A strong, equitable child-care and early learning system strengthens the economy for everyone.
The Social Impact of Think Small’s Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy

This impact value map shows the total cost for the Early Childhood Academy, and the projected benefits generated by the child care providers served.

Projected Social Return on Investment

$1 → $2.46

For every $1 dollar spent by Think Small to serve Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy providers, there is a projected social return of $2.46. This value is being realized through improved physical and mental health, increased earnings for child care providers, parents, and children, reduced special education placement, and reduced grade retention.

**Total Cost of Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy for 3 years:** $710,910

**Estimated Return on Investment:** $1,746,860

### Logic Model

**Outcomes | Impacts | Who Benefits?**

- **Avoided lost lifetime income from avoided child care closure**
  - Parents and Loved Ones $855,116

- **Additional taxes paid**
  - Federal $273,150
  - State $126,470
  - Local $51,080

- **Increased kindergarten readiness and participation in quality early care program**
  - K-12 Schools - $76,060

- **Increased enrollment from quality rating**
  - Children $347,835
  - Taxpayers $450,600

- **Reduced grade retention and special education placement**
  - 1. Health Insurers - $25,300
  - 2. Child Care Providers - $14,150

- **Increased earnings**
  - 1. Education Insurers - $347,635
  - 2. Children - $450,600
  - 3. Taxpayers - $833,115

- **Improved health**
  - Federal $273,150
  - State $126,470
  - Local $51,080

- **Avoided school costs**
  - Federal $273,150
  - State $126,470
  - Local $51,080

- **Avoided child care closure**
  - 1. Health Insurers - $25,300
  - 2. Child Care Providers - $14,150

### Key Performance Indicators

**Inputs**
- Think Small staff
- Ramsey County early childhood education providers
- Strategic partnerships with state agencies, school districts, ECE advocates, other nonprofits
- Grants and donations
- Data management system
- Results Based Accountability framework

**Activities**
- Intake processing
- ECE workforce recruitment, retention, and development
- Professional development training to meet licensing, Parent Aware and Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential requirements
- Coaching for providers to enhance learning environment and outcomes
- Business startup support including fostering a learning community

**Outputs**
- # of child care providers
- Total and average $ incentive
- Average Parent Aware ratings
- # of rated programs
- Business retention rate

**Short-term Outcomes**
- Parent Aware rating
- Financial stress
- Job satisfaction
- Kindergarten readiness
- Age-appropriate social-emotional skills
- Opportunities to pursue education and career pathways

**Intermediate Outcomes**
- Business retention and sustainability
- Early care environment
- Wellbeing
- Family stability

**Long-term Outcomes**
- Inclusive and equitable care and education system
- More qualified, diverse ECE workforce
- Increased quality of life
- Increased family economic security

**Key: ↑: Child Care Provider ↑: Children ↑: Families**

**Dimensions of Impact**

**WHAT:** An initiative designed to incentivize early childhood education providers to progress from licensed to quality programs, increasing the availability and quality of early care in the County.

**WHO:** Serving Ramsey County early child care providers, including those with established programs and those starting their own in the County. Priority is given to family, friends, and neighbors (FYFN) in child care desert areas as well as English Language Learners (ELL) and BIPOC educators.

**HOW MUCH:** Aiming to reach at least 300 child care providers over 3 years with a total funding allocation of approximately $700,000. Goals include increasing enrollment capacity by 420, creating 230 new jobs, and preserving 370 enrollment slots and 90 child care jobs.

**CONTRIBUTION:** The incentive and quality rating strategy is based on growing evidence that shows home-based child care providers and the children served benefit from the financial support and quality improvements.

**IMPACT RISK MITIGATION:** Combining incentives with business support, the Early Childhood Academy provides individualized support, selecting to educator survey responses, needs and experience, increasing the likelihood of participation. Access to multiple incentives promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement, strengthening long-term positive impact for educators and families served.
Dear Ramsey County Residents,

Ramsey County, like all communities across Minnesota and the country, is currently facing significant shortages in childcare options for young families. This is not a new issue families are experiencing, but one that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Access to stable childcare is a barrier to employment and returning to work for many Ramsey County residents. In response to this growing need Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and Think Small have created The Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy. Through the Academy, Think Small’s expert staff, in partnership with its community-based partners, will provide a unique combination of wrap around supports to people looking to get started in the field of early education and those needing additional supports and opportunities to remain in the field. These supports include business consultation, technical assistance, professional development, and wage subsidies.

Ramsey County desperately needs to rebuild a strong child care sector to help our families, communities and economy. The county is committed to increasing the supply, wages and opportunities in early education and care. We are confident this effort can help more of our parents enroll in training programs and go to work. Looking ahead, this model will likely be replicated on a broader scale in other Minnesota communities.

Increasing the pool of qualified early childhood educators and increasing the number of available childcare slots addresses the child care crisis and ultimately the goal of ensuring every child and their family is on a path to prosperity.

In partnership,

– Barbara Yates, President and CEO
  Think Small

&

– Ling Becker
  Director Ramsey County Workforce Solutions