



# Child Care Market Analysis and Strategic Plan Summary for Pella, IA

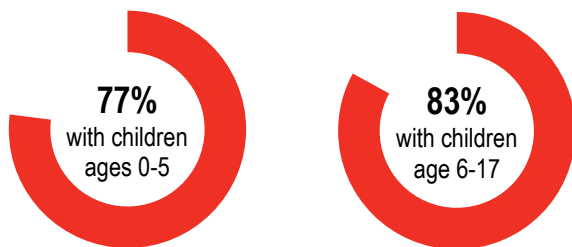
## Eight Key Findings

### 1. Population Ages 0 to 9 is Increasing

1,667 children ages 0 to 9 living in the Pella area in 2000  
1,885 children ages 0 to 9 living in the Pella area in 2017

### 2. Pella Area Parents are in the Labor Force and Need Child Care

*Pella Area Families with All Parents in the Labor Force*



### 3. Parents Prefer Regulated Child Care Settings

According to a 2018 child care needs survey conducted by First Children’s Finance, Pella area parents that would use “outside” child care prefer DHS regulated settings. Overall, 43% would prefer a DHS licensed center and 21% prefer a DHS regulated home, while 23% prefer themselves or their spouse/partner care for their children.

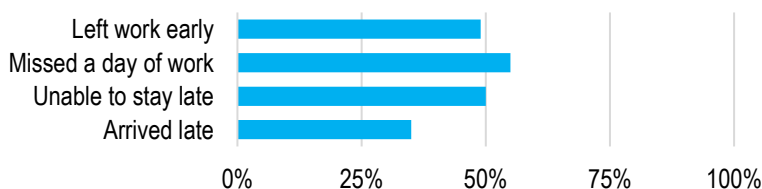
### 4. Median Family Incomes are Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median annual income for families in the Pella area is \$81,499, and the average family size is 3.1, according to the US Census Bureau. To be eligible for the Iowa Child Care Assistance program under the 2019 eligibility criteria, a family of 3 must have an annual household income below \$30,928.

### 5. Child Care is Affecting the Labor Force

Parents in the Pella area that participated in the 2018 child care needs survey indicated they had their jobs affected because of child care challenges during the prior 12 months. Of those whose jobs were affected, 49% left work early, 55% missed a day of work, 50% were unable to stay late, and 35% arrived late.

*Labor Force Affects Due to Child Care Challenges*



### About this Analysis

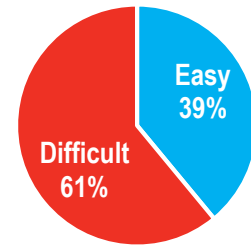
For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment they choose will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough child care spaces in a community, finding *any* care is a challenge; and options for *quality* child care that meets the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

In 2018, a study was commissioned by Marion County Development Commission and community partners to help better understand the supply and demand for child care across Marion County, and to gain insight to any child care challenges experienced by the residents and workforce. This document is a summary of the full *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Marion County* report, which was completed in March 2019. For a copy of the full report contact Carla at [carla@redrockarea.com](mailto:carla@redrockarea.com).

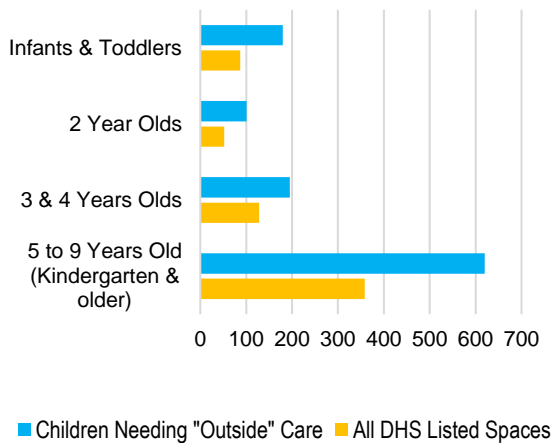
To better identify child care gaps and needs, the county was divided into five markets. The Pella market reflects the townships of Lake Prairie and Summit, including the communities of Pella and Otley.

## 6. Finding Child Care is Difficult

The child care needs survey conducted in conjunction with this study, indicates that 61% of Pella area parents found it difficult to find child care. Obstacles named by Pella parents included lack of openings within existing programs, child care costs, and concerns about the quality of child care available.



Children Needing "Outside" Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces in Pella



## 7. Marion County's Child Care Supply is Declining

According to Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral data, as of July 2018 there were 1,438 spaces within DHS Licensed Child Care Centers, Department of Education Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes in Marion County. This is down from 1,512 spaces reported in July 2013.

## 8. Shortage of Child Care Spaces

There are 1,482 children ages 0 to 9 in the Pella area that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences, First Children's Finance estimates 1,096 children need some type of "outside" child care. With only 625 spaces, (enough to serve 57%), there is a gap of 478 spaces. There is a gap among each age group, with the largest gaps among ages 5 to 9 and infants and toddlers (up to age 2). This gap increases if families that live outside Pella or potential new residents of future housing developments are considered, and could be as large as 681 spaces.

## Pella Child Care Initiatives

The following goals and projects were identified through input and interactions at a series of strategic planning sessions, in which participants were encouraged to develop ideas about how to address the child care challenges in Pella.

### Goal: Increase the number of quality child care spaces in Pella.

Project One: Support the expansion efforts of new and existing child care centers.

Project Two: Recruit and retain in-home child care providers.

### Goal: Increase the child care center labor pool in Pella through local training and partnerships.

Project One: Explore options for offering the required training and work experience needed to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ locally.

### Goal: Make resources available for families that do not qualify for Child Care Assistance (CCA), but still struggle to pay for child care.

Project One: Provide resources and information to local employers on child care related benefits.

Project Two: Explore establishing an income-based child care tuition scholarship fund.

*This project was made possible through funding received from the Marion County Development Commission, PACE Alliance, Pella Corporation and Weiler Corporation.*

First Children's Finance, a national nonprofit organization, believes access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities, and that early care and education is the foundation of individual success and the engine of regional economic growth. First Children's Finance provides financing, training and business-development assistance to child care businesses. First Children's Finance also provides consulting and planning assistance to government agencies, intermediaries and regional child care organizations.

For more information on these and other topics, contact Heidi Schlueter, Regional Director [Heidi@FirstChildrensFinance.org](mailto:Heidi@FirstChildrensFinance.org).