

# Pathways to Quality

## Build Your Own



### ► Project Description



The availability of and access to quality child care has reached crisis levels throughout Minnesota, including the Twin Cities. Between 2005 and 2015, the state lost about 30% (over 3,000) of its family-based child care providers—leaving less than one slot for every four preschool-age children in the state. Since July 2016, Minneapolis and Saint Paul had a net loss of 58 family child care providers, representing 14% of the total. Our research shows that this decrease is due in part to systemic factors: low wages, high turnover of staff within programs, and the high cost of running a business combined with a lack of financial supports to offset the costs of earning and maintaining a Parent Aware quality rating. According to the US Department of Labor, the average center-based or family-based child care provider in the United States makes \$11 per hour, compared with \$26 per hour for the average kindergarten teacher. This translates to child care workers earning more than \$30,000 less per year than their counterparts who work with five- and six-year-olds. Moreover, due in part to low wages, the child care field has one of the highest job vacancy rates (5%) in the state and across the country. All of these factors add up to a capacity crisis that affects child care providers, children, families, employers, and entire communities, especially low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse communities—the very communities Think Small is committed to serving.

In 2018 Think Small implemented its Build Your Own Child Care program to offer assistance in starting or expanding a licensed family child care program or a licensed child care center within Hennepin and Ramsey counties. This program aligns with Think Small's strategic plan strategy of increasing the number of high-quality family- and center-based child care programs participating in Parent Aware. The program offers up to 20 hours of free technical assistance, coaching, and support to participants in seven areas: community assessment, individual assessment, licensing, communications and marketing, resource development, compliance, and Parent Aware.



### Build Your Own: Child Care Program



Free support and information to guide you through licensing while offering essential skills for success!

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## ► Impact

As of May 2019, the Build Your Own Child Care business coach has connected with 115 providers and has actively recruited 70 providers into the Build Your Own program. Of these, 18 providers have already become licensed and on their way to being Parent Aware rated. This equates to an additional 232 high-quality care slots that will be available in the seven-county metro area.

“ My confidence, my drive, my passion all were instantly reignited over this one moment of this one meeting. I am today more ready and more confident than I was at what I would have considered my prime in family childcare! ”

“ I gained so many different ideas about marketing my business as that has completely changed over the past 5.5 years, People used to just call, now its all social media and emails, and not a single phone call. I will open my doors March 25th 2019 with 6 enrolled children, all of them from social media inquiries such as our Facebook page and my website. ”

—BUILD YOUR OWN PROVIDERS



## ► Challenges/Opportunities

Until recently, the Department of Human Services funded capacity building throughout the Child Care Aware system in Minnesota by supporting providers new to the field and helping them become licensed. However, those funds were diverted to scale Parent Aware across Minnesota, and the capacity building and business development funds were never replaced. If replaced, capacity building and business development could once again be scaled throughout Minnesota.

## ► Next Steps

Think Small is currently working on developing and implementing a scalable model of capacity building. This will include collaboration opportunities with other agencies such as First Children's Finance to ensure that licensing, business foundation, and quality elements are supported in the early childhood ecosystem. Think Small is looking for a funding investment of \$50,000 to build a technology platform that will help scale this program to meet the full need in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.



To learn more about Pathways to Quality, visit [ThinkSmall.org/pathways](https://ThinkSmall.org/pathways)