



Southern Adirondack

Child Care Network

A Child Care Resource Center

Strengthening the Quality of Children's Early Care and Learning

Annual Report 2024-2025



**16 Pearl Street, Suite 209
Glens Falls, NY 12801**

www.saccn.org

518-798-7972

info@saccn.org

www.facebook.com/SouthernAdirondackChildcareNetwork

The *Southern Adirondack Child Care Network*, serving Hamilton, Warren, and Washington 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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Coordinator



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Trainer



Amanda Carpenter
Referral Specialist

From the Desk of the Executive Director



**Colleen
Maziejka**
Executive
Director

This past year has been filled with continued growth and renewal for the Child Care Network. In January, after nearly two years of holding the Assistant Director position, I transitioned to the role of Executive Director. Our founding Executive Director, Lynn Sickles, stepped away from the role after 33 years of leadership and dedication to the Agency. Lynn continues her commitment to our mission of **“Strengthening the Quality of Children’s Early Care and Learning”** through her work as Special Projects Director and Executive Advisor. We successfully completed a two-year Standards of Excellence Certification through the Early Care and Learning Council. Last Spring we were once again awarded the CCRR contract with a renewal of initiatives, which have proven successful in the past. As well as the inclusion of a new initiative to support Child Care Business Sustainability through the addition of a Business Support Specialist. We experienced some growing pains as we brought new staff on, promoted from within, and bid another farewell as they embarked on their retirement journey. The willingness of the team to step in and carry us through the transition periods is something that I am extremely proud of. With the multitude of new initiatives on the horizon and the expertise and dedication of our team, I am excited for what the future holds for the providers, parents and community we serve.

Services Provided

We Helped Parents Access Quality Child Care

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, 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 continues to be "no openings." In 2024, we added an on-line parent referral search portal to our website as a convenience to assist parents looking for child care. This new service accounts for **117 or 47%** of the referrals done over the past year.

Family Referrals

Per County
Hamilton: 0

Warren: 135

Washington: 113

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The service we provide 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, like the Child Care Assistance Program.
- Referrals to other community resources .

We Improved the Quality of Child Care

Training and Technical Assistance

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 both in-person and virtual workshops. We also provided one-on-one mentoring/coaching on-site at programs. Workshops included the Child Development Associate credential training, a 3-session Spring Lecture Series, and monthly workshops on topics such as business practices, child development, programming, environments, behavior management, and health and nutrition. Many on-site workshops at various programs were also offered.

960 Early Childhood Professionals attended Child Care Network trainings.

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

Providers contacted the Child Care Network **743** times requesting specific information related to providing services.

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Early Childhood Education Conference

We held the **29th Annual Early Childhood Conference in the fall of 2024** at the Fort William Henry Hotel and Conference Center. **140 early childhood professionals attended on Friday and 75 on Saturday, our largest attendance ever over the two-day event.** The conference included 2 dynamic keynote speakers and 24 workshops presented by experts in the early childhood field.

Early Childhood Conference 2024



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QUALITY starsNY

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential

7 dedicated professionals attended this year-long intensive study in 2024-2025.

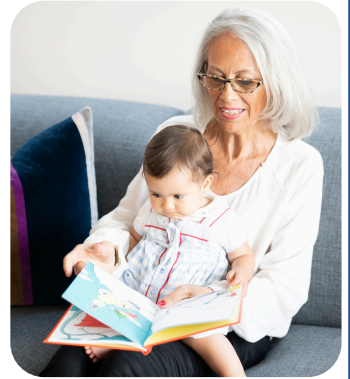
The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and is a key steppingstone on the path of career advancement in early childhood.

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 **19th** 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 developed emergency backpacks filled with on-the-go health and safety items such as, but not limited to: a flashlight, hand crank radio, first aid kit, water bottles, rain poncho, emergency blankets, and a children's story book. Legally exempt child care providers care for children receiving child care assistance through the local Department of Social Services.

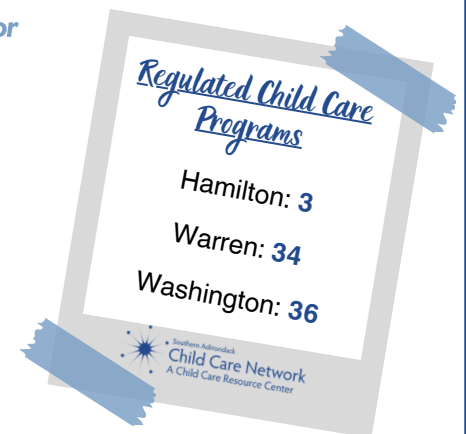


We created the *Guide on How to Start or Expand to In-Home Licensed Child Care* as a tool to assist legally exempt providers move towards becoming a licensed child care program, if so desired.

We Worked to Expand the Supply of Child Care

We responded to 189 (many potential providers call multiple times) requests for assistance in opening a child care program. Four new family or group family child care businesses and five school age programs opened between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

Our early childhood and business support specialists offer technical assistance and training in starting a quality child care program, including information on state regulations, insurance, business management and sustainability, 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 12 people interested in opening family or group family child care programs. This funding covers the required health and safety training, First Aid/CPR training, compliance items, and high quality equipment and supplies necessary for opening a quality program.

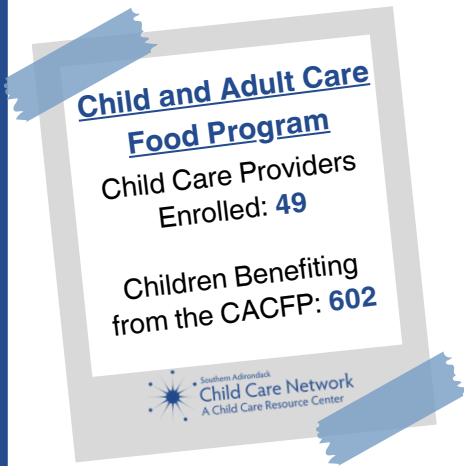


We Helped Improve the Health and Nutrition for Children

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)

By joining CACFP, we helped to promote quality child care by assisting providers to improve the nutrition of young children. The goal of the program is to provide nutrition education through training and technical assistance to providers, and helping children develop positive eating habits at the earliest stages of development. In addition, providers receive reimbursement for meals served to the children in care. CACFP also helps create Breast-Feeding friendly child care communities by increasing the number of programs that have a breast feeding friendly designation.



We Provided Child Care Business Sustainability Support

The Child Care Network has partnered with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Warren and Washington Counties, and the Adirondack Foundation's Birth to Three Alliance, on projects focused on building the supply of care and increasing the sustainability of existing and new programs throughout the state.

Business Support Services

As part of our Child Care Resource Center project work, we provided technical assistance and training on quality business practices to centers and in-home programs, with the goal of assisting them to set up quality business practices. Business support services were also offered to potential providers who are in the process of starting a child care program.

Northeast Shared Services Alliance

With funding from Warren and Washington Counties, SACCN is a founding partner of the Northeast Shared Service Alliance. The Alliance is dedicated to supporting high quality sustainable early childhood education. The partners include the Adirondack Foundation Birth to Three Alliance, and the Child Care Resource Centers serving Clinton, Franklin, Essex, Hamilton, Warren, and Washington Counties. The purpose is to develop and offer cooperative strategies for reducing the administrative and financial burden of providing high-quality early childhood education. Current services include a subscription to child care management software, access to the NY Early Learning Hub, and enrollment in the Adirondack Employee Assistance Program. Currently there are eight programs enrolled in the Alliance.

We Spoke Up for Children, Families, and Our Future

Public Policy Initiatives

The Child Care Network supported the public policy priorities of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care this past year.

One of the priorities focused on creating a statewide Child Care Workforce Living Wage Fund, which would create a permanent fund to increase child care professionals compensation. Those working in this profession earn less than 96% of all New Yorkers, contributing to the high turnover, staffing shortages, and deepening the child care capacity crisis. Unfortunately, the Legislature did not support this initiative in the final 2025-2026 enacted budget.

The other important initiative focused on various aspects of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) calling on New York Leaders to make significant investments that could transform child care across the state. This included mandating that counties keep waitlists, and giving providers an automatic rate increase to be paid the market rate.

Also included in the \$250 billion dollar child care package is \$3 million to create a pilot project for a child care substitute pool, and \$100 million in Capital Grants for center expansion.

Before the end of the Legislative term, many counties around the state, including Warren, Washington, and Hamilton Counties, reported they were going to run out child care assistance funds during the spring or summer months of 2025. The lack of funds places a huge burden on families and programs that serve families who receive child care assistance. Parents were scrambling to find solutions to pay for child care, and programs were trying to figure out creative ways to financially support families who had lost their assistance. Advocates renewed their efforts to get increased funding in the budget for child care assistance. While advocates were able to get a \$400 million dollar increase in funding, the state did not invest adequate state dollars to fully fund the program going forward.

Our advocacy efforts then turned towards the federal “One Big Beautiful Bill” urging our elected officials to not support the drastic cuts to Medicaid and SNAP. The bill was signed into law on July 4th. While we do not yet know the full effects of this funding cut, we do know it will have devastating effects on families and children, and will likely impact how the state allocates its funds going forward. The bill did include an increase in the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.

In the coming year, we will stay tuned and ready to heed calls to action to do what we can to protect the needs of children and families.



If you're not already thinking about child care...
You should be!

Community Outreach and Collaboration



The Child Care Network has been involved in a variety of community outreach opportunities, including tabling at events, attending Kindergarten Round Up at elementary schools, making presentations to local organizations, and participating in a variety of community meetings. The goal is to raise awareness of our services and the importance of quality early care and learning.

One of our most exciting initiatives from last year that has continued into this year is the Joyce Stock Snuggery Project at Glens Falls Hospital. We delivered 230 bundles, which include Sleep Safe books, a Gerber Onesie with our SACCN logo on the front, our program information brochure, start-up flyer, legally exempt flyer, and the Child Care Assistance Program wrapped with a bow!

Community Partners: Working Together for Children

- Adirondack Foundation Birth to Three Alliance
- Adirondack Foundation Stand Up for Child Care
- Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Adirondack Employee Assistance Program
- ARCC Health and Wellness Council
- ARCC Non-Profit Business Council
- ARCC Women's Business Council
- Family Service Association of Glens Falls
- Glens Falls National Bank
- Hamilton County Department of Social Services
- Hudson Headwaters Health Network
- LEAP Washington County
- Southern Adirondack Independent Living Center
- SUNY Adirondack
- Warren County ARPA Committee
- Warren County Department of Social Services
- Warren County Head Start
- Warren County Health Services
- Warren County Public Health and WIC
- Warren County Workforce Development
- Warren Washington Saratoga Workforce Development Board
- Washington County Department of Social Services
- Washington County Children's Services Committee
- Washington County Public Health and WIC



Funding Sources

*We are grateful
to our funders...*

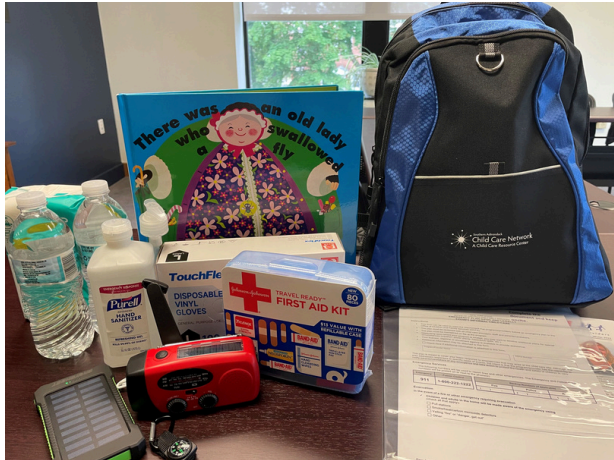
- The New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- New York State Department of Health
- Warren County American Recovery Act Funds
- Washington County American Recovery Act Funds
- Adirondack Foundation
- Various fees for services

Honorable mentions-



The child care providers received a special gift for Provider Appreciation Day 2024. This gift included:

- A copy of a staff favorite book- The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and the Horse
- A sweet treat
- A metal bracelet
- A card holder highlighting and reminding providers of their EAP services available to them



Legally Exempt Provider's received a Health and Safety backpack that included on-the-go health and safety items such as but not limited to:

- a flashlight
- hand crank radio
- first aid kit
- water bottles
- rain poncho
- emergency blankets
- children's story book.



Many Child care providers participated in a four week project called "Beyond the Sensory Bin", which provided a mini kit for each program to keep, and the opportunity to borrow three different kits including items, activities, education and prompts for programs, to explore different type of sensory input processing with their group.

