trained health professionals with education and experience in both child care and community health.
- **Child care programs**: There are many different types of child care. The types and what they are called may vary by location.
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R): An organization that serves as a resource hub for families, child care professionals and communities. CCR&Rs increase access to high-quality, affordable child care by providing many different services depending on where an individual lives.
- **Community Development**: A process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community development activities are meant to promote economic growth and financial stability for low-and moderate-income communities (LMI). They include things like public facilities installation, community centers, housing development, assistance, and rehabilitation, and strengthening public services like education systems, etc.
- **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)**: Finance microenterprises and small businesses, nonprofit organizations, commercial real estate, affordable housing, and more.
- Community/Neighborhood Development Corporations: A non-for-profit organization incorporated to provide programs, offer services and engage in other activities that promote and support community development.
- **Early childhood associations/coalitions**: A group that comes together to promote high-quality early learning for young children.
- **Economic Development**: Short-and long-term processes and practices designed to create jobs and economic activity, and efforts designed to address equity and create wealth at various levels (e.g., local, regional, state, national). Economic development aims to improve the living standards, health, well-being, and education level of the general population. Activities can include small business financing, commercial development, and improving conditions for investments in places. Housing, community development, and most education programs are considered major components of economic development planning.
- **Economic development organization**: An organization dedicated to the economic development of a region.
- **Head Start/Early Head Start programs**: A free, federally funded program designed to promote school readiness for infants, toddlers and preschoolers from families that meet income eligibility requirements.
- Housing Development Corporation: A nonprofit real estate company that specializes in revitalizing neighborhoods through acquisition, development, and management of affordable and workforce housing.
- Intermediary: Organizations that assemble resources from one segment of society (e.g., foundations, corporations, government, research, organizations) and distribute these resources to community organizations for projects designed to build community capacity.



- **Planning board**: A body of citizens appointed to prepare or administer a plan (as for the growth and development of a city).
- **Planning commission**: A group of appointed officials which oversees city planning and makes decisions about land-use or economic planning.
- **Professional development**: The process of acquiring new knowledge and skills that relate to current job duties and allow for growth along a career path.
- **Public-private partnership**: A partnership between a government agency and an agency in the private sector for the delivery of services to the public.
- State Association for the Education of Young Children: State affiliate of National Association for the Education of Young Children and works to promote high quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research.
- **State child care licensing offices**: The state or territory entity that sets minimum health and safety requirements that child care programs must meet to legally operate.
- **Technical Assistance**: The provision of targeted and customized support by a professional with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application or implementation of services by recipients.



## References

- Bridging the Gap Between Child Care and Community and Economic Development (CCAoA)
- Capitalizing on the Capabilities of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies & Community
   Development Financial Institution to Stabilize and Increase the Supply of High-Quality Child Care
   (CCAoA)
- CCR&Rs are the Eyes and Ears of America's Child Care System (CCAoA)
- The child care economy (Washington Center for Equitable Growth)
- <u>Childcare is a Business Issue</u> (Harvard Business Review)
- Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
- <u>Cutting Through the Complexity: A Roadmap for Effective Collaboration</u> (Stanford Social Innovation Review)
- Setting SMART Goals
- Types of child care (CCAoA)
- The Need for Cross-Sector Collaboration (Stanford Social Innovation Review)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- The Ultimate Guide to SMART Goals (Forbes)
- 15 Ways to Improve Business Partnerships and Collaborations (Forbes)
- \$122 Billion: The Growing, Annual Cost of the Infant Toddler Child Care Crisis (ReadyNation)

### Resources

#### **Resources Mentioned in the Roadmap**

#### **Community and/or Economic Development Plans**

- A Plan to Revitalize the Illinois Economy and Build the Workforce of the Future (October 2019)
- Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Southwest Tennessee Development District
- DC's Comeback Plan January 2023
- Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029
- Minneapolis 2040
- Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan
- Strategic Economic Development Plan for the State of North Carolina



#### **Data Resources**

- Black Wealth Data Center
- Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center
- <u>Community Development Data</u> (Federal Reserve Bank Philadelphia)
- Community Development Data Guidebook (Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco)
- Committee for Economic Development
- Early Learner South Dakota Data Dashboard
- The Economic Impact of Child Care by State (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis)
- Financial Assets & Income (Prosperity Now Scorecard)
- Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map
- Kids Count Data Center (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Ohio Early Childhood Dashboard
- Policy Map
- StatsAmerica (U.S. Economic Development Administration)
- Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families Child Care and Early Learning Need and Supply Data
- World Bank Open Data (The World Bank)

#### **Funding**

- All Funding Opportunities (U.S. Economic Development Administration)
- <u>Federal Funding Streams for Child Care and Early Childhood Education</u> (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- Federal Funding Streams for Children and Youth Services (Children's Funding Project)

#### **Organizations/Entities**

- <u>CDFI Locator</u> (Opportunity Finance Network)
- Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
- Committee for Economic Development
- Housing Development Corporation
- National Community Development Association
- National Economic Development Organizations
- SCORE
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Small Business Administration



#### Reports/Studies

- <u>Child Care in State Economies 2024 A Report Series</u> (The Public Policy Center of the Conference Board)
- The Economic Impacts of Insufficient Child Care Cost Washington State \$5 Billion Annually (Ready Nation & Child Care Aware of Washington)
- The Economics of Early Care and Learning in Alaska
- How Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Can Partner with Community Development
   Financial Institutions to Increase Child Care Programs' Access to Financial Services and Information
   (CCAoA)
- Lost Opportunities: The Impact of Inadequate Child Care on Indiana's Workforce & Economy
- Vermont Early Care and Education Financing Study

#### **Search Tools**

- CCR&R Search (CCAoA)
- CDFI Locator (Opportunity Finance Network)
- Economic Development Directory
- NAEYC Network of Affiliates
- State by State Resources (CCAoA)

#### **Other Resources**

- Employer Roadmap: Childcare Solutions for Working Parents (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation)
- Sample Memorandum of Understanding (LISC)

#### **Additional Resources**

#### Guides/Toolkit

- The ABCs of Child Care (LISC)
- Child Care Co-location Impact Calculator Tool (LISC)
- Engaging Business in Child Care (LISC)
- New York Business Navigator Toolkit (Early Care & Learning Council)
- Resource Guide: Child Care Center Facilities Development & Financing (LISC)
- A Strategy Guide for State, Tribal & Territorial Administrators (First Children's Finance)
- Supporting Business Development for Child Care Providers: A BDO Playbook (LISC)



#### Reports/Studies

- Arizona Child Care Infrastructure Grant: An Analysis of Grant Process and Impacts (LISC Phoenix)
- As the Pandemic Eases, Can Philanthropy Help Lift Up Child Care? (LISC)
- Capitalizing Child Care (National Children's Facilities Network)
- Child Care Challenges Compound the Small Business Workforce Issue (Goldman Sachs)
- <u>Child Care and Early Learning in Arizona</u>: A Landscape Analysis of Challenges and Opportunities (LISC Phoenix)
- Child Care is a Business Affair (Bipartisan Policy Center)
- Cities as Champions for Child Care (Build Up)
- Community Development Financial Institutions for Child Care: An Explainer (Bipartisan Policy Center)
- Considerations in Conducting Child Care and Early Education Facilities Needs Assessments (OPRE)
- <u>Data Deep Dive: The Workforce of the Future</u> (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)
- Early Care and Education Co-location in Affordable Housing (LIIF)
- Economic Development Strategies to Promote Quality Child Care (Cornell Cooperative Extension)
- Engaging Business in Child Care (LISC)
- For the Public Good: Child Care as Economic Development (Child Care Aware of Kansas)
- How to Equitably Distribute Funding and Supports to Child Care (LISC)
- How to Model Business Training & Technical Support to Meet the Needs of Early Childhood Educators (LISC)
- Impacts of Child Care on the Montana Workforce: Results from a Survey of Montana Business (Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis)
- The Importance of CDFIs as Intermediaries (LISC)
- The Infant-Toddler Child Care Crisis Exacts a Heavy Economic Toll Nationwide (ReadyNation)
- <u>Positioning Erie to Prosper and Compete: Child Care School for Infants and Toddlers is Key to Future of Workforce and Economy</u> (Jefferson Educational Society)
- <u>Untapped Potential: Economic Impact of Childcare Breakdowns in the U.S.</u> (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation)



# **Additional Planning Space**

Community: **%** Problem you are working to solve: **%** Geographic area served: **&** Existing organizational resources for this work (e.g., budget, staff time):



What community and economic development organizations work in your community? (For each type of organization below, check the ones that work in your community and add the name(s).)

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) Local community/neighborhood development corporations Local housing development corporations Local planning boards Regional Chambers of Commerce Regional development organizations Regional planning commissions State Chambers of Commerce State economic development organizations Other Other Other  $^{\&}$ What child care stakeholders work in your community? (For each type of organization below, check the ones that work in your community and add the name(s).) Local CCR&Rs Local child care programs Local early childhood associations/coalitions Local Head Start/Early Head Start programs State Association for the Education of Young Children State CCR&Rs State Child Care Administrators State child care licensing office Other Other Other















 $\bigstar \text{ Existing partnerships with external key players necessary for this work (mark all that exist and add the name):} \\$ Child Care: Child care health consultants Local CCR&Rs Local child care programs (child care centers, family child care, etc.) Local early childhood associations/coalitions Local Head Start/Early Head Start programs State Association for the Education of Young Children State CCR&Rs State child care administrators State child care licensing offices Other Other Community and Economic Development: Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) Local community/neighborhood development corporations Local housing development corporations Local planning boards Regional Chambers of Commerce Regional development organizations Regional planning commissions State Chambers of Commerce State economic development organizations Other Other



#### Other:

Business leaders
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
City and/or county officials
Community service-based organizations
(e.g., Community Action Program, Rotary, Altrusa)
Developers
Families
Health Department
Philanthropic organizations
School districts
Other
Other

External key players to engage for this work:

S.M.A.R.T. goals:



Plan to gather feedback:



www. Child Care Aware.org