
Meeting Child Care Needs in Growth Communities – Flint Hills Region of Fort Riley and Manhattan, Kansas

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Manhattan, KS

OEA Defense Communities Conference

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Challenges of Child Care

- Increasing child care capacity in ways that address affordability and quality
- Facilities – in family homes, dedicated houses, churches, businesses, centers
- Workforce – size, wages, benefits, vacations, sick leave, training
- Scholarships and subsidies to those in need
- \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ for all of this

FHRG Plan Quality of Life Indicators

- Most notable deficit is in child care
- High percent of median income spent on child care
- Number of children assisted by child care subsidies falls short of demand
- Population and economic growth associated with Fort Riley increases demand for child care
- Up to 1621 spaces may be needed regionally

Statement of Need

- Finding affordable, accessible and quality child care in the Flint Hills region has always been a challenge. With the expansion of Fort Riley, the demand for child care will be even greater.
- Based upon historical trends, it is estimated that Manhattan's share of this need will be 250-500 additional child care spaces.
- Child care is more expensive than many working families can afford.

Statement of Need

- Child care providers are generally not able to purchase health insurance or other employment benefits available at for-profit employers.
- Salary levels are also quite low, making it difficult to recruit qualified employees needed to provide quality care and teaching.
- Recruitment and retention of businesses employees is directly affected by child care availability and costs.

History

- September 2006 Regional Child Care Summit
- MDCLC Space and Facility Challenges
- Focus Group Invitation by Mayor Snead and Chamber President Butler
- Needs Survey Conducted in November 2006
- Identifying resources/programs for providers to access from local, state and federal sources
- Focus Group Meetings over a three year period continue to provide info exchange and on post status
- Secured Federal Earmark \$500,000 –approved Jan 08 for child care facilities/projects by the city of Manhattan

Organizations Engaged

- KDHE –KS Dept of Health and Environment
- SRS- Social and Rehabilitative Services
- KACCRRRA –KS Assoc of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Raising Riley - Smart Start – Riley County/Manhattan Health Dept.
- USD 383 Pre K Pilot Program
- US Army Child and Youth Services – ACCYN
- FHRRA – Flint Hills Resource and Referral Agency
- KCCTO –KS Child Care Training Organization
- Cloud County Early Childhood Centers – RRA
- Head Start
- Family Child Care Providers Network of the Flint Hills
- Child Care Providers Coalition of Kansas
- MDCLC - Manhattan Day Care and Learning Center
- KSU Center for Child Development

Child Care Action Plan for Riley County/Manhattan

- An action planning effort over the last three years in the Manhattan/Riley County/Fort Riley region through collaboration and cooperation in an attempt to meet longstanding and immediate challenges of child care availability, affordability and quality.
- A broad spectrum of community stakeholders has been engaged to help access resources and develop proposals, with monthly focus group meetings, community presentations, and special meetings of providers and agency representatives in an iterative process.

Child Care Action Plan for Riley County/Manhattan

- Transitions in state and local childcare resource organizations, opportunities for pre-K funding, and engaging the business community with viable options, have all impacted this effort, under the overall influence of Fort Riley growth.
- Fort Riley has added significant capacity and has drawn workforce from the region to on post centers
- Cooperation and communication to help off post providers access training and other resources continues

City and County Move to Require Inspection of All Registered Child Care

- Child care providers in Kansas fall into two categories: licensed and registered. Licensed child-care homes, which can care for up to 10 children, must meet health, safety and space requirements. They are inspected yearly by city and county health departments.
- Registered child care homes may care for as many as six children, including the provider's children. They fill out a checklist for standards, but are not inspected and are visited only in response to complaints.
- Manhattan and Riley County have drafted ordinances requiring inspection of all registered providers – action pending after legislature concludes its session allowing for any adjustment based on state level changes
- Action expected before year end by the city of Manhattan

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