**DAY CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

**610 State Street**

**Hudson, NY 12534**

Telephone - (518) 822-0087

**Staff:** 3 full-time

**Team Leader:** Kerry Wolfeil

**Program Director:** Aisha Hart

**Program Hours:** Monday- Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: Day Care Subsidy staff process day care subsidy assistance applications and determine families’ eligibility; provide technical assistance for subsidy eligible families; provide technical assistance for child care programs; maintain contracts with regulated child care programs; and oversee subsidy billing and payments.

ANCILLARY SERVICES: Community coordination of child care subsidy services; technical assistance on day care subsidies to community agencies.

DEMOGRAPHY OF CLIENTS: Day Care Subsidy serves families in Columbia County with income levels under 200% of the federal poverty level. In 2021, 80.33% of the approved families fell in the low income 200% of the federal poverty level category; 11.48% are more financially distressed and receive Temporary Assistance from the Department of Social Services; and 8.2% are families caring for children in non-parental, foster care or preventative care situations.

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Day Care Subsidy program provided childcare subsidies to **102** eligible families with **122** children. The subsidies were distributed to assist families that work **(95)**, attend school **(3)**, attend training, perform job searches **(1)**, are involved with Preventative services **(2),** who pursue self-employment and/or are attend drug treatment **(1).**

The chart below reflects the variety of childcare programs participated in by the 122 children served in 2021:

Day Care Subsidy staff continue to outreach to the Hispanic communities to increase the knowledge of subsidies for quality, available and accessible regulated child care for the families and children of this underserved community. There continues to be a consistent number of Spanish speaking families served, in large part because the program has a full-time staff person who is fluent in Spanish. When requested, staff will travel to various parts of the county to assist families with completing the cumbersome application. In 2021, the Day Care Subsidy program served **16** Spanish speaking families.

The Day Care Subsidy Program distributed **$411,638.15** in Columbia County to help families pay for the cost of childcare. The parent share fee is the fee that is paid towards the child care services directly to the child care provider on a weekly basis. This was not paid by the parents during the pandemic through August 2021. Columbia County covered the cost of the parent share fee.

A strong partnership continues with the Child Care Connections program. The programs partner during community outreach events and offer resources to families on child care financial assistance, searching for quality child care programs, and parenting education.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

Unfortunately, Day Care Subsidy application submissions have **decreased 60%** since 2020 (254 applications in 2020 to 102 applications in 2021). Increased unemployment, school closings, remote learning, quarantine requirements, and extreme lack of available child care is causing families to use illegal child care or use family members and friends to patch together child care. Child Care continues to be a crisis in the community, as well as NYS as a whole.

The parent share fee continues to remain at 10% of the family’s annual income for the 3rd year; NYS just mandated the 10% level again on 12/1/2021.

Effective 12/1/2021, the family share will only be recalculated by the district during the 12- month eligibility period, only if there is a change in household circumstances that will decrease the amount of family share.

Legally exempt enrolled child care providers are now being paid directly by the subsidy department. This has eliminated any chance the child care provider will not get paid by the parent for the child care services, therefore ensuring the stability of child care for the child and family.

The Day Care Subsidy unit improved community outreach by personally delivering Day Care Subsidy applications and informational flyers to current childcare programs, community resources, and schools. The Columbia County Child Care Resource and Referral program (Child Care Connections) have billboards posted throughout the County to inform parents about Day Care Subsidy and Legally Exempt rules.

Effective 12/1/202l a 12-month eligibility period will be implemented for all new applicants deemed eligible for subsidy. The recertification continues to be a 12 month eligibility for the 3rd year, while NYS just mandated the 12 month eligibility on new applications and recertification on 12/1/2021.

Effective 12/1/2021 families are only required to report changes in income that exceed the 85% SMI (200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines).

Effective 12/1/2021 Day Care Subsidy will be able to accept Day Care Subsidy applications via E-mail and other electronic means.