



Child Care Network

Early Childhood News

Special points of interest:

- ED Letter & EcoHealthy updates (page 2)
- CACFP & Winter news (page 3)
- Zoom opportunities (page 4)

With the increase in Covid-19 positives in the SACCN service area, of-
 fice hours remain flexible as staff may work more from home. Please be aware that phone messages left for staff at 518-798-7972 will go to email which staff can access remotely. You must include the staff extensions:
 Lani, ext 208
 Linda, ext 203
 Liz, ext 210
 Lynn, ext 204
 Pam, ext 206
 Patty, ext 211
 Sue, ext 205
Office hours: Staff is available by phone from 9:00-4:00.
SACCN Office Closings
 January 1, Happy New Year
 January 18, MLK Day
 February 15, Presidents' Day

National Reality Check on Child Care

Child care providers across the United States are facing an unsustainable reality without significant public investment, according to a new national survey conducted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a leading advocate for high-quality early childhood education.

“The situation is dire for child care providers--the ones that are still open,” said NAEYC CEO Rhian Evans Allvin. “Add to that the thousands of providers that have already closed and the magnitude of this national crisis is much, much greater.”

“From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, child care has been hit particularly hard,” Allvin said. “As it drags on, and money from the CARES Act, the Paycheck Protection Program, and other sources runs out, there is an emergency need for \$50 billion to stabilize and support the sector. Without relief, our post-pandemic national economy will struggle to recover as parents can’t find high-quality, reliable child care for their children.”

Among the startling findings from the survey of more than 6,000 providers:

- 56% of child care centers are losing money each day they remain open.
- 44% are confronting so much uncertainty that they are unable to say how much longer they will be able to stay open.
- One-in-four centers and one-in-three child care homes say that if enrollment stays where it is and no additional support comes forward, they will have to close in the next three months. That rises to 51% of minority-owned businesses who won’t survive more than three months at the current status quo.

Survey respondents are resorting to desperate measures to stay open:

- 42% of respondents reported taking on debt for their programs by putting supplies or other items on their own personal credit cards.
- 39% reported trying to meet families’ needs by dipping into their own personal savings accounts.
- 60% work in programs that have tried to reduce their expenses by engaging in layoffs, furloughs, and/or pay cuts.

They are doing this as they experience significant increases in operating costs:

- 91% of respondents are paying additional costs for cleaning supplies.
- 73% are paying additional costs for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 60% are paying additional costs for staff/personnel, in an environment in which 69% say recruiting and retaining qualified staff is more difficult now than it was before the pandemic.

“To ignore this impact on the early childhood education sector is to ignore the future of our children, and of our country,” Allvin said. “These passionate early childhood educators have hung on for dear life throughout 2020. Getting them to 2021 requires meaningful relief from Washington.”

New York 2021 Virtual Early Childhood Advocacy Days!

This year, early childhood advocacy will be more necessary than ever to protect New York’s young children and families from budget cuts to programs they depend on – especially those crucial to Black and Brown communities disproportionately harmed by the ongoing pandemic.

While the State Capitol may not be open to us, this virtual event will be an opportunity for those who would not normally be able to travel to Albany to make their voices heard. Anyone who believes that New York State should invest in its youngest children is invited to join. Let’s make sure New York’s budget prioritizes young children, families, and early childhood professionals.

Save the date for Tuesday, February 2, 2021 and join us!



The Child Care Network's mission:

"To strengthen the quality of children's early care and learning."

From the Director's Desk

This time of year, so many mornings arrive in a subtle array of grays and silvers, chilly, windy and overcast. I am writing to you by the warm glow of my Christmas tree, which does help to diminish all that gloom outside my windows. Eventually the wind will blow away the thick clouds and sunshine and a beautiful blue sky will greet me. This is a perfect metaphor for life. Everything changes. Nothing stays the same. I have been thinking about what brings me feelings of joy and ease during this continued challenging time. For me the joy and ease come in the quiet times when I can just sit by my tree with a good book, my cat curled up next to me and a cup of tea in my hand or when I can get outside in nature. This is a stressful and tiresome time for so many of us. It hard to believe it was 9 months ago that life as we knew it changed due to the COVID pandemic. What brings joy and ease to your life? If anything stands out at the Child

Care Network this year, it's that we don't need to be in the same space to be connected, to learn and support one another and to effectively carry out our work serving parents and child care providers.

And we've discovered a few things about ourselves in the process as you may have too. We discovered that we are resilient, caring, and creative. Perhaps it is our spirit and love for our work that helped us to rethink what we do and how we do it, to be adaptable to change, to greet whatever comes our way with optimism (most of the time) so in the end we will meet the needs of those we serve. We have learned that as we connect, meet in small teams, and express our vulnerabilities that we are stronger together. Yes, we all await the day when life returns to normal.

We also discovered that we are still learning. 2020 has challenged us to rethink how we offer our services to the community.

Some of this has been met with resistance at all levels and yet we have moved beyond that resistance and now see things that were once foreign as almost normal. 2020 has challenged us to bring our training and meetings to the online environment. We initiated virtual family child care meetings and our Director's Lunch and Learn is also virtual. This is a time for child care providers to explore and discuss many different aspects of operating in the new pandemic world. We hope you will choose to participate in these monthly meetings scheduled for the 1st Wednesday of each month. Those that have attended have found them a valuable time to connect.

There is hope that 2021 will be different. It will take time. As life changes, we will all continue to adapt.

Wishing you a warm and healthy New Year and the promise of better days in the year ahead.

Lynn

More Resources for Healthier Cleaning & Disinfecting During a Pandemic

Eco-Healthy Child Care® (EHCC) is a national program of the Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN). They have compiled a list of resources for educators, caregivers and advocates to keep children safe during these turbulent times. They share, "The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed critical gaps in our nation's ability to effectively protect our most vulnerable. We must act on preventable health outcomes to promote the safest and healthiest futures for our children." CEHN and **Eco-Healthy Child Care**® have many resources posted on their website, www.cehn.org.

One example is, "*Can you use disinfectant wipes anywhere? NO. They should only be used on surfaces that are listed on the product label. Children should not use disinfectant wipes.*" Most people do not know this important information to keep children safe until someone tells them. There are on-line resources to help with more important answers to questions people don't even know they have.

To receive more tips to keep child care facilities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic--go to EHCC's free, user-friendly, science-based [COVID-19 fact sheets](#) for child care professionals. The fact sheets cover safer cleaning and disinfecting and offer realistic and cost-effective strategies to create and maintain healthy indoor air.

To help disseminate these COVID-19 fact-sheets and environmental health best practices they have also put together a [Toolkit](#) with graphics and sample posts that you can use in your newsletters and on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The [fact sheets](#) and [Toolkit](#) are available in English and Spanish. EHCC encourages everyone to use and distribute the resources widely to parents, the public, and other child care professionals.

IGS (Informed Green Solutions) also shares information to help reduce children's exposures to potentially toxic products. They are updating their publication, "Cleaning for Healthier Schools - Infection Control Handbook." Many documents address COVID-19 issues. For example; Chapter 4: Selection of Products, Dispensing Equipment, and Application Systems shares, "One of the key strategies in reducing the use of toxic products is to prevent their purchase. After an infection-control program is developed, purchasing the right products enables implementation."

The documents in chapter 4 can be used to identify hazardous ingredients in products; to compare equipment, supplies, and less-toxic products; and to select the best methods for applying the products.

To see the new and updated chapters visit

<https://www.informedgreensolutions.org/cleaning-for-healthier-schools-infection-control-handbook#Chapter4>



CACFP

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The holidays are now over and we are at the beginning of 3 long, cold, winter months! Brrrrr! Since many of us are now eating at home more, it might be a good time to dig out those old cookbooks that have been forgotten due to the abundance of on line recipes. You may rediscover some great dishes that were favorites from long ago!

Here is a tried and truly good, simple recipe that is a family favorite. It is also inexpensive, quick and serves 6 people. It comes from a very old recipe book called "ideals – Ground Meat Cookbook" by June Turner and Naomi Arbit

Dilled Stroganoff

1 pound ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
½ teaspoon dried dillweed
¾ cup beef broth
½ cup dry red wine
¼ cup catsup
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup sour cream
Snipped parsley
Egg noodles
Brown beef, onion, mushrooms, and garlic in a frying pan; drain fat. Stir in dillweed,

beef broth, wine, and catsup. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir flour into sour cream. Stir sour cream into beef mixture. Cook and stir until thick and bubbly. Serve on a platter of hot buttered egg noodles garnished with snipped parsley.



Playing in a Winter Wonderland



"Because of COVID-19, concerns for young children's physical and mental well-being have skyrocketed. These concerns are magnified in children and caretakers experiencing compromised or vulnerable situations. That's why the mental and physical health benefits of regular

time outside is more important than ever. Now is the perfect time to improve and maximize your outdoor play environments as a critical tool in your healthy child care." This statement comes from Child Care Aware of America's December newsletter (available via <https://www.childcareaware.org/about/sign-up-for-enews/>) and is supported by Resources from Better Kid Care (BKC), a program of Penn State Cooperative Extension. Visit <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare> and get more information on outdoor play and many other useful ideas for parents and caregivers of young children.

Outdoor enthusiasts often say, "There is no bad weather, just bad clothes." When clothed properly, children can play comfortably outside, even in winter. Be sure to remind parents that children are required to play outside every day. To do so, proper clothing can make their outdoor time the best part of their day.

When children are busy and having fun, their bodies tend to stay warm. Fun and novel activities will make the outside time fly right by. Try some of the BKC suggestions:

Ice Blocks: Ask parents to save their food containers for you. Fill them with water and freeze them. When a supply is built up, remove the ice chunks from their containers, take them outside and see where the children's imaginations lead them. Good building block containers include clean milk containers, large yogurt, cottage cheese, and margarine tubs. The half gallon milk box makes wonderful brick blocks. Cylinders will be used differently and it will be fun to observe how children use them. Think about props that can be used with the ices to enhance and expand children's outside dramatic play.

Snow Maze: Create a snow path pattern for the children to follow. Ask children to stay on the path as they walk like the Abominable Snowman, or move like a snow plow. They can race, crawl, or whatever they choose while they enjoy themselves. Children will want to make their own paths in fresh snow after they see how much fun it is. Let yours and their imaginations run wild!

Snow Obstacle Course: Set up a course of snow piles; some tall, some wide, some small. Make signs with words and pictures at each obstacle to direct children to climb over, run around, hop through, jump into, etc.

Snow Pies: Using mud pie props, have an outdoor kitchen where children can "bake" to their hearts' delight. With snow as the main ingredient, the children's creations can be decorated with other natural objects (twigs, dirt, stones) found outside. For a treat for the birds, consider topping a snow pie with birdseed or stale bread crumbs.

For the full resource, visit <http://bkc-od-media.vmhost.psu.edu/documents/Activities0104.pdf>. Be sure to share it with parents.

Southern Adirondack
Child Care Network

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Fax: 518-812-0799
9:00-4:00 Monday-Friday

*“Strengthening the quality
of children’s early care
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WE’RE ON FACEBOOK
AND TWITTER
FACEBOOK.COM/
SOUTHERNADIRONDACKCHIL
DCARENENETWORK

WWW.TWITTER.COM/SACCN8

Southern Adirondack Child
Care Network is an equal
opportunity provider.

Zoom Opportunities

The Child Care Network is planning to offer more Zoom training in the new year.

- Look for more Infant Toddler training opportunities with Pam Conine to be scheduled throughout the quarter.
- Monthly workshop topics will be scheduled with Sue Kowaleski on a variety of subjects.
- The newest Provider Services Team member, Patty Miller, will plan workshops to co-present with Pam or Sue during the first quarter of 2021. Stay tuned for her January training that is in the works: *As a provider you are likely very aware of the rules and regulations, but are you also familiar with the policies? Policies offer guidance and clarity at times to the rules and regulations. In this training, we will review and discuss the OCFS policies, spending a little more time on the new ones that have been inspired and created due to the Covid epidemic.* The January date will be sent as soon as it is confirmed.
- Family Child Care Zooms with Pam, Patty or Sue will be scheduled as needed to share new information specific to those providers in group/family child care programs.
- The Child Care Network is still considering how to make the Spring Guest Lecture Series work during the uncertain times of the pandemic.

Please send your workshop topic needs to suek@saccn.org.

Notice of SACCN workshops will be sent via email to licensed/registered programs in Warren, Washington, Hamilton and Northern Saratoga Counties.

