



Child Care
Resource and
Referral Network

Powered by  **CHILD CARE
ANSWERS**

2020 - 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

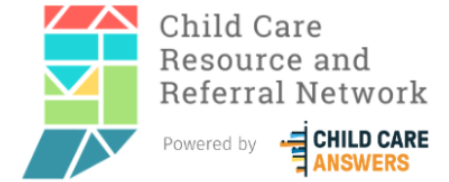
CHILD CARE ANSWERS



Mollie Smith

*Executive Director,
Child Care Answers of
Central Indiana*

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year, Child Care Answers (CCA) experienced massive changes that led to new opportunities and positive growth. In fall 2020 and through winter 2021, CCA administered two grants. The Indiana CARES Act about Child Care grant for child care programs, funded by the CARES Act, granted money for supplies, staffing, and professional services related to the COVID-19 pandemic. PNC Bank awarded CCA \$25,000 to support programs in high need within child care deserts, funding supplies and family tuition. January introduced an opportunity to speak to Child Care Aware of America's Joint Council about CCA's partnership with local chambers. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce also featured CCA on its website, discussing its work with local chambers and connections to early childhood education.

In the spring of 2021, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning began the process to amend its contract to transition it from Early Learning Indiana to Child Care Answers of Central Indiana, which put in motion many required actions. CCA - as its own 501(c)3 organization - officially took on the state contract in May of 2021 and separated from Early Learning Indiana on July 3, 2021.

This kicked off a busy summer. We held our Friends of CCA event celebrating CCA's work since 1985, honoring former leadership and connecting with friends, both new and old, who joined us for stories and memories. CCA moved into its new office space and opened its doors August 3. CCA launched its new website, which has proven to be a powerful tool for our organization. Our feature on Child Care Aware of America's marketing blog showcased the journey from idea to completed website. The fiscal year ended with Child Care Answers featured on Inside Indiana Business with Gerry Dick.

This past year was one for the record books, negotiating the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty in the changes that will come. We saw child care programs remain steadfast and determined to stay open to serve families, seeking creative ways to offer quality care in the face of COVID-19. Families expressed a greater need for support and resources, especially financial assistance, and CCA stepped up to provide access and education like never before. Community organizations rallied to find new ways to support families, businesses, and central Indiana as uncertainty continued to present itself around every corner. Through it all, CCA excelled in providing core services assisting these audiences as part of the Indiana Child Care Resource & Referral Network. Our mission 'To improve the well-being, care, and education for the whole child' is seen throughout these events but even more so in the day-to-day work of every staff member.

CCA's positive outlook on viewing each challenge as a new opportunity allows the work to continue, the passion to shine through, and the commitment to be unmistakable. We have been around for a long time but are truly excited about this new beginning; we are just getting started. Child Care Answers grows with you. Come join us, making the essential accessible to all.



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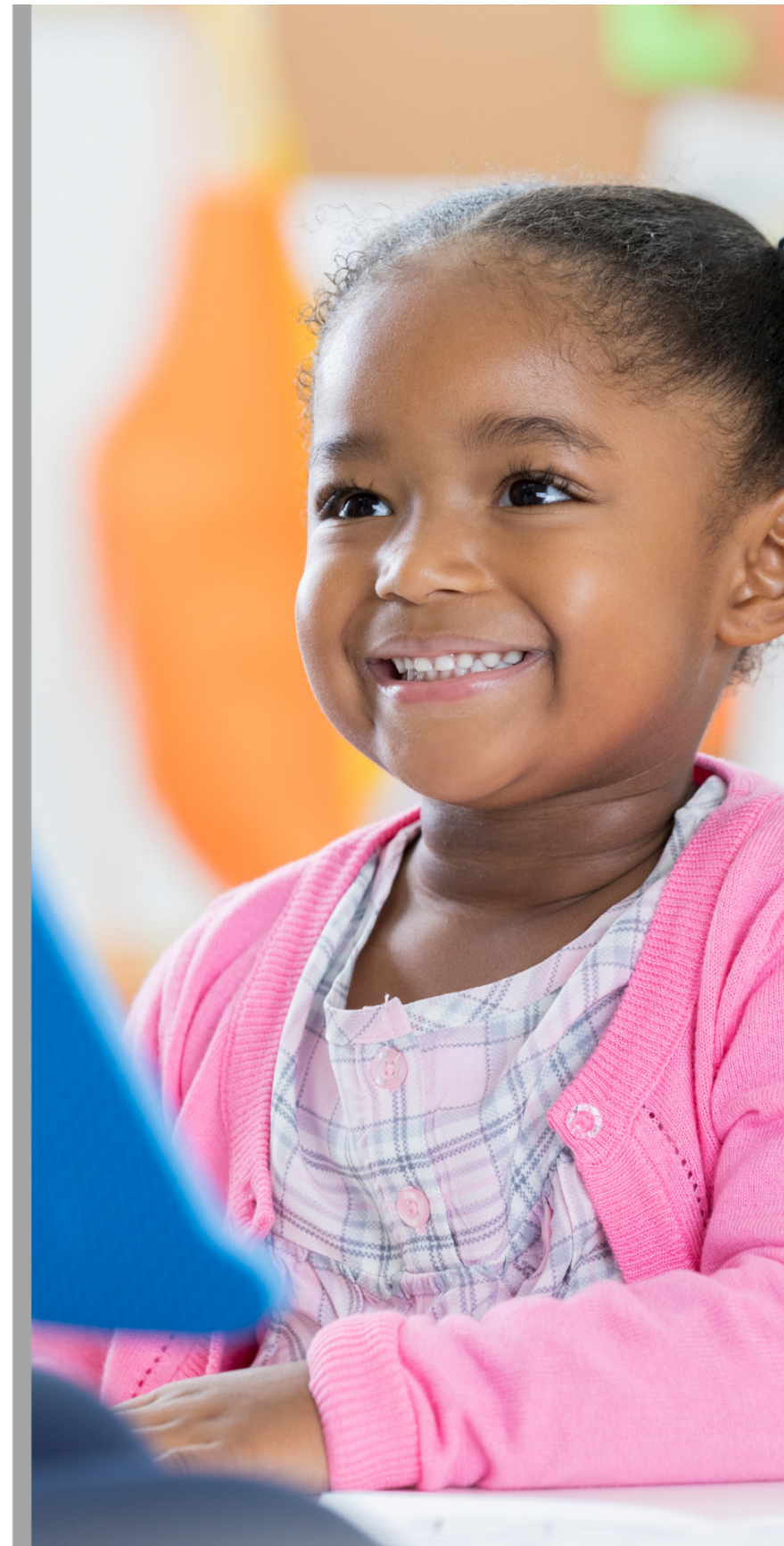
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2020-2021 OVERVIEW

1,247

FAMILIES SERVED

1,839

INTERACTIONS

Families are often repeat customers, taking advantage of multiple services including referrals, one-on-one support, workshops, and resources.

303

EMERGING PROVIDERS SERVED

Future child care business owners can rely on in-depth services (e.g. cohorts, site visits) and ad hoc support (e.g. application help, resources).

1,917

CURRENT PROVIDER INTERACTIONS

Child care programs get the latest news and resources to improve their programs, including grant support, business resources, and more.

409

COMMUNITY PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

Community agencies and partners create mutually beneficial opportunities for families, child care programs, and businesses in central Indiana.

103

EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

362

INTERACTIONS

Employers receive consultations on how to improve their bottom line through family-friendly policies and benefits, plus targeted support for staff.

SUPPORTED BY DATA

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

COMMUNICATION OPTIMIZATION

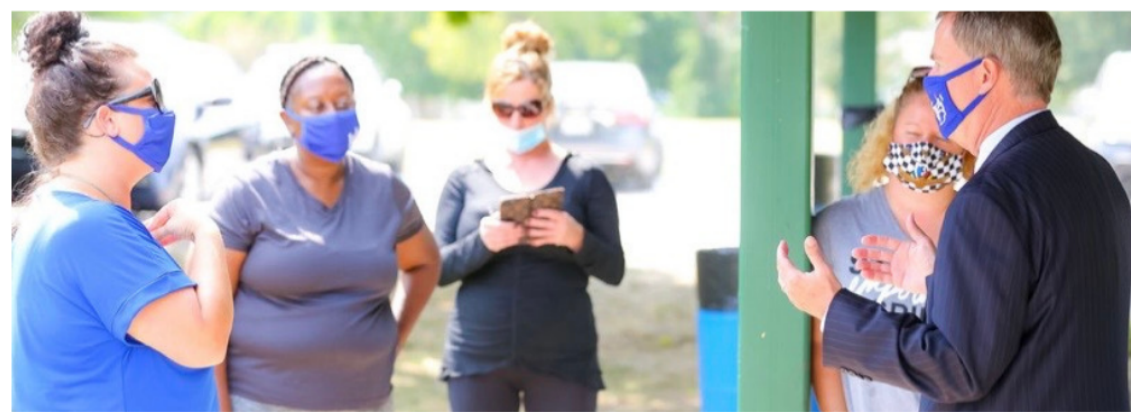
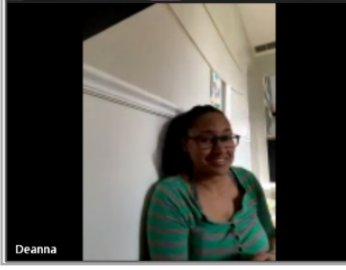
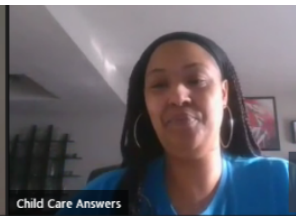
WEBSITE ANALYTICS

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

DATABASE TRACKING

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Metrics and data paint the picture for agency staff and partners to ensure efficiency, identify gaps, and celebrate successes.



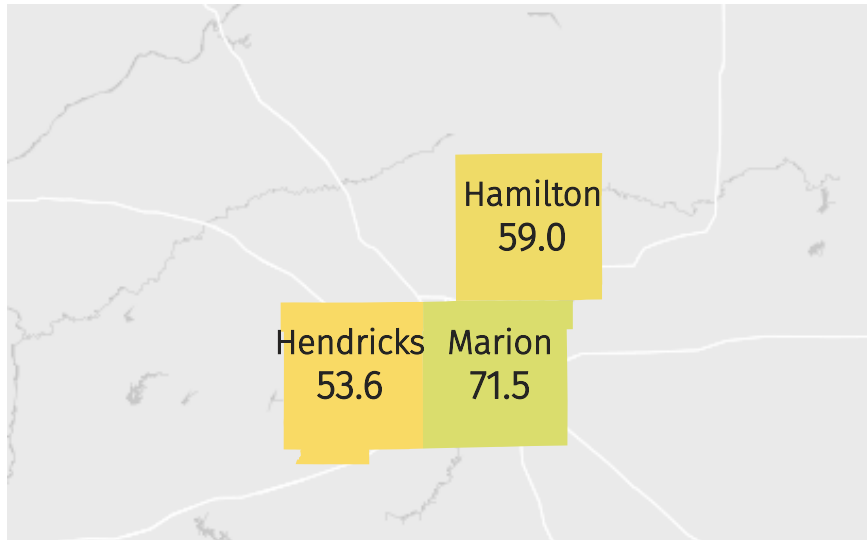
Child Care
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ACCESS

Early Learning Access Index (ELAI) in Central Indiana



	Hamilton	Hendricks	Marion
ELAI Rank	16	35	3
Capacity Sufficiency Rate	49.8	33.9	100.4
Affordability Index	82.8	79.2	67.2
Quality Index	51	53.2	56
Choice Index	61	58.1	56.5

Early Learning Indiana's *Closing the Gap* report provides eye-opening insights into the state of child care in central Indiana. The Early Learning Access Index takes into account:

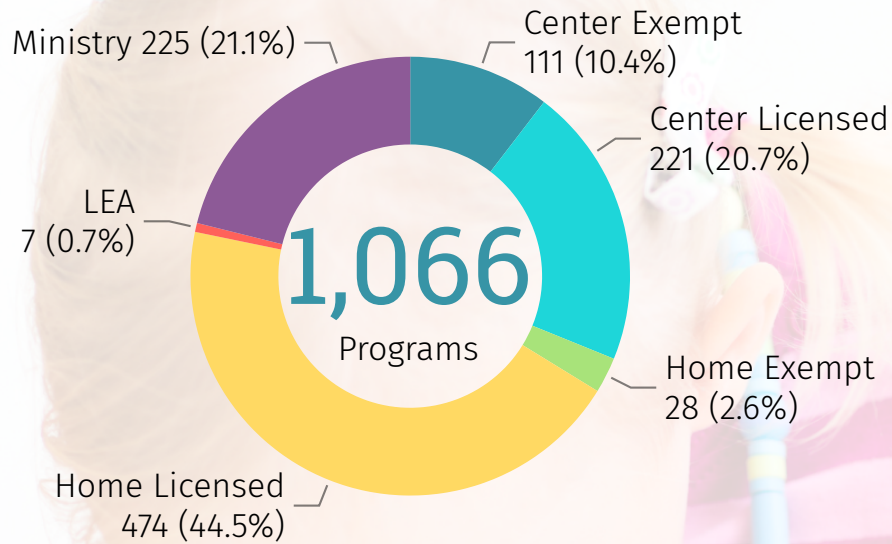
Capacity: Marion County has the state's highest Capacity Sufficiency Rate (CSR) at 100%, which means that the amount of supply meets the amount of demand of children needing care. In addition, Marion County has a number of unregulated preschools, co-ops, and after-school programs that were not considered as part of *Closing the Gap*, which makes the potential supply even greater than it might appear. Although the average is 100%, Marion County varies greatly by census tract. In Hendricks and Hamilton counties, capacity is lower, but there are often large differences along a rural/suburban line. Most rural areas do not have sufficient capacity, whereas some suburban cities have more capacity than demand. CCA plans to target their areas where demand outweighs supply to encourage emerging programs to open in these areas.

Quality: Marion County was found to have the highest rate in the state of children able to be served by high-quality capacity. Hamilton and Hendricks Counties were not far behind. Nevertheless, CCA will continue to educate and promote the importance of high-quality care in its entire region with both current and emerging programs.

Affordability: Affordability in the three-county area closely corresponds with the average income in each county. Families in Hamilton County, in which only 5% of young children live in poverty, can therefore much more easily afford care than Marion County families, which has the second highest cost-to income ratio in the state at 15.3%. CCA will continue its work creating and promoting resources to help families find financial assistance to help them better afford care.

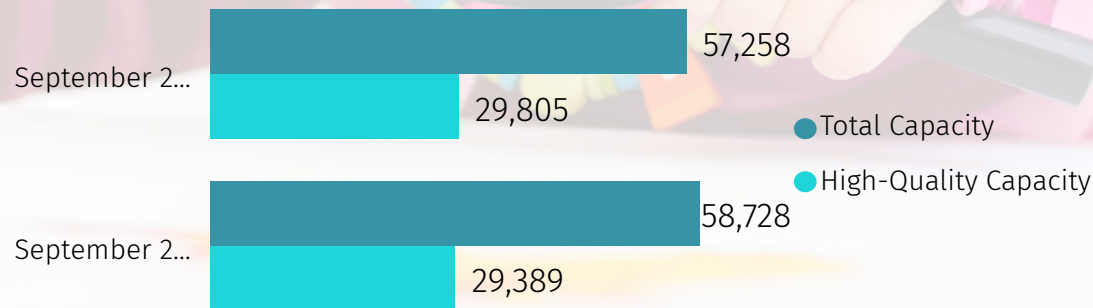
Choice: This dimension takes into account the ages served, the types of care offered and the range of hours provided. In all three counties, access to infant/toddler care is above average. To build on this success, CCA plans to focus on increasing the diversity of types of care in Hendricks County. The team will also continue its work to identify programs who offer non-traditional hours and days and encourage emerging programs to meet this need for families.

Total Programs



Central Indiana's program type makeup was similar to last year, with a **slight decrease in percentage of licensed homes** and an **increase in percentage of licensed centers**. Some larger center corporations, such as Learning Care Group and YMCA, opened centers. Family child care homes were likely affected by changes in the central Indiana real estate market, which affected the number of family child care homes overall. CCA's program team provides resources, such as connections to local realtors and mortgage experts, to help emerging programs find homes in their price range and prepare their budgets accordingly. They also educate both emerging and current programs on the importance of planning ahead for requirements that homeowners' associations and landlords put in place for operating a child care in their neighborhood. Programs of all shapes and sizes, especially smaller child care homes can always benefit from additional information and guidance on applying for **grants designed to help programs stay open**. CCA offers a number of resources to make programs aware of available grants, and they also deliver support to those who need it when writing or finding grants.

Licensed Capacity



Capacity in central Indiana child care programs increased this year again. This may be due to the fact that **COVID-19 vaccines** allowed more providers to open, increase staff, and decrease quarantines in classrooms. Many large **out-of-school-time programs**, such as the YMCA and AYS, were also closed during the pandemic but opened during the summer leading up to the 2021-22 school year.



Shontay Martin
 Owner, A Child's Journey Early Learning Home Childcare

Warm thank you to...Child Care Answers for providing me with so many awesome resources during my process of opening a home child care center. Although I have not had my licensing inspection yet I am completely prepared and awaiting the phone call with a date. Meeting every other Tuesday has benefited me greatly in preparing for what I pray will be a great inspection. Thank you for always being available to answer my one million questions and concerns in a timely manner.

Two-thirds of SDA 3's children needing care live in Marion County, but nearly 90% of SDA 3 programs are located here. To better include Hamilton and Hendricks Counties, CCA will focus outreach on these counties, building upon current partnerships and identifying new ones.

Emerging programs saw a number of individual successes aided by CCA's support. The program team created **caseloads** based on those who completed orientation training, following up to provide support and invite them to **emerging provider cohorts**. Hosted twice per month, CCA served 24 emerging providers in both English and Spanish. Participants learned from each other, as well as early childhood and business experts. The team found success in leveraging **networking groups** to recruit new providers, including Hispanic/Latino groups and the Brownsburg chamber. CCA's **social media and web audiences** lean more towards current programs, so the knowledge manager continues to refine strategies for emerging programs. CCA targets emerging programs monthly on social media and is evaluating how to best use paid advertising to improve reach. They also received a grant from Google for its AdWords feature and continue to update it regularly to maximize use. CCA also looks forward to using the resources and support provided by Early Learning Indiana for this audience.

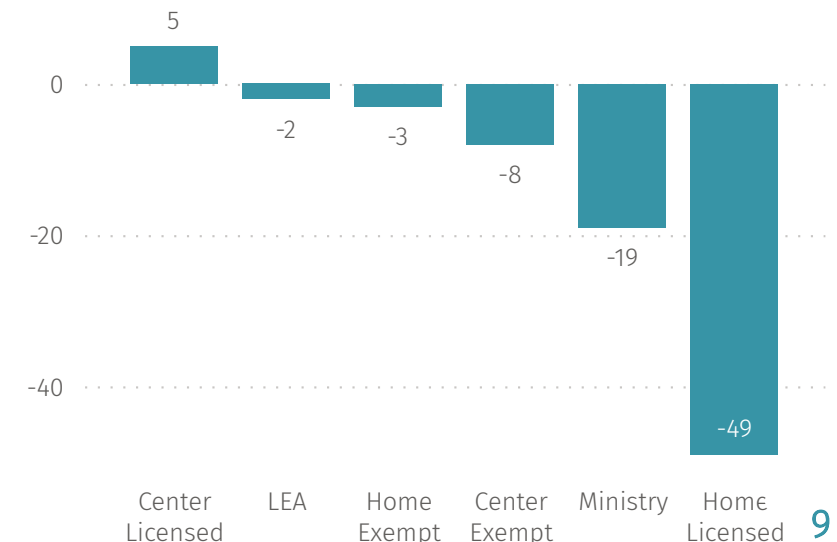
Early Learning Indiana's *Closing the Gap* report and other easy-to-use dashboards empower staff to use **data** to help emerging programs target areas that could benefit from additional child care supply. As they meet with emerging programs, they can suggest the most optimal geographic locations, as well as times and days when families most needed care. Thanks to the advent of the COVID-19 vaccine, staff began performing more on-site **mock inspections**, which built confidence and relationships with those pursuing a child care license. The launch of CCA's **website resource center** also provided easy access to videos and resources.

To help current programs **find and retain staff**, CCA widely promotes and individually supports current and emerging programs with local, statewide, and federal initiatives specifically designed to assist. Through their support of the CARES grant and *Build, Learn, Grow*, CCA educated and built relationships with hundreds of central Indiana programs. These initiatives offer much-needed help with **cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment** as programs make their locations a happy and healthy environment for the children in their care.

-76
 Net Change in Programs

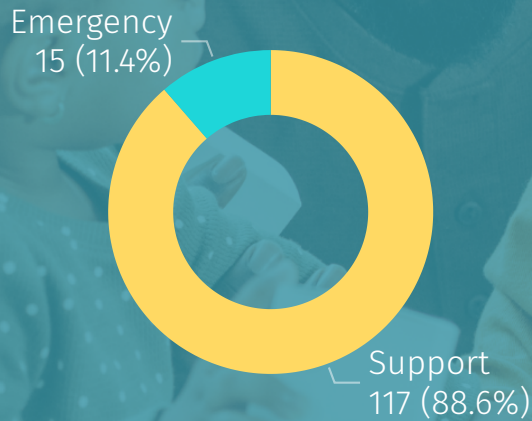
County	New Programs	Programs Closed	Net Change
Hendricks	4	6	-2
Hamilton	14	17	-3
Marion	129	200	-71
Total	147	223	-76

Net Program Changes Since Previous Year



Indiana
CARES
 About Child Care
FUND

Awarded Grant Types



\$426,843

Amount Awarded

421

Applications Submitted

132

Grants Funded

The Indiana CARES About Child Care relief fund launched in October 2020, and its work currently continues. Supported through the CARES Act, these grants help providers with two tracks. The **support track** provides **safety-related expenses** for the ongoing health and safety of the child during COVID-19 and included cleaning supplies, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), additional staffing, professional services, materials to support added classrooms, furniture for social distancing, and tools/materials to support children during this challenge. The **emergency track** is for programs with closures due to a COVID-19 exposure. Needs are immediate to get the program up and running, often including cleaning supplies and PPE. The overall grant goal focuses on those programs that have not yet received funding, especially legally licensed exempt programs, programs not on Paths to QUALITY™, homes that have not yet applied for grants, and after-school programs. CCA also supports larger centers that, in turn, affect a large number of seats.

Over half the CCA team currently support this undertaking, while the other half provide assistance by shifting work to allow the core group the necessary time for this grant. Currently, Team CCA works diligently with programs to provide additional supports and **technical assistance**, and staff **review applications and administer reimbursements and documentation**. Last year, they conducted biweekly open **office hours** with guests presenting on topics such as grant writing and cleaning. In addition, they also created **virtual meetings** for the awardees and video tutorials to ensure the complete understanding of money use and the documentation requirements. The Community Engagement Specialist also managed the Indiana CARES About Child Care grant **customer service phone line and email for the entire state**, answering questions, communicating with program directors, providing additional resources, and being the go-to person for many. While most inquired about eligibility and application status, programs also called about non-CARES issues, like the OECOSL Child Care Closure Assistance Grant, CCDF, and *Build, Learn, Grow*.

CCA had the pleasure of supporting programs during a very difficult time. Programs were not financially prepared to handle sudden COVID-related changes in enrollment due to parent work schedules, staffing challenges, and an increase in costs for additional items needed. Programs shared urgency in needing funds for basic items such as cleaning supplies, as well as additional materials and staffing funds to open new classrooms to accommodate social distancing. Programs also asked for funding for staff to do extra cleaning and communicate supports to families not allowed in for drop-off and pick-up. Thanks to the grant, many programs could stay open, allowing them to follow CDC guidelines and financially support required staffing.



Feedback from Indiana CARES About Child Care recipient

Award funds allowed Care Bear to have less traffic in and out. It allowed us to care for the children and still have a clean, sanitized environment while still focusing on the children's needs and giving them attention.



BACKING Birth to 5



Feedback from child care program recipients

Honestly, I thought the process for this grant was amazing. The webinar was informative and detailed and the follow up was helpful for me knowing I was purchasing items that would be approved.

We were able to financially assist seven families with their child's tuition. Each of the seven families were so grateful to receive this grant and the financial assistance it provided their families for the weeks given.



38

parents served



159

children served



54

teachers served



Feedback from families receiving scholarships

This came at a time when I wasn't sure we could pay...and we are forever grateful for this gift.

My...family cried and said that you are truly an angel. They had been praying how they were going to pay for childcare when I told her.

Child Care Answers received a generous grant this year from PNC Bank, which provided funds as **Backing Birth to 5**, a grant that child care providers could use for health and safety needs, food, or as family scholarships. To qualify, select programs in child care deserts with a high closure rate were invited to apply.

Staff offered **assistance and information sessions** for the application process and also **partnered with SPARK Learning Lab** throughout the process.



Build Learn Grow

Helping working families connect to early care & education

The *Build Learn Grow* program offers a number of supports for **both families and child care programs** across the state. CCA stepped in to guide and direct audiences through the processes to take advantage of these supports.

One component of the program includes scholarships to help children up to age 12 from working families with child care during the COVID-19 pandemic. After an expansion, the **scholarship** was made available to families with incomes of up to 400% of the Federal Poverty Level, making the care more affordable for working families. The scholarship, along with additional features such as **waived co-pays**, especially helped ALICE families who didn't previously qualify for CCDF. CCA supported families directly, many of whom were confused about the process and how it related to CCDF vouchers. This process also allowed CCA to identify a number of families who were eligible for CCDF vouchers, so the team also made a number of **connections to Maximus** thanks to this outreach.

CCA worked to share *Build Learn Grow* information with **community partners** that work with families, introducing the program and answering questions at coalition and community meetings. The agency also introduced and shared multiple resources on **social media** to ensure as many families as possible were aware of the opportunity,

Build Learn Grow also supported **child care programs** through **grants, waived background check fees, onboarding stipends, and more**. Staff supported child care programs with their roles in the program, including conducting **Facebook Live Q&A sessions** and **personally making 636 calls to providers** to ensure their completion of the Business Sustainability training requirement.

\$4,547,086

Amount Awarded (through Sept. 2021)

2,861

Children Served

This past year, emerging programs overwhelmingly prefer to take Orientation 2 trainings in an asynchronous online format, rather than in a live virtual video conference. To accommodate this preference, CCA switched gears to provide support and resources as a compliment to the online training. The Program Engagement team gleans a **steady pipeline of emerging providers through the online Orientation 1 and 2 attendees and then follows up with them accordingly.**

The program team found success in dividing these emerging providers into **caseloads**. Staff check in with each provider at least monthly but frequently check in more often. They listen to needs, assess the resources the emerging providers need, and guide them through the appropriate process. 20 of the emerging programs assisted by CCA received their license.

One of these resources is CCA's **emerging provider cohort, which meets twice monthly**. One session focuses on learning and professional development; CCA often brings in guest speakers from partner organizations on topics such as finance, marketing, and licensing, as well as its early childhood partners. Staff can then make **in-the-moment referrals** to SPARK, Indiana AEYC, and other professional organizations. The other meeting allows emerging providers to share struggles and successes and ask questions to receive targeted support. Ten providers who participated in the cohort received their license. Emerging programs may join the cohort at any time, so program engagement staff are actively providing assistance to the others and look forward to watching them achieve their license.

In September, CCA solicited feedback from both current and emerging providers through a survey and received a Net Promoter Score of 56, considered by Gallup to be in the "excellent" range. Areas in which staff were rated as "very helpful" include **I-LEAD / Indiana Learning Paths support** (76.92% of respondents) and **communication media** (75.68% of respondents).



Terika Westbrook
Owner, Future Scholars Daycare and Cohort Participant

I really didn't know exactly how to navigate through obtaining my license, so, I decided to join. And I'm so grateful that I did! The resources are unmatched, the networking, the relationship building, the program navigation, and just everything for me was a good experience from start to finish. Knowing that there was an opportunity to have an advocate or someone that could kind of navigate me through the steps and processes of what needed to be done to obtain my license, someone that I could...go back to.

Orientation Training

557

Orientation 1 Completions

424

Orientation 2 Completions

Emerging Provider Cohorts

2

Provider Cohorts
(English and Spanish)

24

Cohort participants

43

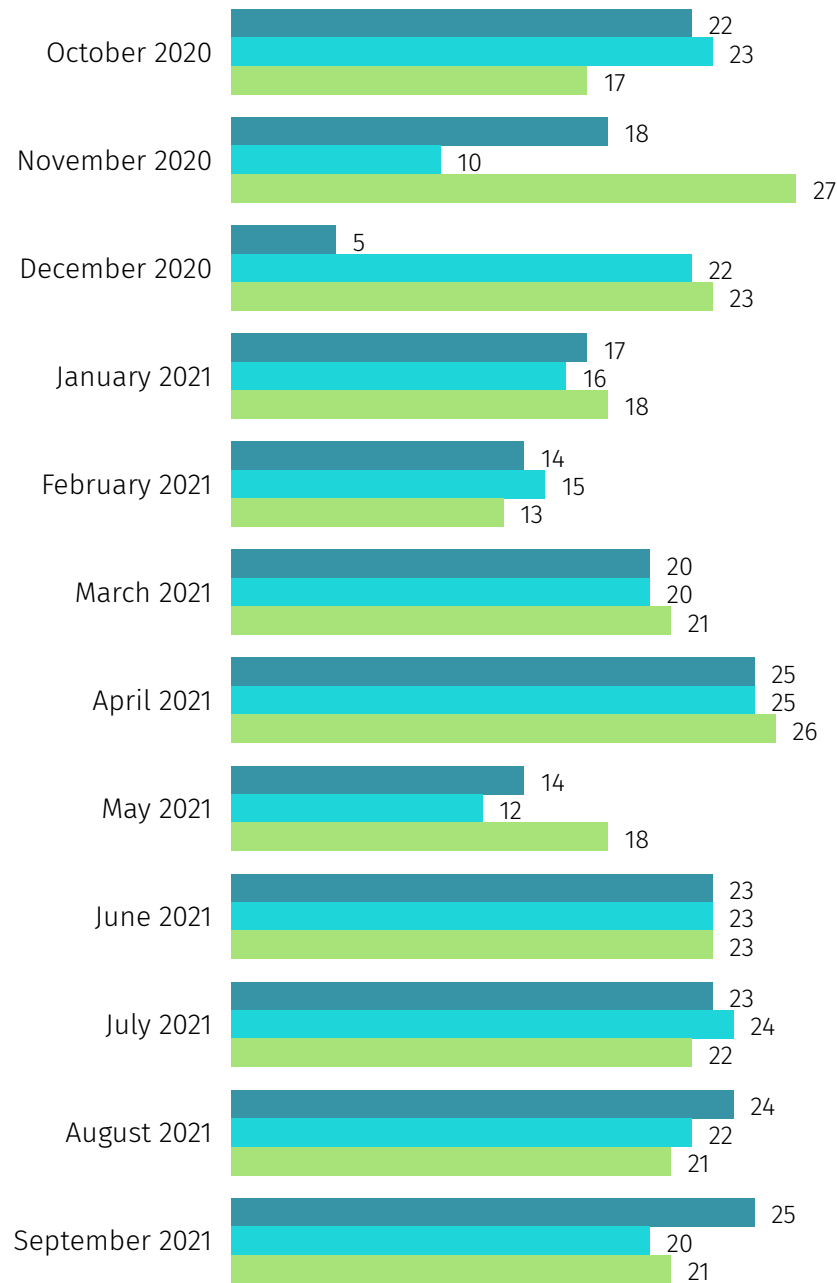
Total meetings

56

Net Promoter Score

Referring Providers to Services

● SPARK ● Indiana AEYC ● Local Professional Organizations



Referrals to other organizations follow a natural pattern - **when more people take orientation classes, CCA makes more referrals.** CCA also saw a jump in referrals during times when they were doing **one-on-one support** for those applying for and receiving CARES grants. Program engagement staff are also finding that they are receiving **fewer calls from existing programs** regarding professional development and Paths to QUALITY coaching, likely because programs are beginning to become better acquainted with SPARK and Indiana AEYC's services.

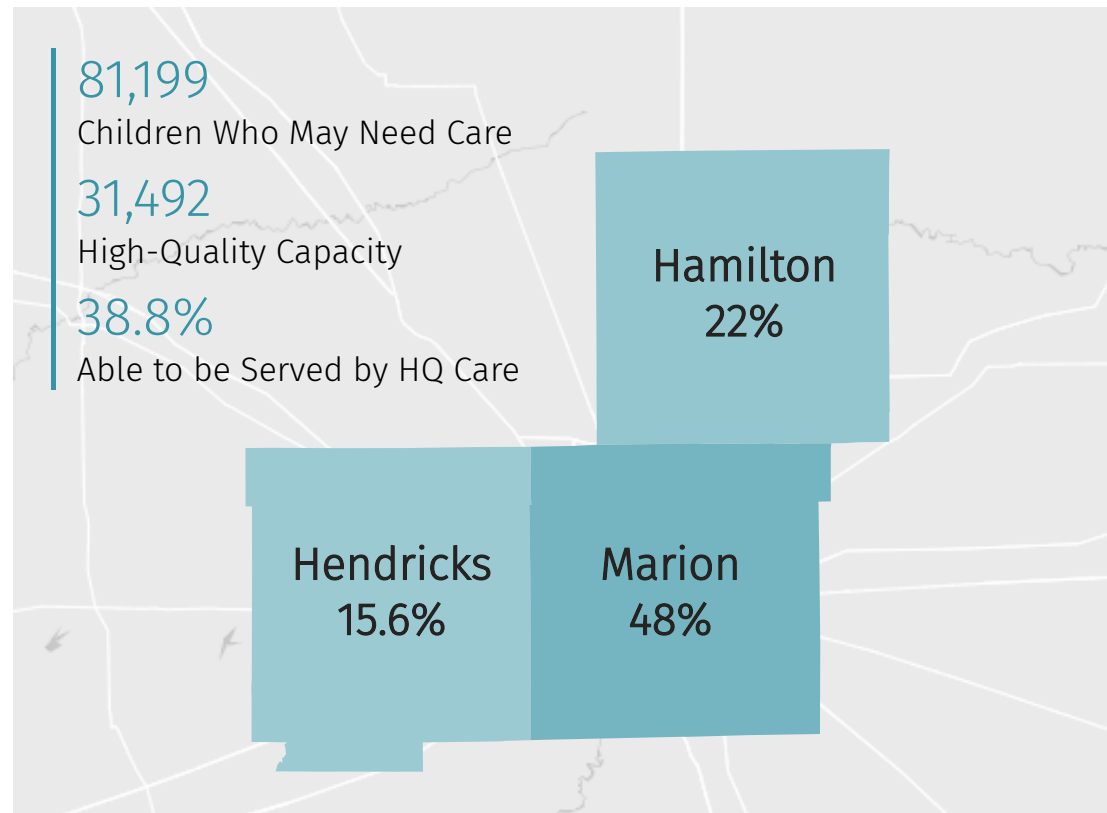
Program engagement staff have made great strides in **building their relationships with licensing consultants.** They have even been able to shadow consultants during licensing visits so that CCA can better connect providers and understand the licensing requirements.

CCA's website is responsible for informing programs of their options, without necessarily requiring them to talk directly with a member of the Program Engagement staff. Ideally, CCA designed the website to be user-friendly enough and contain enough partner information so that individuals can get directly to the partner they need without having to go through CCA to get there. This has actually cut down on the number of referrals that might otherwise be reflected, but CCA is reaching the same, if not more, people.

CCA also continually promotes its partners in its **quarterly newsletter**, which goes out to all provider admins in the three-county area, plus anyone else who has signed up for our newsletter. As of October 1, 2021, **1,613 people are subscribed.** In the past CCA has highlighted services and programs of On My Way Pre-K, SPARK, Infancy Onward, Indiana AEYC, and more.

Programs are learning more about how to use I-LEAD and are using it consistently to fulfill licensing requirements. Although current programs are becoming more self-sufficient, program engagement staff continue to reach out to those that have not yet enrolled in I-LEAD, and they consistently emphasize it with their emerging providers. CCA also recently redesigned its **website** to reflect the updates to Indiana Learning Paths' user interface to ensure that both English and Spanish programs can easily register for the courses they need. **Social media** and the quarterly newsletter also continue to be a vehicle to highlight the most frequent questions surrounding both I-LEAD and Indiana Learning Paths.

Children Able to be Served by High-Quality Care



According to the *Closing the Gap* study, **Marion County has the highest rate of children able to be served by high-quality capacity.** To be able to help families afford the higher cost of high-quality care, CCA staff work closely with both families and programs to educate on central Indiana's available financial supports, such as CCDF vouchers and the *Build Learn Grow* scholarship. The CCA website also highlights a number of places where families can find wrap-around supports and assistance with other needs, which then in-turn may help loosen the family's budget to accommodate the cost of high-quality child care.

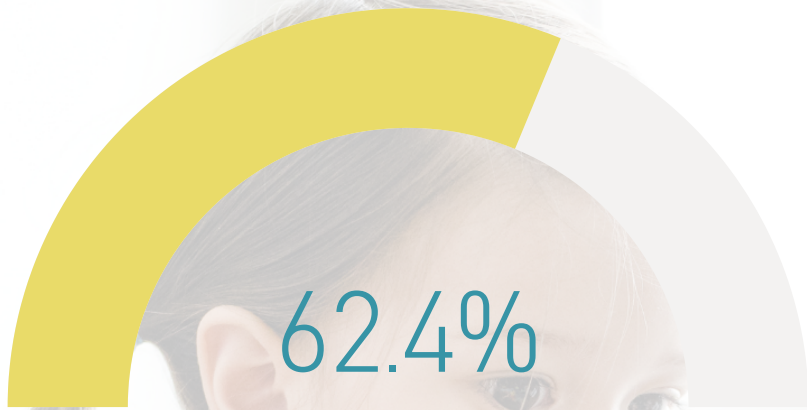
The program engagement team continues to **educate and elevate Paths to QUALITY** with both emerging and current programs through its communications and cohorts. The team also continues to inform and educate about the coaching and support that SPARK Learning Lab can provide directly to child care program leadership and administration.

The Program Engagement team also takes a number of steps to **increase program quality in the general sense.** As CCA was able to move to in-person support, mock inspections have been a great success to prepare emerging providers for licensing but also to give advice on improving their environments. The checklist for licensed centers also brought clarity to improve those in-person visits. The new website also included resources for licensing and added additional video, like those created by the fire marshal to aid programs in improving their overall quality.

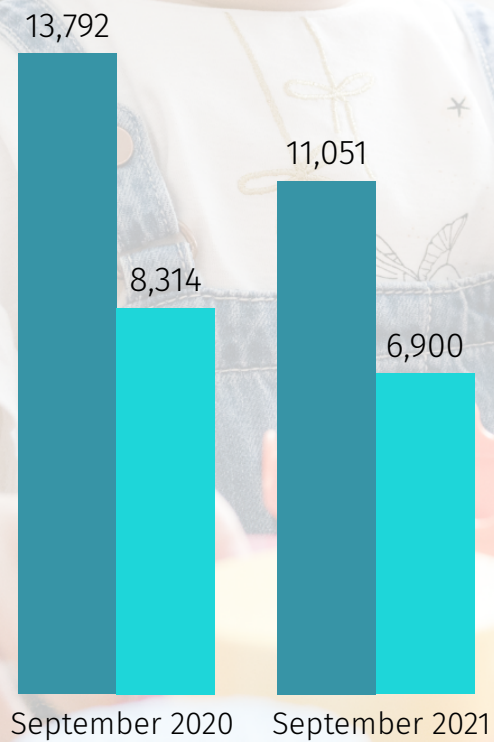
High-Quality (HQ) Care by County

County	Total Programs	HQ Programs	Percent HQ Programs	Total Capacity	HQ Capacity	Percent HQ Capacity
Marion	875	291	33.3%	42,293	21,718	51.4%
Hamilton	123	38	30.9%	11,762	5,258	44.7%
Hendricks	68	18	26.5%	4,673	2,413	51.6%
Total	1,066	347	32.6%	58,728	29,389	50.0%

Children Using CCDF for High-Quality Care



● Total Children Using CCDF ● Children Using CCDF for High-Quality Care



Children enrolled in CCDF in central Indiana are more likely than their counterparts to be in high-quality child care; 62.4% of CCDF children are in high-quality care, compared to 50.7% of the general child population.




This past year, CCA made great strides in **identifying and supporting CCDF-eligible families**. CCA recently added a question **asking for the family's income bracket** on the family information form. This allows staff to immediately identify those who may be CCDF-eligible and get them started on the application. **CCA made 1,426 calls and sent 2,687 emails to families** approved for CCDF vouchers, helping them navigate the process. Staff worked as navigators to ensure families had all necessary information to submit to Maximus to complete the process. CCA strategically provided **CCDF resources for non-English speaking families**. Bilingual staff translated the CCDF Guide into Spanish, and the new website displays information in families' native languages.

CCA made concerted efforts to **inform its community partners** about CCDF, including COVID-related changes such as the job search qualifier and waived co-pays. CCA hosted two separate webinars with OECOSL's CCDF Operations Manager, Carrie Gray, which garnered a total of 126 participants.

The program team continues to **encourage emerging and current providers to accept CCDF**. They are hopeful that new networking groups in Hamilton and Hendricks Counties will help them make meaningful connections. A recent training on how nannies can accept CCDF also brought an often-overlooked opportunity into the spotlight for the program team to highlight.

From a data perspective, CCA staff continue to work closely with Maximus to ensure that the **information in the various databases is up-to-date, accurate, and consistent across platforms**. This is partly demonstrated in the decrease in numbers from 2020 to 2021 - data clean-up processes removed a number of duplicates or families no longer eligible or interested in CCDF vouchers.

**% of Programs
Offering Subsidized
Care**

	Hamilton	83.5%
	Hendricks	80.9%
	Marion	81.6%

Programs who offer subsidies such as **CCDF vouchers** or **On My Way Pre-K (OMWPK)** can often be a lifeline for families who otherwise couldn't afford to attend a quality program or even send their children to care at all. Whether or not a program offers subsidies can be an important deciding factor for a family when choosing care. Even if subsidies do not factor into a family's initial decision, if they choose a program with subsidies, it could mean that a child is able to stay with that program if the family experiences an unforeseen change in life events.

As CCA works to ensure **adequate supply of programs accepting subsidies**, they provide education to program on specific intricacies of CCDF. For example, staff highlight that programs can charge above the CCDF rate. They recommend that programs consider other costs such as staffing, supplies, and operations to determine their true cost. They also explain that the supply of families who are eligible for CCDF vouchers often are not obvious in a program's community; therefore, accepting CCDF could attract and elevate the program to potential families. CCA also highlights that programs are able to be referred by family specialists once they accept CCDF.

Program engagement also staff educate on **OMWPK**. Staff generally target their OMWPK discussion to establish programs, simply because emerging programs often have a number of required steps in front of them before they are eligible for OMWPK (including becoming a Level 3 or 4 on Paths to QUALITY. With that said, OMWPK does come into discussions with bigger emerging programs more frequently, because these programs have more administrative staff to accomplish the OMWPK requirements more quickly.

The addition of income ranges to the **online family info form** allows CCA to assist families and offer wrap-around supports for paying for care. When a family indicates their income range at the time of referral, staff connect the family to financial supports and help them navigate the process. For example, if a family indicates their income is within the CCDF guidelines, staff will look the family up in AIS - the CCDF database - and support them with either applying or navigating their case. Additionally, even if the family does not currently have CCDF vouchers, staff search for programs that accept the voucher so they do not have to switch programs once they do secure a voucher.

The **new website** includes resources related to paying for care (CCDF, OMWPK, Head Start, *Build Learn Grow*, Scholarships, Military Assistance, etc.). CCA simplified its post-referral emails to link directly to the website, which is especially beneficial for families for whom English is not their first language. Once at the website, families can view translated content in **more than 20 languages**.

CCA regularly connects with partners to learn more about their programs, in order to better understand how to direct families. An example of this is a recent all-team meeting with Tonia Carriger from **Head Start**. From this meeting, CCA learned that Head Start is available to families, regardless of documentation status. This inspired staff to highlight this opportunity to families for whom English is not their first language as a potential financial support.

OMWPK project managers were also invited to meet with the entire CCA team, and they shared information about the program and how we can better collaborate together. In addition to continually highlighting OMWPK in newsletters and social media, CCA staff attended three events totaling 20 hours. As a result of these events, staff assisted six families in total, completing four referrals.



Not surprisingly, **cost of care gets less expensive as children get older**. A family of an infant can expect to pay 28% more than for a five-year-old. Mostly due to the strict four-to-one ratio requirement for infants, babies also often require equipment and supplies above and beyond what older children need.

The cost of care data is **self-reported by child care providers**. Most of this information is gathered through the Indiana Child Care Resource & Referral Network's outreach for provider updates. This year, CCA completed **market rate update calls to providers in May**, after which the rates made significant swings. Typically, rates don't change more than \$2.00 from month-to-month. However, they jumped by \$30.56 from April to May and dipped \$22.40 from May to June.

This year, CCA staff completed **254 provider updates** and made **236 additional attempts** to reach providers for an update. The program team completed many of these updates in conjunction with the outreach calls for *Build Learn Grow*. While they had a program employee on the phone, it was often easier and more efficient to also ask them to complete a provider update at that time.

Avg. Cost of Care by Age

0 - 12 Months

\$204.13

Avg. Full-Time, Weekly Cost

13 - 23 Months

\$188.14

Avg. Full-Time, Weekly Cost

24 - 35 Months

\$183.75

Avg. Full-Time, Weekly Cost

3 - 4 Years




\$165.51

Avg. Full-Time, Weekly Cost

5 Years

\$159.45

Avg. Full-Time, Weekly Cost

		Median Family Income	2021 Annual FT Rate (10-mile radius)	2021 Annual FT Rate (County only)	2020 Annual FT Rate (County Only)
	Hamilton	\$118,017	\$9,441	\$11,566	\$11,301
	Hendricks	\$91,990	\$8,888	\$8,482	\$8,254
	Marion	\$60,845	\$9,281	\$7,905	\$7,774

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child care costs should not exceed 10% of a family's budget. The good news is that **Hamilton and Hendricks Counties now fall below that threshold**, leaving just Marion County above the threshold at 15% of median family income. This is likely due to the fact that family incomes grew much more rapidly in these counties last year than the cost of care.

Because many central Indiana families live in one county and work in another, they may be **more likely to choose care in a neighboring county**. The *Closing the Gap* report considers cost within a 10-mile access zone, which may include programs in a different county. For this reason, Hamilton County families may actually be paying less than the county-only data shows, while Marion County families may be paying more. When comparing year-over-year county data, **full-time rates only went up slightly** in all three counties.

While CCDF, On My Way Pre-K, and Head Start have always been in CCA's toolbox for families, the introduction of *Build Learn Grow* was especially helpful this year to be able to address affordability for families who fall outside of the traditional low-income bracket. **CCA's new website** also enhanced resources for families to pay for care, including military child care assistance and explanation of additional financial supports such as adjustable rates, employer incentives, tax credits and spending accounts, and other opportunities for financial assistance outside of child care. This information is translatable in over 20 languages, which allows families for whom English is not their primary language to also benefit.

This year, CCA made a concerted effort to **connect directly with employers** to introduce opportunities for them to subsidize child care for their employees. In one case, staff also helped to make connections with local child care programs near the employer's office, inquiring about opportunities for discounts for employees at their program.

The Community Engagement team also continues to make connections with other social service agencies to ensure that families have access to other types of assistance, even if subsidies for child care aren't available. Examples include partnerships with **military** organizations such as Joining Community Forces Indiana, **employment** organizations such as Employ Indy, **housing** organizations such as Coalition for Homelessness Intervention & Prevention, **immigrant** organizations such as Coalition for our Immigrant Neighbors, **food** organizations such as Indy Hunger Network, **mental health** organizations such as The Indiana Center for Prevention of Youth Abuse and Suicide, **health** organizations such as CareSource, **clothing** organizations such as Dress for Success, and so many more.

Families consistently ask for programs providing care during non-traditional **times and days**, but staff also see requests for **non-traditional shifts** (part-time or compressed schedules), **nanny care**, **drop-in care**, **sick care**, care for children with **special needs**, or care in **languages other than English**.

28% of the state’s population of children experiencing **homelessness** are in Marion County, adding another layer of complexity. Staff work with a number of local organizations who refer these families to CCA for additional child care support. As the family team receives these requests, they prioritize them and provide additional assistance like calling programs on the family's behalf to inquire about openings, cost, and additional financial supports.

COVID elevated the need for non-traditional care, but it has always been there. **Nearly 15% of our providers speak a language other than English**, including Spanish, Russian, French, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, African languages, and German.

In central Indiana, the number of programs self-identifying as offering non-traditional care has **increased**, but **families continue to express non-traditional care as a need**. To move the dial even more, CCA's program staff have been **encouraging emerging providers in their cohorts to explore non-traditional hours**, as well as using the ELI dashboards to highlight where the need exists to inform emerging provider decisions about where and when to open. They have also reached out to individual providers to connect families who are seeking care during non-traditional days and times.

439

Programs with Extended Hours
Any operating hours outside of the traditional range of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. including overnight hours.

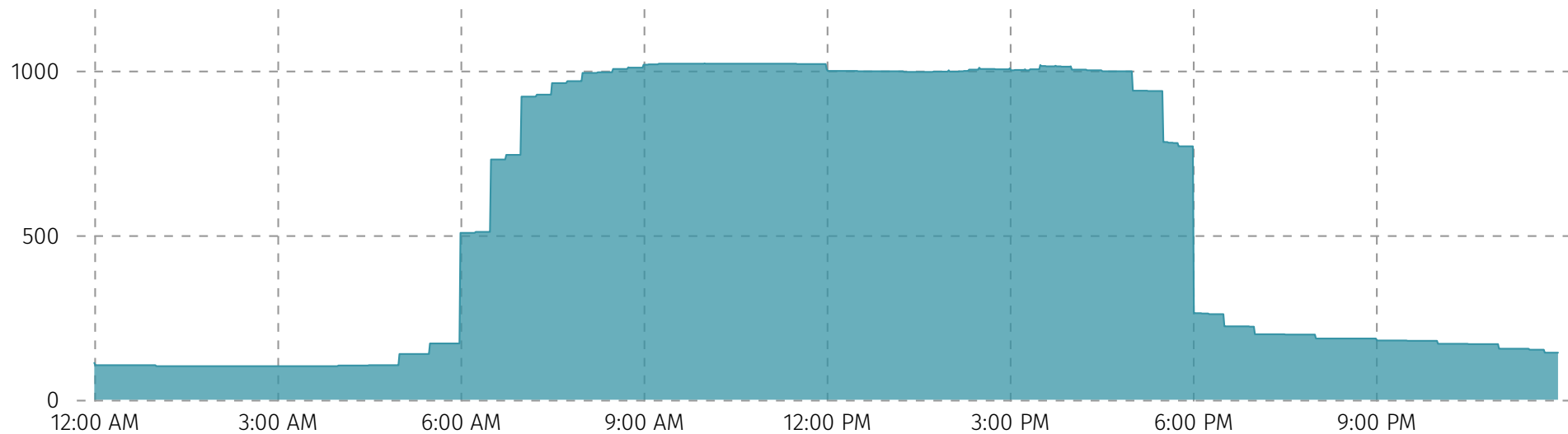
168

Programs with Overnight Hours
Operating hours that begin in the evening (or earlier) and continue through the night into the morning (or later), including night-only and 24-hour programs.

144

Programs Operating on Weekends

Programs Operating at Each Minute

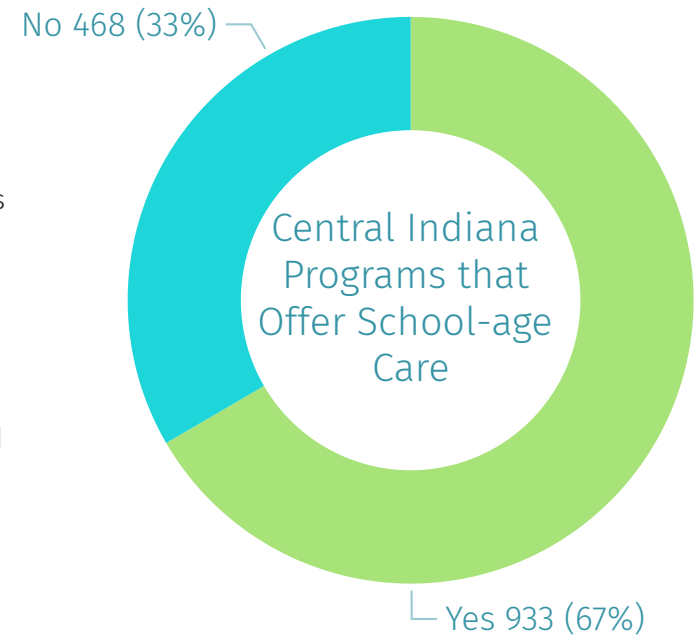


The pandemic taught us that care for children before school, after school, during breaks, and now, during remote learning, is essential to many central Indiana families. **Some programs saw the need and stepped up to provide care** - most of them being larger corporations such as Learning Care Group and the YMCA. **Non-traditional providers**, such as community centers and respite care, have begun to express an interest in how they can better offer care to school-aged children. The program team continues to educate about the process of becoming a licensed provider to encourage capacity building in the school-age arena.

To support programs interested in expanding their school-age offerings, CCA staff provided **technical assistance** for many programs, notably AYS, during the Indiana CARES About Child Care grant process. Program staff have also been able to show programs **how to maximize space** to increase before/after-care opportunities. For example, one program doubled its school-age capacity by erecting a wall in its gym.

To better assist families looking for out-of-school-time care, CCA is working to address some common barriers:

- **Transportation:** A popular need for families, CCA's family team often does extensive research to understand if programs that meet the families needs also offer transportation.
- **Breaks and respite care:** Families often just need care during the summer or during fall/winter/spring breaks. Some families may only need care certain days of the week or in spurts of unscheduled time. Others may simple be looking for summer camps. In these instances, CCA's family, community, and programs teams work closely together to research and identify opportunities that may not be readily visible for families.
- **Trend of earlier start times for younger children:** In Hamilton County, many schools have moved to earlier start and release times for elementary-aged children. This means that children can no longer get off the bus at home to an older sibling or babysitter. The program team recognizes this as an area of opportunity for emerging programs and plans to focus more heavily in building supply in this area over the next contract year.
- **CCDF availability:** Many out-of-school-time programs aren't CCDF-qualified, especially those that are affiliated with schools. Program staff continue to highlight the benefits of offering CCDF to emerging providers to help increase the supply of out-of-school-time programs who accept CCDF vouchers.



933

Programs with School Age Care



543

School Age Children Served through Build, Learn, Grow Scholarships

DEMAND



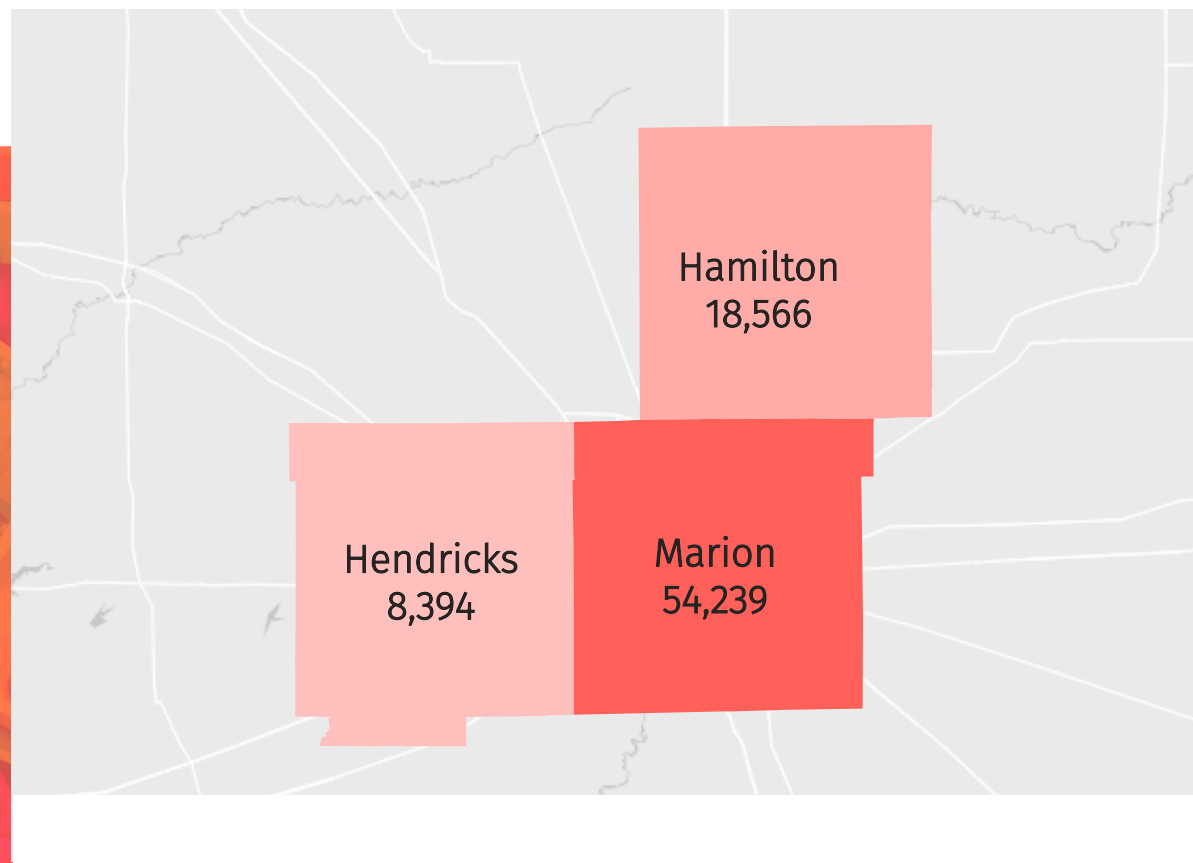
Public data for children who need care reflect children with all parents in the workforce. In the current reality, parents are much more likely to be keeping their children at home while they work.

Marion County is heavily populated and mostly urban, although it is home to a number of enclaves with a suburban or rural feel. Almost one third of its children live in poverty, and the median family income is only \$60,845. This is why programs with subsidized care are an important part of CCA's outreach to Marion County families. Nearly 14% of children in Marion County speak a language other than English at home, with 8.2% speaking Spanish. This illustrates the purpose for CCA's commitment to provide resources and communication in languages other than English. Almost half of Marion County's children are of a minority race, so social justice and diversity initiatives are an important factor of CCA's services to its population.

Hamilton County is home to many affluent suburbs of Indianapolis, but you will also find smaller towns and less-populated areas. In stark contrast to Marion County, Hamilton County household income is almost twice as high and only 5% of its children live in poverty (the lowest in Indiana).

Hendricks County includes not only large suburbs, but many rural areas as well. Income levels are not quite as high as Hamilton County but still well exceed Marion County. Although not diverse in the traditional sense - population is 83.7% white - Hendricks has a wide diversity of income levels, child care settings, and geographic accessibility.

Children Who May Need Care



Rose Wilson
Ivy Tech

I love working with CCA because they hold a positive and valuable service in our community. Everyone that I have worked with is responsive to collaboration, willing to support ideas and provide information when needed, and CCA staff are innovative thinkers. I look forward to sustaining a working relationship with Child Care Answers.

County	Children Who May Need Care
Marion	54,239
Hamilton	18,566
Hendricks	8,394
Total	81,199

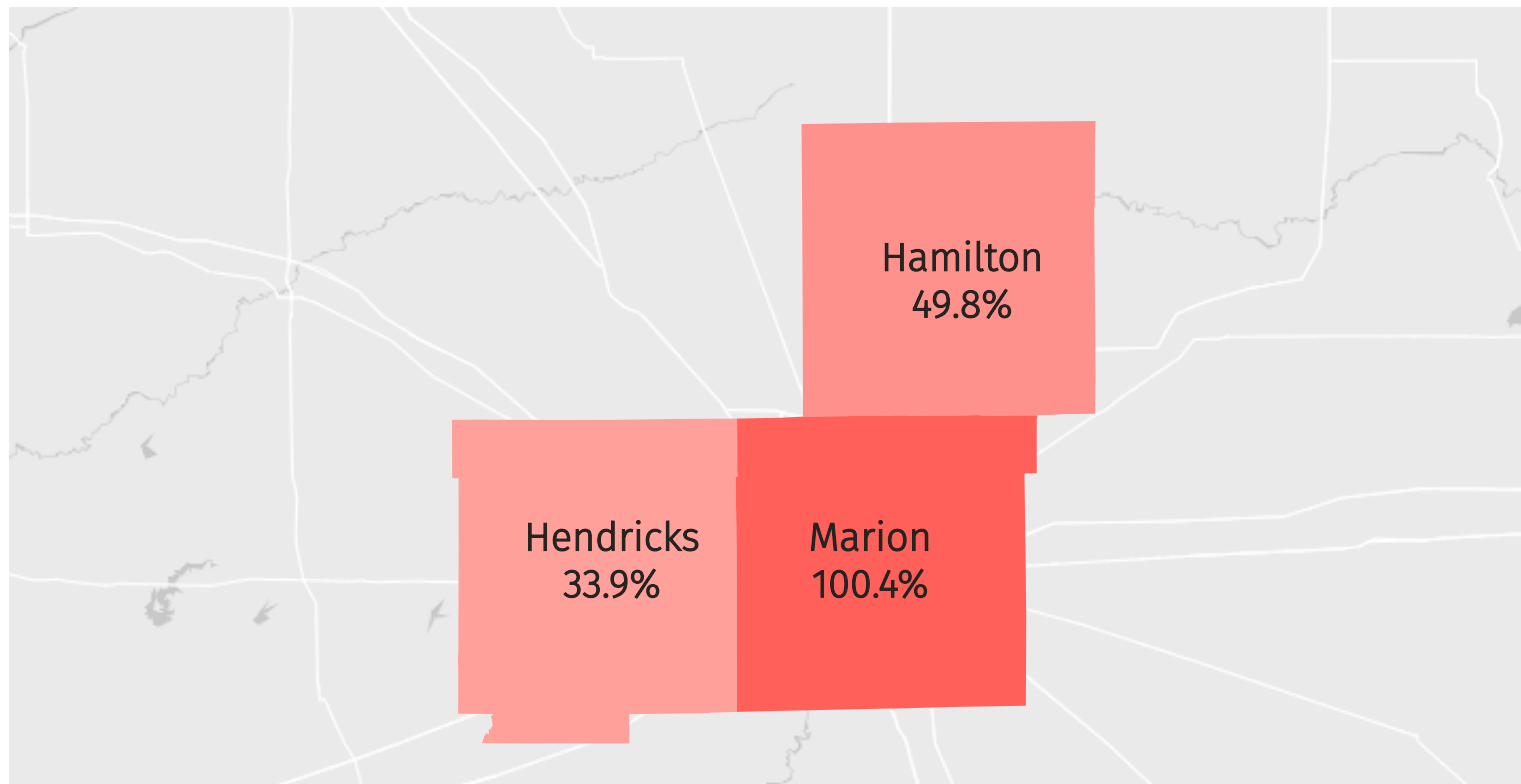
Marion County has the state's highest Capacity Sufficiency Rate (CSR), which is well above 100% in most of its census tracts, in some cases up to 760%. This translates to more slots than children who actually need care. Exceptions in Marion County include areas in:

- Decatur Township (24%)
- Franklin Township (22%)
- Neighborhoods south of Lafayette Square (29%)
- Portions of southern Lawrence Township (average 30%).

Similar trends arise in a rural/suburban line in Hamilton and Hendricks Counties. Most rural areas do not have sufficient capacity, whereas some suburban cities have more capacity than demand, such as:

- Plainfield - 103%
- Carmel - up to 266%
- Fishers - up to 136%
- Noblesville - up to 508%

Children Who Can be Served by Local Care Options

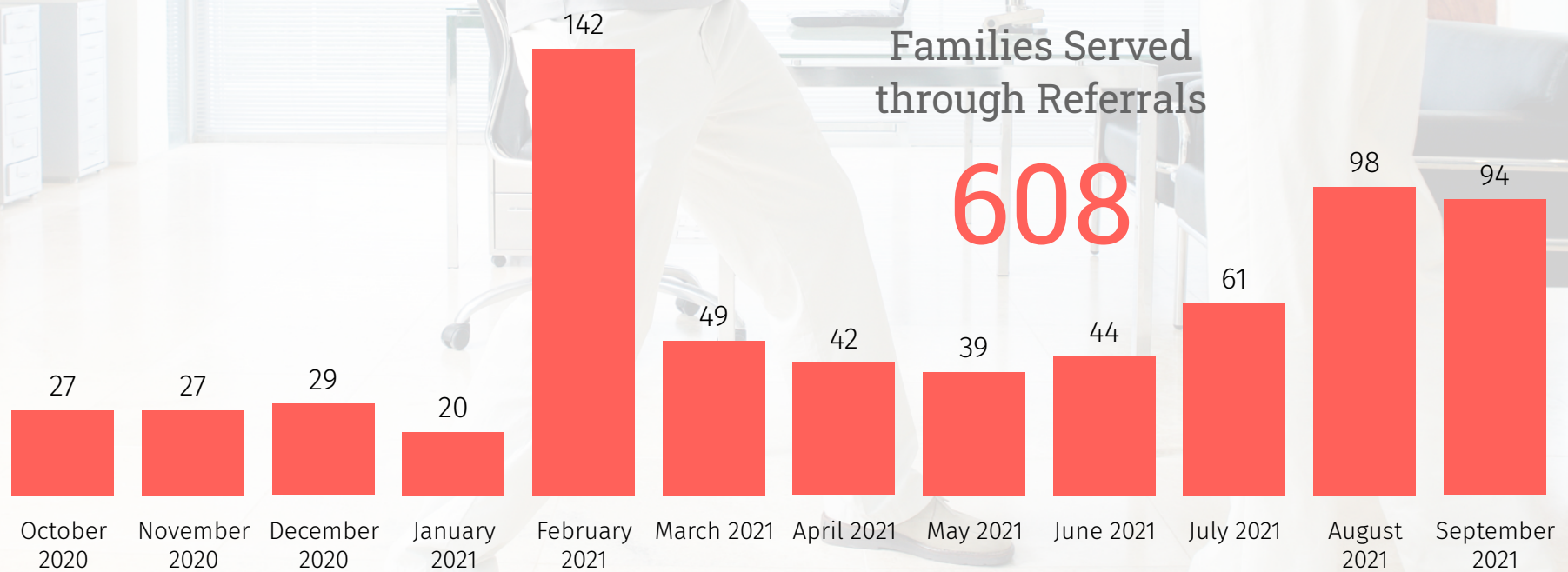


CCA saw a spike in referrals at varying points throughout the last year. In February, **staff made 886 calls and sent 1,794 emails to CCDF families** to support Maximus. Starting in August, staff began making biweekly CCDF calls (totaling 540) and sending emails (totaling 893) as well. Those who received emails were much more likely to request referral services. CCA also has a strong partnership with WFYI's **Bright by Text** service, and families received targeted texts about CCA's referral services in December, February, May, and September.

To improve referral services, CCA created a **simplified email** to accompany the list of child care programs. The email includes links to the website, which offers all the details a family might need throughout the process. The simple language not only made the information more accessible to those families with lower reading capabilities, but it also facilitated easier **translation** into other languages. Because the website is also translatable, families whose first language is not English are fully equipped to navigate the process of finding and choosing child care. As family engagement staff encounter families with different needs, they then pull from a bank of statements that ensure consistent language for children with special needs, expecting parents, and more.

August also introduced the new services of enhanced referrals. For families with children with special needs and/or infants, family engagement staff contact programs on behalf of families to inquire about available openings, cost, special services, and more. Discussions with programs also allowed CCA staff to prepare them for the family's needs when they come into the program. This is especially helpful for families who don't speak English or children with special needs.

Total Family Referrals by Month



CCA offered **11 more workshops** this year over last. **Attendance also increased by 50%**, and **208 families returned** for additional workshops. While some of this success can be attributed to volume and increased marketing on social media, CCA also found success in being more intentional about the topics offered. Staff assess family needs based on individual support conversations, surveys, and polls to choose topics that **focus on what was at the front of families' minds**, like diversity and play-based learning. Staff also found that families were more likely to attend - or to watch on YouTube - workshops that were **shorter and more focused**. So, CCA shortened many workshops to 30 minutes.

CCA continued offering its workshops **virtually**. Not only does this allow for recording of videos for later use, but families told CCA time and again that they preferred the convenience of watching online. Oftentimes, workshops received **video views on YouTube** that were many times more the amount of attendees at the live workshop.



Aimee
Mother of two

I have already made adjustments to our toileting routine and added rewards and reinforcers after attending your workshop. Things have improved since implementing your suggestions. Now we are hoping to try transitioning completely from pull-ups during the day.

CCA also found success in **partnering with a number of organizations** to offer topics that were both meaningful to families and the wider community, including the CCDF voucher office, Families First, IN*Source, Balance & Harmony Yoga, and Vaccinate Indiana.

Family engagement staff offered **private workshops** for specific groups, based on their individual needs. This allowed tailored content for the specific audience on a wide variety of topics. It also created content that could be repurposed for broader family options.

61

Total Workshops

790

Total Attendees

13

Average Attendance per Workshop

208

Attended multiple workshops

9.5

Average workshop rating (out of 10)

Individualized Support and Events for Families



This year, CCA completed **301 individualized support sessions for 153 families**. Staff generally connect with families more than once, and one family received nine sessions. **All post-session survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed** that the specialist was polite, professional, understood and met their needs, was able to answer questions, and went above-and-beyond. CCA family support increased in months where staff completed outreach to **CCDF** families (February, August, and September). **Bright-by-Text** campaigns targeting one-on-one support launched in November, March, and June - which slightly bumped numbers. As families began to learn about **Build Learn Grow**, many called the the *Indiana CARES about Child Care* hotline instead, which led the the Community Engagement Specialist to assist a number of families in May and June. CCA also advertises one-on-one support through its **workshops**. Because March and April had fewer workshops than usual, this may explain the decrease.

CCA offers its services through a **variety of media**, which allows families to receive support in the ways they want to be helped. Most choose to fill out the **family information form online** and correspond via **email**. Many Hispanic families prefer **phone conversations**. Families whose native language is not English generally prefer to correspond via **text**, so staff often use Google translate to text in the parent's preferred language. CCA's **website** also allows staff to send links to more detailed content, translated into the family's preferred language. CCA also leverages Brighter Futures Solution Center for additional **translation**.



Trhas
Tigrinya-speaking parent

Thank you ma'am, you are very helpful. You sent me the information in Tigrinya. I appreciate what you are doing. I cannot thank you enough for all that you do. Even my daughter was whispering to me how kind you are. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. We are sisters now. You are my sister.

Although vaccines have changed events somewhat in the past year, most family **events still remain virtual or in drive-thru** formats. In these cases, CCA is able to provide flyers to partners hosting events to share with families who attend. For example, Covering Kids & Families Drive-Thru Event distributed 2,000 backpacks, and CCA's family brochure was in every single one,

When events are held in-person, CCA staff have found that **parents generally attend for purposes other than finding child care**. CCA's strategy going forward is to use resources on parenting topics as way to draw families in to the conversation, which can then naturally evolve into a discussion about child care. Staff will also continue to work with partners to distribute flyers on our behalf, to increase our presence at more events. As families take the flyer home, they can then use the QR code or call our number at a time that makes sense for them based on their individual needs.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

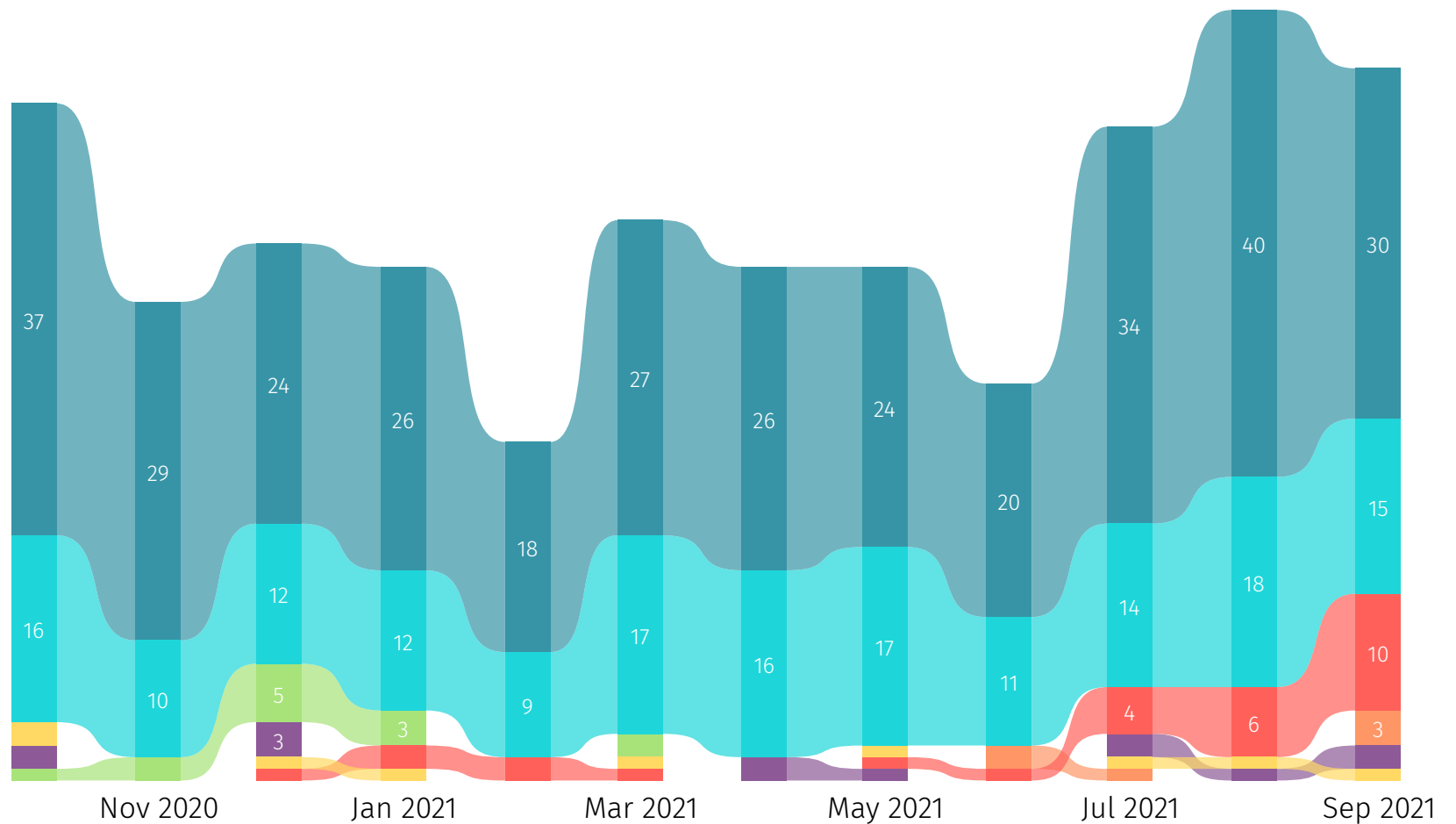


CCA's outreach activities generally follow a **quarterly cycle**. Many coalition meetings and partner connections are scheduled on a quarterly basis, and a number of those check-ins are grouped in the same month.

CCA staff continue to put out a high volume of emails and phone calls; however, their strategy for the coming year is to concentrate on how to get more **responses** from new and potential partners and employers. CCA will receive professional development on strategies often used in the sales arena. HR professionals tend to have **busy seasons** related to things like open enrollment, so CCA is working with professional organizations such as AAIM to gauge when the best time of year is to get maximum exposure to this audience.

Monthly Outreach Activities

● Brochures/Flyers ● Email ● Event/Training ● Other ● Phone Call ● Presentation ● Webinar/Meeting



CCA's recent **Community Engagement survey** highlighted the quality of work that the team is doing with partners. Both Net Promoter Score and response rates increased from 2020. Nearly 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their early childhood education knowledge increased, thanks to CCA.

As the community engagement team initiates and nurtures relationships, they share a number of **resources** with partners, including county-specific data on CCA's website and flyers promoting CCA's overall services and family support. CCA uses an email template that ensures consistent messaging but also allows for flexibility based on the partner's needs and interest. Specialists also use a standard presentation that combines information from the *Early Learning Matters* toolkit with specifics on central Indiana and CCA.

With **over 500 community partners**, staff stay very busy making connections and spreading the word about CCA services. At the same time, CCA's **relationships with partners also run deep**; a prime example is CCA's partnership with WFYI. Throughout the contract year, the Community Engagement Specialist worked with WFYI on a number of different initiatives, including a special needs panel event, Bright By Text, WFYI events, donations for families, and the *Be My Neighbor Day* event which was rescheduled for 2022. This work equaled out to 44 interactions. WFYI has been one of many partners that continue to work with CCA on new projects as they come along and the work shifts.

CCA is intentional to **make connections with community partners and then further connect them to individuals within CCA**. An example is the O'Connor House, which helps young mothers who do not currently have homes. After learning about the organization during a community presentation from O'Connor staff, the community engagement specialist (CES) connected to learn more and share CCA information and supports. Following the conversation, the CES connected both members of the family team to O'Connor, leading to future workshops, one-on-one support, and an ongoing relationship.

Community workshops on a variety of topics engage both partners who serve as presenter and community partners attending the workshop who also work with the families CCA serves. On average, these workshops attracted 26 attendees per workshop.

Staff continued to **adapt services based on COVID protocols**, through virtual meetings but also adding face-to-face events as vaccinations increased. CCA got creative with technology, enhancing virtual collaboration and scheduling. CCA increased the amount of flyers it sent to community events, especially as those events continued to be drive-thru or socially distanced.

Outreach expanded within the international community. For example, CCA worked with the Latino community through the Wayne Township library and within higher education at the Arabic Flagship Program and the African Studies Program at Indiana University.

77

Net Promoter Score

5%

Increase from 2019-20

56

Community partner respondents

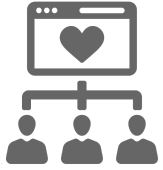
27.3%

Survey response rate



Ann McCafferty
Indiana Rural Health Association

Their spirit of helping the community is just reflected in everyone I have dealt with, their attitudes, their personality, the way they extend help to reach those I refer to them. It's just an overall pleasure. I know that when I reach out to them, I'm going to be met with "Yes, yes, we can help. Let us know what we can do for you." So, that's a real privilege, and it's just been an incredible opportunity.



Taylor Hurley Sitel Group

We worked closely with the CCA team to develop questions to fit our company and survey our employees on their childcare needs and struggles they experience. [We] examined the results, comments, and what actions our company can take from the results we were given. [CCA presented] these results to our leadership team and tips on how to approach child care issues with employees. [CCA] offered a ton of support for us not only from the website but also information about aid programs for our essential workers. Finally, CCA has been working to find daycares in the area for our employees that offer them a discount. Child care is a huge issue among our workforce and finding affordable child care in the area too. CCA has taken our needs and been working to put together different options for our employees. All together Sitel is extremely appreciative for the opportunity to have worked with CCA and help serve our employees better.

As the vaccine arrived, the relationship growth specialist was able to begin attending events face-to-face, which contributed to a boost in engagement level and increased ability to connect with more employers. The team saw particular success with Hendricks and Hamilton chambers and was even featured in a national case study by the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation**, highlighting work with the **Brownsburg chamber** and **OneSource chamber**.

As a part of its rebranding efforts, CCA distributed a press release highlighting the importance of child care access for employees and how businesses can address the worker shortage with CCA support. As a result, the executive director was invited to appear on the **Inside Indiana Business** television show, where she was able to promote our services to a large audience.

CCA continues to advance relationships with businesses, offering extended support such as survey creation and distribution, targeted data reports, consultation with human resources and senior leadership, and recommendations about implementing family-friendly policies and benefits.

48

Business Engagement Level 1

17

Business Engagement Level 2

84

Business Engagement Level 3

CCA posts daily to its social media channels in order to communicate just-in-time updates, advertise services, promote workshops, and share information from partners. Each profile has a slightly different demographic, so types and frequency of content varies on each network:






Facebook maintains most of the child care programs that followed the page during CCA's previous contract, which was program-heavy. Therefore, its demographic skews heavily towards females (93% of followers) in the 25-44 age range (60% of followers).

Twitter tends to be more popular with community partners and thought leaders. Two-thirds of CCA's followers are women, and ages tend to skew older. Nearly one-fourth of CCA's Twitter followers are in the 45-54 age bracket. vs. 16% on Facebook.

Instagram follows a similar demographic as Facebook, with 84% of its followers being women and 65% of people between the ages of 25 and 44. Because Instagram is a visual platform and does not support links, CCA posts less frequently than on Facebook and Twitter. Instagram caters more to families.

LinkedIn is CCA's newest social platform and was revived leading up to CCA's separation from Early Learning Indiana. Although LinkedIn does not report on gender or age, its followers are most frequently in a management position or higher, in fields such as community and social services, business development, and HR. Content posted on LinkedIn is laser-focused to this audience, generally consisting of information about and promotion of CCA's services to employers.

YouTube's demographics are a major shift from the rest of CCA's social media, with 80% of CCA's audience being male and mostly within the ages of 25-44. CCA has benefited greatly from YouTube's algorithm, with a few of its videos consistently going viral by appearing in recommended videos or search.

		Followers	Impressions	Engagement	Posts
	Facebook	2,251	282,109	7,008	368
	Twitter	971	77,654	838	427
	Instagram	665	16,805	728	173
	LinkedIn**	148	3,229	319	25
	YouTube	89	9,822*	384	60

CONCLUSION

As Child Care Answers enters its first full year as an independent organization, leadership and staff will look to 2020-21 as a year that offered many lessons for the future.

- **CCA is equipped to take advantage the opportunities the pandemic created.** The pandemic shined on light on the essential nature of child care to families in central Indiana. CCA will continue to remain nimble and innovative in order to meet the ever-changing needs of its families, programs, businesses, and the broader central Indiana community.
- **Central Indiana organizations need each other to improve the lives of children and families.** By collaborating with other community organizations and early childhood partners, CCA must collaborate effectively to ensure the best service possible to its audiences. Similarly, when CCA learns more about its partners, it improves the access and resources for those it serves.
- **The power of teamwork can do amazing things.** CCA staff continued to exceed their goals, going above and beyond to help families, programs, businesses, and the community.



Child Care Resource and Referral Network

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