

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.

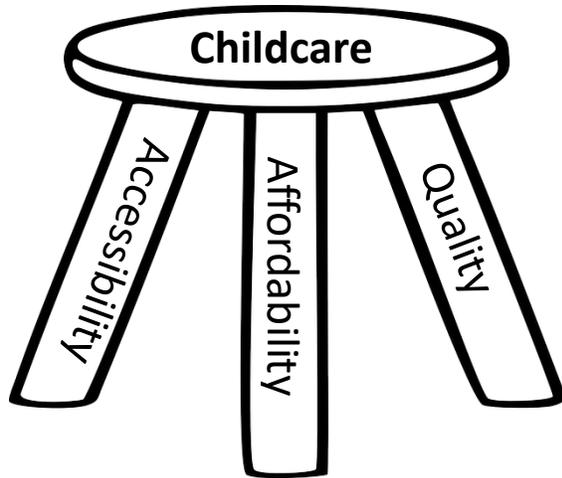
All four Child Care Resource & Referral agencies that serve counties within the Central New York REDC attended monthly meetings with REDC partners including the REDC CO-Chairs and their representatives, local business leaders, child care providers, Head Start agencies, higher education personnel and 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.

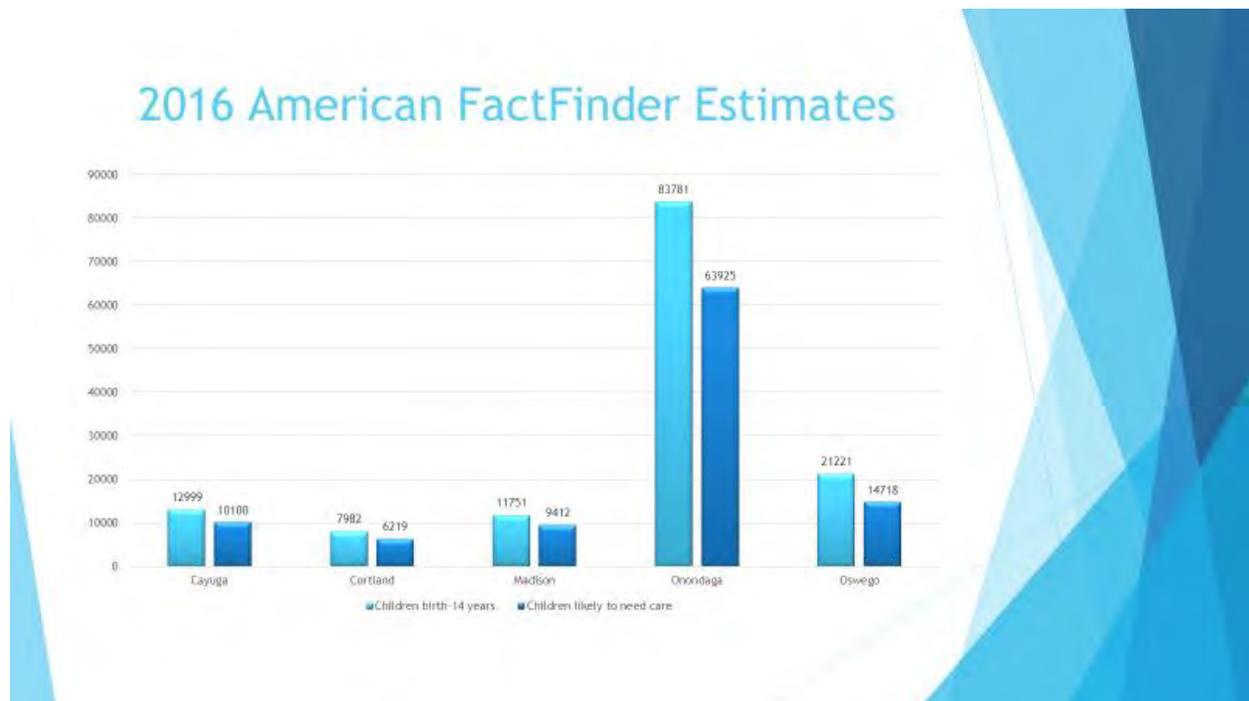
While the results of the survey are still being collected and tabulated the Taskforce members remain committed to continuing their work into 2020 with a Community Roundtable planned for early 2020.

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.



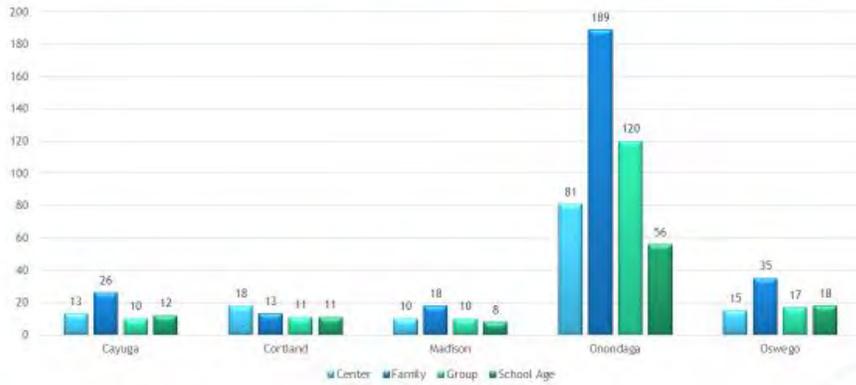
- ↓ **Accessibility:** Supply does not meet needs
- ↓ **Affordability:** Cost exceeds family's ability to pay
- ↓ **Quality:** High quality care is expensive; it depends upon a well-trained and fairly-compensated workforce

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



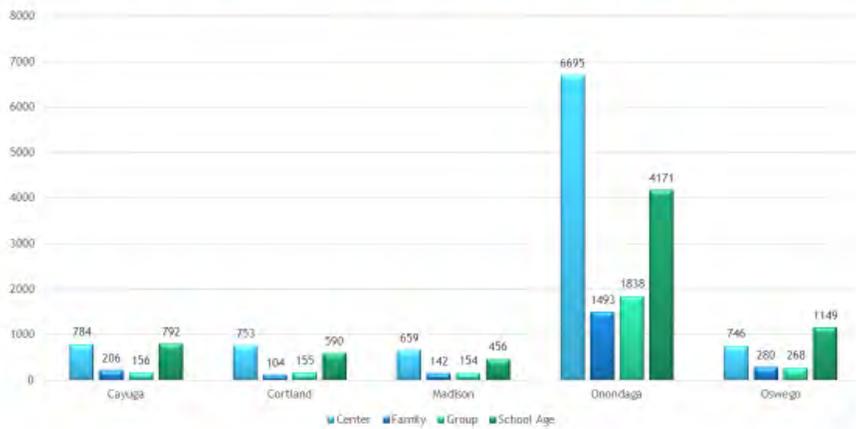
Registered and Licensed Child Care Programs

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



Child Care Capacity

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

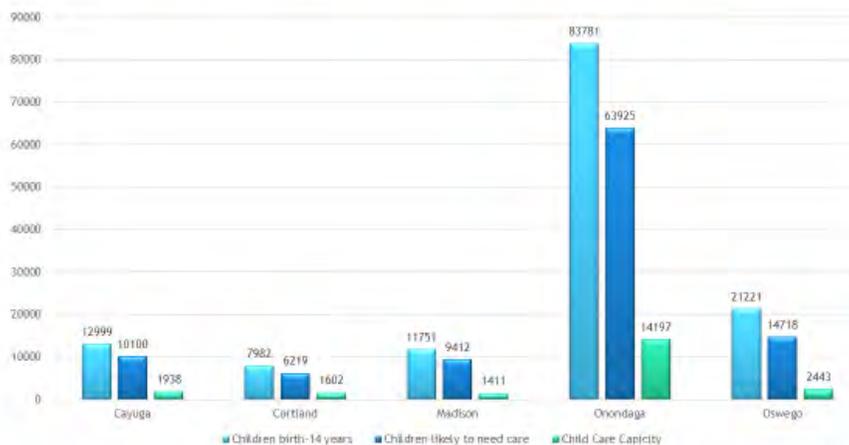


The above capacity data does not take into account those Family or Group Family child care providers who choose not to take infants, or providers that keep a lower enrollment than their registered/licensed capacity. Given those choices, the scarcity of child care is even more dire than it appears above.

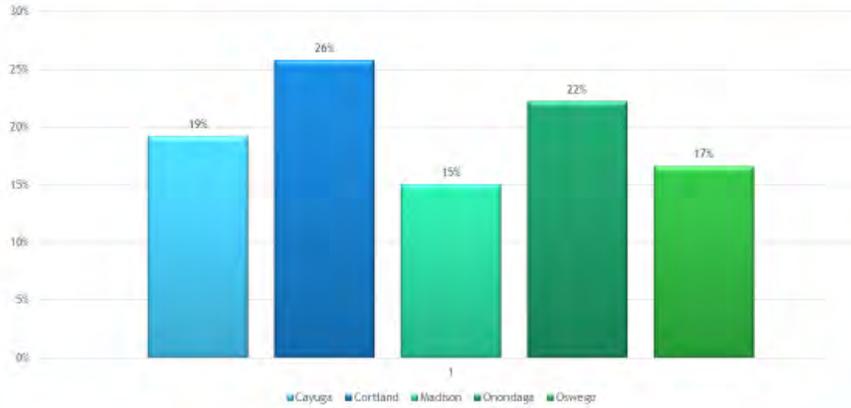
A decline in child care accessibility over the past ten years is also not reflected in the Child Care Capacity chart above. For example:

- 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%.

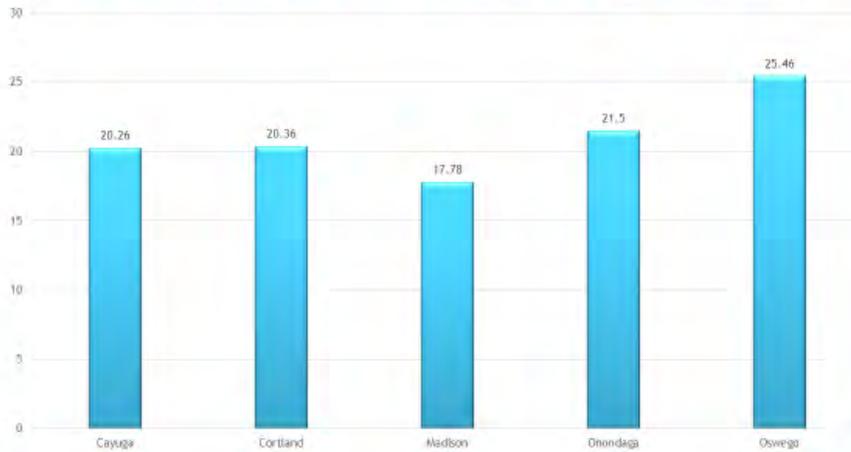
Child Care Need Versus Capacity



% 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)



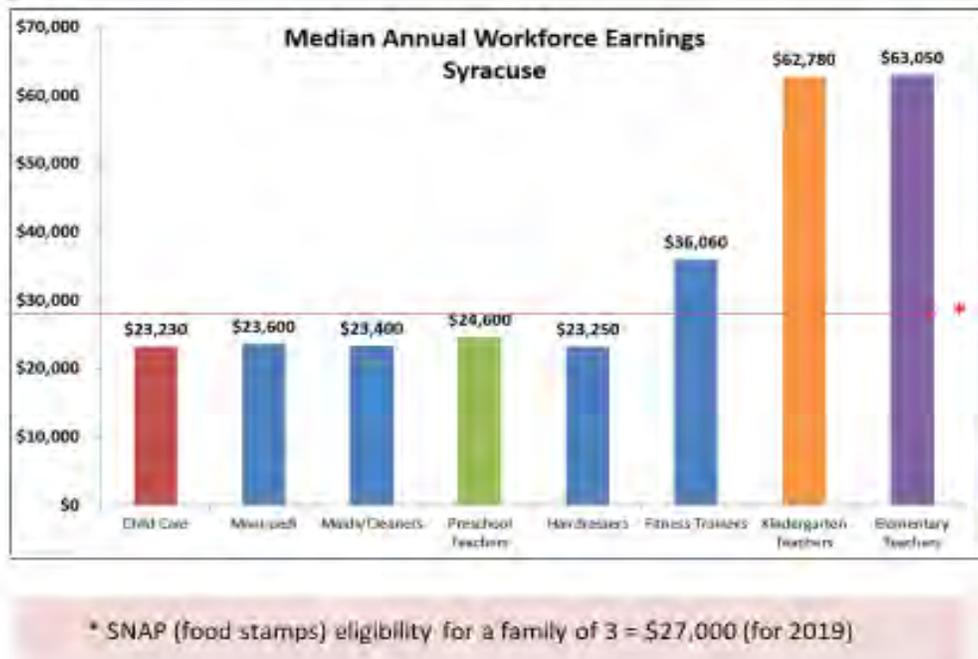
According to NYS KWIC 2017 data, every county in the CNY REDC region, except Madison County, has a higher percentage of children living below poverty than the 2017 NYS rate of 19.9%. The high cost of child care is especially significant for these children, since access to high quality child care is even 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.

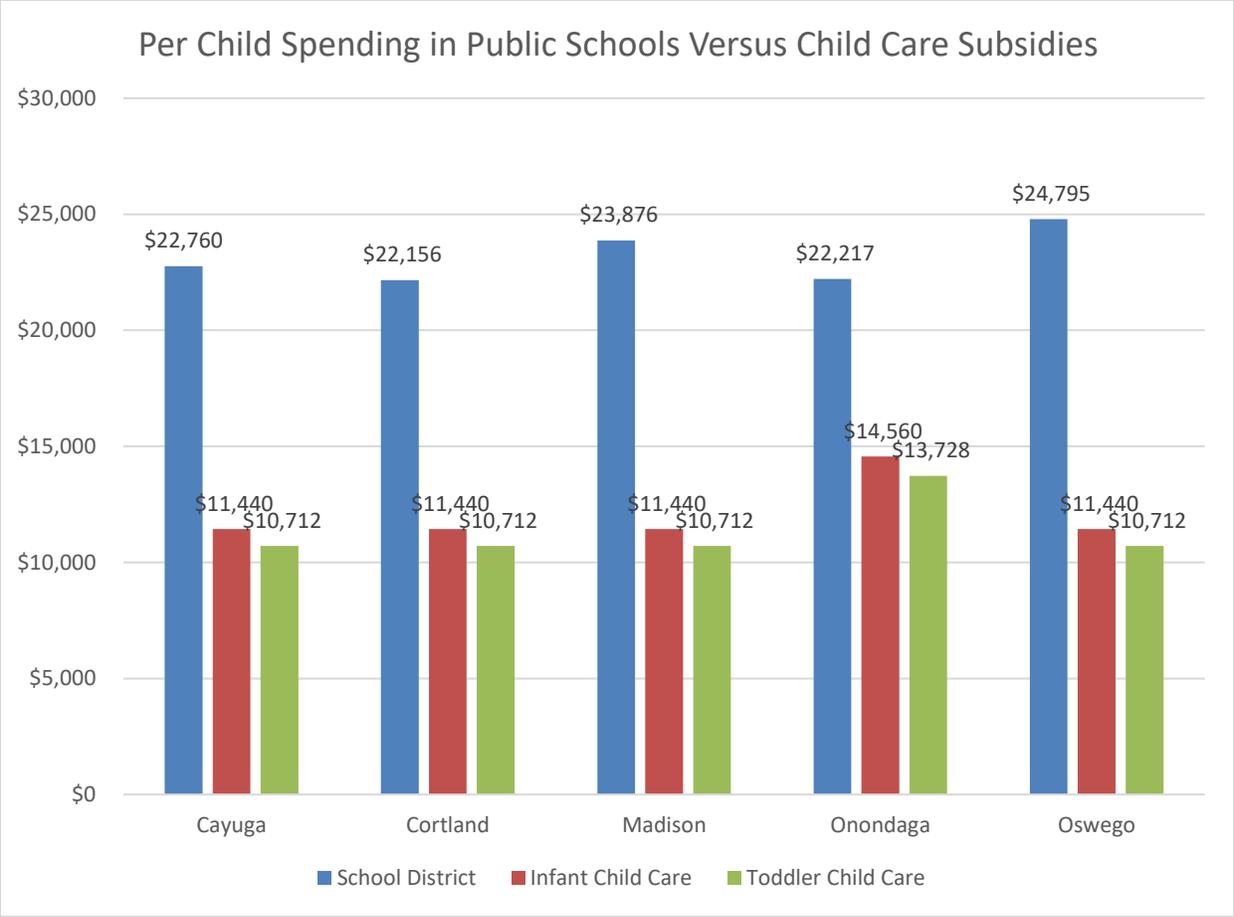
Child Care Workforce Challenges: Education, Pay & Turnover



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.