Building a Child Care Business

The Situation
One of the more challenging obstacles facing America’s workforce is the difficulty of finding quality, reliable, affordable child care. The lack of child care openings in 2016 in the Lake Region has impacted the ability for parents to seek or to continue employment. This has impacted the local economy to the extent that some small businesses have considered closing. In turn, individuals beginning home child care businesses and child care centers are often overwhelmed by the business management side of operating a day care.

Extension Response
Extension agents: Kristi Berdal, Kim Fox, Sara Laite and Brenda Langerud partnered with ND Child Care Aware, Lake Social Services, North Central Planning and the University of North Dakota (UND) Early Childhood Education to bring an in-depth seminar focusing on the business and personal management side of operating a child care to the Lake Region. At the workshop, Brenda presented information on parenting educational resources available from NDSU and taught a hands-on demo on car seat safety and car seat checkups.

Impact
From the “day of” evaluation:
• 100% of the thirteen attendees responded they felt competent or very competent in “writing a business plan for their child care business” as opposed to 0% feeling competent prior to the workshop
• 92% of the attendees responded that they felt competent or very competent in “my ability to hire qualified workers” as opposed to 30% who felt competent prior to the workshop

From the “six months following” evaluation:
• 100% of the nine respondents had implemented an idea from the workshop in their existing child care business or plan to implement an idea when they open their business
• 30% of the respondents had written a business plan or made significant changes to their business plan

From data by Lake Social Services licensing worker six months following the workshop:
A total of sixty-one day care slots had been added to the in-home and group child care businesses operated by the workshop attendees. An additional child care business is still in the process of being licensed. This potentially yields seventy total slots being added as a result of the workshop.

Feedback
• “This was great! Great speakers!”
• “Would like to see more workshops like this in Devils Lake with licensing credit”
• “Good flow of speakers through the day!”
• “I plan to modify the application questions used for new hires.”
• “Now I can now work on increasing our enrollment”

Public Value Statement
Access to quality child care provides positive learning environments, school readiness and reduced stress on parents. Having enough day care openings contributes to growing the economy.

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