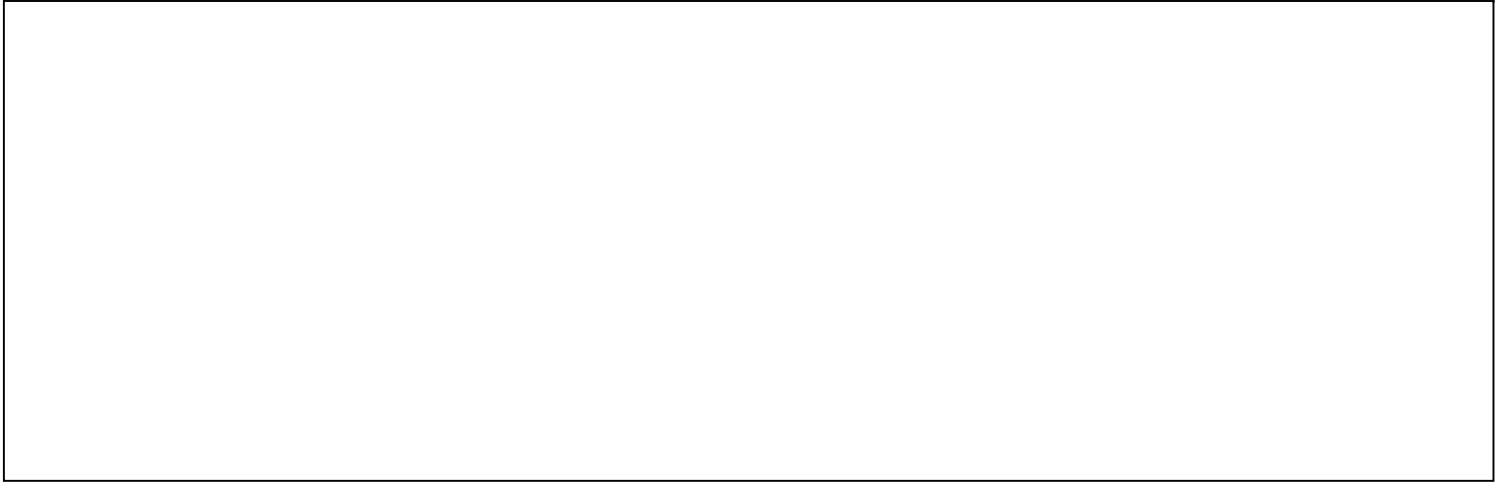


FAMILY

COLUMBIA COUNTY



2009
CHILD CARE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT



INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Columbia County is lacking sufficient legal child care to serve the children in the community. Some communities are grossly underserved, as shown in this community needs assessment. This assessment has been completed compiling information from the Child Care Council's data base of legal child care providers, the school district's, New York State Division of Child Care and Columbia County Department of Social Services.

It is divided into 4 sections Availability, Affordability, Quality, and Community.

Availability is demonstrated using the number of children in need of child care in the individual townships compared to the number of child care slots currently available. The slots are broken down by age group, based on NYS licensing standards. Only licensed and registered child care programs are represented. Programs must be licensed or registered by NYS if they care for children under 13 years of age for more than 3 hours and more than 2 non-relative children are present.

- Registered Family Day Care Providers – Child care is done in the provider's home and the provider may care for up to 6 children (if all of the children are at least two years of age) plus 2 school age children, before and after school and school holidays and vacations. If any of the children are under two years of age the provider may care for 5 children plus 2 school age children.
- Group Family Day Care Providers - Child care is done in the provider's home with an assistant. They may care up to 12 children if all of the children are over two years of age plus 2 school age children, before and after school and school holidays and vacations. If any of the children are under two years of age the provider may care for 10 children plus 2 school age children.
- Day Care Center - A program or facility not in a residence and may care for children 6 weeks – through 12 years of age. The maximum capacity is determined by the square footage of the site and the number available adult caregivers.

When a child day care center is in operation, an adequate number of qualified staff must be on duty to insure the health and safety of the children in care. The minimum ratios of staff to children are as follows:

AGE OF CHILDREN	STAFF/CHILD RATIO	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
6 weeks to 18 months	1:4	8
18 months to 36 months	1:5	12
3 years	1:7	18
4 years	1:8	21
5 years	1:9	24
through 9 years	1:10	20
10—12	1:15	30

- School-age child care program – A program not in a residence and cares for 7 or more children under 13 years of age before or after school hours or when school is not in session. Only children enrolled in kindergarten or a grade higher, or children at least 6 years of age may be enrolled in a school age program.

AVAILABILITY

Ages of Children	Total # of Children	# of Children Needing Care Outside Their Home	Family Day Care Slots	Day Care Center Slots	Total Slots	% of Children Served	Additional Slots Needed
<i>Columbia County</i>							
0-2	1906	1182	122	70	192	16%	990
2-5	3365	2086	183	332	515	25%	1572
School-age	5499	3464	96	603	699	20%	2765
<i>Ancram</i>							
0-2	28	17	2	0	2	12%	15
2-5	38	24	3	0	3	13%	21
School-age	154	97	2	0	2	2%	95
<i>Austerlitz</i>							
0-2	19	12	0	0	0	0%	12
2-5	42	26	0	0	0	0%	26
School-age	143	90	0	0	0	0%	90
<i>Canaan</i>							
0-2	24	15	0	0	0	0%	15
2-5	58	36	0	0	0	0%	36
School-age	160	160	0	0	0	0%	101
<i>Chatham</i>							
0-2	134	83	4	0	4	5%	79
2-5	275	171	6	17	23	13%	148
School-age	472	297	2	44	90	30%	207
<i>Claverack</i>							
0-2	208	129	6	0	6	5%	123
2-5	394	244	9	18	27	11%	217
School-age	1401	883	6	0	6	1%	877
<i>Clermont</i>							
0-2	37	23	6	0	6	26%	17
2-5	68	42	9	0	9	21%	33
School-age	265	167	4	0	4	2%	163

Ages of Children	Total # of Children	# of Children Needing Care Outside Their Home	Family Day Care Slots	Day Care Center Slots	Total Slots	% of Children Served	Additional Slots Needed
<i>Copake</i>							
0-2	72	45	4	0	4	9%	37
2-5	206	206	6	18	24	19%	98
School-age	694	694	2	0	2	1%	692
<i>Gallatin</i>							
0-2	22	14	0	0	0	0%	14
2-5	43	27	0	0	0	0%	27
School-age	167	105	0	0	0	0%	105
<i>Germantown</i>							
0-2	58	36	6	0	6	17%	30
2-5	122	76	9	0	9	12%	67
School-age	478	301	6	85	91	30%	210
<i>Ghent</i>							
0-2	192	119	8	0	8	7%	111
2-5	492	305	12	0	12	4%	293
School-age	1210	762	4	0	4	1%	758
<i>Greenport & City of Hudson</i>							
0-2	413	256	42	34	76	30%	180
2-5	568	352	63	200	263	75%	89
School-age	1578	994	36	221	257	26%	737
<i>Hillsdale</i>							
0-2	38	24	10	0	10	42%	14
2-5	57	35	15	0	15	42%	20
School-age	202	127	8	0	8	6%	119
<i>Kinderhook</i>							
0-2	310	192	22	33	55	28%	138
2-5	567	352	33	54	87	25%	264
School-age	1986	1251	18	200	218	17%	1033

Ages of Children	Total # of Children	# of Children Needing Care Outside Their Home	Family Day Care Slots	Day Care Center Slots	Total Slots	% of Children Served	Additional Slots Needed
<i>Livingston</i>							
0-2	68	42	0	0	0	0%	42
2-5	97	60	0	0	0	0%	60
School-age	355	224	0	0	0	0%	224
<i>New Lebanon</i>							
0-2	53	33	4	0	4	12%	29
2-5	76	47	6	0	6	13%	41
School-age	270	170	2	45	47	28%	123
<i>Stockport</i>							
0-2	148	92	0	0	0	0%	92
2-5	228	141	0	0	0	0%	141
School-age	714	450	0	0	0	0%	450
<i>Stuyvesant</i>							
0-2	56	35	8	3	11	33%	23
2-5	84	52	12	25	37	70%	15
School-age	260	164	6	0	6	4%	158
<i>Taghkanic</i>							
0-2	26	16	0	0	0	0%	16
2-5	40	25	0	0	0	0%	25
School-age	254	160	0	0	0	0%	160

AFFORDABILITY

Cost of Care

The cost of child care is often a barrier to parents who use regulated child care. Parents who are looking for child care can find a wide range in cost of care from each different modality of care and there are differences depending on the ages of the children. Infant care is almost always higher to the child/adult ratios required by licensing for center based child care. There is usually a higher rate in Family and Group Family day care because the number of children a provider may care for drops when they care for children under the age of two years of age.

Center Based Child Care (FULL-TIME CARE)

Age Groups	Lowest Weekly Cost	Highest Weekly Cost	Average Weekly Cost
Infants	\$135	\$170	\$155
Preschoolers	\$100	\$145	\$135
School-age (After School 15 hrs/wk)	\$53	\$130	\$87

Family Day Care

Age Groups	Lowest Weekly Cost	Highest Weekly Cost	Average Weekly Cost
0 - 2	\$100	\$185	\$146
3 - 5	\$100	\$185	\$140
School-age (After School 15 hrs/wk)	\$45	\$100	\$75

Family Income

County Median Income

The chart below estimates the percentage of income spent on full time average child care costs in households earning the median income. The child care costs for the different age groups were averaged for the analysis below.

# in Household	Median Income*	% of income spent for child care for one child		% of income spent for child care for two children	
		center	fdc	center	fdc
2	\$44,700	18%	14%	36%	28%
3	\$59,300	16%	13%	32%	25%
4	\$59,900	13%	11%	27%	21%

*Median income guidelines were derived from the US Dept. Of Housing and Urban Development.

220% of Poverty Income Standard

The chart below estimates the percentage of income spent on full time child care costs in households earning 220% of the poverty income standard. These families would not be eligible for a subsidy since the maximum eligible income is 200% of the poverty income standard.

# in Household	220% of Poverty Income Standard	% of income spent for child care for one child		% of income spent for child care for two children	
		center	fdc	center	fdc
2	\$26,629	30%	24%	60%	48%
3	\$33,572	24%	19%	48%	38%
4	\$42,731	19%	15%	37%	30%

QUALITY

The quality of the child care provided is critical to the well-being of children. Research has shown that the physical, social/emotional and intellectual growth and development of a young child is most directly effected by the competence of the caregiver. It has been clearly demonstrated that children attending early care and learning programs where the caregiver received training in early childhood development and education behaved more positively and made the greatest gains on standardized tests of learning. One such study showed that the teaching environment was more predictive of children's achievement than the child's social class background.

There are many avenues of training teachers and caregivers of young children can pursue to improve the quality of care that they provide. They are required by child care regulations to have a minimum of thirty hours of training every two years. Regulations dictate the topics that must be covered in the 30 hours of training.

In Columbia County, the Child Development Associate credentialing program is available through Scott Associates. Columbia Greene Community College, Hudson Valley Community College and Dutchess Community College are the closest colleges who offer an Associates Degree in early childhood. There are also workshops available through the Child Care Council of Columbia Greene, a program of Family of Woodstock Inc, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Video Conferences.

When cost of training is a barrier to providers receiving the required number of hours; there are scholarship funds available through the New York State Educational Incentive Program for child care providers on a sliding fee based on household income and have an emphasis on providers who are pursuing degree or credential bearing programs.

Meeting the minimum training requirements set by regulations (30 hours, every 2 years) does not insure that high quality care is being provided to children. Seeking to achieve a higher standard, such as those set by professional accreditation for centers and family day care homes requires resources that many programs do not have. There are models for fostering the growth of accredited programs and improving the quality of child care that have been developed by the American Business Collaborative, such as accreditation support groups, mentoring programs and provider resource rooms. New York State has an enhanced subsidy rate for those programs who have achieved accreditation.

The community needs to support the professional development of the people caring for young children and work together to maximize the use of existing training resources and look for ways to implement additional quality enhancing programs.

COMMUNITY

Columbia County Department of Social Services

The Dept. of Social Services is meeting subsidy needs for approximately 205 children each month. There is a general need for subsidized child care throughout the county with the greatest volume of families located in the greater Hudson area. A lack of transportation is a barrier for many families when trying to make child care arrangements in the rural areas of the county. There is also a need for additional infant and toddler slots to meet the needs of subsidized families.

There has been significant growth in the number of families who are choosing informal child care arrangements. A legally exempt child care provider may be paid to do child care for parents who receive day care subsidies. If they do child care in their own home and not in the child's home, the provider may care up to 2 children at one time. There are currently 70 approved Legally Exempt child care providers caring for children receiving subsidies. A quality enhancement initiative which is offered through the Child Care Council of Columbia and Greene Counties provides technical assistance, materials and training to the informal providers.

There is subsidy funding available to assist low-income working families with the cost of child care. Eligible families are those earning less than 200% of the poverty level and are employed.

200% of Poverty Income Standards Program Year June 1, 2009 - May 31, 2010

Family Size	Monthly Income	Annual Income
2	\$2,428	\$29,140
3	\$3,052	\$36,620
4	\$3,675	\$44,100
5	\$4,298	\$51,580
6	\$4,922	\$59,060

Employers

Employers can help parents who need child care by offering flexible spending accounts as a benefit. Employees direct a part of their pay into a special, tax-free account that they can then use to reimburse themselves for out of pocket expenses for health care, transportations or dependent care services. Parents are then able to save money by paying for child care with pretax dollars.

Child Care Council of Columbia and Greene Counties

The Council is a program of Family of Woodstock Inc. serving both parents and the early care and learning community. The staff assists providers through the regulatory process by offering technical assistance and support. The Council sponsors the Child and Adult food Program for family and group family day care providers in Columbia and Greene.

Parents seeking child care call the Council for referrals to legal child care, information and support to help them locate a child care arrangement tat best meets their needs.

