



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

1001 W. KENNEDY AVE. SUITE A, KIMBERLY, WI 54136 | CCRRFOXVALLEY.ORG | 920.886.1211



**Child Care Resource
& Referral Network**

POWERED BY  THRIVING WISCONSIN

Improving the quality and accessibility of early childhood education and care across Northeast Wisconsin, serving Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Sheboygan, Waupaca, and Winnebago counties.

Supporting families, strengthening child care providers, and informing decisions that affect early childhood across Northeast Wisconsin.

Dear Friends,

Each year brings new challenges and new opportunities in early childhood education. In 2025, child care programs across our region continued to navigate staffing shortages, funding uncertainty, and increasing demand from families. CCR&R remained focused on offering steady support and clear information so families and providers could make thoughtful decisions in a shifting landscape.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with families searching for care and with providers doing the daily work of keeping classroom and care centers open. We also continued sharing local child care data and participating in community conversations about access and workforce needs. **Reliable child care allows parents to work, businesses to operate, and children to grow in safe, nurturing environments.**

I have seen so much generosity and care pour into this work from our community. Providers supporting one another. Businesses asking how they can help. Volunteers giving their time. That goodness is real, and I am deeply grateful to be part of it.

I am especially thankful for the dedication of our staff and the leadership of our Board of Directors. Their commitment strengthens child care across the eight counties we serve. In November, CCR&R was honored to receive the Community Service Business of the Year award from the Fox West Chamber of Commerce. We are proud of this recognition and of the team who made it possible.

Part of my role as Executive Director is making sure people understand how CCR&R can help and why this work matters to our region. I also hope to help others discover the sense of purpose and connection that comes from being involved in early childhood work.

We welcome partnership with businesses, volunteers, community leaders, and neighbors who care about children and families. **If you are curious about what CCR&R does or how you might be part of it, I encourage you to reach out. Once you learn more about the impact of this work, I believe you will see why so many people choose to stay involved!**

With appreciation,



Candy Hall
Executive Director, CCR&R
(920) 376-8598
candyh@ccrfoxvalley.org



2025 Board of Directors

TRACY GEHRKE, RN - CHAIR
JUDI BOURIN - VICE CHAIR
PAMELA FRANZKE - SECRETARY
KELLY ZDANOVEC
JODIE FEDERWITZ
NICOLE LEITERMANN
WAUKEYSHA WILLIAMS
DAVID DIEDRICK



4,820
community members in
8 counties
served & engaged

Strengthening Child Care in Northeast Wisconsin

Early childhood education supports families, local businesses, and regional economic stability. CCR&R strengthens the child care system across Northeast Wisconsin by helping families find care, supporting providers, and sharing data that informs community decisions. Now a joint agency, CCR&R also provides **Family Resource Center Services** in partnership with Thriving Wisconsin.

FINDING CARE

Helping families connect with safe, regulated child care and practical support.



Families often contact CCR&R during job changes, relocation, provider closures, or when a child needs change. Support services for families include:

- Child care referrals matched to a family’s schedule, location, and needs. **CCR&R provided 799 child care referrals to families in 2025.**
- Parent education including safe sleep, car seat safety, and **Positive Solutions for Families**
- Concrete supports such as **Diaper Drop** distribution, **car seat** assistance and access to Family Resource Center programming
- Referrals to community partners including food assistance, disability services, and more in both urban and rural communities

BUILDING EXCELLENCE

Strengthening the early childhood workforce and provider community.



CCR&R strengthens the ECE workforce through training, coaching, and provider support services that help programs remain open and sustainable.

- **Child Care Foundational Trainings** for early childhood professionals, along with technical assistance and coaching to support program operations and compliance.
- Startup and licensing guidance for new providers, along with peer networks and leadership groups. **52 providers attended events in 2025.**
- **LENA Grow** program to support language development and strengthen teacher-child interactions. **187 children reached in 2025.**

CCR&R provided training opportunities to 1,978 early childhood professionals in 2025, for a total of 1,596 hours

GIVING VOICE

Using data and partnerships to inform decisions about child care access.



Reliable data and community collaboration support strong child care systems. CCR&R collects and shares local data and works with employers and decision makers to address supply and access challenges.

- **Collecting and sharing regional child care data**, including required state-level reporting
- Helping **policymakers** understand workforce and child care supply challenges
- Meeting with **legislators, employers, and community leaders** to discuss child care needs
- Presenting to employers about how child care access affects workforce participation and retention

Community

CCR&R works with families, providers, and community leaders to address key challenges.

Child care systems grow stronger when families, providers, employers, and community organizations stay connected. Throughout 2025, CCR&R staff participated in events, meetings, and partnerships across Northeast Wisconsin to share resources, listen to challenges, and help communities understand how child care affects family stability and workforce participation.

CCR&R staff regularly attend community events, chamber meetings, and local gatherings to share information about child care resources and early childhood services. These conversations, at **over 160 events and strategic meetings**, focused on helping families find care, introducing potential providers to training opportunities, and helping employers understand how child care access affects their workforce.

- Thousands of children under age five rely on child care so parents can work
- Many programs in 2025 reported waitlists and staffing shortages
- Additional child care slots could open if programs had enough qualified staff

34

Community presentations & outreach events

7

Provider appreciation & professional events

5

Diaper Drop family support events



Diapers are a significant expense for families with young children and are rarely covered by assistance programs. These diaper distribution events help relieve immediate financial pressure while connecting families to additional resources.

Growth of CCR&R's Diaper Bank program in 2025:

- 102 families served
- 151 children supported
- 365 diaper packages distributed
- 5 events across 5 counties
- 27 zip codes represented

Legislative & Local Leadership



Centering family experiences in the planning and policy decisions that shape communities

CCR&R plays a consistent role in conversations with the decision makers and community leaders who influence early childhood policy and workforce development.

Through regional data, real-time feedback from programs, and firsthand stories from families, CCR&R brings a grounded perspective to these discussions.

Staff engage in this work year-round, ensuring that the voices of families and providers remain central to community planning and policy decisions.

In 2025, CCR&R had community conversations with:

- Winnebago County Social Workers
- Outagamie County Health Department
- Calumet County Health Department
- State legislators and economic development leaders
- Community coalitions focused on family support and child well being



Working Together for Children & Families

Many child care programs maintain waitlists for infant and toddler care. Staffing shortages close classrooms and limit the number of children programs can serve. Strengthening child care in Northeast Wisconsin requires collaboration.

CCR&R works with workforce partners, training institutions, community organizations, and nonprofits to support the early childhood workforce and expand access to care. We are grateful for the partners across our region helping address these challenges and support families!

- Collaborating partners for 2025
- United Way Fox Cities
 - Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services
 - LEAVEN
 - WWBIC
 - Harbor House
 - First Five Fox Valley
 - Fox Valley Technical College
 - Motherhood Alliance
 - Appleton Public Library
 - Parent Connection

Substitutes Brought Critical Stability

17,298 classroom hours covered since program launch

(1,824 classroom hours covered in final quarter of 2025)

+

49 child care programs currently using the service

=

Stable Classrooms

When employees are sick, on leave, or attending training, child care programs may close classrooms, move children between groups, or require staff to work overtime. When care is disrupted, families' work schedules are affected and children experience less consistent environments.

CCR&R's Substitute Program connects trained substitute teachers with centers that need temporary classroom coverage, helping to maintain stable classrooms for children while reducing strain on staff. Providers using the service report reduced overtime, improved staff retention, and greater stability for children.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: The Road to Success

Early childhood programs across the region continue to face staffing shortages. Without qualified teachers, classrooms close and families lose access to care. Programs cannot enroll children without qualified teachers, and families cannot work without reliable care. Expanding the workforce is one of the clearest ways to increase access.

In 2025, CCR&R partnered with Forward Service Corp and Fox Cities Workforce Development Board to offer the Road to Success Program, a free 16 week hybrid training model designed to prepare individuals for careers in early childhood education. The program combined virtual and in person coursework with practical supports to help participants stay engaged and complete their training.

Three rounds of the program were held in 2025. Twenty graduates completed the course and became qualified to serve as lead teachers. Each graduate represents additional classroom capacity and stability for local child care programs.

By reducing barriers to training and creating a supported entry point into the field, Road to Success helps address one of the core challenges facing our region: a shortage of qualified early childhood professionals. When programs can hire and retain trained staff, they are able to keep classrooms open and serve families who are searching for care.

20 Graduates Qualified as lead teachers in 2025!



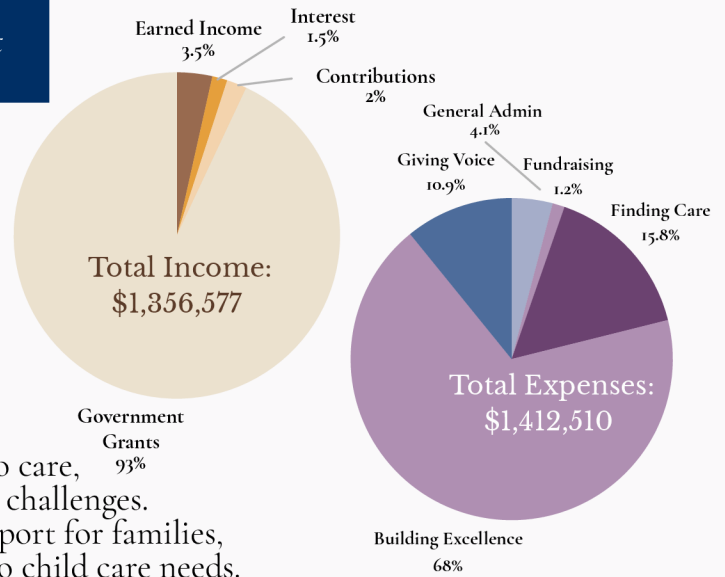
Stewardship

CCR&R is supported through a combination of public funding, grants, and community partnerships. These resources make it possible to provide services for families, strengthen the child care workforce, and share data that informs community decisions.

Funding is directed toward programs that connect families to care, support child care providers, and address regional workforce challenges. This includes training and coaching for providers, direct support for families, and efforts that help communities understand and respond to child care needs.

CCR&R remains committed to using resources responsibly and transparently, ensuring that funding supports practical, community-based solutions that reflect the needs of the region.

If you are interested in supporting this work through a donation or partnership, we welcome the opportunity to connect and explore ways to get involved. You can contact our team directly or visit us tinyurl.com/CCRRN2026Donate or scan the qr code to make a direct donation.



Join Us!

There are so many ways to get involved with CCR&R.

Whether you are a business leader, retiree, parent, provider, neighbor, or simply someone who cares about children and families, **there is a place for you here.** The community you will meet through our events, partnerships, and programs is thoughtful, committed, and deeply invested in the well-being of our region.

We believe our communities are stronger when children are thoughtfully cared for and families have reliable support. If that matters to you, we hope you will join us.

Visit our website to volunteer, learn more about upcoming events, sign up for our newsletter, or connect with us on social media. To make a donation, you can give online, mail a check to our office, or simply give us a call. We would be glad to talk with you!

- Sign up for our training newsletter
- Attend a community event
- Follow us on social media
- Become a donor or sponsor
- Volunteer

