

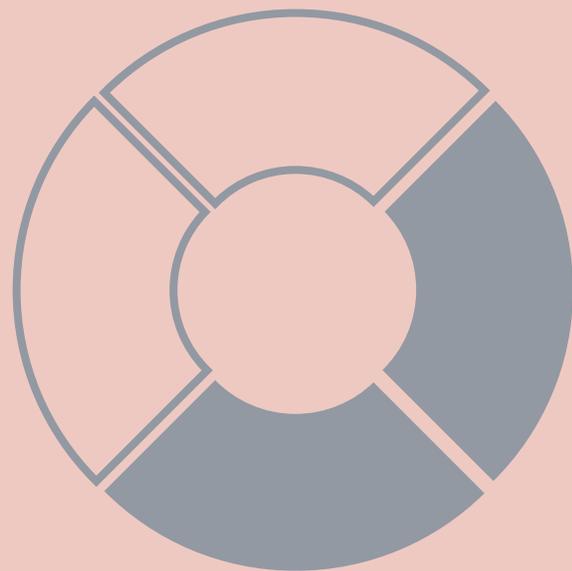
AN EVALUATION OF CHILD CARE DESERTS ACROSS FIVE WESTERN NEW YORK COUNTIES



AUTHORED BY:

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Child Care Deserts

Recently, New York State was identified as having the second highest amount of child care shortages nationwide, where 64% of the state demonstrated a severe lack of regulated child care options. This shortage is often referred to as ‘child care deserts,’ which is defined as having more than 50 children under age 5 in a census tract that contains either no child care providers or so few options there are more than three times as many children as there are licensed child care slots. Deserts exist across urban, suburban, and rural communities – significantly impacting the majority of working families throughout Western New York.

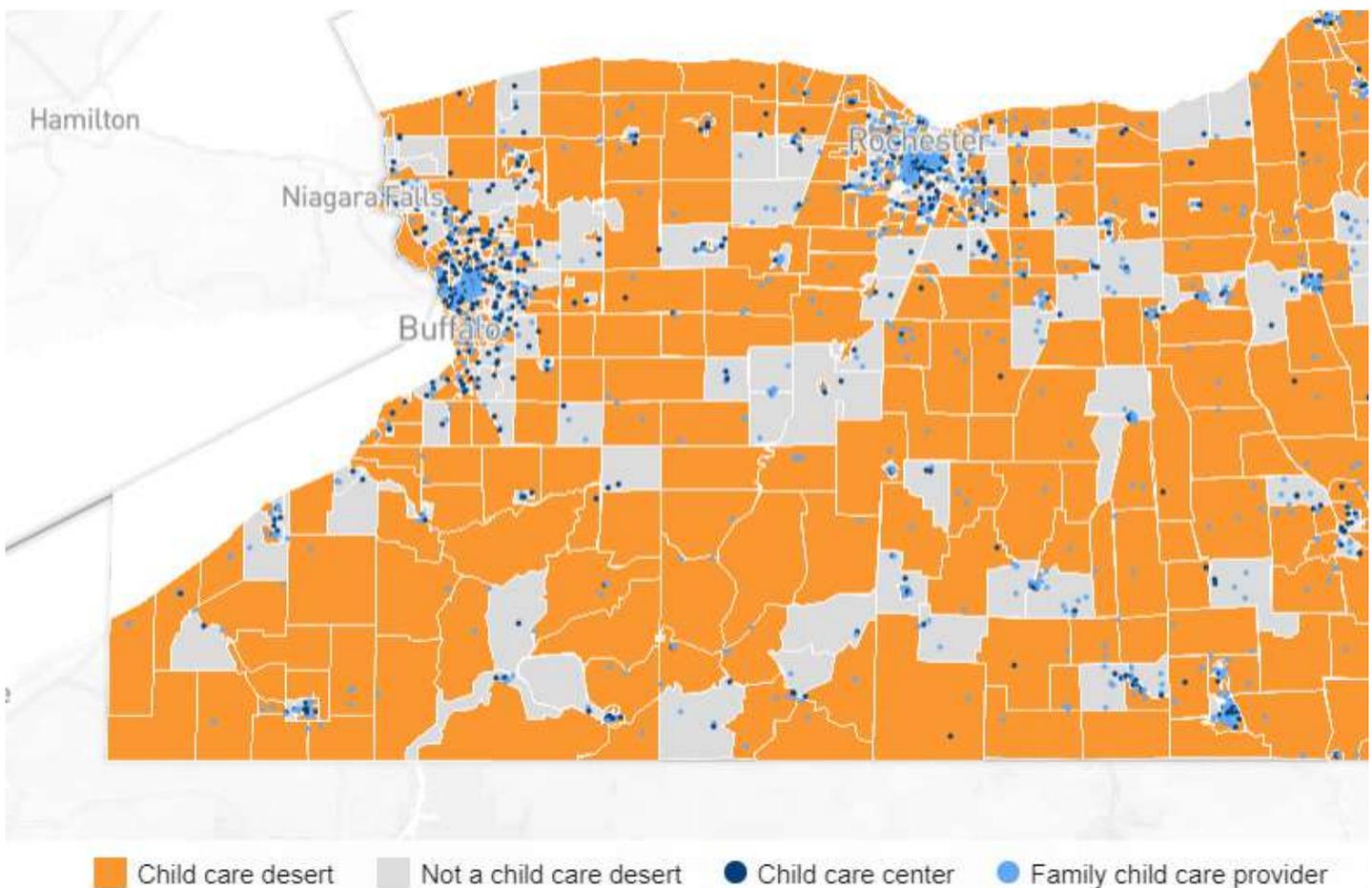


Image Source: Center for American Progress. (2018). *America's Child Care Deserts in 2018*. Retrieved From: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-care-deserts-2018/>

Child Care Needs of Western New York

Nearly three-quarters of Western New York families with children under age 6 have all parents in the workforce, and the region is reported to have an average of only one available child care slot for every five children under age 12. This demonstrates the regularity with which child care is a barrier for working families. One factor contributing to this Western New York crisis is the lack of sustainable programming. In Erie County alone there was a net loss of over 50 child care programs between 2012 and 2017. After closely observing this regional trend, Child Care Resource Network (CCRN) posits that not only does Western New York need an increase in available child care slots, it also needs new programs that are well-equipped to become reliable, long-term child care solutions for working families. Additionally, to avoid a net loss of programs more supports need to be put in place to make sure that existing programs continue to grow and serve the Western New York community.

In the last year, nearly 1000 Buffalo working families have solicited CCRN for assistance with securing child care, and approximately one-quarter of all clients participated in followup surveys. As a result of our services, 61% found care, and 95% of those clients placed their children in licensed/registered child care programs. Those who offered details surrounding their difficulty with finding care most frequently cited two reasons: high cost of care and the lack of available child care slots. Although for over 30 years CCRN has regularly trained providers, helped new programs open, and shut down illegal programs, additional data is necessary in order to learn how best to: cultivate sustainable programs that parents can rely on, continue professionalizing the early childhood field to ensure high-quality care is routinely provided, and facilitate information to all working families about child care options that best fit their employment needs.

“We desperately need more options. I am on 8 wait-lists”

-WNY Parent

Project Overview

Child Care Resource Network (CCRN) partnered with three other child care resource and referral agencies to conduct a brief regional study of current child care conditions. The partner agencies include: Allegany County Community Opportunities and Rural Development (ACCORD), Inc., Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, and Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. This collaborative effort primarily targeted the Western New York counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara. Each agency was provided with the following materials in early October 2019: links for online surveys, focus group directions and scripts, advertising materials, gift card incentives for focus group participants, and one \$2000 stipend for services rendered. Focus groups and surveys were designed specifically for two different types of participants – parents and child care providers – so each resource collected two different data sets. Audio recordings of focus groups were submitted to CCRN by mid-November 2019, which were transcribed word-for-word. Online surveys were closed on November 22nd, 2019 at 5pm. CCRN finished reviewing all study findings by early December 2019.

Project Aims

Overall, the main goal of this study was to assess the needs and barriers related to current child care conditions in Western New York.

To perform this assessment, Child Care Resource Network worked with three resource and referral agencies to:

- Collect quantitative data and demographic information from child care providers and parents across Western New York
- Collect qualitative data on: providers' experiences with facilitating care; parents' experiences with finding child care; and the relationship dynamics between parents and providers
- Research approaches to the needs and barriers suggested by this study
- Assess potential solutions to employ in the Western New York region

Survey Demographics

Parents

There were 156 respondents to the parent survey from across six different counties and 66 different zip codes. Roughly half of parents surveyed were from Erie County, Allegany and Chautauqua accounted for 40% of respondent. Less than 10% were from Cattaraugus, Niagara and Steuben Counties.

Respondents self reported gender, race, employment status and household income. An overwhelming majority of respondents reported as female, only 4% reported as male and 1% reported as other. Over half of the parent respondents identified as White, 18% as Black, African, and/or African American, 7% as Hispanic and/or Latino and 2% identified as Other. 85% of respondents indicated they were employed either full or part time, 11% were unemployed, and less than 1% indicated they were students. A diverse range of household incomes were

reported with no income bracket making up an overwhelming majority. 35% of respondents self reported income below the federal poverty line for a family of four, which is in line with the 35% that indicated they were receiving some sort of assistance from social services. 65% of parents self reported that they made above the federal poverty level for a family of four and were not receiving assistance from social services.

Providers

There were 262 child care provider respondents to the survey from across six different counties and 66 different zip codes. Over half of the child care providers who responded were from Chautauqua and Allegany Counties, 40% were from Erie County and less than 10% were from Cattaraugus, Niagara and Steuben Counties.

Similarly to the parent survey 95% of respondents to the child care provider survey self reported as female, 4% self reported as male with 1% preferring not to answer. 83% of child care providers responding self reported as White, 10% reported as Black, African, and/or African American, 8% reported as Hispanic and/or Latino and 2% reported as Other.

The results of this survey indicate an aging child care provider population with almost half (46%) reporting that they are 50 years old or older. Income levels of child care providers are similar to the parents they serve 35% reported a household income of less than the federal poverty line for a family of four.



The Struggle to **Find Child Care**



Over one-third (35%) of respondents began searching for child care either before their child was born or when their child was a newborn (0-6 weeks). However, nearly 30% waited until their child was 1-2-years-old before finding care. This potentially reflects the issue many parents have with being forced to leave the workforce for a year or more due to current child care desert conditions.

Depending on what type of child care parents are looking for can change the length of time it takes to find care. Nearly

one-quarter (22%) of parents surveyed have been unable to find care. According to survey results, some parents (27%) were able to find care for their child in two weeks or less, but the same number of parents (27%) spent one to two months searching for appropriate care for their child, while another 18% of parents spent two to four weeks searching for care.

Over two-thirds of providers indicated that they do not have any open slots for infants. Nearly 40% of providers have no open slots for toddlers, and over half of providers do

not have any open school-age slots. If they do have open slots, most providers indicated they had no more than 1 or 2 open slots for any given age group. Many parents indicated a need for evening or weekend care hours, but less than 30% of providers indicated they offered evening or weekend care hours.

Over 40% of parents found care by word of mouth, 19% searched on their own using the internet or other resources, 17% used a child care resource and referral agency, and 10% found care through their employers.



Definitions of High-Quality Care

Both parents and providers most often times identified the following three factors as features of high-quality care: qualified providers; organized, safe, and clean environments; and educational & developmentally-appropriate programming. Over half of providers indicated that provider credentials & developmentally appropriate curriculum were essential to providing high-quality care. According to parents the four things they considered the most when choosing child care were child happiness (78%), cost (60%), proximity to home or work (44%), and provider credentials (39%).

A young child with dark skin and curly hair is sitting on a colorful play mat. The child is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and is holding a book in their right hand and a white, textured toy in their left hand. The child is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a play area with various toys and a patterned rug.

Barriers to Providing High-Quality Child Care

Even though parents and child care providers have similar understandings as to what constitutes high-quality care there are providers who are unable to provide high-quality care for a variety of reasons. Over half (52%) of providers indicated that retaining qualified staff had a significant negative impact on their program. There are several reasons providers indicated they are having trouble retaining competent staff. The number one reason was low wages and an inability to competitively compensate for backgrounds in higher education, followed closely by burnout.

Demographic data indicated that the child care workforce is an aging population.

This could be due to the fact that younger people are choosing to leave the early childhood field to take more lucrative positions in K-12 schools. Providers also indicated that rising overhead costs, as well as a reduction of resources create significant barriers to providing high quality care.

A smaller number of providers (20%) indicated that regulations provide a significant barrier to providing high-quality care. Other difficulties providers noted were communication with parents, not being taken seriously as a trained professional, competition with free or reduced programs, and the poor quality of required online trainings.

Provider Focus Group Results

Every CCR&R participating in this study held two focus groups. One for parents, and one for providers. The provider focus group questions centered around, what high-quality care looks like, as well as what barriers they experience in providing high-quality care.

What does high-quality care look like?

"I feel like a quality program or quality teachers are, it's the intuitive ones. It's the ones who know when I have to get down on the floor and deal with that child. It's the ones who know, I'm going to leave that kid alone because he's going to work himself out."

"Quality childcare is treating each child as they were your own. When it comes to interaction, play, manners, emotions, because sometimes they're not getting that got home and sometimes they're with you, way more than there with their own parent or parents and at the same time we have to balance what they need to know going into kindergarten so they feel ready and happy and hopefully instill that lifelong learning and not the frustration that often comes with children who aren't ready in kindergarten."

"having that knowledge and understanding of children and development where they're at, but being able to hook up with whatever other resources are available."

"I think quality childcare starts with being accessible to the parent. I mean, realistically, that's what it is. We can't provide a service if the parents don't know we're here."

"I think that what we do, as high-quality, it's all about the people and the relationships they have, the skills they have, the abilities they have to take a child and family and work with them and developing that young child into a young person."

What are the barriers to providing high-quality care?

"Child care is at a crossroads in this community. The ability to provide affordable child care while facing a NYS minimum wage that has increased by 70 cents each year for the last 5 or more years, is nearly an impossible task. I think many small non-profit and private child care centers will decide to close because they are tired of fighting this on-going balancing act."

"Year after year I see the struggle to find, and then hold on to qualified staff with a great work ethic becoming more and more of a challenge. As a result, children are supervised by staff who may not possess the skills needed for the classroom, and then negative behaviors and lack of safety become a problem. Childcare centers cannot afford to charge the parents the full cost needed to operate a high quality child care center and as such, the children and the program suffers from lack of financial support."

"Look at the reality of what we do every single day is, you know, and like for staff turnover we can't even get them in the door we can't even turn over because they're not even coming in. We are trying to hire a floating person probably 20 hour a week position, we put it out on everywhere that you're supposed to put it out. We got two applicants."

"There is not enough licensed care in my area. I get tons of calls for infant spots"

"We need MORE child care in WNY. And we need a regulatory climate and wages that make this possible"

Provider Focus Group Results

Every CCR&R participating in this study held two focus groups. One for parents, and one for providers. The parent focus group questions were centered around challenges parents had in accessing child care, and what they looked for when accessing care.

What challenges did you have accessing child care?

“For my past four years, I’ve had to turn down job opportunities because we were running into dead ends. Calling--No, we’re full; No, no, I can’t. Alright, well, I’ll stay and be a full-time mom. Things are going to get tighter and it’s gonna be tricky, because we didn’t have that other opportunity.”

“We actually don’t use any child care right now. My husband found an overnight job, kills himself, working 8pm to 5am. But we used to do a daycare. It was actually in town in Niagara, but they were a little home daycare. We absolutely loved them. They were the best price in the area. And when I had my son, they were full. And they had promised a whole spot--so we had lost both their spots. And then we struggled with finding a daycare we liked and could afford.”

“Our youngest is three. For the longest time, I couldn’t work a full time job because we couldn’t afford daycare. So now to save on daycare costs, my husband works second shift, and I work first shift, and between that like three hour period where he leaves and I’m not home yet, my son goes to my mom’s, but he goes to Pre-K two days a week and we have two full time incomes coming in, and it’s still rough paying for two days of Pre-K.”

Just finding a registered daycare that has any openings. It’s just so hard. Everybody’s full, they’re full for years ahead of time. They’ve already got people on the waitlist for kids that haven’t even been born yet, parents that are pregnant.”

What did you look for in child care?

“Flexible hours. I have a three and a one year old. I’m a single mom. So I work two jobs. So during the daytime I have one daycare they go to, and then when I do my overnights they go to another overnight daycare.”

“In my area there is a lack of daycares. There is only 2 I think that actually do daycare in the evening or overnight. Most daycares hours don’t go past 5:30-6 and don’t open till 7am. However most jobs want you in earlier or stay later.”

“I also found actually going in and touring was important. I went and toured one day care that my friends raved or raved about. And I just did not like, the head lady there. There was just something I didn’t like about her. And I was like, I can’t send my kid here. I feel like you have to listen to the instinct when you’re a mom.”

“I don’t think it’s necessarily about how fancy their like their facility is or their houses. I think it’s more about it’s more quality than quantity and just treating make sure each kid knows that they’re cared for and that they’re safe where they are.”

“And so it’s just like quality of daycare, is the person up on their first aid, their CPR...Things can happen so fast. You know, what kind of food are they feeding the kids, or are the kids coming home, you know, saying, Oh, I had chocolate, I had ice cream, I had this and that. So it’s like, Are you eating anything nutritious? So with daycare there’s all of those factors, really.”

Key Findings &

Potential Solutions

Overall, 41% of parents reported having had problems with child care arrangements. Nearly one-third of all parents surveyed were single-parents and 90% of all parents reported working either full- or part-time. As almost one-quarter of respondents have still not been able to find regular child care options. These ratios demonstrate the severe impact Western New York child care deserts have on working families. This severity is heightened when considering the shortages of infant and toddler care, as close to a quarter of providers indicated having no infant/toddler capacity. Specifically, over two-thirds of providers do not have any open slots for infants and less than 40% have 1-2 open toddler slots. As children's brains produce more than a million neural connections every second in the first 3 years of life, high-quality infant and toddler care is critical to the health and well-being of all Western New York children.

One of the most interesting results of this study involved learning how parents and providers discern high-quality child care programs from informal arrangements with untrained providers. Although it was hypothesized the two understandings would differ (and potentially contrast largely), the study revealed both parents and providers hold high-quality child care as primarily involving: qualified providers; organized, safe, and clean environments; and educational & developmentally-appropriate programming. This suggests that current efforts to regulate quality child care have

been effective. As a result, potential solutions to child care desert issues may not need to involve elaborately defining features of high-quality.

Instead, the biggest barrier for providers appears to be the general need for supports related to professionalizing the field of child care. With more resources available to open and maintain high-quality child care businesses throughout Western New York, issues related to capacity and open slots for infants and toddlers could be resolved. The specific factors most commonly cited by providers were: rising overhead costs or issues with funding/resources; staff salaries or low wages; and retaining qualified staff, which included problems related to the increase in minimum wage, caregiver burnout, and high turnover rates. More specifically, over half of providers who described staffing issues explicitly linked the barrier to low wages, as many qualified early childhood professionals can seek out higher-paying opportunities and leave the child care field altogether.

One movement towards professionalizing the field of early childhood is NAEYC's "Power to the Profession" program, whose vision is "each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce." Power to the Profession is a national collaboration whose ultimate goal is to define the early childhood profession by establishing a unifying framework for

career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards and compensation.

Another promising practice that has seen marked increase in child care availability is All Our Kin's (AOK) peer network program, which is generally referred to as a staffed family child care network (SFCCN). AOK is resource and referral agency based in New Haven Connecticut. Between 2004 and 2007, the number of child care slots increased by 27% with the use of their research-based 'toolkit,' which includes a SFCCN component. However, other Connecticut cities during this time saw the number of child care slots decrease by over 30%. Though the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership identifies SFCCNs as promising approaches to increasing both quality of care and professional development, the institute also stresses that any type of solution to child care programming issues must involve a combination of supports. One single resource, like a startup grant or one training, is not effective in bringing sustainable change to the field.

Child Care Resource Network additionally proposes a workforce development project be implemented with support from Western New York Regional Economic Development Council's Workforce Development Initiative (REDC WDI). This would involve facilitating a training program for sustainable child care businesses, developing a staffed family child care network across the region, and expanding CCRN's helpline services. Through the training program, participants will learn the child care business field from start-to-finish – culminating in licensure and an established mentor relationship with an experienced local provider. After opening

new child care programs, providers can join the SFCCN for regular support and assistance from peers to address issues of caregiver burnout and ongoing education and training. The SFCCN would also provide an opportunity for routine collaboration amongst all WNY child care resource and referral agencies, where each community can learn more about the needs and barriers of others in the field and collectively develop ongoing solutions.

Currently, CCRN has a proposal submitted to the REDC WDI to fund 83% of the provider training program. If accepted, CCRN will be able to enroll 40 potential new child care providers and train them over 12 months. If at least 50% of participants complete the program, nearly 20 programs will open throughout WNY for local working parents, offering over 160 new child care slots. This creative solution will increase the total programs available in Buffalo by 9% and those in Erie County by 4%.

There is no one solution that will fix our ever growing child care crisis. It is our suggestion that by crafting a multifaceted system of resources for child care providers that address key barriers identified by providers in this study: rising overhead costs or issues with funding/resources; aging child care field, staff salaries or low wages; and retaining qualified staff, will only serve to strengthen the supply and choice of child care available to our community. It is critical now more than ever to increase investments to our early childhood systems. The benefits of sustainable high-quality child care programming for Western New York children and parents will far outweigh any investment.

Acknowledgments

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The regional data could not have been collected without the hard work and dedication of Child Care Resource Network's collaborative partner agencies: Allegany County Community Opportunities and Rural Development (ACCORD), Inc., which primarily serves Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties; Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara; and Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.

Child Care Resource Network also acknowledges the time and thoughtful feedback of all participating Western New York parents and providers, for without which no study could have been conducted.



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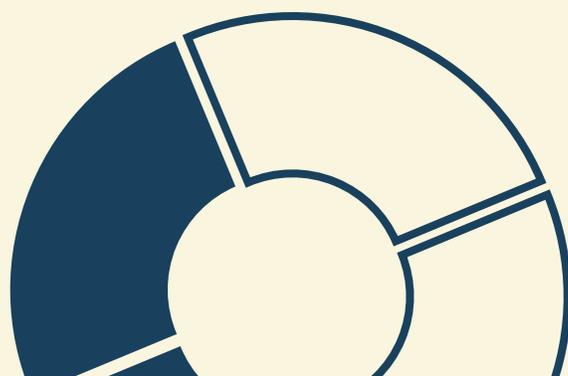
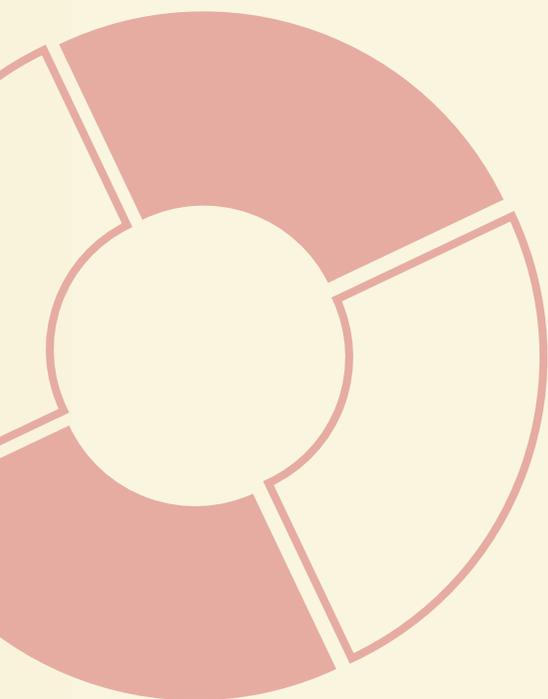
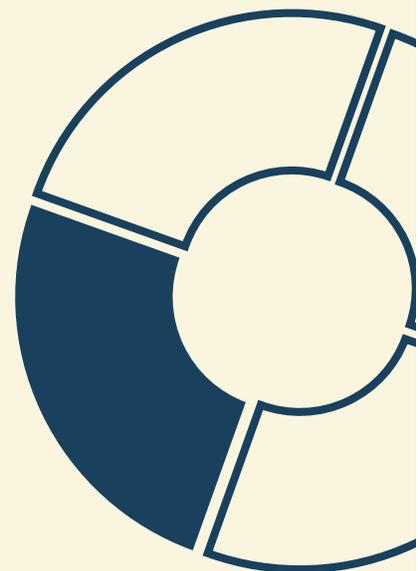
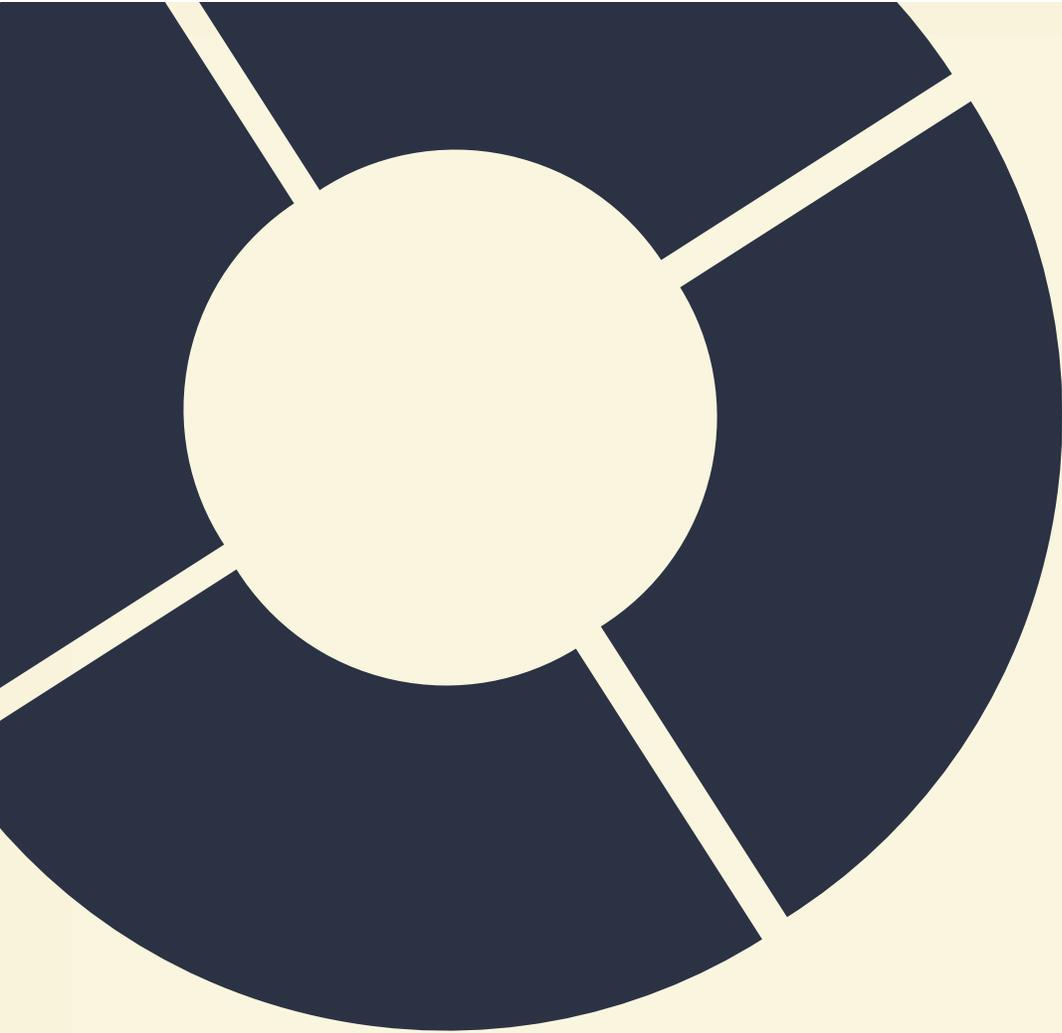
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NYSB5 Final Report for the Southern Tier Region

Prepared by: Child Development Council of Central New York, Inc. (DBA: Child Development Council)

In collaboration with:
Family Enrichment Network
Delaware Opportunities
Chemung County Child Care Council
Child Care Aware of Steuben and Schuyler Counties (Proaction, Inc.)

Date: December 10, 2019

Attachments: A Snapshot of the Southern Tier
What Drives the Child Care Economy
Strategic Plan for Child Care
Voucher for Reimbursement

The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council includes 8 counties, served by 5 different Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agencies. There are common themes across all eight counties with regards to the early care and education challenges and opportunities within the region. In July, members of the areas CCRR programs convened to begin a regional assessment of the child care strengths and challenges, developed baseline data for the REDC and met with two Committees (Executive and Workforce) to report on our plan to develop recommendations for the REDC.

Collaboration with the STREDC

Collaborative Goals:

- STREDC will report business development strategies and progress of economic development within the region.
- STREDC will identify child care data needed by county; GIS mapping may be provided demonstrating the availability of child care near major employers and along travel corridors.
- CCRRs will provide relevant data, including information on vacancy rates, changes in supply and significant child care deserts that coincide with business sites, progress on the development of infant care and care in rural areas.
- CCRRs will engage with employers within their counties to define the child care needs of their employees, examine models to support the development of child care, and assess opportunities for leveraging support for child care.
- CCRRs will assist the STREDC in exploring new and creative funding streams to support child care infrastructure.
- CCRRs and STREDC will identify innovative child care business development and workforce development techniques specific to the region.

Challenges and Strengths in the Southern Tier:

Minimal Supply/High Demand – All 8 counties have child care deserts in at least one of their census tracts (Defined as “more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than 3x’s as many children as licensed child care slots, Center for American Progress). The lack of supply of care is evident for all types of care, and all ages. Infant care is the hardest to find, however, and costs the most to deliver.

Within the Southern Tier, there are approximately 5,885 babies born each year; however, we only have 1,570 licensed/registered child care spaces (26.7%). It should be noted that the definition of infant in home-based care is age 6 weeks to two years of age, so it includes toddlers in the definition; only 43% of all potential spaces for infants are *dedicated* to infants only (child care centers slots).

Each of the five CCRR agencies report low vacancy rates. Vacancies are often part time slots, age specific (e.g. preschool slots where Universal PreK exists), and in the least accessible rural areas of the counties. In a recent survey of the area’s vacancies, it was noted that child care programs may reduce their overall slot capacity as a “best practice” resulting in higher quality care (desired capacity versus licensed capacity), but also phantom vacancies. *The role of Child Care Resource and Referral continues to serve as the foundation of child care in each county. Local solutions are built upon the strengths of our local relationships. Opportunities exist to build upon these successes into regional models in an efficient and effective way, while preserving local resources.*

Sustainability - Child care is experiencing high closure rates, especially in home based care where there are longer hours, isolation from peers (higher burnout), and a need for business skills along with early childhood experience. Yet, home-based care meets a specific need for extended day and evening care. They are more widely distributed throughout the county, whereas centers tend to be closer to the cities. And, home-based care offers smaller group sizes and accommodates siblings in group together. Opportunities have been identified within the region to increase the retention of child care homes, through increased coaching and support.

Existing Child Care Centers face aging infrastructures with minimal resources to upgrade for quality, safety and environmental improvements. A sizeable investment is needed to build new or expand child care centers that meet quality, safety and regulatory requirements. However, child care centers are more sustainable, likely as a result of having a more developed administrative structure. If adequate financing is identified, opportunities exist to expand existing child care centers as a significant way to increase the supply of child care.

Need to increase the child care recruitment, education and retention pipeline. Recruitment of providers/teachers is slow. Once interest has been piqued, a substantial investment in time and resources are needed to open a child care center or family or group family program, it is challenging to recruit new people into this highly regulated low-wage field, with few incentives.

Strengths exist in this area: several of the CCRR agencies have developed innovative approaches to recruit and retain child care teachers and programs. We must move from a pilot phase to creating systemic improvements to better meet our community needs.

Worker shortages - Area employers face a worker shortage; the lack of child care is a barrier for recruitment and retention of workers. Without an adequate supply of child care, we miss the opportunity to recruit new and expanding businesses to the Southern Tier. Our employment sectors are diverse, ranging from education to health care to industry, each presenting with different needs. As a region, it is important for the early care and learning system of child care to keep pace with changing and growing employer needs. Like area businesses, the child care sector also faces worker shortages. When a child care program is unable to meet the minimum staffing requirements, they decrease the number of children served. *The private industrial and educational sectors realize the impact of this worker shortage and offer new ways to address incentives and support for the recruitment of child care employees and teachers.*

Barriers to growth - Barriers to recruitment of more child care has economic, policy and structural challenges: child care centers have better economies of scale, but require hefty investments in the physical space; housing stock is inadequate to meet the physical specifications of child care, precipitating expensive home modifications; landlords do not always welcome home-based businesses. Planning for a multi-pronged approach, inclusive of all the needs in the 8-county region will result in a more robust economy in the Southern Tier. *The collaboration has identified that marketing and communication about the uniqueness of the child care economy would have greater success at a regional level.*

Most parents cannot pay the cost of care- Parents earning the median household income pay as much as 24% or more of their income on child care for one child. It is essential for the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council to understand how child care is financed and what contributes to the cost of care. The national standard is that no parent should pay more than 10% of their income for child care. Families with infants or more than one child under the age of six are quickly priced out of regulated child care.

What happens if they can't find and pay for care? A statewide survey of parents conducted by the Early Care and Learning Council in collaboration with CCRR agencies, showed that the annual cost of child care places a significant strain on family budgets and impacts their employment readiness: 23% cut back work hours or stopped working; 67% borrowed from friend/family/creditor and 56% compromised quality of care and their children's basic needs.

Child Care Resource and Referral in the Southern Tier - CCRR programs support families by helping them navigate complicated child care systems and by conducting initiatives that increase the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care. There are 5 CCR&Rs, serving the 8 counties that comprise the Southern Tier Economic Development Council. CCR&Rs create the conditions of success by providing the necessary infrastructure for child care programs in our local communities. Southern Tier CCRRs have achieved many significant accomplishments in the past five years, including: (1) NACCRA Quality Assurance and State Standards of Excellence, (2) a child care career pipeline, (3) an early childhood business alliance, (4) relationships with local Chambers, and (5) participation on child care work groups, locally, regionally, and statewide. Positioned firmly as a sector leader, CCRRs are ready to set a course for the next five years that builds on our organizations' strengths and focuses its resources on its most important, mission-focused work.

Southern Tier REDC Vision: The STREDC vision builds on a strong foundation of existing businesses and higher education institutions and uses a collaborative approach to leverage its globally competitive advantages to attract talent and investment for the development of industry clusters. The focus is on increasing the size and prosperity of the region’s workforce through new business creation based on high technology discoveries and other entrepreneurship activities, while ensuring healthy communities and protecting the natural beauty and resources of the region.

Child Care Strategy Recommendations for the Southern Tier REDC

GOAL #1 SUPPLY

The Southern Tier has a sufficient supply of regulated providers to meet the needs of its current and future workforce.

- Prioritize STREDC applications that will contribute to growth in the region’s child care supply including the expansion of regulated in-home care
- Create a pool of funds for child care center expansion and new center development
- Help to identify local matching funds for child care applications

GOAL #2 ACCESSIBILITY

- Utilize the GIS map of child care to identify high need/priority areas for support (proximity to care for workers)
- Monitor areas of new business development and communicate with CCRR Collaborative to assess child care needs

GOAL #3 AFFORDABILITY

- Prioritize child care applications that are financed without increasing parental fees
- Promote the tax credit for corporate contributions to child care and CCRRs
- Share innovative business practices that reduce the cost of operating a child care program or supplement parent fees (e.g. discounted purchasing, employer-specific emergency scholarship funds, etc.- see below)

GOAL #4 QUALITY

- Support the creation of innovative child care workforce preparation solutions, such as apprenticeships and shared substitute pools.

GOAL #5 CONTEXT FOR EXCELLENCE

- Encourage and support ongoing collaborative efforts with regionally minded- locally driven Child Care Resource and Referral services.
- Support the growth of innovative technologies that enhance business and other operations
- Support a regional marketing campaign
- Engage with the private sector in supporting public policy objectives that improve child care operational conditions, reduce the loss of existing child care and support the growth of child care.

Innovations that build upon current local efforts, proposed at a regional scale:

1. Provider training and support/ talent retention and professional development – apprenticeships, mentorships and coaching
2. New business creation – creating group family child care networks, which provide business services training, shared resources and support (purchasing of back office services, use of new technologies for enrollment management and billing fees and food program management)
3. Regional marketing and outreach – gains the benefits of consistency and multiple sources of media coverage.
4. Facilities upgrades (regulatory) – Housing stock within the southern tier is not of sufficient quality to meet the child care requirements. Creating a dedicated program would provide incentives for the growth of regulated home-based care in high need areas; engage housing developers to include affordable housing/child care business sites
5. Universal Access – supplemental fees to help parents pay for quality child care so no family pays more than 7% of their income on child care, scaled based on income and eliminating the cliff effect that is created with the child care subsidies.

CFA Review Checklist

Southern Tier Regional Priorities for Child Care	YES	NO	Notes
<p>1. Expands infant care seats</p> <p><i>One new family daycare home can support 2 to 4 infants, one new classroom in center-based care supports 6-8 infants</i></p>			
<p>2. Creates more child care in a high need area</p> <p><i>GIS maps demonstrate deserts and travel corridors</i></p>			
<p>3. Has business and other partnerships to build sustainability</p> <p><i>Documentation provided</i></p>			
<p>4. Minimizes reliance on long term financing</p> <p><i>Less than 50% private financing</i> <i>Reduces the cost being shifted to the parent</i></p>			
<p>5. Identified as a local priority</p> <p><i>Input provided by CCRR and local economic development organizations</i></p>			

Recommendations submitted to STREDC

Every YES earns a point. A minimum of three points would be needed for consideration as a regional priority project.

CHILD CARE:



A SNAPSHOT OF CHILD CARE/EARLY CARE & EDUCATION IN THE SOUTHERN TIER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION



CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (CCRR) AGENCIES

Chemung County Child Care Council, Inc.

Contact: Ruth A. Harvey, Executive Director

(607) – 734-3941

rharry@chemchildcare.com

1580 Lake Street – Suite 200

Elmira, New York 14901

Child Care Aware © of Steuben and Schuyler, a department of ProAction, Inc.

Contact: Carla Hibbard, Director

(607) – 776-2126

HibbardC@proactioninc.org

Schuyler County Office:

Human Services Complex

323 Owego Street – Unit 6

Montour Falls, New York 14865

Steuben County office:

ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

117 East Steuben Street

Bath, New York 14810

Child Development Council – Tompkins County

Contact: Sue Dale Hall, Executive Director

(607) -273-0259

sue@childdevelopmentcouncil.org

609 West Clinton Street

Ithaca, New York 14850

Delaware Opportunities Inc.

Contact: Janelle Montgomery, Child and Family Development Director

(607) -746-1600

JMontgomery@delop.org

35430 State Highway 10

Hamden, New York 13782

Family Enrichment Network

Contact: Jennifer Perney, Director of CCRR

(607)-723-8313

jperney@familyenrichment.org

Broome County Office:

24 Cherry Street

Johnson City, New York 13790

Chenango County Office

21 South Broad Street

Norwich, New York 13815

Tioga County Office

1277 Taylor Road – Suite 9A

Owego, New York 13827

TYPES OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Registered Family Day Care home is a residence in which child care is provided on a regular basis, for more than three hours per day, per child, for three to up to eight children, depending on the ages, for compensation. A family day care must renew their registration every 2 or 4 years. The provider must also take 30 hours of training every two years. The provider is **self-employed**.

Licensed Group Family Day Care home is a residence in which child care is provided on a regular basis, for more than three hours per day, per child, for seven to up to 16 children, depending on the ages, for compensation. Such a home must be operated by a provider and have at least one assistant present during the hours that care is provided. A group family day care must renew their license every 2 or 4 years. The provider is **self-employed** with an Assistant.

Licensed Child Day Care Center is a child care program or a facility that is not a residence, in which child care is provided on a regular basis, to more than six children, for more than three hours per day, per child, for compensation. A child day care center must renew their license every 2 or 4 years. The centers are privately owned as a for profit or a not for profit agency.

Registered School-aged Child Care is a program that enrolls groups of 7 or more children under 13 years of age during the school year before and/or after school. School-age child care programs also may provide care during school holidays and those periods of the year in which school is not in session, including summer vacations. Care is provided in a facility that is not a residence. Registered school-age child care programs must renew their registration every 2 or 4 years. School age programs are privately owned for profit or not for profit agency.

Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive program for 3-5 year old children from income-eligible families. All services are provided at no cost to the family. There is no fee to attend.

Pre-Kindergarten are state funded pre-school programs for 4 year olds operated by a school district or their contracted community based partner. Children must attend the UPK program located in the school district which the child resides. There is no fee to attend.

Legally- Exempt Family Child Care is child care provided outside the child's own home in a residence and is not regulated but must meet all state and local health and safety requirements for such child care. This caregiver is chosen and monitored by the child's parent or guardian. This type of care includes care for relatives within the third degree of consanguinity and up to 2 unrelated children. When caring for one unrelated child and related children, the maximum number of children in care at any one time can be 8, which includes their own children. The provider is self-employed.

Legally-Exempt In-Home Child Care is child care provided **in the child's own home** by a caregiver who is chosen and monitored by the child's parent/guardian and is not regulated but must meet all State and local health and safety requirements for such child care. This type of care requires the child's parent/guardian to provide the caregiver with all employee benefits required by the state and federal law and must pay the caretaker at least minimum wage.

Nursery Schools/ Pre-School Programs serve children ages 3-5 years old in a variety of settings including: public and private schools, churches, community centers and home residences. Programs meet anywhere from one to five days per week for less than three hours per session and often follow the school year calendar.

Camp Programs are day or overnight recreational programs that operate when school is not in session. Camp programs are regulated to some degree by New York State Department of Health.

Slot Capacity by Modality and County

Program/Age	Broome	Chemung	Chenango	Delaware	Schuyler	Steuben	Tioga	Tompkins
FDC – Infant & Toddler	68	98	44	40	14	104	18	46
FDC - Preschool	136	196	88	80	28	208	36	92
FDC – School Age	68	98	44	40	14	118	18	46
GFDC – Infants & Toddler	84	64	64	24	20	80	24	100
GFDC – Preschool	168	128	48	48	40	240	128	208
GFDC - SACC	84	64	64	24	20	80	24	100
Center – Infant	243	68	0	48	11	162	20	130
Center - Toddler	365	89	0	220	18	195	42	241
Center – Preschool	801	276	0	77	18	365	86	482
Center – School Age	379	86	0	10	0	184	78	66
School Age	1362	849	205	209	120	1343	217	1208

Vacancy Data by Modality and County

Vacancy data is a snapshot in time as it changes hourly/daily. Child Care Programs may also reduce their slot capacity as a “best practice” to best serve children and thus their programs have vacancies based on slot capacity but the vacancies will not be filled.

Program/Age	Broome	Chemung	Chenango	Delaware	Schuyler	Steuben	Tioga	Tompkins	TOTAL
FDC – Infant & Toddler	14	12	4	5	7	50	2	Combined with GFDC	
FDC - Preschool	19	37	11	12	4	31	4	Combined with GFDC	
FDC – School Age	13	21	0	3	2	32	0	Combined with Group FDC	
GFDC – Infants & Toddler	10	11	5	2	10	35	8	21	
GFDC – Preschool	23	22	8	12	2	18	8	50	
GFDC - SACC	18	13	1	2	3	17	0	89	
Center – Infant & Toddler	0	12	1	8	1	21	1	8	
Center – Preschool	40	32	12	58	4	26	17	37	
Center – School Age	25	70	8	10	0	18	7	Combined with School Age Programs	
School Age	1	25	1	112	2	38	1	92	

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM INCOME GUIDELINES – June 1, 2019 through May 31, 2020

This is a program to assist income eligible working families with the cost of their child care. The funding is from Federal, State and Local Governments. The program is administered by the local Department of Social Services except in Chemung (administered by the Chemung County Child Care Council); Delaware (administered by Delaware Opportunities and Steuben (administered by Child Care Aware © of Steuben and Schuyler). Income eligible parents pay a family share and make the decision for where their child is cared for. Counties are given allocations of maximum funding they will receive. If there are not enough funds there may be a waiting list or cases may have to close.

FAMILY SIZE	POVERTY LEVEL	125% <u>DELAWARE COUNTY</u>	200% ABOVE Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
1	12,490	15,612.50	24,980
2	16,910	21,137.50	33,820
3	21,330	26,662.50	42,660
4	25,750	32,187.50	51,500
5	30,170	37,712.50	60,340
6	34,590	43,237.50	69,180
7	39,010	48,762.50	78,020
8	43,430	54,287.50	86,860
For families with more than 8 persons add \$4,420 for each additional person			

CHILD CARE MARKET RATES by Modality and County for [FULL TIME CHILD CARE PER WEEK]

The Market Rates are the maximum amount a County can pay a child care program for the care of children whose parents are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy Program. This IS NOT the ACTUAL COST OF CARE. The Market Rates are determined by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services via a survey that asks child care programs what they charge for care for different age groups. Each county has the option to require parents to pay a family share between 10% and 35%. Each county has the option to pay a higher rate for non-traditional hours care between 5% and 15%. Each county can decide if they elect to pay for “sleep time” care for children of parents who work the night shift. Details are provided in each county’s Consolidated Services Plan which is approved by NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Modality and Age of Child	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, and Tioga Counties	Tompkins County
Day Care Center - Infants	\$220	\$280
Day Care Center – Toddler	\$206	\$264
Day Care Center – Preschool	\$195	\$245
Day Care Center – School Age	\$180	\$215
FDC and GFDC – Infant	\$180	\$190
FDC and GFDC – Toddler, Preschool and School Age	\$150	\$185 – Toddler; \$180 – Preschool; \$175 – School Age
School Age – 5 year old	\$195	\$245
School Age – 6-12 years old	\$180	\$215
Legally Exempt – Infant	\$104	\$124
Legally Exempt – Toddler, Preschool, and School Age	\$ 98	\$120 – Toddler; \$117 – Preschool; \$114 – School Age

Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ

➤ **Why is Child Care So Expensive?**

The cost of child care is one of the top 5 expenses for a family. The operation of a child care program whether in a person's home or in a center is a BUSINESS. They have all of the same expenses and requirements as other small businesses in addition to meeting and remaining in compliance with the NYS Day Care regulations that govern their modality of care. Although child care is expensive for parents the amount parents pay does not come close to the true cost of providing the service which means that child care professionals subsidize the cost by accepting low wages and minimal benefits.

➤ **Why is there not enough child care?**

It is difficult for CCRR's to recruit individuals who are interested in becoming home based child care providers or opening and operating a center. The child care industry is faced with the same challenges as most industries – finding qualified/trained/responsible workers. Salaries are low with most child care professionals earning minimum wage or slightly more despite having educational credentials. Most child care professionals do not have employer supported benefits such as health insurance, retirement, life insurance and most have limited sick and vacation days. Most home based child care professionals work 60-80 hour weeks which includes actual care time; program planning; cleaning the environment; shopping for food and program supplies and paperwork associated with the business.

➤ **How many children can someone care for before they need to be licensed in NYS?**

An individual can care for two children, other than their own before they need to be licensed in NYS. There are exceptions for care of children that are related to the child care provider.

➤ **If someone calls their local CCRR are they going to be able to find child care?**

Every CCRR maintains a databased of legal child care programs and regularly updates the vacancy data. The CCRR Child Care Referral Specialist will try very hard to assist an individual in locating child care and if there is not child care available will provide names of programs so that the parent can possibly be placed on the program's waiting list. The CCRR does not recommend any one child care program over another as it is the parent/guardian's right and responsibility to visit programs and interview the providers prior to making an informed decision about the best care for their child. The CCRR Referral Specialist provides parents/guardians with resources on what to look for in quality child care.

➤ **What are the reasons that parents cannot locate or secure child care?**

Reasons might include:

- + lack of reliable transportation
- + needing Infant/Toddler Care – there is a CRITICAL NEED FOR CHILD CARE FOR THIS AGE GROUP
- + geographic area where care is needed
- + evening, rotating shifts, weekends, multiple age group children, children enrolled at different public schools with different release dates
- + unable to afford the cost and is not eligible for the child care subsidy program

• **Why is the Quality of Child Care So Important:**

Children are our greatest resource. The provision of a quality early care and learning environment in their B-5 years is critical to their brain development; success in school and in life. Their caregivers must be not only warm and caring but also have the skills and knowledge to understand how children grow and develop and what they need in order to foster that development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

CONTACT THE CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (CCRR) PROGRAM IN YOUR COMMUNITY. THESE ARE LISTED ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THIS DOCUMENT.



What Drives the Child Care Economy?



Quality

Quality child care is critical to positive child outcomes, impacting school-readiness and child health, particularly for children who lack resources. Child care is also good for parents, enabling them to participate in the workforce. Factors that lead to quality child care include:

- The education and experience of the child care provider
- Child:Caregiver ratios, which differ by age group

Availability

The cost of care and low wages create little incentive to enter or remain in the field. Over the years this has resulted in a reduction of child care supply nation-wide.

- In Tompkins County, the number of child care entities has decreased 68% since 2002
- There are enough child care seats for 1/3 of eligible children—waiting lists are long.
- Parents are faced with choosing care that may be less consistent, un-regulated with an unknown quality level and/or choose to leave work
- Children may be left home, supervised by an older sibling, or unsupervised



Cost of Care

The cost of care varies by age due to differing ratio requirements, caregiver wages and overhead costs. Almost all of the income for programs comes from parents in the form of tuition fees.

It is important to recognize:

- Child care is an undervalued career
- Child care wages remain low, the cost of turnover is high and incentive to enter the field is low
- The widening income spread has created a larger wedge, decreasing the number of families who can afford quality care
- It is common for parents pay an average of \$250-\$275/week = ~24% of their income to care for one child

**Southern Tier Regional Child Care Resource
and Referral Consortium**

2020-2025

**Child Care Now
Strategic Plan**

Introduction

More than 32,505 children younger than age five six? live in the Southern Tier, with 16,413 available child care seats, leaving a potential gap of need at 16,092. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies are a vital resource for families, child care professionals and communities. Located in nearly every community in the nation, CCR&Rs emerged over 30 years ago as a grassroots child care referral service to empower working families to make informed child care choices, and is embedded in federal legislation found in the Child Care Development Block Grant.

As a nationwide system with touchpoints at the local, state and national level, CCR&Rs support families by helping them navigate complicated child care systems and by conducting initiatives that increase the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care.

Today, more than 400 local CCR&Rs, (35 in NYS) along with their state CCR&R (NYS Early Care and Learning Council), are the leading voices for stronger child care licensing regulations, higher investments in child care systems, subsidies and greater recognition of the importance of high-quality child care for all children. *Source: Child Care Aware of America®*

There are 5 CCR&Rs, serving the 8 counties that comprise the Southern Tier Economic Development Council. CCR&Rs create the conditions of success by providing the necessary infrastructure for child care programs in our local communities. Southern Tier CCR&Rs have achieved many significant accomplishments in the past five years, including: (1) NACCRRA Quality Assurance and State Standards of Excellence, (2) a child care career pipeline, (3) an early childhood business alliance, (4) relationships with local Chambers, and (5) participation on child care work groups, locally, regionally, and statewide. Positioned firmly as a sector leader, CCR&Rs are ready to set a course for the next five years that builds on our organizations' strengths and focuses its resources on its most important, mission-focused work.

A robust child care system supports the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council's four priorities: *Build the Greater Binghamton Innovation Eco System, Invest in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry, Transform the Food and Agriculture Industry and the Promotion of the Southern Tier Innovative Culture.*

What is the answer?

The REDC in partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies will strive to increase the supply of child care by targeting the establishment of programs in locations that can meet immediate employer demand (near employment centers or along major travel corridors); support child care providers in starting new businesses and creating jobs; and increase workforce participation by fostering child care supply and workforce development across the region.

Goal #1 - AVAILABILITY

Outcome (#1): The Southern Tier has a sufficient, stable supply of regulated providers.

Strategy: Invest in and grow the impact of relevant “best practice” activities to recruit and retain child care programs.

Invest in and grow entrepreneurial benefits for child care businesses.

Align FDC/GFDC with center child definitions for age ranges with center based regulations.

Monitor and develop recommendations for growth in child care deserts.

Proposed REDC Strategies:

- Prioritize STREDC applications that will contribute to a growth in the region’s child care supply, including infant care.
- Create a pool of funds for child care center expansion and new center development (URI)
- Identify local matching funds for child care applications

Activities: (Mission-level)

- Ensure adequate staff capacity to proactively recruit new providers into the regulated market
- Influence the demand for high quality care for families of all economic levels
- Effectively retain existing providers in the regulated care market
- Continue work to improve quality in all care settings, with a special emphasis on legally exempt care settings and Infant/Toddler care
- Advocate for employer-sponsored child care; on-site or through the provisions of incentives to programs
- Create a fund for sign on and retention bonuses for individuals coming into the system
- Increase supply through intensified outreach and augmented business development support
- Promote the conditions for success through a regional communication and marketing plan
- Engage the REDC in policy and advocacy work

Activities: (Agency-level)

- Equip staff with resources to perform their functions efficiently and effectively
- Ensure adequate CCRR staff to carry out strategic imperatives
- Conduct exit surveys

Measurement Indicator:

- Net annual gain of providers and/or slots in the regulated market
- Number of new CCRR staff throughout the region
- Number of exit surveys to assess primary reasons for closure

Resources: CCR&R Staff

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets, share management drive)
- Appropriate staff training and development

Goal #2 - ACCESSIBILITY

Outcome (#1): Parents are connected with child care options that meet their complex needs.

Outcome (#2): Child care programs are in proximity to workforce centers, travel corridors, and/or locations preferred by parents.

Strategy: Invest in and grow the impact of relevant “best practice” activities to assist parents in making a child care plan.

Proposed REDC Strategies:

- Utilize the GIS map to identify high need/priority areas for support
- Monitor areas of new business development and communicate with CCRR Collaborative to assess need

Activities: (Mission-level)

- Broaden parent usage of CCR&R service
- Develop innovative responses to families’ complex needs that exceed current offerings
- Work with local Department of Social Services to ensure stable care settings for children care who are placed because of a family member use of opiates and/or experiencing homelessness

Activities: (Agency-level)

- Tracking system that captures data to generate necessary insight to improve accessibility through the CCR&R service
- Tracking system that provide accurate data on child care deserts in the Southern Tier
- Increase the number of families who use regulated care

Measurement Indicator:

- Increase the number of parents who use CCR&R service
- Increase the number of parents who find care using CCRR services
- Increase the number of programs in proximity to workforce/travel corridors

Resources: CCR&R Staff

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets, share management drive)

Goal #3 - AFFORDABILITY

Outcome (#1): *No parent/household will pay more than 10% of their household income on child care.*

Strategy:

Invest in and grow “best practice” CRRs activities to strengthen a parent’s ability to pay for quality early learning experiences for their children

Engage all sectors in financing and supporting child care programs and CCR&R infrastructure

Create a consistent stream of resources that is delivered to parents paying for child care on a graduated scale

Proposed REDC Strategies:

- Prioritize child care applications that are financed without increasing parental fees
- Promote the tax credit for corporate contributions to child care and CCRRs
- Share innovative business practices that reduce the cost of operating a child care program or supplement parent fees (e.g. discounted purchasing, employer-specific emergency scholarship funds, etc.)

Activities: (Mission-level)

- Work with businesses to underwrite center based operational gap

Activities: (Agency-level)

Measurement Indicator:

- Number of child care programs that are directly subsidized by employers
- Number of CCR&Rs supported by employers

Resources: CCR&R staff

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets, share management drive)

Goal #4 – QUALITY

Outcome (#1): Sufficient critical resources are available to foster child care quality.

Strategy: Invest in and grow the impact of relevant “best practice” activities within CCR&Rs to ensure quality.

Implement paid apprenticeship programs in centers and group/family child care programs with the focus of a clear educational pathway for advancement

Activities: (Mission-level)

- Increase program’s participation in quality assessment and improvement activities offered by CCR&Rs

Activities: (Agency-level)

- Increase the number of CCR&R staff who are NYS credentialed coaches and trainers
- Provide professional development so that all adults in care settings develop relationships and capabilities to model self-regulation, provide nurturing care and developmental experiences.
- Increase the number of program assessments and quality improvement plans
- Increase effectiveness of TA services through bi-monthly check-ins
- Increase effectiveness of training sessions by establishing an agreement with Registrars and Licensors to enforce Plans of Action
- Expand access to CACFP

Measurement Indicator:

- Increase to 85% the percentage demonstrating that quality improvement occurred.
- Increase number of programs participating in QualitystarsNY
- Increase the number of mental health specialists in Southern Tier CRRs
- Expand the number of home based providers who are trained in and implement research based/research informed curriculms.

Resources: CCR&R Staff

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets, share management drive)

Proposed REDC Strategies

- Support the creation of innovative child care workforce preparation solutions, such as apprenticeships and shared substitute pools.

Goal #5 – CONTEXT FOR EXCELLENCE

Outcome (#1): Child Care businesses realize internal organizational conditions for success.

Strategy: Develop an internal culture of excellence and support it with necessary resources.

Attract and retain child care talent through the earning of a living wage and access to fringe benefits.

Activities: (Agency-level)

- Increase the number of Center Directors who obtain the Director’s credential.
- Increase the number of Center Directors who participate in professional development in business, budgeting and setting fee structures
- Encourage child care programs to utilize a shared services model
- Ensure that home-based programs have access to Tom Copeland Business Essentials resource library
- Support career pathways through increased progressive education attainment
- Promote Shared Services ECNY

Measurement Indicator:

- Number of credentialed Directors
- Number of Directors attending professional opportunities
- Number of centers utilizing a shared services model

Resources: CCR&R Staff (Lead Person: Director)

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets)

Outcome (#2): Through the engagement of new community partners a vision of child care that nurtures the whole child, supports families and promotes workforce participation will be obtained.

Strategy: Elevate child care as a primary concern within the entire community.

Activities: (Mission-level)

- Cultivate a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the importance of the child care sector as an integral part of the economic development success in the region by developing a regional campaign of the importance of child care.
- Increase parent demand for high quality early care and education
- Heighten the sense of value child care practitioners see in the role their work has in fostering school readiness, success and future prosperity.
- Conduct a regional marketing campaign

Proposed REDC Strategies:

- Encourage and support ongoing collaborative efforts with regionally minded- locally driven Child Care Resource and Referral services.
- Support the growth of innovative technologies that support business and other operations
- Support a regional marketing campaign
- Engage with the private sector in supporting public policy objectives that improve child care operational conditions, reduce the loss of existing child care, and support the growth of child care.

Measurement Indicator:

Resources: CCR&R Staff (*Lead Person: Director*)

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets, share management drive)

Outcome (#3): Create the conditions for success.

Strategy: Marshall public/political will to engage external stakeholders as advocates for policies—and backers of initiatives – that advance a strong early care and education system.

Ensure CCR&R success in their role as a local child care system’s infrastructure through adequate funding

Activities:(Mission-level)

- Leverage relationships to cultivate a group of “champions” to take action in support of public policy objectives that increase affordability, availability, accessibility or quality in child care and address pay inequity among low income families to reduce the need of public dollars for child care fees
- Engage external stakeholders in the community as supporters of defined projects that increase affordability, availability, accessibility, or quality
- Ensure adequate staffing for CCR&Rs
- Review, update, and develop a regional Public Policy plan

Activities: (Program-level)

- Southern Tier CCR&Rs become members of the ECLC advocacy mobilization or policy committee
- Southern Tier CCR&Rs mobilize as one to visit legislators in the districts and in Albany
- Invite child care champions from the community to advocate
- Invite legislators to visit CCR&Rs, child care centers, family child care homes and parent meetings.

Measurement Indicator:

- Track levels of engagement in terms of number of third party funders supporting work and/or number of individuals agreeing to participate as “champions” for early care and education.
- Regional plan
- Number of visits to programs by legislators
- Number of visits to legislators by CCR&R staff

Resources: CCR&R Staff (Lead Person: Director)

- Supplies – office supplies
- Space – office
- Technology – computer hardware/software, email, internet, website
- Other equipment – printer, copier, fax
- Financial – budgets (staff time, supplies, filing cabinets, share management drive)

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Summary:

Increasing the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of child care in local communities works and is cost-effective within the existing infrastructure of local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. Economic development investment, in the work of CCR&Rs would further build on and advance their work. CCR&R work dually benefits the formal economic participation of child care providers and the workforce participation of parents who, with child care available, can accept opportunities for work. At the same time, it improves quality in the provision of child care, which creates an opportunity to foster the healthy social, emotional cognitive and physical development of young children, laying the foundation for their later success in school and subsequent workforce preparedness. With existing funding outreach and support would happen only occasionally, and the results would not materialize at the scale needed to have an impact to meet the gap in child care seats.

NYSB5 Child Care Deserts CNY REDC CCRR Partnership Final Report

NYSB5 Child Care Deserts partnership between the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) and the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies resulted in the development of a Child Care Taskforce to assess the early care and education (e.g. Prekindergarten, Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, preschool special education, nursery school) needs of their region, identify the barriers families face in decisions around early care and education, and identify the supports needed to ensure quality early care and education access for all children birth to 5 in their region.

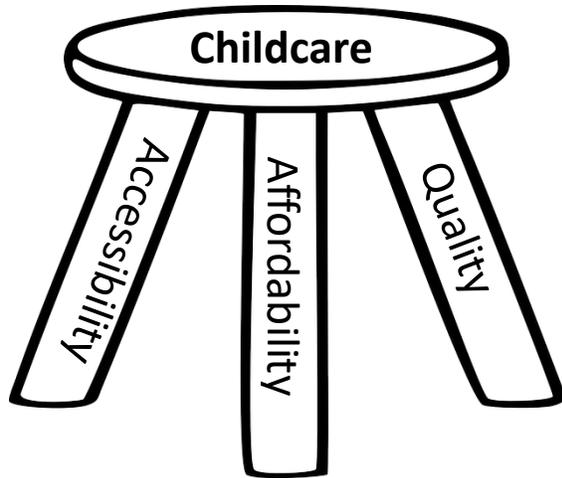
All four Child Care Resource & Referral agencies that serve counties within the Central New York REDC attended monthly meetings with REDC partners including the REDC CO-Chairs and their representatives, local business leaders, child care providers, Head Start agencies, higher education personnel and representatives from other early childhood agencies and collaborations. Participants representing the CCRRS included: Lori Schakow from Child Care Solutions, Inc. serving Cayuga and Onondaga Counties; Sue Dale-Hall from Child Development Council of Central New York, Inc. serving Cortland County; Richelle Singer and Courtney Jones from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County serving Madison County; and Christina Wilson and Brandy Korposki from Integrated Community Planning of Oswego County, Inc. serving Oswego County. Additional Taskforce participants included Karyn Burns-Gerling from MACNY, representing REDC Co-Chair, Randy Wolkin; Pamela Caraccioli from SUNY Oswego representing REDC Co-chair Deborah Stanley; Stephanie Fritz from SUNY Cortland; Nancy Gabriel and Pat Martin from Onondaga Community College; Laurie Black from the Early Childhood Alliance-Onondaga; Kristina Gambitta from Cortland Medical; Lindy Glennon from Cortland County Chamber of Commerce; Zachary Griswold from Oswego County; Brian Tobin from the City of Cortland; and Kelly Tobin from Cortland YWCA.

The Taskforce began meeting on June 28, 2019; nine subsequent meetings were held between August and December at various locations throughout the region including Cortland County, Onondaga County, and Oswego County. During the meetings the group identified data needed to develop a regional plan to address child care deserts. Between meetings the Child Care Resource & Referral agencies were responsible for collecting the identified data needed to develop the plan. In addition to child care supply and demand data for each county, the group sought to gather input from a critical stakeholder regarding the needs and the solutions – local industry. A four-question survey was developed to gather data on the impact of child care on local businesses. The survey is being disseminated through various regional trade associations and Chambers of Commerce. The objectives of the survey are two-fold:

1. Collect critical regionally based information and feedback from the business community on how childcare impacts their day-to-day operations, and what they currently offer or participate in for child care employee solutions; and
2. Create awareness among employers and the community-at-large that childcare is a critical economic development issue with the goal of recruiting interested business leaders and community members to participate in roundtable discussions seeking local solutions.

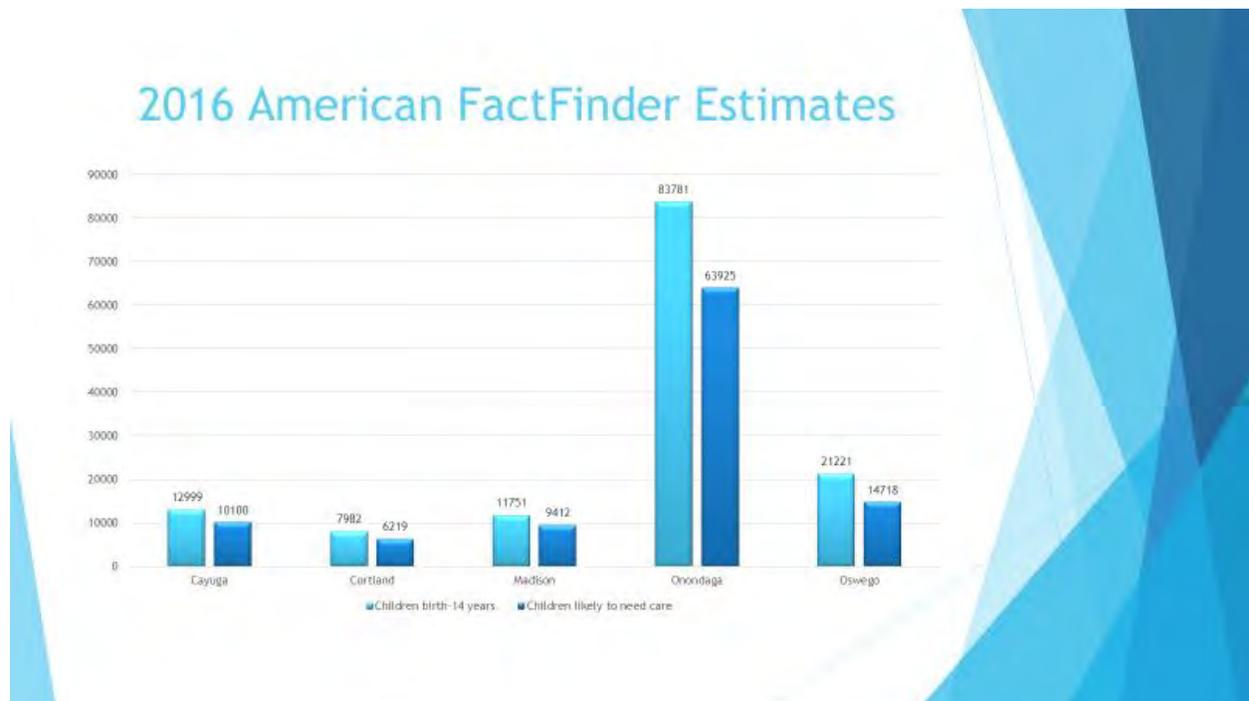
While the results of the survey are still being collected and tabulated the Taskforce members remain committed to continuing their work into 2020 with a Community Roundtable planned for early 2020.

Taskforce members learned that child care in the Central New York REDC region is a complicated issue and parents face many challenges within the child care system. The Taskforce focused on three main issues which are in decline in the Central New York region: Accessibility, affordability and quality. Taskforce members agreed that the issues are inter-related, and success depends upon addressing all three.



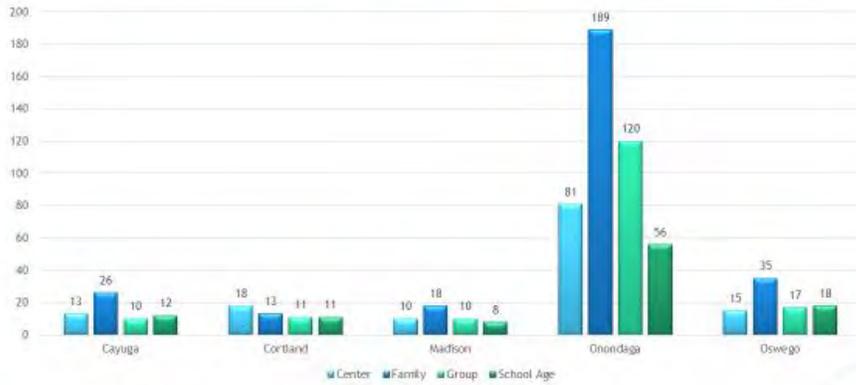
- ↓ **Accessibility:** Supply does not meet needs
- ↓ **Affordability:** Cost exceeds family's ability to pay
- ↓ **Quality:** High quality care is expensive; it depends upon a well-trained and fairly-compensated workforce

Much of the data that the Taskforce requested from the CRRs is contained below:



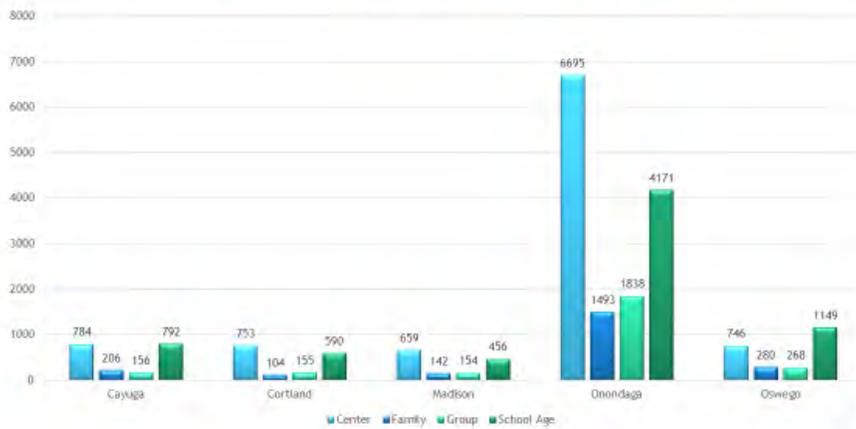
Registered and Licensed Child Care Programs

(NYS Office of Children & Family Services; June 24, 2019)



Child Care Capacity

(NYS Office of Children & Family Services; June 24, 2019)

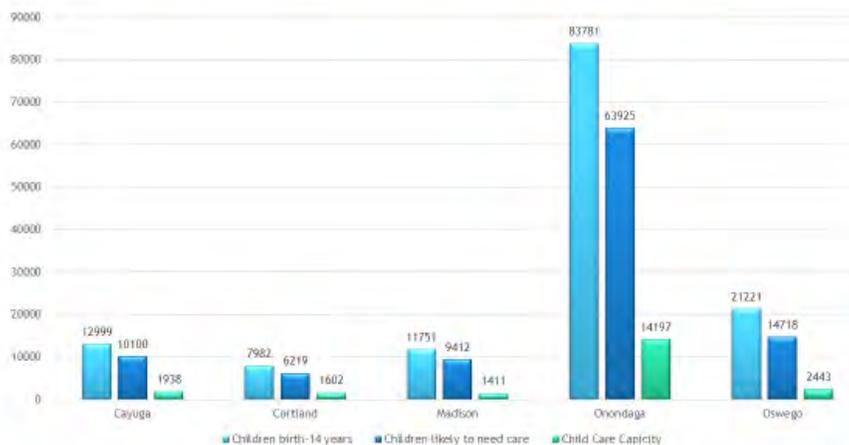


The above capacity data does not take into account those Family or Group Family child care providers who choose not to take infants, or providers that keep a lower enrollment than their registered/licensed capacity. Given those choices, the scarcity of child care is even more dire than it appears above.

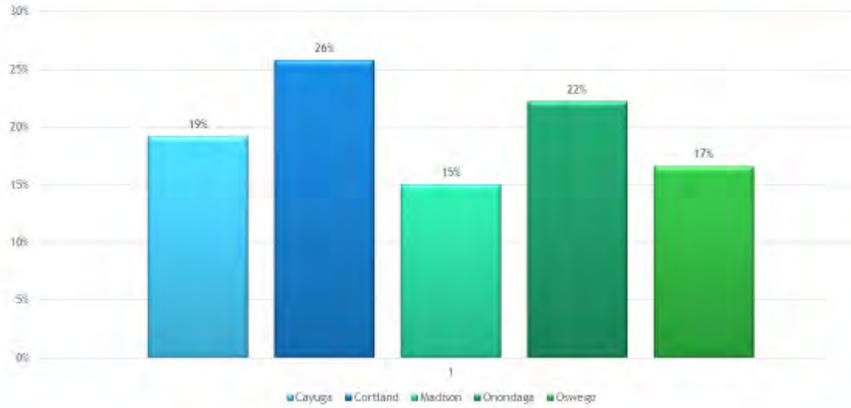
A decline in child care accessibility over the past ten years is also not reflected in the Child Care Capacity chart above. For example:

- Cayuga County experienced a loss of 394 (17%) child care seats since 2012; while the number of 0-13 year-olds only declined by 9%. There are only 113 seats available to serve infants; an average of 1 seat for every 6 infants born to mothers residing in Cayuga County each year.
- Cortland County only has enough regulated child care for 1/3 of the preschool children, and has experienced a significant net loss of child care in the past 3 years. While there were 210 new spaces created, 369 were closed - creating a 24% drop in available spaces. Similarly, the enrollments in subsidized legally exempt care have also dropped in each of the last three years.
- Madison County had a steady decline of programs between 2007 and 2017; Family Child Care dropped by 43% from 35 to 20; Group Family Child Care declined by 36% from 14 to 9; and Child Care Centers (including Head Start) declined by 40% from 15 to 9. There are only 84 infant slots in Madison County, and they are full.
- Since the peak in 2015 there are 38 fewer registered and licensed child care programs in Onondaga County resulting in 681 fewer seats for children who need care. Just since January 2019 Onondaga County has lost 7 registered and licensed child care programs resulting in 230 fewer seats for children who need care. There are only 828 seats available for infants, (21 less seats than 2018) for the approximately 5,263 babies born each year to Onondaga residents
- Oswego County experienced a loss of between 6-10 registered/licensed child care programs annually between 2011 and 2015. Since 2015, the total number of regulated providers and seats would appear to have held steady, however, the modalities of those providers and age range of available seats has changed. The number of seats for school age care has increased by 15%, whereas home-based care has decreased by 18%.

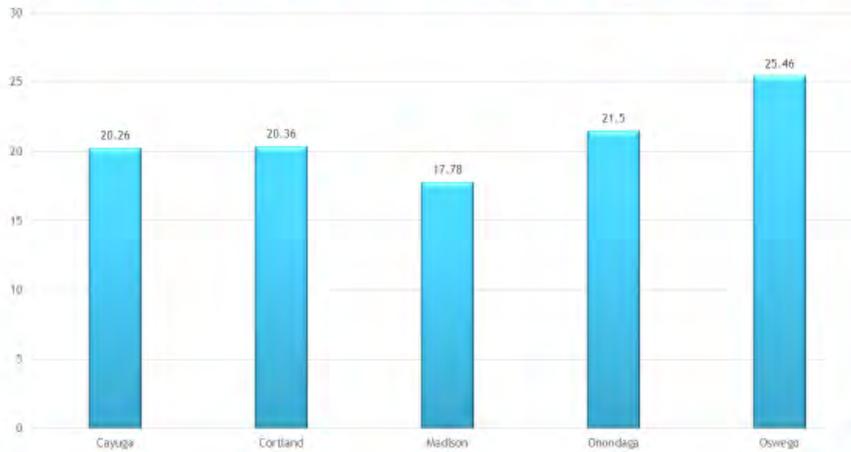
Child Care Need Versus Capacity



% of Child Care Needs Met By NYS OCFS Licensed & Registered Child Care Programs



% of Children & Youth Living Below Poverty NYS Council on Children & Families 5 Year average (2012-2016)



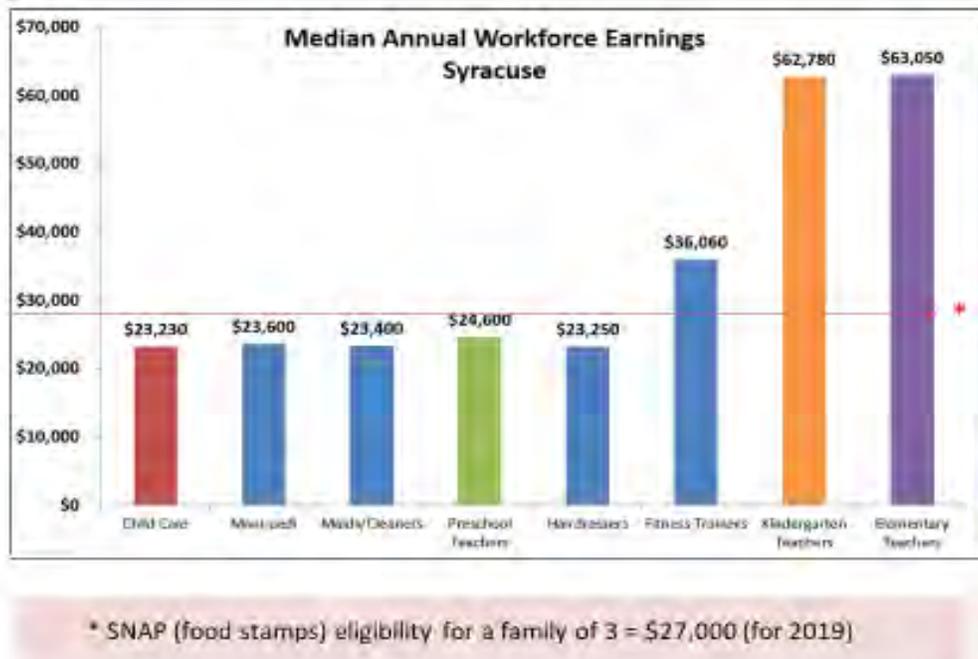
According to NYS KWIC 2017 data, every county in the CNY REDC region, except Madison County, has a higher percentage of children living below poverty than the 2017 NYS rate of 19.9%. The high cost of child care is especially significant for these children, since access to high quality child care is even more out of reach. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that affordable child care not exceed **7%** of family income, however the Center for American Progress (2019) reports that the average cost of care for two children in New York State is \$27,029, or 37% of the median family income.

Based on 2017 US Census American Fact Finder median family income data and 2019 child care fees recorded in the CCRR databases:

- ▶ The average cost of care for an infant and a toddler in a Child Care Center is **\$20,644** annually in Cayuga County:
 - A Married Couple earning a median family income of **\$91,603**, with an infant and a toddler would pay **23%** of the household income for child care.
 - A Male householder, no spouse present, earning a median family income of **\$36,101** would pay **57%** of the household income for child care.
 - A Female householder, no spouse present earning a median family income of **\$28,056** would pay an average of **74%** of the household income for child care.
- ▶ The average cost of care for an infant and a toddler in a Child Care Center is **\$18,564** annually in Cortland County:
 - A Married Couple earning a median family income of **\$81,231**, with an infant and a toddler would pay **23%** of the household income for child care.
- ▶ The average annual cost of care for an infant and a toddler in a Child Care Center was **\$10,660** in Madison County in 2017:
 - A Married Couple earning a median family income of **\$84,308**, with an infant and a toddler would pay **13%** of the household income.
- ▶ The average cost of care for an infant and a toddler in a Child Care Center is **\$25,376** annually in Onondaga County:
 - A Married Couple earning a median family income of **\$102,013**, with an infant and a toddler would pay **25%** of the household income for child care.
 - A Male householder, no spouse present, earning a median family income of **\$41,293** would pay **61%** of the household income for child care.
 - A Female householder, no spouse present earning a median family income of **\$25,557** would pay an average of **99%** of the household income for child care.
- ▶ The average cost of care for an infant and a toddler in a Child Care Center is **\$17,732** annually in Oswego County:
 - A Married Couple earning a median family income of **\$77,736**, with an infant and a toddler would pay **23%** of the household income for child care.
 - A Male householder, no spouse present, earning a median family income of **\$29,877** would pay **59%** of the household income for child care.
 - A Female householder, no spouse present earning a median family income of **\$21,383** would pay an average of **83%** of the household income for child care.

Families in Central New York clearly cannot afford to pay higher fees for child care, however despite the high fees, data shows that child care providers are not making a living wage. Low wages make recruitment and retention challenging as illustrated in the following chart.

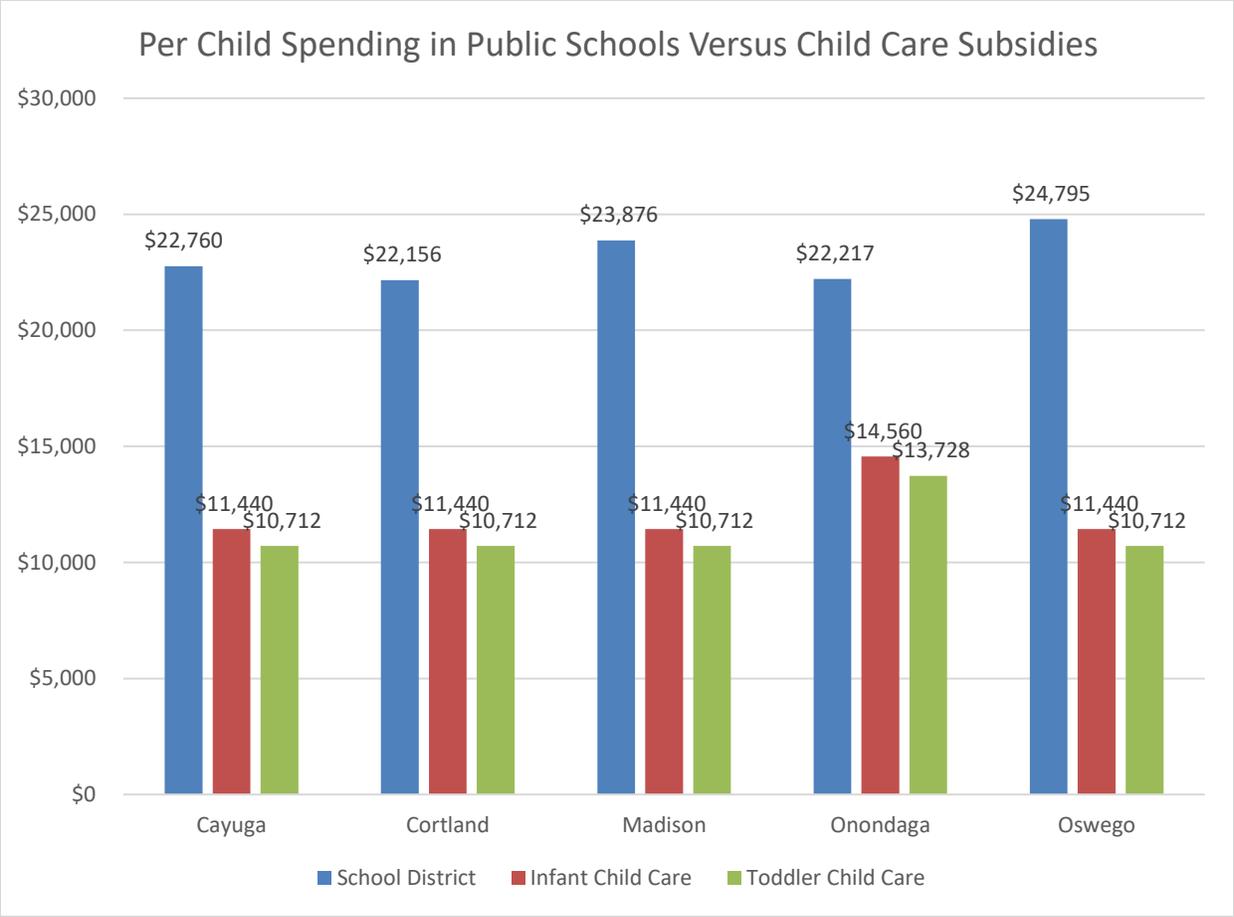
Child Care Workforce Challenges: Education, Pay & Turnover



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Data, 2017

It is evident that the way to increase both accessibility and quality is to attract more qualified caregivers into the field by paying adequate wages. Taskforce members agreed that to be successful, the plan to address child care deserts in the Central New York region must include increased compensation for child care providers without increasing cost for families.

CCRRs were also asked to gather data regarding per pupil spending in the school districts throughout each county and compare it to the per child spending through child care subsidies. The data shows that the average annual school district per pupil expenditure in the CNY REDC region is \$23,361; while the annual child care subsidy rate for a licensed Child Care Center is only \$11,440 for infants and only \$10,712 for toddlers. In other words, the annual child care subsidy rate for a licensed Child Care Center is \$11,297 less for infants and \$12,046 less for toddlers. Funding for child care and early education of infants and toddlers at a rate comparable to primary education would generate extra revenue of \$11,000 per infant and \$12,000 per toddler which would revolutionize the child care industry.



Next Steps: for the remainder of 2019 and into 2020 the Child Care Taskforce members are committed to continuing the dialogue and adding input from additional stakeholders in business and academia to identify local solutions to the childcare issue in the Central New York region. We plan to accomplish this through:

- Completion of the Employer Survey. The CNYREDC aims to identify the main issues that employers face when their employees are seeking childcare. By surveying employers within the five counties; Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego, and creating solutions designed around their feedback.
- Hosting a Stakeholders Roundtable. Early in 2020 the Taskforce will invite regional stakeholders identified through the survey to further identify challenges and potential solutions to the regional childcare needs. Invited participants will include business owners and Human Resources professionals.
- Presentation of the findings and potential solutions to the CNY REDC Members and legislators in the region. The taskforce remains committed to collaboration into 2020 to develop a comprehensive plan with objectives and outcomes that will be presented to the REDC as a clear, strategic regional approach to addressing the childcare issues we currently face. Specifically, the Childcare Taskforce is working together on a pilot program for the five Counties, to create and

launch a Childcare Apprenticeship Program. Modeled after the successful Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program (MIAP) in New York State, this one stop shop will create five county access to building tomorrow's childcare workforce today.

The Taskforce also reviewed child care apprenticeship models that showed success in Vermont and Philadelphia, however a model designed to meet the unique requirements of New York state is needed. The proposed model will align with existing workforce efforts in New York State to create a career pathway for entry-level caregivers. The model will address basic apprenticeship elements such as on-the-job training with an experienced "mentor", related instruction in a classroom setting, and specific competencies that must be achieved to earn incremental wage increases. The pathway will lead to a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, with the goal of participants continuing on to an Associate's degree and ideally progressing to earn Bachelor's and Master's degrees in early childhood education.

The incremental wage increases will help to bring wages on par with other jobs requiring similar education levels. Pay parity will help to stabilize the child care workforce, making it easier to recruit and retain qualified caregivers. The Taskforce will continue to work on the child care apprentice model throughout the first quarter of 2020 to finalize details including cost and identifying an intermediary agency to serve as the program's sponsor. Once the child care apprentice model is successfully piloted in the five county Central New York region it can be brought to scale throughout New York State.

The Impact of Child Care on Working Families in the Mohawk Valley

A summary of survey findings compiled by the Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County and the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council



Children gardening at the Genesee Street Children's Center

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research for this report was coordinated and conducted by the Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County. For over twenty years, the Council has served as the leading resource & referral program dedicated to promoting quality and accessible child care throughout Oneida, Herkimer, and Madison Counties.

Our final report could not have been completed without the help and support of the following individuals and organizations:

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in our Region

- Abbe Kovacik, Executive Director, Brightside Up
- Dawn Garvey, CCRR Program Director, Schoharie County Community Action, Inc.
- Christy Houck, Associate Executive Director, Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties

The Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council

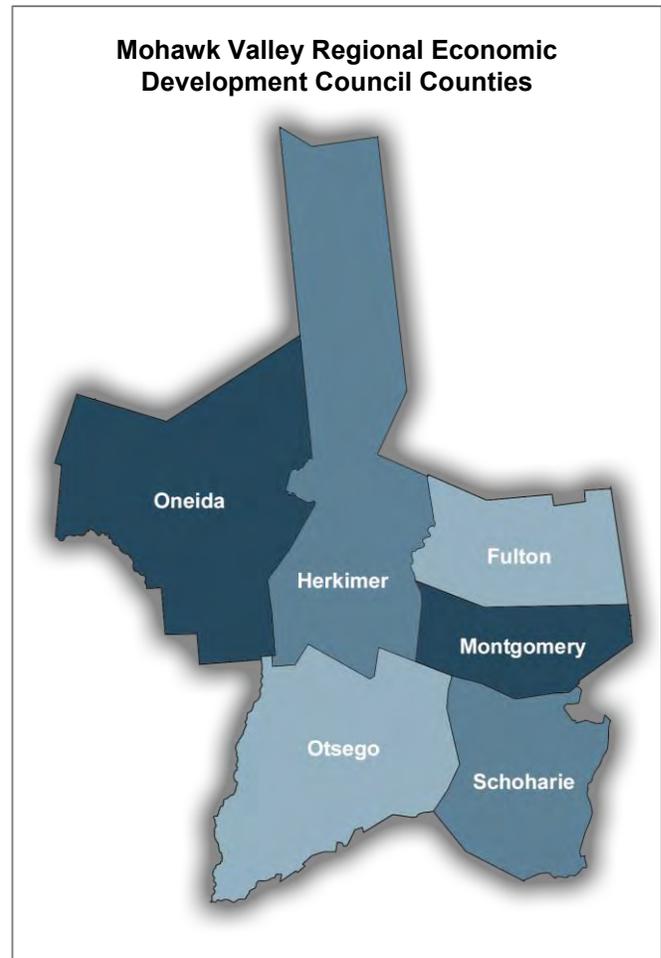
- Allison Nowak, Deputy Director of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council

Data Analysis Consultant

- David W. Franklin Jr., M.S. and Ph.D. Candidate, Educational Psychology and Methodology, University at Albany, State University of New York

In August 2019, The Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida (**CCEOC**) was awarded funding through New York State’s “*Birth Through Five Project*” to partner with the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (**MVREDC**) in identifying the region’s child care needs and challenges. The initiative demonstrated the State’s recognition that child care is not only a *social* issue, but an *economic development* issue which service providers and the business community must tackle together to resolve.

The one-year grant called for an assessment of the needs within the early child care system across New York State. In summary, goals were to strengthen partnerships, increase parent choice, and improve access to quality care options and learning environments.



The Child Care Council of CCEOC worked with the MVREDC Child Care Taskforce to develop a survey for distribution via employers in each of the six counties comprising the Region. The purpose of the survey was to collect data on the experience of local employees as it relates to child care. This information would serve to expand on existing data and provide greater insight into the barriers that parents and employers face regarding child care. Prior to this survey, known data was limited to national statistics from sources such as the Chamber of Commerce and ReadyNation¹ as well as local supply data on child care providers.

The data presented in this report was collected between October 2019 and February 2020. Responses were received from over 2,000 participants: residents/workers of the Mohawk Valley (1863), regional child care providers (128), and focus groups (final attendance count pending) convened to gather qualitative, first-hand viewpoints that could expand upon statistical findings.

¹Referenced data:

Ready Nation Report “The Economic Impacts of Insufficient Child Care on Working Families”

<https://go.aws/2FObkdR>

Chamber of Commerce Report “Building Bridges; Creating Strong Partnerships for Early Childhood Education”

<https://bit.ly/3a3LjFv>



Children explore the outdoors at Masonic Care Community Child Care Center

Child care has become a prevailing issue for working families across all sectors in the Mohawk Valley. Challenges with child care cause a ripple-effect that can be felt throughout an entire workplace. Of course, not all employees have a direct need for child care. Those who do, however, often face substantial barriers and when their child care arrangements fail...the workload they carry shifts elsewhere or, worse, the flow of production throughout the organization is interrupted indefinitely. Workers who don't need childcare are aware of their colleagues' struggles (many faced them at an earlier stage of their own lives), while those in Human Resources and supervisory positions have employees approaching them to explain their

uncontrollable circumstances. Parents are often late, change their hours to accommodate care arrangements, or miss work entirely.

Those who *do* find reliable child care are typically satisfied with their arrangements, however, the luxury of security in child care comes at a price. A *real* price: The cost of child care nationally as well as locally in the Mohawk Valley remains one of our country's most persistent economic issues, and many parents are forced to leave the workforce when their paychecks aren't enough to cover the cost of care.

At the same time that parents struggle to find dependable, affordable providers there are many child care programs in the Mohawk Valley unable to remain open despite the high demand. Providers report that certain regulations in New York State hinder growth and limit their capacity to serve the two neediest segments of the child care pool – early infancy through age two, and after-school day care for age five and up. While some successfully achieve regulatory compliance with age-group restrictions, others struggle to run their business financially, and end up with earnings at or only slightly above minimum wage. It becomes easier – and more profitable -- to simply find a job outside of the home, leaving yet another gap in child care for the community to fill.

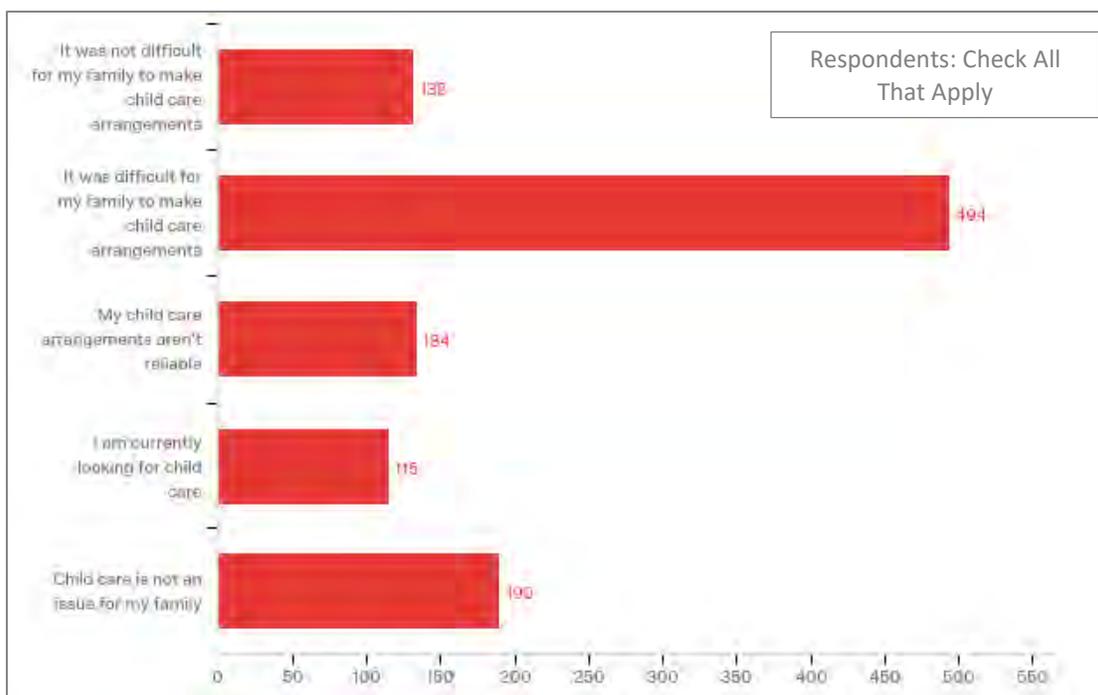
The child care system in the Mohawk Valley is facing a crisis. The longer that communities and officials delay taking steps to reinforce this employee support network, the more likely that people will leave the workforce. This, in time, will bring further socio-economic challenges in the form of lower household incomes, decreased retention of young families, and inability to attract new business due to lack of talent and the resources to support it. This report will demonstrate the need for child care reinforcement at the community level. It will be followed by subsequent testimony and data to be released in Spring 2020 at www.cceoneida.com, along with an action plan of suggestions for improving the child care climate in the Mohawk Valley.

Survey availability was promoted community-wide to individuals who live and/or work in the Mohawk Valley region. Surveys were also disseminated via regional employers, and response was voluntary. Of the 1,863 resident/worker responses collected, it should be noted that 6.7% -- 124 -- were completed by persons who *worked* within the region, but commuted from a peripheral county. Their responses were included in analysis because they participate daily in the Mohawk Valley economy.

A total of 859 respondents (46.3%) indicated they cared for a child under the age of 13 while 996 (53.7%) did not. Of the 859 respondents with children, 824 (96%) were also employed. The county reporting the lowest proportion of respondents who had children under 13 and were employed was Schoharie County, at 82%. All other counties ranged between 95% to 98% employed with children under 13.

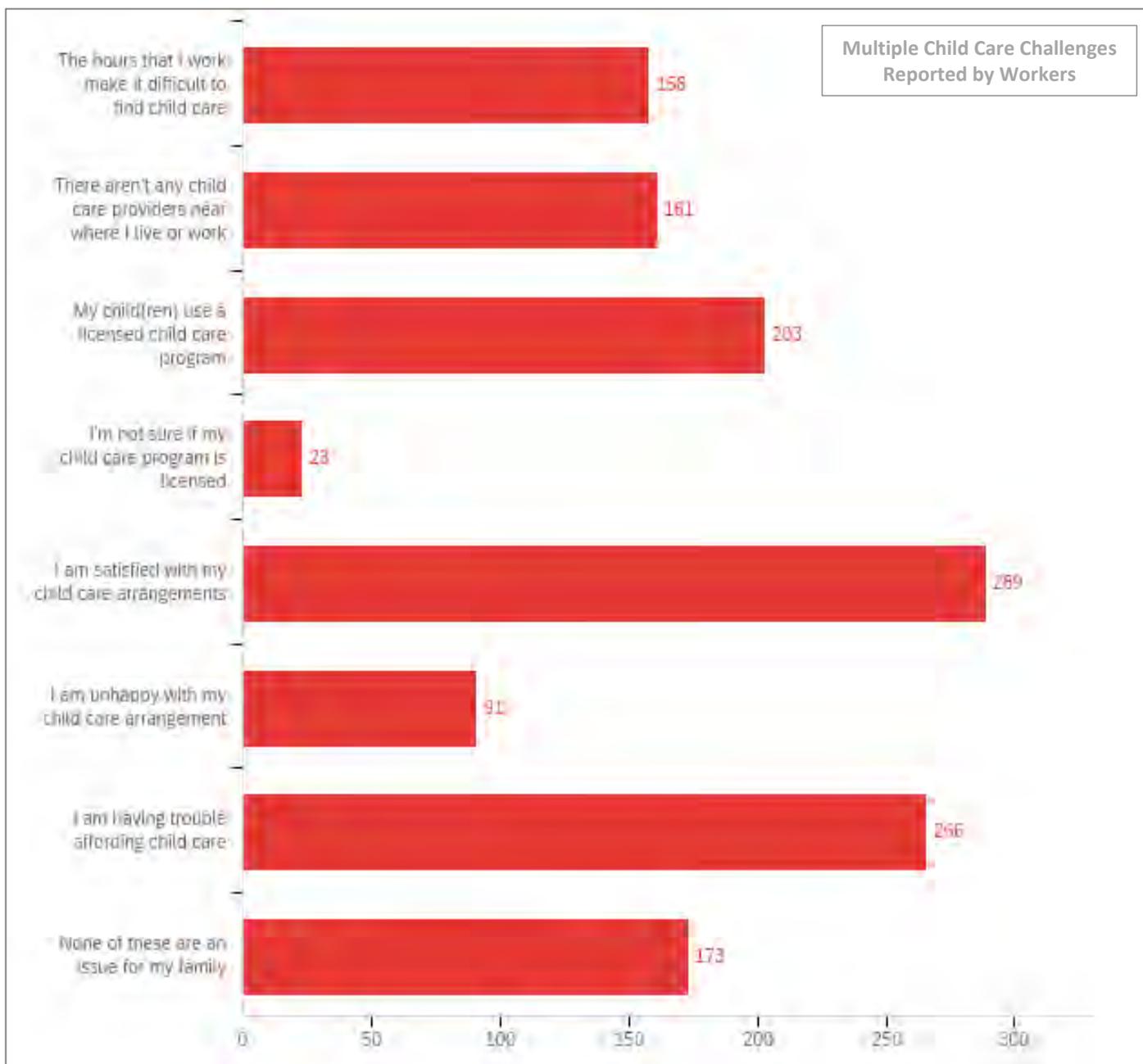
(NOTE: Of the 68 parent-guardians who indicated they were *unemployed at the time of survey*, 65 expanded on the *reasons* for their unemployed status. For 31% of those not working at the time of survey, a child care issue was an underlying factor and, further, 70% of those respondents indicated child care *expense* was the predominant reason. Additional reasons focused on the inability to find quality or dependable care.)

Responses from the 824 working parent/guardians indicated that 60% had a difficult time making child care arrangements and 16% had unreliable child care arrangements. These percentages were especially high in Fulton and Montgomery County, where 75% and 67% respectively had a difficult time making child care arrangements. In addition, respondents were nearly four times more likely to select the statement “It was difficult for my family to make child care arrangements” than the statement “It was not difficult for my family to make child care arrangements”.



While we did not learn exactly why all of the 494 participants indicated it was difficult to find child care, we do know that 319 also reported they either had hours that made it difficult to find care or there weren't any providers near work or home.

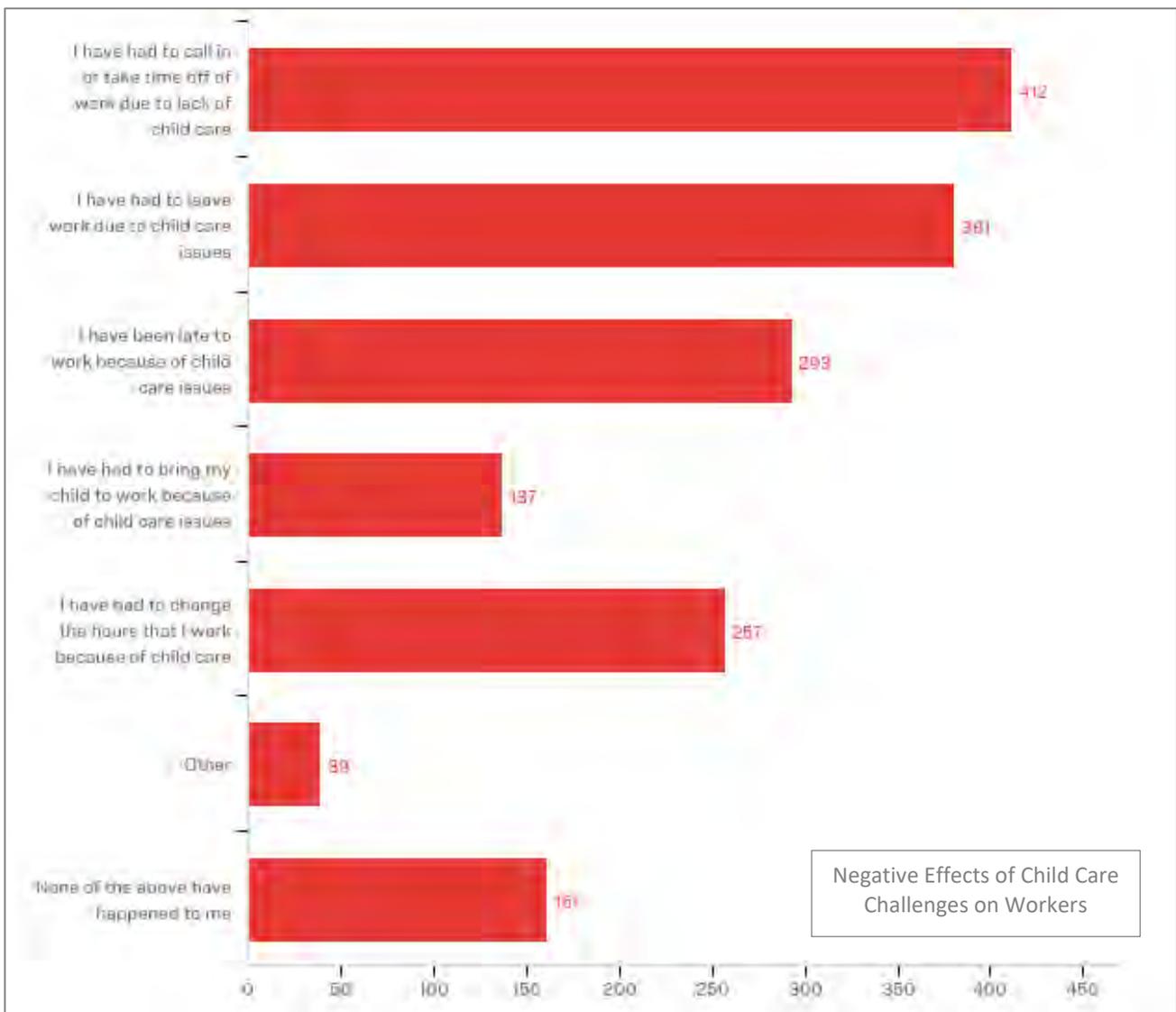
The expense of child care also appeared in survey results for those who were employed at the time, where 266 respondents – 32% -- stated they were having trouble affording child care. Therefore, it is not surprising that, for those who are employed with children, 220 also reported they had considered quitting their jobs to care for their children.



Thoughts about leaving the workforce are only *one* of the many negative outcomes that child care challenges can have on an employee. Survey responses revealed:

- 48% of workers with children under 13 have had to call in or take time off due to lack of child care;
- 34% reported that child care issues have made them late to work;
- 44% have had to leave work for child care reasons (snow days and childhood illness were particularly challenging); and
- 30% of respondents noted that they changed the hours or amount that they worked to accommodate their child care needs.

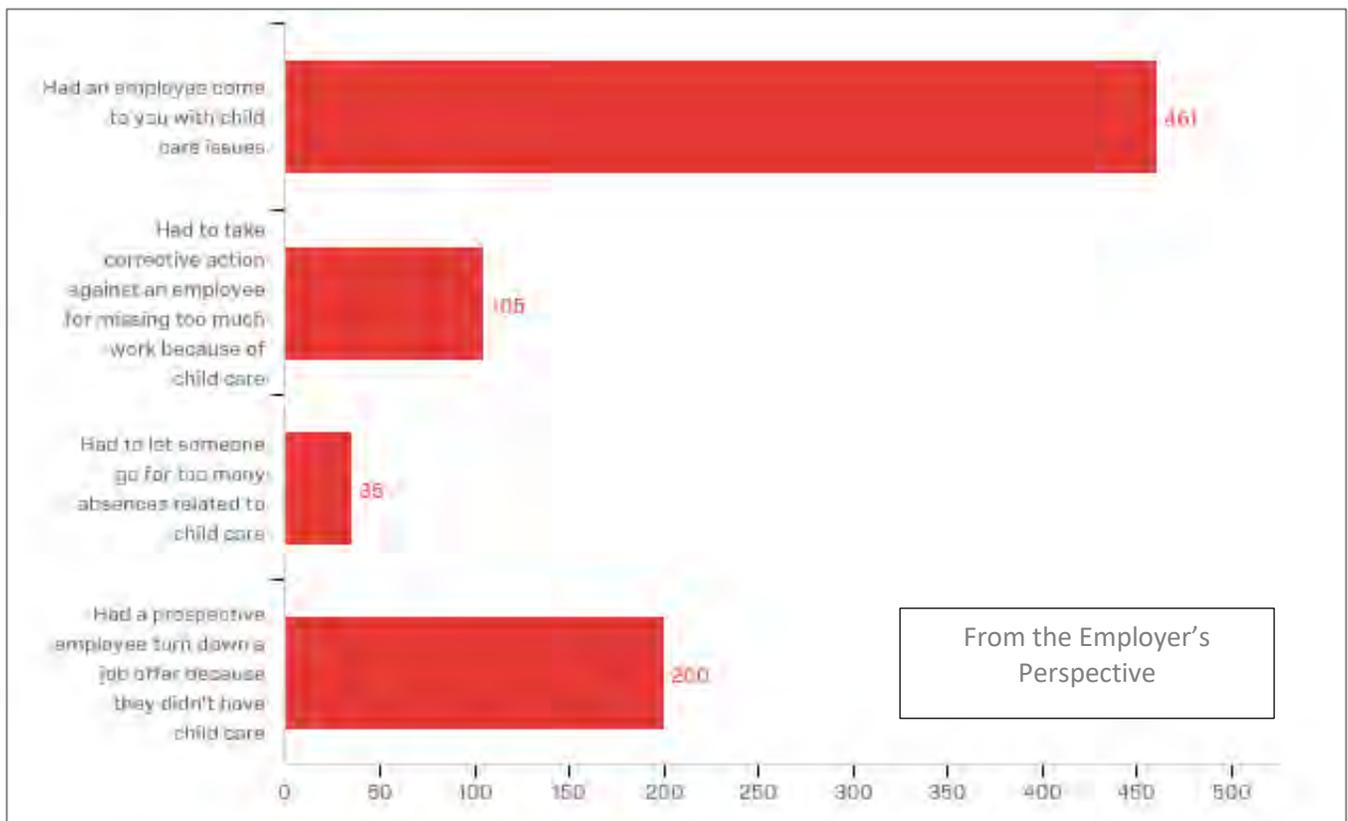
While the majority of workers did not worry that their child care issues would affect their job, 16% worried they might be fired as a result of child care issues. Approximately 6% had corrective action taken against them as a result of child care-related absences or tardiness.



FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS

Although not everyone has children or a need for child care, the impact that it has on the workforce is apparent to most workers, including those *without* children. In fact, when asked if a coworker at their current job has mentioned issues with child care, 59% said yes.

Furthermore, 37% of employed survey respondents were either in a Human Resources or Supervisory position where other employees reported to them. Of these administrative workers, 69% reported that they have had employees come to them to report child care issues. This peaked in Oneida County where 71% of respondents in HR or Supervisory positions have received reports of child-care issues from workers. It may be of particular concern that 30% of these administrators reported they had a prospective employee turn down a position because they didn't have child care. In Montgomery County, this rose to 61%. Overall, 16% stated they had taken corrective action against an employee who missed too much work due to child care issues, and 5% had terminated employees due to too many absences related to child care.



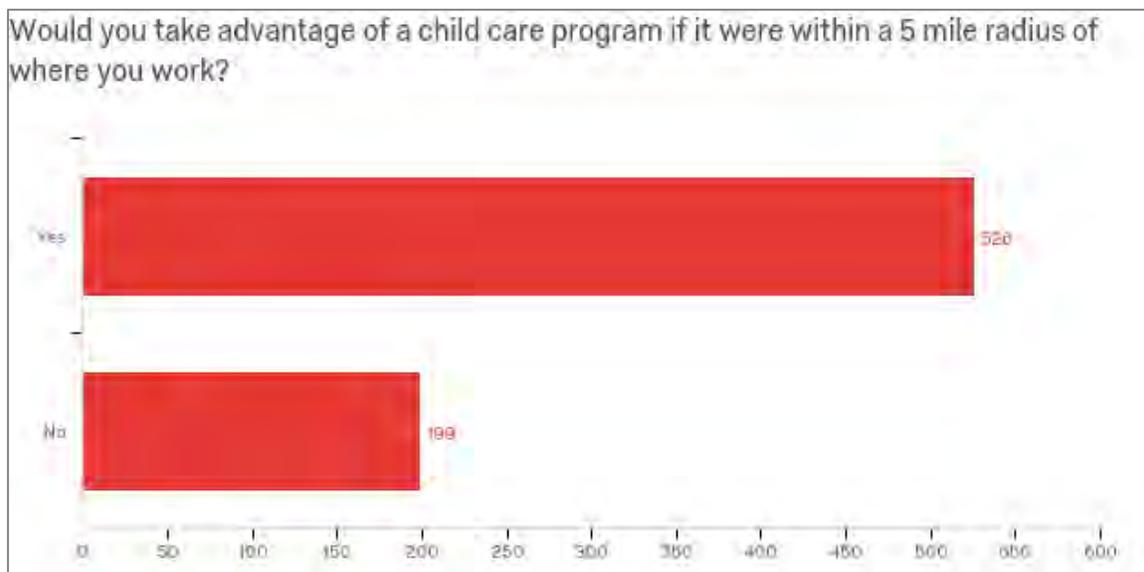
It's hard to tell how survey respondents felt about their child care arrangements. They were asked to select if they were satisfied with their child care arrangement or if they were unhappy. While 34% reported being satisfied with their child care, only 11% reported that they were unhappy with their child care arrangement. This leaves a large population of respondents who, for an unknown reason, didn't select either of those options.

About 24% of respondents reported they made use of a licensed/registered child care program, while 3% of respondents weren't sure if their child's program was licensed/registered. This may indicate that the majority of respondents with children under 13 are making use of child care services provided *outside of* New York State Regulation. With just under 20% of survey respondents stating that the hours they worked made it difficult to find child care and there weren't any child care providers near their workplace, it is not surprising that so many are not using licensed care.



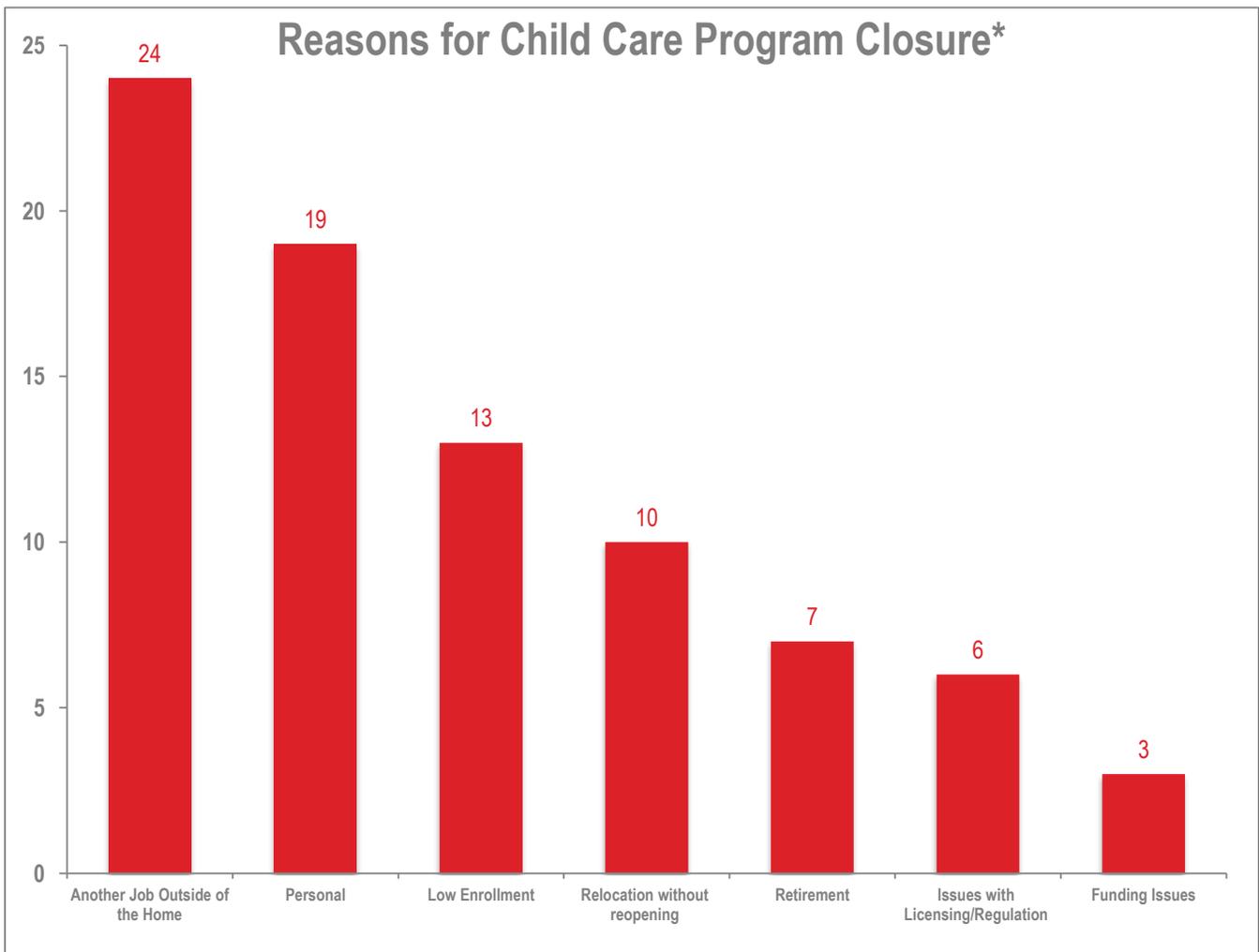
Children investigating berries at Hey Diddle Diddle Daycare in Frankfort

Regardless, 73% of employed survey respondents with children reported that they would take advantage of a child care facility if one was made available within a five-mile radius of work.



As part of addressing the challenges faced by those needing child care, it is also important to understand the reasons why there is a reported shortage of child care *programs* in the Mohawk Valley.

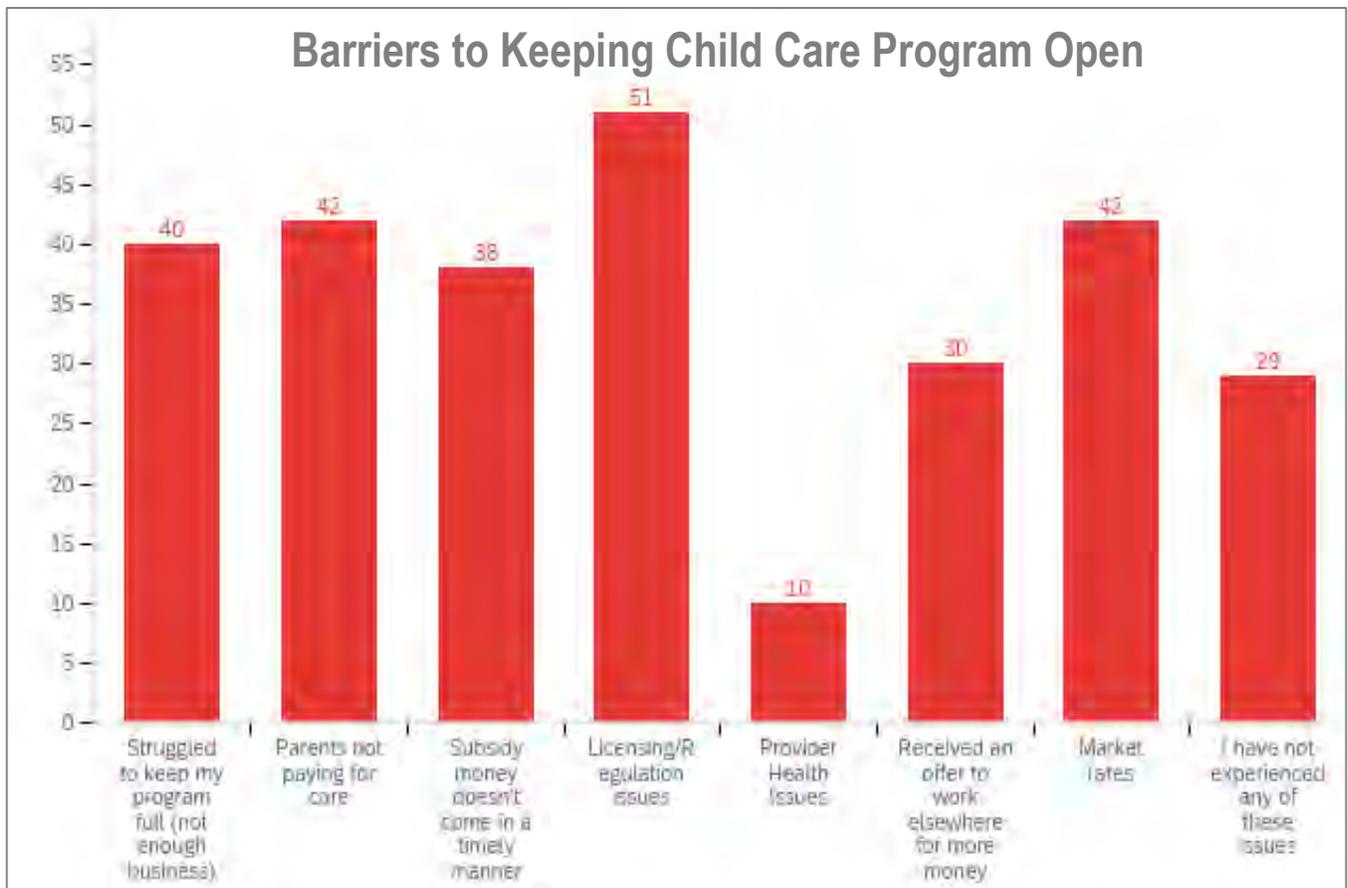
In efforts to oversee area child care providers, the Child Care Council at CCEOC conducts 'exit interviews' for those who are leaving the profession. These exit interviews are part of routine data collection performed by the Council to keep their database of child care programs as current as possible. When the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (**OCFS**) notifies the Council that a child care program has closed, staff contact a representative of the program to discuss reason(s) for closure. This information is not captured by OCFS nor is it always available once the program closes, however, the Council will make multiple attempts as the information is deemed critical to the current and future state of child care services in the Mohawk Valley. The chart below portrays a summary of data extracted from exit interviews since 2006. Not included in this report are temporary closures for reasons such as relocation to a new site, or program/facility expansion.



*proprietary data of Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension, representing 3 counties

While the previous data is helpful for understanding what *former* providers perceived as catalysts driving their final decisions to *close* their businesses, surveyors also wanted to provide a snapshot of what *current* child care providers perceive as hurdles in their efforts to keep their doors *open*. From a separate survey instrument disseminated to child care providers in all six counties of the Region, the Child Care Council received 128 provider responses. They were asked to select from a pre-determined list of provider issues heard frequently by the Child Care Council. In addition, respondents could write-in their own issues to elaborate on unique circumstances or add something not found on the list provided. Immediately below is a graph depicting the responses tallied from this survey.

There are some interesting disparities presented in the two subsets of provider data discussed above. First, while the majority of *current* providers (18%) have experienced issues with Licensing/Regulations only a small percentage of *former* providers (7%) identified that as the primary reason for closure during their exit interview. In addition, the largest percentage of *former* providers (29%) closed after being offered a different job, which was one of the least common factors reported by *current* providers (11%) in discussion of their barriers to remaining open.



In their written comments, several providers also discussed the disproportionate changes that have occurred in the ages of children who currently need child care. The issue they describe has resulted from the ongoing emergence of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs.

As UPK programs have increased in prevalence, the need for care serving youngsters after the infancy and toddler stages has essentially decreased or, in some cases, been reduced considerably to require more flexible, part-time arrangements.

For providers, this reduces income and is compounded by the State's regulations that limit the number of infants one individual may care for at one time. Providers, therefore, find themselves with reduced middle-agers who have moved on to UPK, and their losses cannot be offset by taking in new – or more – infants.



Learning to walk at Little Wonders Child Care in Rome

Certainly, the regulation is meant to ensure the safety and proper supervision of our children. Nevertheless, it has evolved to skew the supply and demand for child care at certain ages and communities are left to deal with the following:

- **high demand, low supply of infant care providers, and**
- **low demand, high supply of preschool care providers**

When asked what could be done to help programs remain in business, an overwhelming majority of responses from providers related to financial support. Operators of child care programs are having trouble making ends meet in a profession that they love. What surveying this population has demonstrated to the Child Care Council is that our Region's providers face many diverse challenges on a daily basis. Eventually those challenges multiply and become too overwhelming for the amount of pay they receive, and providers end up taking jobs outside of the home where they can make at least the same wages with less personal stress, if not more. The result is a high-turnover child care industry that leaves families, workers, and employers struggling.



Children learn about pirates at St. James Church Day School in Clinton

During the survey period, focus groups were convened to assist in collecting qualitative information that could shed additional insight on local perceptions and opinions related to child care in the Mohawk Valley. At the time this report was written, focus groups had been completed and results reviewed for one private business, and one not-for-profit services provider. Data is still being collected and analyzed from the third focus group participant, a local college. Preliminary results are summarized below, however an addendum to this report will be released in Spring 2020. Specific

names of the locations where focus groups were held are not included in this report.

The private business focus group was extremely informative on the barriers that working women face pertaining to child care. The participants were all female and varied in age as well as whether they had children at the time. Regardless of their family composition, everyone in the room recognized that quality child care is difficult to find. Those with children expressed that they weren't prepared for how difficult finding care would be when they were ready to return to work. They wished that the topic and resources had been part of child-birthing class since infant care was so difficult to secure. Between the locations of programs and lack of openings within programs for the age groups they were seeking, it was learned that many families today are making use of child care services they don't like just because it's the only option available. Some participants have solicited full-time care from another family member to make ends meet financially, even if that meant driving longer distances.

The expense of child care was also discussed as a barrier. "You can't afford to work, but you can't afford *not* to work," is how one participant described this situation. Some mentioned that the expense of daycare was one of the reasons they weren't having more children, while others had to split up their care arrangements to save money. Although all child care can be expensive, it was noted that afterschool care was particularly costly, since families pay the same amount regardless of the time their child spends there.

One of the most common challenges expressed by participants was the need to find daycare geographically situated within their school district to accommodate any transportation needs back and forth during the families' school- and workdays.

School schedules also pose another yearlong conflict for working families – snow days, staff training, school breaks, and summertime. Many participants stated that they have taken days off from work to care for their child not only during their own brief illnesses, but also during time periods such as those above that were unannounced or incompatible with routine employment schedules. Participants made a point to mention they were all thankful for their office's flexible work policies that help accommodate their families' child care situations.

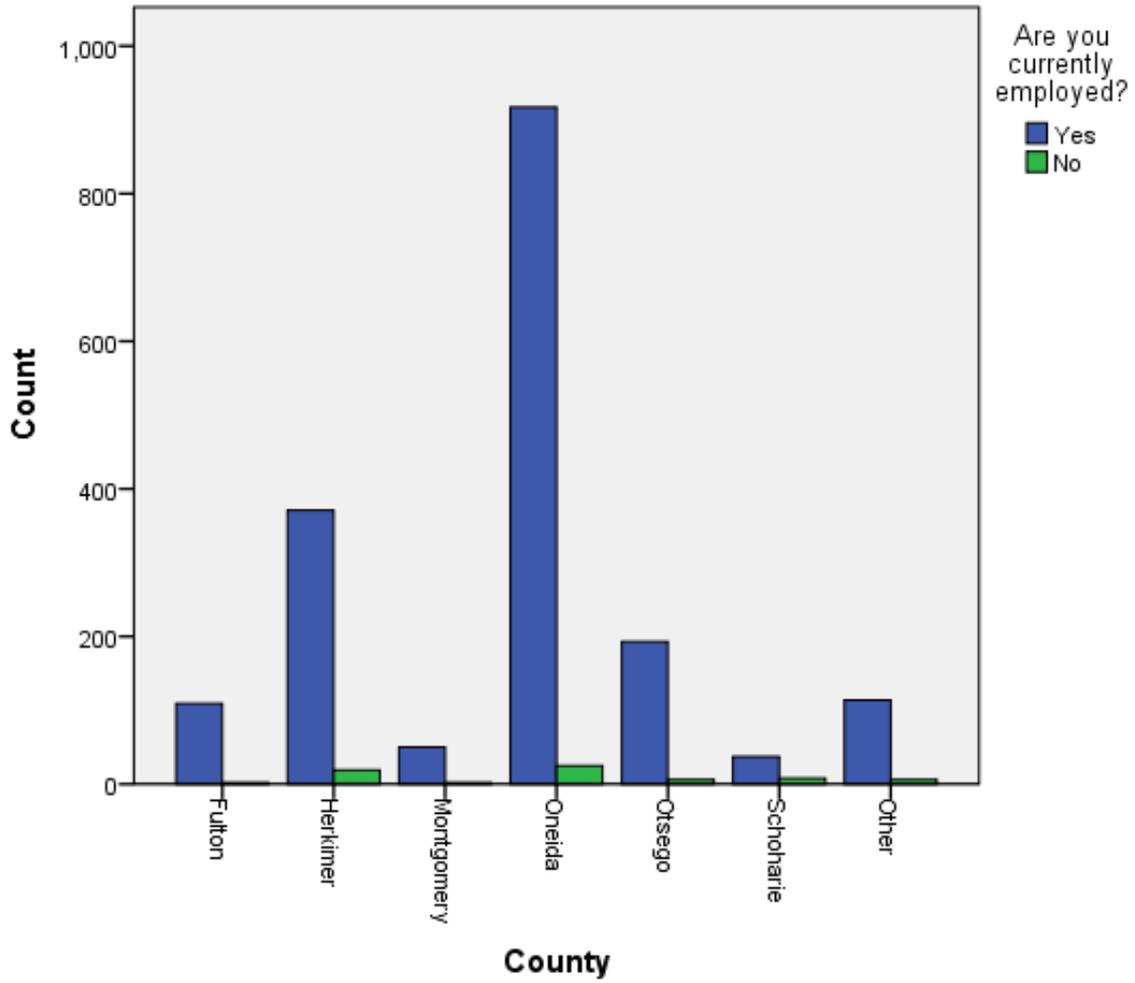
The not-for-profit organization's focus group hosted Arabic, Spanish, Russian, Karen, Burmese and Khmer speaking immigrants (interpreters were used for this focus group). This population mostly uses family members for child care until their children reach school age, so child care wasn't reported as being as much of an issue as it seems to be for indigenous or well-established families. For this population, transportation and language barriers remain the biggest obstacles in nearly all aspects of their lives, particularly gaining employment.

Remaining data and comments from the focus groups are being collected/summarized, and will be released as an addendum in a separate report during Spring 2020.

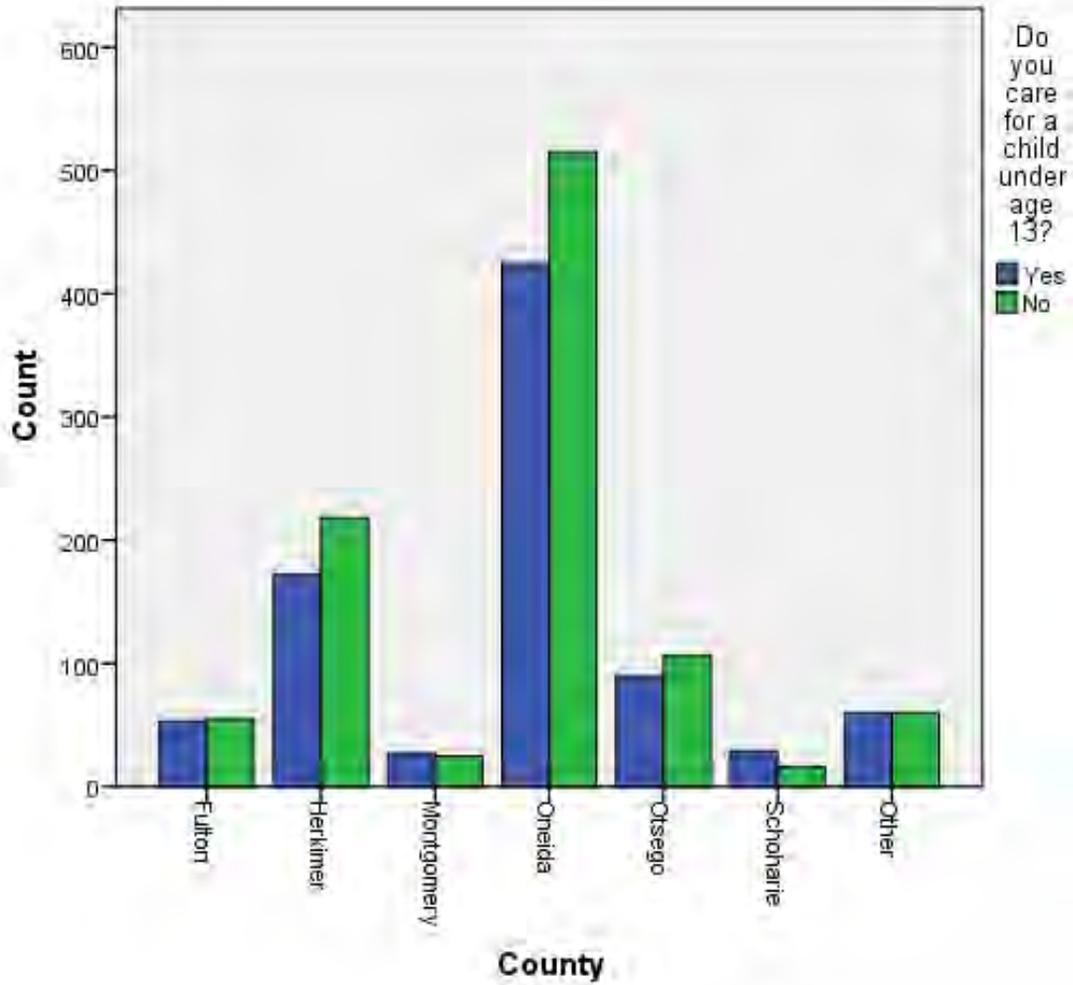
As part of this survey we asked respondents to provide the name of their employer so aggregate data could be reported back to each business regarding their employees' specific child care needs. We found, however, that respondents were sometimes vague in recording their employers' full business names. Therefore, we have compiled an alphabetical roster after cross-checking against public listings to the best of our ability. We regret that we were unable to clearly pinpoint the listings for some of our regional business partners, which in many cases was due to a lack of reference regarding branch or geographical location. Some unverified names have been included in this list as recorded by survey respondents in our attempt to ensure all participating or referenced employers were listed.

ACCESS-VR, Accu-Data, **Adirondack Central School District**, Albany Dental Care, **Americu Credit Union**, Amsterdam Printing, **Aman Development Corp**, Area Resource Center, **Baird**, Bassett Healthcare Systems, **Benefit Plans Administrative Services**, Benton Hall Academy, **Big Moose Inn**, BNY Mellon, **Bob Putnam Agency Inc**, BOCES, **Booz Allen Hamilton**, Brady Fence Co, **Brewery Ommegang**, BRIDGES, **Bright Hill Press**, Brooks Machine Products Ltd, **Bugbee Children's Center**, Building Blocks, **C&D Advertising**, Canastota Central School District, **CAP-21**, Catholic Charities, **Cazenovia Public Library**, Clinton Early Learning Center, **Celebration Children's Center**, Center for Disability Services, **Center for Family Life and Recovery**, Center State Propane, **Central New York Health Home Network**, Central Valley School District, **Centro Civico**, Chamber of Commerce, **Church of the Holy Family**, CNY Developmental Disabilities Services Office, **CNY Psychiatric Center**, Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District, **Cochran Farm 1790**, Community Action, **Community Bank**, Community Foundation, **Cooperstown Central School District**, Cornell Cooperative Extension, **County Child Development Council**, County Department of Planning, **County Emergency Service**, County Office for the Aging, **County Probation**, County Public Health, **County Rural Preservation**, County Sheriff, **County SNAP**, County Social Services, **County WIC Program**, County Youth Bureau, **Cozy Cubs Daycare**, Delaware Engineering, **Department of Corrections**, Department of Education, **Department of Environmental Conservation**, Department of Labor, **Department of Transportation**, **D.P.C.**, Didymus Thomas Library, **Dolgeville Central School District**, Douglas County School District, **DRN Counseling & Consulting Services**, Dunham Library, **Eastern Star Daycare**, Ed&Ed Business Technology Inc, **Eggan Excavating**, Empire State Development, **Enchanted Forest Water Safari**, Family Planning of South Central NY, **Feldman Manufacturing**, FGI, **First Assembly of God Church**, **First Nursery School of Utica**, Foor's Auto Repair, **Frank J Basloe Library**, Frankfort Free Library, **FrieslandCampina**, General William Floyd Elementary, **Genesee Street Children's Center**, Giacomo Sporting USA, **Gilbertsville Expressive Movement Inc**, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy, **Gold Star Feed & Grain**, Griffiss Business & Technology Park, **H&R Block**, Half Pint Academy, **Hamilton Public Library**, Hartwick College, **Head Start**, Helios Care, **Herkimer College**, Herkimer Central School District, **Holland Patent Central School District**, Hope House, **ICAN**, Indium Corporation, **Industrial Development**

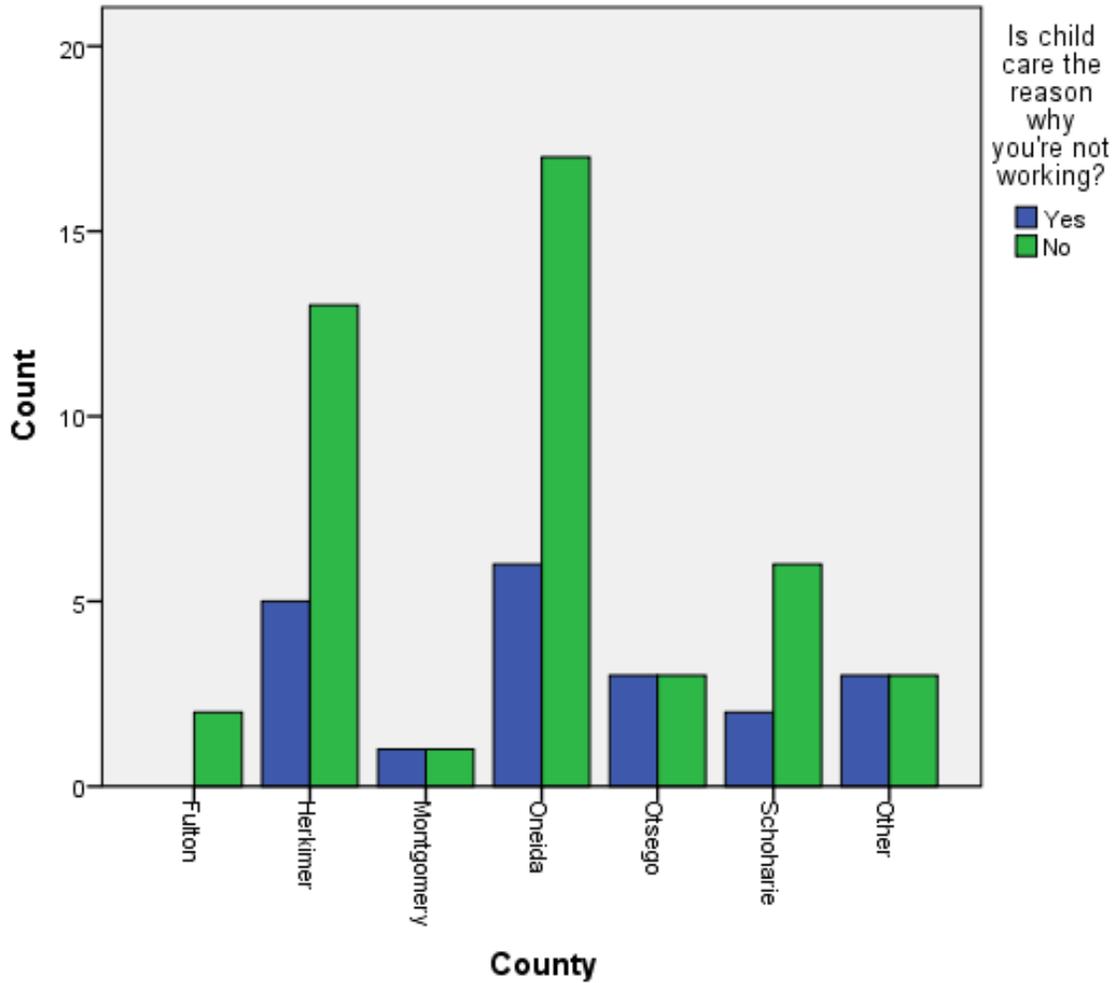
Agency, Jay's Day Care, **JBK Stainless**, Jervis Public Library, **Jewish Community Center**, Johnson Park Center, **Junior Junction**, Kids Time Learning Center, **Kidz Korner**, Kinney Drugs, **Kirby Free Library**, Legal Services of CNY, **LIFEPlan CCO NY**, Little Falls City School District, **Little Falls Hospital**, Little Falls Public Library, **Little Sprouts Daycare**, M&T Bank, **Mama Bear Daycare**, Manna Fish Farms Inc, **Masonic Care Community of New York**, Merrill Lynch, **MetLife**, Mohawk Valley Community College, **MV Housing & Homeless Coalition**, Mohawk Valley Interpreters, **Mohawk Valley Latino Association**, Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network, **Morrisville Auxillary Corporation**, Mosaic Health, **Mount Markham Central School District**, Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute, **MVP Health**, Nathan Littauer Hospital, **National Baseball Hall of Fame**, NBT Bank, **Nelson & Strife Financial Group**, New Hartford Central School District, **New Hartford Public Library**, New Woodstock Free Library, **New York Central Mutual**, New York Folklore Society, **New York Mills Public Library**, NYS Assembly, **NYS Canal Corporation**, NYS Civil Services, **NYS Department of Information Technology Services**, NYS Justice Center, **Mental Hygiene Legal Services**, NYS School for the Deaf, **NYS Senate**, Newport Telephone Company, **Northern Rivers Family Services**, Northstar Recycling, **Nurse Connection Staffing**, NYS Office of Children & Family Services, **NYS Office of General Services**, Operations Residential, **Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville Central School District**, Opportunities for Otsego Inc, **Otsego Now**, Parkway Center, **Puma Accounting**, R&K Enterprise Solutions, **Rehabilitation Support Services Inc**, Remsen Central School District, **Rescue Mission**, Resource Center for Independent Living, **Rome Art & Community Center**, Rome Central School District, **Rome Early Childhood Program**, Rommel Fence LLC, **Rural Rental Assistance**, Russell Services, **Safe Schools Mohawk Valley**, Sangertown Square, **Schoharie River Center**, Sitrin Health Care Center, **Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center**, Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority, **Sotera Investigative Group LLC**, Springbrook, **St. John the Evangelist Nursery School**, St. Paul's Nazareth Daycare, **SUNY Cobleskill**, SUNY Oneonta, **SUNY Polytechnic Institute**, Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, **Syracuse University**, Tech Geekery Inc, **The Center**, The Family Counseling Center, **The Farmhouse at Emmons**, The Fountainhead Group, **The Kelberman Center**, The Neighborhood Center, **The Pavillion at Robinson Terrace**, Thea Bowman House, **NYS Thruway Authority**, Town of Webb, **Town of Webb Union Free School District**, Townsquare Media, **Tractor Supply Co**, Gehring Tricot Corp, **United Healthcare**, Upstate Cerebral Palsy, **Upstate Family Health Center Inc**, United Way, **Utica Academy of Science Charter School**, Utica City School District, **Utica College**, Utica Public Library, **Utica Zoo**, Valley Health Services (Bassett), **Valley Residential Services (Bassett)**, Vernon-Verona Sherrill Central Schools, **Walgreens**, Walmart, **Walter Elwood Museum**, Watershed Agricultural Council, **Weller Library**, West Winfield Library, **Western Town Library**, Westmoreland Central School Elementary, **WIC (Women, Infants, & Children)**, Working Solutions, YMCA, **YWCA**.



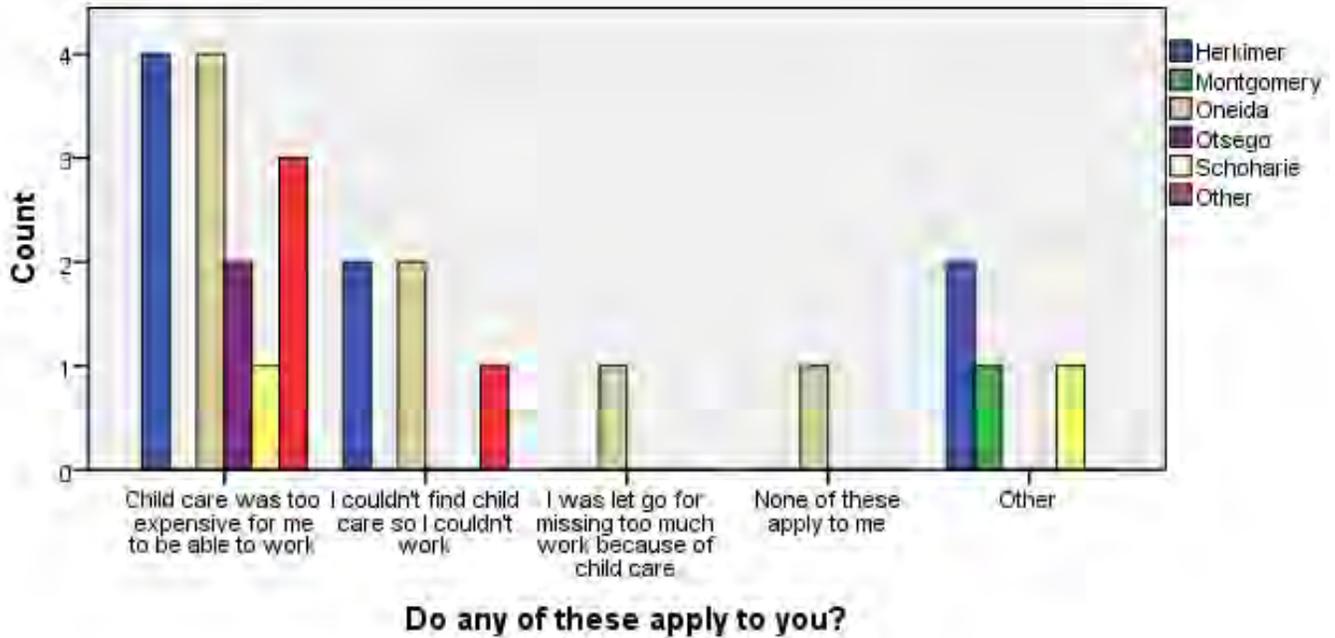
		Are you currently employed?		Total
		Yes	No	
County	Fulton	109 (98%)	2 (2%)	111
	Herkimer	371 (95%)	19 (5%)	390
	Montgomery	50 (96%)	2 (4%)	52
	Oneida	917 (97%)	25 (3%)	942
	Otsego	193 (97%)	6 (3%)	199
	Schoharie	37 (82%)	8 (18%)	45
	Other	114 (95%)	6 (5%)	120
Total		1791	68	1859



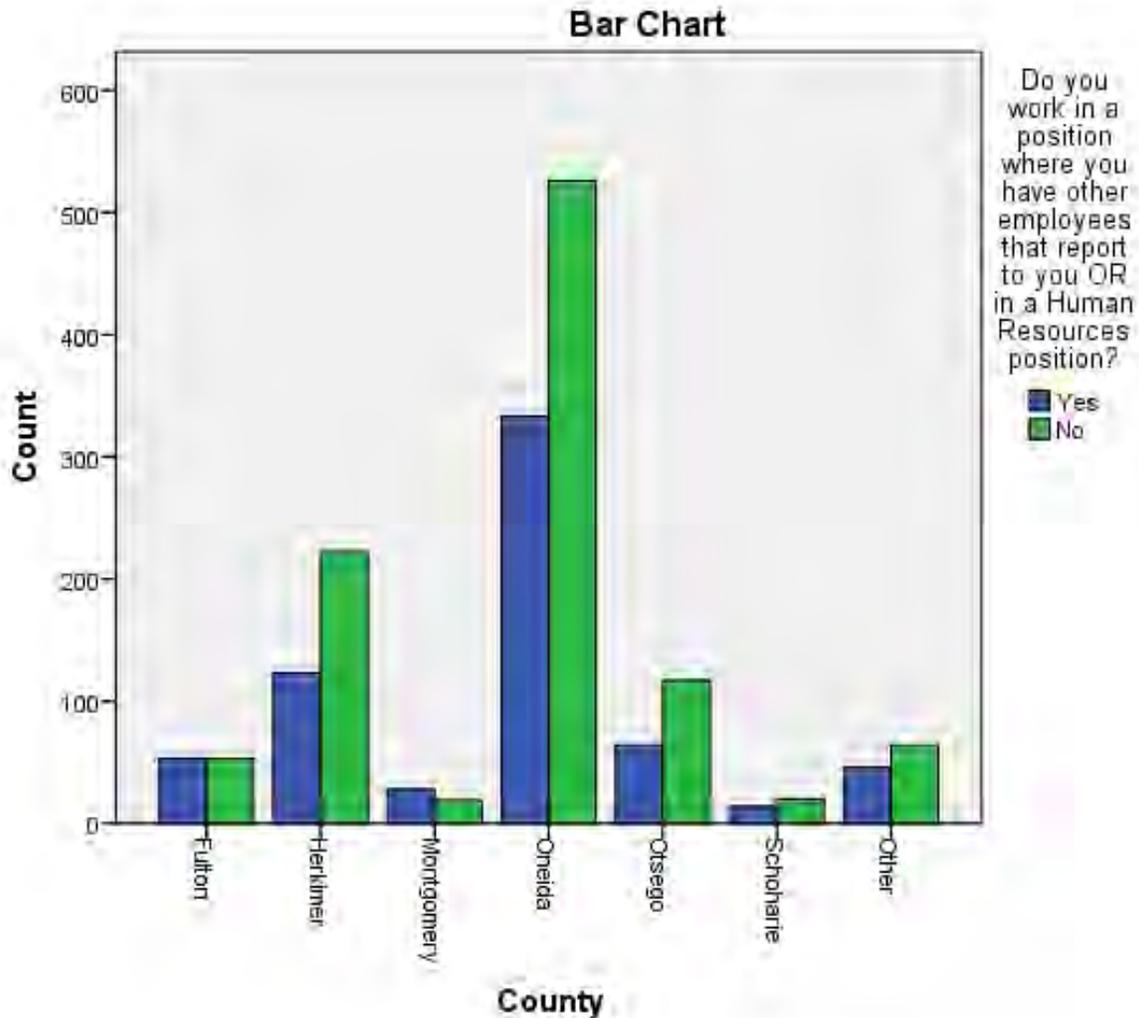
Count		Do you care for a child under age 13?		Total
		Yes	No	
County	Fulton	53 (49%)	55 (51%)	108
	Herkimer	172 (44%)	218 (56%)	390
	Montgomery	27 (52%)	25 (48%)	52
	Oneida	425 (45%)	515 (55%)	940
	Otsego	90 (46%)	106 (54%)	196
	Schoharie	29 (64%)	16 (36%)	45
	Other	60 (50%)	60 (50%)	120
Total		856	995	1851



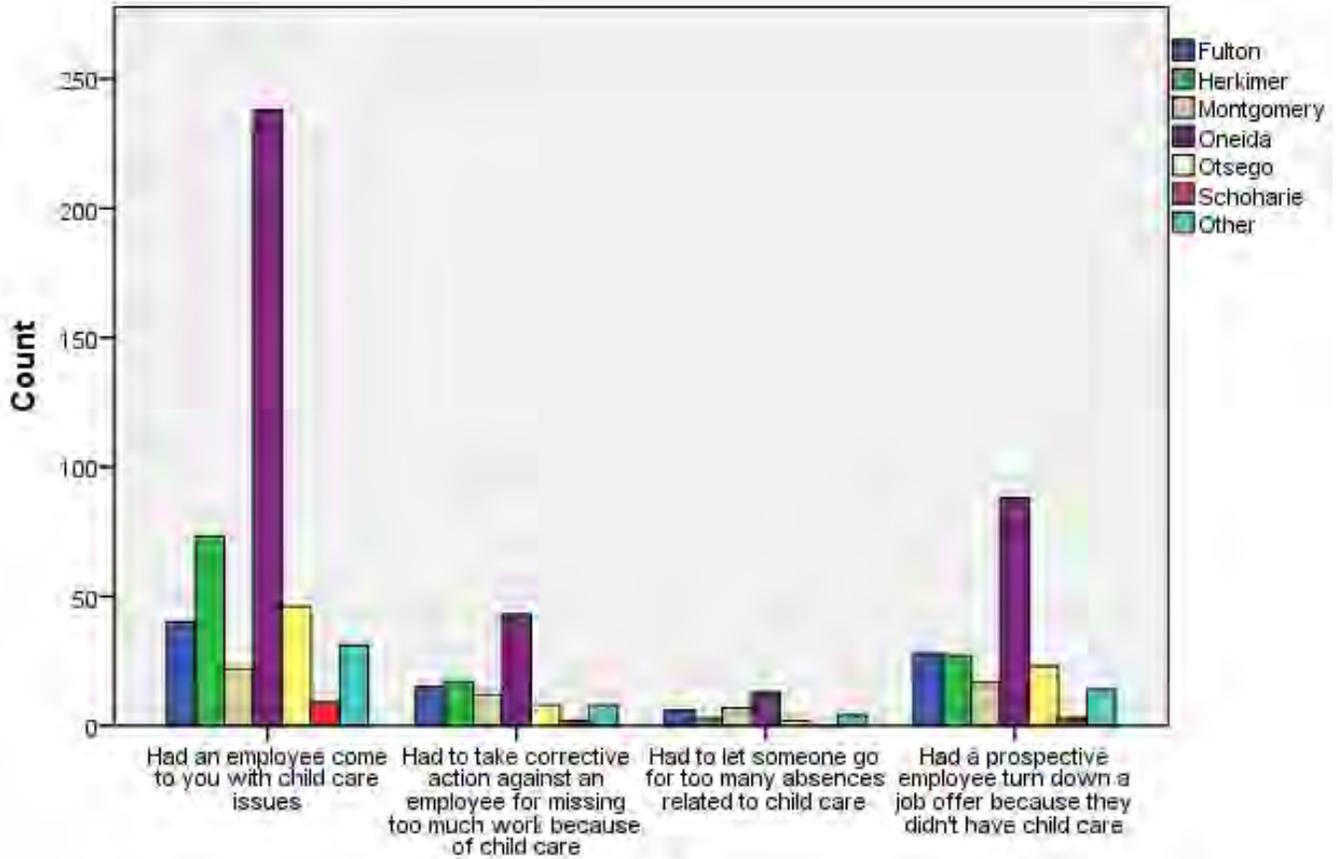
County		Is child care the reason why you're not working?		Total
		Yes	No	
Fulton		0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Herkimer		5 (28%)	13 (72%)	18
Montgomery		1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Oneida		6 (26%)	17 (74%)	23
Otsego		3 (50%)	3 (50%)	6
Schoharie		2 (25%)	6 (75%)	8
Other		3 (50%)	3 (50%)	6
Total		20	45	65



		Do any of these apply to you?					Total	
		Child care was too expensive for me to be able to work	I couldn't find child care so I couldn't work	I was let go for missing too much work because of child care	None of these apply to me	Other		
County	Herkimer	Count	4 (21%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	5
	Montgomery	Count	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1
	Oneida	Count	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	6
	Otsego	Count	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2
	Schoharie	Count	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (13%)	2
	Other	Count	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3
Total		Count	14	5	1	1	4	19

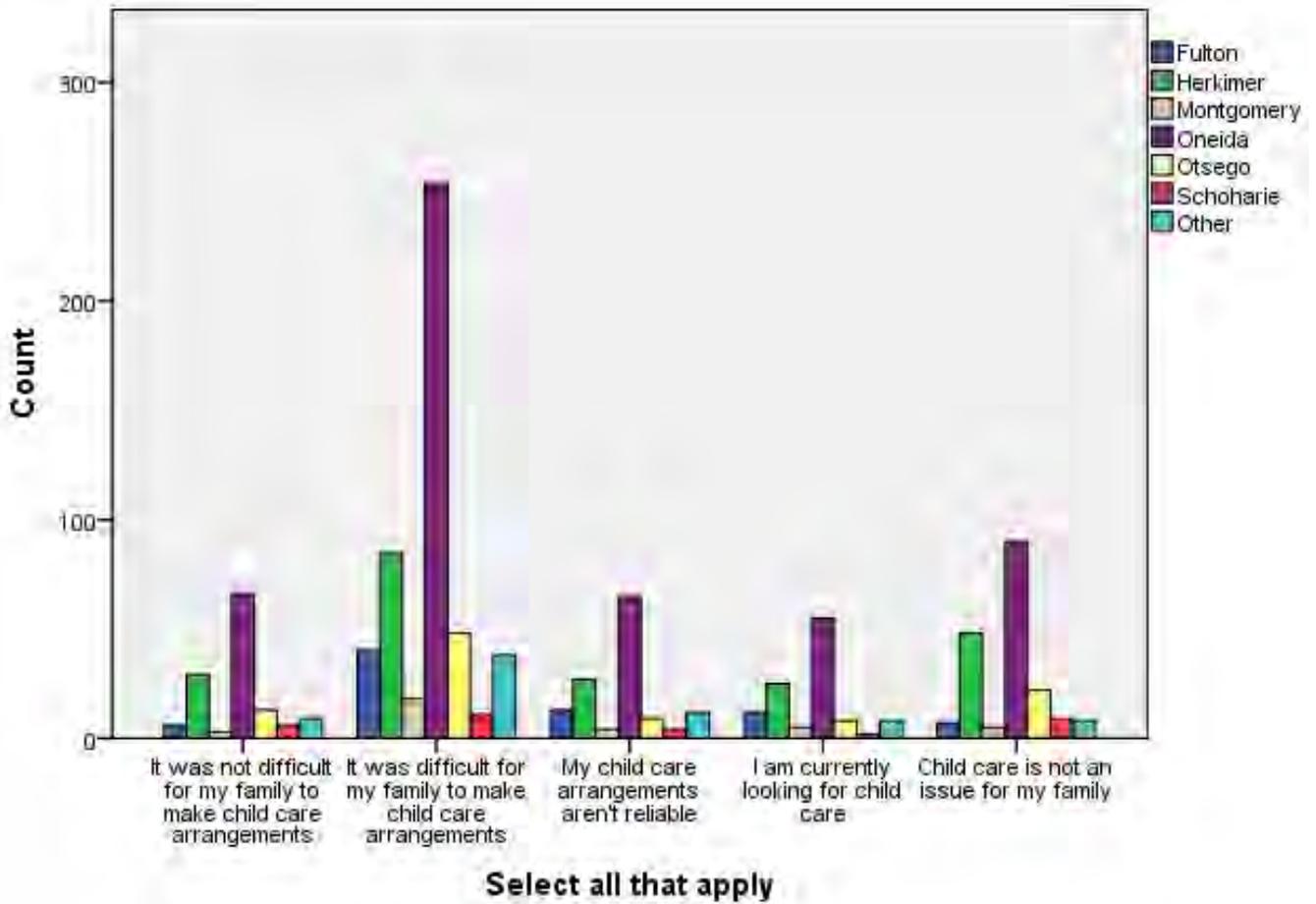


		Do you work in a position where you have other employees that report to you OR in a Human Resources position?		Total
		Yes	No	
County	Fulton	53 (50%)	53 (50%)	106
	Herkimer	123 (36%)	222 (64%)	345
	Montgomery	28 (60%)	19 (40%)	47
	Oneida	333 (39%)	526 (61%)	859
	Otsego	64 (35%)	117 (65%)	181
	Schoharie	14 (41%)	20 (59%)	34
	Other	46 (42%)	64 (58%)	110
Total		661	1021	1682

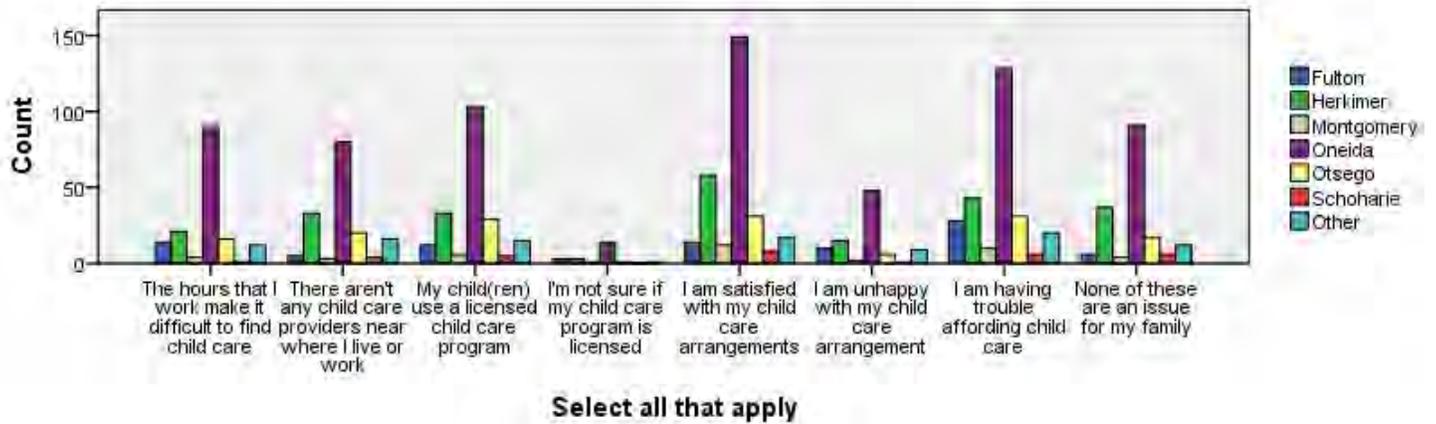


Have you ever...

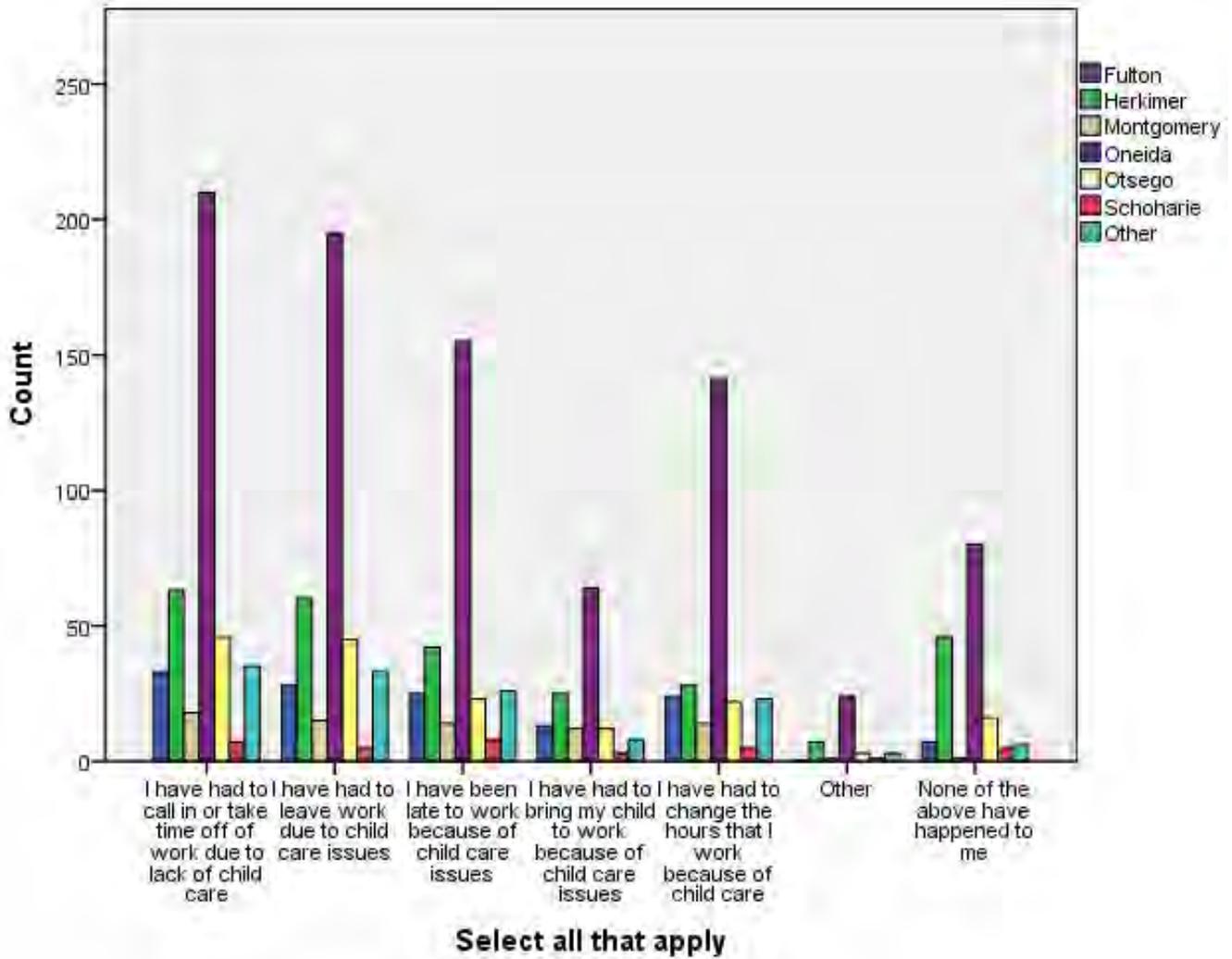
		Have you ever...				Total	
		Had an employee come to you with child care issues	Had to take corrective action against an employee for missing too much work because of child care	Had to let someone go for too many absences related to child care	Had a prospective employee turn down a job offer because they didn't have child care		
County	Fulton	Count	40 (75%)	15 (28%)	6 (11%)	28 (53%)	44
	Herkimer	Count	73 (59%)	17 (14%)	3 (2%)	27 (22%)	81
	Montgomery	Count	22 (79%)	12 (43%)	7 (25%)	17 (61%)	23
	Oneida	Count	238 (71%)	43 (13%)	13 (4%)	88 (26%)	252
	Otsego	Count	46 (72%)	8 (13%)	2 (3%)	23 (36%)	49
	Schoharie	Count	9 (64%)	2 (14%)	0 (0%)	3 (21%)	9
	Other	Count	31 (67%)	8 (17%)	4 (9%)	14 (30%)	32
Total	Count	459	105	35	200	490	



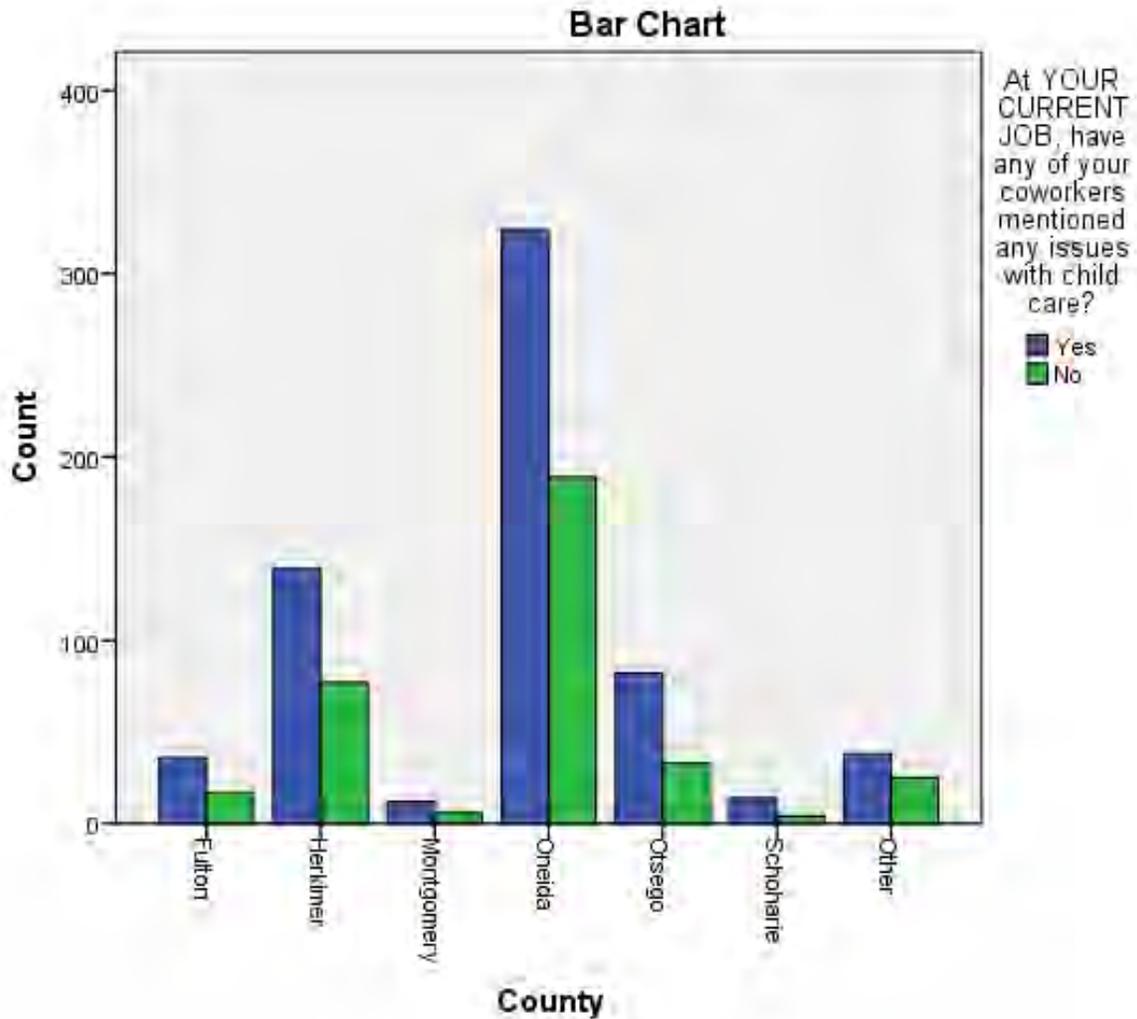
		Select all that apply					Total	
		It was not difficult for my family to make child care arrangements	It was difficult for my family to make child care arrangements	My child care arrangements aren't reliable	I am currently looking for child care	Child care is not an issue for my family		
County	Fulton	Count	6 (11%)	40 (75%)	13 (25%)	12 (23%)	7 (13%)	51
	Herkimer	Count	29 (17%)	85 (49%)	27 (16%)	25 (15%)	48 (28%)	159
	Montgomery	Count	3 (11%)	18 (67%)	4 (15%)	5 (19%)	5 (19%)	26
	Oneida	Count	66 (16%)	254 (60%)	65 (15%)	55 (13%)	90 (21%)	405
	Otsego	Count	13 (14%)	48 (53%)	9 (10%)	8 (9%)	22 (24%)	84
	Schoharie	Count	6 (21%)	11 (38%)	4 (14%)	2 (7%)	9 (31%)	26
	Other	Count	9 (15%)	38 (63%)	12 (20%)	8 (13%)	8 (13%)	55
Total		Count	132	494	134	115	189	806



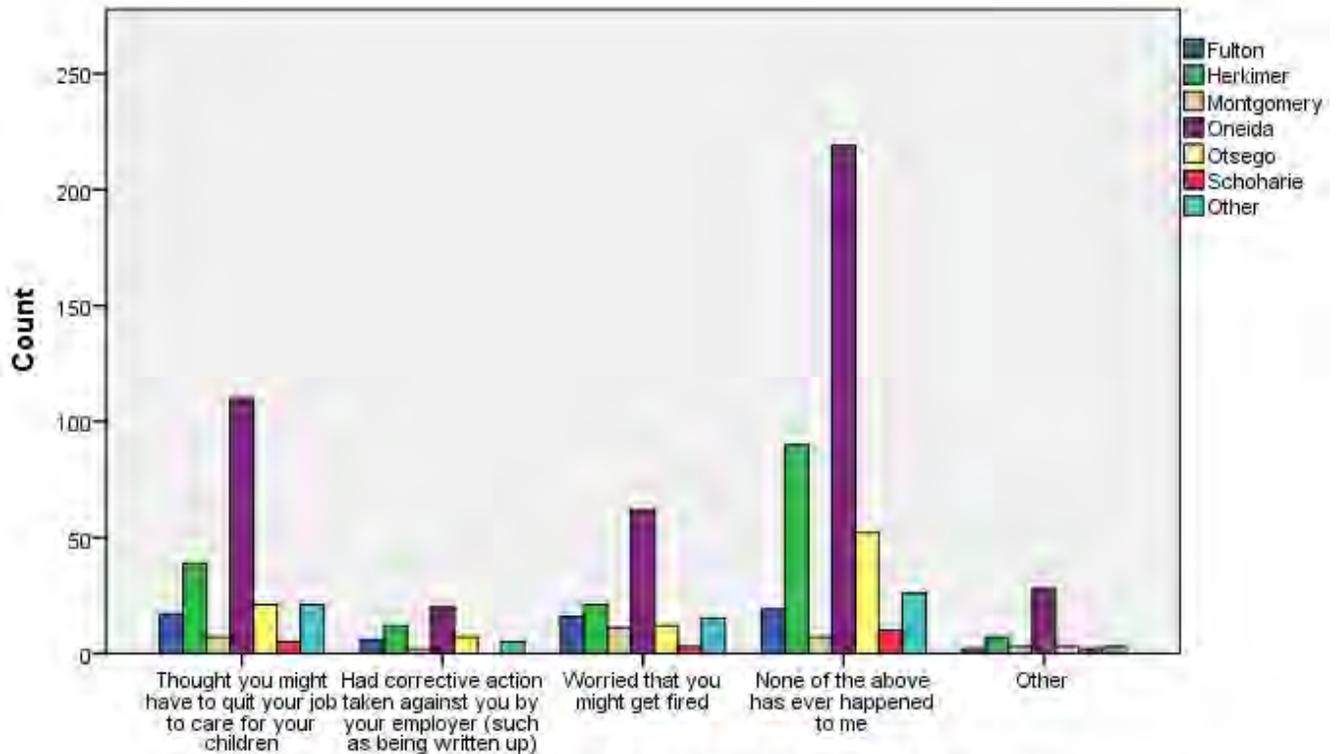
			Select all that apply								
			The hours that I work make it difficult to find child care	There aren't any child care providers near where I live or work	My child(ren) use a licensed child care program	I'm not sure if my child care program is licensed	I am satisfied with my child care arrangements	I am unhappy with my child care arrangement	I am having trouble affording child care	None of these are an issue for my family	Total
County	Fulton	Count	14 (26%)	5 (9%)	12 (23%)	3 (6%)	14 (26%)	10 (19%)	28 (53%)	6 (11%)	50
	Herkimer	Count	21 (12%)	33 (19%)	33 (19%)	3 (2%)	58 (34%)	15 (9%)	43 (25%)	37 (22%)	153
	Montgomery	Count	4 (15%)	3 (11%)	6 (22%)	1 (4%)	12 (44%)	2 (7%)	10 (37%)	4 (15%)	24
	Oneida	Count	90 (21%)	80 (19%)	103 (24%)	14 (3%)	149 (35%)	48 (11%)	128 (30%)	91 (21%)	387
	Otsego	Count	16 (18%)	20 (22%)	29 (32%)	1 (1%)	31 (34%)	6 (7%)	31 (34%)	17 (19%)	82
	Schoharie	Count	1 (3%)	4 (14%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)	8 (28%)	1 (3%)	6 (21%)	6 (21%)	23
	Other	Count	12 (20%)	16 (27%)	15 (25%)	1 (2%)	17 (28%)	9 (15%)	20 (33%)	12 (20%)	54
Total		Count	158	161	203	23	289	91	266	173	773



		Select all that apply								
		I have had to call in or take time off of work due to lack of child care	I have had to leave work due to child care issues	I have been late to work because of child care issues	I have had to bring my child to work because of child care issues	I have had to change the hours that I work because of child care	Other	None of the above have happened to me	Total	
County	Fulton	Count	33 (62%)	28 (53%)	25 (47%)	13 (25%)	24 (45%)	0 (0%)	7 (13%)	48
	Herkimer	Count	63 (39%)	60 (37%)	42 (26%)	25 (15%)	28 (17%)	7 (4%)	46 (28%)	143
	Montgomery	Count	18 (72%)	15 (60%)	14 (56%)	12 (48%)	14 (56%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	21
	Oneida	Count	210 (51%)	195 (47%)	155 (37%)	64 (15%)	141 (34%)	24 (6%)	80 (19%)	374
	Otsego	Count	46 (53%)	45 (52%)	23 (26%)	12 (14%)	22 (25%)	3 (3%)	16 (18%)	79
	Schoharie	Count	7 (30%)	5 (22%)	8 (35%)	3 (13%)	5 (22%)	1 (4%)	5 (22%)	17
	Other	Count	35 (63%)	33 (59%)	26 (46%)	8 (14%)	23 (41%)	3 (5%)	6 (11%)	50
Total		Count	412	381	293	137	257	39	161	732

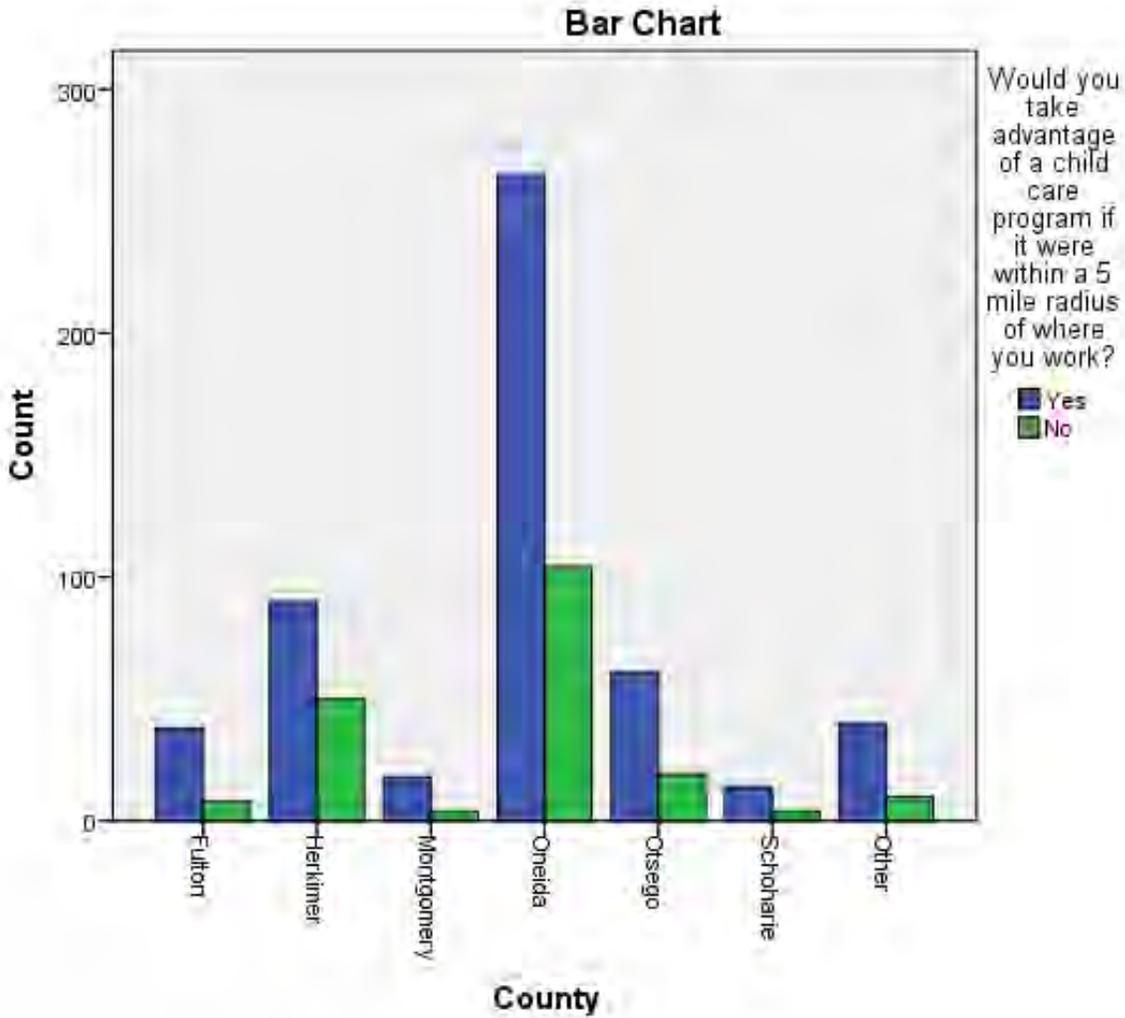


Count		At YOUR CURRENT JOB, have any of your coworkers mentioned any issues with child care?		Total
		Yes	No	
County	Fulton	36 (68%)	17 (32%)	53
	Herkimer	139 (64%)	77 (36%)	216
	Montgomery	12 (67%)	6 (33%)	18
	Oneida	324 (63%)	189 (37%)	513
	Otsego	82 (71%)	33 (29%)	115
	Schoharie	14 (78%)	4 (22%)	18
	Other	38 (60%)	25 (40%)	63
Total		645	351	996



As a result of child care problems, have you ever...

			Select all that apply					Total
			Thought you might have to quit your job to care for your children	Had corrective action taken against you by your employer (such as being written up)	Worried that you might get fired	None of the above has ever happened to me	Other	
County	Fulton	Count	17 (32%)	6 (11%)	16 (30%)	19 (36%)	2 (4%)	46
	Herkimer	Count	39 (24%)	12 (7%)	21 (13%)	90 (55%)	7 (4%)	143
	Montgomery	Count	7 (28%)	2 (8%)	11 (44%)	7 (28%)	3 (12%)	22
	Oneida	Count	110 (27%)	20 (5%)	62 (15%)	219 (53%)	28 (7%)	372
	Otsego	Count	21 (24%)	7 (8%)	12 (14%)	52 (60%)	3 (3%)	78
	Schoharie	Count	5 (22%)	0 (0%)	3 (13%)	10 (43%)	2 (9%)	18
	Other	Count	21 (38%)	5 (9%)	15 (27%)	26 (46%)	3 (5%)	50
Total		Count	220	52	140	423	48	729



		Would you take advantage of a child care program if it were within a 5 mile radius of where you work?		Total
		Yes	No	
County	Fulton	38 (83%)	8 (17%)	46
	Herkimer	90 (64%)	50 (36%)	140
	Montgomery	18 (82%)	4 (18%)	22
	Oneida	265 (72%)	104 (28%)	369
	Otsego	61 (76%)	19 (24%)	80
	Schoharie	14 (78%)	4 (22%)	18
	Other	40 (80%)	10 (20%)	50
Total		526	199	725

*Child Care Deserts in the
North Country:
A Region in Crisis*



OVERVIEW



The North Country region of New York State is comprised of predominantly rural communities covering seven counties—Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence. 86% of census tracts in the region are identified as child care deserts, defined as areas in which the potential need for child care based on population far exceed the capacity of the regulated child care provider system. It is no coincidence that the locations not designated as child care deserts are almost exclusively the small cities and most populous villages that dot the region: Plattsburgh, Watertown, Canton, Potsdam, Massena, and Malone. It is clear the demand for child care is great, given the region-wide rate of 5.8 children per regulated child care slot (or full-time opening for enrollment within a child care center or day care home licensed by or registered with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services).

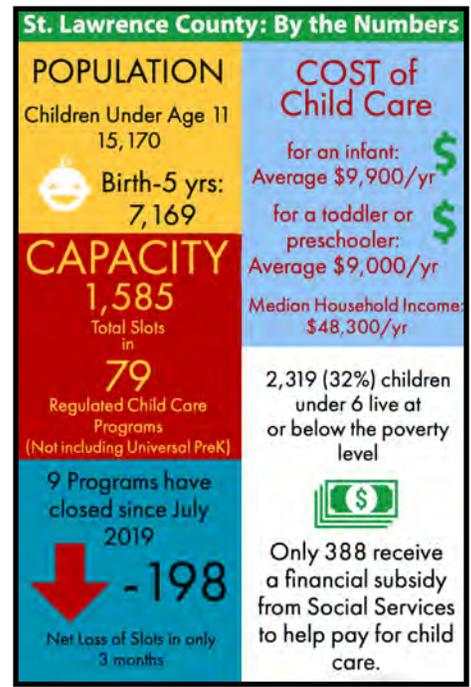
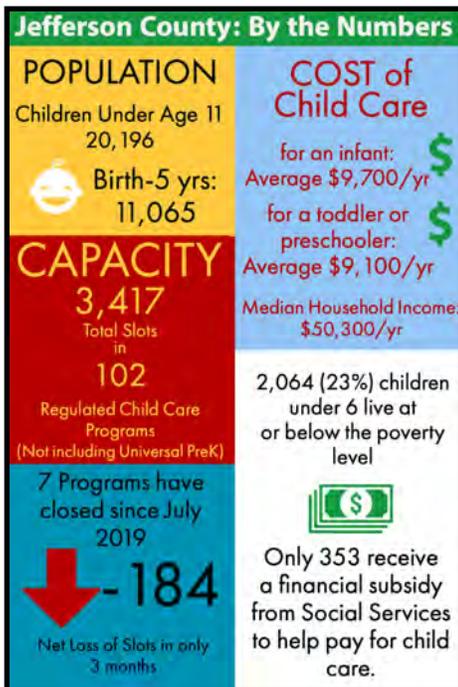
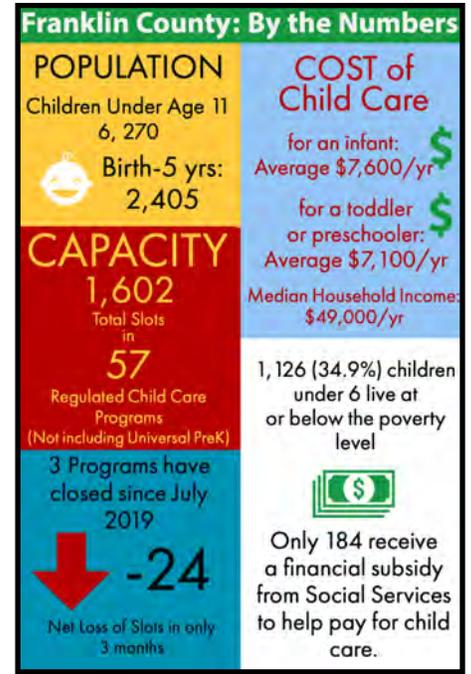
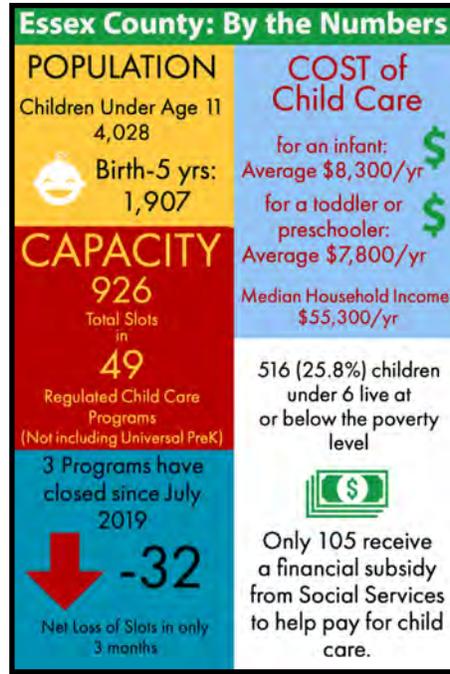
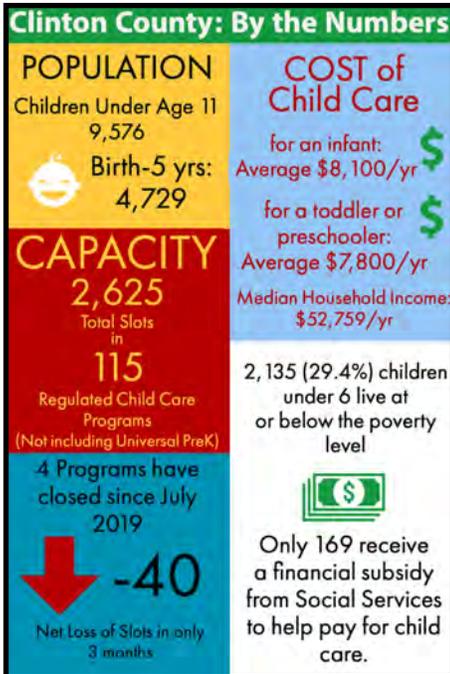
Like many rural landscapes, the North Country is also a region with a high level of poverty, with 32.5% of children from birth to age 6 living at or below poverty level (9,079). This makes affording the cost of child care extremely difficult for many families, especially given that, across the region, only 1,237 children are provided with child care subsidies through the local Department of Social Services.

Child Care Deserts in the North Country Counties and Region								
Data	Clinton	Essex	Franklin	Hamilton	Jefferson	Lewis	St. Lawrence	Region
Children under age 6 (estimates)	4,729	1,907	3,066	115	10,264	1,640	6,165	27,866
Children age 6 through 11 (estimates)	4,847	2,121	3,204	332	10,269	2,063	7,564	30,400
Regulated Child Care Slots	2,566	929	1,571	48	3,051	472	1,422	10,058
Ratio of Children to Slots	3.7	4.3	3.9	9.3	6.7	7.8	9.6	5.8
Number/Percent of Census Tracts that equate to Child Care Deserts (3 or more resident children per slot)	11/66%	15/83%	14/74%	8/89%	23/100%	17/94%	17/89%	105/86%

*Data extracted from a mapping tool developed by the Center for American Progress <https://childcaredeserts.org/index.html?state=NY&split=true&urbanicity=Rural> and from **Child Care Demographics**, NYS Office of Children and Family Services <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/2017-NY-Child-Care-Demographics-Report.pdf>

The infographics below display the state of child care in each North Country county, at a particular recent moment in time (Nov 2019).

Hamilton County is not shown due to low population and lack of accurate census estimate.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

North Country Business & Education Forum

The Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country (CCCCNC) partnered with the Workforce Development Board and other agencies to sponsor the October 2019 North Country Business and Education Forum, focused on child care needs and the workforce. About 90 people, primarily from Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties, representing business leaders, child care and early education professionals, and community organizations were in attendance. Renowned keynote speaker Bill Millett of Scope View Strategic Advantage presented on the economic imperative for high-quality early care and education, specifically related to current impact, and approaching crisis, in the North Country region.

Millett discussed the importance of high-quality early learning and the multiple returns that investment in quality childcare and early education deliver to families, companies and communities in the region and around the world. Millett also urged his listeners to recognize and act upon the overwhelming need for funding and enhancement to child care availability across the North Country, with 86% of all census tracts being identified as child care deserts.

Throughout the day, forum attendees also heard perspectives from a set of panelists reflecting both the interests of employers and the needs of employed parents related to the challenging reality of working around child care, and finding common ground when addressing issues of child care needs. A second panel, consisting of child care business professionals (both center directors, and home-based day care), as well as other early childhood and education experts, explained to the audience barriers affecting the recruitment, education, professional development and retention of a high-quality early care and learning workforce.

Sherry Cleary, of the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute at CUNY, shared a state-level overview of initiatives to support the early childhood field, including QualityStars New York. The day's program concluded with an opportunity for those present to consider "next steps" in advancing the state of quality child care and early learning in our region. Over 30 individuals expressed interest in joining a business leaders' advocacy group, agreed to contact elected officials, or committed to becoming 'champions' and sharing information within their workplace or network.

North Country Child Care Advocacy Work Session

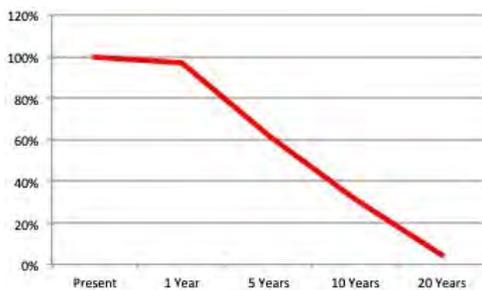
A separate work-group was held the same evening, facilitated by Bill Millett, with a concentration on developing strategies for early care and learning advocacy. This smaller session was attended by the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency directors and staff from the entire seven-county North Country region, as well as other key stakeholders. Discussion revolved around creating targeted messages to 'market' child care as a product with multi-generational impact, promoting the importance of child care and early education as both an essential factor in the development of a globally competitive workforce, and an immediate necessity to support the expansion of the regional economy. Several recommendations emerged as outcomes of this effort, which are included later in this report.

North Country Child Care Surveys

To conduct a thorough assessment of the landscape of child care in the North Country, particularly related to availability, barriers to access, and economic impact, CCCNC created and conducted a set of coordinated surveys to gather information from three major sources: regulated child care sites (licensed or registered day care home providers and child care center directors), parents of young children, and employers. These surveys were distributed throughout the region with the assistance of the five CCRR agencies, and resulted in significant data collection that demonstrated a high level of agreement between respondents from the various sectors of the community regarding needs related to child care. Selected highlights of the responses are presented below, with details of the apparent strengths and weaknesses of the local child care system discussed in the next pages.

The North Country is losing child care capacity at an alarming rate.

Projected Duration of Operation for Current Day Care Home Businesses

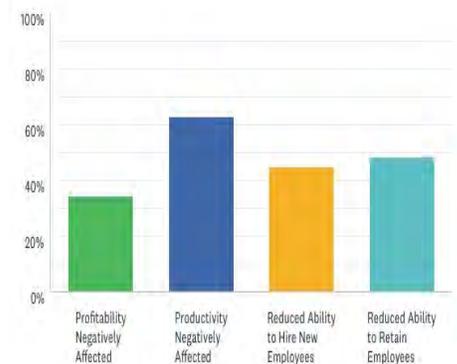


65% of Households Report Concerns About Their Current Child Care

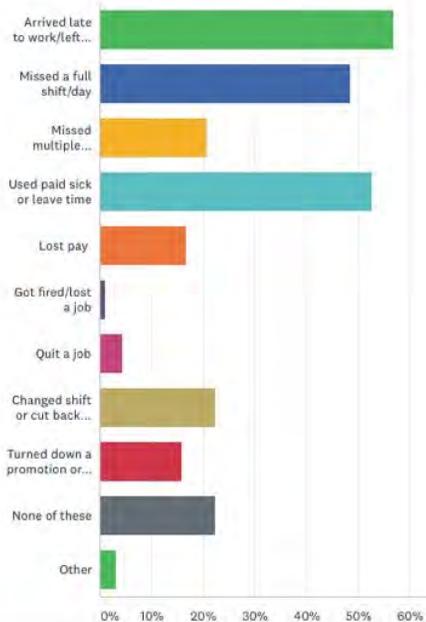
- Not having any available care
- Care not reliable
- Unable to pay for care
- Made late payments or subject to additional fees
- Not enough options/want different care
- Worried child is not receiving best quality of care
- Worried about child's safety



Businesses Suffer When Employee Child Care Needs Are Not Met



78% of Households Experience Work Issues Due to Child Care Needs

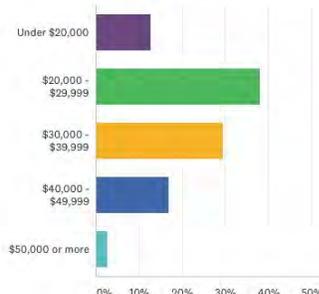


Average Annual Child Care Cost Paid by a Household with 2 Children Under Age 5:

\$15,080

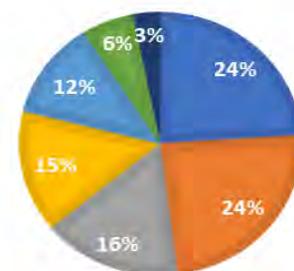
...yet the vast majority of child care center staff and family day care home providers make less than \$30,000 a year.

Annual Income from Child Care Reported by Family Day Care Home Providers



45% of Families With Young Children Have Had to Change Child Care Arrangements

- Daycare Closed/Provider Stopped Providing Care
- Unhappy with provider
- Expense
- Changed Modalities
- Relocation
- Unsafe (provider was negligent, abusive, etc.)
- Behaviors of Child



STRENGTHS

When asked about the quality of their current child care arrangement, families in the North Country region give programs and/or caregivers an average rating of 7.5 out of 10, universally across all modalities. Quality is identified as the most important consideration in arranging care for their children by over 80% of parents/caregivers, with cost being a distant second. Furthermore, 55% of respondents state they are “very happy” with the child care arrangement they currently use. While the phrase “high quality” carries varied meaning for parents, the majority identify the priority of a loving, caring relationship from the provider toward the children as the most important indicator of quality, followed closely by safety of the environment.

Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties were included in the 2010 QualityStars New York pilot program, a voluntary quality improvement and rating system for regulated early childhood programs. 22 programs, representing a combined total of about 20% of available child care slot capacity in the tri-county area, receive support through QualityStars New York to meet standards of best practices in four categories: Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Qualifications and Experience, and Management and Leadership.

50% of all day care home providers state they started their business as a means to stay home with their own children. 35% of providers currently care for their own children within the operation of their established program. These entrepreneurs are not only able to remain the primary caregiver for their own children, they also provide a nurturing and responsive care environment in which community children receive the benefit of a strong and consistent early relationship, while the provider may achieve a high degree of professional satisfaction in the work they have chosen to do.

In the words of home-based child care providers...

“I love what I do and the families I work with! I enjoy nurturing children and watching them grow as young individuals.”

“I enjoy children and I love watching how they change and prosper with everything that they learn to do. It is rewarding to me to teach children... they feel safe with me and they are proud of what they are learning and getting the feeling of independence.”

“It’s a needed job in my small town. People depend on me, and I love ‘my’ kids.”

“I feel I am needed in my community. I made the decision to be a day care provider until I retire.”

“I enjoy making a difference in the little people’s lives watching them grow and knowing that parents can have a safe and dependable place to bring children without worries.”

“I treasure offering a safe, enriching environment for children to be when their parents are at work.”

AREAS OF CONCERN

Over 85% of all census tracts in the North Country region are identified as child care deserts, with 3 or more children residing per regulated child care slot. When adjusting child population numbers to identify a standard for how many children are 'likely to need care' – or have all available parents participating in the workforce – 70% of all children in the North Country still comprise this group. Even within this expectation, the region's capacity is overburdened with an average of 4 children likely to need care for each slot in a regulated child care program.

The existing regulated child care field currently operates very near capacity, with infant slots in particularly high demand. 30% of parent households with young children (birth to age 5) state they are limited in their availability to work due to child care needs, with 15% of families in need of child care reporting they are unable to find any regulated or informal availability of care.



Approximately 20% of parents, and employers, report a need for child care to accommodate shift work during overnight hours or on the weekends. However, fewer than 5% of licensed/registered home providers, and zero centers in the region, offer non-traditional hours of care to cover these – blocking access for this population to even consider regulated providers for their child care arrangements.

36% of total households report that they do not have enough appropriate options for child care or would prefer a different type of child care arrangement than they are currently using. 27% worry that their children are not receiving the best quality of care, and 15% are afraid for their children's safety. 78% of households experience issues related to their child care needs that have affected their work or employment status, including lost income (17%), changing shift or cutting back hours (22%), or turning down a promotion or other job opportunity (16%).



The majority of employers in the region report regular absences or interruption due to employee child care needs, with 38% stating the profitability of the business/organization is decreased. About 50% state the ability to hire and/or retain employees is negatively affected, yet very few provide any direct benefit or assistance to employees in addressing these issues despite the economic impact. Almost 30% of employers report instances where they have terminated employment for reasons associated with the employee's child care needs, choosing the higher costs of hiring and training a replacement rather than attempt to absorb the loss in productivity identified by 63% of businesses.

Another primary concern is the shortage of infant slots, compounded by the fact that over 25% of home-based providers will not fill infant slots in their program, or prefer not to provide any infant care if they can avoid the necessity to do so. This imbalance means many other regulated programs maintain long wait-lists, leaving families to find alternate care until an opening becomes available. This creates a higher burden on families who must juggle multiple arrangements for siblings.



Meanwhile, preschool-age slots in regulated home-based and center programs sometimes sit unfilled as children move into less expensive Universal Pre-K or HeadStart programs. For families working full time, this can still create difficulty as the child often needs to be transported to a secondary care arrangement for the remainder of the work shift. However, half of all home-based programs and a third of the child care centers report they do not offer discounted enrollment for part-time attendance, as this leads to scheduling challenges or potential loss of income. This places families in an untenable situation where they must continue to pay the higher cost, or be pushed into unregulated and possibly unreliable or otherwise lower quality alternatives.

Child care centers report that the major issue facing their survival as a business is the inability to pay a fair, living wage to staff and also maintain affordability for families with children enrolled in the program. The vast majority of all center staff, even at the “highest paid” level, make less than \$31,000/year. Yet, 75% of center sites report families have left their program due to inability to afford fees, especially as minor increases in minimum wage contribute to rising cost. Center directors report they are finding it increasingly more difficult to hire and retain quality staff at low pay. This, combined with the loss of preschool enrollment to “free” programs (such as UPK, Headstart) which decreases center profitability further, means programs may be at risk of closure.

The average weekly fee for a full-time slot in a regulated program ranges from \$150 for a 3-year-old in a day care home, to \$220 for an infant enrolled in a child care center. The average cost paid by households currently using child care in the North Country region is \$8,320 annually for one child, and \$15,080 for 2 children. Less than 10% report receiving any type of financial assistance to cover these costs, while the typical household may pay 35% of their income to child care expenses alone.



The current child care workforce is aging, and shrinking. 25% of families who have already had to change their primary child care arrangement did so because of provider retirement or other program closures. 56% of today’s day care home business owners are over age 45. 38% of current day care home providers state they plan to close their business within the next 5 years; 70% within 10 years. Additionally, 65% of day care home providers currently report concerns that potentially threaten their program continuation for even this length of time. The crisis in loss of slots is deepening quickly and is likely worse than reflected in current capacity numbers since many providers stop filling slots in advance of when they anticipate they will cease to operate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this assessment, the top issue that came to light again and again was one of cost. Everyone – parents, child care providers, employers, the community at large – feels the overwhelming burden of cost to maintain an effective system that meets families’ child care needs and provides quality early education. Funding is desperately needed to improve access and create affordable options that allow parents of young children to join and remain in the workforce.

To address this issue, the assessment team recommends investigating the feasibility of expansion of government-funded child care subsidy in the North Country region, such as through the facilitated enrollment program administered elsewhere in New York State by the Workforce Development Institute, providing subsidies for working families with incomes at up to 275% of the federal poverty level. This would require legislative support and a request for the amount of at least \$1,000,000 to pilot the program in one county, with anticipation of future expansion.

To encourage legislative action, local child care advocates must partner with leaders from the business community to lobby for support by our elected officials at the state and federal level. A taskforce must be developed to guide a group of influential voices from varied sectors in demanding concrete expressions of and investment in the value of quality child care and early education to a multi-generational workforce, and the strength of our communities and economy.

Child care advocates must also maximize these partnerships, working closely with area businesses in taking a hands-on approach to resolving the child care needs of employees. Employers must become proactive in linking to a network of child care providers, providing child care benefits or offering employer-sponsored care options, or innovating other avenues to ensure employees who are parents are able to continue to work, reducing turnover and loss of productivity and profits. CCRR agencies should utilize their local chamber of commerce to create points of contact within the business community, as well as develop strong relationships with civic organizations, increasing the number of referrals and distribution of information about the importance of high quality care.

A mixed media public campaign providing education on the unique necessity of high quality, consistent early care as leading to child development, later school readiness and life-long success should be conducted to reach young families, employers, and the general community. This campaign will also highlight the opportunity for entrepreneurship in opening home-based day care businesses, and attract new talent to the field.

To prevent further attrition of the availability of child care in the region, a pipeline must be developed to recruit, train, and support new child care provider businesses with marketing and technical assistance, as well as promote the continuation or smooth transition of existing programs. Given the lack of population density to fill viable child care centers in most locations, resolving the shortage of regulated child care will be most successful if focused on increasing the supply of family and group family day care homes. Proposals should be submitted to the North Country Regional Economic Development Council which include plans for subsidies to start or expand child care businesses and financial incentives to continue provider education, achieve early childhood certification, and increase the quality of care. Existing providers nearing retirement could be utilized as a source of mentorship to developing businesses, sharing a wealth of experience and optimizing continuity.

In summary, these recommendations can be condensed to a framework of 3 main strategies to resolve the crisis of child care need in the North Country:

- Campaign widely to increase awareness in the community of the importance of high-quality early care and learning, and foster a groundswell of advocacy for an expanded and improved child care system to support current and future generations.
- Streamline and solidify a pipeline for the development of day care home businesses, beginning with recruitment of new providers through the stabilization of a vibrant field of professional caregivers with expert skills in early education, and consistent application of best practices for the highest level of quality and sustainability system-wide.
- Subsidize the child care system from both ends—parent payments and provider expenses—to achieve affordability. On-going failure by the community to commit to funding a functioning child care system is undermining not only the advancement of today’s struggling families, but our entire economy and future.

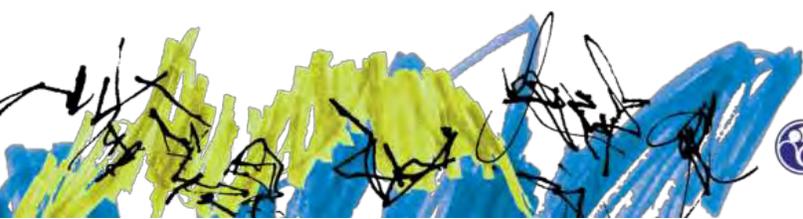
THE CAPITAL REGION'S CHILD CARE LANDSCAPE

Each week, an estimated 38,500 children in New York's Capital Region attend some type of child care. However, many families are unable to find the high-quality child care they want for their children. Families who find child care are overwhelmed by the cost; spending a significant portion of their income on child care expenses. The average cost for center-based care can cost as much as \$14,000 annually for an infant or \$11,500 annually for a four-year-old. The inadequate supply, high cost, and inaccessibility of child care burdens families, communities, and businesses resulting in lost productivity, frustration, and all too often – low quality early education experiences.

Capital Region businesses need a reliable and skilled workforce. An unprecedented number of parents are in the workforce leaving their children in paid child care. Reliable, high quality, affordable child care arrangements significantly contribute to the success of the workforce. While child care is a necessary support for working parents, it also critically influences children during the most consequential phase of human development. By laying the crucial groundwork for tomorrow's workforce and promoting a strong workforce today, high- quality, accessible, and affordable child care provides a powerful two-generation approach to building the human capital that a prosperous and sustainable future requires. It supports parents; increasing workforce productivity, and helping business attract and retain talent. Most importantly, it ensures that children have the chance for optimal development.

While most parents struggle to find child care it is particularly difficult for those seeking care for an infant or for a child with developmental needs. Families who must seek child care to accommodate non-traditional work hours are extremely unlikely to find a reliable or licensed care facility. In fact there are so few child care programs that offer non-traditional care hours that some employers report that their staff bring their children to work on a regular basis or fail to report for their shift a least once weekly.

REGULATED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS OFFERING CARE DURING NON- TRADITIONAL HOURS				
COUNTY	CENTER	GROUP FAMILY	FAMILY	SCHOOL-AGE
Albany	0	20	13	2
Columbia	0	1	2	0
Fulton	0	0	0	0
Greene	0	1	0	0
Montgomery	0	1	0	1
Rensselaer	0	1	5	3
Saratoga	2	2	4	0
Schenectady	0	8	10	0
Warren	0	0	1	0
Washington	0	3	3	2



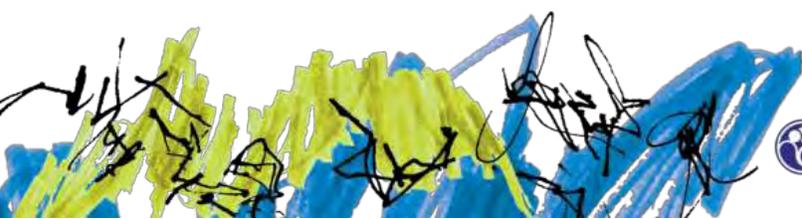
CHILD CARE DESERTS

To better understand the supply of licensed child care across the United States the Center for American Progress analyzed the geographic locations of licensed child care facilities, including centers and family child care homes. In 2016, the Center of American Progress introduced a working definition of child care deserts—areas with an insufficient supply of licensed child care. Their findings indicate that 51 percent of Americans live in neighborhoods classified as child care deserts. Specifically a child care desert either has no child care facilities or there are more than three times the children living in a community for each child care slot. Key findings of the 2017 Center for American Progress report found;

- Families in rural areas face the greatest challenges finding licensed child care, with 3 in 5 rural communities lacking adequate child care supply.
- High-income suburban neighborhoods are the least likely to experience child care shortages.

In review of New York’s Capital Region supply and demand in child care, we found that child care deserts are especially prevalent in low income communities, rural communities, among families of color, and among families with irregular or nontraditional work schedules.

On the following pages we have provided county specific *child care desert* data for the eight Capital Region counties. Data indicate significant shortage of child care in the Menands and Cohoes area, large areas of rural communities without a single child care program in Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Warren and Washington counties, 50 children per single child care slot in South Troy, and overall shortage of infant and toddler care in Schenectady County. Fulton County Gloversville area lacks adequate child care and census tracts 702,703,704,706,707, and 709 in the City of Amsterdam lack a single registered or licensed child care program!



ALBANY COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN ALBANY COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Albany	3	5 children per licensed slot	West Albany/Tivoli NP
Albany	5.02	No child care programs	Beverwyck
Albany	15	17 children per licensed slot	Pine Hills
Albany	16	8 children per licensed slot	Pine Hills
Albany	18.02	11 children per licensed slot	Eagle Hill
Albany	19.01	9 children per licensed slot	Helderberg
Albany	19.02	No child care program	Whitehall
Albany	21	11 children per licensed slot	Academy Rd
Albany	26	7 children per licensed slot	South End
Albany	127	No child care programs	Ontario Street/Cohoes
Albany	128	19 children per licensed slot	Cohoes Blvd./Cohoes
Albany	130	9 children per licensed slot	Columbia St./Cohoes
Albany	131	6 children per licensed slot	Green Island
Albany	132	10 children per licensed slot	2 nd Ave/Cohoes
Albany	133	8 children per licensed slot	19 th St./ Cohoes
Albany	135.08	5 children per licensed slot	Boght Corners
Albany	136.01	26 children per licensed slot	Albany Rural
Albany	136.02	No child care programs	Menands
Albany	137.06	No child care programs	Loudonville
Albany	137.07	8 children per licensed slot	Newtonville
Albany	138.02	30 children per licensed slot	Denison Rd./Colonie
Albany	139.01	11 children per licensed slot	Colonie
Albany	139.02	9 children per licensed slot	Colonie
Albany	140.02	No child care program	Sand Creek Road
Albany	142.02	No child care programs	Delaware Avenue
Albany	142.03	16 children per licensed slot	Elm Ave/Elsmere
Albany	143.01	27 children per licensed slot	Glenmont/Selkirk
Albany	143.02	9 children per licensed slot	Bethlehem/S. Albany
Albany	144.01	6 children per licensed slot	Coeymans
Albany	144.02	4 children per licensed slot	Ravena
Albany	145.01	8 children per licensed slot	New Scotland Road
Albany	145.02	No child care programs	New Scotland
Albany	145.03	3 children per licensed slot	Voorheesville
Albany	146.08	No child care programs	McKownville
Albany	146.11	No child care programs	Tawasentha/Guilderland



Albany	146.12	13 children per licensed slot	Altamont
Albany	146.13	5 children per licensed slot	Guilderland Center
Albany	147	No child care programs	Knox
Albany	148.01	No child care programs	East Berne
Albany	148.02	6 children per licensed slot	South Berne
Albany	148.03	No child care program	Westerlo

www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-deserts-2018

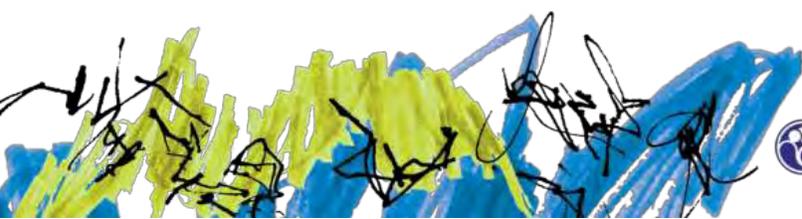
ALBANY COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Albany	Achievements	-	-
3 & 4	Albany	Albany City SD	2,297	977
4	Albany	Berne-Knox- Westerlo CSD	167	29
3 & 4	Albany	Cohoes City SD	94	128
4	Albany	Green Island UFSD	86	20
4	Albany	Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk CSD	201	74
4	Albany	South Colonie CSD	685	144
4	Albany	Watervliet City SD	187	71
ALBANY COUNTY TOTALS			3,717	1,443

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ALBANY COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	68	5,840
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	78	624
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	62	984
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	71	5,955



COLUMBIA COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN COLUMBIA COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Columbia	1	9 children per licensed slot	New Lebanon
Columbia	2	No child care programs	Canaan
Columbia	3	8 children per licensed slot	Chatham
Columbia	4.01	5 children per licensed slot	Kinderhook
Columbia	5	9 children per licensed slot	Stuyvesant
Columbia	7	4 children per licensed slot	Ghent
Columbia	10	5 children per licensed slot	Claverack
Columbia	14	No child care programs	Livingston
Columbia	15	No child care programs	Taghkanic
Columbia	16	No child care programs	Copake
Columbia	17	No child care programs	Ancram
Columbia	18	12 children per licensed slot	Gallantinville

www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-deserts-2018

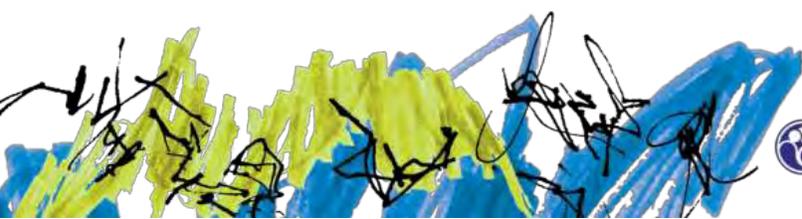
COLUMBIA COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Columbia	Germantown CSD	81	33
4	Columbia	Hudson City SD	640	60
4	Columbia	Taconic Hills CSD	150	39
COLUMBIA COUNTY TOTALS			871	132

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COLUMBIA COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	13	548
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	6	48
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	13	202
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	8	803



FULTON COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN FULTON COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Fulton	9701	No licensed/registered child care	Northville
Fulton	9702	14 children per licensed slot	Mayfield
Fulton	9703	No licensed/registered child care	Broadalbin Junction
Fulton	9705	10 children per licensed slot	Oppenheim
Fulton	9707	No licensed/registered child care	Johnstown/Rt. 309
Fulton	9708	No licensed/registered child care	Gloversville
Fulton	9710	5 children per licensed slot	Kingsboro/Gloversville
Fulton	9711	22 children per licensed slot	Kingsboro/Gloversville
Fulton	9712	9 children per licensed slot	Johnstown
Fulton	9714	16 children per licensed slot	Perth
Fulton	9715	16 children per licensed slot	Broadalbin

FULTON COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Fulton	Broadalbin-Perth CSD	233	90
4	Fulton	Gloversville City SD	470	144
4	Fulton	Johnstown City SD	178	95
4	Fulton	Mayfield CSD	270	46
4	Fulton	Northville CSD	30	21
4	Fulton	Oppenheim-Ephratah- St. Johnsville	114	22
FULTON COUNTY TOTALS			1,295	418

FULTON COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	7	468
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	7	56
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	7	101
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	6	450



GREENE COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN GREENE COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Greene	802	No child care programs	Coxsackie
Greene	802.01	4 children per licensed slot	Greenville
Greene	802.02	13 children per licensed slot	Coxsackie
Greene	803	No child care programs	Ashland
Greene	804.01	4 children per licensed slot	Tannersville
Greene	804.02	No child care programs	Lexington
Greene	806	No child care programs	Earlton/Climax
Greene	809	4 children per licensed slot	Athens
Greene	811.01	No child care programs	Laurenciville
Greene	811.02	10 children per licensed slot	Jefferson Heights

www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-deserts-2018

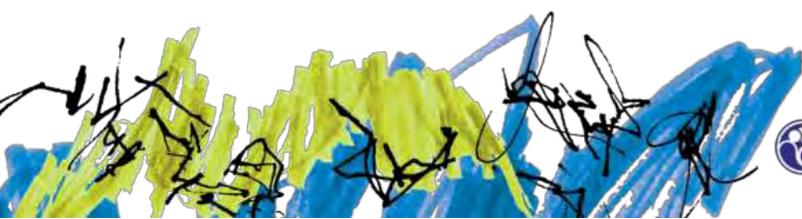
GREENE COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Greene	Cairo-Durham CSD	212	40
4	Greene	Catskill CSD	400	57
4	Greene	Greenville CSD	440	28
GREENE COUNTY TOTALS			1052	125

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GREENE COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	10	400
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	11	88
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	6	96
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	6	337



MONTGOMERY COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Montgomery	702	No licensed/registered child care	Amsterdam
Montgomery	703	No licensed/registered child care	Amsterdam
Montgomery	704	No licensed/registered child care	Amsterdam
Montgomery	706	No licensed/registered child care	Amsterdam
Montgomery	707	No licensed/registered child care	Amsterdam
Montgomery	709	No licensed/registered child care	Amsterdam
Montgomery	722	5 children per licensed slot	Fonda
Montgomery	723	7 children per licensed slot	Palatine Bridge
Montgomery	724	14 children per licensed slot	St. Johnsville
Montgomery	725	15 children per licensed slot	Fort Plain
Montgomery	726	8 children per licensed slot	Canajoharie
Montgomery	727	14 children per licensed slot	Town of Root

MONTGOMERY COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
3 & 4	Montgomery	Amsterdam City SD	715	288
3 & 4	Montgomery	Canajoharie CSD	87	50
4	Montgomery	Fonda-Fultonville CSD	302	54
4	Montgomery	Fort Plain CSD	176	35
MONTGOMERY COUNTY TOTALS			1,280	427

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	11	767
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	5	40
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	13	208
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	3	230



RENSELAER COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN RENSELAER COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Rensselaer	402	8 children per licensed slot	North Troy
Rensselaer	408	No child care programs	2 nd Street
Rensselaer	410	17 children per licensed slot	2 nd St./South Troy
Rensselaer	411	50 children per licensed slot	South Troy
Rensselaer	412	29 children per licensed slot	Pawling Avenue
Rensselaer	515	No child care programs	Rensselaer
Rensselaer	516	6 children per licensed slot	Van Allen Park/Rens.
Rensselaer	517.01	No child care programs	Hoosick
Rensselaer	518	27 children per licensed slot	Pittstown
Rensselaer	519.02	17 children per licensed slot	Speigletown
Rensselaer	520.03	11 children per licensed slot	Brunswick Center
Rensselaer	520.04	3 children per licensed slot	Brunswick Road
Rensselaer	521.02	5 children per licensed slot	Petersburg
Rensselaer	521.03	3 children per licensed slot	Berlin
Rensselaer	522.01	19 children per licensed slot	Poestenkill
Rensselaer	522.03	40 children per licensed slot	Sand Lake
Rensselaer	522.04	5 children per licensed slot	Millers Corners
Rensselaer	524.02	No child care programs	Rt.151/E. Greenbush
Rensselaer	524.03	21 children per licensed slot	Hampton Manor
Rensselaer	525.03	No child care programs	Castleton-on-Hudson
Rensselaer	526.01	33 children per licensed slot	North Nassau
Rensselaer	526.02	13 children per licensed slot	Nassau
Rensselaer	526.03	No child care programs	Stephentown

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RENSELAER COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's & 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Rensselaer	Berlin CSD	115	36
4	Rensselaer	Hoosic Valley CSD	56	34
4	Rensselaer	Hoosick Falls CSD	563	36
3 & 4	Rensselaer	Lansingburgh CSD	414	156



4	Rensselaer	Questar III BOCES	--	--
4	Rensselaer	Rensselaer City SD	384	85
3 & 4	Rensselaer	Troy City School District	1,018	299
RENSELAER COUNTY TOTALS			1,402	646

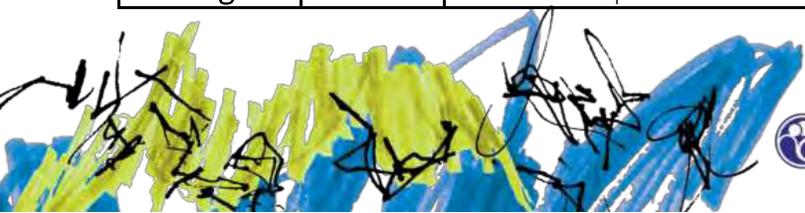
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RENSELAER COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY		
MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	32	2,227
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	36	288
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	23	368
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	30	2,436



SARATOGA COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN SARATOGA COUNTY NEW YORK			
County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Saratoga	601.02	5 children per licensed slot	Moreau
Saratoga	602	5 children per licensed slot	South Glens Falls
Saratoga	603	8 children per licensed slot	S. Corinth/Corinth
Saratoga	605.01	No child care programs	Hadley
Saratoga	605.02	No child care programs	Edinburg/Day
Saratoga	605.03	No child care programs	Barkersville
Saratoga	606.01	5 children per licensed slot	Greenfield Center
Saratoga	606.02	10 children per licensed slot	Greenfield
Saratoga	607.01	24 children per licensed slot	Wilton
Saratoga	607.02	6 children per licensed slot	Rexford
Saratoga	608	5 children per licensed slot	Gansevort
Saratoga	609.01	No child care programs	Gates/Schuylerville
Saratoga	609.02	25 children per licensed slot	Schuylerville
Saratoga	611	5 children per licensed slot	Saratoga Springs
Saratoga	613.01	4 children per licensed slot	Saratoga Springs
Saratoga	614.01	4 children per licensed slot	West Milton
Saratoga	614.04	7 children per licensed slot	Milton Center
Saratoga	615	4 children per licensed slot	Galway
Saratoga	616	7 children per licensed slot	Charlton
Saratoga	617.01	18 children per licensed slot	Ballston Ctr/Brookline Rd.
Saratoga	620	4 children per licensed slot	Wayville
Saratoga	622	7 children per licensed slot	Mechanicville
Saratoga	623	6 children per licensed slot	Mechanicville
Saratoga	624.03	4 children per licensed slot	Crescent
Saratoga	624.04	8 children per licensed slot	Halfmoon/Mechanicville
Saratoga	624.06	11 children per licensed slot	Halfmoon
Saratoga	625.02	5 children per licensed slot	Country Knolls
Saratoga	625.03	5 children per licensed slot	Clifton Park Center
Saratoga	625.05	No child care programs	Halfmoon
Saratoga	625.06	7 children per licensed slot	Lapp Rd/Clifton Park
Saratoga	625.07	No child care programs	Vischer Ferry
Saratoga	626.01	No child care programs	Clifton Park/Country Knoll
Saratoga	626.02	4 children per licensed slot	Rexford
Saratoga	627	6 children per licensed slot	Waterford/Peebles Island
Saratoga	628	10 children per licensed slot	Waterford



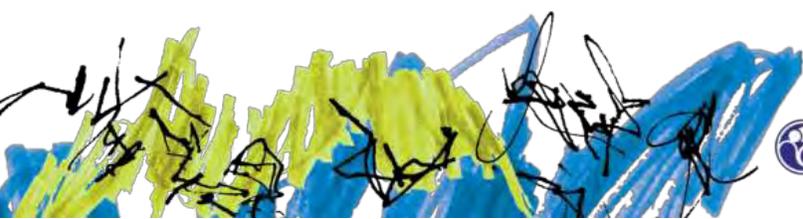
SARATOGA COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Saratoga	Ballston Spa CSD	570	133
4	Saratoga	Corinth CSD	273	4
4	Saratoga	Saratoga Springs City SD	760	128
4	Saratoga	South Glens Falls CSD	545	108
4	Saratoga	Stillwater City SD	67	27
SARATOGA COUNTY TOTALS			2,215	400

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SARATOGA COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	46	3,471
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	50	400
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	58	924
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	33	2,086

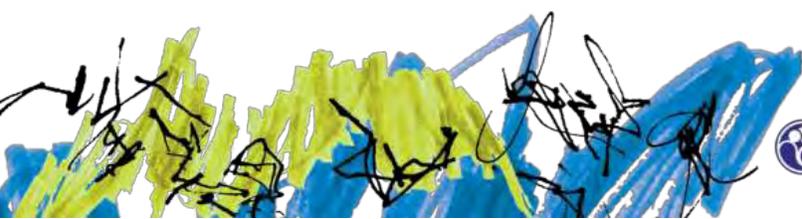


SCHENECTADY COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN SCHENECTADY COUNTY NEW YORK

County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Schenectady	201.02	7 children per licensed slot	Van Vanken Avenue
Schenectady	206	5 children per licensed slot	Central Park
Schenectady	207	21 children per licensed slot	Lawnwood to Brandywine
Schenectady	208	6 children per licensed slot	Eastern Avenue & Elmer
Schenectady	209	27 children per licensed slot	Hamilton Hill/ Duane Ave
Schenectady	212	20 children per licensed slot	Bellevue/ Campbell Ave
Schenectady	214	9 children per licensed slot	Crane Street/ Bridge Street
Schenectady	215	16 children per licensed slot	Mont Pleasant
Schenectady	216	15 children per licensed slot	Dewitt St./Mont Pleasant
Schenectady	319	6 children per licensed slot	St. David's/ Niskayuna
Schenectady	321.01	4 children per licensed slot	GE Research Center
Schenectady	321.02	19 children per licensed slot	Mohawk Rd./Niskayuna
	322	4 children per licensed slot	Scotia
Schenectady	324.02	3 children per licensed slot	Maple Ave./Glenville
Schenectady	324.03	No child care programs	Glenville Bus. Park
Schenectady	324.04	11 children per licensed slot	Beukendaal
Schenectady	325.02	16 children per licensed slot	WillowBrook Park Glenville
Schenectady	325.04	No child care programs	West Glenville/Saunders P
Schenectady	326.01	4 children per licensed slot	Duanesburg Road
Schenectady	326.02	25 children per licensed slot	Plotter Kill
Schenectady	327	7 children per licensed slot	Mariaville Road
Schenectady	330.02	20 children per licensed slot	Guilderland Ave
Schenectady	330.03	11 children per licensed slot	Helderberg Ave
Schenectady	333	6 children per licensed slot	Rotterdam

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SCHENECTADY COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's and 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
3 & 4	Schenectady	Schenectady City SD	3,100	399
4	Schenectady	Duanesburg CDD	724	26
SCHENECTADY COUNTY TOTALS			3,824	425

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SCHENECTADY COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	38	3,133
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	57	456
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	43	670
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	21	1,062



WARREN COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN WARREN COUNTY NEW YORK

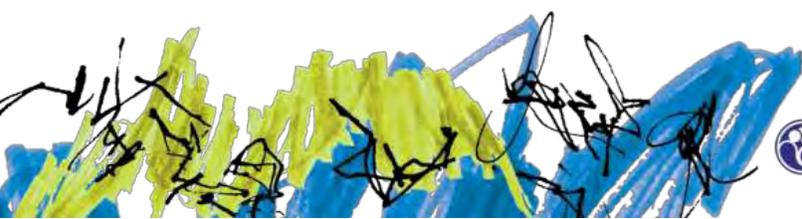
County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Warren	701	10 children per licensed slot	Glens Falls
Warren	703	38 children per licensed slot	North Glens Falls
Warren	704	No child care programs	Dix Avenue/Glens Falls
Warren	706.02	7 children per licensed slot	Lake George
Warren	707.01	3 children per licensed slot	Queensbury
Warren	708	6 children per licensed slot	West Glens Falls
Warren	709	5 children per licensed slot	Tyneswood
Warren	710	8 children per licensed slot	Beartown
Warren	720	3 children per licensed slot	Lake George
Warren	730	3 children per licensed slot	Warrensburg
Warren	735	No child care programs	Thurman/Stoney Creek
Warren	740	No child care programs	Johnsburg
Warren	750	4 children per licensed slot	Chestertown
Warren	760	No child care programs	Brant Lake/Horicon
Warren	780	No child care programs	Bolton Landing

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WARREN COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's & 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Warren	Bolton CSD	766	10
4	Warren	Glens Falls City SD	472	51
4	Warren	Hadley-Luzerne CSD	874	15
4	Warren	North Warren CSD	116	16
4	Warren	Warrensburg CSD	167	29
WARREN COUNTY TOTALS			2,395	121

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WARREN COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	13	939
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	20	157
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	11	168
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	10	368



WASHINGTON COUNTY

CHILD CARE DESERTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY NEW YORK

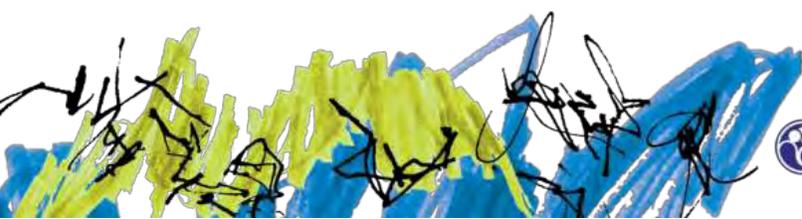
County	Census Tract	Number of children per child care slot	Town/City
Washington	802	No child care programs	Hudson Falls
Washington	803	3 children per licensed slot	Kingsbury
Washington	810	No child care programs	Fort Ann
Washington	820.01	7 children per licensed slot	Whitehall
Washington	820.02	No child care programs	Lake George
Washington	840	3 children per licensed slot	Granville
Washington	850	9 children per licensed slot	Hartford
Washington	860	11 children per licensed slot	Hebron
Washington	870	7 children per licensed slot	Argyle
Washington	890	48 children per licensed slot	N.Greenwich/Spraguetown
Washington	900	29 children per licensed slot	Salem
Washington	910	12 children per licensed slot	Battenville
Washington	930	21 children per licensed slot	North Cambridge

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WASHINGTON COUNTY UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Ages Served	County	District/Agency	# of 3's & 4's in the census (2015)	Number of children Served in UPK
4	Washington	Cambridge CSD	168	18
4	Washington	Fort Ann CSD	620	31
4	Washington	Fort Edward CSD	781	25
4	Washington	Granville CSD	89	39
4	Washington	Hartford CSD	378	26
4	Washington	Hudson Falls CSD	350	115
4	Washington	Whitehall CSD	200	22
WASHINGTON COUNTY TOTALS			2,586	276

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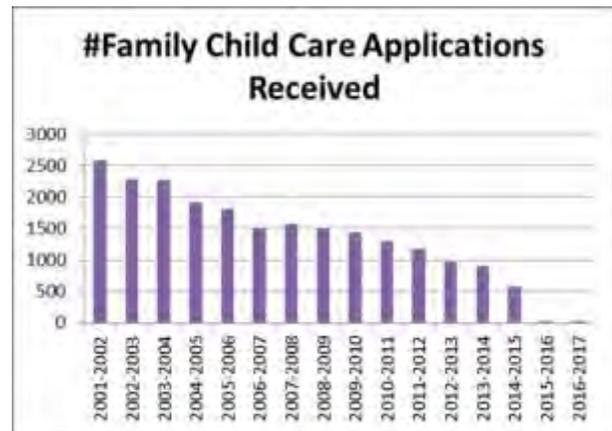
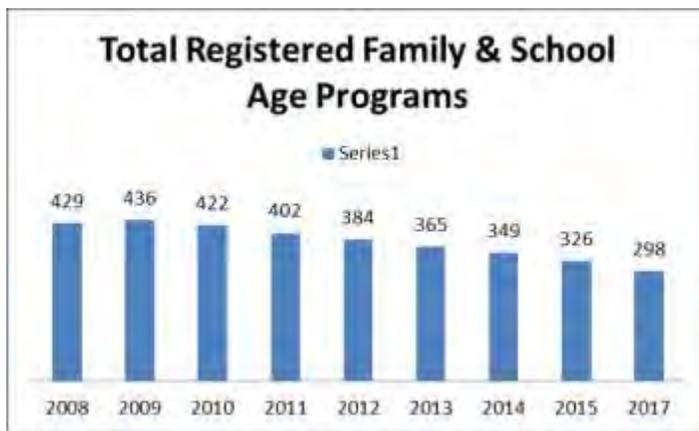


WASHINGTON COUNTY LICENSED/REGISTERED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

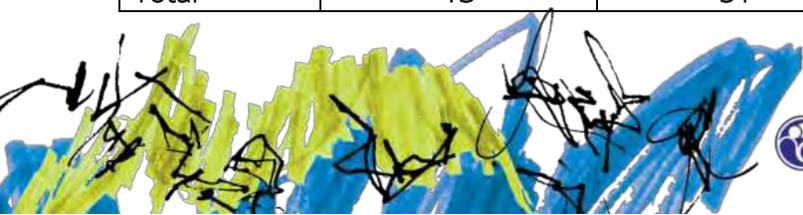
MODALITY	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	ENROLLMENT CAPACITY
CHILD CARE CENTER	10	499
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	24	192
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMESS	20	320
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS	3	105

THE STRUGGLE FOR RETENTION

Since 2008 the number of registered family child care/school-age programs in Albany, Schenectady, and Rensselaer Counties has declined by 131; a 69% decrease. Although we continue to enroll family child care providers in the program we lose enrollees at a faster rate; often due to the child care provider closing her business.



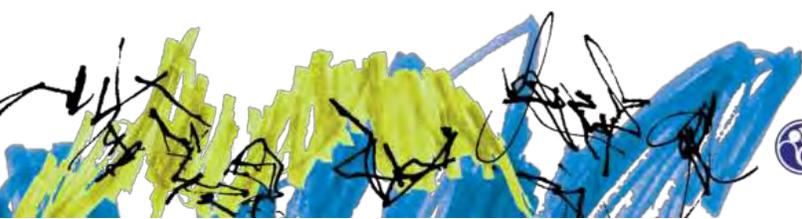
Month	Center	Family	Group Family	School Age
July	1	9	5	1
August	4	12	1	0
September	2	12	7	3
October	3	5	3	0
November	2	7	3	0
December	1	6	4	0
Total	13	51	23	4



RESPONDING

In an effort to meet the 2019 Regional Council priorities to work with businesses and communities to identify child care needs and to develop potential solutions, Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) are implementing strategies to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care services for children in underserved areas, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities (as defined by the state), and children who receive care during nontraditional hours (NTH). Following are a few examples of activities taking place across the State.

- The Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (MVREDC) has established an ACCESS to Child Care Workgroup. Their primary focus is on the discussion of child care needs of the region and the important impact that access to child care can have on the Mohawk Valley's economy. They are developing a regionally specific strategy to increase access to quality, affordable child care. As a means to that end; they are considering potential child care projects in the Mohawk Valley Region for funding.
- The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council has convened a committee of businesses and early educators to address the region's need for child care and the impact on economic development. They have examined regulatory changes and funding support. FLREDC set a Child Care Workgroup Charter with the expressed purpose to develop strategies to meet the unmet need for child care in the Finger Lakes region using catalytic, single-use funding to expand child care infrastructure for lasting boots to economic development, pursuant to the 2019 NYS guidebook for Regional Economic Development Councils.
- The Long Island REDC has convened a child care committee. Members include the local Child Care Councils, labor leadership, corporate leadership, a private foundation, and the small business development center. The group has commissioned a policy proposal that they will recommend to the LIREDC, adopt and put forward in the report to Governor Cuomo. The proposal includes the following points:
 1. Help parents afford child care
 - a. Fund a Facilitated Enrollment model to help parents above County subsidy eligibility up to 400% of poverty, based on a sliding scale.
 - b. Incentivize and facilitate corporate sponsorship models (either to contract with existing providers, or join together to support a specific facility, etc.
 2. Increase wages for the child care workforce
 - a. Proposed model is based on the EARNS program that existed in Suffolk County. This model would provide a wage supplement to child care workers based on their education level.
 3. Support Child Care Providers
 - a. The committee will propose grants to (1) help child care providers expand the supply of care specifically for infants/toddlers and non-traditional hours and (2) reward programs

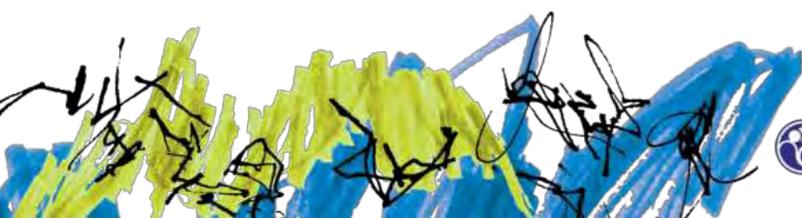


that meet certain quality indicators (QSNY or self –rating).

- The Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) has convened a committee of businesses and early educators to address the region’s need for child care and the impact on economic development. They have applied for the NYS B-5 child care needs assessment grant. The Committee will focus on business engagement to determine obstacles faced by capital region employers and their employees related to child care availability.

ACTION PRIORITIES

1. The Capital District Child Care Council will convene a coalition of child care providers, elected officials, county officials, and community members to address the need for high quality, assessable, affordable child care in the City of Amsterdam and Gloversville.
2. The Capital District Child Care Council in partnership with the City of Albany Poverty Reduction Initiative (CAPRI), and the Employee Navigator Programs is addressing the need for child care during non-traditional business hours in the City of Albany.
3. The Capital District Child Care Council is establishing a Family Child Care Accreditation Cohort in Saratoga County to address the need for accredited child care providers who will care for children of military personnel during non-traditional hours.



NYSB5 – Child Care Deserts Report Mid-Hudson Region January 2020

INTRODUCTION

The six (6) child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) covering the seven (7) counties in the Mid-Hudson region are:

- Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.
- Child Care Council of Orange County, Inc.
- Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.
- Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.
- Family of Woodstock, Inc.
- Sullivan County Child Care Council, Inc.

The Mid-Hudson CCR&R leaders meet throughout the year to problem-solve and share resources; we also maintain frequent email communications. All of the CCR&Rs participate actively in the statewide CCR&R network coordinated by the Early Care and Learning Council and enjoy active and visible roles in their respective communities. We reacted to the news of the NYSB5 – Child Care Deserts funding opportunity with enthusiasm, eager to work even more closely together and in partnership with the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council and regional employers.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Though the short duration of the funding was challenging, we quickly developed several short-term objectives to prepare us to work more closely and effectively with the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council and other business/economic development groups:

- 1) Further standardize our resource and referral data collection and procedures to produce regional child care information and reports;
- 2) Learn what child care information, analysis and planning assistance would be most helpful to the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council and employers in the region;
- 3) Create a regional marketing plan to increase employers' awareness and utilization of our child care resource and referral services, as well as our understanding of their needs;
- 4) Explore specific "child care deserts" within the region including the factors that lead to and/or maintain that status;
- 5) Offer preliminary recommendations to increase regulated supply particularly within the more rural census tracts and for infants and toddlers.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The CCR&Rs quickly agreed on “leads” for each of the objectives as well as staff from each CCR&R to contribute via “work groups”. A liaison to the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council was identified – James Kostenblatt, Deputy Director, Mid-Hudson, Empire State Development, who staffs the Veterans and Workforce Development Committee, the group charged with learning more about the region’s child care needs. The Child Care Council of Westchester coordinated overall project activity. The work groups met in person and via conference call.

PROJECT RESULTS

OBJECTIVE #1: Further standardize our resource and referral procedures and data collection to produce regional child care information

Lead CCR&Rs: Orange and Westchester

As coordinated by the NYS Early Care and Learning Council, our statewide CCR&R network has worked hard to achieve greater standardization of data in our referral database, NACCRRWare. During an initial conference call of this work group, it was quickly established that another review of the data fields was required, including definitions, frequency of data collection and reporting uses. For example, some of the CCR&Rs in the region include universal PreK programs, Head Start centers and Legally Exempt providers in their databases and others do not. We also found that some CCR&Rs collect and analyze callers’ employer information while others do not routinely do so. We envisioned at least two outcomes for this component: (1) agreement on the data fields needed to generate comprehensive regional reports on child care supply and demand; (2) agreement on the data fields and counseling protocols needed to increase data on callers’ employers (both name and industry sector). We also planned to produce one regional report describing some characteristics of the callers to our resource and referral services including their employers, employment sector, income over/under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and type of care requested (age of child, full/part-time/non-traditional schedule, etc.). Although each CCR&R routinely releases information and data on county child care landscape and program activities including resource and referral, there had not been any previous attempt to compile and release any regional report.

Results:

1) Data fields:

Thirty (30) data fields, some with sub-fields, were reviewed; twenty-two (22) were determined to be used consistently by all the CCR&Rs. These fields were agreed to form the basis of the regional report on child care. It was also agreed to collect the following data going forward:

- Industry sector in which parent is employed
- Child care supply by age of child in family provider child care settings
- State-funded universal pre-kindergarten slots
- Availability of rotating shift care
- Availability of part week care

2) Employer data and counseling protocols:

It turned out that one of the biggest limitations in the CCR&Rs collection of data is the employment-related info, specifically the names of callers’ employers and the classification of

those employers by industry description or cluster. While all the CCR&Rs collect employer data, the method and frequency of collection varies widely; it was agreed that a standard procedure would be created and adopted to improve consistency. It was also agreed that a system to classify employers by industry sector or cluster would be adopted. This work group reviewed the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies but noted that military and government seemed to be missing. The Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council uses the NAICS 4-digit codes in its 2019 Progress Report but groups businesses differently. We plan to consult the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council on this point.

The statewide CCR&R network is in the process of moving to a new referral database; members of this work group have been careful when scrutinizing the new options to evaluate the richness of the employer/employment sector data and argue for its importance going forward. My Child Care Plan has been selected by the state network members; an implementation plan and schedule are pending. Once the CCR&Rs have transitioned to the new database, the work group will proceed with its recommendations. To view more detail on the referral database data fields please see Attachment #1.

3) Regional report on child care supply/demand and referral activity:

The work group decided to utilize fresh data to reflect child care supply and referral activity from 2019. The report includes data on the region's regulated child care supply, demand and "gaps", what parents are looking for, child care costs and affordability. The report also looks at child care costs compared to housing costs. County-specific data has been organized into county child care profiles. Findings include:

- 1,736 OCFS regulated programs offer 73,637 slots for the 391,716 children under 13 years
- 60% of the census tracts in the region however, are "child care deserts"
- Regulated child care supply in the region currently meets only 31% of the demand, using 60% of the population of children under age 13 years
- The gap between supply and demand is particularly dramatic for infant and toddler slots
- Legally exempt care is widely used in the region
- The high cost of child care is problematic for regional families at all income levels; in a very expensive state, the cost of care in 3 regional counties is even higher than the NYS average
- The 200% FPL income cap on Low Income Subsidy eligibility leaves thousands of hard-working families without the financial assistance they need to pay for safe, regulated care
- Parents' utilization of care is also impacted by location, and availability of schedules; throughout the region and in Sullivan and Ulster counties in particular, limited public transportation makes getting to child care that much more difficult
- Although the CCR&Rs handled over 6,500 resource and referral calls in 2019, that represents a fraction of the parents searching for care
- Going forward, the Mid-Hudson CCR&Rs will continue to build a better child care system by:
 - Working more closely with local and regional business groups to better educate employers on their workers' child care needs and how CCR&Rs can assist

- Enlisting the business community in publicly supporting more child care funding
- Encouraging prospective child care businesses to locate along/near bus routes and train stations
- Encouraging existing and new child care businesses to add infant and toddler slots
- Advocating for low parent shares that are uniform within the region
- Promoting the development of more non-traditional care

To view the complete Mid-Hudson Region Report on Child Care, please see Attachment #2.

OBJECTIVE #2: Learn what child care information, analysis and planning assistance would be most helpful to the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council and employers in the region

Lead CCR&Rs: Dutchess-Putnam and Westchester

The MHREDC did not establish a specific child care subcommittee but instead assigned its Veterans and Workforce Development Committee the task of learning more about regional child care challenges and need. James Kostenblatt, Deputy Director, Mid-Hudson, Empire State Development, staffs that committee and was identified as liaison for the CCR&Rs on this project. Mr. Kostenblatt arranged a conference call between the Committee and the Council’s executive director, Kathy Halas, to familiarize Committee members with the CCR&R assets in the region and the objectives of the NYSB5 grant. The Committee was receptive and agreed to assist the CCR&Rs in this effort including a survey of Mid-Hudson region employers to assess their current approaches to assisting employees with child care needs. Mr. Kostenblatt assisted in the creation of the electronic survey, titled the “Child Care Survey for Mid-Hudson Region Employers”, which was ultimately approved by MHREDC Executive Director Meghan Taylor, who distributed the survey with a personal email to her Council members. The release of the survey was delayed by the work group’s decision to add a link to a new regional website landing page, which had to be created separately and tested. As a result, the survey was first circulated in December, with a final deadline of January 10, 2020. All of the CCR&Rs sent the survey out to their various lists. The Business Council of Westchester emailed the survey to its membership.

Results:

- 131 employers responded to the survey including 53% for profit, 33% nonprofit and 14% government/public sector
- The largest employment sectors represented in the respondents included education at 15%, health care at 14%, manufacturing at 11% and social services at 9%
- Smaller businesses made up 60% of the respondents
- Nearly half the respondents reported that at least half their employees are working parents
- 87% of the employers reported that child care issues impact their businesses, with 27% agreeing it is a “significant or major impact” on worker productivity and attendance
- Larger employers reported offering more benefits than smaller businesses; 15% of the respondents reported that they did not provide any of the 16 child care and related benefits on the survey list
- Flexible scheduling was the most commonly available benefit, followed by paid and unpaid maternity leave, and the ability to work from home when a child is sick or off from school

- Many of the benefits on the survey were rarely used by the respondents, even those that are relatively low-cost
- 20% of the respondents, typically the smaller businesses, indicated that they provide access to a child care resource and referral agency
- 9 out of 10 respondents indicated that providing child care resources/benefits generates a positive public image for a business

We hope to organize a conference call or meeting with the MHREDC to review the results of this employer survey as well as our regional report on child care. We will consider sending the survey out again in order to capture more responses. We also hope to discuss with MHREDC how the CCR&Rs in the Mid-Hudson region can assist on an on-going basis. To view the full “Child Care Survey on Mid-Hudson Region Employers” see Attachment #3.

OBJECTIVE #3: Create a regional marketing plan to increase employers’ awareness and utilization of our child care resource and referral services, as well as our understanding of their needs

Lead CCR&Rs: Rockland and Westchester

Each CCR&R faces on-going challenges in reaching parents and caregivers in a world increasingly dominated by social media. As a group our efforts to engage employers directly has been sporadic, limited by budget constraints for marketing and outreach. Increasingly, the lines between counties are blurred with commutation within the region steadily rising. Employees are often interested in child care options near where they work as well as where they live. Despite the strong relationships among the regional CCR&Rs and a consistency of mission, each has its own distinctive image and brand in its own community, not easily perceived as a regional (or even statewide) resource. All of the CCR&Rs want to increase delivery of their resource and referral services to parents; to do so via employers would not only be highly efficient but provide immediate value to the employers themselves.

Results:

In an initial work group meeting, each CCR&R’s marketing strategies and materials were reviewed in an effort to develop a common strategy and to create at least one piece of shared promotional material. Subsequently this idea was replaced by a decision to create a shared website with a simple landing page which would connect a visitor to the appropriate CCR&R based on the visitor’s zip code. The domain “hvchildcare.org” was purchased from GoDaddy.com. The project’s marketing and graphic design consultants drafted two options for the landing page and the individual CCR&R pages; one was unanimously selected by the CCR&R leads. A link to the new landing page was included in the electronic employer survey. To view the hvchildcare.org landing page and the individual CCR&R pages, see Attachment #4.

The CCR&Rs will do additional promotion of hvchildcare.org including a press release to regional media and news outlets, as well as other regional marketing efforts. The CCR&Rs are also considering acquiring a Mid-Hudson central phone number to provide families seeking child care anywhere in the region a single number to call. This would be an automated system where families would identify where they would like child care and their call would be transferred to the appropriate CCR&R with a message like “Please let us know where you need child care assistance: dial 1 for Rockland County; dial 2 for Dutchess; dial 3 for Westchester” etc.

OBJECTIVE #4: Identify specific “child care deserts” within the region including the factors that lead to and/or maintain that status

Lead CCR&Rs: Sullivan and Ulster

New York State has one of the highest percentages of child care deserts in the U.S., per the Center for American Progress (2018) at 64%. While the Mid-Hudson Region counties are quite different from one another, each contains a surprisingly high number and percentage of child care deserts, including census tracts without any regulated child care at all. We elected to focus this objective on two Mid-Hudson Region counties with particularly high percentages of child care deserts – the whole of Sullivan County, at 67% and Ulster County, specifically on the Townships of Napanoch and Wawarsing at 49%.

SULLIVAN COUNTY

Sullivan County is nearly 1,000 square miles taking an hour and a half to travel from one end to the other.

Population

Sullivan County has a diverse population and ranks next to last in health ratings in New York (61 of 62 counties).¹ The population in Sullivan County is 75,498 with a median age of 42 years. The birth rate in Sullivan County is 4.9% with 32% of births by unwed mothers. Almost 25% of the births in Sullivan County are to women aged 15 and 19 years but the majority of the births are to women between 25 and 29 years of age. The average family size is 3.4; two adult households have a median household income of \$53,877.² 86% of Sullivan residents hold a high school diploma. The living wage for a two-parent family with one child is \$22.70/hour full time or \$47,217 annual.³ 15.9% of Sullivan residents live below the poverty line (11.6k out of 72.9k people), a rate which exceeds the national average of 13.4%. The second largest demographic living in poverty in Sullivan County is females ages 25 to 34 years followed by females from 35 to 44.⁴

Housing

There is a tremendous lack of affordable housing throughout Sullivan County; 66% of residents own while the remaining rent. Due to the high property taxes in Sullivan, many residents find it hard to maintain their homes adequately to meet the minimum standards for a regulated child care business. Whether a family is renting or owns a home, the costs, combined with child care, transportation and food make it almost impossible for the average Sullivan family to survive without some sort of public assistance.

Transportation

Up until spring of 2019 there was little or no public transportation which has also contributed to the high unemployment rates in Sullivan.

Economic History and Growth

For the past 20 years, Sullivan County’s young have left for college and have not returned because of the lack of careers and jobs available at home. In 2007, 6.2% of the population was under age five, a decade later it had decreased to 5.6%.⁵ As elsewhere in New York, Sullivan’s unemployment rate has declined dramatically, going from 6.4% in January 2007 to 3.6% today. New employers such as Resorts World Casino, YO1 and the Kartrite Water Park have driven up pay rates in Sullivan County although rates in

¹ <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data/NY>

² <https://www.towncharts.com/New-York/Demographics/Sullivan-County-NY-Demographics-data.html>

³ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/36105>

⁴ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/sullivan-county-ny>

⁵ <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices>

Sullivan are still among the lowest in New York State.⁶ This welcome economic growth has awakened other employers to the fact that child care needs to be part of the economic planning if businesses are to be successful and sustainable. The Sullivan County Child Care Council (SCCCC) has received phone calls and committee invites from four of our major employers in the past six months citing lack of child care for their employees.

Employers

Catskill Regional Medical Center’s main campus is located just off exit 102 on State Route 17 in Sullivan County. Approximately 3,300 employees are employed on the hospital’s two campuses plus their urgent care facilities located throughout the county. Additionally, new employers Resorts World Catskills, YO1 Wellness Center and the Kartrite Water Park are all within 8 miles of Exit 102, employ more than 1,200 people combined and are 24/7 facilities. Also within 10 miles is the Center for Discovery, which employs 1,700 workers and is also a 24/7 facility. The Center for Discovery houses their own licensed child care center and is open to the community however, there is a wait list for employees’ children. Rarely if ever, are slots available to non-employee community members. Further, the exit 102 corridor according to the NYS Traffic Viewer, sees an average of daily traffic between 10,000 to 25,000 vehicles per day.⁷ Over the past twelve months, several employers in Sullivan County have realized that lack of child care is a very real barrier to maintaining or recruiting employees. Catskill Regional Medical Center created an employee retention task force and invited SCCCC to participate. The Medical Center owns a vacant building located directly behind the hospital that, upon completion of needed renovations, would provide the space and location for a much needed child care center. They plan to focus on infant and toddler care and to offer the space to an operator rent free. The Medical Center is to be commended for its attempts to address the shortage of regulated child care for its workers and the community. Despite the leadership on this issue, the \$200k needed for renovations has delayed the Medical Center’s progress on executing this plan.

Child Care Supply

There are only 48 regulated programs in Sullivan County that provide 1,713 slots to children under 13 years old, meeting only 23% of the demand. Said another way, nearly 8 out of every 10 Sullivan children may be unable to find child care. Many parents chose legally exempt care because they are unable to find regulated care or because regulated programs offer limited evening and weekend hours. Sullivan’s 25 legally exempt providers serve approximately 75 children. There are more than 4,252 children under the age of five in Sullivan County and only 1,155 regulated slots for that age range. The total supply of child care has continuously decreased over the past 20 years for a variety of reasons: parents were not working or families chose to juggle home and work duties to avoid paying child care costs. Many families use providers in neighboring, more expensive counties sending local dollars outside of the county and spending down Sullivan subsidy dollars faster. However, due to the economic development in Sullivan County over the past two years, people are beginning to show interest in opening child care businesses again with 10 new programs offering 90 slots:

New Child Care Programs 2016 to 2019

	Family	Group Family	Day Care Center	School Age
2016	3 (+18 seats)	0	0	0
2017	0	1 (+12 seats)	0	0
2018	0	4 (+48 seats)	0	0
2019	2 (+12 seats)	0	0	0

⁶ https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-york-new-jersey/news-release/2018/countyemploymentandwages_newyork_20180111.htm

⁷ <https://gis3.dot.ny.gov/html5viewer/?viewer=tdv>

Child Care Demand

The SCCC received 1,008 calls from parents and guardians in need of child care in the past 24 months; of those only 189 or 18.8% reported actually finding acceptable care. Of all the requests, only 139 or 13.7% were looking for infant care but only 35 or 25% of that particular group, actually found care. When parents cannot find regulated child care, their only alternative is to either stop working or choose legally exempt child care. Sixty-two (62) of the children were enrolled in legally-exempt child care. Legally exempt care is, in Sullivan County, always of lesser quality than a regulated child care program. As a result of this situation, the Sullivan County Department of Social Services adopted the Child and Adult Care Food Program Additional Standard requiring legally exempt child care programs to enroll. As a partner in this effort, SCCC, as the administrator of CACFP, conducts related inspections in the legally exempt care settings, providing more oversight and assurance that the children are receiving healthy meals and snacks and are in programs that meet a minimum standard of safety requirements.

Cost of Child Care

Child care fees vary depending on the modality of care however, most child care providers charge the standard regional market rate for child care subsidies issued by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to all parents whether or not they themselves accept child care subsidies for payment. The market rate is the baseline that programs use to set their fees. The Sullivan County market rates are as follows⁸:

Weekly Child Care Subsidy Market Rates	Under 1 ½ years	1 ½ - 2 years	3 - 5 years
DAY CARE CENTER	\$220	\$ 206	\$195
FAMILY DAY CARE HOME AND GROUP FAMILY DAY CARE HOME	\$160	\$150	\$150
LEGALLY-EXEMPT STANDARD RATE	\$104	\$98	\$98
LEGALLY-EXEMPT ENHANCED RATE	\$112	\$105	\$105

The parent share in Sullivan is 35% of family income over 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, the highest level allowed by OCFS. A Sullivan family of three with gross income of \$42,660 would have a parent share of \$7,465.50, which represents 18% of their income.

ULSTER COUNTY

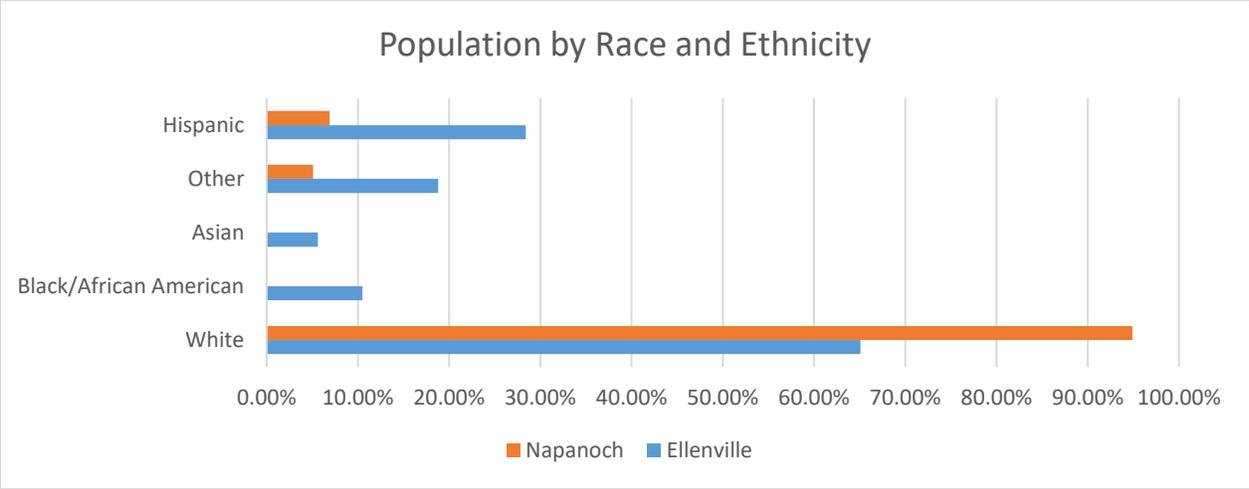
Within Ulster County, there are 25 child care deserts, or 53% of all census tracts. While this report will focus on the villages of Ellenville and Napanoch within the township of Wawarsing, there are many other child care deserts that also need attention. Ellenville and Napanoch are adjoining and are largely in the center of the Wawarsing Township which includes 7 villages/towns of mixed urban, rural and suburban areas.

Population

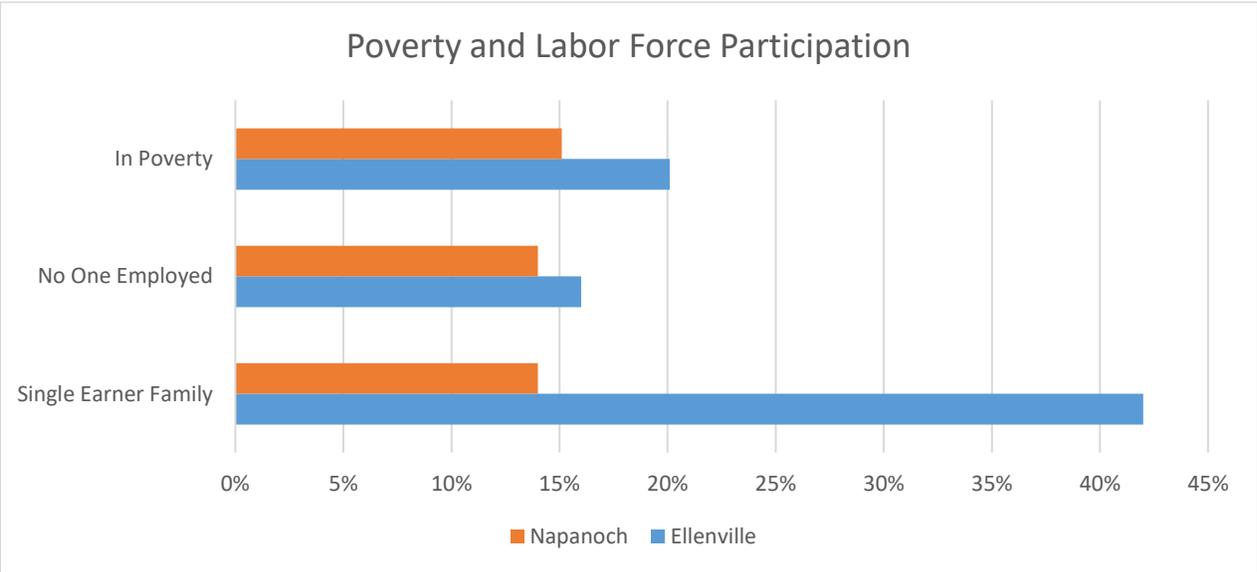
The Ellenville community is mainly an urban area and has a larger minority population than the rest of the county, outside of Kingston.⁹ Ellenville’s diverse population is 4,082 with a median age of 37 years. In contrast, Napanoch is a suburban/rural mix, its population of 1,062 with a median age of 43 years, is overwhelmingly white.

⁸ <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/19-OCFS-INF-03>

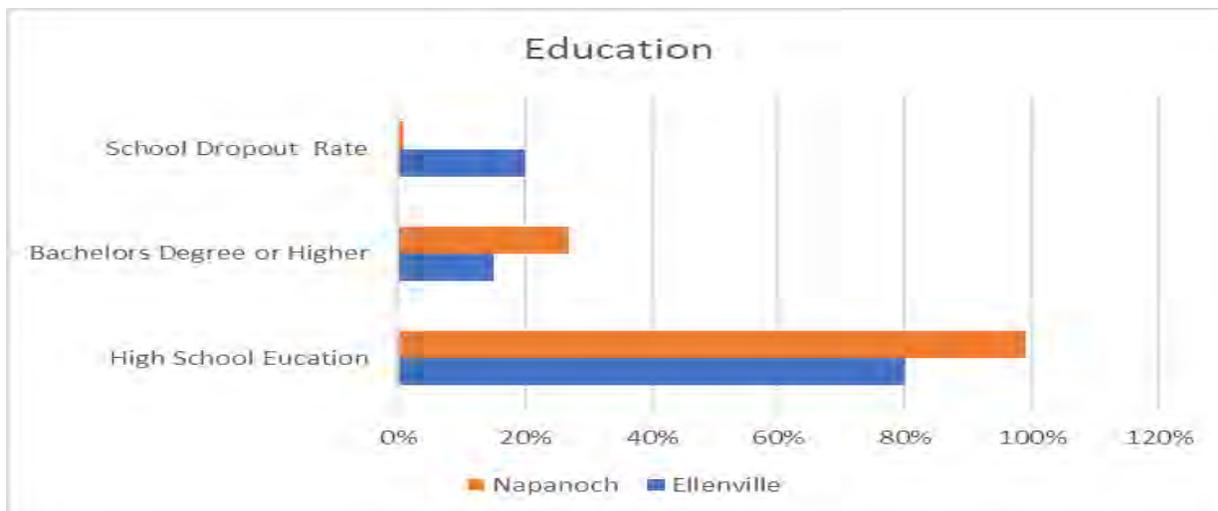
⁹ Family of Woodstock, Inc.’s 2018 Overview of Family of Ellenville Hotline and Walk In Center



Ellenville and Napanoch have some significant differences. The birth rate in Ellenville is at 5% with 74% of the births to unwed mothers. Almost 50% of Ellenville families have single wage earners; the poverty rate is about 20% with an average household median income of \$44,732. The unemployment rate is 7%. Napanoch’s birth rate is slightly higher at 6%, all to married mothers. The median household income is slightly lower at \$42,209, but the poverty rate is lower too, closer to 15%, and the prevalence of single wage earners is dramatically below that of Ellenville. Unemployment in Napanoch is at 3%.



Educational attainment impacts the economic growth of the communities. Many employers offering a livable wage seek workers with college degrees due to funders, contracts or position requirements. Both Ellenville and Napanoch have large proportions of workers without that level of education, making it difficult for employers who cannot find workers with the desired qualifications. The existing workforce finds itself unable to take advantage of the better-paying jobs. Napanoch houses two large correctional facilities and a Walmart, which offer employment but little access to higher wages or diverse employment opportunities.



Economic History and Growth

Wawarsing’s economic base has declined significantly since the early 1980’s. In 1985, the Channel Master Corporation, the largest antenna manufacturer in the world, left the area, eliminating over 1,000 jobs. In the late 1980’s, several other manufacturers closed, including a broom/mop handle and nut bowl company, eliminating several hundred jobs. Additionally, since the early 1980’s, approximately 70% percent of hotels/hospitality-related business jobs have been lost (from 2000 to 600). This has also impacted the other service/support businesses substantially. Wawarsing needs tax incentives, training programs and education efforts which support sustainable development and establish a mechanism for coordinating these efforts across the town to assist in retaining businesses and help existing businesses expand.¹⁰ According to the Ellenville-Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce, Ellenville is experiencing a surge in local pride of place. Building upon the success of the “Restaurant Row” along Canal Street, Ellenville residents and business owners are expanding their footprint, and improving the physical spaces surrounding them.

Housing

There is a tremendous lack of affordable housing throughout Ulster County. 54% of Ellenville residents rent their homes, compared to about 20% in Napanoch. However, with a median rental cost of \$748-\$804 per month, it is difficult to afford rent, child care, and the basic needs for the family. According to the Family of Ellenville, in 2018 they served 112 individuals and their families to find permanent housing. Many families are forced to seek additional assistance to be able to find and stabilize their housing in Ellenville.¹¹

Transportation

Public transportation is available but it is limited in both routes and schedule.

Child Care Supply

Child care is very limited in Ellenville and Napanoch with only 9 regulated child care programs and 13 legally exempt settings. Neither community has a registered school age program though school age children can be served through the existing family providers. There are more than 2,000 children who need child care and not nearly enough programs to serve them.¹²

¹⁰ Source <https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/RDSullivan-WREAPZone.pdf>

¹¹ Family of Woodstock, Inc.’s 2018 Overview of Family of Ellenville Hotline and Walk In Center

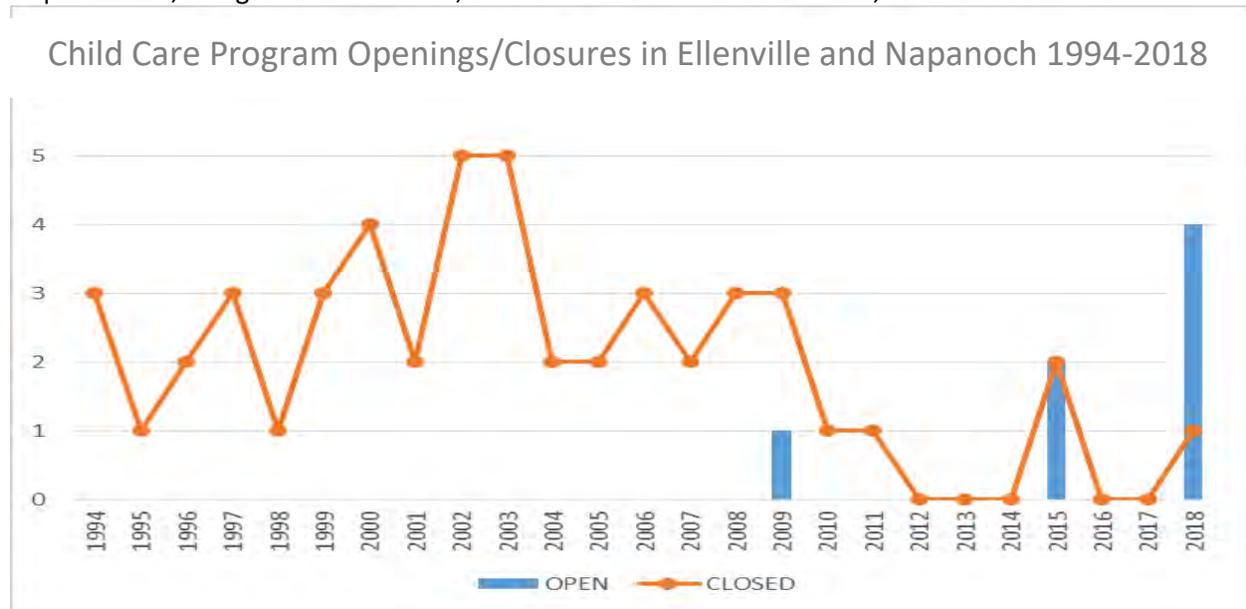
¹² Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Child Care in Ellenville and Napanoch

Program Type	Ellenville Programs	Ellenville Slots	Napanoch Programs	Napanoch Slots
Day Care Center	2	76 preschool	0	
School Age Child Care	0		0	
Group Family Day Care	3	12 infant 24 preschool 12 school age	0	
Family Day Care	3	6 infant 12 preschool 6 school age	1	2 infant 4 preschool 2 school age
Legally Exempt In Home	7	~14 various ages	0	
Legally Exempt Family Child Care	3	~ 6 various ages	3	~6 various ages
Legally Exempt Group Universal PreK	0		0	
	2	2 sessions School District 53 Preschool Head Start	*	

*Ellenville School District offers 2 PreK sessions (AM/PM) to Napanoch families and transportation is available.

The total supply of regulated child care has decreased tremendously over the past 25 years. Closings peaked in the period from 2000-2003. Reasons for closing included the enhanced background clearance requirements, rising health care costs, loss of second household incomes, and relocation.



According to Vivian Roman, Program Director of the Family of Ellenville Hotline and Walk In Center, the Hispanic population is steadily growing in the Ellenville community. While the culture of Hispanic families is often to provide child care with family members only, many Hispanic families are being forced

to seek non-family child care due to the need of dual incomes or second jobs and the limited availability of family members to provide child care. There is also a need for Spanish speaking child care providers in the community and they are not available. Six percent (6%) of individuals in Ellenville are not currently citizens which causes them to be cautious about using any services outside of the family.¹³ According to Child Care Connections, the CCR&R in Ulster County, there are no Spanish speaking licensed or registered child care programs in Ellenville or Napanoch and only 6 Hispanic child care providers in the entire Wawarsing Township. Unfortunately, over the past year a licensed group family day care business closed. A Spanish-speaking family was in the process of reopening the business in the same location, hoping to offer at least 16 child care slots. The new family expected to rent the home with an option to purchase. According to the family, the application approval process was delayed due to many building repair requirements. After the building was repaired and the application process could proceed, the family was notified that the current landlord defaulted on the mortgage. The family is now moving outside the Ellenville area to a town with a greater supply of affordable housing, thus eliminating the one Spanish-speaking program within walking distance to the elementary school, the library and community gardens.

Cost of Child Care

The cost of child care varies by modality but all programs in the Ellenville and Napanoch area accept the child care subsidy. The market rate set by NYS OCFS is the baseline that programs use to set their fees. The Ulster County market rate is as follows¹⁴:

Weekly Child Care Subsidy Market Rates	Under 1 ½ Years	1 ½ - 2 Years	3 - 5 Years	6 - 12 Years
DAY CARE CENTER	\$282	\$265	\$250	\$230
FAMILY DAY CARE HOME AND GROUP FAMILY DAY CARE HOME	\$225	\$210	\$200	\$200
SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE			\$250	\$230
LEGALLY-EXEMPT GROUP CHILD CARE STANDARD RATE			\$188	\$173
LEGALLY-EXEMPT STANDARD RATE	\$146	\$137	\$130	\$130
LEGALLY-EXEMPT ENHANCED RATE	\$158	\$147	\$140	\$140

Ulster County has a parent share of 25% of gross family income over 100% of FPL. An Ulster family of three with a gross income of \$42,660 would be required to pay \$5,532.50 annually toward child care, or 13% of their gross income.

OBJECTIVE #5 – Recommend policies and activities to increase regulated supply particularly within the more rural census tracts and for infants and toddlers.

Lead CCR&Rs: Ulster and Sullivan

Improving access to affordable, high quality child care is vital for the success of families in the workforce, as well as children’s success in school and adult life. In both Sullivan and Ulster Counties there is a shortage of all modalities of child care, particularly licensed and registered family child care. Over the past 6 years the counties have experienced significant declines in regulated child care which have accelerated in the past two. Ulster County suffered a 27% loss in the number of child care

¹³ Source <http://www.towncharts.com/New-York/Demographics/Wawarsing-town-NY-Demographics-data.html>

¹⁴ <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/19-OCFS-INF-03>

programs; in Sullivan the decrease was less, but still significant at 12.5%. In Sullivan County, two-thirds of census tracts (16 of 24) are considered child care deserts; in Ulster the percentage is close to half (21 of 43). Nearly every county in the Mid-Hudson Valley region includes a high percentage of child care deserts, so the recommendations that follow can be applied to all, as well as other parts of New York State.

Barriers to increasing and sustaining regulated child care businesses include the resistance of landlords to allowing child care businesses in rental units, start-up expenses for facility modification, the high cost of quality educational materials, the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified staff to work in a low-wage/low-benefits field, and the difficulty in generating sufficient revenue to cover the on-going expenses of running a child care business.

Recommendations

(1) Increase broad public understanding of and support for safe, quality child care

While there is growing recognition of the importance of access to safe, quality child care to workforce supply and preparedness, business growth, and overall economic vitality, many working parents are unaware of existing services that could help them find and in some cases pay for care. Employers fail to take advantage of CCR&R services that could help their workers meet their child care needs.

- Design and lead new, on-going outreach activities in partnership with new community allies to educate more parents about their options and to more effectively support new and existing child care businesses. As a result of this project, the Ulster CCR&R is launching a new outreach project in Ellenville, beginning in January 2020, involving the Family of Ellenville Hotline and Walk In Center as a partner. Quarterly info sessions for parents, businesses and existing child care programs will be held to discuss the importance of accessible, quality child care; to assist employees looking for affordable, quality child care and to identify strategies for opening and sustaining child care businesses. Groups representing landlords will also be invited to help them understand the need for greater access to child care and the tremendous benefits to the community.
- Expand regional marketing campaigns to educate more parents on the importance of quality in selecting child care, including use of the OCFS website to check regulatory history
- Work with local and regional chambers, business groups, employers and service organizations to educate them on the link between child care, the workforce and economic growth and the availability of CCR&R services and resources
- Enlist the business community in publicly supporting more child care investment and innovation
- Heavily promote the NYS Employer-Provided Child Care Tax Credit to encourage more employers to provide a range of child care benefits to their workforce

(2) Provide more child care financial assistance to parents

Many parents are unaware of the child care subsidy program administered by their local DSS while others are reluctant to apply or unable to successfully complete the somewhat difficult application process themselves. The parent shares in Ulster and Sullivan counties are high, at 25% and 35% respectively. Only Westchester offers Title XX subsidies and those are on a limited basis. Rockland's subsidy program has a wait list. Some child care businesses do not accept subsidy because of various difficulties with the program. And there is evidence that the OCFS child care market rates for subsidy may be too low. Even though OCFS recently released new rates that provided increases, the new rates were derived from a survey of child care prices rather than costs

even though the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant encouraged states to study actual child care costs. Many child care businesses simply charge what they will be paid for subsidized care, and in some cases, may not fully understand their true costs. Additionally, NYS previously set its market rates to allow families using the subsidy to purchase 75% of available care; this was reduced to 69% and remains there.

- Fund public education efforts to increase child care subsidy participation
- Fund subsidy specialists in the CCR&Rs to conduct outreach and assist parents in the subsidy application process
- Increase subsidy funding to bring the market rates back up to 75%, eliminate subsidy wait lists, allow counties to lower parent shares to at least 20% throughout the region
- Use a cost estimation model in the next OCFS child care market rate survey

(3) Create strategic efforts to tie the development of regulated child care supply to economic development planning and investment, aligned with workforce needs

Child care businesses have sprung up throughout the Mid-Hudson region (and NYS) generally without regard for consumer or employer needs and preferences. The majority of child care directors/owners have limited business backgrounds and generally do not employ business planning techniques of any kind before filing applications with OCFS. Additionally, most employers have limited awareness of their employees' child care needs or what the child care market actually offers. The result is a haphazard collection of child care options that do not always match up with what parents want or what employers will need.

- Develop better tools to assess child care supply and demand, such as child care geo-mapping, and use that data in the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council CFA process
- Set child care supply development targets tied to approved MHREDC projects and other municipal economic development efforts
- Award points in the CFA process to projects that increase child care supply with priority to areas that are child care deserts
- Utilize CCR&R expertise in evaluating proposed child care projects

(4) Reduce financial barriers to entry for regulated child care business start-ups

There are many costs associated with opening a regulated child care program. As these costs have risen in the past few years, funding assistance has declined. Some of those costs include: inspection compliance repairs on homes; completion of 15-hour training; environmental and water testing; safety inspections; physicals; purchase of educational materials; specific napping/sleeping equipment; background clearances for staff; availability of nutritionally rich foods; and safety gates. Facility modifications, on-going maintenance and repairs for inspection compliance can include but not be limited to fencing, pool barriers, railings, pet licenses and vaccinations, window barriers, cabinet locks, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers. Existing economic development funding initiatives are sometimes tied to a job creation ratio that is both disadvantageous and unrealistic for a child care business; a different perspective might be adopted which recognizes that for every new child care job that is created, many more parents are able to work. A new infant teacher job may enable another 8 parents to work.

- Allow state funds to be used for capital costs for center-based child care businesses including CFA funds through the Regional Economic Development Councils

- Fund CCR&Rs to stimulate new or expanded child care businesses in child care deserts and areas that lack infant and toddler slots; start-up grants could cover facility requirements, equipment, materials and pre-service training for business owners and staff
- Fund special initiatives for CCR&Rs to assist legally exempt providers operating in child care deserts and areas that lack infant and toddler slots, to become registered or licensed businesses; assistance to include training and on-going consultation in “the business of child care” including help in choosing a location, creating a business plan, marketing, budgeting, pricing and making contacts with employers
- Consider creating a tax credit program for repairs made to sustain a child care program

(5) Support on-going child care programmatic quality with guided investments in learning materials

Quality educational materials are expensive, often beyond the means of new and even experienced child care businesses. As a result, many child care programs do not offer children the type of learning experiences that will truly benefit them, as parents expect. In some cases, programs use the limited funds they do have to purchase materials that are neither developmentally appropriate nor growth promoting.

- Provide additional funding to CCR&Rs for grants for developmentally appropriate program materials that whenever possible, are embedded in training to ensure that child care programs incorporate them appropriately

(6) Promote higher quality programs with more hands-on training methods

People interested in opening home-based child care programs are often parents or grandparents who love children but lack the training and/or education associated with delivering higher quality experiences to children. Experiential learning has been shown to be more effective with adults than other educational strategies.

- Fund model classrooms which would provide new child care slots and at the same time, hands-on professional development and training for the new and existing child care workforce. Participants would be credited with professional development hours to meet training regulations and other credentials.

(7) Address staffing shortages in the near-term with easier access to substitutes

Staffing costs are a significant portion of the overall cost of operation. Required staffing must always be maintained regardless of illness or absence. All staff must complete the entire comprehensive background check before starting employment, which has pushed back start dates for new workers.

- Allow countywide substitute lists of qualified staff available to work in various programs as needed

(8) Respond longer-term to the child care staffing crisis

Finding qualified staff is very difficult given the low wages and limited benefits that characterize the child care industry. As the minimum wage has increased, child care directors and business owners face more competition from other occupations that might be less demanding. It is especially difficult to hire/retain bilingual staff.

- Allow an enhanced child care subsidy rate for child care programs offering bilingual services
- Create a student loan forgiveness program for early childhood majors that become child care providers
- Provide pay enhancements for professional development beyond basic state requirements

(9) Stimulate the creation of more infant-toddler slots

Existing programs have been reluctant to offer infant and toddler care for many reasons: reliance on the tradition preschooler-heavy business model, even in the face of declining enrollment, often related to school district operated PreK programs; lack of personal familiarity with infants-toddlers; anxiety over serving more vulnerable children and thus exposing business to more risk; difficulty in finding suitable space and to fund the licensing requirements for the space/building; inability to find trained staff; the gap between subsidy reimbursement or what parents can pay privately and the actual costs of infant-toddler care, etc. In Westchester 72 centers serve toddlers but not infants.

- Create a fund for start-up costs for infant-toddler slots in either new or expanded programs; this could be integrated into the CCR&Rs' Infant-Toddler Regional Network contracts through OCFS
- Develop new cost models for centers serving infants and toddlers either alone or in combination with preschool children and adopt higher subsidy reimbursement rates as required
- As mentioned earlier, enlist the infant toddler specialists working in the Mid-Hudson region to support legally exempt providers interested in starting regulated child care businesses and include special "transition" incentives
- Engage more programs and providers in earning the Caring Spaces Endorsement to encourage quality, and educate parents about the value of the Endorsement

(10) Stimulate the creation of more child care available for non-traditional hours

The need for more child care options that go beyond M-F from 7am to 6 pm is clear; the few programs that currently exist tend to be in home-based settings operated by owners/directors responding to their families' needs. There is scant information available on these models to encourage additional development.

- Create business development materials to help child care programs, both home and center-based, offer non-traditional hours
- Fund small planning grants, training and technical assistance
- Encourage LDSS's to include the higher differential rate for non-traditional hours option in their child care plans

(11) Other recommendations:

- Encourage landlords to support child care businesses in their properties by creating a state fund for liability insurance payments and/or tax credits
- Investigate partnering with organizations like the Sullivan County Land Bank to provide incentives for people that are qualified to open a child care business in their new home
- Standardize use of child care subsidies to allow more low-wage earning parents to easily access parenting classes, including child development
- Lengthen the pre-kindergarten day so working parents do not have to figure out additional child care solutions before or after Pre-K

ATTACHMENTS

- (1) CCR&R referral database data fields
- (2) Mid-Hudson Region Report on Child Care
- (3) Child Care Survey for Mid-Hudson Region Employers
- (4) Hvchildcare.org Landing Page and individual CCR&R Landing Pages

Mid-Hudson CCR&R Referral Database Data Fields

Data	Agreed to Add to Database
Client Data Only	
Parent Contact information; including name, address, phone or email	✓
Below or Above 200% of Poverty Level	✓
Subsidy Eligibility Status (i.e. receiving, eligibly, and not eligible for child care subsidy)	✓
Employer (FYI: Employer report in current database is not easily usable to report on employer information.)	✗ Not consistently collected to be useful at this time, but the region agrees that we will work on improving the collection.
Employment Industry*	✓ See below for list of recommended industries. The region is also seeking the capacity to collect this data in the new referral database.
Provider Data Only	
Provider contact information; including name, address, phone or email	✓
Cost of Care	✓
Capacity by Age Groups	✓ The region is not consistently collecting capacity by age groups in family home-based care to be useful on a regional level. The region is willing to adopt a system/formula to capture capacity by age groups for family home-based care. However, the region will wait for the new referral database and encourage the adoption of a system/formula to determine capacity by age groups on a state level.
Client and Provider Data	
Types of care requested by parents and types retained in referral database:	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCFS Regulated Child Care 	✓

• Legally Exempt Provider	x
• Camps	x
• Head Start &/or Early Head Start	✓
• Universal Pre-K (UPK)	✓ Region has agreed that all UPK programs will be collected in the referral database; including programs that are not located in OCFS center-based care.
Ages Care Needed (client) / Ages served (provider)	✓
Hours care needed (client) / Hours offered (provider) (FYI: Cannot easily run report on hours of care from current database)	✓
Languages spoken by provider or requested by parent; must include English & Spanish	✓
Full-time care	✓
Part-time care (less than 30 hours)	✓
Evening care: after 6pm care	✓
Overnight care	✓
24-hour care	✓
Evening care	✓
Weekend care; includes Saturday only, Sunday only or both	✓
Rotating schedule care	✓
Part week care	✓
Accepts Child Care Subsidy Payments	✓
Near public transportation	✓

Accreditation: include NAEYC, NAFCC, NAA, After School Works NY	✓
Certifications: include Breastfeeding Friendly, Eco-Friendly, Asthma Friendly	✓
Child's Special Needs (client) / Experience with children who have special needs (provider)	✓

*Suggested Employment Industries to be added to referral database and collected from families. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. However, further discussion is needed to determine the best list on a state level and for the Mid-Hudson region. The following subdivisions of the NAICS 4-digit codes should be thought of as a consideration. Another consideration is the NAICS codes based on their ranking in NYS. The group felt that military and government maybe missing from both these lists and would need to be added.

NAICS 4-digit codes

2012 NAICS US Code	2012 NAICS US Title
72	Accommodation and Food Services
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
23	Construction
61	Educational Services
52	Finance and Insurance
62	Health Care and Social Assistance
51	Information
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises
31-33	Manufacturing
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
92	Public Administration
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
44-45	Retail Trade
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing
22	Utilities
42	Wholesale Trade

Source: https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/2012naics4-digitcodes_0.pdf

NAICS codes based on their ranking in NYS

Rank	NAICS Code	NAICS industry description
1	7225	Restaurants
2	6111	Elementary and secondary schools
3	6221	General medical and surgical hospitals
4	6113	Colleges and universities
5	6241	Individual and family services
6	6216	Home health care services
7	4451	Grocery stores
8	5613	Employment services
9	6211	Offices of physicians
10	5511	Management of companies and enterprises
11	2382	Building equipment contractors
12	6231	Nursing care facilities
13	5411	Legal services
14	5617	Services to buildings and dwellings
15	5231	Securities and commodity contracts brokerage
16	5221	Depository credit intermediation
17	5415	Computer systems design and related services
18	5311	Lessors of real estate
19	7211	Traveler accommodation
20	6232	Residential mental health facilities
21	4481	Clothing stores
22	4461	Health and personal care stores
23	5412	Accounting and bookkeeping services
24	7139	Other amusement and recreation industries
25	5616	Investigation and security services
26	5418	Advertising, pr, and related services
27	5241	Insurance carriers
28	5416	Management and technical consulting services
29	5239	Other financial investment activities
30	4522	Department Stores

Source: Department of Labor

Mid-Hudson Region Report on Child Care

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Prepared by:

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- Child Care Council of Orange County, Inc.
- Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.
- Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.
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- Sullivan County Child Care Council, Inc.



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MID-HUDSON REGION REPORT ON CHILD CARE

INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Hudson Region is made up of seven (7) counties served by six (6) child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) which are separate nonprofits primarily funded through contracts with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Initially established to help parents find child care solutions, which remains a priority today, the CCR&Rs also help child care and after school businesses get started, comply with regulations, and meet higher quality standards. The agencies differ in size and range of services provided but typically also offer professional development services for the child care/after school workforce, administer a nutrition program to ensure that children enjoy healthy meals and snacks, provide parent education, engage in public education and advocacy on the social and financial wisdom of child care investments, and more. Connected by membership in a state network coordinated by the Early Care and Learning Council, the Mid-Hudson CCR&Rs also meet throughout the year to problem-solve, share ideas and materials, and in some cases, conduct joint professional development for their staff.

The CCR&Rs are:

- Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.
- Child Care Council of Orange County, Inc.
- Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.
- Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.
- Family of Woodstock, Inc. (covers Ulster County)
- Sullivan County Child Care Council, Inc.

Each CCR&R maintains a database that includes the child care and after school programs in their counties that are regulated by OCFS. Some CCR&Rs also include other options such as nursery schools, which are typically not regulated, camps, which are regulated by the Department of Health, nanny agencies, which are not regulated, and legally exempt (LE) providers, which are not required by OCFS to be licensed or registered but do have standards that must be met by their enrollment agencies, which are typically CCR&Rs. Legally exempt providers can care for up to two (2) non-related children in either the child's home or their home. This report will focus on OCFS regulated programs, which are defined as follows:

- **Licensed child care centers:** non-residential facilities that can care for children 6 weeks to 12 years old. Each one has a specific number of approved slots per age group.
- **Registered family child care:** residential homes that can care for up to 8 children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. There must be one adult for each 2 children under 2 years old.
- **Licensed group family child care:** residential homes that can care for up to 16 children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. There must be one adult for each 2 children under 2 years old.
- **Registered school age child care programs:** non-residential facilities that can care for children enrolled in kindergarten to 12 years old. Can provide before and/or after school care and full-time care during the summer and school vacations.

Many parents use legally exempt care (LE care), also known as informal child care. LE care is described by OCFS as a person that may provide child care services to a child receiving public child care assistance. Care is provided in a residence, which is not required to be licensed or registered. An LE provider can care for up to 2 unrelated children and 8 related children.

OCFS also employs the following definitions for the age groups of children in child care, which we will use in this report:

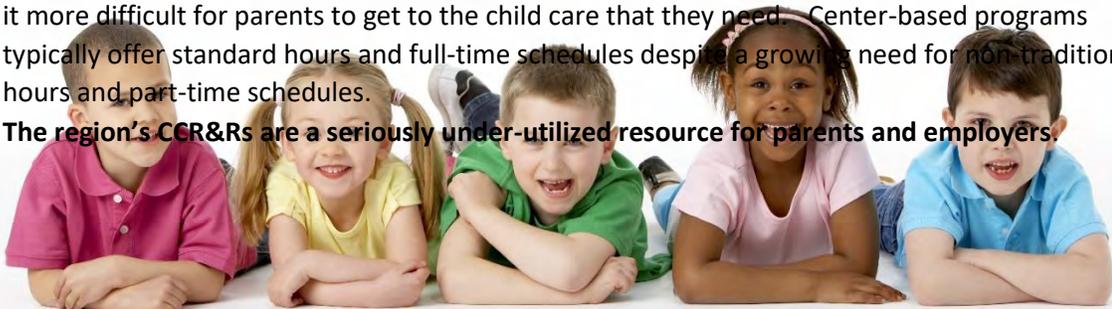
- **Infant:** under 18 months

- **Toddler:** 18 months to 36 months
- **Preschool:** 3 and 4 years old
- **School Age:** 5 to 12 years old

Home to 2,321,965 people, the Mid-Hudson Region contains large cities, including Yonkers, the 3rd largest in the state, as well as suburban and rural areas. Children under 13 make up nearly 17% of the region’s population. There are 73,637 slots available to these children through 1,736 OCFS regulated child care programs. Parents utilize a variety of child care options, ranging from regulated care to LE care and often a combination. The counties vary substantially in population size and density as well as economic landscape. New York is one of the most expensive states in the country for child care and four of the counties approach or exceed the mean state cost of center-based infant care. Despite their differences, the counties share a common challenge – a scarcity of regulated child care.

KEY FINDINGS

- **60% of the Mid-Hudson Region is considered a “child care desert”, with inadequate child care supply.** Several counties exceed the New York State child care desert rate of 64% with Orange County at 68%, Sullivan County at 67%, and Rockland County at 65%.
- **The NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulated child care supply only meets 31% of demand in the Mid-Hudson Region,** using a conservative formula of 60% of the population of children under age 13.
- **The gap between regulated child care supply and demand is particularly significant for infant and toddler slots at 67%.**
- **Legally exempt care is widely used in the region, representing 36% of all child care programs compared to 64% that are regulated.** However, legally exempt providers are particularly prominent in Dutchess (41%), Ulster (44%) and Orange (51%) counties.
- **The high cost of child care is a barrier for many families, at all income levels.** Mean child care costs in three counties - Rockland, Putnam and Westchester – surpass the state average. Only Westchester offers child care subsidies for working families over 200% of the federal poverty level, on a limited basis. In every county, a family of 4 with an infant and preschooler will pay a greater percentage of their income for child care than for their housing, as much as 54% in Westchester.
- **A more nuanced understanding of child care demand is needed.** Using the same formula to calculate demand across age groups, as was done in this report, indicates that the greatest need is for more school age supply. The parents contacting the CCR&Rs for help locating care are most often in search of options for infants and then toddlers. Parents have more alternatives to regulated school age care such as sports, after school clubs, etc.
- **Many factors, in addition to cost, influence parents’ utilization of child care including location, hours of operation and quality.** Inadequate public transportation systems in the region make it more difficult for parents to get to the child care that they need. Center-based programs typically offer standard hours and full-time schedules despite a growing need for non-traditional hours and part-time schedules.
- **The region’s CCR&Rs are a seriously under-utilized resource for parents and employers.**



CHILD CARE SUPPLY

There are just over 73,500 slots available in 1,736 OCFS regulated child care programs for almost 400,000 potential users – children under 13 years. Although only 27% of all regulated child care businesses, licensed centers supply over half the regulated slots. Registered school age programs account for only 10% of the regulated sector, but provide over a quarter of all regulated slots. The family child care providers have been in decline in the region, often replaced by the licensed group family child care providers.

Fig. 1. Mid-Hudson Region Programs and Slots

Care Modality	#/% Programs	#/% Regulated Slots
Center	477 (18%)	40,261 (55%)
Family Child Care	309 (11%)	2,452 (3%)
Group Family Child Care	668 (25%)	10,572 (14%)
School Age Programs	282 (10%)	20,352 (28%)
Regulated Total	1,736 (64%)	73,637 (100%)
Legally Exempt Family Child Care	972 (36%)	
Regulated and LE Total	2,708 (100%)	

Overall, OCFS regulated child care businesses make up nearly 70% of the Mid-Hudson Region’s options for parents, though there is some variation by county. In Putnam, nearly all the slots are regulated, while in Orange County it is only 49%. In Westchester, the county with the most regulated programs by far, LE providers still represent nearly a third of the combined regulated/LE options.

Fig. 2. Mid-Hudson Region Regulated Child Care Businesses

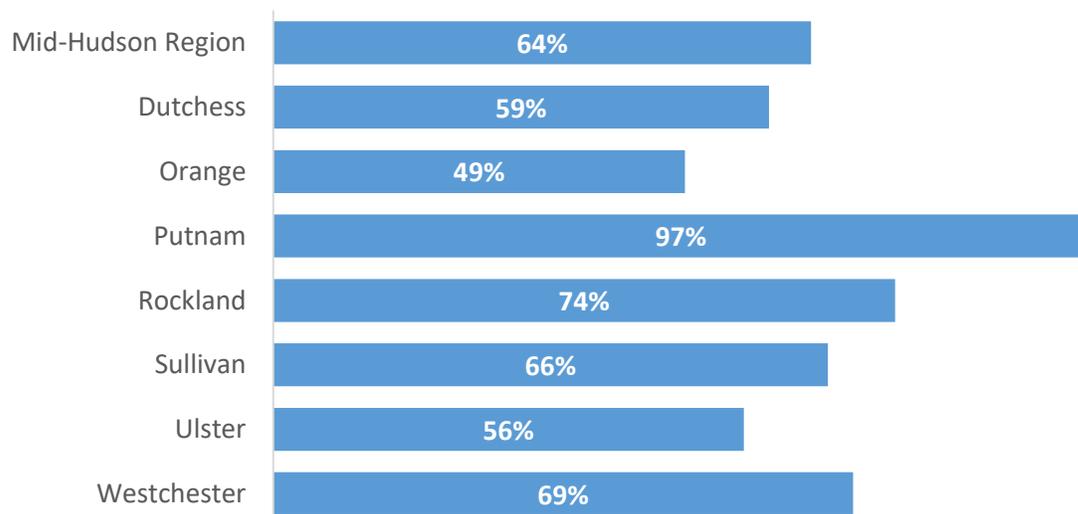
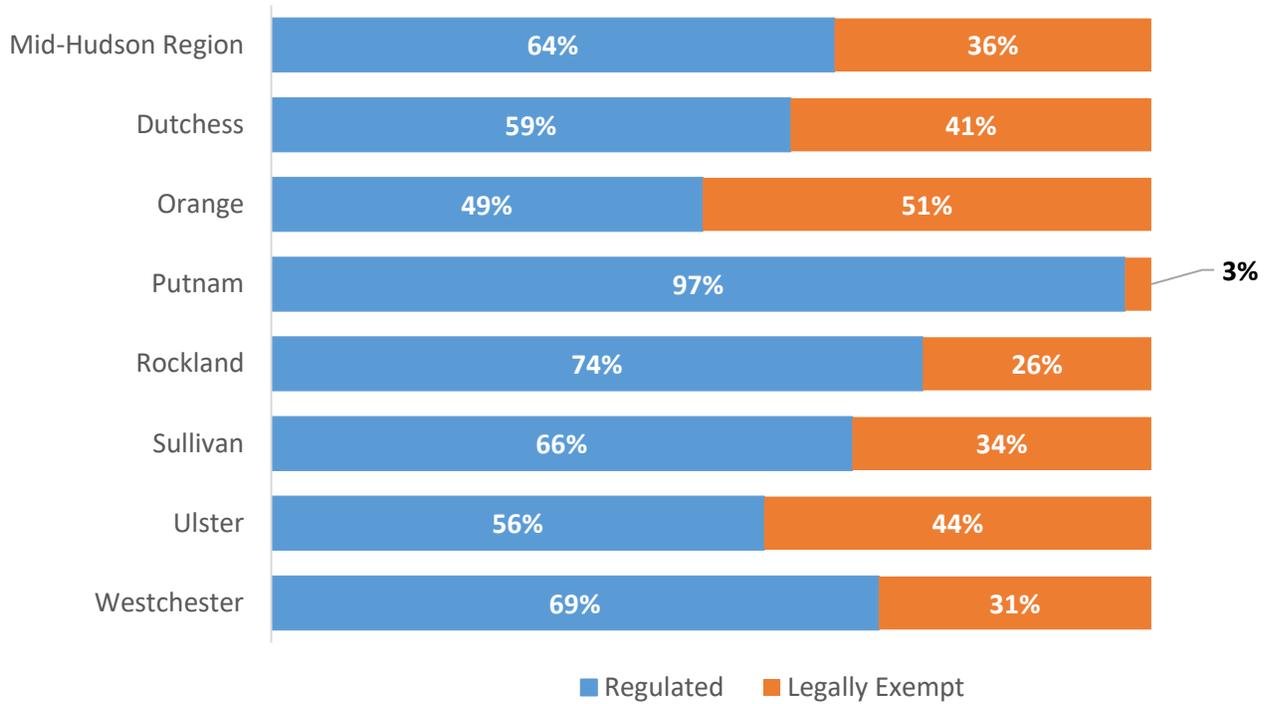


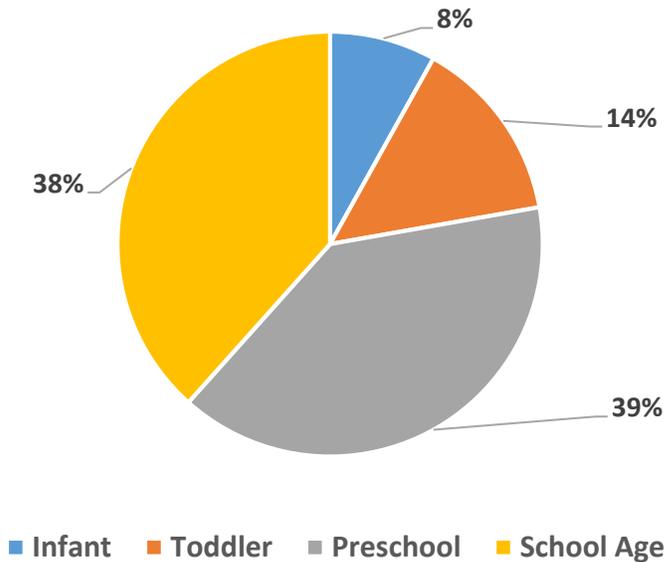
Fig 3. Mid-Hudson Region Regulated Child Care Businesses and Legally Exempt Child Care



School age and preschool slots dominate the region and this breakdown is fairly consistent among the counties. Only 8% of all slots are for infants; the supply of toddler slots represents another 14% of the

total. Despite the modest growth of regulated slots in Westchester, the percentage for infants has remained constant at 8%. There are many factors, which contribute to this situation including greater difficulty in finding licensable space, the cost of equipping that space, the high fees necessary to cover operating costs, and some parental preference to delay non-family care until preschool, etc.

Fig. 4. Mid-Hudson Region Regulated Child Care Slots by Age



Family/group family child care settings provide slightly more than half of the infant slots in the Mid-Hudson Region. Parents with infants often desire center-based care; however, they often encounter wait lists. There are 128 child care centers in the Mid-Hudson Region who start care at 19 months, excluding infant care.

Fig. 5. Mid-Hudson Region Regulated Child Care Slots

Regulated Care Modality	# Infant	# Toddler	# Preschool	# School Age	Total	Total %
Center	2,953	6,932	25,786	4,590	40,261	55%
Family Child Care	618	617	616	601	2,452	3%
Group Family Child Care	2,670	2,653	2,668	2,581	10,572	14%
School Age Program	n/a	n/a	n/a	20,352	20,352	28%
Total #	6,241	10,202	29,070	28,124	73,637	
Total %	8%	14%	39%	38%		

CHILD CARE DEMAND

There are 391,716 children under the age of 13 in the Mid-Hudson Region according to the American Fact Finder: U.S. Census Bureau/ Single Years of Age and Sex for 2010. After consulting other research, we elected to determine the demand for full-time regulated child care by multiplying the total population of children under the age of 13 by sixty percent (60%), a fairly conservative approach as other recent reports have used one hundred percent (100%). Even with demand at 60%, the current supply of regulated child care only meets 31% of the regional need. Stated another way, nearly 7 out of every 10 of the 235,000 children in the region could find themselves unable to access regulated care.

Fig. 6. Mid-Hudson Region Regulated Child Care Demand by Age (60% of population of children)

Infant	32,348
Toddler	17,385
Preschool	35,141
School Age	150,155
Total	235,029

Child care for school age children covers 8 years, so the calculated need would of course be much higher than that for infants, toddlers or preschoolers. The actual demand for each single year within the school age span is 8%. Sports teams and other after school clubs represent possible alternatives to regulated care for some school age children, options that do not exist for younger children.

Fig. 7. Regulated Child Care Demand by County and Age of Child

County	# Infants	# Toddlers	# Preschool	# School Age	Total Children
Dutchess	3,460	1,832	3,851	17,491	26,634
Orange	6,131	3,231	6,531	27,246	43,139
Putnam	1,115	625	1,325	6,462	9,527
Rockland	5,608	2,920	5,753	23,335	37,616
Sullivan	1,078	550	1,147	4,586	7,361
Ulster	2,025	1,127	2,245	9,613	15,010
Westchester	12,931	7,100	14,289	61,422	95,742
Mid-Hudson Region Total	32,348	17,385	35,141	150,155	235,029
	(14%)	(7%)	(15%)	(64%)	(100%)

WHAT FAMILIES LOOK FOR IN CHILD CARE

Each of the regional CCR&Rs has a resource and referral department that helps parents/caregivers understand the child care market and to navigate it to best meet their needs. Each CCR&R also maintains information on each caller and his or her requests for child care. In 2019, the CCR&Rs spoke to just over 6,500 families seeking child care, a substantial number of families. However, with

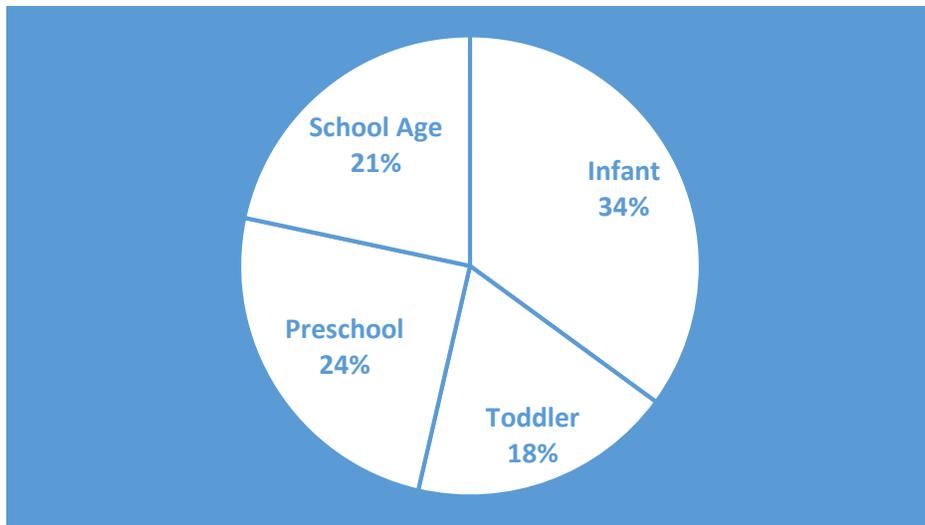
over 235,000 children who potentially need child care in the region, there is obviously a tremendous number of households that did not use CCR&R services. The most common request from the CCR&R callers was for full-time regulated care for infants and toddlers.

Fig. 8. CCR&R Child Care Requests by Age of Child

Age Group	Dutchess	Orange	Putnam	Rockland	Sullivan	Ulster	Westchester	Mid-Hudson Region
Infant	188	192	22	293	226	156	1,128	2,205 (34%)
Toddler	262	258	30	113	68	54	382	1,167 (18%)
Preschooler	184	203	26	542	85	64	491	1,595 (24%)
School Age	264	184	30	137	95	95	590	1,395 (21%)
No Data	5	51	0	7	29	13	75	180 (3%)
Total	903	888	108	1,092	503	382	2,666	6,542 (100%)

Over half (52%) of all requests were for infant and toddler care. Requests for infant care alone were especially high in Ulster (41%), Westchester (42%) and Sullivan (45%) counties.

Fig. 9. Mid-Hudson Region CCR&R Child Care Requests by Age of Child*



*3% no data

Virtually all callers request information on child care centers. Parents often do not know about all their child care options. Many parents are aware of child care centers but do not know that family child care

homes exist and are regulated by OCFS. Family child care homes offer more flexible schedules, and typically cost less than child care centers. After learning more about their child care options, including indicators of quality, parents often request referrals for family and group family providers as well. Nannies are requested more in Westchester than any other county in the region.

Fig. 10. Type of Child Care Requested

Type of Care	Dutchess	Orange	Putnam	Rockland	Sullivan	Ulster	Westchester	Mid-Hudson Region	% of Callers
Child Care Center	775	701	97	702	426	323	2,113	5,137	99%
Family Child Care	608	690	70	398	416	347	1,564	4,093	79%
Group Family Child Care	614	679	67	367	378	342	1,509	3,956	76%
School Age Program	147	123	23	41	39	92	427	892	17%
In-Home (Nanny)	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	n/a	3	536	543	10%
Preschool Program	87	6	9	71	54	18	309	554	11%
Camp	51	27	6	10	36	3	228	361	7%



The majority of callers asked for full-time child care. The schedule of care commonly reflects the schedules related to the industries in the region. Requests for various types of non-traditional care, such as evening, overnight or weekend were limited.

Fig. 11. Type of Child Care Schedule Requested

Type of Schedule	Dutchess	Orange	Putnam	Rockland	Sullivan	Ulster	Westchester	Mid-Hudson Region	% of Callers
Full-time (30 hours or more)	741	848	90	761	412	238	1,516	4,606	88%
Part-time (less than 30 hours)	135	7	17	168	69	91	370	857	16%
Both Full & Part-time	27	57	1	60	22	53	139	359	7%
Evening (after 6pm)	27	22	0	78	29	20	158	334	6%
Overnight	10	13	0	7	11	1	25	67	1%
Weekend (Sat and/or Sun)	35	50	3	30	29	43	135	325	6%

CHILD CARE GAPS

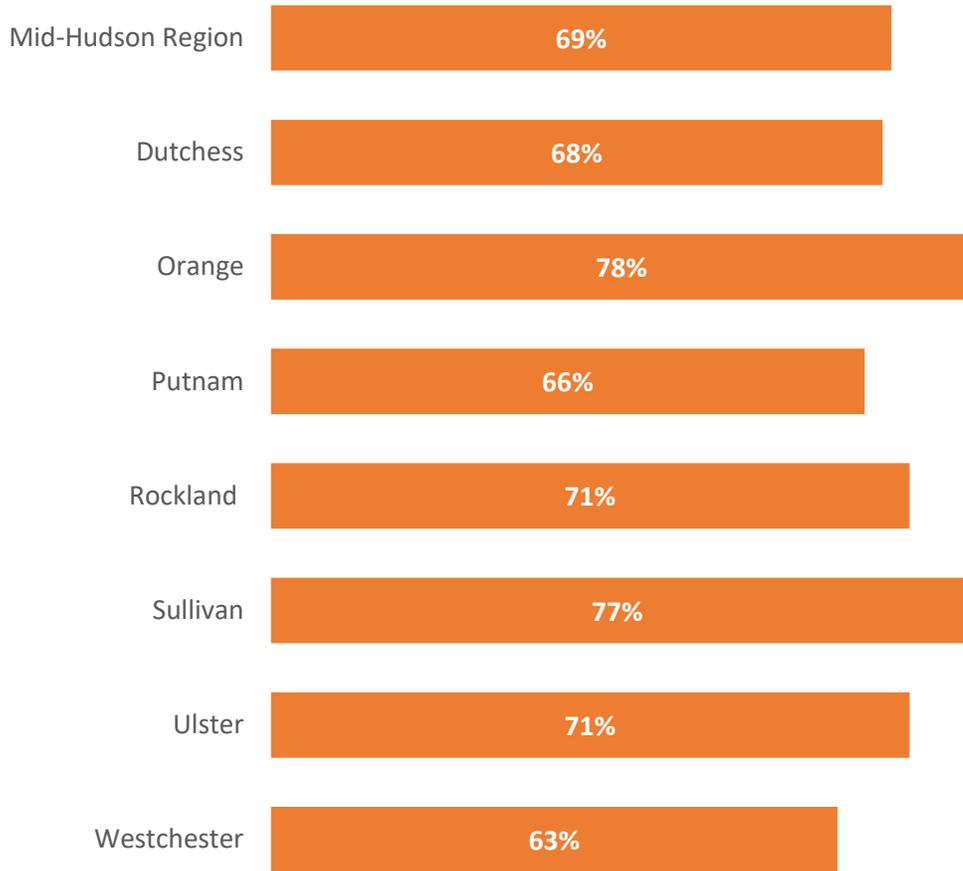
In the Mid-Hudson Region, there is almost a 70% child care gap between the supply of regulated child care and the demand. The gap is particularly wide for infants at 81%.

Fig. 12. Mid-Hudson Region Supply and Demand by Age

	# Infant	# Toddler	# Preschool	# School Age	Total
Supply					
# of OCFS regulated slots	6,241	10,202	29,070	28,124	73,637
Demand					
60% of the child population	32,348	17,385	35,141	150,155	235,029
Gap	-26,107 (81%)	-7,183 (41%)	-6,071 (17%)	-122,031 (81%)	-161,392 (69%)

The biggest shortages of regulated child care, reaching nearly 80%, are in Orange (78%) and Sullivan (77%). Westchester County is in the best shape but has regulated supply only for 4 of every 10 children.

Fig. 13. Mid-Hudson Region Child Care Gap



CHILD CARE DESERTS

Child care deserts are areas with an insufficient supply of regulated child care. This report uses the definition of child care deserts established in the Center for American Progress 2017 report, “Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts”: a child care desert exists when there are more than three young children for every licensed child care slot. (See Figure 1 for additional detail). This definition is derived from U.S. Census Bureau findings that approximately one-third of young children are regularly in the care of someone who is not a relative.¹⁵ When the number of licensed child care slots is insufficient to reach at least one-third of young children under age 5, the likelihood that parents face difficulty finding child care increases. This could affect employment decisions or force families to turn to unlicensed options.

FIGURE 1

A working definition for child care deserts



Note: Child Care Aware of America defines child care deserts as “areas or communities with limited or no access to quality child care.”

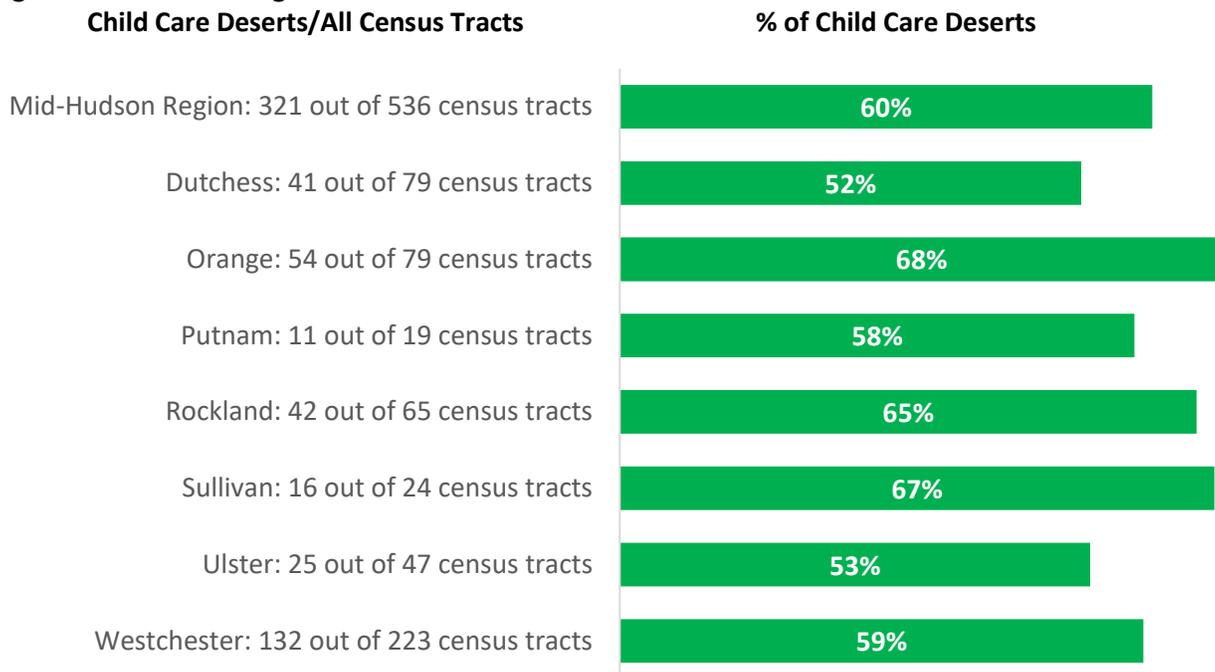
Source: Rasheed Malik and Katie Hamm, “Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2017/08/30/437988/mapping-americas-child-care-deserts>.



New York State is among the states with the highest presence of census tracts that are child care deserts at 64%, according to the 2018 Center for American Progress report on child care supply. The Mid-Hudson Region is slightly less, at 60%. Several Mid-Hudson counties exceed the regional average with Rockland County at 65%, Sullivan County at 67%, and Orange County at 68%. It is important to note that the data on child care deserts does not take into account the quality of care.

¹⁵ Lynda Laughlin, “Who’s Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2011” (Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), available at <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-135.pdf>.

**Fig. 14. Mid-Hudson Region Child Care Deserts
Child Care Deserts/All Census Tracts**



CHILD CARE COST

New York is one of the most expensive states in the U.S. when it comes to child care; center-based infant care averages over \$15,000 annually. Yet three counties in the Mid-Hudson Region exceed the state mean. Center-based programs are generally more expensive than family child care options. Average costs vary within the region, ranging from Sullivan at \$220 to Westchester at \$352 for center-based infant care.

Fig. 15. Annual Cost of Center-Based Infant Care

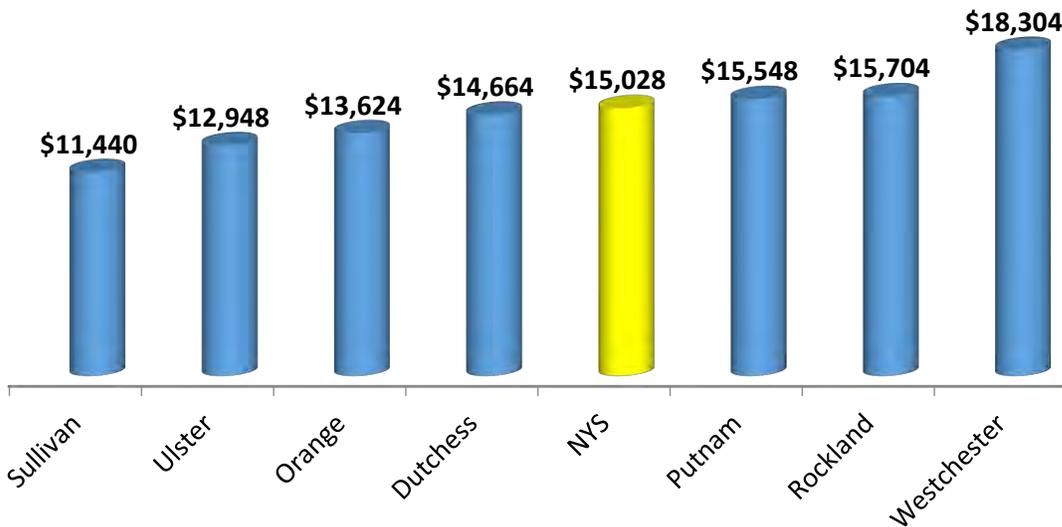


Fig. 16. Mid-Hudson Region Cost of Care

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$281	\$261	\$240	\$198
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$232	\$222	\$217	\$170
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$205

In almost every region in the nation, child care costs more than housing. This is true in the Mid-Hudson Region. We use an example below of a two-parent household with a baby and preschooler in center-based care; their combined gross income is \$60,000 so they are over-income for public financial assistance. In every county, the percentage of family income going to child care is significant and dramatically exceeds the percentage going to housing. In both Putnam and Westchester, child care expense takes up at least 50% of the family's gross income. Once the child care and housing bills are paid, there is very little income left. The high cost of child care is a problem for most families, at every

income level. In the annual child care surveys conducted by the Child Care Council of Westchester, parents describe the strategies they employ to deal with child care costs including credit cards, borrowing money from family and friends, delaying payment of other bills, opting for less expensive (and sometimes unregulated care), etc.

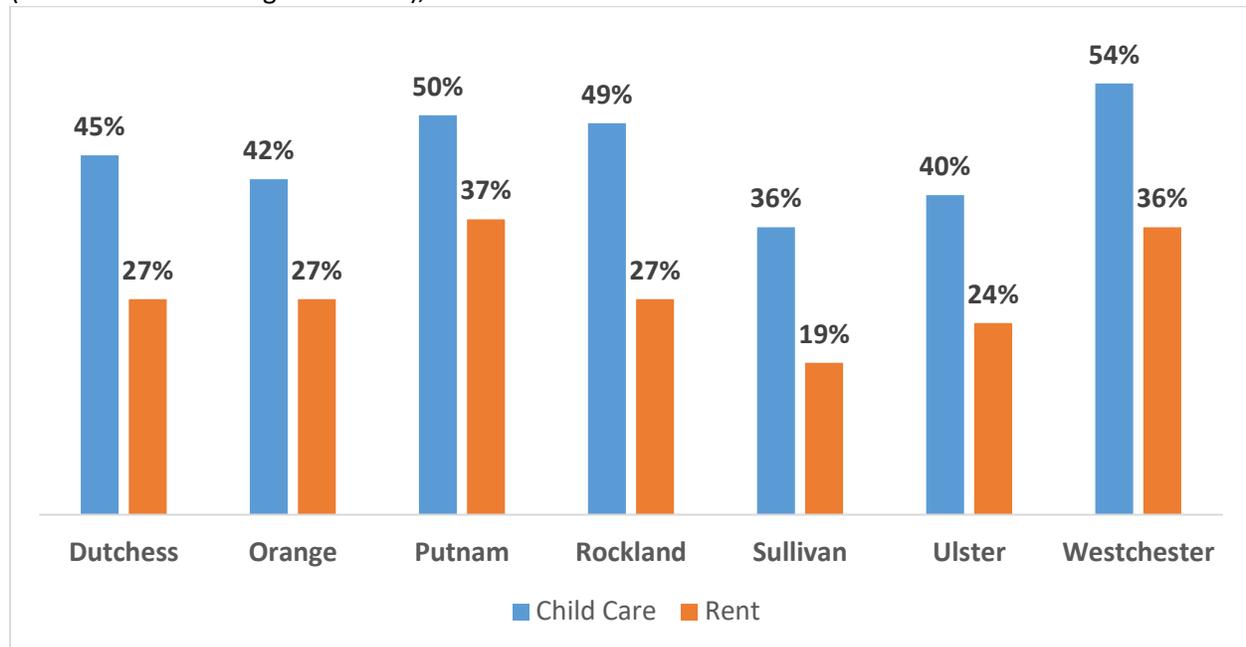


Fig. 16. Child Care and Rental Cost as a % of Household Income

Financial assistance for child care is limited. There are federal and state tax credit programs, but those require putting the money out first. Every county in the Mid-Hudson Region offers the public child care subsidy program through its local Department of Social Services for working families with gross incomes that do not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. This program is largely funded by federal dollars that are allocated to the counties by OCFs, though there is a county “match”. Subsidies are currently available in every county except Rockland, which has not been taking new applications for some time. Counties can also offer subsidies to working families with gross incomes at the Title XX level, funded by Title XX funds or other county dollars. Westchester is the only county in the region to do so, albeit on a limited basis. There are many working families in the Mid-Hudson Region that are over-income for the subsidy, but who could not afford the full price of child care.

NYS Income Effective 6/1/19 - 5/31/20

Family Size	100% FPL	200% FPL	Title XX
1	12,490	24,980	34,347.50
2	16,910	33,620	46,502.50
3	21,330	42,660	54,391.50
4	25,750	51,500	57,937.50
5	30,170	60,340	67,882.50
6	34,590	69,180	77,827.50
7	39,010	78,020	87,772.50
8	43,430	86,860	97,717.50

Most parents receiving a child care subsidy are required to pay a “parent share”. Each county determines its own, ranging from 10% to 35% of family income over 100% of the Federal Poverty Level; this designation has major consequences for families. Using the example of a family of 3 with a gross income of \$42,660, a parent share of 10% translates into \$2,133 annually while at 35%, the parent will pay \$7,465.50; families at this income level would feel this difference of more than \$5,000. None of the Mid-Hudson Region counties are at the lowest end of the parent share range. Putnam is the lowest at 20% while Orange and Sullivan are at the top of the scale at 35%. For more info on the child care subsidy program, see the Addendum.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Mid-Hudson Region CCR&Rs understand how important equitable child care access is to not only individual children and families, but also employers, communities and the regional economy. The current supply of regulated care is wholly inadequate and that which does exist may not be conveniently located, nor offer the schedule that parents need. The need for more infant and toddler slots is particularly acute. Despite the fact that workers in the child care industry are among the mostly poorly paid of any profession, the price of child care to consumers is steep, and beyond the reach of many moderate income families. Despite these serious challenges, there are also immediate opportunities for the CCR&Rs to move toward the child care system that we need:

- Work more closely with local and regional business groups to better educate employers on their workers’ child care needs and how CCR&Rs can assist
- Enlist the business community in publicly supporting more child care funding
- Encourage prospective child care businesses to locate along/near bus routes and train stations
- Encourage existing and new child care businesses to add infant and toddler slots
- Advocate for low parent shares that are uniform within the region
- Further investigate the need for care at non-traditional hours

Dutchess County Child Care Profile

**52% of census tracts are child care deserts
41 out of 79**

NEEDS:

- ✚ More regulated child care, in particular for infants and toddlers
- ✚ More child care options with non-traditional hours, especially near the hospitals
- ✚ More public transportation to enable parents to access existing child care and/or develop child care supply near public transportation
- ✚ Lower parent share

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	67	58	69	44	238	167	405
% of Total	17%	14%	17%	11%	59%	41%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	360	889	2,803	660	4,712	55%
Family Child Care	116	116	116	113	461	5%
Group Family Child Care	276	271	274	262	1,083	13%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,355	2,355	27%
Total #	752	1,276	3,193	3,390	8,611	
Total %	9%	15%	37%	39%		

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$282	\$282	\$242	\$179
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$208	\$208	\$202	\$133
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$103

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	2,028	3,193	3,390	8,611
Demand 60% of the child population	5,292	3,851	17,491	26,634
Gap	-3,264 (62%)	-658 (17%)	-14,101 (81%)	-18,023 (68%)

Orange County Child Care Profile

**68% of census tracts are child care deserts
54 out of 79**

NEEDS:

- ✚ More care in bigger cities (i.e. Middletown and Newburgh)
- ✚ More regulated child care, in particular for infants and toddlers
- ✚ More non-traditional hours child care services (i.e. Woodbury Commons in Monroe is a major retail structure with late store hours but care in Monroe only goes to 6:30pm)
- ✚ A better public transportation info structure
- ✚ Lower parent share

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	65	37	82	43	227	232	459
% of Total	14%	8%	18%	9%	49%	51%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	472	747	3,488	650	5,357	56%
Family Child Care	74	74	74	71	293	3%
Group Family Child Care	328	328	328	320	1,304	13%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,680	2,680	28%
Total #	874	1,149	3,890	3,721	9,634	
Total %	9%	12%	40%	39%		

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$262	\$247	\$225	\$220
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$225	\$200	\$200	\$200
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$220

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	2,023	3,890	3,721	9,634
Demand 60% of the child population	9,362	6,531	27,246	43,139
Gap	-7,339 (78%)	-2,641 (40%)	-23,525 (86%)	-33,505 (78%)

Putnam County Child Care Profile

**58% of census tracts are child care deserts
11 out of 19**

NEEDS:

- ✚ Lower parent share
- ✚ The CCR&R that services Putnam does not receive a lot of request for care, therefore a better understanding on where parents are finding care is needed.

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	28	14	18	11	71	2	73
% of Total	38%	19%	25%	15%	97%	3%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	191	378	1,214	315	2,098	64%
Family Child Care	28	28	28	27	111	3%
Group Family Child Care	72	70	72	66	280	9%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	790	790	24%
Total #	291	476	1,314	1,198	3,279	
Total %	9%	15%	40%	37%		

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$299	\$299	\$279	\$130
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$268	\$268	\$261	\$135
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$147

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	767	1,314	1,198	3,279
Demand 60% of the child population	1,740	1,325	6,462	9,527
Gap	-973 (56%)	-11 (1%)	-5,264 (81%)	-6248 (66%)

Rockland County Child Care Profile

**65% of census tracts are child care deserts
42 out of 65**

NEEDS:

- ✚ More regulated child care, in particular for infants and toddlers
- ✚ More non-traditional hours child care services
- ✚ A better public transportation info structure (i.e. limited buses)
- ✚ More resources and support for families in shelters
- ✚ Lower parent share

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	62	35	124	31	252	90	342
% of Total	18%	10%	37%	9%	74%	26%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	355	962	3,930	979	6,226	57%
Family Child Care	70	70	70	68	278	3%
Group Family Child Care	496	494	496	480	1,966	18%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,405	2,405	22%
Total #	921	1,526	4,496	3,932	10,875	
Total %	8%	14%	41%	36%		

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$302	\$250	\$263	\$245
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$240	\$232	\$233	\$223
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$293

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	2,447	4,496	3,932	10,875
Demand 60% of the child population	8,528	5,753	23,335	37,616
Gap	-6,081 (71%)	-1,257 (22%)	-19,403 (83%)	-26,741 (71%)

Sullivan County Child Care Profile

**67% of census tracts are child care deserts
16 out of 24**

NEEDS:

- ✚ More regulated child care, in particular for infants and toddlers (i.e. there are only 48 regulated providers in the county. Families often need to seek care in adjacent counties.)
- ✚ More infant and toddler slots (there are only 3 centers in entire county that do infant and toddler care)
- ✚ More non-traditional hours child care services; i.e. there are major resorts in the county that have working parents)
- ✚ A better transportation info structure; however it is currently being addressed. In early 2019, the buses only ran in the major township. In September 2019, new bus routes started. The bus system was free but there will be a minimal charge starting in early 2020.
- ✚ Lower parent share

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	11	20	12	5	48	25	73
% of Total	15%	27%	17%	7%	66%	34%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	101	149	641	20	911	53%
Family Child Care	40	40	40	40	160	10%
Group Family Child Care	48	48	48	48	192	11%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	450	450	26%
Total #	189	237	729	558	1,713	
Total %	11%	14%	43%	33%		

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$220	\$206	\$195	\$180
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$160	\$150	\$150	\$150
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	\$195	\$180

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	426	729	558	1,713
Demand 60% of the child population	1,628	1,147	4,586	7,361
Gap	-1,202 (74%)	-418 (36%)	-4,028 (88%)	-5,648 (77%)

Ulster County Child Care Profile

**53% of census tracts are child care deserts
25 out of 47**

NEEDS:

- ✚ More regulated child care, in particular for infants and toddlers (there are only 3 centers in entire county that do infant and toddler care)
- ✚ More non-traditional hours child care services; i.e. there are major resorts in the county that have working parents)
- ✚ Homeless families newly employed to receive subsidy faster so not to lose their employment due to lack of child care
- ✚ A faster turnaround for child care subsidy approval; currently at 30 days
- ✚ A better transportation info structure (i.e. Bus routes have changed with fewer routes available in low-income neighborhoods. Child care subsidy only allows for 30 minutes travel time, which is often less than what is needed when using public transportation to/from child care then to/from work.
- ✚ Lower parent fee

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	45	56	36	19	156	122	278
% of Total	16%	20%	13%	7%	56%	44%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	192	405	1,469	274	2,340	54%
Family Child Care	112	112	112	111	447	10%
Group Family Child Care	144	144	144	142	574	13%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	993	993	23%
Total #	448	661	1,725	1,520	4,354	

Total %	10%	15%	40%	35%
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Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$249	\$226	\$210	\$200
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$229	\$219	\$210	\$131
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$147

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	1,109	1,725	1,520	4,354
Demand 60% of the child population	3,152	2,245	9,613	15,011
Gap	-2,043 (65%)	-520 (23%)	-8,093 (84%)	-10,657 (71%)

Westchester County Child Care Profile

**59% of census tracts are child care deserts
132 out of 223**

NEEDS:

- ✚ More regulated child care, in particular for infants and toddlers
- ✚ More non-traditional hours child care services
- ✚ Additional financial resources for low- to mid-income families
- ✚ A faster turnaround for child care subsidy approval; currently at 30 days
- ✚ Lower parent fee

Child Care by Modality	Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	School Age Programs	Regulated Total	Legally Exempt Family Child Care	Total # of Programs
# of Programs	199	89	327	129	744	334	1,078
% of Total	19%	8%	30%	12%	69%	31%	

Regulated Child Care	# Infant Slots	# Toddler Slots	# Preschool Slots	# School Age Slots	Total Slots	% of Regulated Total
Center	1,282	3,402	12,241	1,692	18,617	53%
Family Child Care	178	177	176	171	702	2%
Group Family Child Care	1,306	1,298	1,306	1,263	5,173	15%
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	10,679	10,679	30%
Total #	2,766	4,877	13,723	13,805	35,171	
Total %	8%	14%	39%	39%		

Weekly Cost of Care	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Center	\$352	\$314	\$269	\$229
Family & Group Family Child Care	\$293	\$275	\$266	\$217
School Age Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$344

Supply & Demand	# Infants & Toddlers	# Preschool Age Children	# School Age Children	Total
Supply # of OCFS regulated slots	7,643	13,723	13,805	35,171
Demand 60% of the child population	20,031	14,289	61,422	95,472
Gap	-12,388 (62%)	-566 (4%)	-47,617 (78%)	-60,301 (63%)

ADDENDUM

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is a county-administered program operated by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) with state and primarily federal funds to help parents/caretakers pay for some or all of the cost of child care services so that they can work, look for work or participate in approved training. Counties also have to contribute a “maintenance of effort” amount, which they can exceed if they choose. Funding is attached to eligible families rather than to programs by contracts.

Parent Share – All families (except for families that are receiving Temporary Assistance) are required to pay a parent share fee directly to their provider. This amount is deducted from the amount DSS pays the provider. The parent share fee is based on the income of the family; it has no relationship to how many children are in care, the number of hours or the cost of care. The parent share is calculated based on the family’s total gross income, minus 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) times the percentage the county has chosen as its “parent share multiplier”. OCFS allows counties to select a multiplier between 10% and 35%. The parent pays the parent share each week directly to the provider.

Eligibility Income Levels – OCFS sets 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) as the eligibility cap for low-income subsidy. The FPL is updated annually and OCFS issues New York State Income Standards each June. Counties can opt to set their own low-income eligibility caps at a level below the NYS Income Standards. Counties can also use their own funds to offer child care subsidies to families over 200% FPL, though only nine counties currently do. Westchester is the only county in the Mid-Hudson Region that currently offers limited “Title XX” slots, named for a former source of funding for this child care subsidy program.

Open or Wait List – Counties may accept new subsidy applications or not; if they close the subsidy program to new applications, they may compile a mailing list or implement a formal wait list. They may also simply inform applicants to check back to see when applications might be accepted again. Rockland is the only county in the Mid-Hudson Region that currently has a wait list.

NYS 200% of Federal Poverty Level

Family Size	Household Income
2	\$33,820
3	\$42,660
4	\$51,500
5	\$60,340



Even when a family is receiving child care subsidy, the parent share fee can be unaffordable. Especially when it is on the higher end.

A single parent with one child with a household income of \$32,000

- Putnam {
 - Pays \$232 a month for child care at 20% parent share fee

- Sullivan {
 - Pays \$406 a month for child care at 35% parent share fee

County	Parent Share	Low Income Subsidy Income Eligibility Cap	Title XX Subsidy Income Eligibility Cap	Low Income Subsidy Open or Wait List
Dutchess	30%	200%	n/a	Open
Orange	35%	175%	n/a	Open
Putnam	20%	200%	n/a	Open
Rockland	25%	200%	n/a	Wait List
Sullivan	35%	200%	n/a	Open
Ulster	25%	200%	n/a	Open
Westchester	25%	200%	275%	Low Income - Open Title XX – Open for families transitioning to Title XX but closed for new applicants

CHILD CARE SURVEY FOR MID-HUDSON REGION EMPLOYERS RESULTS January 2020

INTRODUCTION

In order to learn more about the type and number of resources and services Mid-Hudson Region employers are using to help their workers with their child care needs, a survey was conducted utilizing Survey Monkey. The survey included 9 questions and was distributed via email by the CCR&Rs, and the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council with a cover letter from Executive Director Meghan Taylor. The CCR&Rs also utilized their contacts with business associations throughout the region to circulate the survey. The active survey period was from early December until January 10, 2020.

RESPONDENTS

We received 131 completed surveys.

TYPE OF BUSINESS:

- For profit - 53%
- Nonprofit - 33%
- Government/public sector - 14%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

- Under 10 - 31%
- Under 50 - 29%
- 50 to 99 - 11%
- 100 to 249 – 11%
- 250 to 999 – 7%
- Over 1,000 – 11%
- Small businesses with under 50 employees are by far the largest percentage of respondents at 60%.

BUSINESS LOCATION:

- Dutchess – 20%
- Orange – 16%
- Putnam – 5%
- Rockland – 9%
- Sullivan – 9%
- Ulster – 19%
- Westchester – 18%
- Other – 4%
- Two smaller counties, Dutchess, with 13% of the regional population and Ulster, with 8%, have about the same number of respondents as the much more populous Westchester, with 42% of the regional population.

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR:

- A variety of sectors are represented
- Largest sectors:
 - Education - 15%
 - Health care - 14%
 - Manufacturing - 11%
 - Social services - 9%

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES AS PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS FOR CHILD/CHILDREN:

- Under 10% - 18%
- 10% to 24% - 21%
- 25% to 50% - 34%
- 51% to 75% - 15%
- Over 75% - 12%
- A third of the respondents indicate that between 25% and 50% of their employees are primary care providers.

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES WHO ARE WORKING PARENTS:

- Under 10% - 13%
- 10% to 24% - 11%
- 25% to 50% - 28%
- 51% to 75% - 28%
- Over 75% - 20%
- Nearly half the respondents report that at least half of their employees are working parents.
- The respondents reporting a small percentage of working parents (under 10%), tend to be businesses with under 10 workers.

RESULTS

- Only 9 businesses, or 7%, report that child care issues are not impacting their business compared to 87% who agree that it is.
- 27% feel child care issues have a “significant or major impact” on productivity and attendance.
- Businesses with 50 to 99 employees are most apt to report child care issues as a “significant or major impact” at 47%.
- The larger businesses tend to offer more child care and related benefits.
- 15% of the businesses, typically the smaller size, indicate that they offer none of the child care and related benefits.
- A flexible schedule is the most commonly provided benefit, offered by 43% of the businesses, followed by paid maternity leave at 38%, unpaid maternity leave at 37% and the ability to work from home when a child was sick or off from school, by 31%.
- Smaller businesses with under 50 workers report a higher use of flexible scheduling and working from home than do the larger businesses.
- The smaller businesses also report some back-up/emergency child care compared to the larger businesses, which report none.

- While 16% of the businesses offer a Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP), only 8% of the businesses include an employer contribution, which often increases employee utilization. Use of the DCAP benefit, particularly with an employer contribution, is more prevalent among the larger businesses.
- Many of the 16 benefits listed in the survey are rarely used including employee benefit fairs (9%), information on child care tax breaks/programs (8%), on or near site child care (8%), back-up/emergency child care (6%, and parent groups (5%).
- While 20% of the businesses provide access to a child care resource and referral agency (CCR&R), 65% of that group are smaller businesses of under 50 employees.
- 9 out of 10 businesses indicate that providing child care resources/benefits generates a positive public image for a business.

DISCUSSION

The survey was conducted at the end of the year, over the holidays, which may have contributed to the modest number of participants. With only 131 responses it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions, though the results echo those of the 2016 survey of Westchester employers performed by the Child Care Council of Westchester (the Council). In that survey the Council found that a majority of employers were aware of the link between access to reliable child care and employee attendance, punctuality and productivity as well as the positive “public image” of providing child care resources and benefits to workers. In this regional survey, these findings are even more substantial. What is also true however, is that employers continue to offer few child care resources and services to their employees, even those that are very low cost such as information on child/child care tax credits, dependent care assistant plans (employee contribution only), employee benefit fairs, or access to a child care resource and referral agency (CCR&R). Flexible schedules remain popular, along with maternity and paternity leave, particularly unpaid. Back-up/emergency care, and on/near site child care are virtually non-existent. Non-profit businesses are more apt than for profit businesses or government to provide several benefits including on or near site child care, backup/emergency care and education/info on tax breaks and programs, though the small sample size makes any definitive conclusions impossible. One can conclude however, that businesses of all types, sizes and sectors throughout the Mid-Hudson Region, understand that child care impacts their workforce, and that there is much more to be done to help them meet their employees’ child care challenges.



Need quality child care?

Enter your zip code to connect with the resource agency that can help.

ZIP CODE

All referral services are free!

Did you know that every county in the lower- and mid-Hudson Valley has a nonprofit child care resource and referral agency where you can learn about the different types of child care, obtain referrals that meet your needs, get one-on-one counseling from a child care specialist to help you choose, and explore resources to help you pay for care? These services are all free. Get started today: children are born learning, and quality care from birth is essential for kindergarten readiness, academic success, lifelong social/emotional health, and so much more.

Funding for this site provided by the New York State Council on Children and Families.





Child Care Council of Dutchess-Putnam, Inc.

www.childcaredutchess.org (845) 473-4141, x222

kwalsh@childcaredutchess.org

301 Manchester Road, Suite 201A, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

REFERRAL SERVICES ARE FREE!



Child Care Council of Orange, Inc.

www.childcarecounciloc.org (845) 294-4012, x224

jen@childcarecounciloc.org

40 Matthews Street, Suite 103, Goshen NY 10924

REFERRAL SERVICES ARE FREE!



Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.

childcarerockland.org ☎ (845) 425-0009, x0 ✉ info@rocklandchildcare.org

📍 235 North Main Street, Suite 11, Spring Valley, NY 10977

REFERRAL SERVICES ARE FREE!



Sullivan County Child Care Council, Inc.

www.scchildcare.com  (845) 292-7166  info@scchildcare.com

 7 Community Lane, Liberty, NY 12754

REFERRAL SERVICES ARE FREE!



Family of Woodstock

www.familyofwoodstockinc.org

[\(845\) 331-7080](tel:(845)331-7080) cccouncil@familyofwoodstockinc.org

[39 John Street, Kingston, NY 12402](https://www.google.com/maps/place/39+John+Street,+Kingston,+NY+12402)

[\(518\) 822-1944](tel:(518)822-1944) ccccg@familyofwoodstockinc.org

[160 Fairview Plaza, Suite 914 2nd floor, Hudson, NY 12534](https://www.google.com/maps/place/160+Fairview+Plaza,+Suite+914+2nd+floor,+Hudson,+NY+12534)

REFERRAL SERVICES ARE FREE!



Child Care Council of Westchester

www.childcarewestchester.org ☎ (914) 761-3456, x140 ✉ referrals@cccwny.org

📍 313 Central Park Ave, Scarsdale, NY 10583

REFERRAL SERVICES ARE FREE!

Renee Rider
Executive Director
Council on Children and Families
52 Washington Drive
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Re: Child Care Desert Grant Report

Dear Renee,

Thank you so much for the support to Long Island to address the challenges facing the early childhood system. Beginning in June 2019, the Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc. co-chaired the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council's (LIREDC) new child care sub-committee. The focus of this sub-committee was to assess the child care needs of the region and identify potential solutions and recommendations that would increase access to child care. Working closely with the Child Care Council of Nassau and our business and labor partners on the sub-committee, we have achieved the following:

1. Needs assessment based on capacity, cost and accessibility.

We compared child care capacity by County, modality and age group from 2017 to 2019 and identified the trends. Overall, there was a decrease in total capacity for children under age 5, and an increase in care for school-age children. Suffolk County experienced a greater loss, especially in family child care providers.

This trend has recently reversed and there is a slow but steady increase in child care capacity in centers, group family child care and school-age child care. We are now trying to determine the quality and enrollment issues facing these providers. There has been a documented increase in providers receiving violations and requiring mandated training. So while capacity may be increasing, we have more work to do to determine the quality and stability of the care being provided.

We also analyzed the cost of child care, compared with the median salaries in our counties for various family units (single mother, two-parent working, minimum wage earners, etc). The summary of all of this analysis is included in the LIREDC 2019 Strategic Plan (relevant section attached).

"YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS"

2. Parent Needs and Experiences

Data Analysis. As a Child Care Resource & Referral agency, we work with thousands of parents every year who are looking for child care. This has provided us with an extensive data-base of parent needs, challenges and outcomes. While we have a sense of the biggest challenges and most important family needs, we have never had the capacity to do a deeper dive into the data to fully identify patterns and trends. With support from this grant, we began an in-depth analysis of the extensive data contained in our database with an experienced researcher from St. John's University. The analysis is well underway and will be completed by the end of March 2020. We will share the final results as soon as it is completed.

Survey. In an effort to get a better sense of the general need of working parents on Long Island (not just from the parents who contact our agency which is a small percentage of families who use/need child care), we issued an on-line survey through Survey Monkey (questions are attached). This survey was sent out by multiple labor unions, the County Departments of Social Services and Labor, the LIREDC members, and the two child care councils.

As of February 19, 2020 there have been 601 responses to the survey. Further analysis is required of the responses but some highlights are:

- 20% of respondents work more than 1 job
- 64% of respondents prefer child care closer to home (rather than closer to place of employment)
- 83% of respondents believe the amount they pay for child care is unreasonable for their budget/income
- 54% of respondents with children under age 2 use licensed/regulated child care
- When asked if the following were very important, somewhat important, not very important or not important at all:
 - Cost: 79.3% very important
 - Location: 75% very important
 - Quality of program: 95% very important
 - Credentials of caregivers: 70% very important
 - Reputation of program: 85% very important
- In general, people were interested in child care outside of their home that was available from 6:30am – 7pm; but not before 6:30am or after 7pm. Only 8% said they would be interested in overnight care.
- 11% said they had no trouble finding appropriate care for their child under age 2.

“YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS”

- The respondents income range was:
 - 28% above \$150,000 per year
 - 33% between \$90K and \$149,999
 - 39% below \$90K

We will be breaking this data down further to understand the differences in parent needs/views based on income level, hours of employment, ages of children, etc.

3. Provider Needs & Challenges

With a better understanding of the needs of families, we also examined the needs of child care providers. Operating a child care program on Long Island presents many challenges that are now exacerbated with the increasing minimum wage. Based on forums with child care providers the top challenges right now are:

- (1) Paying staff competitive salaries. Many programs experience high-turnover with staff leaving to work in retail or the service industry where they can make more money.
- (2) Finding qualified staff. The workforce pipeline is drying up on Long Island. Many professionals have been able to find early childhood positions in NYC as the City ramps up Pre-K for All. The colleges and universities are not encouraging people to pursue a career in early childhood education. In fact, several have openly discouraged students, instead recommending the K-12 system.
- (3) Recruiting new families and children. High costs, changing demographics and staffing challenges have made it difficult for many providers to recruit children. While some of the larger and more stable programs may have waiting lists, smaller programs are struggling to survive.

In response to some of these challenges, the region has applied for and been granted support with a Leadership Initiative and Career Center through the PDG grant. We are also working on several strategies to identify funding that would support the compensation of the workforce.

The comprehensive proposal included by the LIREDC examines all of this information and proposes bold recommendations to make quality child care available and affordable to all Long Islanders, while ensuring a family-sustaining wage for providers (see attached). The sub-committee is continuing to meet and the LIREDC leaders have made child care a top priority for the region. We are also discussing pieces of these proposals with local leaders on the County and Town levels.

The support from this grant has ensured that we have been able to fully participate in working with our REDC and local business groups. It also helped us create a stronger linkage with our

“YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS”

local labor leaders and Industrial Development Agencies. We were also finally able to conduct a much more meaningful analysis of the extensive data that is available to us regarding parent needs and decisions.

This work will continue and we will share the results at further analysis is completed.

Thank you again for the support. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Rojas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jennifer Rojas
Executive Director
Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.

"YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS"

60 CALVERT AVENUE • COMMACK, NY 11725 • 631-462-0303
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This survey will help identify the child care needs of Long Island families. If you have parental responsibilities and live in Nassau County or Suffolk County, please complete this short survey. Your response will be very helpful.

Basic Information

1. 1. Are you a resident of Suffolk County or Nassau County, NY?

- Suffolk County
 Nassau County

2. Do you currently work more than 10 hours per week?

- Yes
 No

3. In which County is your primary place of employment?

- Nassau Brooklyn
 Suffolk Manhattan
 Queens Bronx
 Other (please specify)

4. Approximately how many hours do you work every week?

- Less than 20 hours per week
 Between 20 and 40 hours per week
 Between 40 - 60 hours per week
 More than 60 hours per week

5. Do you currently have more than one job?

- Yes
 No

6. 1. What days of the week do you typically work?

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

7. What hours/shifts do you typically work? (check all that apply)

- First shift - 8 hour (usually around 8am - 4pm)
- Second shift - 8 hour (usually around 4pm - 12am)
- Third shift - 8 hour (usually around 12am - 8am)
- 9am - 5pm
- First shift - 12 hour (usually around 8am - 8pm)
- Second shift - 12 hour (usually around 8pm - 8am)
- Other (please specify)

8. How many children do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

9. Are any of your children cared for by someone other than a parent/guardian more than 5 hours per week?

- Yes
- No

10. Approximately how much do you spend each month of child care costs for all of your children?

- Less than \$500 per month
- Between \$500 and \$1000 per month
- Between \$1000 and \$1,500 per month
- Between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per month
- Between \$2,000 and \$2,500 per month
- More than \$2,500 per month

11. If quality child care was available and affordable, would you prefer a location closer to your home, or to your place of employment?

- Closer to home
- Closer to employment
- No Preference

12. Please respond to the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure		
I feel the amount I pay each month for child care is reasonable for my budget.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel the amount I pay each month for child care is unreasonable for my budget.	<input type="radio"/>				

13. What are the ages of your children?

under 1 year of age

1 year old

2 years old

3 years old

4 years old

5 years old

6 - 12 years old

13 years and up

For Children Under Age 6

14. If you have children UNDER age 6, what is your current child care arrangement?

- I do not have a child under age 6
- Licensed or registered child care program
- Family member who lives in the home (grandparent, sibling, etc)
- Family, friend or neighbor caring for child in your home
- Family, friend or neighbor caring for child **outside** of your home
- Alternating arrangements based on work schedule and availability
- Nanny or AuPair

Other (please specify)

15. Approximately how many hours per week is your child(ren) under age 6 being cared for by someone other than a parent/guardian?

- Less than 5 hours per week
- Between 5 and 10 hours per week
- Between 10 and 20 hours per week
- Between 20 and 40 hours per week
- More than 40 hours per week

16. For your child(ren) under age 6, how satisfied are you with your current child care arrangements?

- I do not have a child under age 6
- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

19. If you work hours before 8am and/or after 6pm, please answer the following:

	Yes	No	Maybe	Depends	N/A
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care before 8am.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care after 6pm.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use overnight child care outside of my home.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care after 9pm.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care before 6am.	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

20. If you have a child **under 2 years of age**, did you have trouble finding appropriate child care options?

- Yes, options for babies and toddlers under age 2 were hard to find.
- There were options available, but I did not feel comfortable with them.
- I did not look for child care for my children under age 2.
- A family member or friend cares for my child under age 2.
- I had no problem finding child care for my child under age 2.
- Not applicable/I do not have a child under age 2

Other (please specify)

21. Do you also have a school-age child (over the age of 6)?

Yes

No

School-age children (6 years of age and older)

22. For your school-age child (age 6 and older) what is your current child care arrangement?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Licensed or registered child care program | <input type="radio"/> After-school program located at school |
| <input type="radio"/> Family member who lives in the home (grandparent, sibling, etc) | <input type="radio"/> Alternating arrangements based on work schedule and availability |
| <input type="radio"/> Family, friend or neighbor caring for your child in your home | <input type="radio"/> After-school program at location different from school |
| <input type="radio"/> Family, friend or neighbor caring for child outside of your home | <input type="radio"/> Nanny or AuPair |

Other (please specify)

23. For your school-age child (age 6 and older), how satisfied are you with your current child care arrangements?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

24. For your school-age child(ren), are the following factors (a) very important, (b) somewhat important, (c) not very important, or (d) not important at all?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All		N/A
Cost	<input type="radio"/>					
Convenience/Location	<input type="radio"/>					
Quality of program	<input type="radio"/>					
Transportation offered	<input type="radio"/>					
Credentials of teachers/caregivers	<input type="radio"/>					
Reputation of program	<input type="radio"/>					
Language spoken by staff	<input type="radio"/>					
Homework help provided	<input type="radio"/>					
Enrichment activities available	<input type="radio"/>					

Are there any other factors that are important to you when choosing a child care provider/program?

Demographics

26. What is your household income?

- Less than \$30,000 per year
- Between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year
- Between \$50,000 and \$70,000 per year
- Between \$70,000 and \$90,000 per year
- Between \$90,000 and \$110,000 per year
- Between \$110,000 and \$150,000 per year
- More than \$150,000 per year

27. What is your zip code (of your residence)?

28. What is the primary language spoken in your home?

- English
- Spanish
- Creole
- Asian or Pacific Islander languages

Other (please specify)

29. If you would like to receive the results and analysis of this survey please provide your email address.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.



Regional Economic
Development Councils

State of the Region:

LONG ISLAND

Breaking Down Barriers



2019 Progress Report



The Alston at the Ronkonkoma Hub, Credit: Tri Tec (LIREDC Round 1 & 2)

PART THREE

Implementation Agenda

The beating heart of the LIREDC is really dozens of beating hearts — the volunteers that comprise our Work Groups. Their years of expertise and experience and months of research and engagement help shape our strategies and initiatives and, ultimately, the Implementation Agenda at the core of our annual report.

Strategies and Actions Related to State Priorities

*“Your knee bone connected to your thigh bone.
Your thigh bone connected to your back bone...”*

African-American Spiritual

An Introduction

Everything’s connected. We may organize ourselves around Work Groups dedicated to a specific strategy or industry cluster, but the LIREDC understands that connectivity is the key to a sustainable economy. We know that Long Island’s ecosystem is strongest when every component is in sync. And that includes our people, from the most powerful officials and successful entrepreneurs to the poorest families and most struggling veterans. Of course, in a fragmented suburban policy-scape, where scores of jurisdictions hold sway within their borders, coaxing a critical mass of agreement in a single neighborhood is easier said than done. But the LIREDC is committed to breaking down barriers to communication and collaboration, and in a region with a reputation as the NIMBY “Land of No” we believe we are getting through more and more often.

In implementing the LIREDC’s growth agenda, the region has seen more and more local leaders accept the benefits of thinking – and acting – holistically. Along the length of this very long island, more and more have come to understand that the “knee bone” of innovation is connected to the “thigh” bone of education. That the “hip bone” of tourism is connected to “back bone” of the environment. And agriculture. And historic preservation. And so it goes, as we seek synergies in the sum of all our sectors and related work groups.

In concrete terms, success means more and more village officials approving strategic “place-making” proposals for affordable apartments near transportation hubs, especially the dozens and dozens of commuter rail stations that may be our most under-used asset. These mixed-use developments, often with restaurants and boutiques, relieve congestion and pollution by getting people out of their cars. They generate tax dollars that ease the burden on traditional single-family homeowners. At the same time, these new downtowns create a “buzz” that attracts young workers so desperately desired by businesses where new jobs are going begging.

It’s a virtuous cycle that embraces and benefits even those who often fight such development. As we’ve found in Patchogue, Rockville Centre, Farmingdale, Wyandanch and other places with appealing new apartments and other amenities, the value of the single-family homes – and the equity of the owners who often led opposition to higher-rise housing – has risen as well. Yes, we need to be vigilant about the

impact of gentrification on poorer residents and to subsidize the truly affordable rentals that young and old alike desire. We must provide workforce education and other support for people at all ends of the employment spectrum, even as we continue to invest heavily in engineers and researchers at the cutting edge of discovery. We are doing all that and more. We are as obsessively focused on filling our jobs as we were for years in creating them. But, big picture, the LIREDC’s approach to leveraging our regional investments has paid off and contributed to a strong, self-nurturing ecosystem.

Still, it’s not enough. As we explained in the executive summary, it’s not enough to create prosperity for most. Or to let the region and individuals stand pat in their accomplishments. We need to do more and we were tasked to do more. “Regional Councils are asked to address statewide priorities in ways uniquely tailored to...complement the regional vision,” according to state guidelines. “Each is asked to develop strategies to address those priorities, and to identify and encourage applicants to apply for funding through the CFA to implement those strategies.”

Creating an Equity Economy

That’s why, this year, we have committed to creating not just an Opportunity Agenda directed at our most distressed communities, but an Equity Economy that leaves no resident or neighborhood behind. We have embraced Governor Cuomo’s call to examine the economy and environment through the lens of justice. And we are doing so with the same, inclusive spirit that we have taken to other state and regional priorities. For instance, we have chosen to craft a plan for child care – whose “hip bone” is connected to an entire skeleton of economic and community needs – with a similar focus on equity. We have sought to connect all our work with an emphasis on inclusion that celebrates the value of diversity in building a strong economy. In short, the LIREDC has united behind the idea of equity as a growth strategy in and of itself.

What follows are the reports of our work groups. They include some new job-generating and community-building strategies around child care, place-making, energy development, workforce training for all, and environmental and economic justice. And they reinforce policies and projects that energize innovation and tradeable sectors, spur tourism and support policies to aid our veterans and others we have not abandoned in the ninth year of our mission. While we’ve sorted the Implementation Agenda into segments for ease of reading, the work group reports should be seen as a seamless strategic narrative that connects the dots of everything we do.

The Child Care Challenge

“This year, Regional Councils should develop strategies to address child care needs in their region. Strategies should identify community needs and examine the gap between...the resources available. Councils are encouraged to leverage and maximize existing resources, both within and outside the CFA, explore new and creative funding streams... and are encouraged to develop innovative child care business development, workforce development techniques.”

REDC Guide Book, 2019 Page 10

A CALL TO ACTION ON “CHILD CARE DESERTS”

We get it. Even before child care was declared a State Priority, the LIREDC identified the lack of adequate and affordable “slots” as a threat to local economic growth – especially in recruiting young workers with or planning to have children. It also slowed our efforts to create an Opportunity Economy for all our residents. That’s why the experts on our Child Care Work Group are proposing that Long Island craft a comprehensive system that will make child care affordable and accessible for every family. “Safe, affordable care is becoming harder to find, and families are facing increasingly difficult choices,” says Jennifer Rojas, who operates the Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc. and chairs the LIREDC Child Care Work Group. “A significant investment will eliminate barriers to full employment for many parents and boost our local economy.”

That’s also why we supported Bridgehampton Child Care in 2018 (Round 8) with a \$300,000 grant that leveraged private investment of \$1.5 million for a new building that will allow the not-for-profit to serve hundreds more children and their working parents. And that’s hardly the only LIREDC-supported child care project. In 2015 and 2016 (Rounds 5 and 6), the LIREDC awarded the YMCA of Long Island grants totaling \$900,000 to support private investment of \$8.4 million to construct and equip “The Y Healthy Living Center” in the “smart growth” downtown of Huntington. Just the joy in the faces of the 700 campers we visited on the last day of the program was enough to assure us this was money well spent.

The lack of child care slots not only keeps thousands of people, mostly women, from reaching their full potential as employees, it prevents children from preparing as fully as possible for a successful academic career. But trying to close the child care gap one center at a time won’t get Long Island and its families where they need to be. Our research shows getting there will require an investment substantial of public and private funds.

But it’s an investment that will catalyze enough economic activity to sustain the program. Child care already is an \$800 million industry on Long Island, providing jobs for 9,000 people, many of them minorities. And studies show that the sector produces one of the highest multipliers of dollars invested. So the lack of additional public and private investment is a missed opportunity to boost child care as a well-paying profession whose employers and employees can accelerate growth.

Child care is a chance to achieve economic justice and growth. Improving child care and the economy, as well as helping thousands of working families and their children reach their full potential, is a great deal that Long Island and the rest of the state can’t afford to pass up. The LIREDC will do its part. Governor Cuomo’s Child Care challenge couldn’t have come at a better time.

That’s because the problem is worsening: The number of child care slots on Long Island is actually shrinking. This is a crisis that hits every income group – and most businesses – but the burden falls most heavily on the working poor who are not eligible for a subsidy. A significant number of families are likely to pay as much as 25 percent of their paycheck for safe, reliable care. That loss of disposable income drains families and neighborhoods alike. It’s bad for everybody’s business.

Background

In order to address our employment and skills gaps, Long Island must attract workers whose ideas and energy can grow our industries. Younger workers are increasingly looking at the options available for child care. With all the challenges to recruiting and retaining workers on Long Island, from traffic to taxes, it would be foolish to add child care to the list.

The approach should be region-wide and focus on facilities, training and affordability. Similar to the progress toward Universal Pre-Kindergarten in New York State (and fully universal Pre-K for All in New York City), Long Island needs nothing less than universal Child Care.

Long Island has always taken pride in our public education system. We have some of the best schools in the country and we’ve invested heavily because we care about our children. But it’s the first five years of life – prior to Kindergarten for most children – when the brain grows the most. A universal child care program would help all children – regardless of their zip code or school district – prepare for school success.

Child care is also a key aspect of economic development. Parents with reliable child care are more productive, miss less time at work and have more opportunities for upward mobility. Access to affordable child care allows more women to work and to earn more, helping to close the gender wage gap.

New York State has demonstrated a commitment to working families and young children by implementing a strong Paid Family Leave policy and Pre-K expansion. Child care is the nexus between these two programs, serving children from 6 weeks of age through school-age.

Assessing Need on Long Island

But the child care industry is at a crossroads. Like public education (which is almost entirely subsidized by taxpayers) it is not a typical market-based industry. The cost exceeds what most parents can afford. Unlike public education, 85% of revenue for child care is through private fees paid directly to the provider by the parent. Furthermore, child care programs cannot control their cost drivers which are set by regulations and statutes – such as staffing, facility requirements, credentialing and training. The result is an unstable industry with low salaries and high turnover.

Long Island working families:

- 46% of households in Nassau and 52% in Suffolk earn less than \$100,000/year.
- The average income for a single mother in Nassau is \$50,000 and in Suffolk \$45,000.

Market rates for child care on Long Island are:

- \$15,500 for one pre-school child in a center
- \$14,250 for one child in a family or group program
- \$18,200 for one child under age 2 in a center
- \$15,000 for one child under age 2 in a family or group

That means about half the working families on Long Island would have to spend at least 15 percent of their

pre-tax income – right off the top of their paycheck – for child care. For a single parent, the burden can be far bigger.

*A single mother earning \$50,000/year with an 18-month old would pay **at least 36%** of her gross income for a regulated child care slot. With 2 children under age 5 she would pay **more than 60%** of her income.*

*A family with two parents both earning \$15/hour with a 1 year old would pay **at least 30%** of their gross income for regulated child care.*

Supply

Even for parents who can afford licensed child care, there is an inadequate supply.

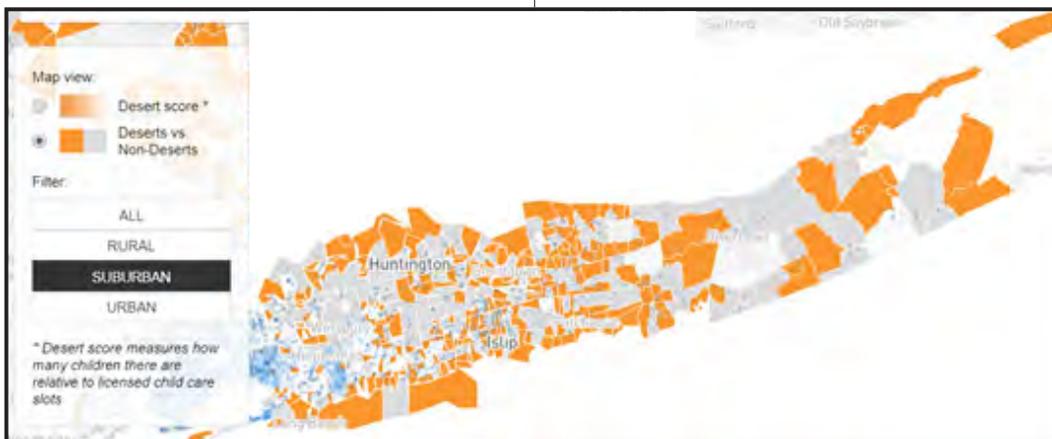
- There are 1,518 child care businesses on Long Island; 80 fewer than in 2017.
- Long Island has 61,227 licensed/registered child care slots for children under 5, about 1,000 fewer than in 2017.
- There are 155,795 children under 5 on Long Island, 122,917 in a household with all available caregivers in the workforce.
- Only 10% of Long Island’s 4-year olds have access to publicly-funded pre-kindergarten through their school district (compared to every 4-year old in New York City).

Long Island has a significant number of “child care deserts” – almost half of Suffolk’s census tracts.

Economic Benefit

According to the Long Island Association’s Chief Economist, John Rizzo child care has one of the highest economic multipliers of all sectors in the region with a return of \$1.95 for every \$1 invested: “As child care businesses and their employees spend money... they collectively stimulate economic activity in other industries as well.”

Parents who use child care on Long Island earn \$10 billion each year. Unfortunately, this number is decreasing as child care becomes harder to find. As more families cobble together unregulated, unreliable child care, our economy is losing money, too.



Proposal

We are proposing to phase in a comprehensive child care program for every family who needs it. This will require significant public and private investment over a five-year phased-in implementation period. We believe most, if not all, of the funds will be recouped through increased economic activity. Studies and experience suggests Long Island would see new economic activity of more than \$1 billion once fully implemented.

Several models with a high return on investment could be replicated or adapted as a pilot.

- The U.S Department of Defense (DoD) has a high-quality child care system available to children of active military. DoD programs are accredited and available on a sliding scale fee. The military invests almost \$1 billion in centers and parent subsidies because it knows service members will be more focused on their jobs if not worried about their kids.
- In 1996, Quebec implemented a universal program for children under 5. The province annually subsidizes with roughly \$2 billion. Quebec families cover part of the costs on a sliding scale. More working mothers, plus increased economic activity by the programs themselves, has provided tax revenues to cover more than 100% of the program.
- Oregon, Washington, Illinois and the District of Columbia have all added significant funding to their budgets to support child care expansion, increasing salaries for the workforce and increasing affordability.

Strategies

Make Child Care Affordable. Research into successful programs indicates that parent costs should be capped between 7% and 10% of gross income depending on family earnings and size.

Increase Availability and Supply. We must meet the needs of working parents, including new industries and shift-workers. This can be done through start-up and capacity-building funds, as well as ongoing support for operations. The development of child care capacity in new hubs, downtowns and other projects as appropriate could be incentivized with grant programs.

Public/Private Partnerships. Funds from P3s can provide ongoing operational support to on-site child care programs for employees of hubs, industrial parks, downtowns, etc.

Stabilize and Expand the Workforce. Childcare workers must be paid livable wages and have professional training & credentials. The existing structures on Long Island could be leveraged to create a cohesive and effective career pathway, including:

- Career counseling support
- More access to credentialing programs with articulation to community colleges
- Increased opportunities for higher-education degrees in early education
- Apprenticeship programs
- Salary enhancements based on position and/or level of education

Outcomes

In the short-term (1 – 3 years) investments in child care will:

- Stabilize the child care industry, preventing closures and job loss.
- Create new jobs for entry-level and experienced early educators.
- Increase options for families.
- Brand Long Island as a desirable option for young families.
- Increase economic activity by the child care workforce and the parents.

Once fully implemented (5+ years) a universal system will:

- Increase workforce participation, particularly of women ages 20-44
- Decrease the gender wage gap.
- Generate revenue & economic activity of more than \$1 billion.
- Decrease the need for remedial education.

This plan is ambitious but it can pay off big-time. In the short term, investments in child care will stabilize the industry, create new jobs for entry-level and experienced early educators, better serve families with children and the children themselves, brand Long Island as a desirable place to live and work, and increase economic activity by as much as \$2 billion. And that's just the benefits in the first three years. Once fully implemented after five years, a universal system will progressively increase workforce participation and give women a better chance to win promotions and support their families. Universal child care also will save money by boosting the number of children starting kindergarten more ready to learn – and thus decreasing costs of remedial programs.

We are all in on child care. It's hard to imagine any public or private investment that can pay off so well and so fast for so many. What's even more remarkable is how it breaks down another barrier to filling jobs for businesses and expanding opportunity to people with few other options. Adding thousands of affordable child care slots advances economic growth and equity, the twin pillars our development strategies.