



NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS
DAYCARE

**New Buffalo Area School Board
Annual Presentation**

July 28, 2025

Kate Nicolai, Director

MISSION

At the NBAS Daycare, children are gently encouraged to discover their individual strengths and unique talents. We believe that each child possesses a marvelous capacity to learn. Learning is best accomplished through play in a place that is emotionally secure, physically safe, and fun! PLAY is children's work.



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PLAY GROWING

- Rooted in a play-based, child-led approach
- Play is the essential work of early childhood

- Focused on building social-emotional skills
- Laying the foundation for a rigorous new buffalo education

- Now operating year-round to support working families
- Strengthening community connections every day



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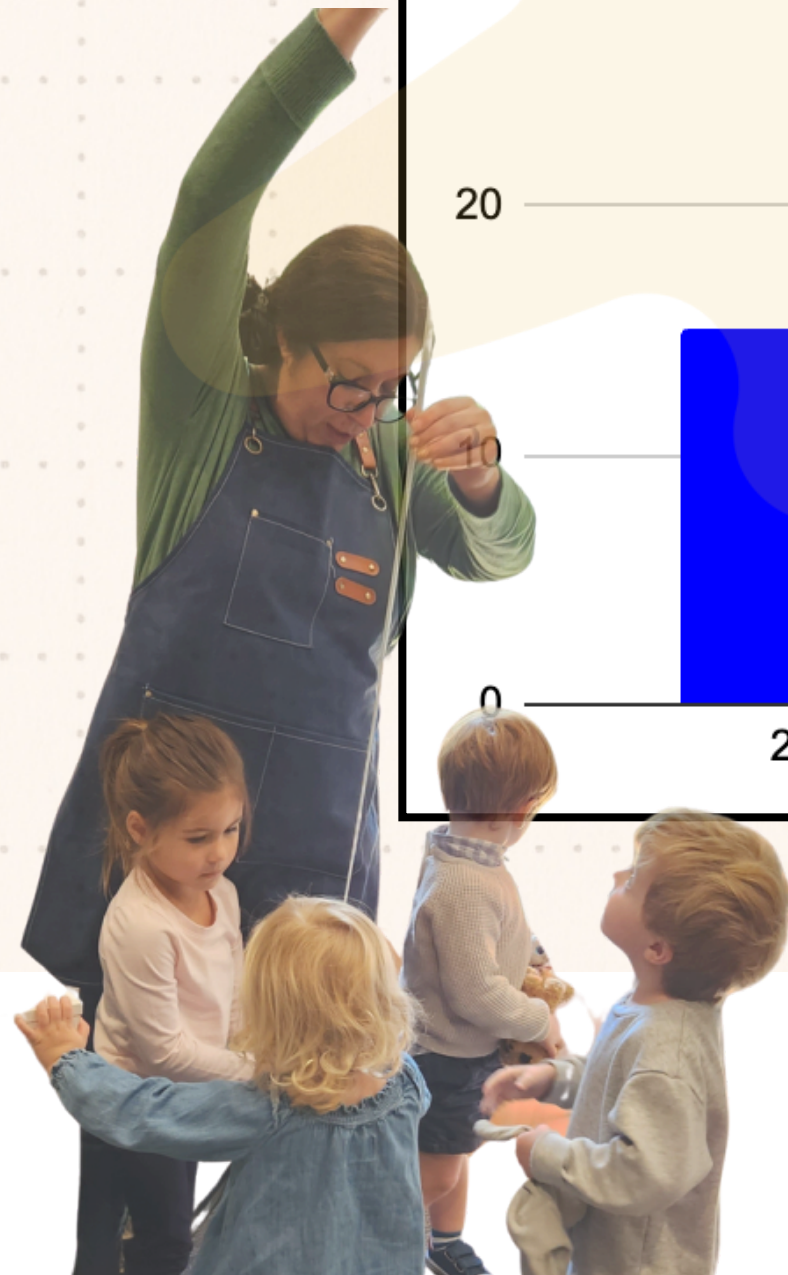
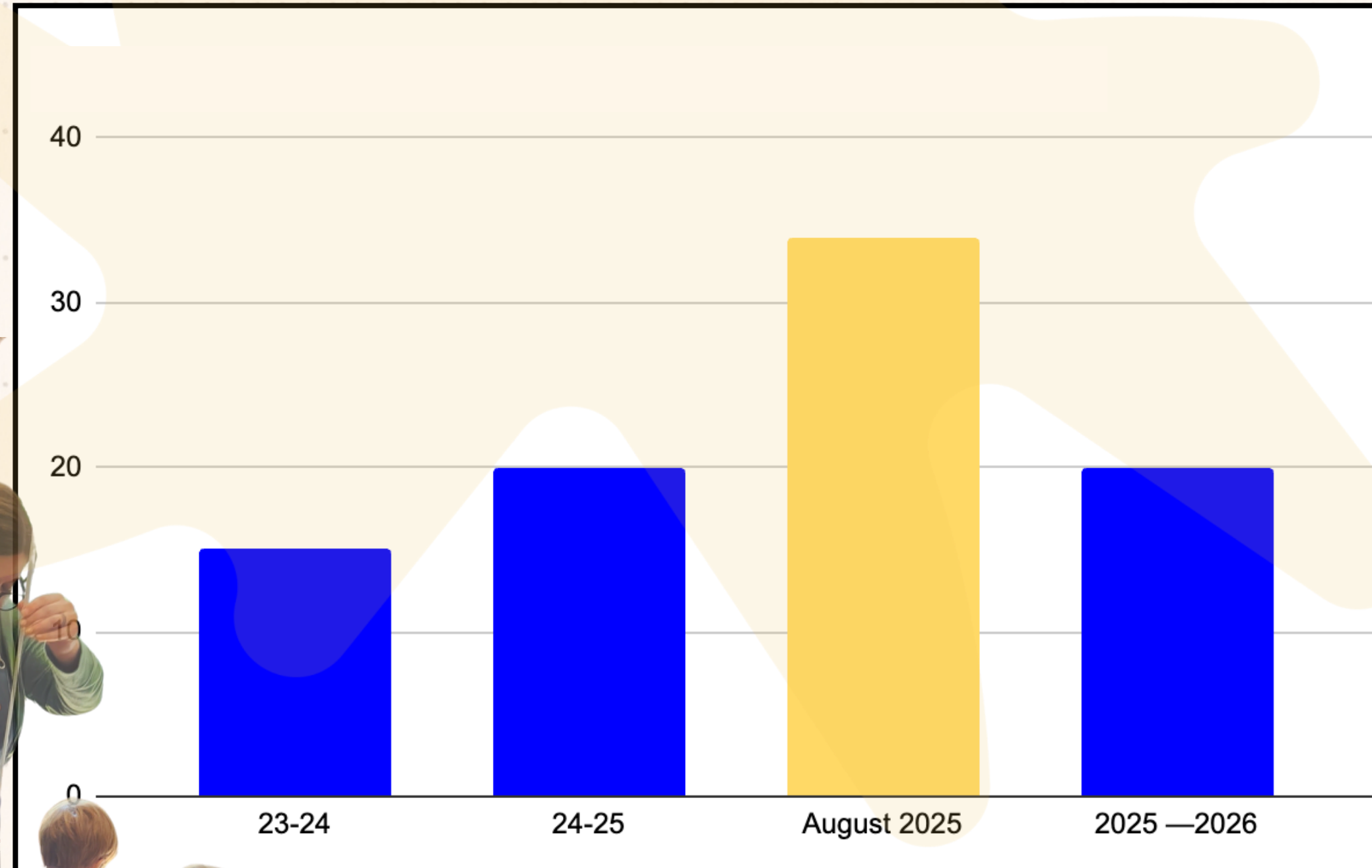


OUR GROWTH AT A GLANCE

Average Student Enrollment

based on Full Time Equivalency*

*not including August 2025



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ACCESS

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

PARTNERSHIP WITH NBAS MARKETING

Outreach campaign in full swing

NOW ACCEPTING CDC SCHOLARSHIPS

Helps Michigan families offset the child care costs



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OUR PLAYMAKERS

👶👩 Team ages range from 16 to 60+

🧠💡 A blend of experience, curiosity, and creativity

🎨✖ Focused on child-led, play-based learning

🏠🌈 Creating a safe, joyful, and inspiring environment

OUR STAFF INCLUDES

1 x Master's in Early Childhood Education

1 x Special Education Endorsement

2 x Associates in Child Development

2 x committed to earning their CDA



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GROWING PLAYMAKERS

 **Alex Beckman:**
First “homegrown” CDA candidate

 **Kate Nicolai:**
Certified MiRegistry Trainer

 **Renina Ledcova:**
First NBHS student staff member on a CDA path



NEW BUFFALO AND BEYOND

US Honored to represent MiAECYC at NAEYC Public Policy Day in Washington, D.C.

📊 Gained deeper insight into the national struggle for affordable child care and equitable educator pay

🙌 Inspired by the opportunity to advocate for early childhood educators and families

💪 Proud to represent a district actively addressing these challenges

❤️ Committed to building a center where families want to be and professionals want to work



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BEHIND THE PLAY



BEHIND THE PLAY: SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT POSSIBLE

-  **Ongoing professional development for all staff**
-  **Investment in “grow our own” career pathways**
-  **Planned tiered pay scale based on education & experience**
-  **Respecting ECE as a specialized profession**
-  **Building the foundation for sustainable expansion**



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FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

The Heart of Our Program

❤️ **Seasonal gatherings: Fall Family Night & Picnic in the Park**

🎵 **Highlights like the “I Am a Nut!” performance**

🤝 **Strong family partnerships at drop-off & pick-up**

📢 **Growing interest in community-led events & fundraising**

🚌 **Weekly park trips & continued local field trip success**



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LOOKING AHEAD

 **Growing requests for care from 6 weeks to 30 months**

 **1:4 infant-to-adult licensing ratio**

 **Doubling in staffing, space, and regulatory requirements**

 **Need for qualified ECE professionals, not just caregivers**

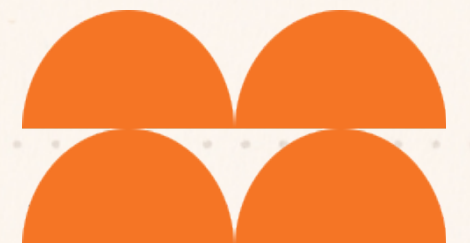
 **Exploring a 5-year goal:**

  **A dedicated NBAS Early Childhood Education Center**

 **Serving children ages 6 weeks - 4 years**



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TOGETHER WE GROW

 **Thank you to our families, staff, admin, school board members and community partners**

 **We're committed to growing with intention and purpose**

 **Continued investment = better outcomes for kids & families**

 **Let's keep building something beautiful together**



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ANY QUESTIONS?



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THANK YOU

