



Committee on Childcare in Minot Meeting

Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 2:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall (10 3rd Ave SW)

Any person needing special accommodation for the meeting is requested to notify the
City Clerk's office at 857-4752.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
2. OLD BUSINESS
 - 2.1. REVIEW COMMUNITY SURVEY FOR CHILDCARE RESULTS
3. CURRENT CHILDCARE AVAILABILITY - UPDATE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. ADJOURNMENT

Minot Area Child Care Supply and Need



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Minot Area Child Care Supply

Workforce and Community Implications

Background

First Children's Finance (FCF) conducted a comprehensive Supply–Demand Gap Analysis and Employee and Community Survey designed to better understand child care needs and service gaps in the Minot area. As one of the region's largest employers, Trinity Health participated in the survey efforts to help highlight the child care experiences and needs of a significant segment of the local workforce. Survey results are presented side by side to compare the perspectives of Trinity Health employees with those of the broader community, offering a more complete picture of child care access, availability, and challenges across the region.

To guide this work, a stakeholder team was convened, including members of the Minot City Council, Minot Chamber EDC, and Trinity Health. This group provided essential insight and direction throughout the project, ensuring that voices of those impacted were heard.

The project consisted of:

- ▶ Team meetings facilitated by First Children's Finance
- ▶ Distribution of Child Care Needs Survey to the Minot Area Community and Trinity Employees
- ▶ Analyzed survey results, distributed to team
- ▶ Complete a Supply and Demand Gap Analysis of Ward County

Community Information

Minot, North Dakota located within Ward County, is a mid-sized community of just under 50,000 residents and serves as a regional hub for surrounding rural areas. The city has a relatively young population, with a median age in the mid-30s, and a large share of households include children. Many parents in the community participate in the labor force, contributing to a strong demand for reliable child-care options across age groups and schedules. Minot's steady population base, combined with its role as a service and economic center for north-central North Dakota, underscores the importance of understanding local child-care supply as the community continues to grow and evolve. First Children's Finance completed an in depth study into the child care supply and demand of Ward County, which encompasses where employees of the community live and work. The project included the zip codes and corresponding communities listed in Figure 1 as the geographic region for the study.

Zip Codes	Cities	Zip Codes	Cities
58716	Benedict	58759	Max

58718	Berthold	58707	Minot
58721	Bowbells	58704	Minot AFB
58722	Burlington	58705	Minot AFB
58725	Carpio	58768	Norwich
58731	Deering	58771	Plaza
58733	Des Lacs	58779	Ryder
58734	Donnybrook	58781	Sawyer
58735	Douglas	58785	Surrey
58740	Glenburn	58790	Velva
58746	Kenmare	58702	Minot
58756	Makoti	58701	Minot
58703	Minot		

Figure 1: Minot and Surrounding Area Defined Zip Codes

Community Insights

First Children's Finance developed two surveys to gather deeper insight into child-care challenges in Minot and the surrounding area. One survey targeted community members, while the other was distributed to employees of Trinity Health. The purpose of these surveys was to better understand how families in the region access, use, and perceive the current child-care supply. Key findings and interpretations are presented in this section.

Survey responses were collected over an 18-day period, yielding a total of 811 submissions.

Qualifying questions were built into each survey to ensure that results reflected the experiences of families with dependent children under age 12. The Trinity Health Employee Survey was limited to respondents who work at Trinity Health and have children in this age group, while the Community Survey was limited to individuals who live, work, or reside in the Minot area and also have children under age 12. After applying these qualifiers, 469 respondents remained and form the basis of the analysis that follows.

Preferred Care- While some respondents indicated a preference for unlicensed care provided by a family member, friend, neighbor, nanny, babysitter, or other informal arrangement, the vast majority reported that they prefer a licensed or regulated child-care setting. These preferred settings include child-care centers, family child-care homes, group child-care programs, preschool programs, Head Start, and Early Head Start. This preference highlights a strong demand for licensed, high-quality child-care options within the community. (See Minot Area Child Care Survey Data)

Enrolled in Preferred Care - Of the 416 respondents who answered this question, 171 reported that their children are currently enrolled in their preferred child-care arrangement. This means that more than 40% of families are using care that does not fully meet their needs or preferences,

indicating a notable gap between what families want and what is available. (See Minot Area Child Care Survey Data)

Access to Preferred Care Impact on Family Planning- Responses in this category were nearly identical across the community and employee surveys. Among community respondents, 34% reported that child care had no impact on their decision to have children or chose not to answer; similarly, 31% of Trinity Health employees reported no impact or preferred not to respond. However, the majority of respondents-66% of community members and 69% of employees-indicated that their family-planning decisions have been influenced by the affordability, availability, or both availability and affordability of child care. These findings suggest that child-care constraints play a significant role in shaping decisions about expanding or starting a family.

When asked about the documented child care shortage in the Minot area, respondents commonly identified several contributing factors. These included challenges in staffing child care programs, a lack of available infant slots, extensive waitlists, low wages for child care staff, and difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. Together, these issues contribute to a strained child care system that is unable to fully meet the needs of families in the community.

Survey quotes related to the child care shortage in Minot area:

"Staffing Shortages mixed with low wages. Quality of providers is poor in daycare centers because of low wages and lack of structure."

"People are overworked and underpaid. Expenses are high. There needs to be 2 working adults in order to have a home now. Its insanely expensive."

"There isn't a lot of places taking kids and when they do its months out before they can start. If you don't call the minute you find out your pregnant to be put on waiting lists there isn't going to be a spot for your child when it's time for you to go back to work. I know families that have to use more than one daycare for their children because of availability."

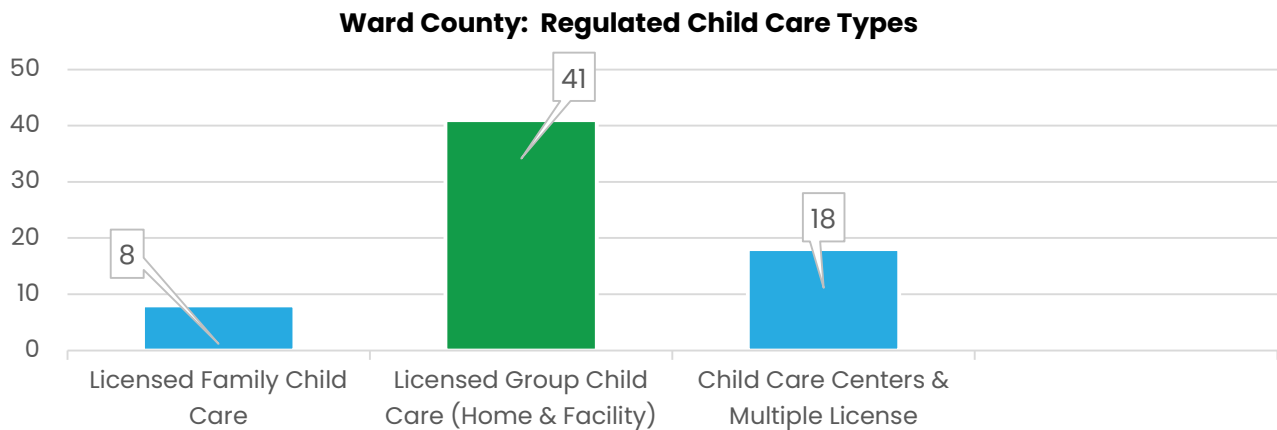
"Childcare should be backed/supported by the employers in Minot. People are left scrambling to find care and transportation on a daily basis. The larger employers should have on-site daycare, with a dedicated area for childcare, play, eating and education."

Supply Demand Gap Analysis

When determining the child care needs of a community, it is essential to draw from multiple data sources and apply consistent, transparent assumptions. In addition to the surveys described above, First Children's Finance used a combination of quantitative data and provider-level research to develop a comprehensive picture of child care capacity in the Minot area. Licensed child care options considered for this analysis include Child Care Centers, Multiple Licenses, Group Child Care (Home and Facility), and Family Child Care programs that

offer full-day, year-round care (see Figure 2). Data sources used include U.S. Census data, North Dakota Health and Human Services licensing and capacity data, and First Children's Finance research and provider-level information.

Figure 2: Ward County Active Licensed Child Care | North Dakota Health and Human Services Data Pull



Although the surveys collected responses from families with children ages 12 and under, the Supply-Demand Gap Analysis focuses specifically on children birth to age 5, as this age group has the greatest need for consistent, full-day care. For the purposes of this analysis, full-day, year-round care is defined as care that operates at least 10 hours per day, serves children from infancy through preschool age, and is available on a year-round basis. Programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and other preschool or part-day programs are not included in the supply calculation because they typically do not operate for the hours or duration required to meet full-time workforce needs, even though they play an important role in early learning and family support.

The Supply-Demand Gap Analysis completed by First Children's Finance for Ward County (dated 12/10/25) identifies a deficit of 1,214 child care slots for children birth to age 5 living in households where all available parents are in the workforce. The analysis identified a total licensed and regulated full-day, year-round capacity of 1,977 child care slots across Ward County, with several zip codes reporting no available licensed capacity. To reflect realistic operating conditions, First Children's Finance calculates child care capacity at 85% of licensed capacity, rather than 100%. This adjustment accounts for staffing constraints, staff turnover, child transitions, enrollment fluctuations, and the operational reality that most programs cannot always maintain full enrollment (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ward County Supply Demand Gap Analysis | First Children's Finance Analysis

Zip Code	City	CCC and Multiple License Programs	Licensed FCC Programs	Group Child Care (Home and Facility) Programs	Expected Child Care Capacity	Expected Number of Children Under Age 5	Expected Child Care Need
58716	Benedict	0	0	0	0	2	-2
58718	Berthold	1	0	0	54	24	30
58721	Bowbells	0	0	0	0	20	-20
58722	Burlington	0	0	1	17	99	-82
58725	Carpio	0	0	0	0	11	-11
58731	Deering	0	0	0	0	26	-26
58733	Des Lacs	0	0	0	0	7	-7
58734	Donnybrook	0	0	0	0	41	-41
58735	Douglas	0	0	0	0	0	0
58740	Glenburn	0	0	0	0	0	0
58746	Kenmare	0	0	0	0	65	-65
58756	Makoti	0	0	0	0	1	-1
58759	Max	0	0	0	0	18	-18
58701	Minot	8	4	29	931	1438	-507
58703	Minot	8	4	8	751	808	-57
58707	Minot	0	0	0	0	0	0
58704	Minot AFB	0	0	0	0	282	-282
58705	Minot AFB	0	0	0	0	0	0
58768	Norwich	0	0	0	0	29	-29
58771	Plaza	0	0	0	0	14	-14
58779	Ryder	0	0	0	0	42	-42
58781	Sawyer	0	0	0	0	43	-43
58785	Surrey	0	0	3	48	135	-87
58790	Velva	0	0	0	0	87	-87
58702	Minot	1	0	0	177	0	177
Total		18	8	41	1977	3191	-1214

Filling the Gap

The supply–demand gap identified in this report reflects the availability of licensed, regulated, full-day child care and does not capture all of the ways families may meet their child-care needs when formal options are unavailable. When there is a gap in the licensed and regulated child care slots available in a community compared to the children potentially needing care in the community, families find unique ways to meet their needs outside of licensed or regulated child care. These may not be desired or preferred, but in order to remain in the workforce, many families have to compromise. The following are common ways that parents may fill their need for child care.

Illegal Unlicensed / Unregistered Care

Child Care is provided in a setting that requires licensing or regulation, but the provider has chosen to provide care without the proper license or following regulatory guidelines.

Under-Employment / Shift Alignment

Parents may work split shifts, work part-time, or limit their work hours to stay home with their children. There may be children in the community whose parents have left the workforce and are not looking for employment because of child care challenges. These families are not included in the data in this report, but parents may enter the workforce if viable child care options were available.

Out of Area Care

Parents with children in the region studied may take their child to care outside of this report's area. This may be due to parents' work location, access to care, or other reasons.

Alternative Unpaid Options

Some families in the community have had to take alternative approaches to meeting their child-care needs. Among survey respondents, 21% reported that they do not use paid child care. Instead, many parents rely on informal arrangements such as family support, reduce their work hours, or leave employment altogether due to challenges securing care. As illustrated in the figures below, affordability is the primary factor driving families to pursue non-paid or alternative care options (see Figure 4).

Responses categorized as “Other” commonly reflected the use of before- and after-school programs for school-aged children, or circumstances in which a household was expecting a child and had not yet begun paying for child care.

Filling The Child Care Gap

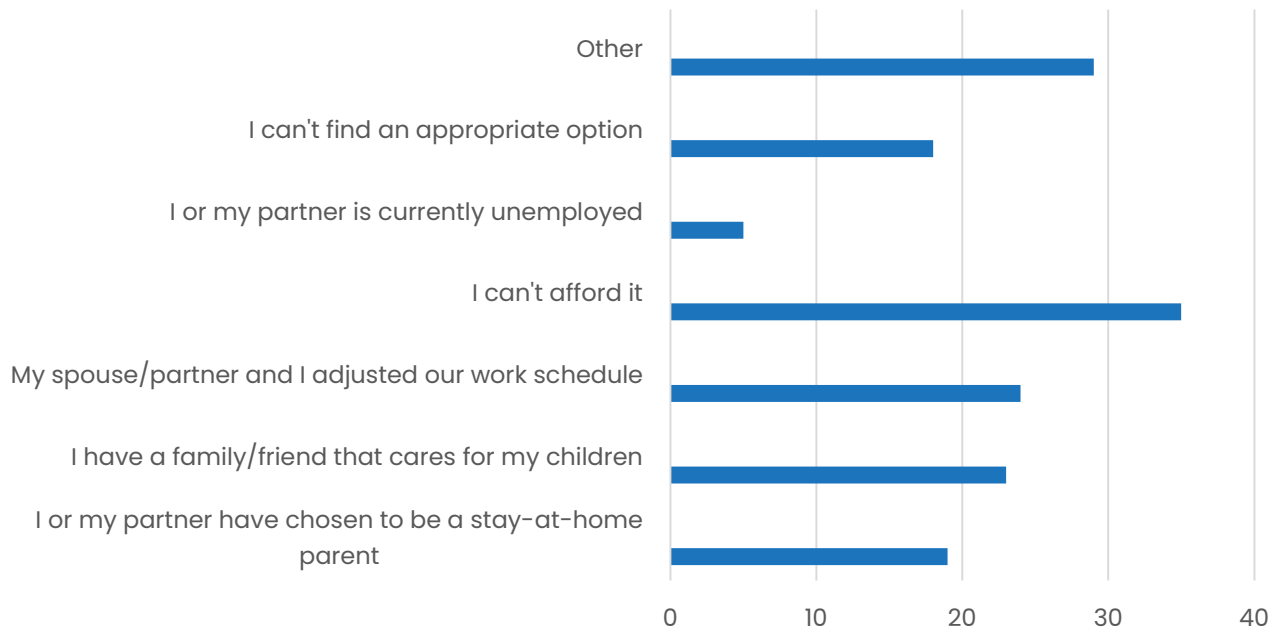


Figure 4: Minot Area Families Not Paying for Child Care | Minot Area Child Care Community & Employee Survey

Quality Child Care

First Children's Finance examined community-wide data on the number of child-care programs participating in Bright & Early North Dakota, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Bright & Early North Dakota is a voluntary system that recognizes programs demonstrating quality practices beyond basic licensing requirements. Programs progress through four steps, each building upon the previous one, and must meet defined criteria before advancing.

- Step 1: Health and Safety
- Step 2: Space and Materials
- Step 3: Activities and Experiences
- Step 4: Relationships and Interactions

These steps reflect the key components of early childhood quality and provide families with a clear, consistent way to understand the level of quality offered by participating programs. Findings from both the Employee and Community Surveys indicate that the supply of high-quality child care does not meet current demand. The insights below summarize respondents' perceptions of quality child care, alongside data on the number of programs participating in Bright & Early North Dakota's QRIS. (See Figure 6 and Figure 7.)

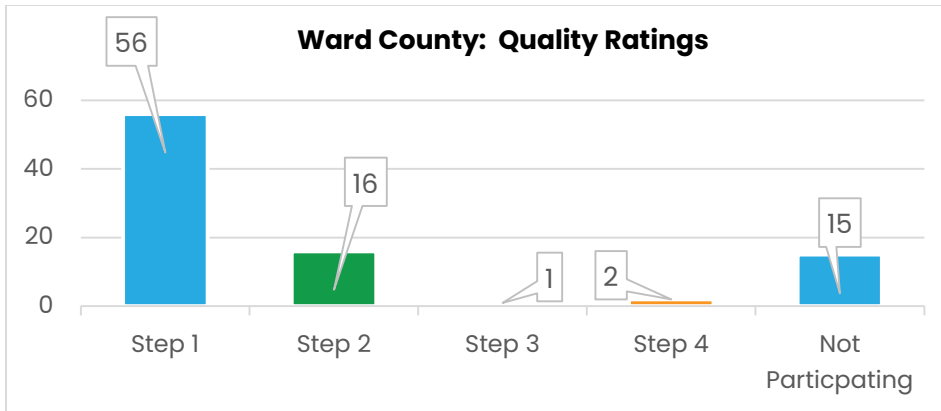


Figure 6: Ward County Bright & Early North Dakota Quality Rating | North Dakota Health and Human Services Data Pull

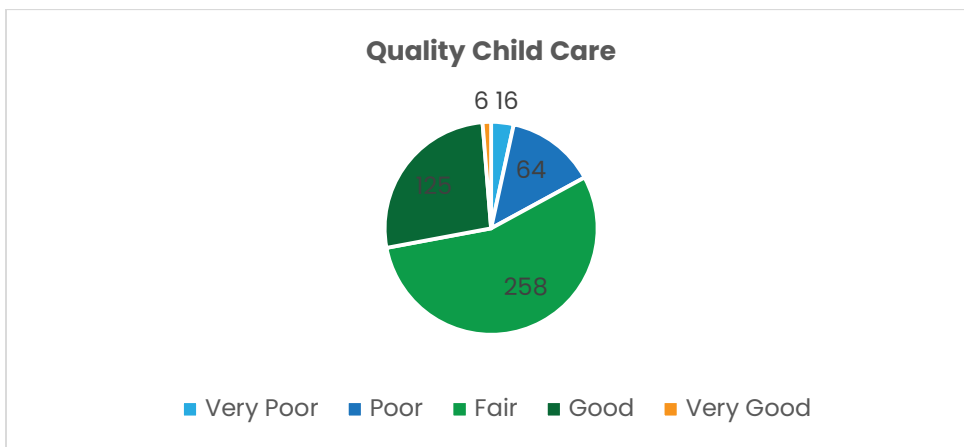


Figure 7: Minot Area Perception of Quality | Minot Area Child Care Survey

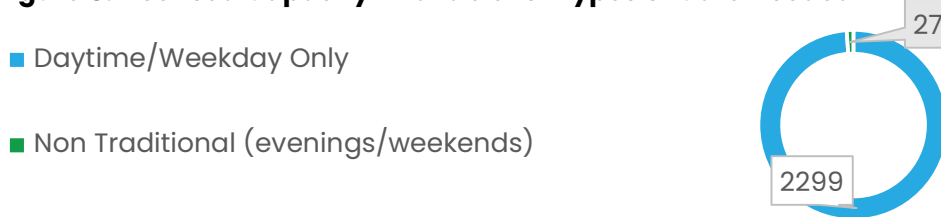
Workforce Needs

Both Trinity Health employees and community members underscored the need for non-traditional hours of care, high-quality care, affordable care, and consistent reliability—all of which are essential for supporting working families. Survey results indicate that while 135 respondents reported no child-care-related issues affecting their employment, the remaining 334 respondents experienced some level of work disruption due to child care challenges. These impacts ranged from minor issues, such as occasional tardiness, to more significant consequences, including missed work hours, reduced schedule flexibility, being unable to work altogether, or even being passed over for promotions. The most common challenges involved employees being unable to adjust their schedules or having to miss work because child care was unavailable or unreliable. (See Minot Area Child Care Survey Data)

As a hospital system, Trinity Health depends on its workforce's ability to work non-traditional shifts, including evenings, nights, and weekends. However, current licensed child care capacity in Ward County offers very limited options for families needing care outside of standard business hours. According to available child-care supply data, only a small number of licensed slots are available that serve evening or weekend hours, which is insufficient to meet the needs of many working parents in the health care sector. This gap in non-traditional hour care places

additional strain on staff who must balance critical job responsibilities with securing reliable care for their children.

Figure 8: Licensed Capacity Available for Types of Care Needed



FCF Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations (0–18 months)

Leverage data to inform and engage the community.

Use the survey findings and Supply–Demand Gap Analysis to increase awareness of child-care challenges across Minot and Ward County. Sharing this data with local leaders, employers, early-childhood organizations, and families can help build momentum around solutions and support coordinated action.

Explore expanded hours at existing child care offerings (if applicable).

Assess the feasibility of offering extended hours, such as early-morning or early-evening coverage to support staff working non-traditional shifts. Even modest adjustments could relieve pressure for some employee groups.

Increase access and affordability.

Evaluate strategies to reduce cost burdens for employees, such as employer-supported child care stipends, priority access to local providers, or partnerships with programs that offer scholarships or sliding-fee scales.

Promote quality and support provider improvement efforts.

Work with community child care providers to increase awareness of quality-improvement initiatives, professional development opportunities, and licensing supports. This may include informational sessions, resource guides, or collaboration with the state's quality-rating system, Bright & Early North Dakota.

Maximize employee benefits.

Assess whether child care support (i.e. dependent care FSA, stipends or scholarship programs) could be aligned with HR goals to further support retention.

Long-Term Recommendations (18 months and beyond)

Continue strengthening community partnerships.

Collaborate with local government, economic development organizations, and child care stakeholders to champion broader system improvements, including workforce development, provider pay, and expansion of regulated slots.

Address quality staffing concerns.

Partner with local colleges, high schools, and workforce agencies to recruit and train child-care staff, including Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or early-childhood certification pathways.

If Pursuing a New Child Care Facility

Consider a phased approach to opening classrooms.

Launching with a limited number of classrooms and expanding as demand grows can reduce financial risk and ensure that staffing levels remain sustainable. Unused or flexible spaces early on could be repurposed temporarily for community engagement activities such as parent-child classes, music or movement programs, or family resource events.

Explore licensing and design options for extended or 24-hour care.

Given the high number of non-traditional work shifts in the Minot area it is recommended to review the regulatory requirements for offering overnight care. This includes considering safe sleeping spaces, supervision ratios, parent-pick-up protocols, and appropriate facility layouts for evening and night operations.