



ENERGY CAPITAL  
COOPERATIVE  
CHILD CARE

# Coming together to meet a community need

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ECCCC board president

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# Overview

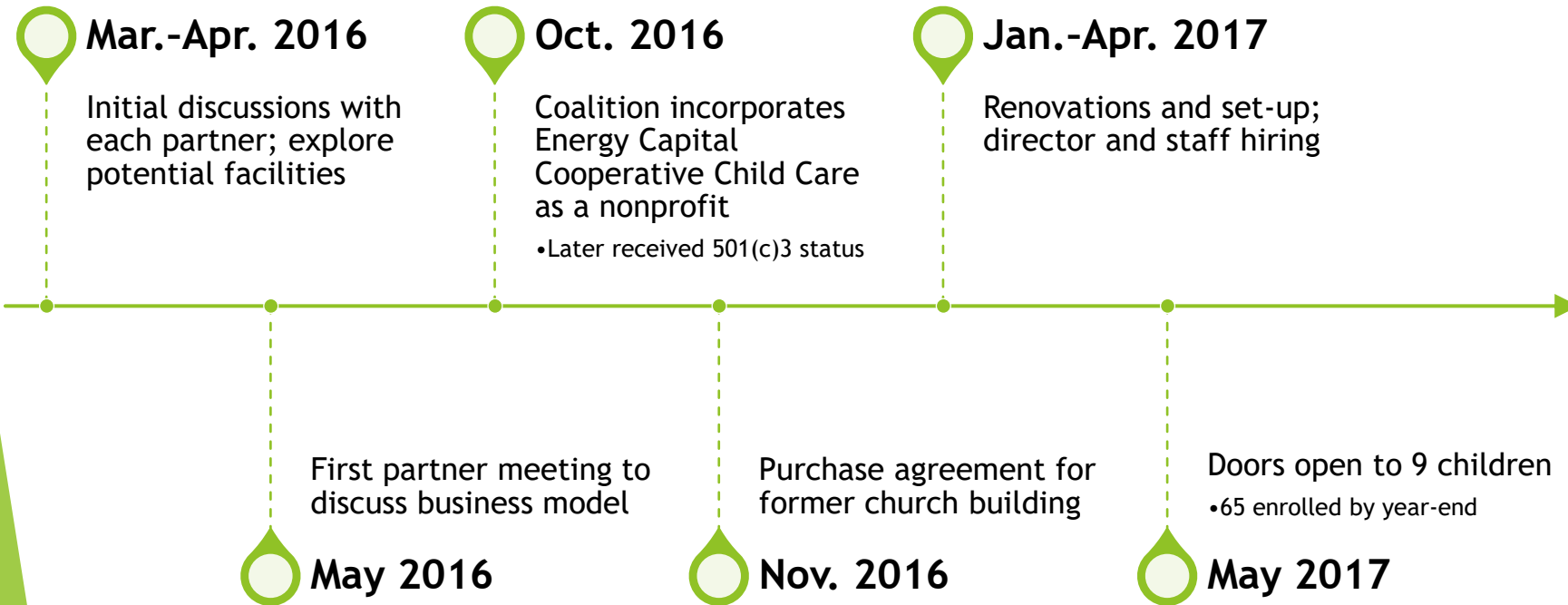
- ▶ Located in Hazen, ND
  - ▶ 2,500 residents
  - ▶ Heart of North Dakota's Coal Country, which employs thousands directly and indirectly
- ▶ Licensed for 77
- ▶ Infant to 12 years
- ▶ 7 am to 5 pm
- ▶ Employer-assisted
  - ▶ Founding partners have spots reserved in exchange for their supporting efforts
  - ▶ All other spots available for community

# Why here, why now?

- ▶ 2015-2016 economic development studies, surveys, and community health assessments proved the need
  - ▶ 216-spot deficit in Mercer County, North Dakota, the heart of the state's energy industry
- ▶ Basin Electric set out to form a coalition of other large employers facing employee recruitment/retention challenges related to child care
  - ▶ 8 large employers stepped up: energy plants, coal mines, bank, nonprofit health care, school



# Year-one whirlwind



# Facility

- ▶ Several months exploring building options in two communities
  - ▶ Clinic, office building, closed churches
- ▶ Choice: Former church in Hazen that had been in use up until purchase
  - ▶ Purchased at a significant market discount thanks to the generosity of the parish selling it
- ▶ Furnished with donated materials, used furniture
- ▶ Two levels
- ▶ Depend on significant volunteer labor for maintenance



# Today

- ▶ 60 enrolled
- ▶ 17 employees
  - ▶ Free child care for employees
  - ▶ Wages \$11-\$15/hr
- ▶ Full-time weekly rates
  - ▶ Infants (6 weeks-18 months) - \$195
  - ▶ Toddler (18 months-36 months) - \$185
  - ▶ Preschool (3 yrs-Kindergarten) - \$180
  - ▶ School Age Summer - \$170
- ▶ Partners continue representation on the board
- ▶ Rely on donations to support operations



# Keys to Success

- ▶ Expert support from start-up
  - ▶ Electric co-ops!
- ▶ Dedicated staff/volunteer to follow up and follow through with every action item from concept through operation
- ▶ True servant leaders and decision-makers at the table from the start
- ▶ Community & partner support
  - ▶ LOTS of in-kind expertise
- ▶ Communication with families



# Challenges

- ▶ Balancing fair worker wages with affordable tuition
- ▶ Recruiting and retaining employees
  - ▶ Employee shortage led to difficult decision to cut families
- ▶ Stabilizing financial operations
  - ▶ Almost break-even pre-COVID; now operating at a deficit
- ▶ Building maintenance





# Let's Talk!



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