



# PRIORITIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY AND BRIGHTER FUTURE

Our recommendations for investing the American Rescue Plan Act county funds

The Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance recognizes that the American Rescue Plan Act is providing North Country communities with opportunities to invest strategically in our economy and in our community. Child care is essential to employee availability and retention for local businesses and to the families who live and work in the North Country. Our communities, many already child care deserts, have lost many child care businesses during the past year. The ones that remain struggle to survive. And early care and learning workers have left the workforce. With this upheaval of child care, businesses are struggling to find workers. The mental health and well-being of children and families has suffered tremendously. As you consider investing resources from the American Rescue Plan Act, please make child care and vital children and family initiatives a priority for our region.

## #1 Increase the number of licensed child care providers and build a pipeline for new professionals in this field.

There is an overwhelming need for licensed child care providers in our region. But, becoming a licensed child care provider, or even entering the profession, can be daunting. The Alliance recommends investing \$400,000 in a program to support individuals seeking to become licensed child care providers. **The Child Care Pipeline Project** recruits and supports a candidate from beginning to end - from credentialing all the way through to accepting their first family.

## #2 Ensure families have access to all the services they need by strengthening the infrastructure of referrals and improving access to services.

Raising a child brings new challenges at every stage of development. Knowing what services are available, how to find them, and how they work together is hard. The Alliance recommends \$25,000 - \$160,000 enhance the information and referral network in the Adirondacks, including the Adirondack 2-1-1 system. A staged approach could start with creating up-to-date access methods, such as text messages and a mobile app, as well as increasing the visibility of 2-1-1. A deeper investment in an established systems-approach like Help Me Grow, which already operates in multiple New York counties, would work toward closed loop referral, strengthen family protective factors, and be responsive to mental health and other needs.

### Alarming Trends

Percentage **decrease** of licensed child care slots in the past 24 months:  
**Clinton County | 16%**  
**Essex County | 34%**  
**Franklin County | 16%**

### Troubling Gaps

The pandemic exposed gaps in referral services for family supports, food, transportation, broadband, and other vital services. This is an opportunity to fix them.

### About the Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance

The Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance, hosted by Adirondack Foundation, brings together key stakeholders working in unison to support early childhood initiatives. The accelerated pace of early brain development makes the early years—especially the first three—a period rich with opportunities for improving lifetime trajectories of achievement and well-being. Our cross-sector, multi-county coalition works to ensure our region has strong families, healthy children, and high-quality early learning. Learn more online: [adirondackbt3.org](http://adirondackbt3.org) or contact Connie Prickett at [connie@adkfoundation.org](mailto:connie@adkfoundation.org) or 518.523.9904.

# UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY

Aligning needs and opportunities between counties can be a powerful way to maximize each county's investment of American Rescue Plan Act funds. The table below shows what a proposed, proportional investment for our recommendations could look like. All told, these recommendations represent 1.7% of each county's total allocation and will go a long way toward helping to reignite our economy.

County	ARPA	Share of request
Clinton	\$15,633,268	\$269,255
Essex	\$7,164,479	\$123,395
Franklin	\$9,716,479	\$167,349
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$32,514,226</b>	<b>\$560,000</b>

## A REGIONAL SNAPSHOT OF CHILD CARE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

