



**WORKFORCE CHILDCARE
ACCESS AND THE
PROPIETY OF
CONSOLIDATION OF
CHILDCARE
ADMINISTRATION**

Report Compiled by the
Child Care Task Force

June 30, 2024

— **TOGETHER** —
COMMUNITY · FAMILY · CULTURE

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Executive Summary

The Child Care Task Force at the Cherokee Nation has conducted a thorough analysis responding to directives issued by Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. on March 19, 2024. This report explores critical aspects of childcare support for the Cherokee Nation workforce and evaluates the feasibility and benefits of consolidating Head Start and Child Development Center (CDC) operations. The recommendations and findings aim to address gaps in current childcare services and enhance the overall quality and accessibility of early childhood education for Cherokee Nation employees and their families.

Key Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

1. **Examine Gaps in Childcare Services:** Investigate the usage and effectiveness of existing childcare programs and identify areas for improvement to support the Cherokee Nation workforce.
2. **Evaluate the Potential for Administrative Consolidation:** Assess the feasibility, potential benefits, and challenges of consolidating CDC and Head Start operations to streamline administration and optimize resource utilization.

Methodology

- **Data Collection:** Utilized comprehensive surveys and feedback from employees and leadership teams of CDC and Head Start.
- **Feasibility Assessment:** Conducted analyses of childcare service usage and potential for on-site childcare facilities.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Gathered insights through live interviews and structured questionnaires from key stakeholders to ensure inclusive and representative feedback.

Examination of Childcare Gaps

Current Childcare Program Usage

- **Program Utilization Trends:** Analysis of existing programs like Head Start, Child Development Centers, and the Child Care Subsidy Program revealed gaps in availability, accessibility, and affordability of childcare services. There is significant demand for more flexible, reliable, and cost-effective childcare options.
- **Barriers Identified:** Employees highlighted barriers such as high costs, limited availability of slots, and the lack of convenient locations. These factors contribute to difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities.

Employee Questionnaire Insights

- **Response and Participation:** The employee survey, which received 1888 responses, provided critical insights into the childcare needs of the Cherokee Nation workforce. The majority of respondents expressed interest in on-site childcare solutions.
- **Key Findings:**
 - **Childcare Needs:** 43% of respondents indicated current or imminent childcare needs with a preference for locations near their workplaces.
 - **Satisfaction Levels:** Common issues included high costs, limited hours, and inadequate educational quality.

- Financial Assistance: A substantial number of employees are unaware of available financial assistance programs, indicating a need for better communication and support mechanisms.

Feasibility of On-Site Childcare Services

Key Findings

- High Demand: Employees expressed a strong preference for childcare near their workplaces with significant interest in flexible options like extended hours and school holiday care.
- Prime Locations: Tahlequah Headquarters and the Hard Rock Casino in Catoosa were identified as prime locations due to high employee density.
- Infrastructure Needs: Existing facilities are not suitable for childcare without significant renovations or new construction.

Recommendations

- Pilot Programs: Implement pilot programs at key locations to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of on-site childcare.
- Partnerships: Explore partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to share costs and resources.
- Detailed Study: Conduct a comprehensive study to include needs assessment, cost-benefit analysis, site feasibility, and funding exploration.

Examination of Administrative Consolidation

Feedback from Leadership

- Benefits Identified: Leadership from CDC and Head Start noted potential benefits of consolidation, including streamlined administrative processes, reduced redundancy, and improved resource allocation.
- Challenges Highlighted: Concerns were raised about possible service disruptions, increased bureaucratic complexity, and the need to maintain the unique strengths and focus areas of each program.

Analysis of Potential Gains

- Administrative Efficiencies: The consolidation offers the potential to create a unified administrative structure, simplifying processes such as enrollment, billing, and reporting.
- Resource Maximization: A consolidated approach could facilitate better resource allocation, optimize facility use, and enhance training and professional development opportunities for staff.
- Service Delivery Improvements: Integrated services could lead to expanded offerings such as extended hours and wraparound care, benefiting both families and employees.

Consolidation Recommendations

- Phased Implementation: To mitigate risks and manage potential disruptions, a phased approach to consolidation is recommended. This includes piloting programs at select sites and gradually expanding to other locations.
- Pilot/Starting Location Recommendation: Pryor CDC Head Start is recommended as the location for the pilot/starting location for a phased implementation of consolidation to systematically identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in real time before

rolling out consolidation on a larger scale. This location is ideal as the existing CDC and Head Start operations already work under the same roof.

- Detailed Transition Plan: A comprehensive plan outlining key steps, timelines, and responsibilities will ensure a smooth transition while maintaining high-quality service delivery.

Recommendations

Enhance Existing Childcare Programs

- Increase Capacity and Accessibility: Address gaps in current services by expanding program capacity and making targeted improvements to better meet employee needs.
- Implement On-Site Childcare Solutions: Develop on-site childcare facilities at key locations to provide accessible, convenient, and high-quality childcare options for employees.

Proceed with Consolidation of CDC and Head Start Operations

- Develop a Unified Administrative Structure: Streamline processes and integrate administrative functions to improve efficiency and reduce redundancy.
- Optimize Resource Utilization: Create a consolidated budget and prioritize resource allocation to areas of greatest need, facilitating cost savings and better service delivery.
- Foster Professional Development: Establish shared training programs and clear career pathways to enhance staff skills and improve service quality.

Ensure a Smooth Transition

- Comprehensive Transition Plan: Develop a detailed plan that includes timelines, responsibilities, and strategies to manage change effectively and minimize service disruptions.
- Robust Communication Strategy: Maintain open and transparent communication with all stakeholders to build trust and ensure a smooth transition.

Focus on Continuous Improvement

- Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement regular reviews and evaluations to track progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments to improve service delivery.
- Stakeholder Feedback Mechanism: Establish a robust mechanism for collecting and analyzing stakeholder feedback to continuously refine and improve childcare services.

Need for Additional Future Studies

To make informed decisions, additional comprehensive studies are recommended to include:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis: Evaluate financial implications, including start-up and operational costs.
- Site Feasibility: Assess potential locations for infrastructure and regulatory compliance.
- Funding Exploration: Identify financial support of on-site childcare development.
- Pilot Program Development: Test various on-site childcare models to refine the approach.

Preliminary findings suggest significant potential benefits from on-site childcare, but a thorough, detailed study is essential to ensure the success and sustainability of such initiatives.

By addressing gaps in existing services and exploring the potential benefits of consolidating CDC and Head Start operations, the Cherokee Nation can create a more effective and unified early childhood education system. This approach not only improves access to high-quality childcare but

also supports the well-being and productivity of employees, ultimately contributing to the overall strength and prosperity of the Cherokee Nation community.

Through careful planning, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the Cherokee Nation can ensure that its childcare services meet the diverse needs of its families and provide a strong foundation for the future. This report provides a clear roadmap for achieving these goals and highlights the significant potential for positive impact through thoughtful and strategic consolidation and enhancement of childcare services.

Introduction

The Cherokee Nation places a high priority on the provision of early childhood education (ECE) services, recognizing their critical role in promoting the educational, social, and economic well-being of its citizens. This report is prepared by the Child Care Task Force in response to directives issued by Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. on March 19, 2024, to address two specific objectives: examining gaps in childcare for the Cherokee Nation workforce and further examining the propriety of the administrative consolidation of Head Start and Child Development Center operations.

Background

The Verna D. Thompson Early Childhood Education Act of 2021 (hereinafter "the Act"), as amended in 2024, mandates a biennial analysis of early childhood education services and provides for significant investments in the infrastructure and expansion of these services. The Act was named in honor of Verna D. Thompson, who has made substantial contributions to the Cherokee Nation's Head Start program, which has positively impacted thousands of families since its inception in 1978.

The 2022 Early Childhood Education Report, prepared at the direction of Principal Chief Hoskin, highlighted several critical findings:

- There is a significant need for repair or replacement of Head Start facilities.
- The Cherokee Nation provides only 19% of the ECE slots needed by Cherokee children within its reservation.
- The workforce within the Cherokee Nation and its entities faces substantial challenges in accessing quality, affordable childcare, which affects employee satisfaction and productivity.

Objectives

In the March 19, 2024, memorandum, Principal Chief Hoskin outlined two key directives for the Child Care Task Force:

1. Examine Gaps in Childcare for the Cherokee Nation Workforce and Related Entities:
 - a. Examine the usage of the following Cherokee Nation programs or services by the workforce: Head Start, Child Development Centers, Child Care Subsidy Program.
 - b. Consider an employee questionnaire to gather information on childcare usage, needs, and gaps across various workforces.
 - c. Identify opportunities for on-site childcare services based on need, work site, worker population, etc.
2. Further Examine the Propriety of the Administrative Consolidation of Head Start and Child Development Center Operations:
 - a. Solicit feedback on the question from CDC and Head Start leadership, requiring each to express the pros and cons of consolidation.
 - b. Identify potential gains from consolidation.
 - c. Make a recommendation regarding consolidation, including where the programs should consolidate (if at all), based on a consensus of the task force, while identifying any dissenting considerations.

Scope and Methodology

The Child Care Task Force, composed of representatives from Administration, Education, Human Services, Child Development Center, Head Start, Commerce, and Finance, conducted a comprehensive analysis to fulfill the directives. The methodology included:

- **Data Collection:** Usage data for existing childcare programs was collected and analyzed to identify trends and gaps.
- **Employee Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was distributed to gather insights into the childcare needs, preferences, and barriers faced by employees.
- **Feedback from Leadership:** Structured questionnaires were used to solicit detailed feedback from the leadership of CDC and Head Start programs on the pros and cons of consolidation.
- **Feasibility Assessment:** The potential for on-site childcare services was assessed based on workforce needs and site capabilities.

Importance of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is foundational for the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children. Quality ECE programs, including Head Start and Child Development Centers, play a crucial role in preparing children for future academic success and overall well-being. These programs are also vital for supporting the workforce by enabling parents to engage in employment, education, and training opportunities without compromising their children's care and development.

The Cherokee Nation's commitment to expanding and enhancing ECE services is aimed at addressing childcare deserts, improving accessibility, and ensuring that high-quality education is available to all Cherokee children. By achieving these objectives, the Cherokee Nation aims to promote equitable educational opportunities and support the economic stability and growth of its communities.

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Child Care Task Force, providing a roadmap for enhancing childcare support within the Cherokee Nation. Through strategic improvements and potential consolidation, the report aims to maximize resources, improve service delivery, and ensure that the needs of the Cherokee Nation workforce and their families are met effectively.

Methodology

This section outlines the approach and methods used by the Child Care Task Force to fulfill the directives issued by Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. on March 19, 2024. The primary focus areas were examining gaps in childcare for the Cherokee Nation workforce and assessing the propriety of consolidating the administration of Head Start and Child Development Center (CDC) operations.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process involved two main activities: distributing an employee questionnaire and gathering feedback from CDC and Head Start leadership.

Employee Questionnaire

To gather comprehensive insights into the childcare needs, preferences, and barriers faced by employees, an all-employee questionnaire was distributed via email on May 8, 2024. The recipients included employees of the Cherokee Nation, Housing Authority of Cherokee Nation, Cherokee Nation Businesses, and other entities working on or near the tribal reservation. The questionnaire aimed to identify usage patterns of existing childcare programs, assess gaps in childcare services, and evaluate the interest and feasibility of on-site childcare services.

Email Communication to Employees:

The email sent to employees emphasized the importance of their input for the success of the childcare initiative and highlighted the connection to the Verna D. Thompson Early Childhood Education Act. It informed employees about the purpose of the survey, assured confidentiality, and mentioned an incentive (a chance to win a Pendleton Woolen Mills blanket) to encourage participation. The survey link was provided, and employees were given until May 15, 2024, to complete it. Here is the wording of the email:

Dear Cherokee Nation Employees,

At Cherokee Nation, we recognize that access to quality childcare is essential for our employees to balance their work and family responsibilities.

To better understand and address the childcare needs of our workforce, Principal Chief Hoskin Jr. and Deputy Chief Bryan Warner have called for the Cherokee Nation Childcare Task Force, originally established in 2021, to reconvene and examine gaps in childcare across our organization and family of businesses.

This effort is a part of the landmark Verna D. Thompson Early Childhood Education Act, which was first proposed by Chief Hoskin and Deputy Chief Warner in 2021 and approved by the Council of the Cherokee Nation. The Act's expansion in March of 2024 calls on the task force to address childcare gaps throughout the tribe's workforce under the direction of First Lady January Hoskin, Chief of Staff Corey Bunch, and Secretary of State Shella Bowlin.

As a valued member of our Cherokee Nation workforce family, your input is crucial. We invite you to participate in our all-employee childcare survey, which will help us identify challenges and develop targeted solutions to support you and your family.

To show our appreciation for your time and feedback, we will be giving away prizes to randomly selected participants. By completing the survey, you will be automatically entered into a drawing for a chance to win a Pendleton Woolen Mills blanket.

The survey will be open from Wednesday, May 8 to Wednesday, May 15 and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of informing our Cherokee Nation childcare initiatives.

To get started, please click on the following link: [INSERT LINK HERE]

Your participation is vital to the success of this initiative, and we greatly appreciate your input. Together, we can create a more supportive and inclusive work environment for all our employees.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to Austin Patton at 918-453-5000 ext. 5204.

Thank you for your time and valuable feedback.

Wado,

January Hoskin, First Lady of the Cherokee Nation

Corey Bunch, Chief of Staff

Shella Bowlin, Secretary of State

Feedback from Child Development Center and Head Start Leadership

To evaluate the potential consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations, the task force conducted interviews with frontline staff and distributed a structured questionnaire to all CDC and Head Start supervisors, managers, and directors. The feedback aimed to capture detailed opinions on the pros and cons of consolidation, identify potential administrative efficiencies, and assess the impact on service delivery.

Email Communication to CDC and Head Start Leadership:

The email sent to the leadership teams on May 8, 2024, explained the purpose of the evaluation, provided a link to the questionnaire, and requested completion by May 15, 2024. The communication emphasized the importance of their insights for informed decision-making. Here is the wording of the email:

Dear Child Care and Development Leadership Team,

As members of the Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force, we are currently undertaking a thorough evaluation of the potential benefits and challenges associated with the consolidation of Child Development Center (CDC) and Head Start operations. This initiative stems from the directives outlined in the Verna Thompson Early Childhood Education Act and the recent expansions to the law.

To ensure that our decision-making process is as informed and comprehensive as possible, we are seeking detailed feedback from you, our valued leaders in the CDC and Head Start programs. Your insights are crucial as they will directly influence the recommendations we present to the Cherokee Nation leadership.

We have developed a structured questionnaire designed to capture your expert opinions on the pros and cons of this potential consolidation. The questionnaire has been digitized for your convenience, allowing you to submit your responses directly through the link provided below:

[INSERT LINK HERE]

Please complete the questionnaire by Wednesday, May 15, ensuring that your feedback reflects your professional experiences and perspectives. Your input will play a key role in shaping the future of our early childhood education services.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification as you complete the survey, please do not hesitate to reach out. Your active participation in this process is not only appreciated but also vital for our continued success and improvement.

Thank you in advance for your time and thoughtful responses. We look forward to receiving your insights.

Best regards,

[INSERT TASK FORCE MEMBER NAME]

Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force

Analysis Process

1. **Data Compilation:** Responses from the employee and leadership questionnaires were compiled and categorized to identify common themes, trends, and areas requiring attention.
2. **Trend Analysis:** Data on the usage of existing childcare programs was analyzed to identify capacity issues, service gaps, and potential areas for improvement.
3. **Feasibility Assessment:** The feasibility of on-site childcare services was assessed by considering workforce needs, site capabilities, and potential partnerships.
4. **Consolidation Evaluation:** Feedback from CDC and Head Start leadership was analyzed to evaluate the pros and cons of consolidation, potential administrative efficiencies, and impacts on service delivery.

The methodology employed by the Child Care Task Force was comprehensive and aimed at gathering detailed and actionable insights from employees and leadership. By utilizing structured questionnaires and direct interviews, the task force ensured that the recommendations presented in this report are well-informed and reflect the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders involved.

Examination of Current Childcare Program Usage

This section examines the usage of existing childcare programs by the Cherokee Nation workforce, based on the data collected from various sources. The analysis covers several key childcare support programs, including foster parent leave, family leave, paid maternity leave, and flexible spending accounts. The goal is to identify trends, gaps, and areas for potential improvement in childcare support provided to Cherokee Nation employees.

Program Definitions

1. Paid Foster Parent Leave
 - a. Provides specific paid time off for eligible employees to meet the needs of Cherokee Nation foster children placed in Cherokee Nation certified homes, whether in state or tribal custody.
2. Family Leave (Paid)
 - a. Offers paid leave to eligible employees for the birth or adoption of a child through Cherokee Nation Indian Child Welfare, when the employee does not otherwise qualify for paid maternity leave.
3. Paid Maternity Leave
 - a. Provides paid leave to eligible employees during a maternity absence for the birth of their child.
4. Child Flex Spending Account
 - a. Allows employees to use pretax dollars to pay for eligible expenses related to care for a child, disabled spouse, elderly parent, or other dependent who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care, enabling the employee or their spouse to work, look for work, or attend school full-time. Cherokee Nation contributes \$2,000 per child to help cover the cost of childcare expenses for employees who elect to enroll.
5. Flex Spending Account (FSA)
 - a. Allows employees to set aside pre-tax dollars each year to cover the cost of a wide variety of expenses, reducing taxable income and increasing disposable income.

Program Usage Analysis

Comparison of Childcare Support Investments: Flex Spending Accounts vs. Broader Investments

In evaluating the effectiveness of current childcare support programs and identifying opportunities for improvement, the Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force has conducted a comparative analysis of potential investments. This analysis focuses on the impacts of increasing contributions to child flexible spending accounts (FSAs) compared to other broader investments that could benefit a larger portion of the employee base.

Current Program Overview:

1. Child Flex Spending Accounts (FSA):
 - Description: FSAs allow employees to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible childcare expenses. The Cherokee Nation contributes \$2,000 per child annually to help cover these costs.
 - Usage: In FY 2024, 109 employees utilized the child flex spending account, indicating moderate engagement with this benefit.
2. Broader Childcare Support Programs:

- Programs Include: Paid family leave, on-site childcare facilities, childcare subsidies, and increased funding for external childcare services.
- Usage: Broader programs, such as paid family leave and childcare subsidies, serve a wider range of employees and show varying levels of utilization depending on the specific program.

Comparison of Investments:

1. Increased Contributions to Child Flex Spending Accounts:

- Advantages:
 - Direct Financial Relief: Provides immediate financial support to employees by reducing taxable income and covering a portion of childcare expenses.
 - Flexible Usage: Allows employees to choose their preferred childcare provider, offering greater flexibility in managing childcare arrangements.
 - Tax Benefits: Both the employee and employer benefit from tax savings, making it a cost-effective option for childcare support.
- Disadvantages:
 - Limited Reach: Benefits primarily employees who have young children and are in higher tax brackets, thus offering less support to a broader employee base.
 - Usage Complexity: Employees must actively enroll and manage their accounts, which may be a barrier for some, leading to lower overall participation.
 - Non-Universal Impact: Does not address the needs of employees without young children or those who do not require childcare support.

2. Broader Childcare Support Investments:

- Paid Family Leave:
 - Impact: Provides financial stability during critical family events, such as the birth or adoption of a child, and supports a larger portion of the employee base.
 - Advantages: Universal benefit that supports work-life balance and promotes employee well-being.
 - Disadvantages: Higher upfront costs for the organization, requiring significant budget allocation.
- On-Site Childcare Facilities:
 - Impact: Directly benefits employees with young children by providing convenient, high-quality childcare services near their workplace.

- Advantages: Enhances employee retention, reduces absenteeism, and improves productivity by alleviating childcare concerns.
- Disadvantages: Requires substantial capital investment for infrastructure and ongoing operational costs, limiting the initial reach until facilities are expanded.
- Childcare Subsidies:
 - Impact: Offers financial support for a wider range of childcare options, making it easier for employees to afford quality childcare.
 - Advantages: Flexible and inclusive, catering to diverse employee needs and circumstances.
 - Disadvantages: Administrative complexity in managing subsidies and ensuring equitable distribution among employees.
- External Childcare Service Funding:
 - Impact: Supports community-based childcare providers, expanding access and improving quality for all families in the region.
 - Advantages: Strengthens community ties and provides a broader benefit to both employees and the wider community.
 - Disadvantages: Indirect benefit to employees, as it does not provide immediate financial relief like direct subsidies or FSAs.

Broader Implications and Potential Benefits:

1. Holistic Employee Support:

- Work-Life Balance: Investments in paid family leave and on-site childcare facilities contribute to a healthier work-life balance, enhancing overall employee satisfaction and productivity.
- Inclusion and Equity: Broader childcare support programs are more inclusive, addressing the diverse needs of employees across different life stages and family situations.

2. Community and Economic Impact:

- Economic Stability: By supporting childcare services, the Cherokee Nation not only aids its employees but also contributes to the economic stability and growth of the community.
- Community Engagement: Investments in external childcare services and partnerships with local providers foster stronger community relations and support local businesses.

3. Long-Term Organizational Benefits:

- Employee Retention and Recruitment: Comprehensive childcare support programs make the Cherokee Nation an attractive employer, helping to retain talent and attract new employees.
- Increased Productivity: Reliable and accessible childcare services reduce absenteeism and stress among employees, leading to higher productivity and better job performance.

Remarks

The comparison between increasing contributions to child flex spending accounts and broader childcare support investments reveals that while FSAs provide valuable financial relief to a specific segment of the workforce, broader investments offer more inclusive and far-reaching benefits. By adopting a holistic approach to childcare support, the Cherokee Nation can address the diverse needs of its employees, promote community well-being, and enhance overall organizational performance.

Key Recommendations

1. Expand Childcare Support Programs:

- Prioritize the development and expansion of on-site childcare facilities and increase funding for paid family leave and childcare subsidies to support a broader employee base.

2. Increase Flex Spending Contributions:

- While broadening overall support, also consider moderately increasing contributions to child flex spending accounts to provide immediate financial benefits to those who use them.

3. Strengthen Community Partnerships:

- Collaborate with local childcare providers and community organizations to enhance access and quality of childcare services, benefiting both employees and the wider community.

4. Implement Continuous Evaluation:

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness and reach of all childcare support programs to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the workforce and contribute to long-term organizational goals.

Statistics

Adoption Leave:

- FY 2022: 2 employees used adoption leave, totaling 41 hours and \$731.07 in paid leave.
- FY 2023: No employees utilized adoption leave.
- FY 2024: No employees utilized adoption leave.

Foster Care Parent Leave:

- FY 2022: 3 employees used foster parent leave, totaling 72 hours and \$1,815.27 in paid leave.
- FY 2023: 12 employees used foster parent leave, totaling 667.5 hours and \$17,188.98 in paid leave.
- FY 2024: 7 employees used foster parent leave, totaling 265 hours and \$7,220.58 in paid leave.

Family Leave/Parental Leave:

- FY 2022: No employees utilized family leave.
- FY 2023: 19 employees used family leave, totaling 1332 hours and \$50,343.35 in paid leave.
- FY 2024: 23 employees used family leave, totaling 1513.50 hours and \$44,100.71 in paid leave.

Paid Maternity Leave:

- Despite the availability of paid maternity leave, data indicates no employee took maternity leave in FY 2022. This low utilization suggests potential barriers or lack of awareness about the program.

Child Flex Spending Account:

- In FY 2024, 109 employees took advantage of the child flex spending account, which helps cover the cost of childcare expenses using pretax dollars.

Child Care Subsidy Program:

- Data on the usage of the child care subsidy program is still being gathered. The subsidy program provides financial assistance to eligible employees to offset the cost of childcare.

Observations and Trends

1. Low Utilization of Certain Programs:
 - Observation: Adoption leave and paid maternity leave show low utilization rates. Adoption leave was used by only two employees in FY 2022 and not at all in FY 2023 and FY 2024. Similarly, no employees took maternity leave in FY 2022. This could indicate barriers to access, lack of awareness, or other factors that need to be explored.
 - Action: Increase communication and explore barriers to improve utilization.
2. Increased Use of Foster Care Parent Leave:
 - Observation: There has been a significant increase in the use of foster care parent leave, with 12 employees using the program in FY 2023 compared to 3 in FY 2022. However, there was a decrease in FY 2024 with only 7 employees utilizing the program.
 - Action: Assess the factors influencing the fluctuating utilization to ensure consistent support for foster care parents.
3. Rising Utilization of Family Leave:
 - Observation: Family leave saw substantial usage in FY 2023 and FY 2024, with 19 and 23 employees using the leave, respectively. This indicates a growing recognition and use of this benefit among employees.
 - Action: Continue promoting family leave and ensure it meets the diverse needs of employees.
4. Child Flex Spending Account Popularity:
 - Observation: The child flex spending account is a popular benefit, with 109 employees enrolled in FY 2024. This program helps employees manage childcare costs more effectively by utilizing pretax dollars.
 - Action: Consider expanding this program to further support employee childcare needs.

Discussion on General Liability Insurance Risks

To ensure comprehensive risk management, the Cherokee Nation must address potential general liability insurance risks related to employee claims. This includes examining historical claims, identifying current risks, and implementing strategies to mitigate future liabilities.

1. Historical Claims:
 - Employee Injury Claims: Historically, there have been claims related to employee injuries in childcare settings, including slips and falls, lifting injuries, and exposure to illnesses. These claims highlight the need for robust safety protocols and ergonomic practices.
 - Child Safety Incidents: Claims have been made for child injuries at childcare facilities, ranging from minor incidents to more severe cases. Past claims underscore the importance of stringent safety measures and supervision.
 - Professional Misconduct Claims: Instances of claims related to inadequate care and breaches of confidentiality have occurred. This points to the necessity for continuous staff training and adherence to professional standards.

2. Current Risks:

- **Operational Risks:** Risks associated with daily childcare operations include injuries to children and staff, property damage, and health emergencies. These require diligent safety management.
- **Compliance Risks:** Non-compliance with childcare regulations can result in legal and financial penalties. Ensuring adherence to all regulatory standards is crucial.
- **Reputational Risks:** Negative incidents or allegations of misconduct can damage the organization's reputation, making proactive risk management essential.
- **Financial Risks:** Liability claims and related litigation can significantly affect financial stability, necessitating adequate financial planning and insurance coverage.

3. Mitigation Strategies:

- **Comprehensive Liability Insurance:** Ensure all childcare facilities are covered by comprehensive general liability insurance, including bodily injury, property damage, and professional liability.
- **Regular Safety Audits:** Conduct regular safety audits to identify and mitigate potential hazards, reducing the likelihood of incidents and claims.
- **Enhanced Staff Training:** Provide ongoing training in safety, health protocols, and professional conduct to maintain high standards of care and minimize liability risks.
- **Robust Incident Reporting:** Implement a thorough incident reporting system to document all incidents and near-misses, facilitating quick responses and providing evidence for claims.
- **Legal Compliance Monitoring:** Establish a system to monitor compliance with childcare regulations, reducing the risk of legal actions and fines.
- **Crisis Management Planning:** Develop a crisis management plan for handling emergencies, enhancing preparedness and response capabilities.
- **Parental and Community Engagement:** Engage with parents and the community to communicate safety measures and build trust, reducing the risk of disputes and claims.

Recommendations

1. Increase Awareness and Access:

- **Action:** Enhance communication efforts to raise awareness about the availability and benefits of underutilized programs like adoption leave and paid maternity leave.
- **Action:** Provide training and resources to HR and management to ensure employees understand their eligibility and how to access these benefits.

2. Assess Barriers to Utilization:

- **Action:** Conduct follow-up surveys or focus groups to understand why employees may not be utilizing certain programs and address any identified barriers.
- **Action:** Address barriers related to policy, process, or cultural perceptions within the organization.

3. Expand Childcare Support Programs:

- **Action:** Given the popularity of the child flex spending account, consider increasing the contribution amount or expanding eligibility to further support employees' childcare needs.

- Action: Explore additional support mechanisms, such as on-site childcare facilities, to address needs identified through employee feedback.
4. Monitor and Evaluate Program Effectiveness:
 - Action: Regularly review usage data for all childcare support programs to ensure they meet the needs of employees.
 - Action: Adjust policies and benefits as necessary based on feedback and changing workforce demographics.
 5. Strengthen Liability Risk Management:
 - Action: Secure comprehensive general liability insurance to protect against potential claims related to employee injuries and professional misconduct.
 - Action: Implement regular safety audits and training programs to minimize risks and ensure a safe environment for employees and children.
 6. Develop Crisis and Compliance Plans:
 - Action: Establish a crisis management plan to handle emergencies effectively and maintain compliance with childcare regulations.
 - Action: Engage with parents and the community to enhance trust and reduce the risk of disputes and claims.

By addressing these areas, the Cherokee Nation can better support its workforce, ensuring that employees have the necessary resources to balance their professional and family responsibilities effectively while minimizing liability risks and ensuring comprehensive coverage in risk management.

Employee Questionnaire Results

The employee questionnaire distributed on May 8, 2024, to the Cherokee Nation workforce and affiliated entities, including the Housing Authority of Cherokee Nation (HACN) and Cherokee Nation Businesses (CNB), yielded a significant response rate. The questionnaire aimed to gather insights into childcare needs, preferences, and gaps to inform the development of targeted solutions and potential improvements in childcare support programs. This section provides an analysis of the survey results, highlighting key findings and trends.

Survey Overview

Participants:

- Total Responses: 1,888
- Affiliated Entities:
 - Cherokee Nation: 1,129 responses
 - CNB / CNE / Other: 710 responses
 - HACN: 48 responses
- Employment Status:
 - Full-Time: 1,868
 - Part-Time: 17
 - Temporary: 2

Survey Duration:

- Average Time to Complete: 7 minutes 28 seconds

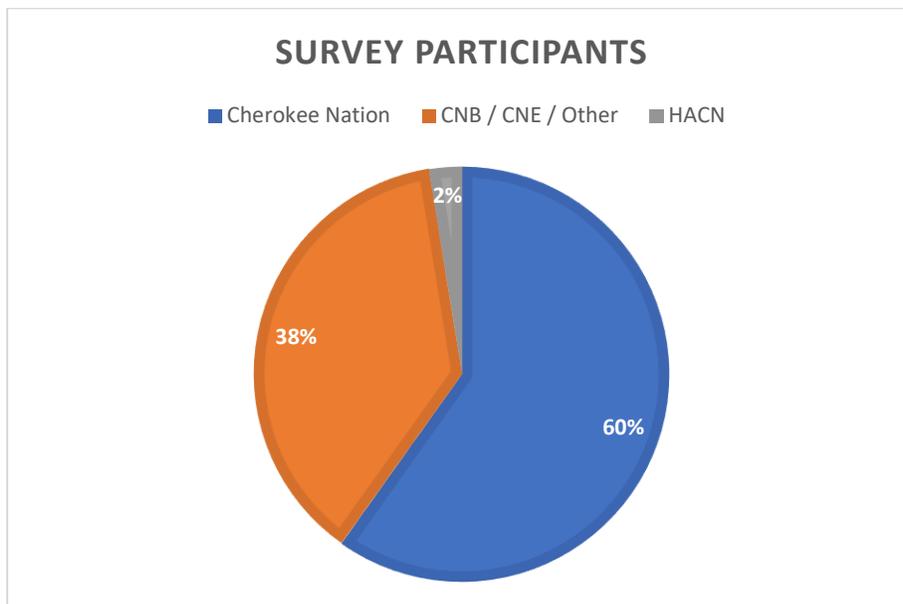


Figure 1: Survey Participants

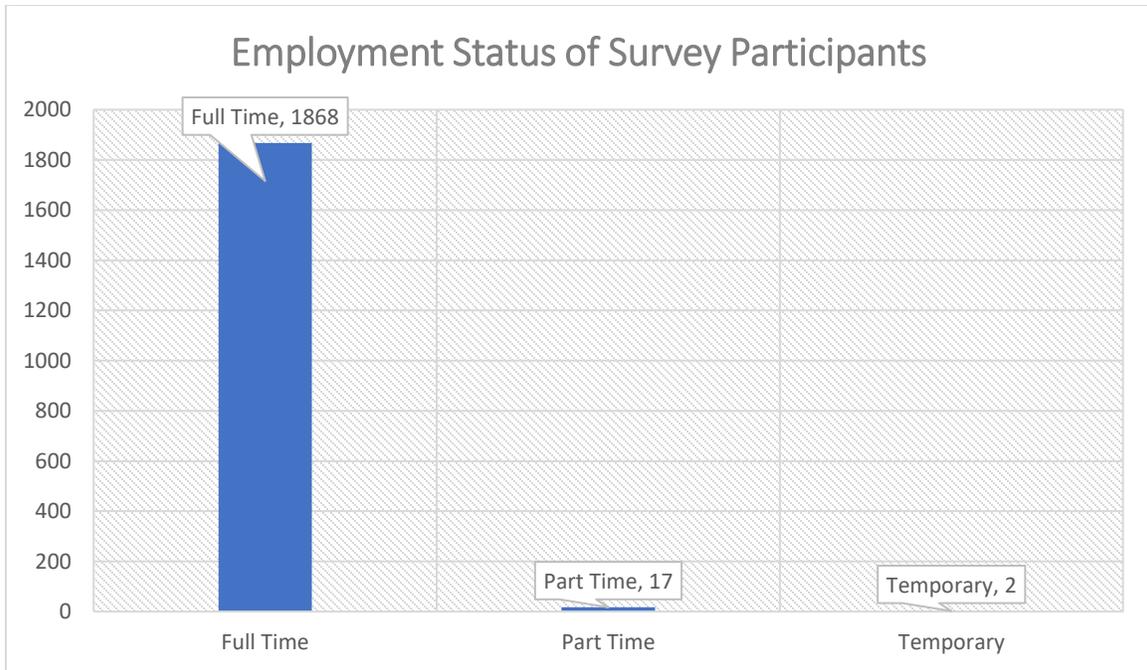


Figure 2: Employment Status of Survey Participants

Key Findings

Childcare Needs:

- Current Childcare Needs: 815 respondents indicated they currently have or will soon have childcare needs, while 1,073 reported no childcare needs.
- Number of Children with Childcare Needs:
 - 1 Child: 403 responses
 - 2 Children: 301 responses
 - 3 Children: 90 responses
 - 4 Children: 16 responses
 - 5 or More Children: 5 responses

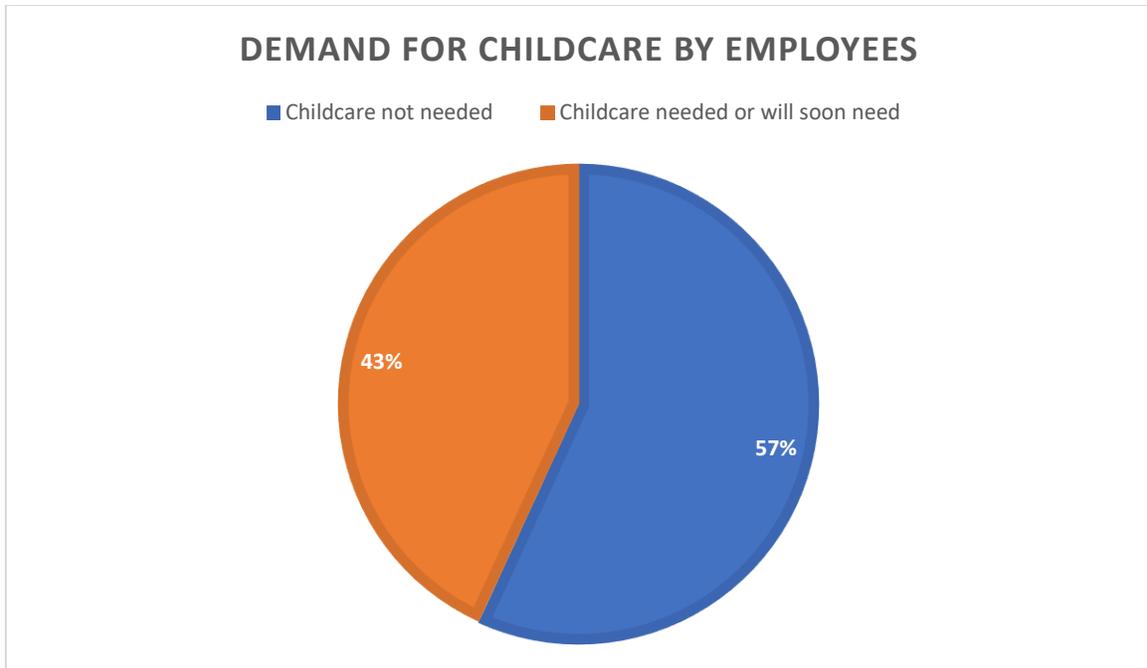


Figure 3: Demand for Childcare by Employees

Age of Children:

- Children Needing Care:
 - 0 - 2 Years of Age: Predominant need for infant and toddler care.
 - 3 - 4 Years of Age: Significant need for preschool-age care.
 - 5 - 12 Years of Age: High demand for before/after school programs and summer care.
 - 13 - 17 Years of Age: Lower need, focusing more on occasional supervision and activities.

OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD THAT HAVE CHILDCARE OR WILL SOON HAVE CHILDCARE NEEDS

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 or more

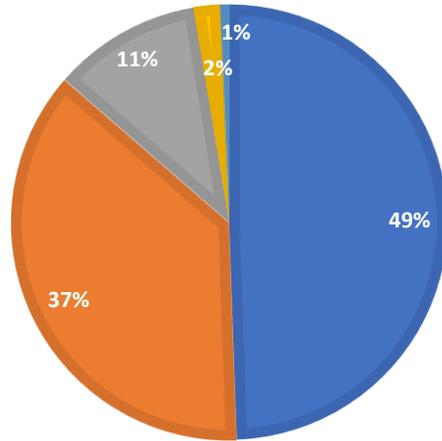


Figure 4: # of children in household that have childcare or will soon have childcare needs

Types of Childcare Used:

- Licensed Child Care Centers: Most frequently used across various age groups.
- Relative Care (Paid): Common for younger children and as supplementary care.
- Before/After School Programs: High usage, particularly for school-aged children.
- Summer Care: Important for many families, reflecting the need for continuity in childcare during school breaks.
- Unpaid Caregivers: Significant reliance on relatives for childcare, particularly for multiple children.
- Special Needs Care: Notable, albeit smaller, segment requiring specialized care.

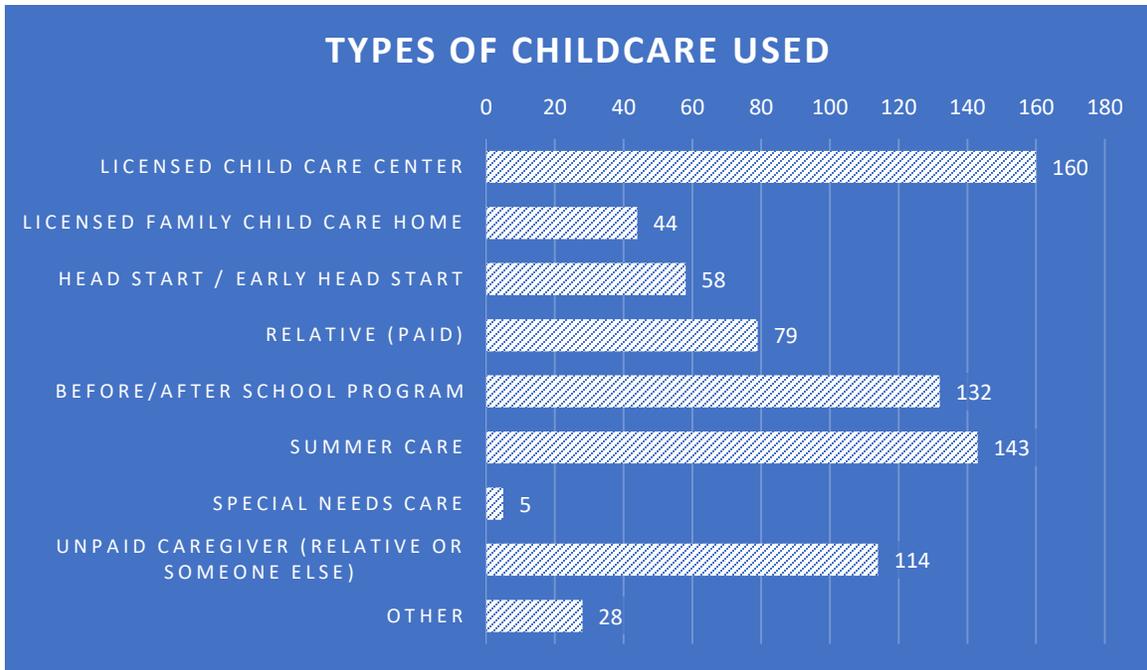


Figure 5: Types of Childcare Used

Location Preferences:

- **Current Location of Childcare Providers:**
 - Close to Work: 191 respondents
 - Close to Home: 443 respondents
 - Other Locations: 180 respondents
- **Preferred Location of Childcare Providers:**
 - Close to Work: 460 respondents
 - Close to Home: 278 respondents
 - Other Locations: 76 respondents

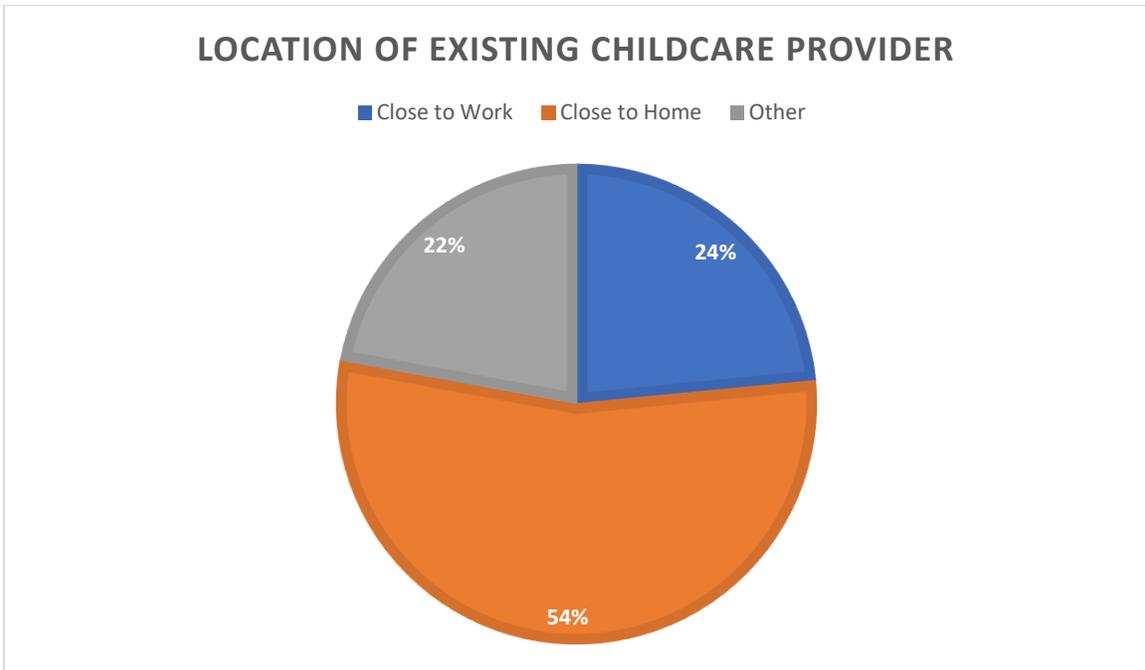


Figure 6: Location of Existing Childcare Provider

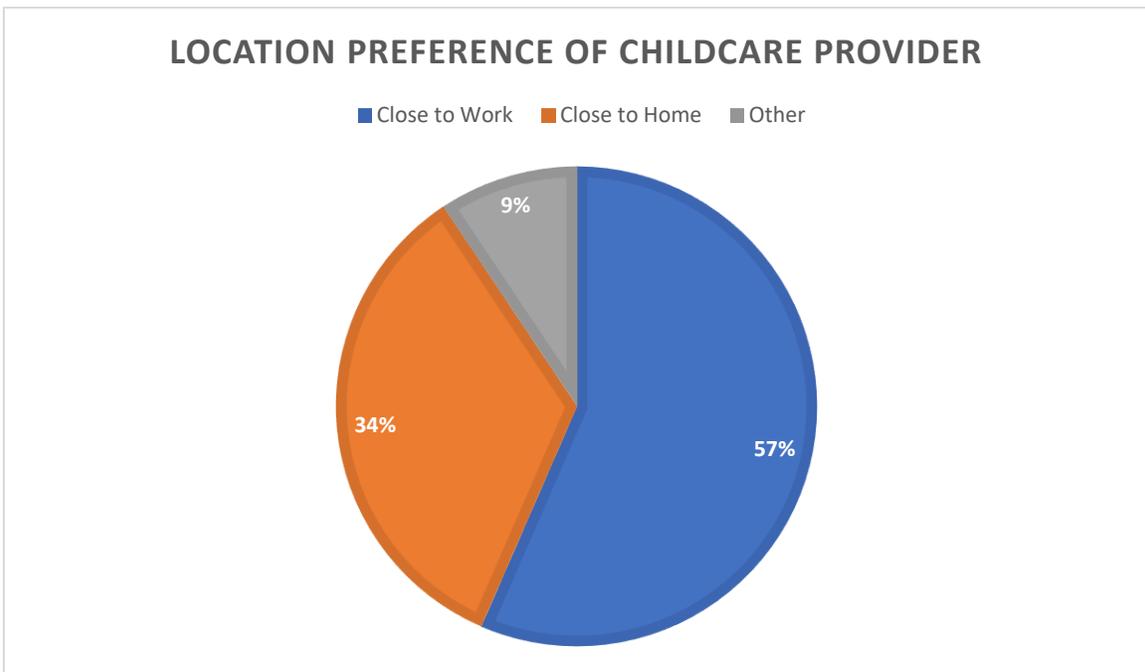


Figure 7: Location Preference of Childcare Provider

Satisfaction with Current Childcare Arrangements:

- Overall Satisfaction:
 - Yes: 432 respondents
 - No: 382 respondents

- Common Dissatisfaction Reasons:
 - Affordability
 - Availability and hours of operation
 - Quality and educational stimulation
 - Safety and physical space

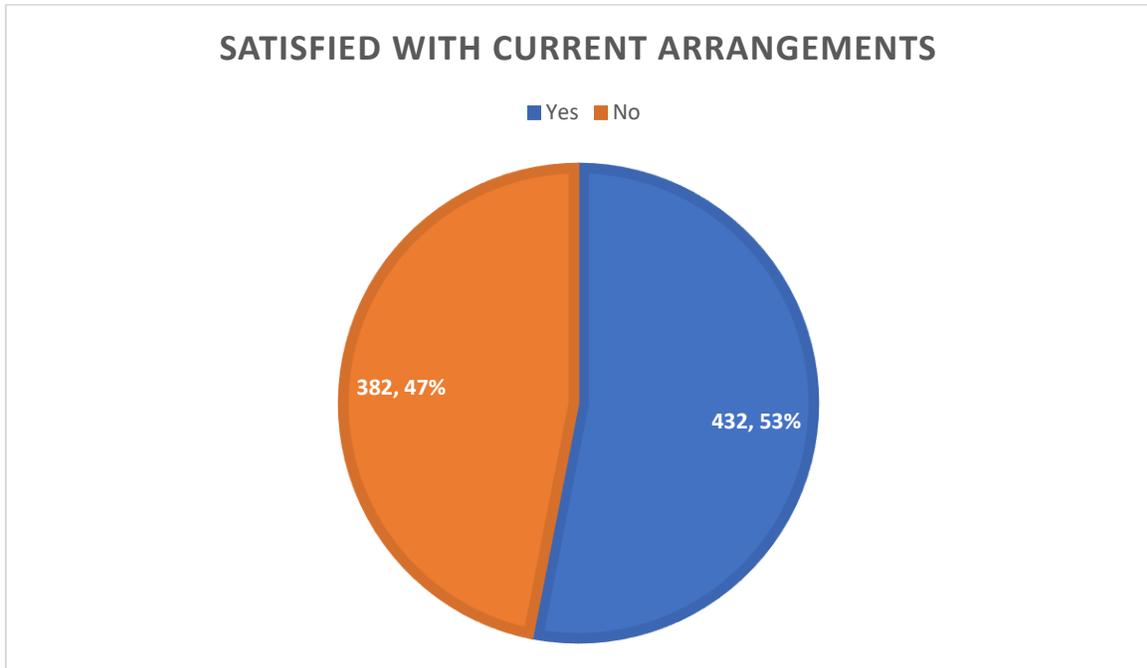


Figure 8: Satisfied with Current Arrangements

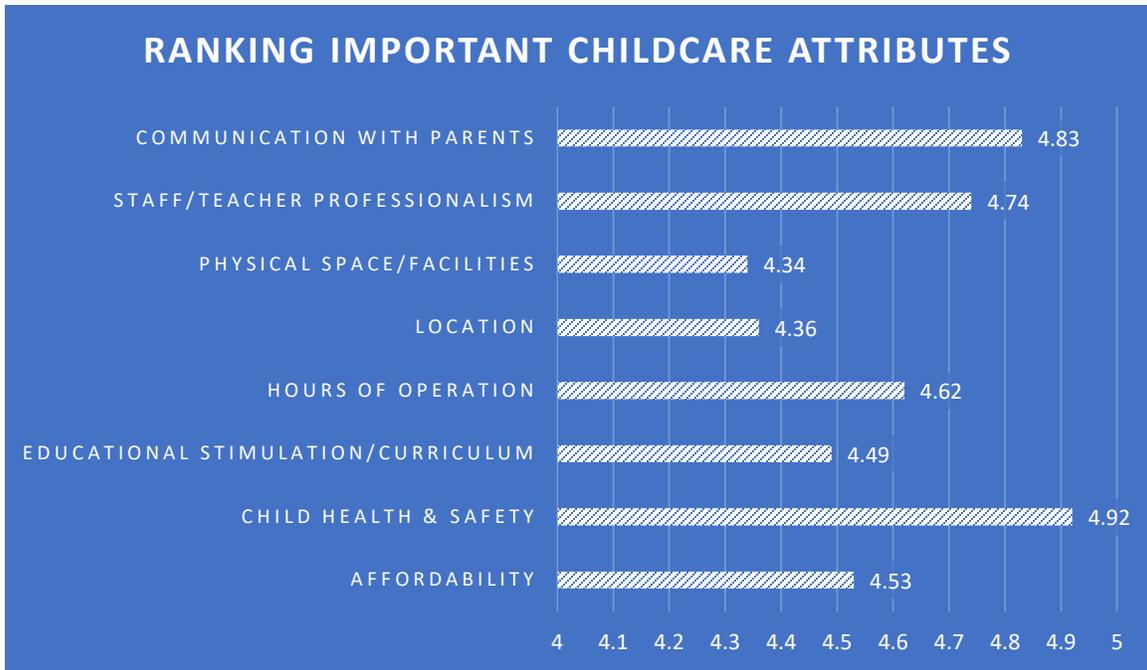


Figure 10: Ranking Important Childcare Attributes

Financial Assistance for Childcare:

- Current Recipients of Financial Assistance: 147 respondents
 - Primary sources: Cherokee Nation (85 respondents), DHS (21 respondents), other sources (35 respondents).
- Non-Recipients: 666 respondents
- Reasons for Not Receiving Assistance:
 - Lack of information about available programs
 - Ineligibility due to income or other factors

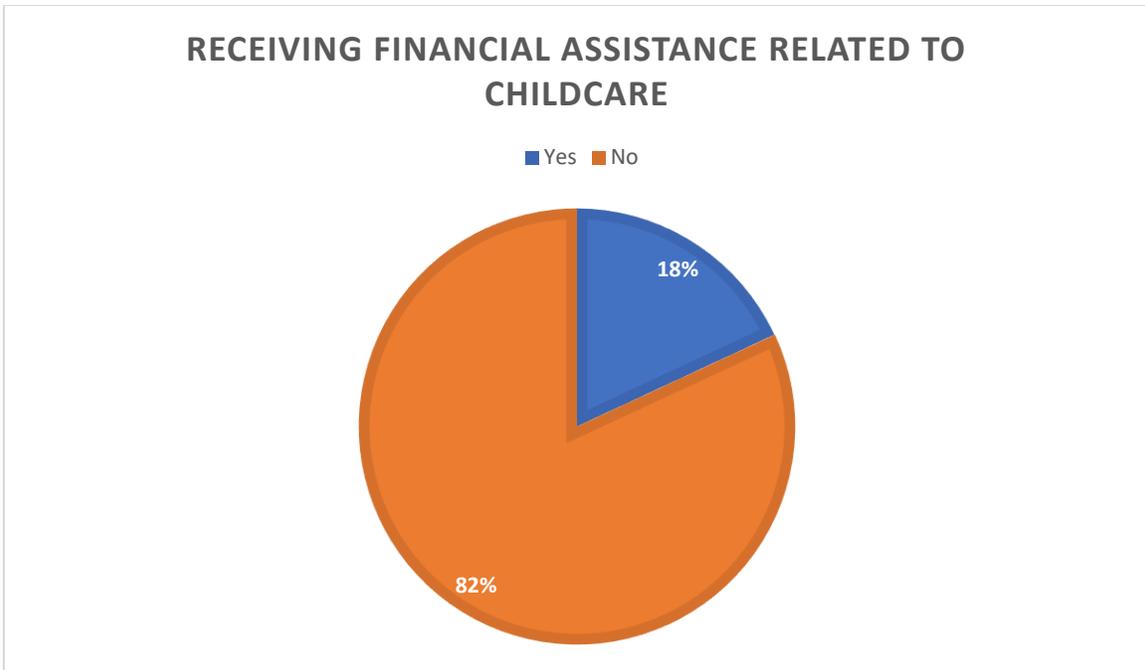


Figure 11: Receiving Financial Assistance Related to Childcare

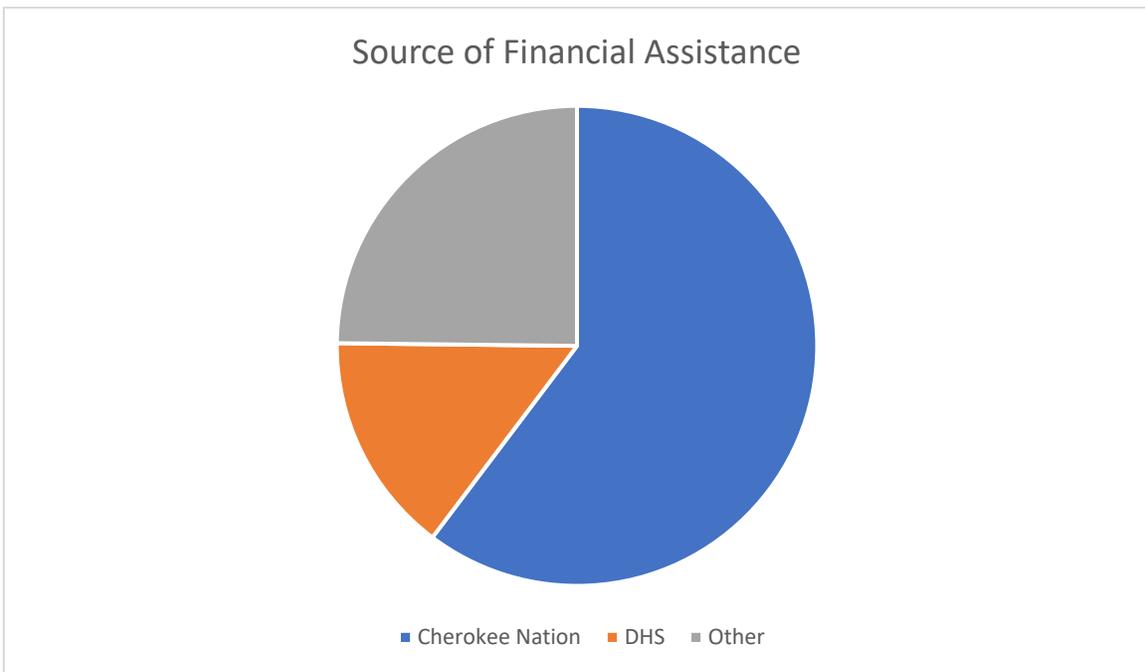


Figure 12: Source of Financial Assistance

Childcare Costs:

- Monthly Childcare Expenses:
 - Responses indicate a range of \$97 to over \$1,000 monthly, reflecting diverse childcare arrangements and associated costs.
- Payment Frequency:

- Weekly: 179 respondents
- Monthly: 280 respondents
- Unsure: 211 respondents

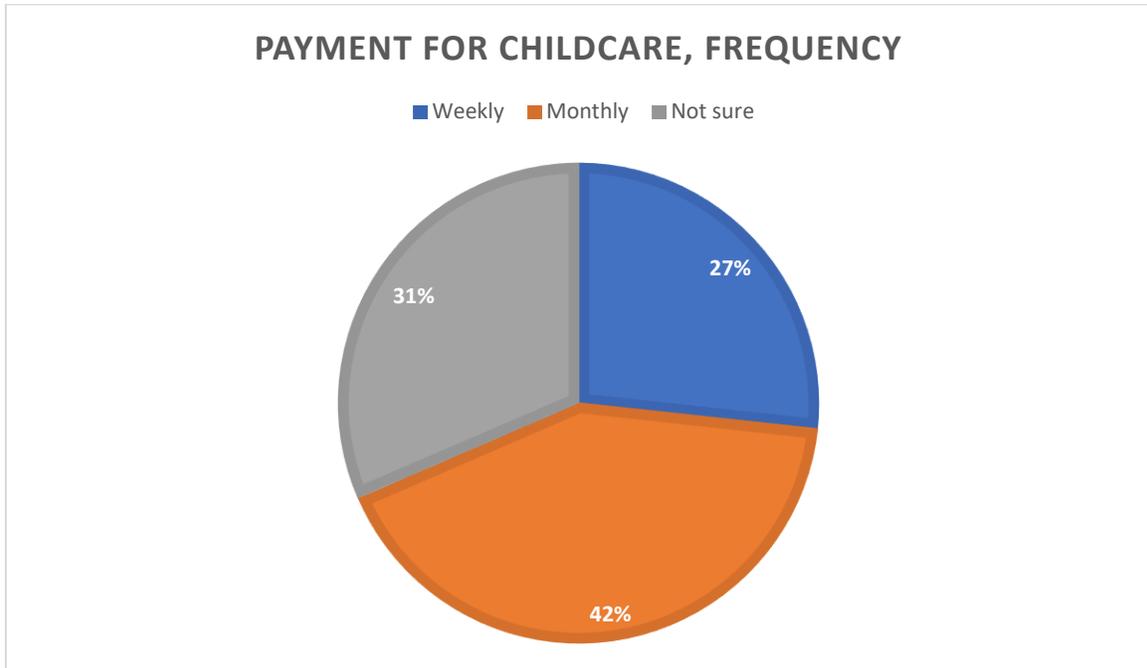


Figure 13: Payment for Childcare, Frequency

Childcare Availability and Preferences:

- Need for Before/After School Care: 525 respondents
- Need for Summer/Holiday Break Care: 668 respondents
- Preferred Hours of Childcare:
 - Earliest Start Time Needed: Ranges from 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM
 - Latest End Time Needed: Ranges from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM
- Days of the Week Childcare Needed:
 - Monday to Friday: Majority of respondents require care on these days.
 - Saturday and Sunday: Lesser need, but some respondents require weekend care.

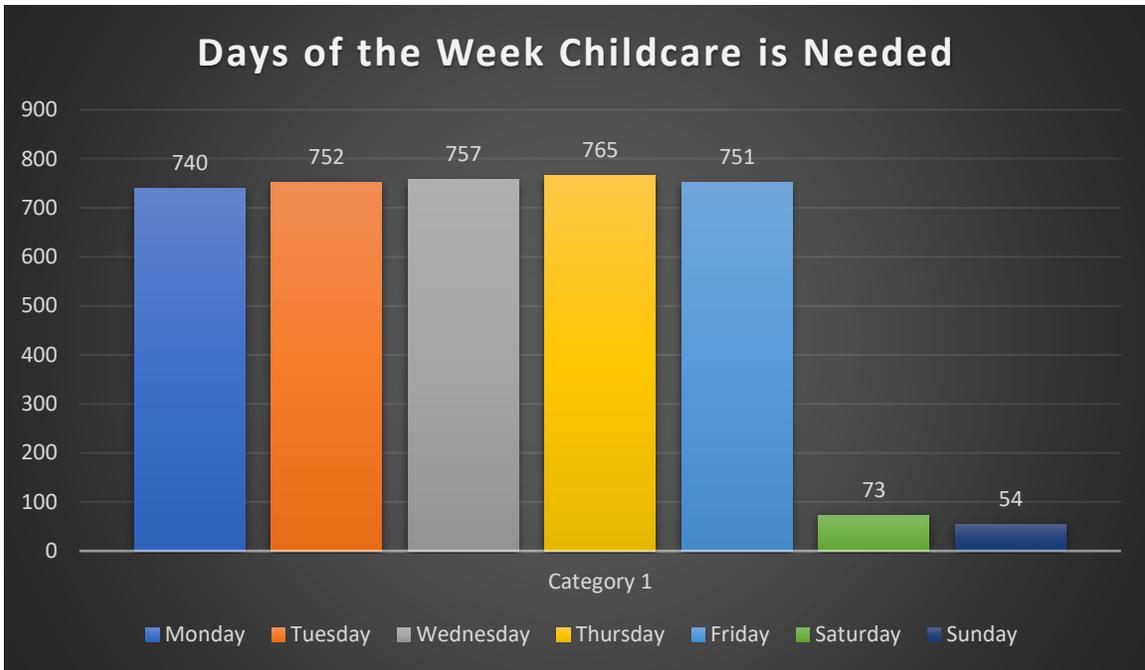


Figure 14: Days of the week childcare is needed

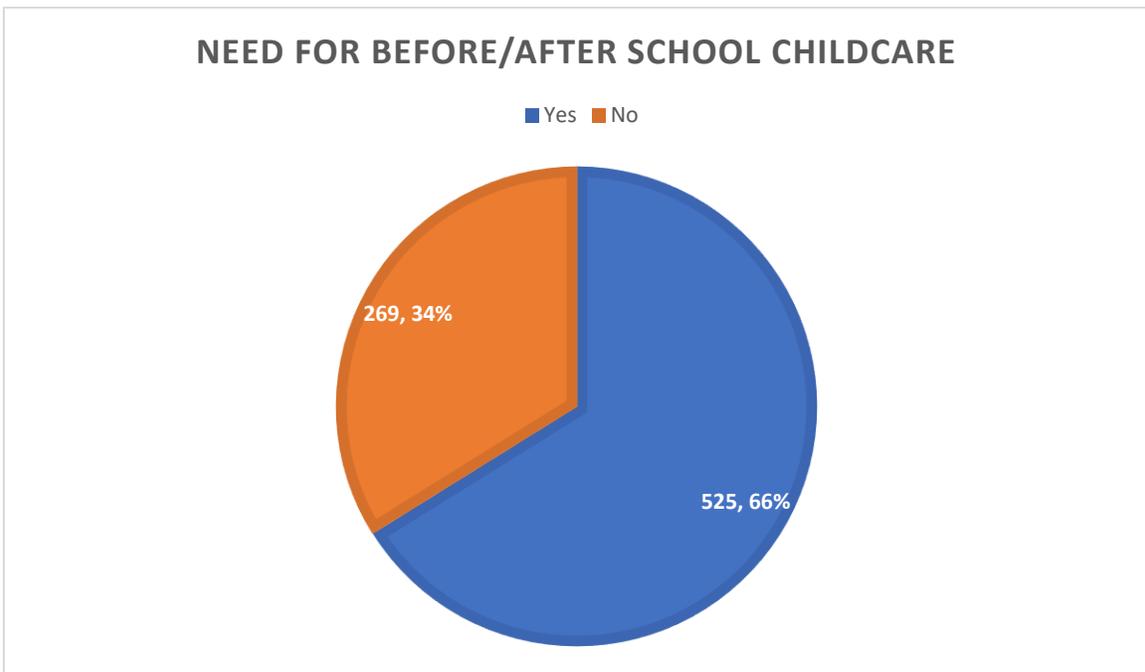


Figure 15: Need for Before/After School Childcare

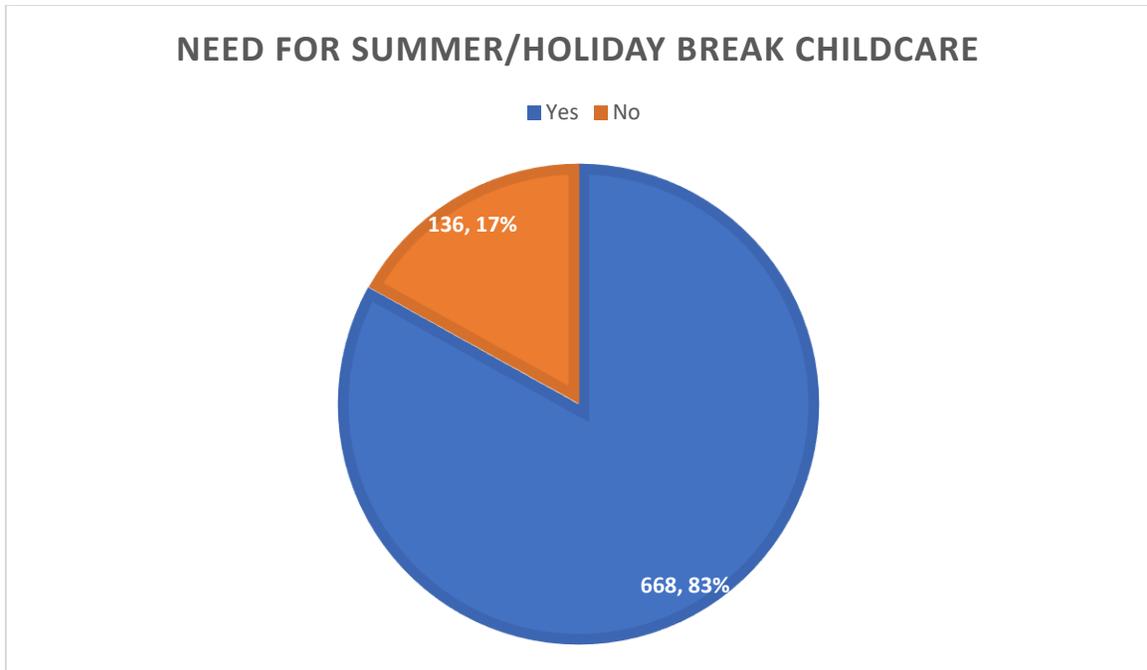


Figure 16: Need for Summer/Holiday Break Childcare

Analysis and Observations

1. Significant Childcare Needs:

- A large proportion of respondents (43%) have or will soon have childcare needs, indicating a substantial demand for accessible and reliable childcare services within the Cherokee Nation workforce.

2. Diverse Childcare Preferences:

- Preferences for childcare locations close to work or home suggest a need for flexible solutions that accommodate varying family circumstances and work locations.

3. High Demand for School-Age Programs:

- The need for before/after school and summer care is prevalent, reflecting the importance of continuous childcare support for school-aged children.

4. Financial Assistance Gaps:

- A notable number of respondents do not receive financial assistance, pointing to potential barriers in accessing these benefits or a lack of awareness about available programs.

5. Satisfaction Levels Vary:

- While many respondents are satisfied with their current childcare arrangements, there are significant areas of dissatisfaction related to affordability, hours of operation, and educational quality.

6. Childcare Cost Concerns:

- The range of childcare costs highlights the financial burden on families, underscoring the need for more affordable childcare solutions and better access to financial assistance.
7. Need for Comprehensive Solutions:
- The diverse needs and preferences identified in the survey call for a multifaceted approach to childcare that includes expanding availability, improving quality, and enhancing support for families.

Recommendations

1. Increase Awareness and Access to Financial Assistance:
 - Enhance communication and outreach efforts to inform employees about available childcare financial assistance programs and how to access them.
2. Expand Childcare Options:
 - Explore opportunities to increase the availability of licensed childcare centers, before/after school programs, and summer care to meet the growing demand.
3. Improve Affordability:
 - Consider increasing the contributions to child flex spending accounts and providing additional subsidies to reduce the financial burden on families.
4. Enhance Quality and Accessibility:
 - Focus on improving the quality of childcare services, including educational stimulation and safety standards, to better meet the needs of children and families.
5. Implement Flexible Solutions:
 - Develop flexible childcare options that accommodate varying work schedules and locations, including on-site childcare facilities and extended hours of operation.

By addressing these areas, the Cherokee Nation can better support its workforce, ensuring that employees have access to the necessary resources to balance their professional and family responsibilities effectively.

Feasibility of On-Site Childcare Services

The feasibility of implementing on-site childcare services for the Cherokee Nation workforce involves evaluating multiple factors, including geographic distribution, current infrastructure, and the specific needs identified in the employee questionnaire. This section assesses the potential for developing on-site childcare facilities across various Cherokee Nation entities and offers recommendations based on the findings.

Scope and Purpose of On-Site Childcare Services

The Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force has assessed the need for on-site childcare services to support the workforce and community. The primary goal is to provide accessible, high-quality childcare that enables employees and community members to balance their professional and personal responsibilities effectively. To clarify the intended scope and beneficiaries of these services, the following details are provided:

Intended Beneficiaries of On-Site Childcare Services:

1. Cherokee Nation Employees:
 - Primary Focus: On-site childcare services will primarily serve employees of the Cherokee Nation and its affiliated entities, including Cherokee Nation Businesses (CNB), the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation (HACN), and other tribal government departments.
 - Rationale: The provision of convenient childcare solutions directly at or near the workplace aims to reduce absenteeism, enhance productivity, and improve employee satisfaction and retention. This service will help employees manage their work and family commitments more effectively.
2. Cherokee Citizens:
 - Inclusion: Services will also be extended to Cherokee citizens, particularly those living within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Cherokee Nation. This ensures that the community benefits from accessible childcare, supporting the overall well-being and educational development of Cherokee children.
 - Focus on Community Needs: This inclusion reflects the commitment to supporting the wider Cherokee community and promoting educational opportunities for all children within the tribe.
3. General Community Members:
 - Extended Access: The on-site childcare facilities will also be available to the broader community, beyond just employees and Cherokee citizens, on a space-available basis. This ensures that the facilities can operate at full capacity and generate additional revenue to support their sustainability.
 - Community Engagement: By opening services to the general community, the Cherokee Nation demonstrates its commitment to inclusive community support and development, fostering stronger community ties and providing a vital resource to all families in the area.

Service Prioritization and Access:

- **Priority Access:** While the services are open to all, priority access will be given to Cherokee Nation employees and Cherokee citizens. This prioritization ensures that the primary beneficiaries, who are most closely aligned with the mission and objectives of the Cherokee Nation, receive the support they need.
- **Community Partnerships:** The expansion to the general community will be facilitated through partnerships with local businesses and organizations, ensuring that childcare services meet a broad spectrum of needs while maintaining a high standard of care and education.

Geographic and Demographic Considerations:

- **Target Areas:** Initial implementation will focus on areas with high employee density, such as Tahlequah and Catoosa, where the demand for childcare is most pronounced. This approach ensures that services are located where they can have the most significant impact.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Services will be designed to be culturally relevant and sensitive to the needs of the Cherokee Nation community, providing an environment that reflects and supports the values and traditions of the tribe.

Operational and Financial Sustainability:

- **Flexible Enrollment Options:** Offering services to the broader community helps ensure full utilization of facilities, which supports financial sustainability and operational efficiency.
- **Revenue Generation:** Fees collected from non-employee and non-Cherokee citizens will contribute to the ongoing costs of the childcare facilities, helping to fund high-quality services and potentially expand the program in the future.

The on-site childcare services are designed to provide a comprehensive and inclusive support system that benefits not only Cherokee Nation employees and citizens but also the broader community. By prioritizing access for employees and Cherokee citizens while extending services to others, the Cherokee Nation ensures that its childcare facilities support a diverse and inclusive population, promoting community well-being and enhancing the overall quality of life.

Next Steps for Implementation

1. **Finalize Policies for Service Access:**
 - Develop detailed policies outlining the prioritization of services and criteria for enrollment to ensure clarity and fairness in access.
2. **Engage with Community Partners:**
 - Establish partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to facilitate broader access and support for the childcare facilities.
3. **Promote Services to the Community:**
 - Launch a communication campaign to inform employees, Cherokee citizens, and the broader community about the availability and benefits of the on-site childcare services.

4. Monitor and Adjust Service Scope:

- Regularly review the demand for services and adjust the scope and capacity as needed to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Geographic Distribution and Infrastructure

The Cherokee Nation exercises tribal jurisdiction over a 7,000 square-mile reservation in northeastern Oklahoma. This vast area includes numerous satellite offices for Cherokee Nation Businesses (CNB), the Housing Authority of Cherokee Nation (HACN), and various other entities. The widespread nature of these offices poses a challenge in establishing centralized on-site childcare facilities that can adequately serve all employees.

Currently, none of the tribal offices are equipped with dedicated space for on-site childcare, meaning significant renovations or new constructions would be necessary to accommodate such facilities. This lack of existing infrastructure requires a thorough analysis of potential locations, costs, and logistics to ensure feasibility and effectiveness.

Employee Needs and Preferences

According to the employee questionnaire results:

- A significant number of employees expressed a preference for childcare services located close to their work sites.
- The need for flexible childcare solutions, including before/after school programs and summer care, was prominently noted.
- The primary barriers to existing childcare arrangements included cost, availability, and proximity to work.

These findings suggest a strong demand for on-site childcare that is both convenient and affordable. The survey highlighted the importance of providing flexible hours and diverse care options to meet the varied needs of the workforce.

Potential Locations for On-Site Childcare

Given the geographic spread of Cherokee Nation offices, a decentralized approach to on-site childcare services might be more practical. The following criteria can help identify potential locations for on-site childcare facilities:

1. **High Employee Density:** Sites with the largest concentrations of employees would be prioritized to maximize impact and utilization.
2. **Accessibility:** Locations that are easily accessible to a majority of employees, considering travel times and transportation options.
3. **Space Availability:** Sites where there is potential for expansion or renovation to create childcare facilities.

Proposed Locations

- **Tahlequah:** As the capital of the Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah hosts a significant number of tribal offices and employees, making it an ideal location for a primary on-site childcare facility.
- **Catoosa (Near Hard Rock Casino):** This area has a high density of employees working for CNB, and establishing a childcare facility here would benefit many working parents.
- **Vinita and Sallisaw:** Both locations have a considerable number of HACN and other Cherokee Nation employees, and they serve as regional hubs within the reservation.

Analysis of Potential Turnover at the Catoosa Facility

The Hard Rock Casino in Catoosa, operated by Cherokee Nation Businesses (CNB), is a significant employment hub within the Cherokee Nation. Given its high employee density, it is a prime candidate for the implementation of an on-site childcare facility. However, understanding and addressing potential turnover implications is critical to the success and stability of this service.

Turnover Rate Analysis for Hard Rock Casino

1. **High Turnover Trends:**
 - a. **Observation:** The casino industry generally experiences higher turnover rates compared to other sectors. At Hard Rock Casino, turnover rates can exceed 30% annually, which is significantly higher than the average across other Cherokee Nation entities.
 - b. **Impact on Childcare Services:** High employee turnover can lead to fluctuations in the demand for on-site childcare services, as employees frequently enter and exit the workforce.
2. **Factors Contributing to Turnover:**
 - a. **Industry Characteristics:** The nature of the casino industry, including non-standard work hours, job stress, and seasonal employment patterns, contributes to higher turnover.
 - b. **Employee Demographics:** A younger workforce and higher levels of job mobility can result in employees frequently moving between roles or leaving for opportunities in other industries.

3. **Impact on Childcare Planning:**
 - a. **Demand Fluctuations:** The variable nature of employee retention can lead to inconsistent demand for childcare services, making it challenging to maintain stable enrollment and predict long-term service needs.
 - b. **Capacity Management:** Planning for a childcare facility in a high-turnover environment requires flexible capacity management to accommodate fluctuating numbers of children without overextending resources.

Strategies to Mitigate Turnover Impact

1. **Flexible Enrollment Policies:**
 - a. **Adaptability:** Implement flexible enrollment policies that allow for quick adjustments in response to changes in employee numbers, such as short-term enrollments and prorated fees for employees who may not stay long-term.
 - b. **Priority Access:** Prioritize access for full-time and long-term employees while providing options for part-time or temporary staff, helping to stabilize service demand.
2. **Enhanced Employee Retention Programs:**
 - a. **Supportive Initiatives:** Develop and promote employee retention initiatives at the Hard Rock Casino, such as career development programs, wellness support, and employee engagement activities, which can help reduce turnover and stabilize childcare service demand.
 - b. **Childcare as a Retention Tool:** Highlight the availability of on-site childcare as a significant employee benefit that can reduce job stress related to finding external childcare and increase employee satisfaction and retention.
3. **Demand Forecasting and Capacity Planning:**
 - a. **Dynamic Forecasting:** Use historical turnover data and predictive analytics to forecast childcare service demand, allowing for proactive capacity planning and resource allocation.
 - b. **Scalable Operations:** Design the childcare facility with scalable operations that can easily expand or contract based on actual demand, ensuring efficient use of space and resources.
4. **Community Partnerships and Support:**
 - a. **Collaborative Efforts:** Establish partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to support broader access and maintain consistent enrollment, even during periods of high employee turnover.
 - b. **Shared Resources:** Leverage shared resources to reduce operational costs and maintain service quality, regardless of fluctuations in employee numbers.
5. **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - a. **Continuous Assessment:** Implement a system for regular monitoring of turnover rates and their impact on childcare service utilization, allowing for timely adjustments to service offerings and capacity.

- b. **Feedback Loops:** Gather feedback from employees using the childcare services to understand their needs and improve service delivery, which can help retain employees by addressing their childcare concerns effectively.

The high turnover rates at Hard Rock Casino in Catoosa present both challenges and opportunities for the proposed on-site childcare facility. By implementing flexible and adaptive policies, focusing on employee retention, and leveraging community partnerships, the Cherokee Nation can effectively manage these challenges and provide a stable, high-quality childcare service that supports the needs of its workforce. Proactive planning and continuous evaluation will be key to ensuring that the facility remains responsive and sustainable in a dynamic employment environment.

Next Steps for Implementation:

1. **Finalize Enrollment Policies:**
 - a. Develop and formalize flexible enrollment policies that cater to the unique needs of the Catoosa workforce, ensuring that the childcare facility can adapt to changing employee numbers.
2. **Enhance Retention Programs:**
 - a. Work with HR at CNB to develop and promote retention programs that emphasize the benefits of on-site childcare as a means to improve employee satisfaction and retention.
3. **Implement Dynamic Forecasting:**
 - a. Use turnover data and predictive models to forecast childcare demand, informing capacity planning and resource allocation for the facility.
4. **Build Partnerships:**
 - a. Establish and strengthen partnerships with local businesses and organizations to support the childcare facility and ensure consistent enrollment and funding.
5. **Monitor and Evaluate:**
 - a. Set up a system for ongoing monitoring of turnover rates and childcare utilization, with regular reports and evaluations to guide continuous improvement.

Infrastructure Requirements

Establishing on-site childcare facilities in the identified locations would involve several key steps:

1. **Space Renovation or Construction:**
 - **Renovation:** Modifying existing office spaces to create safe, child-friendly environments equipped with necessary amenities.
 - **New Construction:** Building new facilities designed specifically for childcare, which would be more costly but allow for customization to meet specific needs.
2. **Compliance and Licensing:**
 - Ensuring that all facilities comply with state and tribal regulations regarding childcare operations, including health and safety standards.

- Acquiring necessary licenses and certifications to operate legally within the jurisdiction.
3. **Staffing and Operations:**
- Hiring qualified childcare professionals and support staff.
 - Developing operational policies that align with the needs of employees and meet regulatory requirements.

Cost Considerations

The cost of implementing on-site childcare services includes both initial capital investments and ongoing operational expenses. Estimated costs encompass:

- **Construction/Renovation:** Varies widely depending on the extent of renovation or new construction required, ranging from \$200,000 to \$500,000 per facility.
- **Equipment and Supplies:** Initial outfitting of childcare facilities with furniture, educational materials, and safety equipment, estimated at \$50,000 to \$100,000.
- **Staffing:** Ongoing salaries and benefits for childcare staff, expected to be \$300,000 annually for a medium-sized facility.
- **Operational Costs:** Utilities, maintenance, insurance, and other recurring expenses, potentially \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually per facility.

Funding Opportunities:

- Leveraging grants from federal and state programs designed to support childcare infrastructure development.
- Exploring partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to share costs and resources.

Benefits of On-Site Childcare

Implementing on-site childcare facilities offers numerous benefits for both employees and the organization:

1. **Improved Employee Retention and Satisfaction:** Access to convenient and reliable childcare helps employees balance work and family responsibilities, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates.
2. **Increased Productivity:** Reduced absenteeism and tardiness as employees have dependable childcare arrangements.
3. **Enhanced Recruitment:** Attracting new talent by offering comprehensive childcare support as a valuable employee benefit.

Feasibility Studies and Pilot Programs

The Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force recognizes the critical importance of conducting detailed feasibility studies for each proposed location. This includes assessing specific needs, estimating costs, and identifying potential challenges to ensure successful implementation of on-

site childcare services. Following these studies, pilot programs will be launched at selected sites to evaluate their effectiveness and gather feedback for further refinement.

Establishing KPIs for Success

To systematically measure the success and impact of pilot programs for the proposed consolidation of Child Development Center (CDC) and Head Start services, the Task Force will establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs will provide benchmarks for assessing the effectiveness of the pilots, ensuring they meet their intended goals and facilitate broader acceptance and implementation.

Proposed KPIs for Pilot Programs

1. Enrollment Metrics:
 - Target: Achieve 90% enrollment capacity within the first 6 months.
 - Measurement: Track the number of children enrolled in the pilot programs compared to the available slots.
2. Parent and Guardian Satisfaction:
 - Target: Attain a satisfaction rate of 85% or higher among participating parents and guardians.
 - Measurement: Conduct quarterly surveys to assess satisfaction with the quality of care, communication, and overall experience.
3. Operational Efficiency:
 - Target: Reduce administrative processing time for enrollment and billing by 50%.
 - Measurement: Compare time spent on these activities before and after pilot implementation using workflow analysis.
4. Cost Effectiveness:
 - Target: Achieve a cost reduction of 20% per child in operational expenses.
 - Measurement: Analyze and compare operational costs per child before and after the implementation of the pilot programs.
5. Educational Outcomes:
 - Target: Improve early childhood education outcomes by 15% as measured by developmental milestones and standardized assessments.
 - Measurement: Track children's progress using a set of developmental benchmarks and standardized educational assessments.
6. Employee Turnover and Retention:
 - Target: Reduce employee turnover in childcare positions by 25%.
 - Measurement: Monitor turnover rates and compare them with pre-pilot figures to assess the impact on employee retention.

7. Infrastructure and Facility Usage:

- Target: Utilize 100% of the designated space for childcare services effectively.
- Measurement: Conduct regular facility audits to ensure that the space is being used efficiently and meets all regulatory standards.

8. Financial Performance:

- Target: Ensure that the pilot programs are financially sustainable, with a positive net income within 12 months.
- Measurement: Perform regular financial audits and compare results against budget projections.

9. Community Impact:

- Target: Increase community engagement and support for childcare services by 30%.
- Measurement: Track community involvement through participation in childcare-related events, feedback, and volunteerism.

10. Regulatory Compliance:

- Target: Maintain 100% compliance with state and tribal regulations for childcare services.
- Measurement: Perform regular compliance audits to ensure that all standards are met without violations.

Pilot Program Development and Implementation

To ensure that the pilot programs are effective and meet the set KPIs, the following steps will be taken:

1. Needs Assessment and Baseline Data Collection:

- Action: Collect initial data to establish a baseline for all KPIs, focusing on current enrollment, satisfaction levels, costs, and educational outcomes.

2. Pilot Program Design:

- Action: Develop detailed plans for the pilot programs, including staffing, curriculum, operational procedures, and financial management.

3. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Action: Involve key stakeholders, including parents, staff, and community members, in the planning process to ensure that the pilot programs meet their needs and expectations.

4. Training and Capacity Building:

- Action: Provide training for staff to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the pilot programs.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

- Action: Establish a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the pilot programs, using the identified KPIs to track progress and make necessary adjustments.

6. Reporting and Feedback:

- Action: Implement a system for regular reporting on the progress of the pilot programs, including feedback loops to address issues and enhance performance.

7. Scaling and Expansion:

- Action: Based on the success of the pilot programs as measured by the KPIs, develop plans for scaling up and expanding successful elements to other areas.

By incorporating these KPIs into the pilot programs, the Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force will systematically assess the effectiveness of the proposed changes, ensuring they deliver meaningful benefits to the community. The implementation of these KPIs provides a clear framework for measuring success and guides the continuous improvement of childcare services across the Cherokee Nation.

Key Recommendations

Based on the feasibility assessment, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Prioritize Locations:

- Action: Focus on high-density employment areas such as Tahlequah and Catoosa for the initial rollout of on-site childcare facilities. These areas are identified due to their high employee concentration and potential for significant impact.

2. Phase Implementation:

- Action: Start with pilot programs to test and refine the approach before scaling up to additional sites. This phased approach allows for adjustments based on feedback and KPI outcomes, ensuring successful wider implementation.

3. Explore Partnerships:

- Action: Collaborate with local businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to share resources and expertise. Partnerships can provide additional support, reduce costs, and enhance the quality of childcare services.

4. Secure Funding:

- Action: Apply for grants and explore funding opportunities to offset the capital and operational costs of establishing on-site childcare. Securing diverse funding sources ensures financial sustainability and supports long-term service provision.

By addressing these recommendations, the Cherokee Nation can effectively support its workforce through accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare services. This approach fosters a more productive and satisfied employee base, contributing to the overall well-being and growth of the community.

Examination of the Consolidation of CDC and Head Start Operations

Introduction

The potential consolidation of the Child Development Centers (CDC) and Head Start programs within the Cherokee Nation has been a topic of extensive analysis and discussion. This initiative is rooted in the goal of enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and reach of early childhood education services provided to the community. By integrating these two complementary programs, there is an opportunity to streamline administrative processes, maximize resource utilization, and ultimately deliver more comprehensive and accessible services to families and children. This section presents a detailed examination of the feedback collected from key stakeholders, including leadership and frontline staff, highlighting the perceived benefits and challenges associated with consolidation. The insights gathered aim to inform a thoughtful approach to decision-making that prioritizes the well-being of the community and the quality of early education services.

Overview of Feedback

To gather comprehensive feedback on the proposed consolidation, four live interviews were conducted with frontline staff, and a detailed questionnaire was distributed to the leadership teams of CDC and Head Start. The following summary captures the key perspectives and insights from these sources.

Live Interview Highlights

The following are key insights and standout quotes from the live interviews conducted with frontline staff at the Child Development Centers (CDC) and Head Start programs regarding the proposed consolidation.

1. Anonymous Participant:

- Collaboration and Staffing Resources:
 - *“Consolidation offers a unique opportunity to share staffing resources, which can help us provide better service delivery. It’s crucial, though, that we maintain the unique strengths of each program to avoid losing what makes them effective.”*
- Balancing Administrative Consolidation:
 - *“The challenge lies in balancing the administrative consolidation while preserving the distinctive aspects of each program. This balance is essential to ensure that both programs can continue to serve their communities effectively.”*
- Leadership and Communication:
 - *“For consolidation to succeed, we need top leadership buy-in and clear communication at all levels. It’s critical to keep everyone informed and involved throughout the process.”*

2. Anonymous Participant:

- Past Collaboration Challenges:
 - *“In the past, we’ve had limited collaboration between CDC and Head Start, which led to power struggles and inefficiencies. Consistent policies and equitable resource allocation are key to avoiding these issues in the future.”*
- Equitable Resource Allocation:
 - *“It’s important to ensure that resources are distributed fairly across programs to prevent conflicts and ensure that all children receive the support they need.”*

3. Anonymous Participant:
 - Benefits and Concerns of Consolidation:
 - *“Consolidation could bring benefits like increased funding and better child-to-teacher ratios, but it’s essential to consider the impact on staffing and service quality. We need to involve experienced staff in decision-making to develop practical and effective policies.”*
 - Importance of Experienced Staff:
 - *“Involving staff who understand the day-to-day challenges is crucial. Their input can help shape policies that are not only effective but also realistic and practical.”*
4. Anonymous Participant:
 - Administrative Burden and Autonomy:
 - *“One of the main concerns is the potential increase in administrative burden and the loss of autonomy for local centers. It’s essential to keep the administrative processes lean and flexible to support the unique needs of each program.”*
 - Transparent Communication and Stakeholder Involvement:
 - *“Transparency and active involvement of all stakeholders are crucial to building trust and ensuring a smooth transition. Keeping everyone informed and involved is key to making this work.”*

These quotes and insights provide a valuable perspective on the potential benefits and challenges of consolidating CDC and Head Start operations. They highlight the importance of careful planning, clear communication, and inclusive decision-making to ensure a successful transition that preserves the strengths of each program while enhancing overall service delivery.

Questionnaire Feedback

The questionnaire distributed to CDC and Head Start leadership teams gathered detailed feedback on the potential consolidation. Key responses included:

Administrative Efficiencies

Pros:

- **Streamlined Decision-Making:** Consolidation could lead to a more cohesive decision-making process, where policies and procedures are standardized across both programs, reducing confusion and ensuring consistency.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "A single administrative body can provide clear directives and reduce the back-and-forth that currently happens between CDC and Head Start."
- **Reduced Redundancy:** Combining administrative tasks such as enrollment, billing, and reporting could eliminate duplicate efforts, freeing up staff to focus on core functions and improving overall productivity.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "We often have overlapping paperwork and procedures. Consolidation could streamline these processes, saving time and resources."
- **Cost Savings:** By merging administrative roles and functions, there could be significant cost savings related to staffing, office supplies, and technology systems, which could be redirected to enhance program services.

- *Quote from a Leader:* "Reducing overhead costs by merging administrative functions could allow us to invest more in direct services for the children."

Cons:

- **Risk of Bureaucratization:** Consolidation may lead to a more complex and bureaucratic system, with increased layers of administration and slower response times to issues and concerns.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "A larger, consolidated administration might become too bureaucratic, leading to slower decision-making and potentially stifling innovation."
- **Loss of Specialized Expertise:** Each program has unique administrative needs and strengths; consolidating them could dilute the specialized expertise that currently exists, leading to a one-size-fits-all approach that may not suit all situations.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Our current setup allows each program to focus on its specific administrative needs. A merger might result in a loss of that focused expertise."
- **Increased Training Needs:** A unified administrative structure may require significant retraining for staff to understand new processes and systems, which could be time-consuming and disruptive.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Transitioning to a new, consolidated system would require extensive training for staff, potentially leading to a temporary dip in productivity."

Resource Maximization

Pros:

- **Shared Resources:** Consolidating programs could allow for more efficient use of resources, such as shared facilities, joint training programs, and bulk purchasing of supplies, leading to cost savings and improved resource allocation.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Pooling resources could lead to significant cost savings and ensure that both programs benefit from shared expertise and materials."
- **Enhanced Funding Opportunities:** A larger, consolidated entity might have better access to funding opportunities, grants, and other financial resources that could support program enhancements and expansions.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "A unified program could leverage greater funding opportunities, helping us expand services and improve quality."
- **Improved Facility Utilization:** Combining resources could lead to better use of existing facilities, such as repurposing space for multiple uses and reducing the need for separate, underutilized spaces.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "By consolidating, we could optimize our use of facilities, ensuring that space is used more effectively and efficiently."

Cons:

- **Potential Resource Conflicts:** Merging resources may lead to conflicts over priorities and the allocation of funds, with concerns that one program's needs might overshadow the other's.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "There's a risk that one program's priorities could dominate, leading to conflicts over resource allocation."

- **Unequal Distribution of Resources:** There may be challenges in ensuring equitable distribution of resources, with some programs potentially feeling neglected or underfunded compared to others.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Ensuring fair distribution of resources across programs could be challenging, potentially leading to feelings of inequity."
- **Complex Logistics:** Managing shared resources across a geographically dispersed organization could present logistical challenges, requiring careful planning and coordination to avoid inefficiencies.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Coordinating shared resources across our widespread facilities could be logistically complex and challenging."

Impacts on Service Delivery

Pros:

- **Integrated Services:** Consolidation could facilitate the integration of services, allowing for a more holistic approach to early childhood education that incorporates the strengths of both CDC and Head Start.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Combining services could lead to a more comprehensive and integrated approach, benefiting children and families."
- **Expanded Service Offerings:** A unified approach could enable the development of new service offerings, such as extended hours or additional support programs, that better meet the needs of the community.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "With combined resources, we could potentially offer extended services like longer hours or specialized programs."
- **Enhanced Continuity of Care:** Consolidation could lead to improved continuity of care, where children and families experience more consistent and cohesive support as they transition between programs.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "A single, continuous system could provide better support and stability for families moving between services."

Cons:

- **Service Disruptions:** The transition period may result in temporary disruptions to services, which could negatively impact families who rely on consistent childcare and early education.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Transitioning could cause disruptions to service delivery, which would be particularly hard on the families we serve."
- **Dilution of Program Focus:** There is a risk that the unique focus of each program could be diluted in a consolidated model, potentially reducing the quality and effectiveness of specialized services.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Each program has a unique focus that could be diluted in a merger, potentially affecting the quality of our services."
- **Resistance to Change:** Staff and families may resist changes to established routines and service delivery models, which could lead to challenges in implementing new systems and approaches.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Resistance to change is a major concern, as both staff and families are used to the current system."

Staffing Considerations

Pros:

- **Flexibility in Staffing:** A consolidated structure could provide greater flexibility in staffing, allowing for more efficient use of personnel and better coverage during staff absences or high-demand periods.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "A unified system could give us more flexibility in deploying staff where they are needed most, improving service continuity."
- **Enhanced Professional Development:** Joint training and development programs could offer staff broader learning opportunities and career development, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Consolidation could lead to more comprehensive training programs, enhancing our staff's skills and job satisfaction."
- **Improved Career Pathways:** Consolidation could create clearer career pathways and opportunities for advancement, helping to attract and retain skilled professionals.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "By creating a unified system, we could offer better career progression opportunities, helping us retain top talent."

Cons:

- **Job Security Concerns:** Staff may be concerned about job security and potential changes to their roles and responsibilities, leading to anxiety and resistance to the consolidation process.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "There are legitimate concerns about job security and role changes, which could cause anxiety among staff."
- **Morale and Cohesion Issues:** Integrating staff from different programs could lead to challenges in building a cohesive team and maintaining high morale, especially if there are perceived inequalities in treatment or opportunities.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Ensuring team cohesion and maintaining morale will be critical, as staff from different programs may have different expectations and experiences."
- **Training and Transition Burden:** The transition to a consolidated model may require significant training and adjustment, which could strain resources and temporarily affect service quality.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Training staff for the new system will require significant time and resources, potentially affecting service quality during the transition."

Facilities and Infrastructure

Pros:

- **Optimized Use of Facilities:** Consolidating operations could lead to better utilization of existing facilities, allowing for more efficient use of space and resources.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Optimizing our facilities through consolidation could lead to better use of space and resources."
- **Potential for New Investments:** A unified approach may attract additional funding and investment for facility improvements, leading to better-equipped and more modernized spaces for childcare and education.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Consolidation could make it easier to secure funding for facility upgrades, leading to improved environments for our programs."

- **Shared Infrastructure:** Combining resources could facilitate the development of shared infrastructure, such as IT systems and maintenance services, reducing costs and improving service quality.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Shared infrastructure could lead to cost savings and better service quality, benefiting both programs."

Cons:

- **Space Constraints:** Existing facilities may not be adequately equipped to handle the increased demand or the specific needs of both programs, necessitating significant renovations or expansions.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Our current facilities may not be able to accommodate the combined needs of both programs without significant investment."
- **Logistical Challenges:** Managing shared facilities across a geographically dispersed organization could present significant logistical challenges, including coordinating schedules and allocating space.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Coordinating shared use of facilities across different locations will be a logistical challenge."
- **Potential Conflicts Over Space:** There is a risk of conflicts arising over the allocation and use of space, particularly if different programs have competing needs or priorities.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Competing needs for space could lead to conflicts, particularly if one program's requirements are perceived to take precedence."

Analysis of Potential Administrative Efficiencies

The proposed consolidation of Child Development Centers (CDC) and Head Start operations within the Cherokee Nation offers several opportunities for improving administrative efficiency. This section explores how integration can streamline processes, enhance resource allocation, and improve staff training and professional development.

1. Streamlined Processes

Integration of Administrative Functions:

- **Enrollment:** Currently, CDC and Head Start operate separate enrollment systems, each requiring distinct documentation and processes. Consolidation would allow for a unified enrollment system, reducing redundancy and making it easier for families to access services from both programs. This could lead to faster processing times and reduced administrative overhead.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "With separate enrollment systems, families often have to submit duplicate forms, leading to frustration and delays. A unified system would simplify this process and improve our efficiency." - CDC Leadership
- **Billing:** Both programs have their own billing systems, leading to duplicate efforts in managing payments and financial records. Merging these functions could streamline billing processes, reducing the time and resources spent on financial administration.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* "Combining our billing systems would not only save time but also reduce errors and improve our ability to track financials more accurately." - Head Start Leadership
- **Reporting:** Consolidation would also streamline reporting requirements, allowing for consistent data collection and analysis across both programs. This would enhance the

ability to monitor program effectiveness, comply with regulatory requirements, and make informed decisions based on comprehensive data.

- *Quote from a Leader:* “Unified reporting would help us track progress more effectively and ensure that we meet our compliance and regulatory obligations without duplication of effort.” - CDC Leadership

Consistent Application of Policies:

- Currently, CDC and Head Start have different policies and procedures, leading to inconsistencies in program delivery and administrative practices. Consolidation would enable the creation of a single set of policies, ensuring that all staff follow the same guidelines and reducing the potential for confusion and discrepancies.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Having a unified set of policies would provide clarity for staff and ensure that we’re delivering services consistently and fairly across all locations.” - Head Start Leadership

Reduction of Redundant Efforts:

- The consolidation would eliminate the need for duplicate administrative roles and tasks, such as separate management of human resources, payroll, and facility maintenance. This reduction in redundancy could free up staff to focus on core program activities and improve overall productivity.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “By eliminating redundant roles, we can redirect our resources towards program improvements and enhancing the quality of services we provide.” - CDC Leadership

2. Improved Resource Allocation

Unified Budgeting:

- Consolidation would allow for the creation of a unified budget, which could facilitate more strategic allocation of resources. By combining funds from both CDC and Head Start, the organization could prioritize spending based on overall needs, leading to more effective use of financial resources.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “A unified budget would give us the flexibility to allocate funds where they’re needed most, ensuring that we’re making the best use of our financial resources.” - Head Start Leadership
- **Prioritizing Funding:** A single budget would enable more informed decisions about where to allocate funds, allowing for prioritization of areas such as facility improvements, program expansions, and technology upgrades. This could lead to better support for high-need areas and more balanced resource distribution.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “We could direct more funds towards high-impact areas, like expanding our facilities or improving our technology, which would greatly benefit our programs.” - CDC Leadership

Joint Purchasing Agreements:

- Consolidation could lead to significant cost savings through joint purchasing agreements for supplies, equipment, and services. By buying in bulk, the organization could negotiate better prices and reduce overall expenses.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Combining our purchasing power would allow us to get better deals on everything from classroom supplies to maintenance services,

reducing our costs and freeing up funds for other needs.” - Head Start Leadership

- Economies of Scale: Leveraging economies of scale could result in lower per-unit costs for supplies and equipment, making it more affordable to equip classrooms and provide high-quality materials for both programs.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Economies of scale would help us lower our costs and ensure that all our classrooms are well-equipped and resourced.” - CDC Leadership

Centralized Resource Management:

- A consolidated administrative structure could facilitate centralized management of resources such as facilities, technology, and transportation. This could improve the efficiency of resource use and ensure that all programs have access to the tools and support they need to operate effectively.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Centralizing resource management would help us make sure that all our facilities and programs are well-supported and that resources are distributed equitably.” - Head Start Leadership

3. Enhanced Training and Professional Development

Shared Training Programs:

- Consolidation would enable the development of shared training programs that draw on the expertise of both CDC and Head Start. This could lead to more comprehensive training opportunities that cover a broader range of topics, from early childhood education best practices to compliance with state and federal regulations.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Creating shared training programs would allow us to tap into the strengths of both CDC and Head Start, providing our staff with more diverse and well-rounded training.” - CDC Leadership

Broader Professional Development Opportunities:

- A unified approach to professional development could provide staff with access to a wider array of training sessions, workshops, and continuing education courses. This could enhance their skills and knowledge, leading to improved service quality and better outcomes for children.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “With a consolidated system, we could offer more varied professional development opportunities, helping our staff grow and excel in their roles.” - Head Start Leadership

Development of Specialized Programs:

- Consolidation could also facilitate the creation of specialized training programs that address specific needs, such as supporting children with special needs, implementing innovative educational practices, and enhancing family engagement. These programs could leverage the combined expertise of both CDC and Head Start to deliver targeted training that addresses the unique challenges faced by staff.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “We could develop specialized training programs that address specific challenges and opportunities in early childhood education, drawing on the strengths of both programs.” - CDC Leadership

Cross-Program Knowledge Sharing:

- By bringing together staff from CDC and Head Start, consolidation would encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration, leading to the exchange of ideas and best practices. This cross-program interaction could foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation, benefiting both staff and the children they serve.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Encouraging cross-program collaboration would help us learn from each other and continuously improve our practices and services.” - Head Start Leadership

Career Development and Advancement:

- A unified structure could provide clearer career paths and opportunities for advancement within the organization. This could help attract and retain talented professionals by offering them the chance to grow and progress in their careers within a supportive and well-structured environment.
 - *Quote from a Leader:* “Providing clear career paths and opportunities for growth would help us retain our best talent and ensure that our staff feel valued and supported in their careers.” - CDC Leadership

By consolidating the administrative functions of CDC and Head Start, the Cherokee Nation can achieve significant efficiencies that enhance service delivery, improve resource allocation, and provide better training and professional development for staff. These efficiencies can lead to a more effective and sustainable early childhood education program, ultimately benefiting the children and families served by both programs.

Key Considerations for and Against Consolidation

For Consolidation

Increased Collaboration:

Consolidation could significantly enhance collaboration between the Child Development Centers (CDC) and Head Start programs by creating a unified administrative framework. This integration would facilitate the sharing of best practices, resources, and expertise, leading to more cohesive and comprehensive support for children and families.

- **Shared Expertise:** Both CDC and Head Start have developed specialized knowledge and skills in early childhood education. A consolidated structure would allow these programs to leverage each other’s strengths, providing a richer educational experience for children.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Our program has developed unique approaches to engaging parents, and Head Start has strong expertise in supporting children with special needs. By working together, we can offer a more holistic service to our families.” – Anonymous Participant
- **Resource Sharing:** Consolidation would enable the sharing of resources such as educational materials, staff training programs, and facilities, leading to more efficient use of available resources and reducing costs.
 - *Quote from Questionnaire:* “Combining resources would mean we can invest in better facilities and training, which benefits everyone. It’s a win-win for both programs.” - Anonymous Participant

- Integrated Services: A unified approach could lead to the development of integrated services that address a wider range of needs, such as health screenings, family support services, and educational enrichment programs, thereby providing a more comprehensive support system for families.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “With a combined effort, we could expand our services to include health and wellness programs that cater to the needs of both children and their families.” - Anonymous Participant

Enhanced Access to Services:

A consolidated administrative structure could streamline and expand access to essential childcare and early education services, making it easier for families to receive the support they need.

- Extended Hours: By pooling resources, consolidated programs could offer extended hours of operation, providing more flexibility for working parents who need childcare beyond traditional hours.
 - *Quote from Questionnaire:* “Many of our parents work late shifts and need childcare services that extend beyond the typical 9 to 5. Consolidation could help us provide those extended hours.” - Head Start Leadership
- Wraparound Care: The unified structure could facilitate the development of wraparound care services that provide continuous support throughout the day, including before and after school programs, holiday care, and summer camps.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Families would greatly benefit from wraparound care that covers school breaks and holidays, ensuring that children have safe and enriching environments even when school is out.” - Anonymous Participant
- Increased Service Availability: By combining resources, the consolidated entity could expand service availability, reducing waitlists and improving access to high-quality early education and care.
 - *Quote from Questionnaire:* “We often have long waitlists, and combining forces could help us serve more families faster, reducing the time they wait to get critical services.” - CDC Leadership

Greater Efficiency:

Consolidation offers the potential to eliminate redundant administrative processes, streamline operations, and reallocate resources more effectively, leading to cost savings and increased investment in program quality and staff development.

- Streamlined Processes: Merging the administrative functions of CDC and Head Start would reduce duplication in areas such as enrollment, billing, and reporting, leading to more efficient processes and freeing up resources for direct service delivery.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Currently, we spend a lot of time on redundant paperwork. Streamlining these processes would save time and allow us to focus more on the children.” - Anonymous Participant
- Cost Savings: By reducing administrative overhead, consolidation could lead to significant cost savings, which could then be reinvested in enhancing program quality, such as upgrading facilities, purchasing new educational materials, and providing staff training.

- *Quote from Questionnaire:* “With a unified budget, we could cut down on administrative costs and reinvest those savings into our programs, improving the quality of care and education we provide.” - Head Start Leadership
- Improved Resource Allocation: A consolidated structure would allow for more strategic resource allocation, ensuring that funds and resources are directed to areas of greatest need and impact, leading to better outcomes for children and families.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Pooling our resources would allow us to prioritize funding for the most critical needs, such as expanding access to early education in underserved areas.” - Anonymous Participant

Against Consolidation

Potential for Disruption:

The transition to a consolidated structure could cause significant disruption to existing services, creating uncertainty for staff and families and potentially affecting the quality and continuity of care.

- Service Interruptions: The process of integrating two distinct programs could lead to temporary service interruptions, affecting families who rely on consistent and dependable childcare and education services.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “During the transition, there’s a risk that services could be disrupted, which would be particularly hard on the families who depend on us for reliable care.” - Anonymous Participant
- Staff Uncertainty: Consolidation could create uncertainty for staff regarding job security, roles, and responsibilities, potentially leading to decreased morale and resistance to change.
 - *Quote from Questionnaire:* “Staff are concerned about how consolidation will affect their jobs and responsibilities. Clear communication and support are crucial to managing this transition smoothly.” - CDC Leadership
- Family Concerns: Families might worry about changes to the quality or nature of services, particularly if they have had positive experiences with the existing programs. Addressing these concerns through transparent communication and stakeholder involvement is critical.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Families are naturally concerned about how changes will impact their children. It’s important to keep them informed and involved in the process.” - Anonymous Participant

Risk of Bureaucratization:

Consolidation might lead to a more bureaucratic administrative structure, which could increase the administrative burden, slow decision-making processes, and reduce flexibility.

- Increased Administrative Layers: Combining two programs could result in additional layers of administration, complicating decision-making processes and potentially slowing down the implementation of new initiatives or responses to issues.
 - *Quote from Questionnaire:* “A larger administrative structure could mean more red tape and slower decision-making, which would hinder our ability to respond quickly to the needs of our programs.” - Head Start Leadership

- Reduced Responsiveness: A consolidated system may become less responsive to the unique needs of each program, leading to delays in addressing specific concerns or implementing tailored solutions.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “We need to ensure that the new system remains flexible and responsive, otherwise it could become a bureaucratic obstacle rather than a support.” - Anonymous Participant
- Loss of Autonomy: Staff and program leaders might experience a loss of autonomy, which could stifle creativity and innovation in program delivery and management.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “There’s a concern that consolidation could limit our ability to innovate and adapt to the specific needs of our community.” - Anonymous Participant

Loss of Program-Specific Strengths:

Each program has developed unique strengths and areas of expertise that could be diluted in a consolidated structure, potentially reducing the quality and effectiveness of services.

- Specialized Focus: CDC and Head Start each have specific focuses—CDC on early childhood development and Head Start on providing comprehensive support for low-income families. Merging these focuses might dilute their effectiveness and fail to meet the specialized needs of each group.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Each program has unique strengths that could be lost in a merger, potentially weakening the support we offer to families.” - Lori Toney
- Tailored Services: Each program has tailored its services to meet the specific needs of its community. Consolidation could lead to a one-size-fits-all approach that may not effectively address the diverse needs of the families served by each program.
 - *Quote from Questionnaire:* “We’ve developed services that specifically address the needs of our community. A one-size-fits-all approach could undermine our ability to provide tailored support.” - CDC Leadership
- Cultural and Operational Differences: The operational and cultural differences between CDC and Head Start could create challenges in achieving a cohesive and unified program, potentially leading to conflicts and inefficiencies.
 - *Quote from Interview:* “Combining two programs with different cultures and operations could lead to conflicts and inefficiencies that might be difficult to manage.” - Anonymous Participant

The feedback gathered from CDC and Head Start leadership and staff underscores the potential for significant benefits through the consolidation of these two programs. While challenges exist, such as the risk of service disruptions and the need for careful management of resources, the overall outlook suggests that integration could lead to more streamlined operations, improved service delivery, and better resource allocation. By addressing concerns related to administrative complexity and maintaining the unique strengths of each program, the Cherokee Nation can create a more unified and effective early childhood education system. This approach promises to enhance the quality of care and support provided to families, ultimately contributing to the long-term success and well-being of the community. The findings point toward a thoughtful and strategic consolidation as a viable path forward, aligning with the overarching goal of improving access to high-quality early childhood education for all.

Recommendations

Implementation Plan

Implementing the consolidation of Child Development Centers (CDC) and Head Start operations within the Cherokee Nation requires a detailed action plan to guide the process and ensure a smooth transition. This plan will outline key components and provide a framework for effective implementation, with a particular emphasis on a robust communication strategy to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the process.

Detailed Action Plan Overview

1. Establishing the Foundation

- Form a Consolidation Steering Committee: Start by creating a steering committee composed of senior leaders from both CDC and Head Start, as well as representatives from the Cherokee Nation government. This committee will oversee the entire consolidation process, define roles and responsibilities, and develop a detailed plan for integrating the two programs.
 - *Key Activities:* Regular meetings to coordinate efforts, setting goals, and establishing a timeline.
- Conduct a Comprehensive Needs Assessment: Assess the current state of both programs to identify gaps, overlaps, and areas for improvement. This will involve collecting data on enrollment, staffing, facilities, and service delivery.
 - *Key Activities:* Data collection and analysis, stakeholder consultations, and identification of key needs.
- Develop a Unified Administrative Framework: Create a framework that integrates administrative functions such as enrollment, billing, and reporting. This will streamline processes and reduce redundancy, ensuring more efficient operations.
 - *Key Activities:* Drafting unified policies and procedures, reviewing existing systems, and aligning processes.
- Secure Funding and Resources: Identify and secure the necessary funding and resources to support the consolidation process. This includes budget planning, applying for grants, and allocating financial resources effectively.
 - *Key Activities:* Budget development, funding applications, and resource allocation planning.

2. Implementing Pilot Programs

- Launch Pilot Programs: Implement pilot programs at selected sites to test the consolidation approach. These pilots will provide valuable insights and allow for adjustments before full-scale implementation.
 - *Key Activities:* Selection of pilot sites, development of pilot program plans, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Train Staff on New Systems: Provide comprehensive training for staff on the new processes and systems introduced through consolidation. This ensures that all team members are equipped to work within the new framework.
 - *Key Activities:* Development of training materials, conducting training sessions, and evaluating training effectiveness.

- Standardize Data and Reporting Systems: Integrate data management systems to ensure consistent data collection and reporting across both programs. This facilitates better decision-making and program evaluation.
 - *Key Activities:* System integration, data migration, and implementation of standardized reporting procedures.

3. Expanding and Full Implementation

- Rollout Consolidation to All Sites: Expand the pilot programs to include all CDC and Head Start locations. This phase will involve scaling up the integrated model and ensuring consistency across all sites.
 - *Key Activities:* Expansion planning, site coordination, and full implementation.
- Monitor and Evaluate Progress: Continuously monitor the progress of the consolidation and evaluate its impact on service delivery and outcomes. This helps identify areas for improvement and ensures that goals are being met.
 - *Key Activities:* Regular progress reviews, feedback collection, and ongoing evaluation.
- Establish Continuous Improvement Processes: Develop processes for continuous improvement to address any challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the consolidated program over time.
 - *Key Activities:* Development of improvement plans, implementation of initiatives, and regular updates.

Communication Strategy

A key component of the implementation plan is a robust communication strategy designed to keep stakeholders informed, engaged, and supportive throughout the consolidation process. Effective communication ensures transparency, builds trust, and facilitates stakeholder buy-in.

1. Stakeholder Identification and Engagement

- Identify Key Stakeholders: Determine who the key stakeholders are, including staff, families, community members, and funding bodies. Understand their interests, concerns, and preferred communication channels.
 - *Key Activities:* Stakeholder analysis, creation of stakeholder lists, and development of engagement strategies.
- Engage Stakeholders Early and Often: Involve stakeholders from the beginning of the process to ensure they are informed and their feedback is considered. This includes regular updates and opportunities for input.
 - *Key Activities:* Initial engagement meetings, regular updates, and feedback collection sessions.

2. Communication Channels and Methods

- Diverse Communication Channels: Use a variety of communication channels to reach all stakeholders effectively. This includes:
 - Email Updates: Regularly send detailed email updates to keep stakeholders informed about progress, key milestones, and upcoming activities.
 - Newsletters: Publish newsletters that provide comprehensive information on the consolidation process, highlight key developments, and share success stories.
 - Website and Social Media: Create a dedicated web portal and use social media platforms to provide accessible information and updates.

- Town Hall Meetings and Webinars: Host interactive meetings and webinars to provide updates, address concerns, and gather feedback.

3. Communication Plan and Timeline

Phase 1: Initial Communication and Engagement (0-3 Months)

- Announce Consolidation Plans: Kick off the communication strategy with an announcement about the consolidation plan, including its goals and the benefits expected. Use this opportunity to set the tone and provide an overview of the process.
 - *Key Activities:* Announcement emails, website updates, and initial stakeholder meetings.
- Provide Regular Updates: Begin a series of monthly email updates and newsletters to keep stakeholders informed about progress and key developments. These updates should include information on what has been accomplished and what is planned next.
 - *Key Activities:* Monthly emails, newsletters, and web portal content updates.

Phase 2: Ongoing Communication and Feedback (4-6 Months)

- Host Regular Meetings and Webinars: Continue with regular town hall meetings and webinars to provide updates and gather feedback. These sessions should focus on specific aspects of the consolidation, such as progress reports, challenges, and success stories.
 - *Key Activities:* Bi-monthly meetings, stakeholder Q&A sessions, and feedback surveys.
- Distribute Feedback Surveys: Conduct surveys to collect feedback on the consolidation process and identify any concerns or areas for improvement. Use the results to refine the communication strategy and address stakeholder needs.
 - *Key Activities:* Survey development, distribution, and analysis.

Phase 3: Final Implementation and Continuous Engagement (7-12 Months)

- Announce Full Implementation: Communicate the full implementation of the consolidated model, highlighting achievements and the positive impact on services. Use this opportunity to celebrate successes and acknowledge contributions from stakeholders.
 - *Key Activities:* Final implementation announcement, success story sharing, and thank-you messages.
- Share Success Stories and Testimonials: Regularly share stories and testimonials from staff and families who have benefited from the consolidated services. This helps to build confidence in the new system and reinforces the benefits of the consolidation.
 - *Key Activities:* Collection and publication of testimonials, case studies, and impact stories.
- Maintain Ongoing Communication: Continue to provide updates on continuous improvement initiatives and any ongoing changes. Keep stakeholders engaged by sharing progress and inviting feedback on how the consolidated services are performing.
 - *Key Activities:* Bi-monthly updates, continuous feedback loops, and improvement initiative updates.

By developing a comprehensive action plan and robust communication strategy, the Cherokee Nation can ensure a smooth and effective consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations. This

approach will keep stakeholders informed, engaged, and supportive throughout the process, ultimately leading to a more unified and efficient early childhood education system that better serves the needs of the community. Through careful planning and open communication, the transition can be managed successfully, providing lasting benefits for children and families across the Cherokee Nation.

Conclusion

The consolidation of the Child Development Centers (CDC) and Head Start programs within the Cherokee Nation represents a significant step toward enhancing early childhood education services and supporting the well-being of the community. This comprehensive report has provided a detailed analysis of the potential benefits and challenges associated with such a consolidation, based on extensive feedback from leadership, frontline staff, and other key stakeholders.

Recap of Key Findings and Recommendations

Throughout this report, several critical insights and recommendations have been highlighted:

- **Administrative Efficiencies:** The consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations offers the potential to streamline administrative processes, reduce redundancy, and enhance overall efficiency. Integrating functions such as enrollment, billing, and reporting can simplify operations and improve service delivery.
- **Resource Maximization:** A unified administrative structure can facilitate better resource allocation and utilization, including the creation of a consolidated budget and the optimization of facilities. Joint purchasing agreements and shared resources can lead to significant cost savings and more effective use of funds.
- **Enhanced Training and Professional Development:** Shared training programs and professional development opportunities can improve staff skills and knowledge, leading to higher quality services and better outcomes for children. A unified structure also offers clearer career pathways, helping to attract and retain talented professionals.
- **Service Delivery Improvements:** Consolidation can lead to more integrated and comprehensive services, including expanded service offerings such as extended hours and wraparound care. This can provide greater flexibility for families and ensure that children receive continuous and high-quality care.
- **Challenges and Mitigation:** While consolidation offers many benefits, potential challenges such as service disruptions, the risk of bureaucratization, and the need to balance program-specific strengths must be carefully managed. A detailed transition plan, ongoing communication, and stakeholder engagement are crucial to addressing these challenges and ensuring a smooth transition.

Final thoughts on consolidation of Child Development Center (CDC) and Head Start

The Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force has meticulously reviewed the findings and recommendations presented in this report. The Task Force recognizes the significant potential for the consolidation of Child Development Center (CDC) and Head Start operations to enhance the quality and reach of early childhood education services.

Key recommendations from the Task Force include:

- **Commitment to Quality Care:** The Task Force emphasizes that any changes resulting from consolidation must uphold the highest standards of quality in early childhood education. The primary goal is to provide every child in the community with access to comprehensive, high-quality care and education that supports their development and prepares them for future success. Establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for pilot programs will be essential in measuring and ensuring these high standards.

- **Focus on Community Needs:** The consolidation should focus on meeting the diverse needs of the Cherokee Nation community. This includes making services accessible, culturally relevant, and tailored to support the unique circumstances of each family. Strategies must address the specific needs of low-income families, children with special needs, and other vulnerable populations. The clarified scope of on-site childcare services, serving both employees and the broader community, exemplifies this commitment.
- **Embracing Change for Improvement:** While acknowledging the challenges that change can bring, the Task Force views consolidation as an opportunity for growth and improvement. By aligning resources and integrating services, the Cherokee Nation can create a more effective and responsive system that better supports families and children. Addressing potential turnover implications at key facilities like the Hard Rock Casino in Catoosa will be crucial to maintaining service consistency.
- **Ensuring a Smooth Transition:** A carefully planned and well-executed transition process is paramount. This includes clear communication, stakeholder involvement, and adequate support for staff and families. A successful transition will minimize disruptions and ensure that the benefits of consolidation are realized quickly and effectively. Discussing potential liability risks and ensuring comprehensive insurance coverage will help mitigate any transitional challenges.
- **Looking Forward to a Brighter Future:** The Task Force is optimistic about the potential for consolidation to create a stronger, more cohesive early childhood education system within the Cherokee Nation. By leveraging the strengths of both CDC and Head Start, the Task Force believes that consolidation can lead to better outcomes for children, families, and the broader community. The evaluation of broader investments, including increased contributions to child flex spending accounts, will support a more comprehensive childcare support system.

Final Thoughts on the Importance of Improving Childcare Support for the Cherokee Nation Workforce

The importance of providing high-quality childcare support for the Cherokee Nation workforce cannot be overstated. Access to reliable and effective childcare services is essential for enabling parents to participate fully in the workforce and for ensuring the healthy development and education of children. By enhancing early childhood education services through the consolidation of CDC and Head Start, the Cherokee Nation can create a more supportive and equitable environment for its families.

This consolidation effort is not merely about administrative efficiency or resource optimization; it is fundamentally about investing in the future of the Cherokee Nation. By providing children with the best possible start in life and supporting their families, we are laying the groundwork for a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous community.

In conclusion, the proposed consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations offers a unique opportunity to enhance early childhood education services across the Cherokee Nation. By carefully implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, including the establishment of KPIs, addressing turnover implications, evaluating broader investments, and mitigating liability risks, the consolidation can lead to a more unified and effective early childhood education system that benefits the entire community. Through thoughtful planning, open communication, and the

commitment of all stakeholders, we can ensure a brighter future for the children and families of the Cherokee Nation.

Appendices

Appendix A: Full Text of the March 19th Memo from Principal Chief Hoskin March 19th Memo from Principal Chief Hoskin (INSERT LINK)

This memo outlines the directives given by Principal Chief Hoskin for the reconvened Child Care Task Force. It highlights the specific objectives for the Task Force, which include examining gaps in childcare services and exploring the consolidation of the CDC and Head Start programs. The memo provides essential background and context for the consolidation initiative.

Key Points:

- Directive to reconvene the Child Care Task Force.
- Focus on examining gaps in childcare services and the potential consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations.
- Task Force composition and expectations.

Appendix B: Child Care Task Force Action Plan Child Care Task Force Action Plan (INSERT LINK)

The action plan details the steps the Task Force will take to address the critical need for comprehensive childcare solutions. It includes timelines, responsible parties, and specific actions to be taken to gather feedback, analyze current childcare usage, and assess the feasibility of on-site childcare services.

Key Sections:

- Introduction and objectives.
- Task Force composition and communication protocol.
- Detailed action items and timeline.
- Conclusion and commitment to improving childcare support.

Appendix C: Employee Questionnaire Template and Summarized Responses Employee Childcare Needs Survey Template and Summarized Responses (INSERT LINK)

This document includes the template for the employee questionnaire distributed to gather insights into the childcare needs, preferences, and barriers faced by employees. It also contains a summary of the responses, highlighting key findings and trends.

Key Questions:

- Current childcare arrangements and satisfaction levels.
- Awareness and usage of Cherokee Nation childcare programs.
- Childcare needs and preferences.
- Barriers to accessing childcare.
- Interest in on-site childcare services.

Summary of Responses:

- Insights into childcare preferences and challenges.
- Trends in program awareness and usage.
- Identified gaps and potential areas for improvement.

Appendix D: Structured Questionnaire for CDC and Head Start Leadership and Their Feedback

CDC & Head Start Leadership Questionnaire (INSERT LINK)

This structured questionnaire was distributed to gather feedback from the leadership teams of the CDC and Head Start programs. It includes detailed responses on the potential benefits and challenges of consolidation, as well as specific recommendations and considerations.

Key Sections:

- Overview of current operations.
- Pros and cons of consolidation.
- Impact on services.
- Recommendations for consolidation.

Summary of Leadership Feedback:

- Perspectives on administrative efficiencies and resource allocation.
- Concerns about potential challenges and impacts on service quality.
- Suggestions for ensuring a successful consolidation process.

Appendix E: Additional Supporting Documents and Data Tables

Employee Child Care Needs Survey Data (INSERT LINK)

This Excel file contains the raw data from the employee childcare needs survey, providing detailed insights into the childcare preferences, barriers, and program usage among Cherokee Nation employees.

Supporting Documents (INSERT LINK)

Additional documents include the legislative act and other supporting materials that provide context and background for the consolidation initiative. These documents support the analysis and recommendations provided in the report.

Key Components:

- Legislative Act: Verna D. Thompson Early Childhood Education Act.
- Survey data tables and charts.
- Supporting correspondence and memos.

These appendices provide comprehensive support for the report's findings and recommendations, offering detailed documentation of the feedback and data that informed the analysis of the potential consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations within the Cherokee Nation.

Appendix F: Definitions and Methods

KPI Definitions

- Enrollment Metrics:
 - Definition: Measure the number of children enrolled in the pilot programs compared to available slots.

- Measurement Methods: Track enrollment numbers monthly and calculate the percentage of capacity utilized.
- Parent and Guardian Satisfaction:
 - Survey Methodology: Develop and distribute quarterly surveys to parents and guardians.
 - Rating Scales: Use a Likert scale (1-5) to gauge satisfaction levels across various aspects of the program.
- Operational Efficiency:
 - Workflow Analysis Techniques: Analyze the time taken for administrative processes like enrollment and billing before and after pilot implementation.
- Cost Effectiveness:
 - Cost Analysis Methods: Compare operational costs per child before and after the pilot programs to determine cost reductions.
- Educational Outcomes:
 - Developmental Benchmarks: Use standardized developmental benchmarks to assess children's progress.
 - Assessment Tools: Implement tools like the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) to track outcomes.
- Employee Turnover and Retention:
 - Measurement Techniques: Monitor and record employee turnover rates quarterly, comparing pre-pilot and pilot periods.
- Infrastructure and Facility Usage:
 - Audit Methods: Conduct regular facility audits to ensure effective use of space and adherence to safety standards.
- Financial Performance:
 - Financial Audit Techniques: Perform regular financial audits to track the program's net income and expenses.
- Community Impact:
 - Engagement Tracking Methods: Measure community involvement through participation rates in childcare-related events and volunteer activities.
- Regulatory Compliance:
 - Compliance Audit Procedures: Conduct regular audits to ensure all childcare services meet state and tribal regulations.

References

1. Cherokee Nation Childcare Task Force Interviews, June 2024
Interviews conducted with frontline staff and leaders from CDC and Head Start to gather detailed feedback on potential consolidation and improvements in childcare services.
2. Employee Child Care Needs Survey Results, May 2024
Data and feedback collected from a comprehensive survey distributed to employees of the Cherokee Nation, HACN, and CNB to understand their childcare needs and preferences.
3. Cherokee Nation Early Childhood Education Act, Section Five, 2021
Legislative framework that provides guidelines for the operation and consolidation of early childhood education programs within the Cherokee Nation.
4. March 19th Memo from Principal Chief Hoskin
A memorandum issued by Principal Chief Hoskin outlining the directives for the Child Care Task Force, including examining gaps in childcare services and exploring the potential consolidation of CDC and Head Start operations.
5. Child Care Task Force Action Plan, 2024
Detailed action plan developed by the Task Force to address the critical need for comprehensive childcare solutions and to assess the feasibility of on-site childcare services.
6. Legislative Act 08-24, Verna D. Thompson Early Childhood Education Act, Amended 2024
Legal document that mandates a biennial analysis of early childhood education services and supports significant investments in these services.
7. CDC & Head Start Leadership Questionnaire, June 2024
Structured questionnaire distributed to leadership teams of the CDC and Head Start programs to collect feedback on the potential consolidation and other key issues related to childcare services.
8. Employee Child Care Needs Survey Template and Summarized Responses, May 2024
Template of the survey distributed to employees and a summary of the responses highlighting key trends and insights into childcare needs and gaps.
9. Cherokee Nation Reservation Overview, 2023
Overview document detailing the geographical and administrative structure of the Cherokee Nation reservation, providing context for the distribution of childcare services.
10. Oklahoma Department of Human Services, 2022
Analysis report on the costs and feasibility of establishing childcare facilities, used as a reference for understanding the financial implications of on-site childcare.
11. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2023
Study on the impact of on-site childcare on employee retention and satisfaction, which provided insights into the potential benefits of implementing such facilities within the Cherokee Nation.
12. Childcare Infrastructure Costs and Feasibility, 2022
Report providing detailed cost estimates and feasibility assessments for the establishment of childcare facilities, informing the financial analysis of proposed on-site childcare solutions.

13. Employee Benefits and Childcare Access, 2023
Research on the benefits of accessible childcare for employee satisfaction and productivity, supporting the recommendations for expanding childcare support within the Cherokee Nation.
14. Feasibility Study for On-Site Childcare Services, 2024
Preliminary study conducted by the Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force to assess the demand, infrastructure needs, and potential locations for on-site childcare services.
15. Cherokee Nation Childcare Programs Overview, 2023
Document outlining the existing childcare programs provided by the Cherokee Nation, including Head Start and Child Development Centers, and their utilization rates among the workforce.
16. Feedback from Child Development Resource Referral, CDC, 2024
Insights and feedback from the Child Development Resource Referral staff on the benefits and challenges of consolidating childcare services within the Cherokee Nation.
17. Memo.ChildCare2024.20240319
Internal memo detailing the goals and expectations for the Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force, issued as part of the initiative to improve childcare services for the workforce.

These references provide the foundation for the comprehensive analysis and recommendations presented in this report, ensuring that the findings are grounded in reliable data and informed by expert feedback and legislative context.