



Working Together to Fill Childcare Needs

Four out of every 10 children in Indiana live in a childcare desert, where there is no more than one childcare seat for every three children.

In 2019, **Early Learning Indiana** created the Child Care Deserts Competition to encourage communities across Indiana to develop innovative solutions to address this challenge. The competition is one of several initiatives developed through a 2014 Lilly Endowment grant to Early Learning Indiana to increase awareness of the importance of high-quality early learning and drive collaboration to improve childcare in Indiana. Through the competition, Early Learning Indiana chose 13 winning projects based in schools, childcare centers and other community organizations.

The grantees received funding of up to \$150,000 to create a total of more than 900 new high-quality childcare seats across the state. “As a result of this competition and the support of Lilly Endowment, many more Hoosier families will be able to experience the two-generational impact of early childhood education,” says Maureen Weber, president and CEO of Early Learning Indiana. “Parents who previously faced difficult decisions due to lack of access to childcare can now remain in or rejoin the workforce while their children benefit from an enriching early learning experience.”