CHILDCARE and HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Current Situation

Affordability, quality, and availability of childcare are pressing issues affecting families around the country. A 2016 study by care.com and the think tank New America found that the average cost of fulltime care in childcare centers for ages 0-4 is $9,589 a year, which is above the average cost of in-state college tuition ($9,410). https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/press-releases/new-index-measuring-us-child-care/

Childcare costs of this magnitude are utterly unaffordable for single parents and couples that rely on low-wage jobs for income.

The Indiana Institute for Working Families has developed a "Self-Sufficiency Standard". http://www.incap.org/iiwf/self-sufficiency/2016-Self-sufficiency-report.pdf which is a bare bones, county-specific budget that would meet all the basic necessities of a family, entailing childcare, housing, transportation, food and healthcare. Based on that bare bones budget, it is then calculated what the hourly wage and yearly income parents would have to earn to meet that budget.

The Table below shows that a Monroe County adult with one preschool child needs to make $20.44 an hour, or an annual income of $43,173, to live a "bare bones" existence covering basic costs of living. In a family with one adult, a preschooler and a school-age child that amount would be $27.72 per hour or $58,535 annually. In a family with two adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child, if both parents were working, each would have to earn $15.56 per hour, for a combined annual income of $65,730.

Please note that for both of the last two scenarios, childcare costs in Monroe County exceed the cost of housing (see table).

	Adult	Adult/ Preschooler	Adult /Preschooler/ School age	2 Adults /infant/ Preschooler
Monthly Costs				
Housing	$709	$913	$913	$913
Childcare	$0	$752	$1,215	$1,638
Food	$251	$381	$575	$717
Transportation	$241	$248	$248	$472
Health Care	$178	$463	$488	$535
Misc.	$138	$276	$344	$428
Taxes	$327	$699	$853	$1,041
Earned-Income Tax credit	$0	$0	$0	$0
Childcare Tax Credit	$0	($50)	($100)	($100)
Child Tax Credit	$0	($83)	($167)	(167)
	$1,842.00	$3598	$4370	$5478
Self Sufficiency Wage				
Hourly	$10.48	$20.44	$27.72	$15.56 per adult
Monthly	$1,845	$3,598	$4,878	$5,478
Annual	$22,136	$43,173	$58,535	$65,730
Emergency Savings monthly contribution	$52	$107	$194	$85
2015 Poverty Level	$11,770	$15,930	$20,090	$24,250

Self –Sufficiency Standard for Monroe County, 2016, p. 79, Table 53 in: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana 2016 , prepared by the Indiana Institute for Working Families, http://www.incap.org/iiwf/self-sufficiency/2016-Self-sufficiency-report.pdf

In any of the scenarios of families with children in the Table above the self-sufficiency wage is roughly between 2 to almost 3 times higher than the federal poverty level. For example, the family with one adult, one preschooler and one school age child would be considered poor at an income of $20,000 per year according to the federal poverty level, while the self-sufficiency budget is 58,535 per year.

According to Kids Count Data Center, in the year 2015, 1820 children in Monroe County aged 0-5 lived in families with income below 100% of the poverty level. An additional 1530 children lived in families with incomes between 100-200% of the poverty level, unable to earn enough to meet the self-sufficiency budget. Since for some families the self-sufficiency wage is almost 3 times the federal poverty level, the Table below is probably underestimation of the number of children in poverty.

Monroe County Poverty Level Population 0-5		
Poverty Level	**Total**	**Percent**
Below 100%	1820	20.4%
100% to 199%	1530	17.2%
Total Below 200%	**3350**	**37.8%**

Kids Count, 2015

Children born into families struggling with the hardships of poverty, including stress, lack of nutritious food, long work hours for parents who try to make ends meet, and precarious childcare arrangements, are unlikely to receive the kind of nurturing that is needed to lay a foundation for a more prosperous future. Instead, they are at risk of staying in poverty, are more likely to have run-ins with the criminal justice system, and in need of public assistance as adults. It thus has repercussions on our whole community for years after infants and toddlers have grown into adulthood.

In order to break out of that cycle, children need safe, nurturing environments that promote school readiness and lay the foundation for high school completion and skill-building. These children require more than a place to be parked where they are reasonably safe and entertained.   They necessitate high quality childhood education woven into childcare services.

The early years of a child, i.e. the years between ages 0-3, have the most profound effect on the child's future. The first three years in the life of a child shape their social behavior and learning ability. The effects of these early years are already evident as they enter kindergarten at age 5 and can be observed into adulthood.

While high quality early childhood education is important to the development of children regardless of family income (and has rightly received attention in the mayor's Wage taskforce report), it is paramount for children growing up in poverty. It needs to start at an early age (0-3) to reach the highest levels of effectiveness. Economists have calculated that investments in early childhood high quality education pays large dividends to society.   They in bring significant returns (up to 16%) (Blakely, Edward J., and Nancey Green Leigh. *Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and Practice*. SAGE, 2017 page 314)

The public believes affordable childcare needs to be addressed.   The problem continues to be a priority issue for The City of Bloomington and the community at-large.   According to the Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Consolidated Plan 2015, affordable childcare ranks just below mental health issues as a community concern. This was established through surveys, historic and existing data, and focus groups. (p. 55)
https://bloomington.in.gov/sites/default/files/2017-05/old_2015-2019_consolidated_plan.pdf

Not surprisingly, the (market) cost of high quality early childhood education is somewhat above the average of all childcare costs. In Monroe County, it is $10, 648 per year for an infant, and $10,156 for a toddler, compared to an average across ages 0-5 of $9,828.

Monroe County Average Cost of High Quality Care (2017 ELAC Dashboard) (*I. High quality is defined as participation in Paths to QUALITY Level 3, Level 4 or nationally accredited by an approved accreditation body.*)

CHILD's AGE	ANNUAL COSTS
Infant	$10,648

City of Bloomington Common Council "Affordable Living Committee"

Toddler	$10,156
Preschool	$8748
County Average 0-5	9,828
State Average	8,482

Monroe County Average Cost of High Quality Care (2017 ELAC Dashboard) (I. High quality is defined as participation in Paths to QUALITY Level 3, Level 4 or nationally accredited by an approved accreditation body.)

Source: http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/County-Profiles-All.pdf Monroe County P. 108

Quality of Childcare in Indiana is assessed by "Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ)", a statewide rating system for early care and education programs. It is designed to provide families assistance in making informed decisions and to help early care and education providers improve their quality. [1]

The Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee ELAC reports that in 2015, there were 7,683 young children ages 0-5 in Monroe County. In 2016, 2,762 children were enrolled in known programs, and of these 1,106 children (40%) were enrolled in high–quality programs. [2]

Support programs for families who cannot afford to pay market rate childcare costs, and especially the costs of childcare that meets high quality early education standards is available in Monroe County though **Head Start** and **Monroe County United Ministries.**

Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide **free l**earning and development services to children aged 0 to 5 from low-income families.

According to the website of the Indiana State government's Family and Social Services Administration:

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[1] Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA); Paths to Quality http://www.in.gov/fssa/2554.htm, Paths to Quality, http://childcareindiana.org/
Level 4 Programs receive top rating that demonstrates a commitment to the highest level of professionalism in quality early care and education —achievement of a nationally recognized accreditation.
Level 3 Programs implement a curriculum that supports children's learning and school readiness. Level 3 programs have made a significant investment in the professional development of their staff, and they incorporate family and staff input into their program.
Level 2 Programs have demonstrated a commitment to improve program quality. These programs offer environments that support children's growth, development, and learning. Level 2 programs will have evidence of a consistent daily schedule, planned activities for children, and will provide relevant program information for families.
Level 1 Programs have voluntarily chosen to be a part of Paths to QUALITY. This means they care about providing quality early care and education. These programs meet all basic health and safety standards.
[2] http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/County-Profiles-All.pdf, p. 107

"**Head Start** programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children 3-5. They engage parents in their children's learning and help them in making progress toward their educational, literacy and employment goals."[3]

Early Head Start provides intensive, comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers (up to the age of 3) as well as to pregnant women and their families.

In Monroe County, the South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) offers Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Monroe County has **one Early Head Start** location in **Ellettsville**, and 11 locations throughout the County for the Head Start Program (ages 3-5).

Head Start also provides some families with services at home. These families are visited regularly by a SCCAP family advocate.

Head Start is unique with its focus on the whole family. Every family (whether services are provided at the home or in Head Start locations) goes through an initial, brief STRENGTH AND NEEDS assessment. Later on the family is offered a more thorough assessment. Participation in that is voluntary. Out of this more thorough assessment may result a **Partnership Agreement**, with which parents agree to work with a family advocate on any number of issues that parents want to resolve. Issues could be drug abuse, finding employment, or getting a GED, getting healthcare…. this is very flexible. About ½ of the parents have partnership agreements.

Parents are also encouraged to be partners in the education of their children. All families get Home Learning Calendars that the teachers fill out with things parents can do with their children at home. The calendars are individualized for each child.

Table X: Number of children enrolled in head start in Monroe County[4]

Location	Head Start	Data Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Early Head Start	Number	0	57	57	57	57
Monroe	Head Start	Number	235	267	267	267	267
	Total	Number	235	324	324	324	324

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[3] http://www.in.gov/fssa/2679.htm
[4] Indiana Youth Institute, Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment in Monroe County
http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5191-early-head-start-and-head-start-funded-enrollment-slots?loc=16&loct=5#15-indiana-youth-institute

The numbers from the Indiana Youth Institute only go to 2013. Ashly Oliver (SCCAP) provided updated numbers for the 2016/17 school year:

At the end of the 2016/17 school year:
Early Head Start: 57 enrolled, 82 on waiting list.
Head Start: 267 enrolled, 93 on waiting list.

Ashley Oliver pointed out that even though there are long waitlists, sometimes Head Start locations in the county have open slots that cannot be filled, due to lack of transportation. Parents just don't have a way to get their children there.

Head Start used to provide transportation to all its locations, but had to cut most of these services as the result of federal budget cuts (sequester) a few years ago. [5] The two locations that still provide transportation are Fairview and Broadview schools.

> "Childcare is unattainable for those without vouchers, even with vouchers transportation is an issue. Getting to and from the Head Start. 4/6/2017 Thriving Connections participant

Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM):

This Program provides high-quality childcare and is open to households of all income levels. It provides childcare services for children age 6 months to 6 years old. Parents must be Monroe County residents and be working full-time or working part-time while attending school. A few spots are available for children of full-time students.

Low-income families receive first priority for enrollment. Fees are determined on family size and income.

The lowest rate is $50 per child per week; the highest rate is $210 per child per week for children in the 3-5 year-old range, and $250 per child per week for 2 year olds.

The average family on MCUM's sliding scale pays $60 per week, and a discount is available to families with more than one child enrolled. The monthly costs are therefore less than one third of what market rate childcare would cost (according to the Self-Sufficiency Standard).

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[5] Michael Alison Chandler, Head Start eliminated services to 57,000 children in US as a result of sequester. Washington Post, August 19, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/head-start-eliminated-services-to-57000-children-in-us-as-a-result-of-sequester/2013/08/18/e1181810-06d9-11e3-9259-e2aafe5a5f84_story.html?utm_term=.cb6fb71deb5b

City of Bloomington Common Council "Affordable Living Committee"

> Working with Chances and Services for Youth (CASY) for childcare assistance was so difficult that if I did not have the help I would have never made it through the process. It is complicated with huge scheduling issues to meet them as they are from Terre Haute and only in Bloomington once a week. You have to already have a job, and then two weeks later can apply. What you then find is that all of the good childcare facilities are booked with long waiting lists. You have to have the right person to navigate you through this process. – One participant at Thriving Connections

The Compass Downtown facility at 219 E. Fourth Street and the Compass North program on West 14th Court both have achieved Level 4 Paths To Quality as well as other high Indiana and national standards [6]

MCUM Capacity

Downtown: Infant-Toddler: 36   Two-Five: 60   Total Capacity: 96
North: Toddler-Two: 10   Three-Twelve: 74   Total Capacity: 84

CCDF Vouchers

For families without access to free Head Start or low-cost MCUM Programs, there is a possibility of receiving subsidies for buying childcare in private childcare center through the Childcare Development Fund (CCDF) Voucher Program. Families do not have to enroll in a specific Paths to Quality level facility.

The Childcare and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal program that helps low-income families obtain childcare so that they may work, attend training or continue their education. The purpose of CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability and quality of childcare. Bloomington's in-take office (where families have to apply for a voucher) is Chances and Services for Youth (CASY) located in Terre Haute. Only for one afternoon a week a CASY representative is present in Bloomington to assistant with applications.

In order to obtain childcare vouchers, parent(s) must be full-time employed or in-school. The child must already be in an accredited facility in order to be added to the wait-list. The families with the lowest of incomes receive priority.

The following Table shows how many children in Monroe County are receiving CCDF childcare vouchers and how many are on waitlists.

Table X: Number of Children in Monroe County receiving CCDF Vouchers [7]

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[6] MCUM Childcare Program, http://mcum.org/programs/compass/
[7] Kids Count, Monroe County Data, Children Receiving child care vouchers, http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/1170-children-receiving-child-care-vouchers?loc=16&loct=2#detailed/2/16/false/870,573,869,36,868/any/2547

Location	Data Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Monroe	Number	612	605	630	463	557

Table X: Monthly average number of children in Monroe County on waitlist for CCDF vouchers[8]

Location	Data Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Monroe	Number	77	93	47	165	67

IU's Parent Cooperatives

As of August of 2017, Indiana University (IU) decided to close their two parent co-op facilities that offered a rare affordable childcare option. Parents work shifts as volunteer caregivers in order to receive care for their children at a fraction of the costs they would otherwise face. The price is about $250 a month or one week of care at other accredited IU facilities. The IU Provosts closed the co-ops in the desire to have all of the facilities accredited, which according to the Provost, could not happen in this co-op model. [9]

Monroe County Community School Corporation - Preschool

High quality early childhood education is available at all MCCSC preschool programs that use the **Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards** for young children. The Foundations are aligned with the Indiana Academic Standards for kindergarten in a developmentally-appropriate way and reflect the types of experiences and interactions early learners need in order to be ready to transition to kindergarten. Thirteen of our nineteen preschools are **Level 3 Paths to Quality preschools** according to the Indiana Department of Family and Social Services.
https://www.mccsc.edu/Page/211

The current fees for a working parent who drops of a child at 7:00 AM and picks it up at 5:30 pm (this includes before and after school care) is $37 per day. With 20 school days in a month, the cost

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[8] Kids Count, Monroe County Data, Monthly average number of children on waiting list for child care vouchers, http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/1171-monthly-average-number-of-children-on-waiting-list-for-child-care-vouchers?loc=16&loct=2

[9] Hoosier Times, Oct. 1 2017, Michael Reschke, Child Care Coops Closing

will be 720 per month, which is only slightly lower than the amount of $752 calculated in the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Without before and after school care, the costs will be $520 per month.

There is no childcare available when school is off, which posed problems for working parents.

New Monroe County Community School Corporation Facility Planned to Open Fall 2018

After the closing of IU's childcare coops and of the Northwest YMCA's program many families were left without childcare. The Monroe County Community School Corporation responded to the need and will open a new early childhood care facility for about 90 children aged from 6 months to pre-kindergarten. [10]

Enrollment cost for 40 weeks will range from $7,800-$9,800, depending on a student's age. The MCCSC plans to use Title I funding to help offset costs for low-income families. The center will be open from July 30 to May 31, and will observe all of the same holidays and breaks as the district, just as the Hoosier Hills Career Center child-care program does. Hours: 6:45 a.m.-5:45 p.m., Monday-Friday. Enrollment basis is first-come, first-served.

Indicators:

1. Total number of children 0-5 in Monroe County; and total number (and percentages of all children) of children living at or below 100% of poverty level, and between 100% and 200% of poverty level.(Kids Count Data Center)

2. # of Children Receiving Childcare Vouchers and monthly average of children on waitlist for vouchers (Indiana Youth Institute)

3. # of Children enrolled and children waitlisted for Early Head Start and Head Start (and % of children age 0-5 receiving enrolled in Head Start

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[10] Howell, Brittani "MCCSC aims to fill a void with early childhood center" *Bloomington Herald Times*, Feb 18, 2018 https://tinyurl.com/y8fsmmkg

(Indiana Youth Institute and direct inquiry with SCCAP)

4. # of Children from families with income < 200% poverty level enrolled and waitlisted for MCUM Programs (info from MCUM). Please note MCUM gives priority to low income families, however it is open to families of all incomes. If possible, information about # of kids from families < 200 % poverty level could be obtained from MCUM

5. # of children from families with income < 200% of poverty level enrolled and waitlisted in MCCSC's new childcare program

6. **# of informal or formal childcare providers that received training in high quality childhood education. (related to recommendation)**

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to the Bloomington City Council, the Mayor, IU Bloomington, local charities, and community members about increasing opportunities for children ages 0 to pre-kindergarten to receive appropriate early childhood education, even though their families may not be able to pay for it.

1) **Invest in the Future**

   Bloomington mayor and city council should use their influence to enlist the Community Foundation, Chamber of Commerce and their members, other employer circles and individuals to invest into the community's future. They can do this by providing ongoing funding support that allows families to access high–quality early childhood education they would otherwise be unable to afford. This may include direct subsidies to families, childcare providers or financial support for some of the initiatives listed below.

As laid out above, our community, region and state would greatly benefit from making sure that our youngest, most vulnerable community members receive the care, stimulation and education that ensures a bright future for them.

2) **City Land and Buildings**

Search for property/buildings that the City, private companies, non-profits, and utilities could make available at below market rate to non-profit childcare providers (Switchyard Park? Other parks? Storage facilities? Trades District? Any new City structure?)
South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) would like to expand availability of their Early-Head Start program to the City of Bloomington, but lacks the space. Currently Early Head Start is only available in one location in Ellettsville.

3) **Downtown Childcare with High Early Education Rating**

City should explore the need for, possible locations, and funding sources for a shared (between different employers) downtown childcare facility (with high early childhood education rating), serving city employee's families and other families with jobs in the downtown area. For example it would include a consortium of employees working for county, and possibly IU employees).

4) **City's Community and Family Resources Department: Develop and Oversee a <u>Teaching the Teachers Program</u>**

We recommend the City's Community and Family Resources Department make connections with IU School of Education /IVY TECH – service learning opportunities to organize ongoing, free "Teaching the Teachers" programs on high quality early childhood education. This would be geared especially towards staff at childcare facilities, parent coops, and the childcare volunteer corps (see more about that below)

5) **IVY TECH and IU School of Education, the City's Community and Family Resources Department's Volunteer Network, SCCAP and the Nurse/Family Partnership Program working together to develop and promote an <u>Early Childhood Education Volunteer Corps</u>**

The purpose of this adult/senior Early Childhood Education volunteer corps is to go into childcare facilities and visit family-based and informal providers (grandparents, for example) to supplement activities for children and expand their exposure to early childhood education.

   a. City would recruit and run background checks,
   b. SCAAP and Nurse/Family Partnership may be able to provide connections with families that would benefit from the services provided by the volunteers, and SCCAP especially could use their expertise in early childhood education and family support to help design and shape the program.

     c. IU School of Education /IVY TECH – service learning programs would be involved to provide a reliable stream of education students who would train volunteers, and professors would provide their expertise for the development of the program.

6) **City's Community and Family Resources Department: Spread the Word about existing childcare programs**
Collecting and disseminating information about low-cost and no-cost learning opportunities for children *(Examples: Library programs, Smart Start, Born Learning trail……* https://www.monroeunitedway.org/sites/monroeunitedway.org/files/BornLearningPlayPat hFlyerFNL.pdf

7) **Other support for parents, informal and home-based childcare providers and child-care cooperatives:**

     a. With IU cancelling its **parent coop program**, it has become apparent that there are some crucial elements that might help such cooperatives ~~to~~ achieve high and consistent standards of excellence. One concern is about background checks, another about the need for a staff member with a degree in early childhood education to be available. This is a call to local non-profits engaged with children, the City of Bloomington and IU, to find creative and affordable means to assure training and ongoing supervision of parent-cooperatives (if they desire to have certification as high quality early childhood education providers).

     b. **Help expanding informal childcare providers' support**- intended for those who provide informal childcare (grandparents, neighbors, older children) as well as for parents. One local organization that already does that is Monroe County Smart Start https://www.monroeunitedway.org/monroesmartstart . Smart Start offers Kindergarten Readiness checklist, booklet, literacy parties, and more).

     Another possibility is to include informal childcare providers in "Teaching the Teachers Programs (see above).

     Part of this is could be assembling and providing free Learning "Kits" of materials appropriate for children of different ages, including educational toys, books, and tips for things kids can explore inside and outside with their parents/caretakers (as an extension of "Born Learning" and Smart Start); the kits could be assembled by volunteers with low cost materials from Salvation Army/Goodwill and distributed through social service agencies, churches…; Smart Start is already providing learning kits, this would be an extension of that program. Encourage Smart Start to share their approach with other organizations to see how these programs could be expanded. The kits could be used and distributed for example by the Volunteer Corps (see

above), and made available through the MCPL, places of worship, the Nurse Family Partnership and any other organizations serving children and their families. **https://www.monroeunitedway.org/bornlearningdownloads, https://www.monroeunitedway.org/monroesmartstart**

c. **Born-Learning Trails**

City or social service agencies (or both together) could build more of these Born Learning Trails in parks and neighborhoods close to where the children live who could most benefit from them. The current trail is located on the Clear Creek Trail near the That Road trailhead and features outdoor games that engage children and their caregivers, but may not be accessible for families living in other parts of the city. https://www.monroeunitedway.org/bornlearningplaypath

d. **Thriving Connections for Parents**

Provide funding support to SCAAP and other organizations and agencies to set up parent circles (similar to "Thriving Connections") for ongoing support to families with pre-kindergarten children. SCAAP could provide guidance on how to set those up.