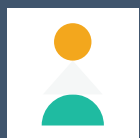




ECO DEVO 101

CASE STUDY:

Bridging the Child Care Gap



Raising
WYCO



Wyandotte Economic Development Council is partnering with Raising WYCO and The Family Conservancy to bridge the child care gap. These key players are meeting with local businesses to identify and address the child care needs and challenges in the region, with a goal to strategize solutions that benefit both employees and employers.

The program, Bridging the Child Care Gap, is creating a supportive environment for working parents and their families. The initiative hosts meetings and workshops for local businesses that cover everything these companies need to know, from workplace policies to benefits, that could result from offering onsite/near-site child care.

Current Assessment:

- The estimated annual economic impacts of child care gaps range from 151.7M to 232.5M in Wyandotte County. (Child Care Gaps Assessment)
- Future impacts, within the next 10 years, may be as high as 376.3M to 576.2M. (Child Care Gaps Assessment)

Opportunities:

- Child care efforts can generate up to \$7.30 per dollar invested.
- Child care can increase property values by \$13 for every dollar invested in local programs, attracting more homebuyers to the community.
- Child care programs can save money for K-12 education.

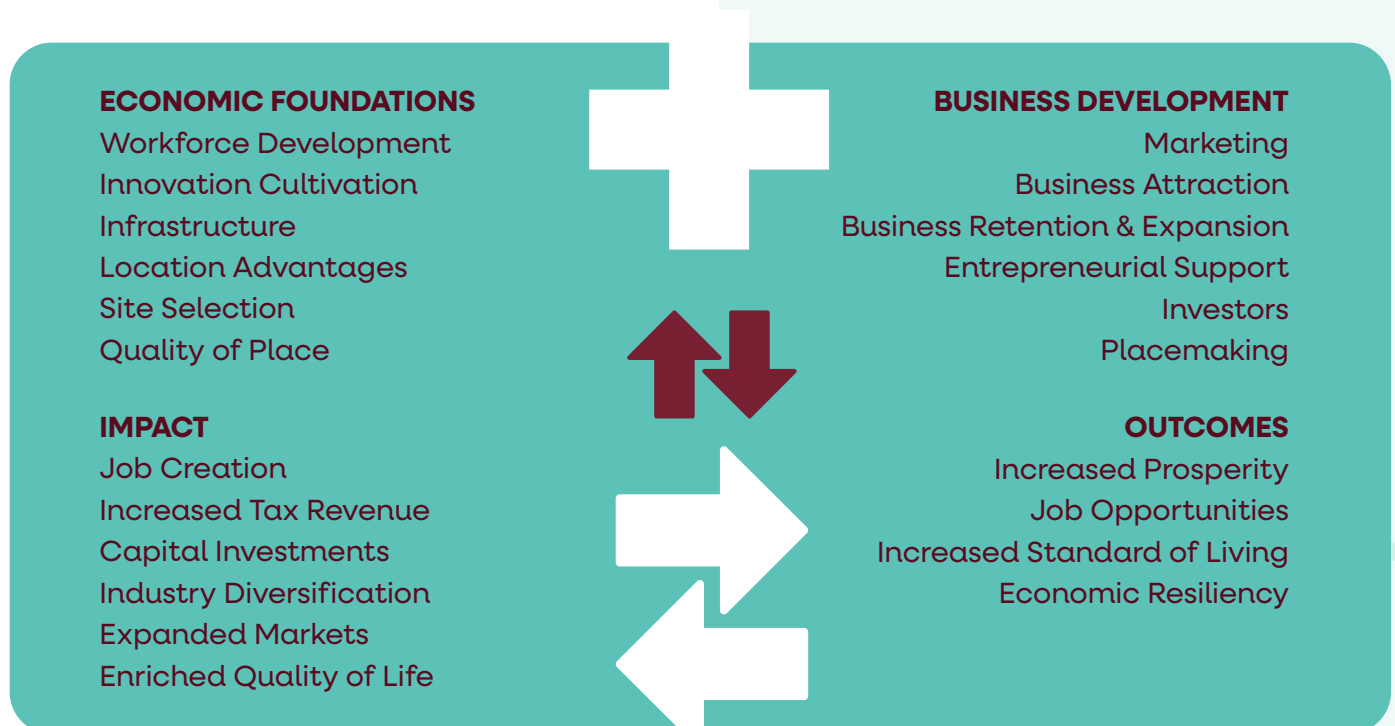
EcoDevo 101: How Economic Development Supports the Growth of Wyandotte County Businesses

Economic development is often discussed in terms of its parts, each category siloed and distinct: business retention and expansion, attraction, workforce development, and job creation, among others. Wyandotte Economic Development Council (WYEDC) joins other innovative thinkers working to flip the perception towards an ecosystem model where each objective is interlocked and dependent, like the pieces of a puzzle, to form the total picture of EcoDevo 101. Providing accessible child care options is an important piece in the puzzle.

Economic Development Ecosystem

Structuring economic development around this ecosystem framework, creates an environment where economic foundations and business development create impact and favorable economic outcomes. Wyandotte Economic Development Council prioritizes:

- Creating Jobs
- Improving Quality of Life
- Generating Tax Revenue
- Raising Household Income
- Building and Strengthening the Workforce





Character of Place is an Important Economic Foundation

In “The character of innovative places: entrepreneurial strategy, economic development, and prosperity” (*Small Bus Econ* 43, 9–20, 2014), Maryann P. Feldman asks, “Why do investments in certain places yield jobs, growth and prosperity while similar investments made in seemingly identical places fail to produce the desired results?”

While acknowledging that geography and clustering of resources play important roles, she postulates, “What matters most is human agency — the building of institutions and the myriad public and private decisions that determine what I call the character of place — a spirit of authenticity, engagement and common purpose.”

In the Kansas City, KS, (KCK) region, Wyandotte Economic Development Council (WYEDC) supplies the human agency for placemaking, bringing assets, stakeholders, innovators, and agencies together, to fortify the region’s economic development ecosystem. WYEDC promotes and strengthens Wyandotte County’s economy through innovative approaches to programs, partnerships and incentives, as well as leadership in industrial, residential, office and retail markets. In 2024, WYEDC’s efforts resulted in 19 announced projects, \$863 million in capital investment, and 2,723 new and retained jobs. Over the last 10 years, there has been over \$6.2 billion in capital investments.

How The Bridging the Child Care Gap Initiative Benefits Local Businesses & Our Community

“The Bridging the Child Care Gap initiative is made up of community leaders like Jennifer Traffis, Start Young Director with The Family Conservancy and 9 local businesses. We are also working with Raising WYCO. We handpicked the companies we wanted to be involved in the initiative based on the 204 Business Retention visits we did in 2024. During these visits, we asked about the need for child care and if child care benefits were offered to employees. Many of these companies identified a need for more child care support and were excited to be involved,” said Monica Brede, Vice President of Business & Workforce Solutions, Wyandotte County Economic Development Council.

Some of the local companies that have expressed interest in joining the Bridging the Child Care Gap efforts and have attended workshops, are Empire Candle, Liberty Fruit, Orange EV, Marvin, Owens Corning, Providence Medical Center, Ultra Tech, Unified Government, and Urban Outfitters. Workshops and informative meetings have already begun and will continue through the remainder of 2025.

“We’ve had meetings in January, February, March and April of this year, and we have more workshops scheduled for this project. I provide ad-hoc support to the participating businesses between workshops as well. Many companies are excited about potential changes that could be made,” said Kelly Davydov, Strategic Consultant for Daydelys LLC and facilitator of the initiative. “From my perspective, this project has been incredibly valuable in terms of helping businesses understand the array of options they have for investing in child care. We are facilitating connections and collaboration between the participating businesses and ensuring they are aware of federal and state tax credits available to them.”

Many of the businesses that attended the workshops have plans to be involved in the solutions that are evolving from these collaborations.

“Marvin’s Kansas City location is in the early stages of opening and we are enthusiastic about joining forces with other businesses in the area to understand available options and potential solutions for the future of child care,” said Kate Adams, Senior Manager, Human Resources, Marvin. “Marvin currently offers a Day Care Spending Account to help employees manage child care expenses. We are committed to exploring additional options as our Kansas City location becomes more established.”



Owens Corning has also expressed an interest in being involved. The business is in the process of attending workshops, to review which options will be most viable and beneficial to the local workforce. Onsite child care is the ideal, but for many businesses it is not yet feasible. Instead, businesses are exploring how local partnerships with child care agencies could be advantageous.

“By collaborating with our current Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, other local Fairfax District businesses, and child care agencies, we hope to secure group blocks at a discounted rate from these local child care agencies. These could be of great benefit for everyone involved if successful. This approach aims to provide accessible and affordable child care solutions for our employees, enhancing their work-life balance and overall job satisfaction,” said Darrien Moore, Human Resources Leader, Owens Corning.

Owens Corning and Marvin both already have what most would consider robust benefits for company employees, but the corporations are still exploring more ways to ensure these benefits are utilized to the fullest advantage to address child care needs. They are accomplishing this goal by working to solidify community relationships through the Bridging the Child Care Gap initiative.

“We are very excited about the positive impacts this initiative will have on both employers and employees. It will provide our employees with a peace of mind regarding the wellbeing of their children. It will offer better options for our existing workforce but also enable us to recruit from a larger and more diverse talent pool. Additionally, it will enhance our employees’ performance and overall job satisfaction,” said Moore.

Child Care Affect on Wyandotte County Jobs

High quality child care provides support for child development, gives families peace of mind while they work, and improves the overall economy and job growth and retention of Wyandotte County and beyond.

In Moore's experience, child care issues have often been cited as a reason why potential applicants' schedules do not align with current job offerings at Owens Corning. The child care initiative will allow Owens Corning, and other local corporations, to continue to develop additional internal programs that will result in more flexibility for the current and future workforce, helping more members of the Wyandotte County community secure and retain employment.

- **85% of Fortune 500 Company HR leaders** say child care offerings reduce employee turnover. (KinderCare Survey, 2025)
- **86% report child care offerings** attract top talent. (KinderCare, 2025)
- **82% of these corporate leaders** say child care options enhance professional performance of employees. (KinderCare, 2025)

When employees are confident their children are in a safe and caring environment, they are better able to focus on their work. This increases productivity and efficiency in the workforce. Employees at companies that provide child care benefits are more likely to be satisfied at work, which creates job retention.



The Bridging the Child Care Gap Initiative Will Positively Impact Women and Minorities

Women and minorities are disproportionately forced to make career sacrifices and suffer pay cuts due to issues with child care. (The Gender Policy Report) Women are less likely than men to receive pay when they take Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)-type leave, in order to care for and bond with a child. (Center for American Progress)

- More than two-thirds of the nation's children have all available parents in the workforce. (Center for American Progress)
- 94% of employees involuntarily working part-time due to child care problems are women. (Committee for Economic Development)
- Despite the expensive cost of child care, child care workers remain one of the lowest-paid occupations in the United States. This labor force is overwhelmingly composed of women and, disproportionately, women of color. (First Five Years Fund)
- Black women make up 17% of the child care workforce in the United States. (Center for American Progress)

These disparities are being addressed by the Bridging the Child Care Gap Initiative. The more employers become involved, the more sustainable the child care solutions will be.

2025 for Bridging the Child Care Gap

“I am excited about the collaborative efforts among businesses in Wyandotte County to address child care needs. The Bridging the Child Care Gap initiative has the potential to create a supportive environment for working parents, making it easier for them to balance their professional and personal lives. By understanding what is available and exploring possible solutions, we can contribute to a more family-friendly business landscape in the future,” said Adams, Marvin.

According to facilitator Kelly Davydov, one on one consulting with businesses about their childcare needs is scheduled for the remainder of 2025. With each meeting, Wyandotte County will see a surge of business support and thoughtful solutions as we work to address the child care gap in the community.

Wyandotte Economic Development Council's EcoDevo 101

Wyandotte Economic Development Council's focus and facilitation improves the county's economic development ecosystem, by pulling the pieces of the puzzle together: business attraction and job creation, business retention, and improved quality of life found through initiatives like Bridging the Child Care Gap.

What does the puzzle's total picture look like? Prosperity for Wyandotte County residents. Through creating and stabilizing jobs, by supporting local businesses and bringing new companies to the county, the median household income and tax revenues are increased. The additional property taxes from new projects help provide additional resources to the local school district, library system, community college and local and state general services. It's EcoDevo 101 and it's what Wyandotte Economic Development Council does. The best news is, there's always room for new pieces for our prosperity puzzle.





Wyandotte County Economic Development Council (WYEDC) helps businesses harness “The Power of the Dotte.” WYEDC promotes and strengthens Wyandotte County’s economy through innovative approaches to programs, partnerships and incentives, as well as leadership in industrial, residential, office and retail markets. Contact them today! Follow WYEDC on LinkedIn and Facebook!



The mission of the Bridging the Child Care Gap initiative is to develop community relationships that support local childcare workers, working parents, and the economy as a whole. Join forces with WYEDC to create a supportive environment for working parents and their families. To get involved or learn more, contact us at info@wyedc.org.



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