



Sharing the Caring



2020

Annual Report

A Year of Adversity

850 Hwy. 153, Ste F | Mosinee | WI 54455 | 1.800.628.8534 | www.childcaring.org

(Across from Central WI Airport, Baymen Professional Building)





Thank You to All the Helpers

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" – Fred Rogers

We want to share – We Care! Childcaring is always here to offer help and support. 2020 was an unprecedented year of challenges, difficult conversations and decisions. Staying connected was and still is more important than ever.

During this time of adversity, Childcaring provided a response to changing demands for child care resource and referral services. These efforts to support families and providers included:

- Providing COVID-19 emergency child care referrals and provider availability updates
- Offering COVID-19 communication and resources
- Helping to collect and distribute funding and donations
- Providing virtual opportunities

Thank you to all the dedicated early childhood professionals helping families every day. Please take some time to view the "We Just Can't Say Thank You Enough to Early Childhood Professionals" video. The video, available on the Childcaring YouTube channel and Facebook, features a recording of each Childcaring staff member saying thank you to child care providers in their own way. <https://youtube/2RUWFktQnTw>

Childcaring also designed t-shirts with a message about the importance of quality care and early childhood professional appreciation. During this unprecedented time and always - **Early Childhood Professionals - You Are More Than Essential!**

♥ Thank you to all the helpers! We are so very grateful for all the community connections.

This report highlights how we have accomplished so much together. We just can't say thank you enough! ♥

Service to Families

Providing Resources that Strengthen and Support Children & Their Families

Childcaring assists families in locating child care that meets their needs and provides tools to help choose a quality child care program. Families can call or meet with a referral specialist or enter their information online. A computer-generated list of regulated child care programs is then emailed or mailed to the family along with a variety of resources.

Referral Specialists Are Available to Help

A mother called trying to find care for her school age son who was ready to transition to a school-age and/or summer camp program. The Referral Specialist talked with the parent about the referral process. The mother said that she really liked to have information in hand, not via email so that she could make notes. The Referral Specialist offered to mail her the packet as well as sample interview questions so she'd be able to take notes as she talked with the programs.

She was very appreciative and shared,

"I am so impressed and thankful for your help. I called and they helped me right away, understood my needs, and sent me a comprehensive list via mail. She was very personable and followed up with a call a few weeks later. Finding day care is one of the most stressful things. I would highly recommend their services."

Referral Services to Connect Essential Workers and Child Care Providers

Like other child care resource and referral agencies in Wisconsin, Childcaring participated in the matching project through the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families where essential workers were paired with the child care programs who had openings. All Childcaring staff were involved with this important project and staff quickly became accustomed to working from home and continuing to offer high quality customer service. For example, while following up with the child care programs to ensure they updated their information on the new provider portal, we quickly became aware of a need for cleaning/disinfecting wipes, Lysol spray and hand sanitizer. Several child care programs expressed frustration in finding these items during numerous attempts to area stores. Childcaring staff put together a list of providers, their contact information and the supplies needed. We contacted the local United Way office and they were able to efficiently find the supplies and delivered them to the child care programs within one day!

546

families

650

children

received child care referrals



Enhanced Referral Services

Childcaring contracts with Marshfield Clinic Health System to provide Enhanced Referrals for their employees. Based on the referral intake, the referral specialist works to locate child care providers with openings. The families are responsible for calling the providers to discuss details and schedule interviews.

Parent Café

provides a comfortable environment for parents to have authentic conversations about their families with peers, and learn ways to strengthen their family through the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors. This year, Childcaring offered our first virtual café in Marquette county.

The Marquette County Virtual Parent Cafés included topics such as: Transitions, Finding Joy, Positive Parenting, Taking Care of Yourself, Leading by Example and Maintaining Friendships as Adults. Throughout the sessions, Parent Café (PC) staff and volunteers discussed the additional challenges families were facing and strategies that helped everyone get through them. The families in attendance also brainstormed ways to keep supporting each other outside of the café sessions. They decided to leave words of encouragement on the PC survey, and PC staff texted those messages to families after the café's. Some families replied that those messages came at just the right moment when they needed some extra support.

Childcaring Receives Alliant Energy Community Grant

Childcaring was pleased to announce that we were awarded an Adams County Parent Café Grant of \$2,000! The Alliant Energy Foundation Community Grant provides funding to hold additional cafés in Adams County. These in person sessions will be held at a later date, when it is safe to do so.

Funding provided by:



Marquette County hosted

9

virtual
sessions

48

attendees



Scholarship Aid

funded through Marshfield Area United Way and United Way of South Wood & Adams Counties helps families who are struggling to pay the high cost of child care.

21 families 32 Children
Received Scholarship Aid

6 Child Care Programs rated 3 Stars or higher in YoungStar are serving these children and families.

Good Start Grants (GSG)

provide financial assistance for eligible families in Marathon and Portage Counties to ensure they have access to quality, affordable child care.

Childcaring experienced an increase in referrals at the start of the school year. With COVID-19, some schools chose to go all virtual, hybrid, or in person. With the schools that went completely virtual, this left many families needing to find care. This also put a financial strain on the parents, as this is an expense that they normally wouldn't have because their kids would be in school. Fortunately, Good Start Grants was able to help some of these families pay for a portion of their child care.

2020 GSG funders:



COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND
(Community Foundation of North Central WI and United Way of Marathon County)

Dudley Foundation



102
families

151
children

received
GSG

21 Child Care Programs rated 3 Stars or higher in YoungStar are serving these children and families.

Childcaring received United Way of Portage County Emerging Needs funding this year. To qualify, a program presents an innovative approach to meet the health and human services needs of Portage county, that is time sensitive. This \$50,000 grant award allowed Childcaring to offer the Good Start Grants (GSG) program in Portage County.

With the release of the Preschool Development Grant – Community Innovation Grant, Childcaring submitted an application as the lead organization to expand our Good Start Grant program into Langlade, Lincoln and Taylor Counties.



COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response

COVID-19 Impact Catalog hosted by the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin

In October 2020, Childcaring applied and was chosen as one of 19 nonprofit organizations, due to COVID-19, to accept donations for our Good Start Grants (GSG) program. The Giving Catalog campaign was "A Month of Giving!" Childcaring was very grateful to receive a donation of \$1,320 for the GSG Program. <https://cfoncw.org/2020/09/18/impactcatalog/>

A Marathon County parent who received GSG funds said,

"COVID-19 has impacted my family's emotional health. Having the choice to still enroll my child in daycare and school has helped tremendously and gave them a safe and social environment. GSG plays a role in that by providing financial assistance to families in need."

Childcaring applied for and received \$10,000 through the Marathon County COVID-19 Community Response Fund to help support families

Due to the Safer at Home Order closing schools, many families needed full time care for their school aged child. This was an extra expense that families were not prepared for. The grant was distributed along the same guidelines as Good Start Grants. The grant helped support 18 children that needed child care who normally would be in school. One of those families said, *"It really is just a relief to have this additional support during this time and I truly appreciate it."*

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Donation Distribution

Through a connect with the Northeastern Region Licensing Team, Childcaring staff picked up a donation of 80 packages of diapers, 36 packages of pull ups and 36 packages of baby wipes from Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. These packages were distributed to 5 family child care programs and 3 group child care centers in Plainfield, Wild Rose, Coloma, Wautoma, Montello and Redgranite (Marquette and Waushara Counties).



**Sharing
the
Caring**

*Take Care
of You!*





"My families and staff members feel safe coming into work and to the center because of how many precautions we are taking and all the extra cleaning we are doing daily. With these added supplies we will be able to make sure we have enough to keep our center clean and all our children healthy."

- Child Care Provider

Childcaring applied for and distributed \$31,000 of local COVID response and/or relief support from five separate funds

A sincere thank you to these five organizations: 1. Merrill Area United Way 2. Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin and the United Way of Marathon County 3. Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin and the United Way of Portage County 4. United Way of South Wood and Adams Counties and 5. Marshfield Area United Way and Community Foundation. This relief funding allowed Childcaring to provide Sustainability Grants to 59 different child care providers. The child care programs reported that the grants helped to support 651 families with 918 children. The grant funds were sent directly to child care programs that responded to an initial survey and expressed a need for assistance for things such as cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, and other items needed for operation during this pandemic. A variety of organizations and individuals had also provided donations including face masks, hand sanitizer, diapers and baby wipes. Childcaring staff delivered donations directly to the child care programs.

Childcaring Distributes Masks to Early Care Professionals

With the help of undesignated donations, Childcaring was able to purchase 1,500 masks to help provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for regulated child care providers in our service area. The number of masks distributed to each program was determined by the response to a Childcaring Mask Survey and the available supply. We received very positive feedback from providers like, *"Thank you so much for the masks! All my staff loved them!"* and *"I Just opened the bag and took a look at the masks – what a great quality one and I love the color and logo as well."*

Thank You to Lincoln County Department of Social Services

Childcaring was also able to deliver additional face masks to child care providers thanks to their generous donation of masks.



COVID-19 Training & Resources

Childcaring had an opportunity to work with the Wood County Health Department and some local physicians to sponsor an online training - The Science Behind the Effectiveness of Face Masks, focused on the importance of mask wearing and other COVID-related protective measures. Two opportunities were offered in early August for Wood County child care providers.

The Wood County Health Department created a toolkit to assist child care providers in making decisions for the health and safety of those they serve. The goal of this resource is to provide information for what to expect when it comes to COVID-19 and child care. The toolkit is available on the Childcaring website.

When does my sick child and other family members need to stay home?

If anyone in the house has:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste
- New loss of smell

Or at least 2 of the following:

- Fever
- Body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- Headache
- Fatigue

COVID-19 POSSIBLE
ALL FAMILY MEMBERS SHOULD STAY HOME

When can we return to school and work?

Sick person	Household members
Sick individual is diagnosed with a different illness	All well individuals may return to school and work
Sick individual tests negative for COVID-19	All well individuals may return to school and work
Sick individual tests positive for COVID-19	14 days after last contact with sick person AND do not have any COVID symptoms
Sick individual does not test for COVID-19 and does not have a medical diagnosis of another illness	14 days after last contact with sick person AND do not have any COVID symptoms

Note: There are other times a child will be required to stay home from school because of potential exposure to COVID. Public Health will provide directions if this happens.

Service to Providers

Providing Technical Support for Quality Child Care

Childcaring provides training to retain existing child care providers and improve program quality. We offer over 20 different, high quality training topics. Supporting Families Together Association, along with the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agencies in WI, offer online learning opportunities. To view the most updated listing of the Childcaring trainings available visit: <http://www.localendar.com/public/Childcaring>.

In February, Childcaring worked with NTC to sponsor our annual Early Childhood Education conference. This year's focus was Nurturing Brain Development and Self-Care. Over 100 participants spent the day with presenters Deborah McNelis from Brain Insights and Debbie Moellendorf from UW-Extension. The day ended previewing the *No Small Matter* documentary.

In March, Childcaring worked in coordination with CAP Prevention Board, United Way of Portage County and SFTA to sponsor a viewing and panel presentation of *No Small Matter*. Over 100 people registered for the event which had a special focus on Strengthening Families through the Five Protective Factors.



Childcaring Receives COVID-19 Emergency Relief Funding to Offer Trauma Informed Early Childhood Training & Support to Child Care Providers

COVID-19 produced a unique challenge for child care staff working with preschool age children. Many children experienced loss and fear for their own health and safety. Some were afraid to return to their child care environment. Child care teachers and caregivers, when equipped with the knowledge of how to be trauma informed and responsive, can play a vital role in not only identifying a need for trauma related intervention and treatment, but can also be a valuable support system for the social/emotional and mental well-being of children and families.

Thanks to the generous gift of \$9,700 from the B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation, Childcaring in partnership with Marshfield Clinic Health System and the Wisconsin Afterschool Network, worked with consultants Quinn Wilder, Quality Youth Development Consulting and Jennifer Smith, Program Coordinator, Center for Community Health Advancement, Marshfield Clinic Health System to develop and facilitate a virtual trauma informed care training geared specifically to 20 teachers and caregivers of preschool aged children in Marathon County.

"As children return to care after months at home due to COVID-19, many may exhibit challenging behaviors arising from concerns related to their families' health and stability. Supporting early childhood educators' ability to call upon trauma-informed care principles is critical to supporting children's well-being and the strong foundation they need to start right in life," said Linda A. Hall, Director, Office of Children's Mental Health.

Virtual Child Care Huddles

COVID-19 presented some challenges, one being how to safely stay connected. Like many of the CCRR's around the state, the Childcaring team wanted to provide an opportunity for the child care providers to connect with each other and share ideas, concerns, and resources. It was a lot like a virtual support group; we called them Huddles with separate sessions for family child care providers and group center staff. Weekly sessions were planned for 4 weeks – two sessions of family child care providers and two sessions of group center directors. The Childcaring team planned a very fluid agenda with a few focus questions and plenty of time to talk about any hot topics that were presented. Much of the conversation related to COVID-19. Some of the topics discussed were: staff appreciation, policy changes, updated procedures, Paycheck Protection Program and unemployment, online resources, cleaning and supplies, advocacy, activities, rates, and more. Each session was left with positive thoughts, ideas for self-care, and good news. At one of the Huddles, participants were asked to share one word to describe their experience; we heard things like camaraderie, togetherness, support, helpfulness and inspiring.



Virtual Professional Director Cohort

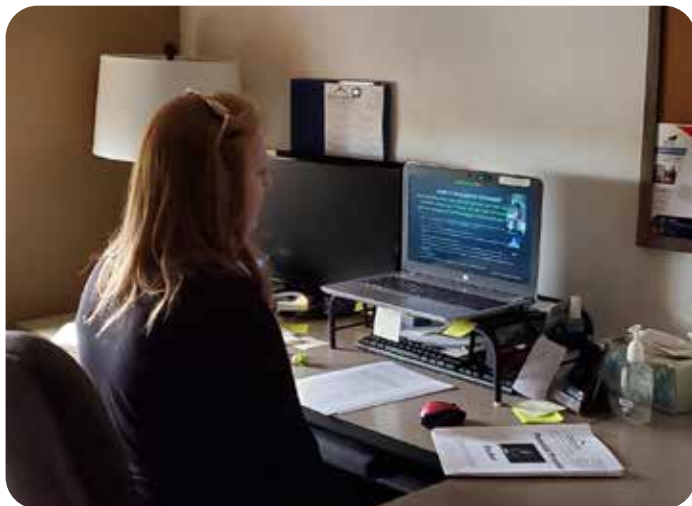
Fifteen directors from many different counties in our service delivery area participated in the 2020 virtual director cohort. The virtual opportunity allowed center directors to learn, connect and build relationships. A majority of the directors were new to their position and working through the learning process of being a director and dealing with a pandemic. The sessions included powerful conversations about topics like: connection, relationships, team building, communication and environments. The directors benefited from conversation through large and small group, one on one, and guest speakers. A great example of how this group made strong connections virtually is how they agreed to share contact information to continue conversations and support each other outside of the cohort.

Starting a Regulated Child Care Program

In 2020, Childcaring held two “Are You Interested in Becoming a Child Care Provider?” virtual information sessions. Due to COVID-19, sessions scheduled for the earlier part of the year were cancelled but individual outreach for each of the registered participants took place. The free sessions gave potential providers the opportunity to ask questions and learn about regulated child care and available start up grants.

Since 2017, over \$19,500 in Start Up Grants has been allocated to child care providers in our service delivery area. Eligible providers have used the funding to pay for classes required to obtain regulation, and to buy equipment and materials (ie: fencing, safety gates, developmentally appropriate materials for a variety of age groups, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, etc.) Being able to support new programs and help increase regulated child care capacity is the purpose of the grants.

This comment was shared by a start up grant recipient, *“Thank you-with just opening a new center, this grant helped purchase items to help with lesson plans and everyday needs for the center.”*



2020 Start Up Grants

8

grants

\$6500

grant
money

162

new child
care slots

Childcaring shares information regarding the benefits and process of becoming regulated (certified or licensed) along with critical business planning tools such as local market rates. Childcaring also provides technical assistance regarding a wide range of topics to existing providers including: child development, staff/child interactions or appropriate environments, and successfully running their business. This year, Childcaring added another County Human Services contract to offer child care certification services in Lincoln County. A child care certifier on staff provides services in Adams, Lincoln, Marquette, and Portage Counties. Childcaring also provides pre-licensing technical assistance to individuals pursuing a child care license.

County	Regulated Programs	Total Capacity
Adams	8	127
Clark	21	492
Langlade	12	283
Lincoln	18	406
Marathon	98	3,349
Marquette	5	148
Portage	50	1,591
Taylor	12	238
Waushara	15	397
North Wood	37	1,610
South Wood	36	1,070



YoungStar is a program of the Department of Children and Families created to improve the quality of child care for children in Wisconsin. Childcaring is the Regional YoungStar office for central Wisconsin. YoungStar rated child care providers go through a 40-point evaluation process specific to each program's regulation type. Those voluntarily participating in onsite technical consultation also received a micro-grant.



In our **10** county service area **227** out of **312** regulated child care providers participated in YoungStar

73%



DCF Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Payment Programs

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) supported the growing demand for child care access for essential workforce families by assisting in the launch of three payment programs to support child care providers. Childcaring staff helped inform providers of the opportunity, encouraged participation and helped answer questions.

Improving Quality – YoungStar Technical Consultation

A small group child care center that opened in late 2018 shared that they signed on for YoungStar consultation right from the start as a way to focus dedicated efforts toward quality improvement. The director also stated that as a former family child care provider she appreciates the guidance and perspective that YoungStar consultation offers their program, and that it is a “streamlined system to assess all dimensions of a program”. The Owner/Administrator and Director have dedicated significant time, energy, and resources into creating a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for the children they serve. In the first year of consultation, the team and their Technical Consultant (TC) focused primarily on the paperwork pieces of YoungStar. As a new program, staff found it helpful to walk through the self-assessment and review how that connects to many aspects of programming as well as to their quality improvement plan. The team also shared that “with such a narrow profit margin in the child care industry, the micro-grant is a saving grace in the financial aspect required for so many quality improvement goals and allowed us to provide an extremely wide variety of materials that would not have been possible through program funds alone”. With their TC, program staff focused on making intentional choices around the materials purchased.

During the first year of consultation, in addition to paperwork completion, a large amount of planning and energy was expended on putting into place the required points to earn a 3-star rating as that was a goal from the outset for the staff. The education component is the only piece standing between 2 and 3 stars for this program right now. Both administrative staff enrolled in a course to complete the Administrator's Credential.

During other consultation for YoungStar at this program, the opportunity to participate in Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) was shared. The TC shared that PBC is a research-based process that supports the improvement of specific teaching practices. Program leaders were excited about the possibility of using some of their consultation time to jump into this new opportunity as well! YoungStar supports programs in their many and varied steps toward a quality improvement journey.

Service to Community

Childcaring was involved in community planning and events throughout our service delivery area. Childcaring helped communities, school districts, employers, and others develop solutions to complex child care problems. Because of the pandemic, many in person events were cancelled in 2020. Childcaring is represented on several collaborating groups within 10 counties.

Represented at events and committees such as:

- Adams County Maternal Child Health Task Force
- Clark County Interagency Coordinating Coalition
- Marathon County United Way Early Years Coalition Planning Committee
- United Way of South Wood County Early Years Coalition
- United Way of Portage County Born Learning Parent and Community Education Committee
- Portage County COVID-19 Community Health Response
- MSTC Early Childhood Advisory Committee
- Portage County Right from the Start Committee
- Wood County Economic Development Roundtable
- United Way of South Wood County Financial Stability Coalition
- Marshfield Area United Way Vision Council
- Waushara County Child & Family Partners
- Waushara Prevention Council
- Stevens Point Optimist Club
- Office of Children's Mental Health Infant Toddler Policy Team + Immediate Needs of COVID-19 Work Group
- Parenting Support Network of Lincoln County
- Pregnancy Expo (Marathon & Taylor County)
- NTC Conference Planning Committee
- PDG Listening Sessions
- Taylor County Early Childhood Committee
- Marquette County Community Networking Group
- Mosinee Area Chamber of Commerce Member



Congratulations!

At the Recognition Luncheon & Annual Meeting held January 29, 2020, Assistant Director Micki Krueger and Training/Program Coordinator Rachele Johnson received 2019 Speaker of the Year awards from United Way of Marathon County.

Providing Communication Support & Connections

Media Connections

Throughout the year and in response to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Childcaring delivered essential communication to keep the public well informed. Through various media outlets, Childcaring staff provided interviews on topics like child care availability, finding child care resources, and regulated child care. (Visit: <https://childcaring.org/newsandlinks/> for the most updated news links)

Quarterly MACCI Newsletter

Childcaring continues to submit articles to the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MACCI). The newsletter goes to member businesses and their employees and provides early care information and resources.

To stay informed on the most current resources and updates, sign up for the Childcaring email list serves and like us on Facebook!

Childcaring 2020 Finances

Funding Sources

- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families through the Supporting Families Together Association
- Marshfield Clinic Health System
- Adams, Marquette, Lincoln, and Portage County Human Services
- United Way
- Other special project funding



A Member of



www.supportingfamilies.together.org



www.childcareaware.org

Income (000)

Youngstar	\$ 537
Indirect Public	230
Core Services	94
Other Direct Public	121
All Other	285
Total Income	\$ 1,267

Expenses (000)

Personnel	\$ 862
Operational	89
Travel	20
Good Start Grants	207
Scholarship Aid	17
All Other	93
Total Expenses	\$ 1,288
Net Income	\$ (21)

Income: Childcaring Financials in 2020 included funding for YoungStar training and technical assistance for child care providers; Good Start Grants and Scholarship Aid supports for families and other United Way funding; core services like referrals and technical assistance; pre-licensing and child care certification services, enhanced referrals, Parent Cafes and on-site consultation; and private training and technical assistance contracts.

Expenses: Operating costs were fairly consistent with the previous year.

Thank You for Your support!

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

– Elizabeth Andrew

Childcaring Staff would like to thank these Childcaring volunteers who donated a combined total of 20 Volunteer Service hours, in 2020:

Gloria Nettesheim, JoAnn Grode,
Mary Cleveland, and Sienna Borchardt

We so appreciate your gift of time and project assistance.



THANK YOU

to the hard working
Childcaring Board of
Directors.

We appreciate your time,
dedication, and the
guidance you give.

2020 Childcaring Board of Directors

Brad Gast, President - Northcentral Technical College

Donna Ginzi, Vice President - Anderson O'Brien Law Firm

Michelle Rantala, Treasurer - CoVantage Credit Union

Joan Krohn, Secretary -

Retired (former Director of Head Start/Early Childhood/4K Merrill Area Public Schools)

Jane Brandt - Child Care Provider

Annett Mooney - Marquette County Human Services

Tammy Schreiber - Taylor County Human Services

Tina Smith - Adams County Health & Human Services Department

Nancy Vance - University of Wisconsin-Extension, Clark County

Barry West - Waushara County

2020 Childcaring Staff

Tara Biebl ~ Resource & Referral Specialist

Audrey Bittner ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer

Kelly Borchardt ~ Executive Director

Linda Francis ~ Financial Manager

Rachele Johnson ~ Training/Program Coordinator

Kristine Joyce ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer

Micki Krueger ~ Assistant Director

Andrea Mueller ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer

Shelley Nelson ~ Referral & Communication Specialist

Mary Olson ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer

Gayle Schiszik ~ Certifier/Pre-licensing Consultant

Lori Shafranski ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer

Carrie Steinke ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer

Tracy Verjinsky ~ Program Coordinator

Kao L. Xiong ~ Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer - Bilingual



"I count it an honor and a privilege to be a part of the Childcaring Inc Board. It has been and continues to be a rewarding experience to be a part of. I have much appreciation for the desire to create good quality childcare. It is fun and exciting to be able to participate in the Blue Ribbon Kids Day every year. Watching the excitement and enthusiasm that comes from the workers and children make it all worthwhile. I look forward to many more"

- Board member, Barry West

On Read Across America/Dr Seuss Day 2020,

Childcaring staff and board members read Dr Seuss books in 13 child care classrooms and distributed stickers to hundreds of children at the child care centers we visited.



850 Hwy. 153, Ste F | Mosinee | WI 54455

Xav tau kev pab pes/txhais daim ntawv xovxwm
no thov hu tuaj rau
Kao Lai Xiong 715-841-9490
Hnub Monday-Friday 8:30 txog 4:30.

