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Our Mission: To Strengthen the Quality of Children's Early Care and Learning

The Southern Adirondack Child Care Network is a not for profit child care resource and referral organization, founded in 1992, to strengthen the quality of children's early care and learning in Warren, Washington and Hamilton Counties. Services are offered for the purpose of supporting all child care programs, parents and the community by:

- Developing, strengthening and improving area child care services
- Recruiting, assisting and training child care providers
- Assisting parents to find and select child care
- Working with employers to assist with the child care needs of their employees
- Informing the community of child care issues

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Introduction

Child care is an important component of our community's infrastructure, one that impacts our economy, our local businesses, our families and most significantly- our children. Research on brain development in the early years reveals that 85% of brain development occurs by the time a child enters kindergarten. This fact, coupled with the results of several longitudinal studies demonstrating the positive outcomes of **quality** child care, increasingly substantiate what early care and learning professionals have known for a long time--that the first few years of life are the most important in determining a lifetime of well-being- cognitively, emotionally and socially.

This report is for the purpose of illuminating the current state of child care in the geographic area served by the Southern Adirondack Child Care Network (SACCN): Warren, Washington, Hamilton and Northern Saratoga counties. Exploring the various factors that impact early care and learning in general, this report also addresses the issues determined to be especially relevant to our particular region of New York State; it is intended for those persons and organizations in our communities who have a stake in, and commitment to, the well-being of all of our children.

Methodology

Provider surveys were e-mailed in June 2018 to approximately 160 licensed/registered providers in SACCN's service delivery area with a response rate of 20%. These surveys targeted providers of family and group family child care, as well as centers and school age programs.

Parent referral follow-up surveys were offered to all parents within 45 days of receiving consumer education and referral services from our agency. The response rate for these surveys was 35- 60% each month.

Community stakeholder surveys were distributed to agencies and other organizations that provide services to children and families in 2017. 50 surveys were distributed with a 60% return rate.

Data from several databases was collected and tabulated for this report. These databases include:

- New York State Child Care Facility System (CCFS)--provider data
- National Database System (NDS) Also known as Naccraware --provider and parents referral data
- U.S. Census (American Community Survey)--demographics of service delivery area

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Child Care Demand

The data displayed in the following charts is collected from NACCRRAware, a child care referral database utilized by the Child Care Network (and all other child care resource and referral agencies throughout New York State). This database is used for referrals to New York State licensed and registered child care providers only. All charts below indicate totals from the period 4/1/2017-3/31/2018.

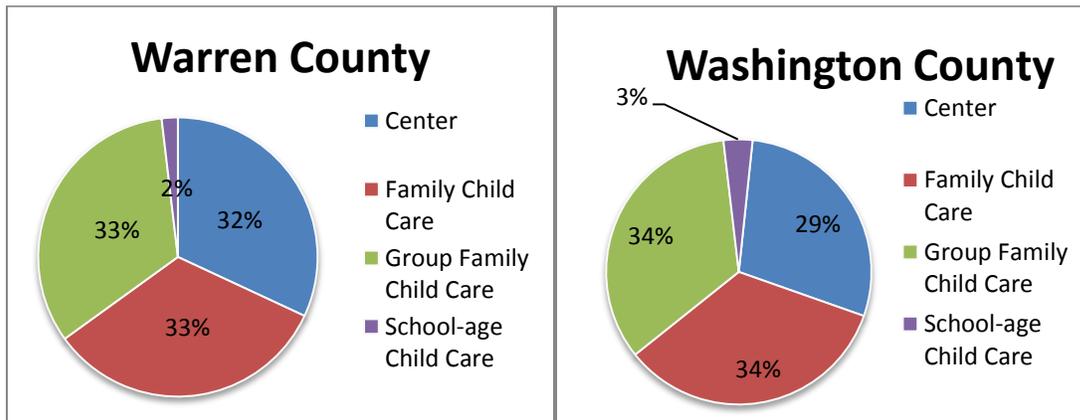
The child care request charts below do not include Hamilton County due to the few child care referral requests received from this county.

Child Care Referral Requests Received by County

County	2017/2018	2014/2015	2011/2012
Warren	103	133	158
Washington	84	99	122

While the numbers show a significant decrease in referrals received since 2011 (35% Warren and 31% Washington) this does not mean that child care need has declined. On the contrary, the demand for child care continues to grow. What seems to be changing most strikingly in the past decade is how parents are finding out about and searching for child care. With many families now using hand held smart phones and tablets, some choose to search for child care on-line using websites such as Craig’s List, Care.com and the NYS OCFS provider database.

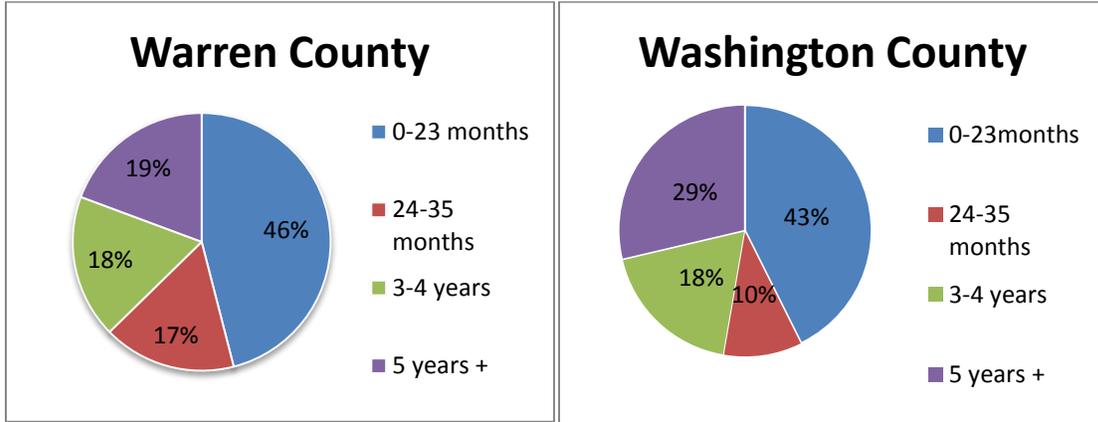
Requests by Modality of Child Care



Family child care (including group family child care) is requested more frequently than center- based care in both counties, but not by a significant margin.

Parents often prefer to find out what care is available among **all** three major types of licensed/registered child care in our area- family child care, group family child care and center care, which largely explains the similar percentages in each graph.

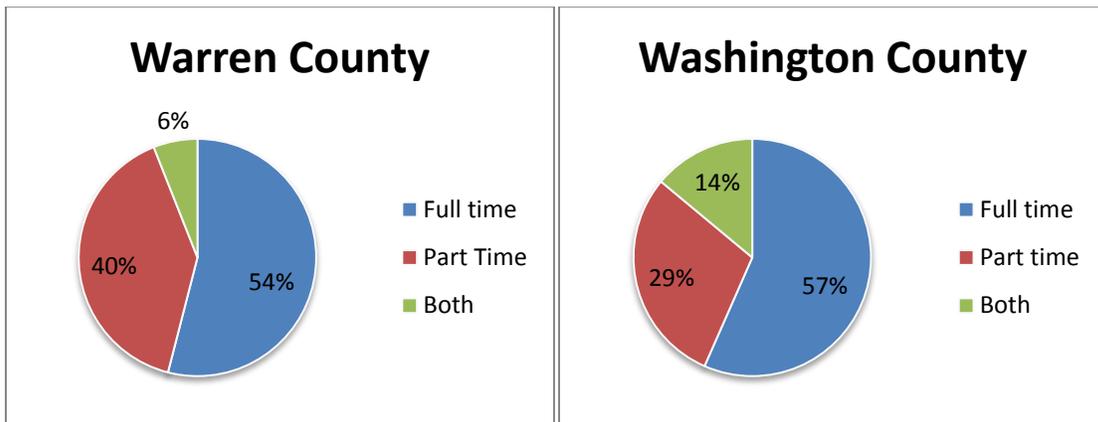
Requests by Age of Child



There is a high demand for infant care in each county. In Warren County close to 50% of total requests are for children under 2 years old.

Age of Child	Warren	Washington
0-23 months	69	55
24-35 months	25	13
3-4 years	27	24
5 year +	29	37

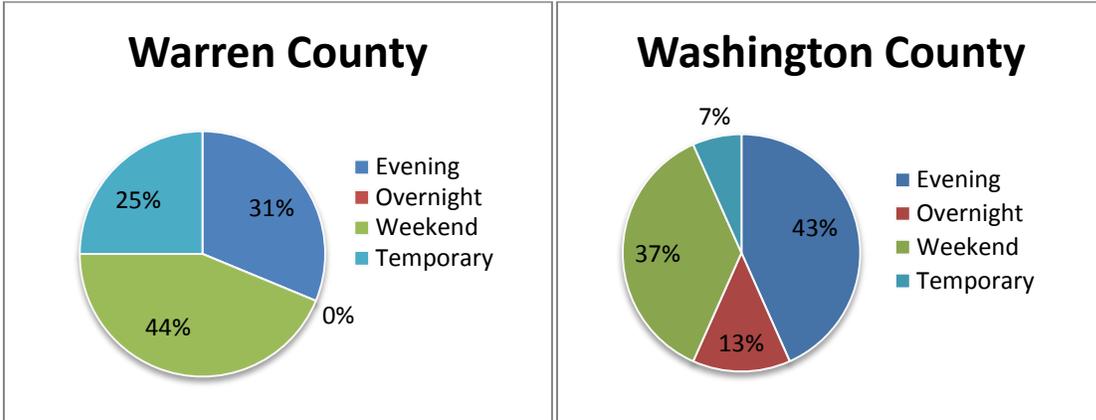
Requests by Schedule Type



Although there are more requests for full-time care in both counties, there are a significant number of requests for part-time care.

Schedule Type	Warren	Washington
Full Time	81	73
Part time	60	38
Both	9	18
Total requests	150	129

Requests for Non-Traditional Hours of Care



Note: The above charts represent the percentages of specific requests as part of the total requests for non-traditional hours of care.

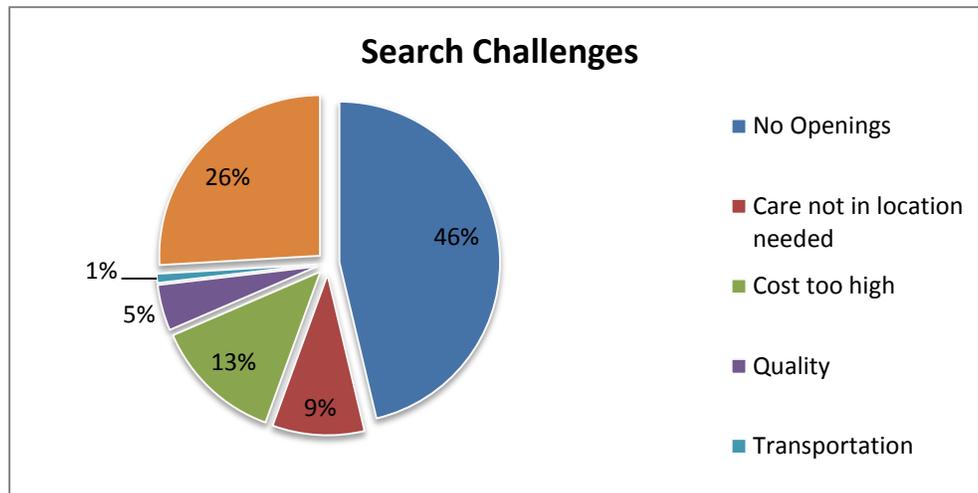
	Total Requests	Requests for non-traditional hours of care	% of all requests
Warren	103	12	12%
Washington	84	23	27%

A supply and demand gap for non-traditional hours of care continues to be a concern for many working families in both counties whose jobs are in factories, health care, tourism, retail establishments and other employment sectors that require evening, weekend and overnight work.

Last year, both Warren and Washington County DSS offices began addressing this need by paying an enhanced subsidy rate to providers who offer non-traditional hours for families receiving child care subsidies.

The Challenges of the Child Care Search

The Child Care Network asks parents about problems encountered during their child care search for licensed/registered providers. This questioning takes place as part of the follow-up surveys conducted with parents within a month of receiving child care referrals from our agency. Not all parents encounter obstacles during their search; however, three quarters of the parents surveyed responded that they encountered at least one, and often more than one problem, in their efforts to find child care.



The “no openings” category includes “no openings for age of child” (often referring to infants openings) and also “no openings for particular days and hours when care is needed” (non-traditional work hours/schedules). Due to the few licensed/registered child care programs who offer non-traditional hours of care, many families who work non-traditional hours continue to have a tough time finding care to meet their schedule needs. In Warren County there are currently 3 providers who offer weekend, evening and/or overnight care; in Washington County the number is 5. All of these facilities are family or group family child care

During a one year period (April 1, 2017-March 30, 2018), 21% of the parents who contacted the Child Care Network for child care referrals, requested care for non- traditional hours. Broken down by county, the percentage of requests for non-traditional hours of care for Warren County was 12% and for Washington County more than twice that—at 27%.

Although transportation issues are not represented as a major challenge in the above chart, this has been, in fact, a significant issue for parents in Glens Falls for many years. Elementary schools are neighborhood based and therefore within walking distance for most children. The challenge for parents who need to be at work in the early morning has been to find a provider who can transport their child (ren) to school after being dropped off at child care. This problem is soon to be resolved for many families. The Family YMCA of Glens Falls has just received approval to open Before School Care in elementary schools in Glens Falls beginning in September.

The High Cost of Child Care

New York State-- Cost of Child Care

	Center	Family Child Care
Annual Cost of Infant Care	\$15,028	\$10,972
Annual Cost of Care for an Infant and a 4 year old	\$27,092	\$21,112

Child Care Aware of America 2017

In New York State, the cost of a year of care in a center for an infant is nearly double (94% greater than) the cost of a year of tuition at a public college, the widest gap of any state in America.

Child care affordability is a major concern for many families throughout New York State- including in our area. Every family can expect to pay over 10% of their income for every type of child care. A single parent can expect to pay over 54% of his/her income for just one child in center-based care and nearly all of it (99.6%) for two children. *Child Care Aware of America 2017*

Average Weekly Full-Time Fees for Child Care with Licensed/Registered Providers

Warren County

Type of Care	Ages Birth -1 ½	Ages 1 ½ -3	Ages 3-6	Ages 6-13
Family Child Care	\$161.00	\$157.00	\$158.00	\$142.00
Child Care Center	\$196.00	\$182.00	\$158.00	\$142.00

(As of May 2018)

Washington County

Type of Care	Ages Birth -1 ½	Ages 1 ½ -3	Ages 3-6	Ages 6-13
Family Child Care	\$149.00	\$146.00	\$146.00	\$128.00
Child Care Center	\$177.00	\$158.00	\$146.00	\$128.00

In Hamilton County there are currently 3 licensed/registered family child care programs available. Full time infant care averages \$125/week.

Child care costs in our region are approximately one third the average child care costs for all of New York State.

Middle class families as well as families working at and below the poverty level have real concerns about the high costs of child care. Child care is expensive – and generally the higher the quality of care, the more a family can expect to pay. For lower-income families, especially, the high cost of child care is often a barrier to accessing quality care.

Referral Requests by Families At or Below 200% of Poverty (for the period 4/1/17-3/30/2018)



Child care is essential for parents to work, support their families and improve their standard of living, yet low income wage earners often have a number of obstacles to overcome related to their search for child care. In addition to the high cost factor, other issues impacting the ability of parents to access quality child care include:

- Many low waged jobs have hours/shifts during which there is limited or no care available
- Schedules for many retail and shift jobs are provided by employers one week at a time
- Back to work training programs require that parent find temporary child care, a type of care not generally available in our area
- Many providers choose care that is exempt from licensing or is illegal. In either case this type of care can be more unreliable than licensed care causing issues with job stability
- Non-traditional work hours often require parents to put together a patchwork quilt of arrangements that include multiple providers
- Lack of transportation to a child care facility can especially be an issue in our rural areas.

Financial Assistance for Child Care

The Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act provides for funding for child care assistance to eligible families. The purpose of this grant program is to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care services. Federal funds are made available to assist New York State in supporting subsidies for child care services to low income families. The Child Care and Development Block Grant funds are administered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and distributed to families at the county level.

The Federal budget that was passed by both the House and Senate this past spring significantly increases funding for child care subsidies over the next three years. There is good reason to believe that with more funding available at the county level, significantly more families will be approved for child care assistance.

Legally-Exempt Child Care is a form of child care that is exempt from licensing for specific reasons determined by the state. In our area, there is primarily the type of care known as **Legally Exempt Informal Child Care** which is a form of care provided often by family, friends and neighbors for children whose parents receive a child care subsidy from the county. Another type of license exempt care known as **Legally Exempt Group Child Care** is also exempt from licensing. This care is provided in larger group settings, such as a summer camp program. The YMCA summer camp in our area is an enrolled legally exempt group provider and therefore is approved for eligible families to receive child care assistance to enroll in this program. All Legally Exempt providers must meet basic health and safety requirements, participate in trainings and undergo background checks in order for subsidy payments to be issued.

Families Receiving Child Care Subsidies through Department of Social Services

	Warren County	Washington County	Hamilton County	Totals for All Counties in Service Delivery Area
Number of child care subsidy families as of 5/1/2017 utilizing legally exempt informal child care	50	36	--	86
Number of families receiving child care subsidy to attend legally exempt group child care program. (YMCA summer camp)	21	3	2	26
Number of child care subsidy families as of 5/1/2017 utilizing registered/licensed care	106	84		190
Totals	177	123	2	302

Sources: Warren and Washington County Departments of Social Services -March 2018; Hamilton County -April 2018

Washington County Department of Social Services reported that 123 families were receiving child care assistance; 68% of subsidized cases were for licensed and registered child care providers and 32% for legally exempt providers. *(As of May 15, 2017)*

The Department of Social Services for Warren County reported 173 families who were receiving child care subsidies; 60% of subsidized cases were for licensed/registered child care providers and 40% for legally exempt providers. *(As of May 15, 2017)*

Working parents in our area may also get some relief from the high costs of child care through NYS and Federal Tax credits.

Many child care providers in our area (40%) offer multi-child discounts as a measure to help offset the costs of care.

While the child care subsidies, tax credits and provider multi-child discounts are measures to help offset the high costs of child care, for many families, these measures are most often insufficient in closing the affordability gap.

Child Care Need: Key Findings

1. Parents request family child care (and group family child care) almost twice as often as center care.
2. There is a high demand for infant care in both counties.
3. There is a high demand for full-time child care, and while there is still a need for part time care, requests for it have decreased since last year.
4. There continues to be a need for non-traditional hours of care, especially for parents with evening and weekend work schedules.
5. While the total number of parent requests for child care referrals has declined for several years, the need for child care has not; one explanation for the fewer referral requests is that parents are using technology resources such as smart phones and child care websites to search for care.
6. More than 1/3 of parents surveyed indicated that during their child care search, there were no openings that met their family's particular needs.
7. A particular shortage of child care options exists in certain locations of the service delivery area, including Whitehall in Washington County, and Lake Luzerne and Chestertown of Warren County. Hamilton County has a few licensed providers in Wells and Indian Lake only.
8. The cost of child care is a concern for many families seeking quality child care.

Child Care Supply

New York State Licensed/Registered Child Care

The following charts include the numbers of licensed and registered child care programs in each county as reported by New York State's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) as of 5/1/2018.

There are currently **115 registered/licensed child care facilities in Warren, Washington and Hamilton Counties**. This number includes a total of 11 Head Start sites in Warren and Washington County, early childhood programs also licensed as child care by OCFS. Child Care Providers in Northern Saratoga County, whom we serve because of their geographic proximity to the Child Care Network, are not included in these numbers, but do need to be considered as part of the child care supply in our area even though Saratoga County is not a county the Child Care Network has contracted with NYS to serve.

In addition, there are **46 licensed/registered child care facilities in the Northern Saratoga County towns of Gansevoort, South Glens Falls, Fort Edward, Corinth and Schuylerville** with a capacity to serve a total of 1,343 children. Most of these Northern Saratoga county child care programs are listed in our child care referral database and participate in Trainings and Technical Assistance through the Child Care Network. Due to the location of these Northern Saratoga child care providers, parents who commute to the Glens Falls area for work and/or who live in the area and commute to Saratoga or even further south, consider these locations in their child care search.

Recent data of providers who have closed their doors during the past two and a half years demonstrates a trend toward the stabilization of a child care supply that dropped in numbers significantly during that period impacted by the economic recession. While twice as many providers were closing their programs as were opening them during that period, it is good news to report that during the past two and half year period, the **number of closed programs has been cut almost by half and the number of new programs remains steady (61 closed 2013-15 and 37 closed 2016-18)**.

NYS Licensed and Registered Child Care Providers in Service Delivery Area

County	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	Center Child Care	School Age Child Care	Totals
Warren	24	10	9	11	54
Washington	25	22	2	9	58
Hamilton	1	2	0	-	3
No. Saratoga	19	18	3	6	46
Totals	69	52	14	26	161

Warren County

Warren County has a population of approximately 65,000 residents. Over 60% of the county's population resides in the City of Glens Falls and the neighboring town of Queensbury. Children under 18 years of age comprise 19% of the population, with 4.7 % of the population under 5 years old. The per capita household income is \$30,662 with 11% of residents living below the poverty level. Among persons living below the poverty level, more than 36% of these are families headed by a single parent.

Numbers of Child Care Providers by Modality of Care and Ages of Children

Type of Care	# of licensed/ registered providers	6 wks to 2 yrs Number of slots	2-4 yrs Number of slots	5-12 yrs Number of slots	Total
Family Child Care	24	48	92	48	188
Group Family Center	10	40	78	34	152
School Age	9	271	522	186	979
	11	--	--	393	393
Total	54	359	692	661	1,712

There are 6 Head Start sites in Warren County licensed to serve a total of 257 children

This year, an afterschool program opened in the Hadley Luzerne Elementary School, sponsored by the YMCA. Child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers continues to be needed.

Northern Warren County towns, including North Creek and Chestertown are in need of additional child care programs for all ages.

Potential Supply Gap

Age Groups of Children	# of Children	# of Child Care Slots	Potential Demand *	Additional Slots Potentially Needed
Birth to 2	1,253	359	777	418
2-4	1,888	692	1,171	479
5-12	5,508	661	3,580	2,919

Data Sources: 2014 estimates U.S. Census and NYS Child Care Facility System

*Note: "Potential Demand" is calculated based on a percentage determined by Kidscount. The total number of children multiplied by .62 for under age 5 and .65 for ages 5-12

Washington County

The population of Washington County is approximately 62,000. 20% of the population is children under 18 years of age, with 5% under 5 years. Persons living below the poverty level make up 13% of the population; of these families, more than 41% are headed by a single parent. The per capita household income in Washington County is \$23,877.

Numbers of Providers by Modality of Care and Ages of Children

Type of Care	# of providers		6 wks up to 2 yrs Number of slots	2-4 yrs Number of slots	5-12 yrs Number of slots	Total
Family Child Care	25		50	100	50	200
Group Family Child Care	22		88	176	88	352
Center	9		80	320	66	466
School age	2			--	85	85
Total	59		218	596	289	1,103

There are 5 Head Start sites in Washington County licensed to serve a total of 228 children.

In Salem, 2 family child care programs opened in May of this year, meeting a significant need in that town.

Whitehall is in need of licensed/registered child care programs; the town has been without since 2011.

Potential Supply Gap

Age Groups of Children	# of Children	# of Child Care Slots	Potential Demand *	Additional Slots Potentially Needed
Birth to 2	1,232	218	764	546
2-4	1,963	596	1,217	621
5-12	5,594	289	3,636	3,347

Data Sources: 2014 estimates U.S. Census and NYS Child Care Facility System

*Note: "Potential Demand" is calculated based on a percentage determined by Kidscount. The total number of children multiplied by .62 for under age 5 and .65 for ages 5-12

Hamilton County

Hamilton County is a mountainous region located entirely within the Adirondack Park. Seasonal tourism, coupled with the small industrial/commercial base of the region, make for limited employment opportunities for many of the county's residents.

The population of this county is 4,712 with a 12% decline in population since 2000. 11% of the population lives below the poverty level. 15.1% of the population is comprised of children less than 18 years of age; 3.4 % are under age 5.

Numbers of Providers by Modality of Care and Ages of Children

Type of Care	# of providers		6 weeks up to 2 years Number of slots	2-4 years Number of slots	5-12 years Number of slots	Total
Family Child Care	1		2	4	2	8
Group Family Center	2		8	16	8	32
School Age	0		--	--	--	--
Total	4		10	20	10	40

Data Source: NYS Child Care Facility System (CCFS) database

There are no Head Start sites in Hamilton County. One group family child care provider became licensed this year. There are now two providers in Indian Lake and one in Wells.

Potential Supply Gap

Age Groups of Children	# of Children	# of Child Care Slots	Potential Demand	Additional Slots Potentially Needed
Birth to 2	65	10	40	30
2-4	91	20	56	36
5-12	331	10	215	205

Data Sources: U.S. 2014 Census estimates for number of children, NYS Child Care Facility System (CCFS) database

*Note: "Potential Demand" is calculated based on a percentage determined by Kidscount. The total number of children multiplied by .62 for under age 5 and .65 for ages 5-12

While supply gap data collected from Warren, Washington and Hamilton Counties indicates a need for additional afterschool programming across the board, Washington County, especially, has need for additional licensed afterschool programs in several towns including Granville, Whitehall and Argyle.

Legally Exempt Informal Child Care

Legally-Exempt informal Child Care is a type of care provided often by family, friends and neighbors for children whose parents receive a child care subsidy from the county. This form of care is exempt from licensing because no more than two non-related children are cared for in the provider's home at the same time for more than three hours in a day. These providers must meet basic health and safety requirements and undergo background checks in order for subsidy payments to be issued. This type of care fills a critical need in our area for parents who work non-traditional hours.

	Washington County	Warren County	Hamilton County	All Counties in Service Delivery Area
Care in Provider's home (FCC)	24	34	0	58
Care in Child's home (In-Home)	43	33	1	77
Total Legally Exempt Providers	67	67	1	135

*There is one enrolled legally exempt **group** provider in our area*

Source: NYS CCFS Database As of 5/1/2018

Children Enrolled in Other Early Care and Learning Settings

	Warren County	Washington County	Hamilton County
Universal Pre-K	111	291	7
Nursery/pre-schools (less than 3 hours/day)	432*	378*	36*

Data Sources: NYS CCFS database, NYS Department of Education website

**Numbers estimated based on earlier years' data*

- Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)** The number of school districts sponsoring UPK programs has increased significantly in the last 10 years. Queensbury, Lake George and Stony Creek school districts in Warren County and Salem, Argyle, Greenwich and Hampton school districts in Washington County have not yet implemented UPK programs. The number of children enrolled in UPK programs in Washington County has increased by 42% since 2012. There has been an 11% increase in UPK enrollments in Warren County during the same period.
- Nursery School** Generally, these early childhood programs are part-time and are no more than 3 hours a day. While serving an important learning role for children and in some cases being one piece of the overall child care arrangements for a family, these programs are not designed to meet child care needs. Part time early childhood program data will be updated in 2019.
- Special Education Schools** Although not included in numbers above there are a few special education schools that are licensed by NYS. Prospect Center is located in Warren County and New Meadow School has a site in Washington County.

Child Care Supply: Key Findings

1. 50% of children who are in licensed/registered child care in Warren County are cared for in center programs, while 17% of children attend family and group family child care programs. 13% of children who are enrolled in licensed programs attend Head Start classrooms located in towns through the county.
2. In Washington County, there are far fewer centers than in Warren County, but significantly more family and group family providers. 50% of children enrolled in licensed child care programs are cared for in family or group family child care homes and 22% of children participate in center programs; these percentages are the reverse of Warren County's. There are 228 children (21%) enrolled in Washington County Head Start, with classrooms in various towns throughout the county.
3. The supply of child care has stabilized during the past few years, with a significant decline in the number of programs closing, particularly when compared to closings in the previous reporting period.
4. Child care arrangements in our area consist of licensed and registered care, legally-exempt care, universal pre-kindergarten programs, part-day nursery/preschool programs, Head Start and sometimes combination of two or more of these programs, often pieced together to cover child care needs during a family's working hours.

The Quality Factor in Child Care

Providers and Quality

Discussions of the child care availability, accessibility and/or affordability necessarily lead to the topic of quality and its crucial impact on children's development and learning. Research reveals that **children who participate in high quality early care and learning programs do better in school and in life.** (*Child Care Aware of America, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Center for Early Development and Learning, Zero to Three.*)

The role of the provider/teacher is crucial to the overall picture of quality early care and learning in our communities.

Relationships formed as a result of the daily interactions between children and their caregivers are a key ingredient in determining the level of quality that a program provides. Adults trained in child development who offer a warm, nurturing environment are best able to provide a quality program. Adults who understand that children differ in growth rate, interest, abilities, frustration levels and family influences are better able to meet the needs of children. (*i.e. National Association for the Education of Young Children, Zero to Three, NYS Early Care and Learning Council, NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council*)

Indicators of Quality

Knowing what constitutes quality child care is a major first step in quality improvement and in a parent's child care search. The following indicators are often cited as measures in determining a program's level of quality.

- **Adult to Child Ratio:** How many children are there in care for each adult? The fewer the children for each adult, the more attention children receive. And the younger the child, the more important the adult to child ratio is.
- **Group Size:** How many children are in the group? The smaller the group size, the better for children, as a smaller group size is likely to be a calmer, safer environment for young children, in general.
- **Caregiver Qualifications and Training:** What type of training and education has he/she experienced? Caregivers with degrees and/or special training to work with young children will be better prepared to help children learn.
- **Staff Turnover:** How long has the staff at the center or the family child care home been there? Children benefit greatly when caregivers stay with the same children for at least a year. Learning and development can be negatively affected when children are repeatedly using their time and energy to transition to new staff.
- **Parent Involvement:** How does the caregiver promote communication with parents? Is parent input and involvement valued by the caregiver? Forming positive relationships between the caregiver and the parent is essential to quality care.

- **Health and Safety:** An important component of a quality environment for children is one that is safe for exploration, social interactions and freedom of movement. While state regulated programs meet basic health and safety standards, they do not necessarily meet other quality standards as outlined above; quality standards go beyond state licensing standards.
- **Accreditation:** Is the child care provider accredited by a national organization? Caregivers that are accredited have met voluntary standards for child care that are higher than licensing requirements. The National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) are the two largest organizations that accredit child care programs.

Professional Development and Quality

Those in the early care and learning field enter with a wide range of educational and life experiences; almost 50% of child care providers/teachers in Warren, Washington and Hamilton Counties have an Associate degree or higher. The following chart further breaks down the type of degree and the percentage of the total provider population to earn each degree. Note that Northern Saratoga County providers are not included in these numbers.

College Degrees Earned

Masters	Bachelors	Associates
18 (or 15%)	29 (or 24%) An additional 18 providers went on to earn additional degree	9 (or 7%) An additional 44 providers went on to earn additional degree

Data source: Naccraware2017

Note: Data used for Center and Group family child care reflect the education of one employee (generally the owner/director) at each site.)

Of the degrees indicated above, 19 (or 16%) are early childhood related degrees, 7 are in special education and 12 are health care related.

Training

The Southern Adirondack Child Care Network (SACCN) provides training opportunities for early care and learning professionals through workshops, conferences, on site one-on-one mentoring and other networking opportunities that assist them to improve the quality of child care provided to children in the Southern Adirondack region.

Attendance at SACCN Trainings by Early Childhood Professional

2017	2016	2015	2014	2012
499	737	560	721	683

55% of providers recently surveyed, indicated that they receive **most or all** of their trainings from the Child Care Network; all respondents indicated that at least some of their trainings were received through the Child Care Network. When asked to rank their preferred methods of having trainings, workshops were ranked as 1st and 2nd choices for 68% of respondents, with just a slightly fewer number indicating the on-line training option to be preferable (57% selected online trainings as first or second choices). As on-

line trainings have become increasingly available during the past 5 years, many providers choose this option.

Pre-service Required Training

During the licensing/registration process, prospective providers are required to take a 15 hour pre-service health and safety training. SACCN offers this training as well as on-site technical assistance as needed to assist in the child care start-up phase.

Ongoing Professional Development Training Requirements

Once a program is NYS licensed or registered, providers/teachers are required to have 30 hours of training in required topic areas (including CPR and 1st aid) every two years. These trainings are intended to give providers additional knowledge and skills to help better serve families and their children. Studies show that the quality of care provided improves as the level of training and education increases. Training also demonstrates to families that providers are continually striving to improve their abilities and skills, and to enhance overall practice in order to meet the needs of the children in their care. (OCFS website 2017).

Other Credentialing Options

In addition to state required training topic areas, many providers also elect to participate in optional training opportunities to further enhance the quality of their programs. One example of this is the “Child Development Associate” credential or CDA. This is a nationally recognized credential, administered by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington D.C. Requirements include the obtainment of 480 hours of professional work experience in either a center-based or group setting, and 120 hours of formal child care education training in 8 subject areas.

Approximately half of all licensed/registered early care and learning professionals in our service delivery area have at least one CDA credential. The Child Care Network offers CDA sessions each year for all modalities of care. Last year (2016/17), a total of 7 providers/teachers participated in these sessions and 6 received the CDA credential; in the current year, there are again 7 early childhood professionals participating and all are expected to complete the program.

Other optional child care training certificates can be earned for Eco Healthy Practices, Medication Administration Training (MAT) and Breast Feeding Friendly Practices (BFFC). Beginning in 2017 the Child Care Network became a subcontractor with Clinton County Department of Public Health to recruit, educate and support child care programs in Warren and Washington Counties in the process of becoming Breast Feeding Friendly certified. In the first year, 5 programs have become certified, with an additional five programs to become certified in 2018.

Accreditation

Family child care providers and center programs are encouraged to join early childhood associations such as The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)-and/or its state and local chapters and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) -and its state and local chapters. Providers and programs can become accredited by these professional organizations on a voluntary basis. A growing number of studies indicate that accreditation elevates the quality of child care provided; however, there are no accredited child care programs in this service delivery area at this time. (*Early Care and Learning Council, NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services*)

Technical Assistance

Child care programs are also urged to contact SACCN for on the job, on-site, coaching assistance to reinforce lessons learned during trainings. During the past year child care providers participated in **73** hours of on-site technical assistance to improve quality of care; in addition, child care providers contacted SACCN **383** times via telephone, email, fax and in-person for specific information relating to providing services to children and parents.

Training and technical assistance is also provided at no charge to family child care providers who are enrolled in the **Child Care and Adult Food Program (CACFP)**, a federally funded health and nutrition program, sponsored by the Child Care Network. Participation in CACFP is considered an indicator of quality care. Currently 81% of licensed/registered family child care and group family child care providers in Washington, Warren and Hamilton Counties participate in the Food Program.

Participation in the CACFP by County

County	Licensed/Registered providers	Enrolled in CACFP	Percentage of total providers
Warren	34	24	71%
Washington	47	41	87%
Hamilton	3	3	100%
Sub Totals	84	68 *	81%

*Note: 18 child care providers in northern Saratoga county towns also choose to utilize the CACFP services of the Child Care Network due to the agency's proximity to their programs. Therefore, **the total number of child care providers enrolled in SACCN's CACFP program is 86.**

Report Summary

The supply and demand analysis of this report indicates a continued need for additional child care slots in certain locations within The Child Care Network's service delivery area, most notably in rural areas. There is shortage of child care for infants throughout the service area. There are also significant gaps for school age care in certain areas, although a much needed school age program opened in Lake Luzerne this year.

Parents who are employed in industries that operate with multiple shifts that include evening and weekend hours are in need of child care during these hours. The few licensed/registered programs that offer non-traditional hours of care are not nearly enough to meet the need of the many families in our area who work in retail, health care facilities, factories and the tourist industry.

The high cost of child care is daunting for many families as it consumes an increasingly high percentage of the total family budget. While lower income families may qualify for child care assistance through the county, funding is not always available to meet the needs of all parents who apply.

While availability of, and access to, child care slots is important, it is not enough. Access must be to **quality** child care for **all** children, quality early care and learning programs that all families can afford. There is a need for greater understanding among our community's stakeholders of what quality means, how quality improvements can happen and how it will impact all of our futures. Parents' advocacy for quality child care is necessary to grow the demand for quality.

Child care professionals have a crucial role in the lives of our youngest children, and are essential to the **quality** equation, yet they are generally unrecognized and underpaid for the important work they do; additionally, college level degree program options in this field continue to be limited.

Recommendations for Next Steps

- 1) Continue to help build the supply of child care in specific locations of determined need, for specific age groups of children and for particular hours of care (i.e. weekends and evenings).
- 2) Collaborate with local stakeholders to enhance understandings of child care issues and to engage them in efforts to promote quality care for all children; utilize an interdisciplinary, integrated approach to address these needs.
- 3) Educate parents about how young children learn and develop best, and engage them in efforts to promote quality early care and learning for all children.
- 4) Engage community leaders, employers and elected officials (at the local, state and federal levels) in child care issues to advocate for and support policies that will increase funding to offset the high costs of child care for families, and also to increase funding for quality improvements. Lessening the financial burden and elevating quality is imperative for more families to be able to access affordable, quality child care.

- 5) Support the professional elevation of the early care and learning field both at the local and state/national levels by recognizing child care providers in our community and by advocating for funding for higher wage compensation, as well as increased higher level education career paths for the profession.

Glossary of Child Care Terms

FAMILY CHILD CARE is provided in a home setting by one primary caregiver. When any children are under the age of two, the maximum number of children allowed in care is 8; this includes two school age children. No more than two children under the age of two may be cared for at any one time. School-aged children can fill the slots for infants and toddlers up to the total capacity permitted (8).

Family Child Care programs must be registered through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services if care is provided for three or more children. If care is provided for only two children in the home setting, it is exempt from state licensing.

GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE is provided in a home setting by a primary caregiver and an assistant caregiver. There must be at least one caregiver present for every two children under the age of two. School-age children can fill the slots for infants and toddlers up to the total capacity permitted (16) for Group Family Child Care. A provider or assistant may care for up to 8 children when alone, and only two of those children can be under the age of two. A provider and assistant(s) may care for any combination of age groups up to a total of 12 children plus four school-age children. Group family child care programs are licensed through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Family and Group Family Child Care programs may be accredited through the National Association of Family Child Care.

CHILD CARE CENTERS provide care to a group of children for more than three hours per day, in a non-residential facility which must meet state licensing regulations for facility, health, safety, staffing and educational programming. In

addition to becoming state licensed, child care centers may strive to become accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Age Groups in Center Care:

❖ Infant	6 wks- 18 mths
❖ Toddler	18 mths- 3 yrs
❖ Preschool	3 and 4 yrs
❖ School-age	5-11 yrs

LEGALLY EXEMPT CAREGIVERS provide care for families receiving subsidies; they are exempt from the family child care licensing process by caring for no more than two non-related children in the provider's home- or the child's home. In addition, group programs such as summer day camps that are under the auspices of the NYS Department of Health, may qualify for Legally-exempt status. Legally-exempt providers are required to meet health and safety standards as determined by NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

IN-HOME CARE is a type of Legally Exempt child care in which care is provided by a relative or non-relative within the child's home.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE is care provided for a group of school-age children from Kindergarten through age 12 before and after school, and at times when school is not in session. School- age care may be provided by child care centers, family child care programs, public schools, youth recreation groups and other community groups. School-age care can also be offered as a stand- alone program. School-age programs are registered through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

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