

FAMILY

CHILD CARE COUNCIL
Serving
COLUMBIA, GREENE AND ULSTER COUNTIES

A Program of Family of Woodstock Inc



2014 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Funded by NYS Office of Children and Family Services

Mission of Family’s Child Care Council: To support the community by expanding and promoting high quality child care that meets the needs of children and their families.

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WHAT DOES THE CHILD CARE COUNCIL DO?

Family's Child Care Council is a program of Family of Woodstock Inc.. The council was established in 1984 to provide child care resource and referral services under a corporate contract. Prior to that Family of Woodstock Inc. ran a family day care training project for the Ulster County Department of Social Services. In 1988 the Council became the only publicly funded child care resource and referral service for Columbia, Greene and Ulster Counties. Since that time the Council has been serving parents and the child care community in all three counties.

Family's Child Care Council is providing:

- **Support and technical assistance** to those interested in opening a child care program either in a home or center;
- **Resource and referral** to parents on the types of legal child care, what to look for and questions to ask when seeking care for a young child;
- **Training and technical assistance** to early care and learning programs on child care regulations, effective business practices, programming, health & safety, child abuse identification and reporting, nutrition, quality care and healthy recreational activities;
- **Advocacy** for quality child care, early learning and promoting safe care for young children;
- **Reimbursement** to those participating in the Child Care Food Program for nutritious meals and snacks served to children in their family, group family and legally exempt day care programs;
- **Registration and inspections** of family day care; providers seeking licensing for more than 2 children and less than 6; responding to complaints made against registered family day care and school age programs; and
- **Enrollment** of legally exempt providers caring for no more than 2 children at one time and receiving day care subsidy from the County Department of Social Services.

SUMMARY

The conclusion of this Needs Assessment is there is not enough: not enough child care slots; not enough quality child care; not enough day care subsidy; and not enough funding to support a declining early child care system. The governments are trying to rapidly fill the gaps with funding that attempts to address specific issues, but does not address the real need, which is providing services for all children between birth and 5 to prepare them to enter school. It should be noted that our society acknowledges its responsibility to educate all of our children once they reach the age of Kindergarten, but has not fully accepted that responsibility for younger children, a conclusion which is dictated by our increasing knowledge of the importance of the early years to child development. As a result of changing economic conditions and changes in societal norms, parents are forced to work, and therefore there is no one at home to promote this critical child development education. Therefore quality child care becomes more critical. All children need to receive a strong foundation to develop social, emotional, early reading readiness, eye-hand coordination, large motor, small motor, and self-help skills. The children who enter school strong and ready, achieve greater success.

Decline in Regulated Slots

There continues to be insufficient regulated child care slots in Columbia, Greene and Ulster Counties. The needs assessment shows that in Columbia County 50% of the townships are serving less than 10% of the need, with 7 having no regulated care; in Greene County 71% of the townships are serving less than 10% of the need with 8 having no regulated child care; in Ulster County 40% of the townships are serving less than 10% of the need, with 2 having no regulated care. Several issues creating the decline in regulated child care slots are:

- Providers have been significantly impacted by the increased number of parents using relative care to replace regulated care, in part due to the high cost 47% of surveyed child care providers reported losing families to relative care and currently have problems filling open slots. Regulated providers' fees range from \$150 -\$250 per week/per child depending on the ages of the children. Some offer multi-child discounts, but this care is still not affordable to many parents supporting a household. Parents are often using a mix of regulated and relative/friend care to meet their financial needs, regulated care two days a week and family and friends help the rest of the time, leaving providers with unfilled slots.
- The increased use of legally exempt child care by parents receiving subsidies has impacted on the decline of regulated child care. Subsidies will pay for care in the child's home or in the provider's home. This type of care is helpful to parents with two or more children, who work atypical hours, or cannot find regulated care in their neighborhood. In-home care is the most convenient type of care for parents. Registered and licensed providers have a difficult time competing with the convenience. The 3 counties currently have 279 legally exempt child care providers (Columbia-62, Greene-26 and Ulster-191) paid through day care subsidies. Of those, 157 are providing care in the children's home.

Day Care Subsidy

Insufficient day care subsidies has caused providers to have open slots and, in some instances, caused low income parents to turn down or leave employment. All 3 counties have been forced to create waiting lists for the past 3 years because the state allocation for subsidy dollars has not been sufficient to meet the needs of low income parents. In Greene, the eligibility for subsidy was dropped to 125% of poverty and a waiting list was also instituted for more than 6 months of the year, forcing parents who are able to continue to work without the subsidy to use informal or illegal child care. Columbia and Ulster counties have maintained the 200% of eligibility but instituted waiting lists for several months each year.

Quality of Care

How is the lack of developmentally appropriate child care affecting the children? This is a subject which will be studied on an ongoing basis, but some conclusions can already be noted. What we are increasingly learning about early brain development, is that the first 1,095 days are the most critical in a child's life. More is learned during that time period than any other. The brain's wiring is being developed for all future learning. The pattern of development is established at this time and early childhood educators recognize the importance of nurturing that process with programming that stimulates the brain activity. Some of the critical issues are:

- Children are impacted by the lack of continuity of care in the early years due to working parents being forced to patch together child care arrangements for their work week. Continuity of care in the earliest months of development cultivates children's stronger emotional ties and trust. Feelings of being safe nurture further growth and development of young children. Scholars in the field of early childhood development are encouraging facilities to implement the practice of teachers following the children, instead of children changing teachers every year as they travel through the education system.
- The lack of consistent early childhood education has been cited as a reason for a significant amount of young children being ill-prepared for kindergarten. The concept that having a skilled educator providing care for part of the week and a non-trained relative providing care the rest of the week ignores the fact that children are gaining skills and knowledge continuously and therefore need care to be developmentally appropriate at all times.

The Community

Community leaders are only recently recognizing the critical importance quality early childhood programming to the economic well being of the community. For businesses, reliable child care is critical to the stability and work performance of their staff. It is also becoming apparent that the lack of quality child care is resulting in older youth who are failing or dropping out of high school and are not prepared to absorb the needed technical training for employment.

There has also been a failure to recognize the economic impact that the child care community provides. When there is not enough regulated care, few dollars are going into the tax system and the community. There are 244 small businesses in the regulated child care community within the 3 county area, 54 in Columbia, 30 in Greene and 160 in Ulster. A Cornell University study linking child care and economic development shows that every \$1 invested in child care realizes \$1.56—\$2.00 return to the community. A return to the community of that rate is greater than most development projects realize.

The negative trends in child care education, which are described above for Columbia, Greene and Ulster County, are unfortunately also characteristic of early childhood development throughout the state and country. It is time for our governmental leadership and business community to recognize the critical need to invest in early childhood education and to ensure that these services are available to all children, not just those who come from low income families.



**TYPES
OF
CARE**

Family Day Care

Group Family Day Care

Day Care Centers

Family Day Care is provided in a residence for up to 8 children of mixed ages. The program must be registered with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Child Care Services. One provider cares for the children. The program must be inspected prior to opening and at least every two years thereafter. It is registered to operate for four years. Each provider is required to attend 30 hours of approved training within every two year period.

Group Family Day Care is provided in a residence for up to 16 children of mixed ages. The program must be licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Child Care Services. At least a provider and one assistant are required to care for the children at all times. The program is inspected prior to opening and every 3 months thereafter. It is licensed to operate for four years. Each provider and assistant are required to attend 30 hours of approved training every two years.

Day Care Centers are located in nonresidential buildings and are zoned commercial. Each age group must have it's own classroom and each group has a different child/ adult ratio that must be obeyed to meet licensing requirements. Each program is inspected prior to licensing and has a 4 year license period. The Director and staff must attend 60 hours of training during the licensing period.

Child / Adult Ratios for Day Care Centers

- 6 weeks to 18 months..... 1 adult to 4 children
- 18 months to 36 months 1 adult to 5 children
- 3 and 4 year olds 1 adult to 7 children

School age Programs

Legally Exempt

Nursery Schools

Headstart/Early Headstart

Universal Pre-K



School age programs are located in non-residential buildings and must be registered if they have more than 6 children under 13 years of age. Each program must maintain a child/adult ratio of no more 1:10 for children 9 years of age and younger with a maximum group size of 20 children. 1 adult to 15 children is the required ratios for children between 10 and 12 years of age, with a maximum group size of 30. All staff must receive training during the four year registration period and programs are inspected prior to being registered.

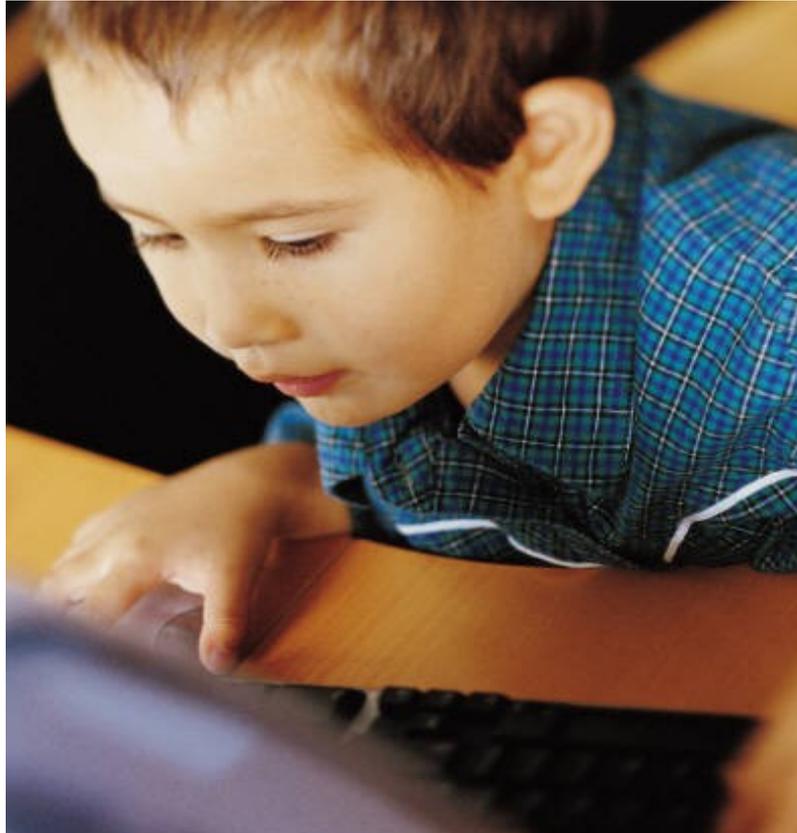
Legally Exempt Family day care and Legally Exempt In-home providers must be enrolled with NYS Office of Children and Family Service to receive day care subsidy from the local Department of Social Services. The provider completes a self assessment application in which they answer questions about the health and safety of their care environment and past history of criminal or child abuse offenses. They may care for up to two non-relative children at one time. The enrollment is valid for one year and training is not required.

Nursery Schools are not a regulated form of care. They must be operated for less than three hours per day. Often parents use nursery schools for socialization. Training and child/adult ratios are not regulated.

Head Start Centers promote school readiness for children from low income families, ages three to five. Early Head Start Programs support low-income infants and toddlers, as well as pregnant women and their families. The programs focus on the support of the family by offering educational, nutritional, health, social and other services. The programs encourage parent involvement in all aspects of their children's learning.

Universal Pre-K is a part-day program within a school district which supports children, ages three and four to develop school readiness skills.

ACCESSIBILITY and AFFORDABILITY



The following information details the demand for child care and the financial impact of child care on the families in Columbia, Greene and Ulster Counties.

During the recent down turn of the economy, as people lost their jobs, child care providers have struggled to keep their doors open. Many family day care providers went out of business due to low enrollment, the cost of operating a home base business and the increased fees for training and licensing requirements. As parents are reentering the workforce, there is concern as to whether there will be enough child care slots to meet their needs.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Columbia County comprises 648 square miles. It has a population of 63,094, with approximately 9,360 children under the age of 12. An estimated 60% of those children will need child care during their early years. The chart below documents the number of children needing care and the number of regulated slots available to parents, by town. Because there is so little regulated care, parents are forced to make informal, and sometimes illegal child care arrangements.

The chart below documents the approximate number of children in need of child care and the number of regulated child care slots by age group, by town. Because such a low percentage of needed slots are available through regulated care, parents are forced to rely on informal arrangements, patching care together with family and friends. Sometimes they are forced to use illegal child care arrangements to meet their families

DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE

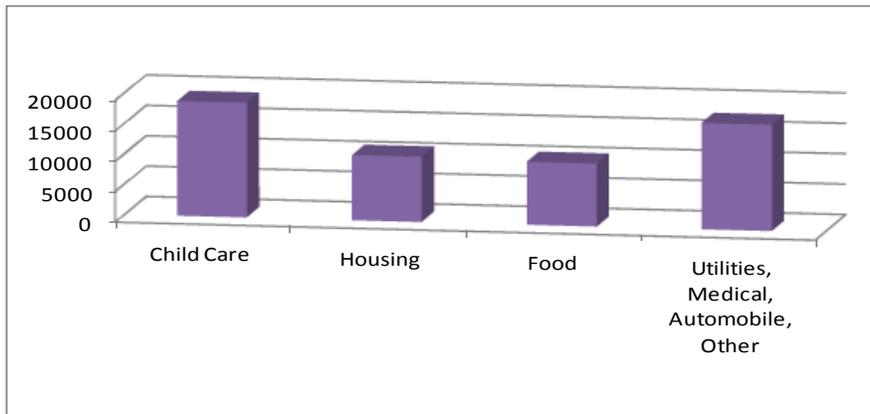
TOWNS	# of Children in need of Child Care	0-5 year old child care slots	School age Child Care Slots	% of Need Met
Ancram	126	0	0	0%
Austerlitz	112	0	0	0%
Canaan	155	0	0	0%
Chatham	387	47	96	49%
Claverack	574	24	2	6%
Clermont	204	24	8	20%
Copake	276	0	0	0%
Gallatin	128	0	0	0%
Germantown	189	24	93	82%
Ghent	514	36	10	10%
Greenport	819	378	408	284%
Hillsdale	169	24	6	22%
Kinderhook	800	151	148	49%
Livingston	297	6	2	3%
New Lebanon	228	0	45	31%
Stockport	314	0	0	0%
Stuyvesant	235	40	4	23%
Taghkanic	85	0	0	0%

COLUMBIA COUNTY



Impact of the Cost of Child Care

Child care costs are a large burden for families with young children. A family with 2 children ages 18 months and 3 years old would spend approximately \$365 a week for child care, or \$18,980 per year. The median income for a family in Columbia County is \$57,491; the cost of child care for the above family would represent 37% of the median income in the county. When one adds the cost of housing, food, clothing, and transportation, there is no money left for quality of life activities.



According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development the fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment in Columbia County is \$896. Add to that the monthly cost of child care, \$1,582, and this family has spent \$2,478 for shelter and care, 52% of the median income of the county.

Day Care Subsidy— The Columbia County Department of Social Services helps eligible families pay for child care. Families who are struggling to pay for the cost of care may apply to Social Services. They must be income eligible, and meet the guidelines for an approved activity. The income guideline is up to 200% of the poverty rate.

Family Size	200% of Poverty Income Guideline
2	\$31,460
3	\$39,580
4	\$47,700

In 2013 the Department provided day care subsidies for an average of 157 families per month, with approximately 460 children receiving subsidy. The County was forced to stop processing applications from low income families needing child care financial assistance for two months. The current Department of Social Service’s subsidy allocation is not be enough to cover the need.

Parental Choice—Low income parents receiving day care subsidies often choose legally exempt care over other forms of care. Subsidies pay for care in the child’s home or the provider’s home. Parents who are not eligible for subsidies often can not afford the cost of child care and choose to have family and friends care for the children. The Child Care Council statistics show that parents in Columbia County prefer family day care over other forms of care, when it is available and affordable.

GREENE COUNTY

Greene County comprises 658 square miles. It sits on the northern end of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River serves as its' eastern border. The village of Catskill is the hub of the County. It has a population of 48,455, with approximately 5,715 children under the age of 12. Approximately 3,425 of those children have working parents. At least half of them will need child care outside of their home.

The chart below documents the approximate number of children in need of child care and the number of regulated child care slots by age group, by town. Because such a low percentage of needed slots are available through regulated care, parents are forced to rely on informal arrangements, patching care together with family and friends. Sometimes they are forced to use illegal child care arrangements to meet their families

DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE

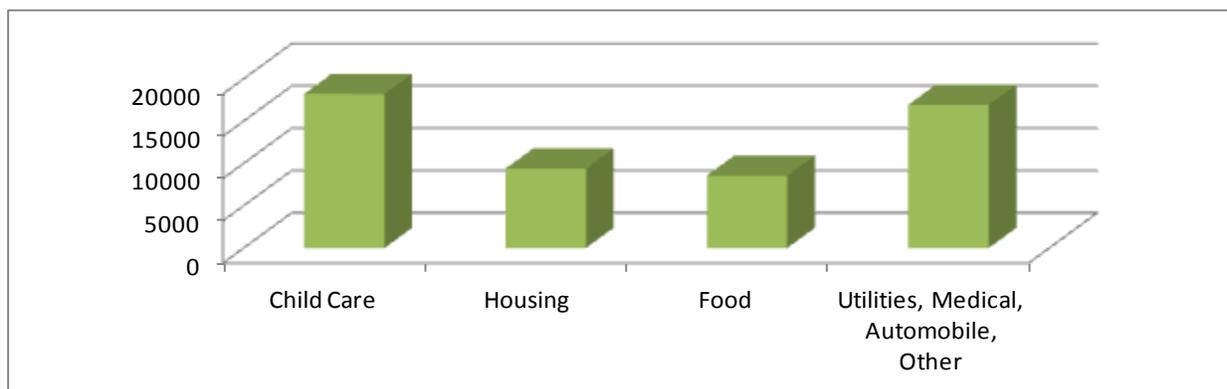
TOWNS	# OF CHILDREN IN OF CHILD CARE	0-5 YEARS	SCHOOL AGE	% OF NEED MET
Ashland	35	0	0	0%
Athens	382	12	24	11%
Cairo	612	180	76	52%
Catskill	1161	178	72	26%
Coxsackie	582	12	4	3%
Durham	242	0	0	0%
Greenville	334	82	42	37%
Halcott	15	0	0	0%
Hunter	296	0	0	0%
Jewett	86	0	0	0%
Lexington	63	0	0	0%
New Baltimore	325	18	4	9%
Prattsville	74	0	0	0%
Windham	11	0	0	0%

GREENE COUNTY



Impact of the Cost of Care

The cost of child care is a major stressor in families' lives. A family in Greene County with 2 children ages 18 months and 3 years old would spend approximately \$350 a week for child care or \$18,200 per year. The median income for a family in Greene County is \$53,046; the child care costs for the above family would represent 34% of the median income for the county. When one adds the cost of housing, food, clothing,



According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development the fair market rate for a two bedroom apartment in the county is \$781. Add to that the monthly cost of child care, \$1517, and this family has spent \$2298 for shelter and care, 52% of the median income for the county.

Day Care Subsidy—The Greene County Department of Social Services helps eligible families pay for child care. Families who are struggling to pay for the cost of care may apply to Social Services. They must be income eligible, and meet the guidelines for an approved activity. The income guideline is up to 125% of the poverty rate. There is not enough subsidy allocation to meet the needs of low income families, therefore the county has been forced to lower the eligibility rate. It has had to stop processing new applications for subsidy in both 2013 and 2014, creating a significant waiting list.

Family Size	125% of Poverty Income
2	\$19,662
3	\$24,737
4	\$29,812

Parental Choice—In Greene County parents have lost the opportunity of making choices for child care. Without sufficient subsidies and many communities without enough child care slots, parents are turning to family and friends to meet their child care needs.

The majority of parents receiving subsidy are using legally exempt in home care. The provider cares for the children in the parent's home giving parents the ability to choose work during non-traditional hours or rotating schedules.

ULSTER COUNTY

Ulster County is about an hour south of Albany and an hour and a half north of New York City. The Hudson River forms its' eastern border. The County is 1,161 square miles in size and lies in the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve, which includes more than 1/4 of a million acres of protected woodlands. The population of Ulster County is 182,493, with approximately 29,000 children under 12 years of age. An estimated 60 percent of those children will need child care at some point during their childhood.

The chart below documents the approximate number of children in need of child care and the number of regulated child care slots by age group, by town. Because such a low percentage of needed slots are available through regulated care, parents are forced to rely on informal arrangements, patching care together with family and friends. Sometimes they are forced to use illegal child care arrangements to meet their families

DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE

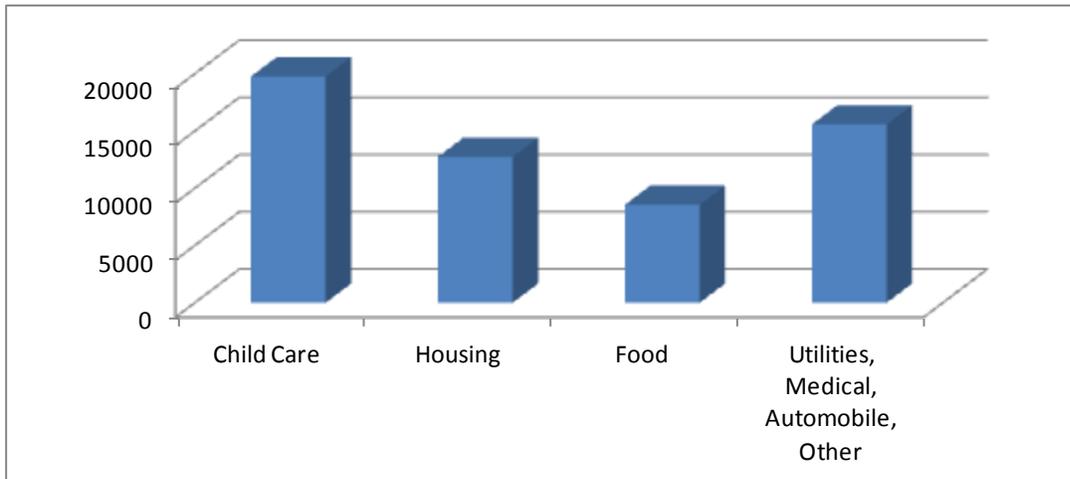
TOWNS	# of children in need of Child Care	0—5 yr old slots	School age child care slots	% of need met
Denning	49	0	0	0%
Esopus	559	94	46	25%
Gardiner	611	36	12	8%
Hardenburgh	22	0	0	0%
Hurley	576	127	8	23%
Kingston	2649	623	208	31%
Lloyd	1192	316	147	39%
Marbletown	483	103	8	23%
Marlborough	967	228	103	34%
New Paltz	950	346	112	48%
Olive	358	39	44	23%
Plattekill	874	44	6	6%
Rochester	772	42	14	7%
Rosendale	577	24	6	5%
Saugerties	1954	269	156	22%
Shandaken	229	29	2	13%
Shawangunk	1281	60	56	9%
Ulster	1120	73	22	8%
Wawarsing	1282	89	67	12%
Woodstock	405	94	12	26%

ULSTER COUNTY



Effects of the Cost of Care

The cost of child care is a major stressor in families lives. A family in Ulster County with 2 children ages 18 months and 3 years old would spend \$380. a week for child care, or \$19,760 per year. The median income for a family in Ulster County is \$56,642. These child care costs represent 35% of the median income for the county. Add on the cost of housing, food, clothing and transportation and there is no money left for quality of life activities.



According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development the fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment in Ulster County is \$1062. Add to that the monthly cost of child care, \$1520 and a family has spent \$2582 for shelter and care. The two major costs represent 55% of the median income for the county.

Day Care Subsidy—Ulster County Department of Social Services helps eligible families pay for child care. Families who are struggling to pay for child care may apply to the Department of Social Services. They must be income eligible, and meet the guidelines for an approved activity. The income guideline is up to 200% of the poverty rate.

Family Size	200% of Poverty Income
2	\$29140
3	\$36,620
4	\$44,100

Parental Choice—Parents who called the referral service, sought referrals to family day care programs 20% of the time more than center based care. Referral counselors reported parents usually knew if there was center based care available in their neighborhood. Parents often were seeking less expensive care close to home.

Low income parents often use legally exempt child care to meet odd hour or rotating shift work schedules.

QUALITY



The following section discusses the issues impacting on the quality of child care and details the professional development of child care providers.

Training-Providers

A strong predictor of quality in child care programs is the education, training and experience of the child care provider. Individuals with early childhood education and who are participating in ongoing training are better equipped to help children learn. Licensing requires providers to receive a minimum of 30 hours of training every 2 years. According to regulations the following topics must be covered during the 2 years: Principles of Child Development, Nutrition and Health; Child Day Care Program Development; Safety and Security; Business Record Maintenance and Management; Child Abuse and Maltreatment Identification and Prevention; Statutes and Regulations Pertaining to Child Day Care; Statutes and Regulations Pertaining to Child Abuse and Maltreatment; and Education and Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome.



When regulated child care providers were surveyed on the type of training they preferred, the majority response was face to face training over online/distance learning. However based on the submissions of proof of training in registered family day care, 85% are distance learning/online or Office of Children and Families Services Video Conferences.

Formal Education Opportunities

There are 3 colleges in the three county catchment which provide coursework toward and early childhood degree:

- SUNY Ulster http://www.sunyulster.edu/programs_courses/index.jsp
- Columbia/Greene Community College [http://www.sunycgcc.edu/DegreePrograms/?incFil=DegreePrograms/DegreePage.cfm&ql=true&mLv1=2&smLv1=3&lFrom=2,](http://www.sunycgcc.edu/DegreePrograms/?incFil=DegreePrograms/DegreePage.cfm&ql=true&mLv1=2&smLv1=3&lFrom=2)
- SUNY New Paltz (<http://www.newpaltz.edu/schoolofed/>) which offers a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Training-Parents

There is little or no training offered for parents of young children. There is mandated training for parents in the court system, but no training for those who are looking to be more skilled at parenting. Unfortunately there has been no funding for this type of training, if offered parents would need to pay for it.

New Child Care Regulation

New York State Office of Children and Families Services has released new regulations that impact on quality of care. The regulations limit screen time in regulated child care settings. Televisions may not be left on during day care hours except when being used for specific, planned educational purposes. Providers are expected to develop planned programming that meet individual children's needs.

This 2014 Community Needs Assessment has been completed with the assistance from the following :



- Ulster County: <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us>
- Greene County: <http://www.greenegovernment.com>
- Columbia County: <http://www.columbiacountyny.com>
- United States Department of Agriculture: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov>.
- Housing and Urban Development: <http://www.huduser.org>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: <http://www.naeyc.org>
- Visual Economics: <http://www.visualeconomics.com>
- Child Care Providers in Columbia, Greene and Ulster from all modalities of care
- Parents and caregivers from Columbia, Greene and Ulster who used our referral services
-
- SUNY New Paltz: <http://www.newpaltz.edu>
- SUNY Ulster County Community College: <http://www.sunyulster.edu>
- SUNY Columbia Greene Community College: <http://www.sunychcc.edu>
- Zero to Three: <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/brain-development>
- Cornell University: Linking Child Care and Economic Development

FAMILY OF WOODSTOCK INC.

Family of Woodstock, Inc. (Family) is a multi-program human service agency providing services throughout Ulster County. Founded in 1970, Family's principle focuses are **crisis intervention services** - Family runs one of the oldest continuously operating 24-hour-a-day emergency switchboards in the country, which is county-wide and toll free; and walk-in centers in Woodstock, New Paltz, Ellenville and Kingston - **emergency shelter** - Family House, a 14-bed runaway and homeless youth facility; the Darmstadt Shelter for the Homeless, a 19-bed shelter for men and women, primarily in recovery; the Family Inn, a 27-bed shelter for homeless families; the Washbourne House, a 17-bed domestic violence shelter, for women and their children; and MidWay, two supervised transitional living residences for up to six homeless adolescents each, and, when necessary, their children - **child care programs** - Family's Child Care Council serving Ulster, Columbia and Greene Counties serving families, child care providers and community; and Child Care Subsidy Administration for the Department of Social Services of Columbia County - **case management services** - to such discreet populations as adult and adolescent substance abusers, individuals involved with the criminal justice system, homeless individuals and families, victims of domestic violence, as well as the general public - **and food programs** - extensive food pantries at the walk-in centers in Woodstock, New Paltz and Ellenville and at the domestic violence shelter and distribution of donated produce and food from local farmers to the county's food pantries and feeding programs.

The agency provides non-residential services to victims of domestic violence through advocates at the Ulster County Family Court and to men having a problem with violence through the Evolve program; and supervises visits authorized by the Family Court for non-custodial parents. The agency is leading the effort to expand strength-based and prevention programs which grow healthier individuals and communities, sponsoring Kingston Cares, a community collaborative focused on the area covered by the Kingston School District, and participating in collaboratives in Saugerties, Onteora, New Paltz and Ellenville. Family advocates for the creation of affordable housing and has taken responsibility to provide reentry support for those returning to the County from State Prison. Family is also providing leadership in an effort to identify and respond to the difficulties seniors are having in staying in their own homes as they age. Family assists with vocational training and employment support for all those we serve. The goal of Family's programs is to assist people to achieve self-sufficiency and self-respect.



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