

## **The Childcare Crisis in Rural North Dakota**

### ***Building Sustainable Solutions through Creative Partnerships***

The childcare crisis of rural America hits close to home for many North Dakota communities. The “lack of daycare” has been identified as a [key concern](#) in North Dakota’s latest published Community Health Needs Assessments. Right now, the number of licensed childcare services in North Dakota covers only [40% of the current demand](#).

The challenges for offering affordable, quality childcare services are [complex](#), ranging from workforce shortages to high operational costs. The lack of options can be a deterrent to working parents, including those in the healthcare field. Having access to childcare is important not only for the workforce, but ultimately for a community’s economic development and long-term sustainability.

But there is hope. Successful models with North Dakota healthcare facilities at the forefront, are helping to alleviate the childcare burden on families, communities, and healthcare industries. This handout outlines key resources and examples that will help you become a part of the solution.

*Please reach out to the contacts provided for more information.*

## **Resources to Help**

1. [Child Care Aware of North Dakota](#) is the state’s trusted partner to provide childcare resource and referral services. Child Care Aware supports communities in developing innovative strategies, grants, and tools to build capacity for childcare services.
  - [The State of Child Care in North Dakota](#) offers detailed information and statistics that can support action plans.
  - [Child Care in Your Community: Strategies to Build Capacity and Support](#) can be used as an aid for healthcare facilities and the greater community.

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2. [The Rural Health Information Hub](#) (RHInhub), a national, online clearinghouse located at the North Dakota Center for Rural Health.
  - Several [models and innovations](#) provide updated examples of partnerships between healthcare facilities and communities to meet local childcare needs.
  - [Resources](#) related to rural health and childcare are regularly added to the site.

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## Models to Follow

1. [Grand Forks Region Economic Development](#) exemplifies the role economic development can have in creating viable childcare solutions on a local level. By partnering with a financial institution, GFRED has initiated ways to reduce the burden of debt for childcare facilities.

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2. Through a combined effort of local businesses, the [Energy Capital Cooperative Child Care](#) (ECCCC) has brought needed childcare to their employees in Mercer County, North Dakota. Sakakawea Medical Center and Coal Country Community Health Center were some of the founding partners and continue supporting its operation.

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3. Housed within the [Towner County Medical Center](#), Cando Community Childcare has received support from local businesses for equipment and financial costs. The center has played a successful role in the recruitment and retention of healthcare workers.

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4. [Benedictine Living Community of Ada](#) is a Minnesota nursing home that built a childcare center in response to a need in the community. The on-site location allows for daily intergenerational activities among children and the elderly residents, an educational focus for children, and discounted rates for staff.

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5. Founded in 1998, [Eventide Devils Lake Care Center](#)'s onsite childcare center has gained expertise and respected longevity for a successful healthcare/childcare partnership. Employees take advantage of the reduced rate which is offered as a part of their benefits package.

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6. [Nelson County Health System Hospital](#) of McVille recently transformed a nearby house into a childcare center. This decision has already helped in recruitment and retention of healthcare workers, who receive a reduced rate for the service.

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*“Don’t let cost make your decision for you. Don’t do it for money.  
Do it because it’s a needed service.”*

-Ben Bucher, CEO  
Towner County Medical Center