



Understanding Employees' Child Care Needs



Oscar Winski provides employees child care resources, free diapers

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, several Oscar Winski Company employees were forced to take paid family leave because of child care issues. However, as the pandemic waned, the company's leaders found that employees still faced challenges accessing child care. Instead of leaving those challenges up to families, Oscar Winski became a part of the solution.

At first, the company explored the potential of opening a child care facility. But it was soon determined that Oscar Winski's real need was before and after school care for school-aged children.



"We talked about having flexible shifts and flexible schedules and how we can create family-friendly policies," said Ashley McCloud, human resources director for Oscar Winski. "We have been in operation for 115 years and are on the fifth generation of family ownership. Our goal is to make those employees feel like an extension of the Oscar Winski family, while here and giving them the resources and tools they need to take care of their families outside of here."

Oscar Winski partnered with its local CCRR, The Child Care Resource Network, to create a list of resources for employees, including information about child care referrals, CCDF, On My Way Pre-K and other programs. When a family has a new child, the company also provides six months of diapers or a year of books, McCloud said.



"We learned really quickly to not assume you have all the answers as a company or know what needs you are going to fill for those employees. Ask them," McCloud said. "The more you can create an inclusive work environment for employees, the more loyal they become. When you are walking the talk, it is more impactful and meaningful and can help employee retention."

Ashley McCloud, Human Resources Director, Oscar Winski

The company also worked with its the Child Care Resource and Referral Network to survey its workforce, so they didn't assume an ineffective solution. The knowledge the agency brought to the table regarding the specific child care landscape of the area and what resources were available was essential, McCloud said. After seeing the impact of the efforts, Oscar Winski's CEO Mark Cianciolo is now heavily involved with the local early childhood coalition, which is working to create more child care access and resolve affordability issues.

"A lot of employers say they are family orientated, and Oscar Winski really has the benefits they offer to back that up," said Grant Britzke, community engagement specialist for the CCRR. "A lot of employers aren't able to do that as concretely. Yet. But, we are happy to help them get there"