



Southern Adirondack

Child Care Network

Strengthening the Quality of Children's Early Care and Learning



Annual Report

2018-2019



37 Everts Avenue
Queensbury, New York 12804
518 798-7972

www.saccn.org info@saccn.org
www.facebook.com/southernadirondackchildcarenetwork.com
Follow us on Twitter: @SACCN8

The Southern Adirondack Child Care Network is a not for profit child care resource and referral organization, formed in 1992, to further the provision of quality child care services for parents, child care providers and businesses in Hamilton, Warren and Washington counties of New York.

The purposes of the organization are:

- To develop, strengthen and improve area child care services;
- To recruit, assist and train child care providers;
- To assist parents with finding and selecting child care;
- To work with employers to assist with the child care needs of their employees;
- To assume a leadership role in supporting children, parents, child care professionals and employers through programs that champion the healthy development of children and families and promotes quality early learning.
- To inform the community of child care issues.

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Lynn Sickles, **Executive Director**
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From the Executive Director

On behalf of the board of directors and staff, I am pleased to present the Child Care Network's 2018-2019 Annual Report.

As I enter my 28th year as Executive Director of the Child Care Network, many things have changed and much has remained the same since we started. As I did throughout year one, I continue all these years later, to realize and appreciate the impact our services have on the quality of child care for the area's children and families. If you walk into our office and ask what guides the work we do every day, our dedicated team members are likely to say, something like "we believe in the mission of the organization and the impact our services has on the quality of area child care and we find joy in what we do." Yet we realize we are not the "feet on the ground" people who do the really challenging work every day. There are the parents, who struggle daily, to balance a work/family lifestyle and call us seeking the best child care possible for their children. There are the over-worked and under-paid child care providers and early childhood teachers who put in long hours devoted to keeping children safe and providing a stimulating and nurturing environment that helps children develop the foundation for a life of learning. They seek to provide the best quality care because they recognize the importance of what they do to the families and children they serve. If parents work, much of the formative years of their children between birth and age 5 will be spent in a child care program.

On a daily basis, we:

Educate parents to help them develop a clear picture of quality child care standards which in turn helps them find and evaluate the best possible child care program for their needs.

Empower child care providers and early childhood teachers to increase the quality of the services they offer by attending workshops, credentialing programs, the annual conference and taking advantage of on-site coaching opportunities.

Work with employers to help them understand the benefits of a stable quality child care workforce. Child care, whether in a local child care center or with grandparents or the other myriad of available options, is necessary for employed parents. Employers must recognize the need for quality child care as their concern too, and not just a family concern.

Advocate with elected officials to increase funding for early childhood so it will become more affordable and quality will be accessible for all families.

Each year the media, business leaders and elected officials pay more attention the child care issue. The Child Care Network stands ready to help seek solutions and collaborate to ensure access to high quality child care for all families.

Lynn R Sickles
Executive Director



Services Provided

We Helped Parents Access Quality Child Care

Family Referrals

Hamilton County: **1**
Warren County: **86**
Washington County: **110**

Choosing child care is one of the most important choices parents make for their family. Our goal is to help families evaluate child care options and better understand the importance of quality early learning and what constitutes quality programming.



When our referral specialist answers the phone, she offers comprehensive personal guidance to parents based on their family's needs. The service includes:

- Providing information on the types of and options for child care
- Referrals to family, group family, center and school age programs that fit the family's needs
- Helping families become informed consumers about quality child care and selecting care that best meets their needs
- Information about financial assistance
- Referrals to other community resources

We Improved the Quality of Child Care

Training and Technical Assistance

401 Early Childhood Professionals attended Child Care Network training.

120 hours of on-site technical assistance was provided to child care providers.

Providers contacted the Child Care Network **478** times requesting specific information relating to providing services.

Child Care Network staff provided a variety of professional development opportunities for early care and education professionals to learn the latest ideas and the newest current research on topics pertinent to providing quality early learning programs for children. We offered workshops, the annual fall conference and one-on-one on site mentoring/coaching and other networking opportunities throughout the year. Workshops included the Child Development Associate credential training, the Spring Lecture Series and quarterly trainings on such topics as business practices, child development, programming, environments, behavior management and health related topics.

Annual Early Childhood Conference

82 early childhood professionals from all types of early childhood settings attended the 2018 conference.

The Early Childhood Conference was another outstanding success. This highly respected professional development opportunity for local and regional early care and education staff is the biggest event sponsored by the Child Care Network on an annual basis. The two day event opened on Friday with give-a-ways from Lakeshore, one of our keynote sponsors, and a thought provoking keynote by Jeannine Fitzgerald. On Saturday, Discount School Supply, another keynote sponsor, opened with give-a-ways and Jeannine Fitzgerald delivered a different keynote address. Attendees had the opportunity to choose from 24 different workshops presented by local and state experts in the field of early childhood.



Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential



7 dedicated professionals completed this year long intensive study in 2018-2019.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and is a key stepping stone on the path of career advancement in early childhood.

The CDA Credential is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.

Legally Exempt Child Care Enrollment

The Child Care Network is now in our 13th year of providing enrollment services to legally exempt child care providers which include helping to ensure that basic standards of health and safety are met. Criminal history attestations are investigated to determine eligibility for approval, various background checks are conducted with the local department of social services and inspection visits are conducted for a minimum of 20% of enrolled providers. Legally exempt child care providers care for children receiving child care subsidy through the local Department of Social Services.

Legally Exempt Child Care Enrollment

Total Approved Providers	
Hamilton:	0
Warren:	67
Washington:	64



Infant Toddler Care

This new project, beginning in January 2019, is designed to address the unique and special needs of the infant toddler population and promotes safe, nurturing child care environments for our youngest children. It emphasizes the high quality care that is necessary to a child's long term social, emotional and intellectual development beginning in infancy. Our Infant Toddler Specialist promotes the importance of, and strategies for improving the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Through this project we provide training and technical assistance to providers on best practices in serving infants and toddlers, and assisting them to address issues that have been identified by the providers as important to the infants and toddlers in their care.

We Expanded the Supply of Child Care

We responded to 42 requests for assistance. 7 new child care businesses were opened.

Our early childhood specialists offer technical assistance and training in starting a quality child care business, including information on state regulations, insurance, child development and maintaining a healthy and safe environment.



Regulated Child Care Programs

Hamilton:	3
Warren:	54
Washington:	52

We Helped Improve the Health and Nutrition for Children

Children of working parents spend a significant amount of time in child care. Through a variety of programs and services we assist child care professionals to offer nutritious foods, support breast feeding mothers and give providers access to health related information.

Health Care Consultant Services

Our health care consultant assisted area programs in developing a health care plan, a New York State regulatory requirement, to become approved to administer medications to children while in care. Part of the health care plan consultation teaches providers how to meet best practices to ensure the health and safety of children in care.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



We helped to promote quality child care by assisting providers to improve the nutrition of young children by joining the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The goal

of the program is to provide nutrition education through training and technical assistance to providers and help children develop positive eating habits at the earliest stages of development. In addition, providers receive reimbursement for meals served to the children in care.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Child Care Providers Enrolled: **78**

Children Benefitting from the CACFP: **980**

New providers enrolled in CACFP: **6**

Creating Breast Feeding Friendly Communities

The Child Care Network, in partnership with the Clinton County Health Department, is in our 3rd year of this exciting initiative. Our role in this project is to assist in increasing the number of child care centers and family child care programs that have the Breast Feeding Friendly designation. Specifically, we provide information about creating breast feeding friendly child care environments and provide technical assistance to providers interested in becoming a Breast Feeding Friendly designated program. An integral part of the initiative includes funding to assist providers with the purchase of needed equipment and program materials.



Year two of the project resulted in 6 family/group family child care providers becoming Breast Feeding Friendly Certified.

We Spoke Up For Children, Families and our Future



Public Policy Initiatives

The Child Care Network's public policy efforts this year have continued to focus on the need for high-quality, accessible and affordable child care for all families in our service delivery area. We have met with our state legislators urging them to increase child care spending for subsidies and quality initiatives including funding for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. At the

Federal level, we have advocated for increased funding to pay for the implementation of the new child care requirements of the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

New York State's 2018/2019 budget has increased funding for child care, most notably with additional funds for improving the quality of child care in the State.

Along with other Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies across New York, the Child Care Network has long advocated for child care to be a part of discussions involving community economic planning and development. It is, therefore, a great pleasure to report that the Governor's office this year has responded to the urgent child care needs of our time calling for all NYS Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC's) to use their leadership roles to address child care needs in their regions as part of their overall planning for economic development and growth. In addition, a Governor's child care task force committee has been created, one on which our own, Sue Kowaleski, participates.

Our advocacy efforts, as usual, have included outreach and education of community stakeholders in order to engage them on early care and learning issues, especially about the importance of quality care for all children. This work has been done through the dissemination of key messages and "specific calls to action" through a variety of communication methods including group email blasts, our agency's parent and provider newsletters, SACCN's website, Facebook page, Twitter, community tabling events, and interagency collaborative meetings and presentations.

Key Public Policy/Advocacy Messages

- **All** children deserve safe, quality child care.
- Our federal, state and local budgets need to reflect a commitment to young children and working families.
- The high cost of child care strains household budgets and can force parents to make compromises about the quality and safety of the care they choose for their children.
- Quality child care provides children with the foundation they will need to succeed in school and life.
- Quality child care positively impacts children and communities in the short and long terms.
- Quality child care is good for parents as it provides them with the stability they need to stay employed.
- The Quality of the child care workforce is directly related to the quality of care.
- Quality child care is good for employers as it allows them to have a productive work force- and a well prepared and skilled workforce for the future.
- Investing in quality child care is an economic development plan for the next generation.

Community Outreach and Collaboration

Over the past year the Child Care Network has been involved in a variety of community outreach opportunities to raise awareness of our services and the importance of quality early care and learning.

Community Partners: Working Together for Children

- Warren County Head Start
- Washington County Head Start
- Washington County Economic Opportunity Council
- Warren County Department of Social Services
- Washington County Department of Social Services
- Open Door Mission
- Adirondack Health Institute
- Family Service Association of Glens Falls
- Hamilton County Department of Social Services
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Warren County
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County
- Warren County Public Health and WIC
- Washington County Public Health and WIC
- Adirondack Wellness Connections
- The CARE Center
- WAIT House
- SUNY Adirondack Community Hub
- Glens Falls Family YMCA
- Adirondack Chamber of Commerce
- Health and Wellness Council
- Glens Falls National Bank



Funding Sources

We are grateful to our funders:

- The New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- New York State Department of Health
- Capital District Child Care Council
- Healthy Community Alliance
- Clinton County Department of Public Health
- Various fees for services
- Early Childhood Conference Sponsors
 - Discount School Supply
 - Kingsbury Printing
 - Lakeshore
 - Marshall and Sterling
 - Price Chopper's Golub Foundation
 - Stored Tech
 - WB Mason

