

Focus on Early Literacy

Our Early Literacy Family Book Bag Program provides child care centers and family child care providers with bags of books to lend to children in their programs, to encourage family reading time and promote early literacy. In addition to books, participating child care programs receive 6+ months of support from Council specialists: training and technical assistance designed to build and enrich the early literacy experiences they provide to the children in their care. We have distributed approximately 2,000 books to child care programs and providers since this program was established in 2012.

We're immensely grateful to the **Sexauer Foundation** for its generous ongoing support of this program. We recently received a first-time grant of \$2,500 from **People's United Community Foundation**, which funded the purchase of books related to asthma, allergies and other special health care needs and facilitated important learning and dialogue among child care providers, parents and children.

Improving the Quality of Westchester's Child Care

Through our daily work and our **#GetSmartChildCare** campaign, our Resource and Referral Department is educating parents about the importance of choosing quality care, and teaching them what it looks like.

To make sure that quality care exists when parents go looking, our Professional Development team is in classrooms and programs every day, helping providers improve the quality of their services through training and technical assistance. Using a formal rating scale, we're able to track progress and quantify the improvements made - and changes come in all forms. Sometimes, it's something simple like rearranging furniture or reorganizing materials to make a more engaging environment for kids. In other cases we work on more complex issues, like curriculum design. One common thread is that child care providers come to trust and rely on us as a resource and tend to develop a close relationship with our specialists.

We also offer the opportunity for Westchester child care professionals to earn the nationally-recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential as a way to substantially increase their knowledge of early care and education best practices, demonstrate a commitment to excellence, and advance their careers. Offered in-person and online, we currently have 35 participants in this 120-hour program.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

Council raises over \$14,000 for scholarships in ONE day

This year's **#GivingTuesday** campaign, dedicated to raising funds for our Early Opportunity Scholarships, was truly exciting!

We were proud to not only be selected by the Journal News and Nonprofit Westchester as a critical nonprofit whose "pitch" appeared in the paper, but also to be prominently featured on the front page of the Journal News to talk about our successful social media fundraising strategies.



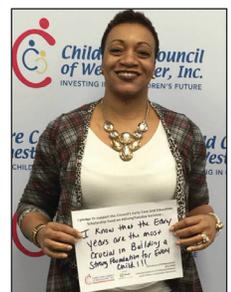
The week before **#GivingTuesday**, TD Bank generously sponsored a social media challenge, and donated a dollar to us - totaling \$2,500 - for every like, share and RT we got on specified Facebook and Twitter posts.

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 a total of \$3,000!

THANK YOU so much to everyone who participated in **#GivingTuesday** 2015.

And, special thanks to IBM - we enjoyed a full day of social media strategy and planning last year that really inspired us with great ideas and positioned us for success with **#GivingTuesday** this year!

Child Care Council Board member Felice Harris pledged to donate and shared her reasons with an #UNSelfie.



Making Technology Fun

Everyone had a great time at Family Tech Day at the Digital Arts Experience! We love seeing parents and kids spending time together and enjoying tech-related fun. Special thanks to our community partners: Macaroni Kid, W@tercooler, LEGOLAND Discovery Center, JR Inman's Rocktown Monarchs, Greenburgh Nature Center, JobsyWobsy, TD Bank, Westchester Library System, March of Dimes, The Rye Arts Center, and the Westchester County Association.



You're never too old for Legos!



CCCW Executive Director Kathy Halas, and Board President Steve Wismuller with special guest, professional basketball player JR Inman

save the Date!

**ANNUAL AWARDS
BREAKFAST
June 3, 2016**

Join us to celebrate and network with 300+ professionals, educators, nonprofit leaders, philanthropists and elected officials at this uplifting event, where we recognize our Champions for Children and Joey Award winners.



313 Central Park Avenue, Scarsdale, NY 10583

WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

HOW TO REACH US

(914) 761-3456 TEL
(914) 761-1957 FAX
childcare@cccwny.org

www.childcarewestchester.org

To make a donation, visit
www.childcarewestchester.org/donate
or contact Dana Lawless,
Director of Development,
at (914) 761-3456 x 127 or
DanaL@cccwny.org

We envision a 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

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The Results Are In!

Our **Annual Parent Child Care Survey** reveals that working parents at all income levels have trouble paying for care. As a result, they are forced to reduce work hours, use credit cards, remove children from regulated care, and/or switch to a less expensive child care provider. On the bright side, more and more parents are citing "quality" as an important selection criteria when choosing child care.

Demographics

Respondents included in analysis	632
At least one parents working outside the home	95%
Two-parent families	61%
Earning more than \$100k/year	30%
Earning less than \$32k/year	32%

Cost of Care

Trouble paying for care in the last 6 months	44%
Child care subsidy recipients struggling to pay for care	52%

Subsidy

Eligible for child care subsidy	21%
Receiving subsidy	60% of those who are eligible

Factors for Choosing Care

	OVERALL	AMONG SUBSIDY RECIPIENTS
Location	52%	34%
Quality	46%	27%
Hours	34%	25%
Children happy	29%	42%
Cost	26%	n/a
Accepts subsidy	n/a	29%

What this survey tells us:

- Child care cost is an issue that affects parents at all income levels
- We need to keep child care subsidies in the Westchester County budget so parents don't need to miss work or put their children in lower quality care to afford it
- It's critical that we make sure families who are eligible for the subsidy know about it and are able to apply successfully
- Parents are beginning to understand that quality is an important selection criteria, over cost and location, but we will continue to reach out and educate through our #GetSmartChildCare campaign

Advocacy Update



Child Care Council Board member Jeff Samuelson testifies about the importance of investing in quality early education at the first County Budget Hearing in Yonkers on November 19th.

As of December 3, 2015, it appears our advocacy efforts have been successful: the **County Executive's proposed 2016 budget maintains child care subsidy funding at current levels.**

However, continued funding for the Council's Subsidy Support Specialist (who this year has worked with 800+ families on their applications), is not included. We're pleased to have these critical subsidies in place, but they're only helpful if families know about them and are able to complete the (complicated) application.

The budget could be finalized as early as December 14th, and we will continue to push for the subsidy specialist.

Child Care Council Executive Director Kathy Halas has been meeting with the County Executive's administration and the Board of Legislators; testifying, along with Council Board members, at public budget hearings; and has created an online campaign through the Voter Voice feature on the Council's website that allows anyone to **send a letter of support for child care funding** to the County Executive and legislators. Check out the Council's website for news about this and other campaigns.

As a member of the Early Care and Learning Council Board of Directors and the statewide "Winning Beginning" coalition, Kathy is also advocating for more NYS subsidy funding.



We heard from a lot of passionate and engaged stakeholders at our annual **Child Care Report Card Challenge** event in October, attended by nonprofit and community leaders, parents, child care providers, employers and professionals, as well as elected officials at all levels of government. We revealed the results of our annual Parent Survey and graded the quality, affordability and supply of Westchester's child care offerings.



Welcoming our new Board President



We're so pleased to have **Steve Wismuller** of IBM, a Council Board member since 2012, as our new Board President. A respected leader in environmental sustainability for nearly 15 years, Steve currently serves as IBM's Smarter Cities sales leader for the Mid-Atlantic. He has been recognized by the U.S. EPA as a "strategic thinker" and helped IBM win the EPA's SmartWay Transport Partnership award. Steve displays passion for the community with a history of active service, including a term as president of the Mount Kisco Child Care Center Board of Directors.

We also welcome **Dr. Laura Stout Sosinsky**, Research Consultant at Child Trends, to the Board. A developmental psychologist with expertise and background in policy, teaching and training, we look forward to her contributions to our mission.