

Spink County Childcare Fact Sheet

Childcare Challenges in Spink County and South Dakota

South Dakota is one of the fastest growing states in the U.S., logging more births than deaths in 2022 and far exceeding the national 50-state population change median. Despite population and job growth, the state lacks sufficient child care supply to meet demand. For many families, securing quality and affordable child care is an uphill battle. Spink County is not immune to the impacts caused by a lack of childcare capacity. At first glance, 13 childcare businesses serving a total county population of 6,361 seems sufficient. However, a deep dive into the current status of our childcare businesses provides eye-opening information as to the effects on the local workforce and community development.

Facts for Businesses

- South Dakota employers are losing approximately \$150 million annually due to childcare challenges faced by their employees.
- Parents who have access to high-quality care are more productive and businesses that offer family friendly policies are better able to attract and retain talent and see a decrease in absenteeism.
- Responses from surveys sent to Spink County Employers indicate the urgent need for full-time and drop-in childcare services.
- The economic impact of childcare challenges extends beyond individual households and into the broader community as people have less disposable income to spend at local restaurants, buying cars and homes, going on vacation, etc.

Facts for Families

- Roughly 80% of children under the age of 6 live in homes where both caregivers work.
- Today, families spend on average 27% of their household income on childcare expenses.
- 30% of the Spink County Population is near or in childbearing age. This could affect future county growth and the need for childcare services.
- According to a feasibility study, there is a service gap of 552 children (ages 0-9) with potential childcare needs within a 20-mile drive time from the central point of Spink County.
- 50% of South Dakota residents live in childcare deserts where at least 3 children need childcare for every available spot. This includes Spink County.

Facts for Child Care Businesses

- South Dakota's childcare professionals are among the lowest paid nationally, often earning close to minimum wage with limited to no benefits.
- Most costs are fixed for childcare businesses. Staff compensation on average is 70% of the total business budget. Licensed and registered childcare businesses must follow teacher to child ratio requirements, which prohibits adding more children to grow revenue.
- Locally we have a total of 13 childcare businesses.
- There is only one childcare center in Spink County. All others are considered home based.
- A majority of our current childcare providers have indicated they are either no longer accepting new enrollments or have waitlists that are 1 to 2 years out.

Strategies for Action. How can YOU get involved?!

- Recognize that childcare is a vital community infrastructure that we must invest in if we want a strong and productive workforce for today and tomorrow.
- Support and appreciate our current childcare providers
- Businesses can create common family-friendly policies and practices.
- Support the new childcare facility that will be committed to providing accessible, affordable and high-quality childcare for Spink County Community Members.

Spink County Daycare Project

- In the fall of 2023, Grow Spink began efforts to tackle childcare challenges in Spink County. This included completing a childcare feasibility study, meeting with local businesses and daycares to identify childcare needs, establishing partner entities such as Redfield Area Development Corporation and applying for the State Childcare Grant.
- In October of 2023 Grow Spink was awarded the State Childcare Planning Grant which covered costs incurred during planning for a childcare project in Spink County.
- In March of 2024 Grow Spink was awarded the State Childcare Implementation Grant which is currently being utilized for specific costs towards a new childcare facility in Redfield.
- In June of 2024 the former Wells Fargo Building in Redfield was purchased and will be the home of the future Spink County Daycare. This building will also be home to the Redfield After School Program.
- July is the kickoff for the 2024 the Kids Campaign. Funds raised will go towards renovation costs for the new daycare. **See our fundraiser information page for more details.**

Please consider donating to the 2024 the Kids Campaign!

Spink County Daycare Board of Directors

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Fact Page Resources

- John T. Vucurevich Foundation
- Child Care Biz Help: 2023 Spink County Target Modeling and Feasibility Study
- Golden Shovel Agency: Economic Developer's Role in Alleviating Child Care Crisis
- 2020 U.S. Census Report

