



Southern Adirondack

Child Care Network

Strengthening the Quality of Children's Early Care and Learning



Annual Report

2022-2023



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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.

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Patty Miller, **Legally Exempt Coordinator**
Kelly Saunders, **Early Childhood Specialist**
Linda Scimeca, **Child Care Food Program Coordinator**
Lynn Sickles, **Executive Director**
Jorgey Wethington, **Child Care Provider Services Coordinator**

From the Executive Director



As I prepare this annual report, I am closing in on completing my 31st year of leading this organization and working on behalf of children and families. In November 2022 we celebrated the organization's 30th Anniversary with a celebratory dinner which was also an event to recognize the dedicated hard-working child-care providers in our community. Over this 30-year span there have been many changes, challenges, and accomplishments in the child care world. Probably one of the greatest successes came as a result of the pandemic which created an awareness of the importance of child care to a variety of stakeholders. Child care remains on the radar of elected officials, business owners and other community organizations. Even with this new acknowledgement, child care providers are still under appreciated and under paid. As part of our work, we continue to work to bring the important recognition and appreciation of the child care field to the forefront in all our conversations.

The board and staff have been working to develop a new strategic plan to guide our activities over the next 2 years. The work we do will be in alignment with our mission and focus on meeting the needs of child care providers and parents who are seeking child care services. Our work in the community to highlight child care will continue. We will embark on new projects and ideas which will benefit the child care community. The Child Care Network looks forward to the year ahead and continuing the valuable work we do.

Services Provided

We Helped Parents Access Quality Child Care

Family Referrals

Hamilton County: **1**
Warren County: **86**
Washington County: **105**

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. Based on information from follow up calls, the greatest barrier for parents looking for child care was "no openings." This speaks directly to

the continuing child care crisis in our area which began pre-pandemic.

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

260 Early Childhood Professionals attended Child Care Network trainings.

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

Providers contacted the Child Care Network **707** times requesting specific information related 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 returned to conducting in-person workshops and continued to offer some virtually. We also provided one-on-one mentoring/coaching either virtually or in person. Workshops included the Child Development Associate credential training, a 6-session Spring Lecture Series, and monthly trainings on such topics as business practices, child development, programming, environments, behavior management, and health and nutrition.

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential

3 dedicated professionals attended this year long intensive study in 2022 2023.

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 17th 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. With additional funding we provided educational toys and books to all providers as well as needed health and safety items. Legally exempt child care providers care for children receiving child care assistance through the local Department of Social Services.

Legally Exempt Child Care Enrollment

Total Approved Providers

Hamilton:	1
Warren:	26
Washington:	24

We Worked to Expand the Supply of Child Care

We responded to 198 requests for assistance in opening a child care program. 5 new child care businesses were opened in all modalities of care, except school age.

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. We also assist with completing the NYS licensing application.

With funding from Warren County, Washington County, and the Adirondack Foundation (for Hamilton County) we have been able to offer start up grants to people interested in opening family or group family child care programs. This funding covers the required health and safety training, First Aid/CPR, business workshops and equipment and supplies necessary to opening a quality program.

Despite these incentives, the increase in the number of programs in our area has been slow. The process to become licensed is lengthy and can be cumbersome, even with our help in minimizing barriers. Continued incentives once open are minimal, with providers receiving low pay and working long work hours with little public recognition for the important work they do.

Regulated Child Care Programs

Hamilton:	2
Warren:	33
Washington:	35
Northern Saratoga:	20

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.

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: **48**

Children Benefitting from the CACFP: **591**

Creating Breast Feeding Friendly Communities

The Child Care Network, in partnership with the Clinton County Health Department, is in our 7th and final 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 7 of the project resulted in 9 family/group family child care providers becoming Breast Feeding Friendly Certified.

We Provided Child Care Business Sustainability Support

The Child Care Network partnered with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services on two projects over the past year focused on building the supply of care and increasing the sustainability of existing and new programs throughout the state. Our role with both funding streams was to provide technical assistance in applying for the funds, assisting in the use of the funds, assisting with the licensing process, and developing business related training for child care providers.

New York State Stabilization Funds

\$208 million was recently awarded to 12,578 child care programs across NYS through a second round of funds. These funds were made available to specifically support the work force. Locally, most eligible programs applied for and received this funding.

Invest in New York Desert Funding

\$100 million was dedicated to build and expand child care capacity in areas of the state with the least supply (child care deserts). In our region one new program received funding and two existing programs received funding to expand their care to include infants and children with special needs.

We Spoke Up for Children, Families, and Our Future

Public Policy Initiatives



The Child Care Network's public policy efforts this year focused 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 in Albany in February 2023 urging them to increase child care spending for child care assistance (formerly called child care subsidy) and for funds to promote provider sustainability to help stabilize the child care industry. An investment of \$1.8 billion was secured. This included increasing the child care assistance eligibility to 300% of the federal poverty level, increasing the market rate for provider reimbursement for parents on assistance, additional stabilization funds devoted to workforce initiatives and increase in Child Care Resource & Referral funding.

On the federal level, child care saw a historic and necessary \$1.9 billion increase in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), raising total funding of the block grant to \$8 billion.

Children and families in our region and across the state, continue to struggle to find child care as it remains in short supply. Through efforts on the local level, we were able to secure funding from Warren and Washington Counties to assist with recruiting new providers and to provide financial and other supports to become licensed.

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.

From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, we presented several times on the topic of the child care crisis to local community organizations and local government agencies and committees.



Community Outreach and Collaboration

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 LEAP
- LEAP Washington County
- Warren County Department of Social Services
- Washington County Department of Social Services
- Warren County ARPA Committee
- Salvation Army of Glens Falls
- Family Service Association of Glens Falls
- Hamilton County Department of Social Services
- Warren County Public Health and WIC
- Washington County Public Health and WIC
- Adirondack Chamber of Commerce
- ARCC Health and Wellness Council
- ARCC Non-Profit Business Council
- Glens Falls National Bank
- Warren County Workforce Development
- SUNY Adirondack
- Southern Adirondack Independent Living Center



Funding Sources

We are grateful to our funders:

- The New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- New York State Department of Health
- Glens Falls National Bank
- Warren County American Recovery Act Funds
- Washington County American Recovery Act Funds
- Adirondack Foundation
- Clinton County Department of Public Health
- Various fees for services

