



Southern Adirondack

Child Care Network

Strengthening the Quality of Children's Early Care and Learning



Annual Report

2020-2021



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The Southern Adirondack Child Care Network, serving Hamilton, Warren, Washington and Northern Saratoga Counties, is a not-for-profit child care resource and referral organization, incorporated in 1992.

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.

2020-2021 Board of Directors

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Pamela Conine, **Infant Toddler Specialist**
Lani Dake, **Bookkeeper/Office Assistant**
Sue Kowaleski, **Early Childhood Trainer**
Elizabeth Mahon-Laidlaw, **Assistant Director**
Patty Miller, **Early Childhood Specialist**
Linda Scimeca, **Child Care Food Program Educator**
Lynn Sickles, **Executive Director**
Jorgey Wethington, **Child Care Provider Services Coordinator**



From the Executive Director

Last year I wrote that the year ahead would look different and life would continue to feel uncertain. I was right. The way we offered services in 2020 2021 evolved to meet the changing needs of our customers. With the continuation of the pandemic into the spring of 2021, all the protocols established early on in the pandemic needed to be maintained or adjusted. Staff continued to work mostly remote. Training for child care providers resumed, however, it was delivered virtually via Zoom. In the spring of 2021, we began providing on-site technical assistance again and we also continued to provide it remotely depending on the wishes of the providers requesting the service. Parents continued to call for child care referrals; however, finding child care became a challenge for many. New funding was received from the federal CARES Act which helped parents who were considered essential workers, pay for child care and providers received grants to help ease the financial burdens related to COVID.

There were staffing changes at the Child Care Network. Two of our long-time employees left for other jobs. Sue Kowaleski, our Training Coordinator, retired after 29 plus years. We hired a new full-time Child-Care Provider Services Coordinator.

In spite of the challenges related to living through a pandemic, we continued to offer quality services to parents, providers, employers and the community. We were always ready to rethink, pivot, change and do whatever was necessary to meet the needs of those we serve.

Services Provided

We Helped Parents Access Quality Child Care

Family Referrals

Hamilton County: **1**
Warren County: **77**
Washington County: **108**

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.



Comprehensive personal guidance to parents based on their family's needs is offered with every referral. 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

224 Early Childhood Professionals attended Child Care Network training.

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

Providers contacted the Child Care Network **1084** 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 virtually and one-on-one mentoring/coaching either virtually or in person. Workshops included the Child Development Associate credential training, a 6-session Spring Lecture Series presented by Jeanine Fitzgerald and quarterly trainings on such topics as business practices, child development, programming, environments, behavior management, COVID protocols and other health related topics.

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential

12 dedicated professionals resumed their training after a 6-month suspension of classes due to COVID and completed the yearlong intensive study.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and is a key steppingstone 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 15th year of providing enrollment services to legally exempt child care providers which include comprehensive background checks and helping to ensure that basic standards of health and safety are met. 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:	1
Warren:	28
Washington:	23

Infant Toddler Care



This project 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 Worked to Expand the Supply of Child Care

We responded to 50 requests for assistance. 2 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.

This past year an unprecedented number of programs closed or became inactive, mainly due to COVID, leaving huge supply gaps and long waiting lists for parents who searched for child care. Over the upcoming year we will be working with local partners to help address the need for more programs.

Regulated Child Care Programs

Hamilton:	2
Warren:	33
Washington:	39
Northern Saratoga:	21

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: **50**

Children Benefitting from the CACFP: **611**

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 5 of the project resulted in 4 family/group family child care providers becoming Breast Feeding Friendly Certified.

We Helped Provide COVID Relief Funding

The Child Care Network was busy implementing several grant funded projects that came about through emergency COVID funding bills passed by the Federal Government and administered by New York State. These projects provided some much-needed financial relief and health guidance to children and families, as well as to child care providers.

Essential Worker Scholarships for Parents

NYS used a portion of the federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) money to provide financial assistance for child care for essential workers who work outside of the home, at reduced rates or no cost to the worker. The Child Care Network received funds to administer this program. 55 parents were recipients and received a total of \$317,791 through this program.

Grants to Child Care Programs

The CARES funding also provided one-time grants to programs to assist with re-opening and the funding also provided temporary operating assistance grants to incentivize the re-opening and expansion of child care capacity in open programs. 10 providers received \$38,771.

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 met with our state legislators via zoom urging them to increase child care spending for subsidies and for funds to promote provider sustainability in this era of the COVID Pandemic.

Since March of 2020, COVID-19 has impacted the focus of our public policy work and advocacy efforts. Children and families in our region and across the state, have been hit hard by the health and economic impacts of the Pandemic. Child care programs have closed in significant numbers and those that have remained open, struggle to make ends meet and to stay healthy. Public policy engagement and advocacy efforts have urgently called for emergency funding at the state and federal level for child care programs to help them to stay open and/or to re-open.

Our advocacy efforts, continue to include outreach and education of community stakeholders 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 provider newsletters, and interagency collaborative meetings.



Community Outreach and Collaboration

The Child Care Network has been involved in a variety of community outreach opportunities to assist with COVID relief and 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 LEAP
- LEAP Washington County
- Warren County Department of Social Services
- Washington County Department of Social Services
- Family Service Association of Glens Falls
- Hamilton County Department of Social Services
- Warren County Public Health and WIC
- Washington County Public Health and WIC
- WAIT House
- Glens Falls Family YMCA
- Adirondack Chamber of Commerce
- ARCC Health and Wellness Council
- Glens Falls National Bank
- Warren County Employment & Training



Funding Sources

We are grateful to our funders:

- The New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- New York State Department of Health
- Brightside Up
- Clinton County Department of Public Health
- Various fees for services