



Choteau Youth Alliance

JULY 2024

CHOTEAU COMMUNITY RALLIES TOGETHER TO EXPAND CHILD CARE

▶ A Case Study in Collaboration & Commitment

The Choteau Youth Alliance (CYA) was formed in 2023 in response to the lack of services available to the community’s families and young children. Made up of a diverse and committed group of partners and parents, CYA provides a variety of resources for Choteau families, including a daytime child care program, after-school care, early childhood education, and enrichment programs like summer camp. With a strong focus on early childhood development, CYA plays a vital role in building a solid foundation and nurturing environment for the children of Choteau – enabling parents to pursue their careers with peace of mind. Choteau is a small community in Montana and is known for its friendly atmosphere and strong community spirit!

BACKGROUND



LOCATION:
Choteau, Montana



ORGANIZATION:
Choteau Youth Alliance



POPULATION:
1,700 people



WEBSITE:
ChoteauYouthAlliance.org

MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS
CONNECT





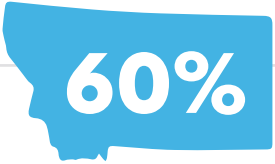
Katie Adams, President

THE CHALLENGE



Tackling a community’s urgent need for child care.

Like so many Montana towns, Choteau was struggling to balance child care supply with community demand – leaving many parents with an inability to find safe and accessible child care. And though the issue had been talked about for years, even resulting in a small group of advocates forming in 2019, the community continued to face numerous roadblocks in their efforts – including funding, bringing together the right partners, finding the ideal location, ensuring accessibility for families, and improving on the quality of care provided.



60%
OF MONTANA COUNTIES
are considered child care deserts.



66,000
PARENTS IN MONTANA
are currently not fully participating in the labor force due to the lack of child care.

THE SOLUTION

Pairing the right partners with the right resources.

After years of inaction and fizzled momentum, Katie Adams (an involved parent and member of the School Board), ignited a new kind of child care movement – one that was dependent not on the individual but the entire community. Empowered and encouraged by MCCBC’s cohort program, Katie helped rally together local businesses, community organizations, and concerned citizens to launch Choteau Youth Alliance. Driven by a cohesive mission, CYA pooled their resources and worked alongside MCCBC to build the foundation for a successful child care business in their beloved town – securing a safe and accessible location, hiring high-quality staff, and launching its first child care facility in just 12 months!



As a small community like Choteau, we knew that instead of splintering off, it was time to come together and pool our resources.

Katie Adams, President, Choteau Youth Alliance

Through CYA and the presence of safe and reliable child care businesses, the town is demonstrating its commitment to creating a supportive environment for families, businesses, and the next generation.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. ESTABLISHING A DEDICATED TEAM

From a kindergarten teacher and a health director to local business owners, CYA broadened its reach, increased community buy-in, and balanced its workload by bringing together a diverse group of individuals – all offering different (and necessary) skills and resources.

2. CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To better understand the needs of their community and identify the gaps in child care, CYA conducted multiple formal and informal needs assessments – resulting in a response that shifted their business model entirely.

3. CREATING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In collaborating with local organizations, businesses, and schools, CYA was able to tap into additional funding, share best practices, gather donations, find qualified staff, and expand their services. They even secured a business location by collaborating with the Lutheran church who donated space!

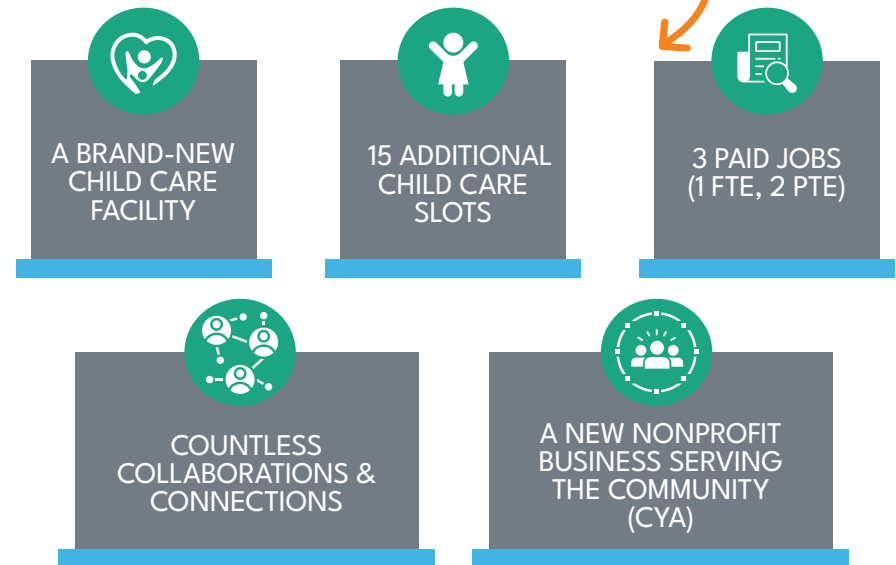
4. SEEKING OUT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Choteau Youth Alliance secured two grants to kick-start their work – one through MCCBC's Community Capacity Building cohort for \$5,000 and another from a local CCR&R agency for \$3,000. They also rallied the community and fundraised another \$30,000 to cover the first six months of business operations!

PROGRESS

When you bring together the right partners with the right connections, and pair them with the right resources, a lot can happen.

TAKE A LOOK!



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Based on the success of Choteau Youth Alliance, the following key takeaways can guide other child care providers in Montana:

- ✓ **Form a committed and diverse team.** Through the establishment of a dedicated team comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds, the workload was effectively balanced – fostering a collaborative environment that encouraged the development of stronger community connections and facilitated the sharing of a wider range of innovative ideas.
- ✓ **Encourage parental engagement.** Foster open communication channels with parents, providing opportunities for involvement and support.
- ✓ **Seek community partnerships and collaboration.** Collaborate with local organizations, businesses, and educational institutions to leverage additional resources and funding opportunities. CYA found it crucial to make connections in their community, establish relationships, and be transparent and vocalize what they needed from community partners and individuals.
- ✓ **Showcase community commitment.** Being an invested and known community member helps to not only bend more ears but to also give credibility to the business. Be willing to pay for services and/or do the work to show the community you care deeply. The more community buy-in you have, the better chance of success.

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

Whether you're a business owner, parent, current child care provider, or long-time resident, you have a role to play – because better child care systems mean thriving communities.



DOWNLOAD FREE RESOURCES

Planning tools, step-by-step guides, blog posts, and more!



JOIN US AT OUR NEXT EVENT

From annual summits to training workshops, we'll save you a seat.



GET ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

There's power in unity. Let's talk about the opportunities in your community.

CONNECT WITH US!



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LEARN MORE

about Montana Child Care Business
Connect and take your next step.

