



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**KIDS COUNTRY SERVICES EXPANDED THROUGH USDA ASSISTANCE**

**Lincoln, Neb., July 31, 2002** – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development awarded in late July \$96,200 in loan funds to Kids Country, Inc. (KCI) for the development of a new childcare center in Cook, Neb. The center will serve the 2,212 rural residents of the Nemaha Valley School District, as well as residents in Johnson and Otoe counties.

“Quality childcare is crucial to rural communities,” stated Janice Stopak, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development. “The demand for childcare services in the Nemaha Valley School District and surrounding areas is greater than daycare available. The expansion of Kids Country will help to fill this gap which is associated to the area's growing workforce.”

Kids Country is presently operating out of a leased facility, which is no longer large enough to meet the area's daycare demands. Expansion of the facility was addressed but ruled out due to the center's location. Currently licensed for 12 fulltime and 2 after school children, with a waiting list for future enrollees, Kids Country has reached its maximum capacity for childcare.

“It seems like we have always had a waiting list here at KCI and being able to serve those families and children is finally becoming a reality,” stated Jan O'Brien, director of Kids Country, Inc. “This has been a long project but will be well worth it in the end.”

USDA funds will be used to purchase the 2,109 square foot future Kids Country child care center inclusive of garage and 1 1/2 lots. Renovations and professional fees will also be paid through the borrowed USDA dollars. The remaining funding for the near \$112,000 daycare center will be provided through \$9,408 in grant funds from the State of Nebraska with KCI contributing the remaining \$6,000 for working capital. State funds will be used for installation of a fire sprinkler system, fencing, appliances, and other equipment needed to meet state licensing requirements.

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Kids Country, Inc. will expand its services through its new childcare facility. Written commitments have been obtained for 15 daycare slots for the next fiscal year along with 3-year commitments for 14 daycare slots from local businesses and private parties. Childcare will be provided to children ranging in ages from 6 weeks to 13 years, 12 hours a day, 5 days per week with no membership or affiliation requirements.

"Being able to participate in a loan program such as the one provided through USDA Rural Development has enabled Kids Country to expand. If it weren't for this type of government program I know that we would never have been able to expand our business," stated O'Brien.

For additional information contact Janice Stopak in the USDA Rural Development office at 6030 S. 58<sup>th</sup> St. Suite B Lincoln, Neb. 68516, 402-423-9683, 402-437-5093 (TDY), or email [janice.stopak@ne.usda.gov](mailto:janice.stopak@ne.usda.gov). Visit [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne)

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