Community Development's Role in Improving Child Care



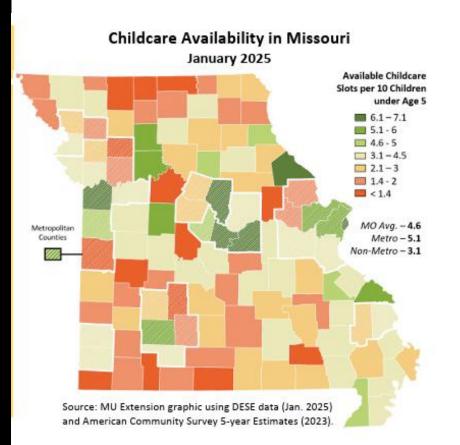
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New Position at MU Extension



Housing and child care are the top issues in every county of Missouri. It doesn't matter if it is urban or rural. Additionally, MU Extension saw the intersection between the child care, the business community and the overall community. MU Extension saw the opportunity to hire a community development field specialist with a focus on early childhood impact.

This new position was to focus on discovering the programs, services and resources related to early childhood that are currently being offered at MU Extension and the greater University of Missouri system. Secondly, this position would connect those programs, services and resources to communities across the state through the network of community development and business development specialists.

This position plays a role in bridging the early childhood education community with the business and community development communities. This includes facilitating multi-sector conversations with early childhood educators, researchers, economic developers, business developers, community leaders, chambers of commerce, school districts and elected officials.



Tours de Missouri

One of the key components of any new job is learning about what others are doing, how they are doing it and the experiences they are having. This job requires a lot of listening to various groups of people. As I traveled the state for MO-SECA, I was intentional about meeting with individuals in each community to better understand how they are handling child care. The second leg of this tour is through the MO Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Missouri program where I am touring the state and learning about the businesses and industries in different regions.

Vitality: Residents, organizations, governments co-crating conditions for equitable, thriving, resourceful places.

Leadership: Diverse community leaders (including those who typically have less power and influence) collaborating for action and bridge-building.

Belonging: Place-based community building, social capital and inclusivity through neighboring, civil dialogue, placemaking, etc.

Contribution: Residents (particularly those at the margins) participating in civic life and engaged in decision making (volunteering, attending public meetings, voting)



Missouri Supporting Early Child Care Administrators (MO-SECA)



Overview:

The program provides professional development to support participants in their business and career growth. Through group training, participants connect with fellow child care providers in their area and one-on-one coaching supports reaching personalized, selfdirected goals.

Partners:

- University of Missouri-Kansas City Early Childhood Innovation Center
- University of Missouri-St. Louis-Community Innovation & Action Center
- Missouri Small Business Development Center
- Child Care Aware of Missouri

Academy Structure:

In 2024, MOSECA hosted 14 academies across various regions of Missouri. Each region received a business academy and a leadership academy. These academies were offered across 2 days- Friday afternoon through early Saturday afternoon. Each academy included a mix of plenary sessions, break out trainings and networking opportunities. Participants received a complimentary hotel room and a stipend for their participation. Each academy earned participants 9 professional development credit hours. In 2025, MOSECA will host 4 academies in strategic locations across the state and the stipend has been eliminated due to budget restraints. In 2024, Community Development specialists facilitated 29 trainings for 267 participants. Participants enjoyed the group discussions, content and activities that were part of each training. As a result of the training, participants stated that they would do the following things differently: build new connections and collaborations, use data and access new resources.

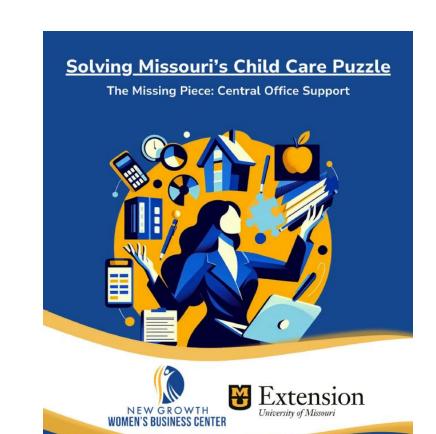
Training Development & Facilitation:

MU Extension has developed and facilitated a variety of trainings for the MOSECA Academies. These trainings focus on systems change topics and the community change process as it related to early child care. These trainings can also be used outside of the MOSECA Academies to facilitate multi-sector conversations around early child care. The trainings include:

- Activating Your Community
- Leveraging Your Community Assets to Lead Change
- State of Early Child Care in Missouri
- Introduction to Collective Impact Evaluation for Early Child Care
- Assessing Resource for Early Child Care Support
- Creating Impactful Early Child Care Data Visualizations
- Early Child Care Supports Thriving Communities
- Creating a Community's Early Child Care Report Card
- Introduction to Collective Impact for Early Child Care Results Based Accountability for Early Child Care
- Early Child Care Supports Thriving Businesses
- Introduction to Early Child Care Data
- Understanding Collective Early Child Care Work In Your Community
- Action Planning for Early Child Care



Solving Missour Puzzle The Miss Office Support Solving Missouri's Child Care Puzzle The Missing Piece Central



Overview:

This partnership came about from a conversation at MU Extension's Creating Entrepreneurial Communities Conference. New Growth Women's Business Center was interested in researching shared service models that were successful in other states to see if this was a possible solution for some child care businesses in Missouri, especially the family home child care centers that make up the majority of the infrastructure in rural Missouri

Partner:

New Growth Women's Business Center

Report:

The report looked at shared service models and how they work in different communities. MU Extension helped guide the local research and make connections with key stakeholders across Missouri to gather their insight and perspectives on the topic.

The report's findings contribute to local and state efforts to address the significant economic, community, and family challenges that now exist for Missouri with too few early child care and education options.

The report, Solving Missouri's Child Care Puzzle, advocates for a shared services approach to helping the state's mostly small and home-based child care businesses survive and thrive in a highly regulated and under-resourced industry. Shared services, or central office support to small and independent businesses, is the missing piece in the state's multi-faceted work to stabilize and increase the number of early child care and education providers in Missouri.

Webinar Series:

Each webinar featured a panel of speakers from Missouri and across the country to share their insights on shared services as an option to help improve early child care in Missouri.

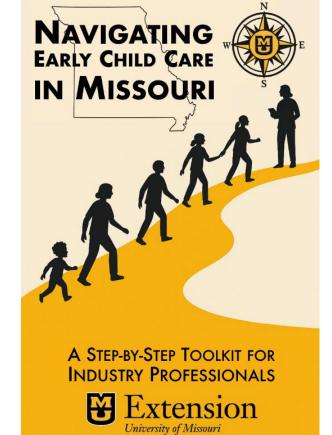
The Business of Child Care - This webinar provides an up-close look at the daily reality of the mostly small and home-based businesses that make up the unique and highly regulated child care sector. Presenters will highlight the types of business support that childhood education providers need to survive and thrive.

Central Office Shared Services - Across the country, child care agencies and organizations are joining forces to build a shared services approach to increasing the number and quality of child care providers. In business, shared services amount to central office support that reduces administrative burden and frees up time and money.

Missouri Assets and Opportunities - Missouri is struggling with a chronic crisis in child care. Many more providers went out of business in 2024. This webinar will review the many assets and opportunities the state has in place that it could further align and advance to benefit child care providers with the central office support of shared services.



MO-EXCEL



Overview:

This project is funded by the Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development. The goal of this project is to strengthen and expand the child care workforce by building new credentials and expanding existing pipelines.

Partner:

- MU Center for Family Policy & Research
- Missouri Small Business Development

New Child Care Credential Options:

MU CFPR developed a new online, on-demand option for child care workers to earn their CDA license. Additionally, they have developed two new 12-credit certificates for their early childhood program as well- Director's Certificate and the Business of Child Care Certificate. These credentials will launch in the fall.

Best Practice Social Media Videos:

MU also developed a series of best practice early childhood lessons. These are short videos that can be shared on social media to facilitate quick lessons about early childhood.

Community Building:

MU Extension created two data products for this project. The Missouri Economic Indicators Report looks at child care accessibility and affordability across the state. The Child Care Economic Impact Analysis looks at the loss experienced by businesses and the economy when adequate child care is not available to families. Additionally, MU Extension facilitated Strategic Doing conversations with two communities to improve child care in their regions. In Kansas City, the multisector group is working on developing a recruitment campaign to bring more workers into the field of early childhood. In Moberly, the multisector group is working on developing an apprenticeship pipeline while simultaneously bringing the hours of care in alignment with the manufacturing shifts in their community.

Online Training Library:

A series of trainings and webinars will be available in an online library. MO SBDC have some recorded trainings and online, on-demand trainings that focus on child care business topics. Others offerings are the recorded webinar series that was hosted earlier this year.

Toolkit

These resources and more will be combined in a toolkit offering. This will be a menu of options for communities or businesses to decide how MU Extension can support them on their child care improvement journey. This toolkit follows the community change process and offers various programming for each level: assessment, planning, acting, evaluating and sustaining. Every community is different and this allows MU Extension to meet them where they are at in their journey.