

Discovery Kids Child Care

Created: March 2018

1400 Montana Avenue, Door #33

Benson, MN 56215

320-843-2710

discoverykids@benson.k12.mn.us

discoverykidsbenson.com

“The Benson School District has taken a lead in looking for solutions to the community’s day care shortage.”

- Swift County Monitor-News

Background

Primary Contact

Shelly Vergin, Benson Community Education

Development & Preparation

The goal was to find a collaborative model to increase the number of quality daycare spots in Benson. The idea for a new childcare facility began with community members in Benson. Business owners noticed a shortage of licensed childcare options for their employees. The Benson school board offered for the school to be involved in the childcare solution, which led to Benson Community Education now running Discovery Kids.



A few members of the community felt that the school should not offer childcare and that the city should oversee it instead. There were also some childcare providers who felt the same way. Overall there was more support than opposition in the community.

Established

September 5, 2017

Discovery Kids Basic Info

Food

Discovery Kids uses the Child and Adult Care Funding Program to pay for meals for the children. The school food service prepares meals for the childcare, and the costs of these meals are covered by the daily fee paid by parents.



Upper Minnesota Valley
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Helping Communities Prosper

323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208 320.289.1981 www.umvrdc.org

Building Information

Discovery Kids set their licensing limit based on the space available in the building since the school gave them the space. With that in mind, they have:

- 1 large infant room
- 2 toddler rooms
- Large green space in back

This allows room for 16 infants and 28 toddlers.

Enrollment

Discovery Kids cares for 24 children and is licensed for infants and toddlers. Since they are part of the Benson School District, they are exempt from licensing for pre-school and school-aged children.

Age Range	Number of Children
6 weeks to 16 months	16
16 months to 33 months	28

Schedule

Discovery Kids is open Monday through Friday from 5:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. and is closed on national holidays. They offer pre- and post-school care for preschool and school-aged children or all-care for younger children.

Fees

Age Range	Cost		
6 weeks to 16 months	Drop In: \$36	12-15 Months Old: \$32	6 Weeks – 11 Months: \$33
16 to 33 months	Drop In: \$34	Scheduled: \$31	
33 months to kindergarten	Non-School Day: \$29	School Day/ Half Day: \$15	Before/After School: \$6
Kindergarten to 12 years	Non-School Days: \$25	Before/After School: \$16	

Staff

Discovery Kids Child Care was fortunate since several qualified people applied as soon as work began on the center. Discovery Kids also put ads on Facebook to attract more applicants. All Discovery Kids staff are Benson School employees. They employ one director, three teachers, two assistant teachers, and two aides.



Financing

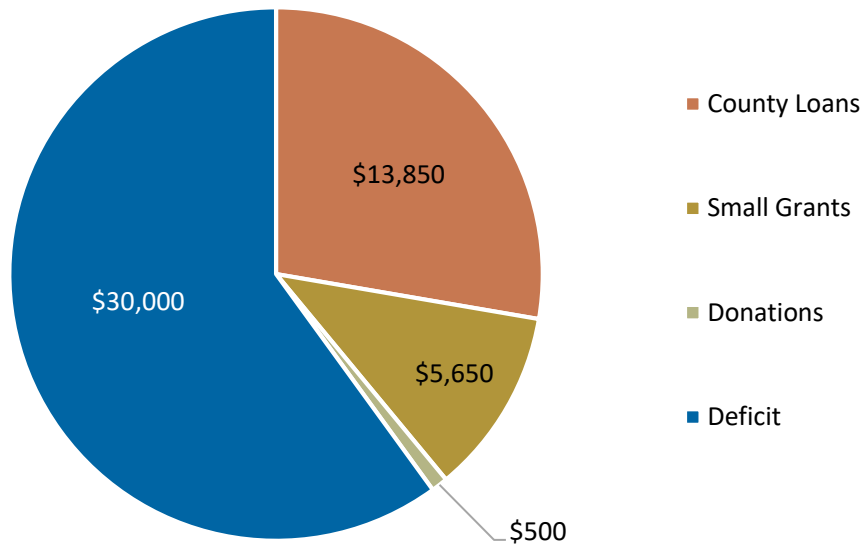
Start-Up Costs

Discovery Kids has about \$50,000 in startup costs, which do not include staff costs. This covers:

- Toys & storage
- Handwashing stations
- Tables & chairs
- Cribs & cots
- Playground & fence
- And other infrastructure

Discovery Kids received about \$20,000 in loans, donations, and grants to help cover startup costs. The deficit will be absorbed by the Benson School District.

Discovery Kids Benson Startup Costs



*Budget Info is from October 2017



Loans and Grants

Discovery Kids applied for and received a forgivable loan from Swift County, which does not need to be repaid if they operate for 5 years, to help pay for the playground and the fence. They also applied for and received a Child Care Aware grant to cover cots, tables, and multicultural toys as well as a Benson Community Foundation Grant. The Swift County Benson Hospital held a fundraiser in April of 2017 and raised enough money to buy strollers.

The Benson School District is the fiscal host of Discovery Kids and has covered the startup funds not covered by grants and donations. Benson Schools also provides the space for the daycare center and covers the day to day operation costs such as heating, lighting, etc.

Operating Budget

Annual Operating Revenue	Amount
Annual Expected Child Care Center Revenue	\$114,830
Gift & Bequests from Local Sources	\$28,116
TOTAL	\$142,947
Annual Operating Expenses	Amount
Space Rental/ Utilities	In-Kind
Staff Positions	\$188,306
Operational (food, supplies, insurance, dry goods)	\$51,028
TOTAL	\$239,334
Loss	-\$96,387

Challenges and Successes

Biggest Challenge

According to Shelly Vergin, Community Education Director, the licensing process for the center is lengthy and detailed. It often takes many amendments and changes to the application, policies and handbooks. Once all of the pieces are in place and the application is complete, the time goes much faster, especially if the inspections are completed while you are waiting for the license approval.

Vergin recommends starting the equipment purchasing early as there are many toys, equipment and items needed for each room. This is also imperative as finding many of the items needed for licensing had to be purchased online.

Greatest Success

Discovery Kids has been able to work with the community to provide much-needed childcare support. Also, their preschool program has a Parent Aware Rating so that preschool children can receive Pathway Grants. Discovery Kids is working towards a Parent Aware Rating for infants and toddlers as well.

