

Employer-Sponsored Child Care: A Case Study

Providing Quality Child Care and Supporting a Hospital's System of Care



South Dakota Child Care Workforce Study

Developing Practical Strategies to Strengthen the Workforce and Support Economic Growth

Initiative Highlights

- High-quality child care for hospital employees
- Benefits for child care workforce
 - Full benefits package
 - Bonus earning opportunities
 - Flexible scheduling

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Rapid City Children's Center

Over the past 40 years, the Rapid City Children's Center has continued to expand in its response to Monument Health's employees' child care needs. It started as a small preschool program in the community operated by a woman who saw a greater need to provide care for younger children. According to Jodi Richter, Program Director, that woman contacted the hospital and offered a proposal: "If you bring us your employees' children, we'll make sure you have employees at work."

The program later evolved from only a preschool to a child care program strictly for Monument Health employees. Eventually, the program outgrew its building and moved into a nearby rental home. So Monument Health built a new building for the infants and toddlers to accommodate the growing program. The Program Director now oversees both buildings with a combined capacity to serve 196 children from birth until they enter kindergarten. As of fall 2024, the center will celebrate 43 years of programming for young children.

Benefits for Child Care Staff

Not only does the center offer child care employees flexible schedules around their busy lives. It also offers part- and full-time staff several benefits, including paid time off; tuition assistance and reimbursement; health, dental, and vision insurance; health savings accounts and flexible spending accounts; and retirement benefits. The Program Director noted that child care staff receiving the same benefits as hospital employees helps in recruiting and retaining good teachers.

She highly values her employees and does what she can through the program to support them. This year, she offered staff an opportunity to earn a summer bonus. Employees could get a portion of the bonus at the beginning of the summer. Regularly completing shifts through the end of August and clearly communicating with the Program Director about leaving for college and any plans to work while home over semester breaks earned them another portion of the bonus.

"As the director of the program, I want to make sure that my employees feel that they are valued and appreciated," she said.



Hospital Supports for the Center

Monument Health provides financial support for the center's operational costs. Plus, hospital staff prepare and deliver lunches to child care classrooms and wash laundry for the center on an ongoing basis.

Monument Health recruiters help the center to hire new staff. Hospital recruiters host events during evenings when anyone interested in employment can tour the center, talk to current center staff, and be interviewed, which the Program Director reports has helped to hire new child care staff. Hospital recruiters also invite and interview job seekers at the hospital for any open positions, including positions at the center.



Indicators of Program Success

The center upholds a very positive reputation among hospital employees for its high-quality care.

- The center typically carries a waitlist, which the Program Director sees as evidence of Monument Health employees' trust in her center. She said hospital employees frequently give her positive feedback when they call to get on the waitlist or to set up appointments to complete enrollment paperwork. "I always hear, 'I've heard great things about your child care.'"
- The Program Director also noted that Monument Health employees enroll more than one of their children in the center. "They're bringing all of their kids here," she said.

Considerations for Replication

Collecting Data to Assess Needs

Over the years, the center has conducted parent surveys and held parent meetings to understand hospital employees' needs. In addition to surveying employees with children already in center care, they've also surveyed employees with children in care outside of the center to learn what they would need to enroll their children in the center.

Offering Flexible and Responsive Care While Striving for Program Operations Efficiency

The center has made many adjustments to balance meeting Monument Health employees' child care needs and the center's available resources, including adjusting hours of program operation to explore offering programming up to 24 hours a day, over weekends, and on holidays. "We started saying, 'OK, let's look at utilization. What hours are employees scheduling versus what they are using?'"

