

**The Child Care
Council of
Westchester**

2015 Annual Report



**Child Care Council
of Westchester, Inc.**
INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE



A Message From The Executive Director

Dear Friends,

2015 was a very good year. National investment in life-changing experiences for young children expanded with the new federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program designed to boost the quality of subsidized child care for babies and infants. The federal Child Care Development Block Grant, which funds child care subsidies, was reauthorized with overwhelming bi-partisan support. The

new law introduced higher standards for child care safety and quality, reflecting a growing understanding that child care not only enables parents to work, it changes life outcomes for children. The New York State budget included the first ever funding for QUALITYstarsNY, our state’s emerging system to improve child care quality and expand parental information on available options. And despite fears of child care cuts in the Westchester County budget, subsidy funding was maintained and we retained our child care subsidy specialist.

Westchester’s regulated child care sector grew in 2015 to serve over 34,000 children birth to age 12, so the Council was busier than ever. We helped 23 family provider and after school programs, and 20 school age programs, open. We distributed \$1.94 million in reimbursements to family providers to support their serving of healthy meals and snacks. We brought the joy of reading to hundreds of children and their families through our Early Literacy/Family Book Bag Program. We connected nearly 2,700 parents to child care options and provided Westchester employers with Smart Child Care info for their workers. We deepened the skills of the child care workforce through trainings and conferences, and worked in classrooms and provider homes to improve program quality. Participation in our Child Development Associate (CDA) credential courses reached an all-time high with the addition of a preschool CDA funded by the Westchester County Department of Social Services - Office of Workforce Investment.

Our work is far from done. We still heard from Westchester parents, even those at the highest income levels, that they are struggling to pay for child care. Child care scholarships from our Early Opportunity Fund made safe, quality child care possible for 30 Westchester families, but many more need our help.

We will continue to deliver our unique services to parents, employers and the Westchester early care and education community. But we will also continue to seek systemic changes leading to an affordable and high quality child care system that serves all our children and families.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Halas
Child Care Council of Westchester

Working together, we will see the day...

- when every child’s potential is maximized from birth
- when every parent can go to work free from distraction or worry
- when Westchester businesses have access to a talented, well-educated homegrown workforce
- when community leaders universally acknowledge that quality early care is essential

Who We Serve

Children

Children are born learning; 85% of their brain growth happens between birth and age 5. Whether or not that opportunity is maximized before kindergarten - through interactions and sensory experiences - impacts every aspect of their future: academics, physical health, emotional development, decision-making, career and earnings. If parents are working, children need to be in a quality early care and education setting in order to start and stay on the right path.

Families

Parents and guardians should be able to go to work knowing their children are safe, loved and learning. We help them understand what quality child care looks like and why it's important, find and evaluate child care programs, and access financial support in the form of the child care subsidy program, tax credits and scholarships. There is no charge for any of our parent services.

Child Care Providers

As a one-stop resource for all segments of the early care and education community, we offer the training, technical assistance and professional development opportunities that help child care providers give the best possible care, grow their businesses, and meet regulatory requirements.

Employers

When employers share our free resources and referral services with employees, it can **improve productivity and morale and help with recruiting and retention.**

Westchester

Quality early care and education is how we ensure today's children will grow into tomorrow's well-prepared workforce.



The Child Care Council of Westchester, part of a state and national network of nonprofit resource and referral agencies, **champions the healthy development of children, families, and communities through quality early care and education.** As Westchester's central hub for child care resources, referrals and information for parents and child care providers, our work is a collaborative effort between our early care and education colleagues, government partners, generous business and individual sponsors and donors, volunteers, and other nonprofit organizations who share our vision.

Our Impact

Advocacy

Our advocacy enabled us to maintain funding at a time when many other nonprofits faced cuts.

- In Westchester, Title XX child care subsidy funding of \$1.4 million remained intact, the parent share was held at 27%, and we preserved the child care subsidy specialist position at the Council

- At the state level, there was \$22 million of new pre-k funding

- The federal government increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which funds child care subsidies

We are a voice for parents, who responded to our annual Child Care Survey with a clear message: ***working parents at all income levels have trouble paying for care.***

- 647 parents, from every income level in every community in our county, responded - a 41% increase over 2014
 - Half of the survey respondents earn more than \$60k/year; 30% earn more than \$100k
 - 44% of respondents have trouble paying for child care, including those with household incomes over \$100,000
 - Just 60% of respondents who are income-eligible for the child care subsidy are receiving it
 - Nearly half the respondents cited “quality of program” as a factor in their child care selection, a big jump over prior survey results
 - Parents are beginning to understand that quality is an important selection criteria, over cost and location

New in 2015

The Council asked for Westchester County to look at the long-term challenges and opportunities in the child care industry, outside the annual budget process. The Child Care Study Group was formed, co-chaired by Deputy County Executive Kevin Plunkett and Board of Legislators Chairman Mike Kaplowitz.

We expanded quality early childhood services in Westchester via a collaboration with WestCOP on a new federal Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership grant for “Babies Step Forward.”

Deputy County Executive Kevin Plunkett and County Legislator Ben Boykin

Council Executive Director Kathy Halas and former County Legislator Michael Smith, President of Berkeley College

Council Board member Dr. Josephine Moffett and NYS Assemblyman David Buchwald



We're all stakeholders when it comes to the future of Westchester's children. Our advocacy events and alerts keep the business and nonprofit communities, as well as parents, child care providers and elected officials, engaged and informed about the most pressing issues.



Above & below right: At our annual Children's Legislative Breakfast, presented in partnership with the Westchester Children's Association, Westchester youth had the opportunity to address legislators about issues facing young people.



Above left: Testifying at County budget hearings is critical to ensuring that children and families have a voice. Here, Council Board of Directors member Jeff Samuelson speaks about the importance of investing in quality early education.



Report Card Challenge Nonprofit and community leaders, parents, child care providers, employers, and professionals, as well as elected officials at all levels of government, joined us at the annual Report Card Challenge in October where we revealed the results of our annual Parent Survey and graded the quality, affordability and supply of Westchester's child care offerings.



Increasing access to quality care!

In 2015, we helped 135 families complete the subsidy application.



Our #GetSmartChildCare campaign educates parents countywide that when it comes to child care, they need to think beyond just location and affordability and understand that quality matters.

Parent Support

Westchester's parents always have a place to turn when they need information and resources related to child care and education.

Resource and Referral Department Highlights:

- Responded to nearly 2,700 requests for child care
- Provided online child care search tool in Spanish
- Assisted 900+ parents with child care subsidy needs, to help get more children into quality care
 - A 28% increase over the number of parents served in 2014
 - Prescreened 736 parents for the subsidy
 - Assisted 147 child care providers with subsidy issues



Melanie Santana, Child Care Subsidy Specialist



Cathy Fernandez, Resource and Referral Counselor

Registration and Monitoring of Child Care Programs

Our info sessions, technical assistance and monitoring visits help individuals and groups who want to start or maintain a center, home-based or school age child care program to understand and meet the associated legal, regulatory, business and programmatic requirements.

Provider Services Highlights:

- Registered 43 new and renewed 79 Family Child Care (FCC) and School Age (SACC) programs
- Completed 932 initial and renewal Legally Exempt provider enrollments

We keep kids safe and healthy

In 2015 we conducted 485 inspections, 57 safety assessments, and 662 food monitoring visits to child care providers in Westchester County.





Health Services

Adult health, including the prevention of costly chronic diseases and the ability to make positive lifestyle choices, is heavily determined by the availability of quality early childhood

development (before age 5).

Health Care Consultant Services Highlights:

- Provided direct Health Care Consultant Services to 62 programs and Intensive Technical Assistance to 20 programs
- Conducted 59 site visits to assist child care providers in complying with regulations
- Approved/updated 74 Health Care Plans
- Held courses and workshops related to medication administration, flu prevention and control, and asthma

As part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which helps providers offer nutritious meals and snacks for children in their care and pay for the food, we:

- Enrolled 41 new CACFP participants for a total of more than 200 providers
- Distributed more than \$1.94 million to providers for healthy meals and snacks

Educate Early Care and Education Workforce

To improve the quality of care in Westchester, our professional development opportunities target every aspect of a quality child care provider's required skillset.

Professional Development Highlights:

- Trained 3,379 early care and education professionals
 - New trainings: Power of Teachers Talk, Nature Training with Hanover Hilltop Farm, Summer Cooking, The Unhurried Child, Reggio Emilia, and more
- Improved the quality of more than 120 classrooms and family/group family programs through our collaborative intensive technical assistance services
- Implemented the innovative Babies Step Forward program with a dozen group family providers serving babies and toddlers receiving the child care subsidy
- Professional Development Specialist Letty McGrath earned the NYS Early Learning Training Credential
- Continued to expand our work with the growing number of Spanish speaking family and group family providers through training, technical assistance and participation in the Early Literacy/Family Book Bag Program

Babies Step Forward Changes Lives

The children and families in 12 family child care programs have access to critical intervention services - including physical and speech therapy, mental health, food and housing, parent education and provider training - that have a lifelong impact. The program is administered by the Child Care Council in partnership with federal grantee WestCOP.

Above: Elissa Guzzardi, Director of Health Care Consultant Services, provides Medication Administration Training to a child care provider

Left: Registrar Michele Sardullo provides technical assistance to members of the Pleasantville Recreation Department

New Website!

Now parents, professionals and employers can quickly find exactly what they need, and all of our visitors can easily navigate to opportunities to get involved. Interactive features include the Advocacy Action Center, a job bank for providers and job seekers, and the e-child care search database.



Improve Early Literacy

Early experiences with books are crucial to literacy and language development of young children. Differences in children's vocabulary are evident at 18 months of age, generally related to family income and education levels. We seek to lessen that disparity.

Literacy Highlights:

- With support from the Sexauer, Thomas and Agnes Carvel and People's United Community foundations, we brought our Early Literacy/Family Book Bag Program to over 350 children in 28 different child care settings all over the county. Participants received staff training on early literacy, intensive classroom consultation, resources and book bags full of carefully chosen books for the families to enjoy.
- For the first time, we included children's books on asthma and allergies to encourage awareness of and support for these sometimes-challenging conditions
- Teachers and parents overwhelmingly agreed that the program improved the frequency of family reading

Right: Following our 7th Annual Book Drive, sponsored by Nordstrom, Westchester child care providers who serve children from low-income families have an extra 3,000 books on-hand to read and share.



Left: Sandra Arasim, Infant/Toddler Specialist

Right: The Council's highly-skilled Professional Development Team



Child Care Scholarships

All children are entitled to quality early care and education, no matter the circumstances of their birth. Through scholarships generously supported by the community, we were able to help families who would otherwise not be able to afford care.

Scholarship Highlights:

- Launched the Early Opportunity Fund at our Annual Breakfast and raised \$47,745 for scholarships in 2015
- 31 children received a scholarship for child care
- Geographically diverse scholarship recipients live all over Westchester, including Hastings-on-Hudson, Montrose, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Ossining, Peekskill, Port Chester, Somers, White Plains, Yonkers and Yorktown Heights

“Before my family received the scholarship awards, my husband and I were both working full time, but still could not afford to put our kids in quality full time care. So one of us was going to have to quit and stay home. Thanks to the Council, we didn’t have to make that choice.”

Recognize Exceptional Contributions

There are many people and organizations working to improve the lives and education of Westchester’s youngest residents. We celebrate them at our Annual Awards Breakfast each year.

2015 Champions for Children – community leaders and institutions that create bright futures for children through life-changing programs, initiatives and funding:

- Congresswoman Nita Lowey
- Family Services of Westchester
- Sarah Lawrence College



Social Media Success: Council raises \$14k for scholarships in 1 day!

On #GivingTuesday, we were selected by the Journal News and Nonprofit Westchester as a critical nonprofit and prominently featured on the front page of the Journal News to talk about our successful social media fundraising strategies. Our thanks to TD Bank for sponsoring our first ever social media challenge and donating \$1 to us (up to \$2,500) for every like, share and retweet we got on related Facebook and Twitter posts. And, our supporters were really inspired to dig deep and give generously thanks to our Board of Directors, who graciously matched every donation (up to \$3,000).

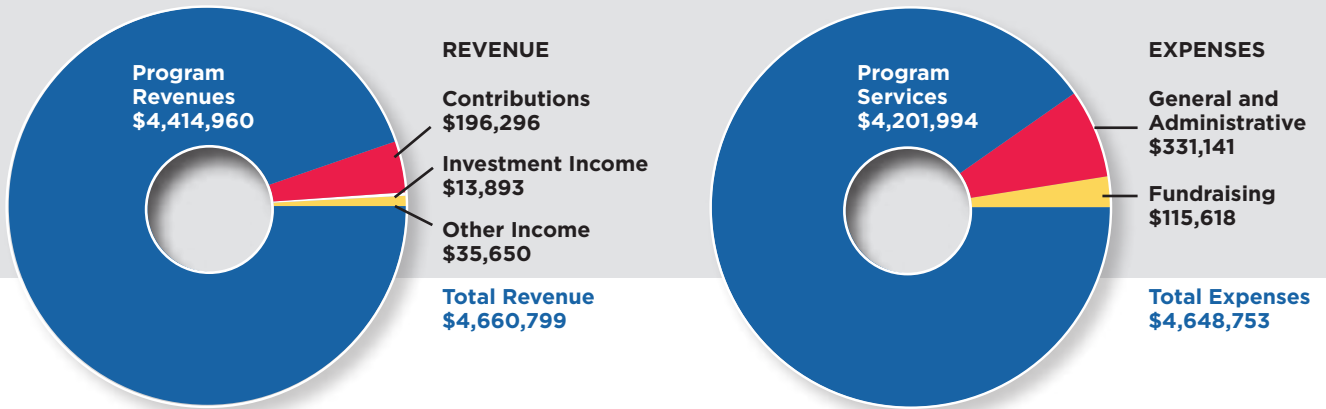
2015 Joey Award Winners – professionals in early care and education or related fields who make outstanding contributions to the field and quality of life for children and parents:

- Dawn Meyerski, *Mount Kisco Child Care Center*
- Elizabeth Spano, *Oak Lane Child Care Center*
- Patrice Cuddy, *Parent Child Home Program, Westchester Jewish Community Services*
- Bettina Langsam, *Morning Star Day Care*

Regent Harry Phillips III, Congresswoman Nita Lowey, and Master of Ceremonies Tara Rosenblum of News12



Financials



For the Child Care Council's complete 2014-2015 audited financial statement, visit http://www.childcarewestchester.org/pdf/2014-2015_Financial_Audit.pdf

Grants

Grants received from our generous business, individual and nonprofit partners allow us to offer exciting, important and innovative programs that improve early care and learning for children in Westchester.

Grantor	Purpose
Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation	Early Literacy
Cornell University	Blumenthal Summer Internship Program
The Jandon Foundation	General Support
People's United Community Bank	Early Literacy
Sexauer Foundation	Early Literacy
Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation	General Support
Philip and Lynn Straus Foundation, Inc.	General Support
TD Charitable Foundation	School-Age Quality Improvement
University of Chicago	Subsidy Research Study
Westchester Community Foundation	Public Policy and Advocacy
IBM Corporation	Board Capacity-Building
Anonymous (1)	Advocacy and General Support

Government Contracts

New York State Department of Health
 New York State Office of Children and Family Services
 Westchester County Department of Social Services
 Westchester County Office for Women
 Westchester County Office of Workforce Investment
 US Administration for Children and Families -
 Head Start (through grantee WestCOP)



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to the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

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for your vital support!**

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The Council would like to acknowledge the programs, providers and individuals listed below for supporting the Council by becoming members in 2015.

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Alcott School, Alcottschool.org,
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[Scamarone, Grace](#), Kelly's After-School Kids, Kellysafterschoolkids.com, Ossining

[Scarpati, Maria](#), Maria Scarpati Day Care Agency, Inc., Mount Vernon

[Seecharan, Marlon](#), Krayola Kid, LLC, Yonkers

[Shillingford, Susan](#), Emily's Care, Peekskill

[Smith, Gertrude](#), Precious Moments Daycare Services Inc., Yonkers

[Smith, Gertrude](#), Smith Loving Care, Inc., Yonkers

[Smith, Sharon](#), Little Steps Day Care, Inc., Mount Vernon

[Soto, Michelle](#), Early Einstein Inc., Earlyeinstein.webs.com, Yonkers

[Truyillo, Soraya](#), Our House Child Care, Ourhousefamilydaycare.com, Hartsdale

[Tuminaro, Carmel](#), Please and Thank You Children's Place, LLC, Pleaseandthankyouchildrensplace.com, West Harrison

[Unrath, Amy](#), Milo's Play School, Milosplayschool.com, Amawalk

[Velasquez, Esperanza](#), Hope Child Group Inc., Rye Brook

[Vernon, Watina](#), Little Angel Hands Family Group Daycare Inc., Yonkers

[Walker, Adele](#), Nana's Place Child Care, Inc., Nanasplacechildcareinc.com, Peekskill

[Wignal, Murlene](#), Wiggles and Giggles Day Care, Mount Vernon

[Woo, Rosalie D.](#), Kids Are People, Inc., Scarsdale

[Wyllie, Karina](#), Koala Park LLC, Tuckahoe

[Wyllie, Karina](#), Koala Park II, LLC Tuckahoe

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[Zaccagnino, Elizabeth](#), L&L Childcare, Purchase

Family Child Care Members

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[Arvelo, Gladys](#), Mi Casa Child Day Care, Yonkers

[Bond, Sandra](#), Peekskill

[Calabro, Stella](#), Starlight Early Childcare, LLC, Starlightearlychildcare.com, New Rochelle

[Careaga, Victoria](#), Scarsdale

[DeFino, Anne](#), Briarcliff Manor

[Dicks, Jeanette](#), New Rochelle

[Guzman, Annethy](#), Loving Hands Day Care, LHFdaycare.com, Yonkers

[Hewie, Carshella](#), Carshella-Daycare, LLC, Mount Vernon

[Hidalgo, Esperanza](#), Tarrytown

[Mack, Suquenna](#), Yonkers

[Martinez, Juana](#), Mommy's Hands Daycare, Yonkers

[Martino, Angelo](#), TLC Daycare of Yonkers, Yonkers

[Matos, Susan](#), Imagination Family Daycare, Tarrytown

[Molina, Wanessa](#), Happy Angels Day Care Center, Port Chester

[Moody, Sharon](#), Landscape Happy Kids, Inc., Yonkers

[Narvesen, Desiree](#), Leap Frog Nursery of New Rochelle, New Rochelle

[Perez, Adalgisa](#), Endicotts Kids Zone, LLC, Elmsford

[Powell, Barbara](#), Effective Child Care Services, Inc., Elmsford

Nursery School Members

[Bet Torah Nursery School](#), Bettorah.org, Mount Kisco

[Country Day Nursery School at St. Bartholomew's](#), White Plains

[Hastings Nursery School](#), Hastingsnurseryschool.com, Hastings on Hudson

[Mamaroneck Community Nursery School](#), Mcnschool.org, Mamaroneck

[Mazel Tots](#), Sstte.org, Scarsdale

[Play Care](#), Playcarepreschool.com, Chappaqua

[Temple Beth Shalom Nursery School](#), Hastings on Hudson

[Temple Israel Nursery School](#), White Plains

School Age Members

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[Aspire Inc.](#), Hastings on Hudson

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[CLUSTER, Inc.](#), Clusterinc.org, Yonkers

[Enrichment Center of Yorktown, Inc.](#), Yorktown Heights

[Harrison Children's Center - Parson's After School Program](#), Harrisonchildrenscenter.org, Harrison

[Harrison Children's Center - Preston After School Program](#), Harrisonchildrenscenter.org, West Harrison

[Harrison Children's Center - Harrison Avenue After School Program](#), Harrisonchildrenscenter.org, Harrison

[Irvington Children's Center Inc.](#), Irvingtonchildrenscenter.org, Irvington

[Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Inc.](#), Andrus1928.org, Yonkers

[Kids S.P.A.C.E. of Rye, Inc.](#), Kidsspaceofrye.org, Rye

[Lakeland Children's Center](#), Lakelandchildrenscenter.com, Shrub Oak

[Nepperhan Community Center, Inc.](#), Nepperhanc.com, Yonkers

[YMCA of Rye, Inc.](#), Ryeymca.org, Rye

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**Child Care Council
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INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

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Improving the lives of children and families requires the close collaboration of every sector and stakeholder. To advance our own mission and build stronger communities for all in Westchester, we're proud to play a leadership role in: Nonprofit Westchester, the Westchester Women's Agenda, the Board of Legislators Families Task Force, the Westchester Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, the 0 to 6 Early Childhood Planning Group, Yonkers Thrives, the Westchester Association for the Education of Young Children and the NYS Early Care and Learning Council. The Council is also a member of the Business Council of Westchester and the Westchester County Association.

