

Survey Says: Child Care Affects Our Workforce

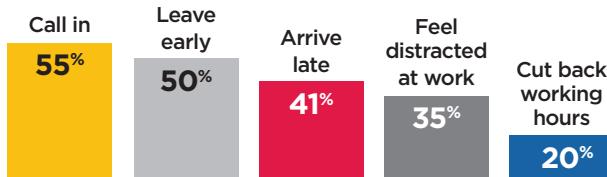
The Child Care Council of Westchester recently completed two separate surveys, of Westchester parents and Westchester employers, which together paint a clear picture of the child care-related challenges facing our county.

RESPONDENTS

526 families: geographically and economically diverse
41 employers: for- and non-profit

Of the Westchester employers who responded to our survey, **75% find that child care issues result in absenteeism or productivity loss** among employees. Even so, 98% of employers report that child care issues are handled on a case-by-case or ad-hoc basis, rather than in a more formal way.

Westchester's working parents agree that child care issues affect their work: **50% of parents** surveyed report that child care has impacted their job in the past year, causing them to:



34 parents say they quit or lost their job in the last year, due to child care issues that include:

- lack of child care
- unreliability
- inability to pay for child care
- worry about quality of care or safety

The bottom line: Both employers and employees recognize that lack of quality, affordable, reliable child care negatively affects the workplace, yet employers offer few parent-friendly benefits other than mandated maternity leave, despite their general belief that doing so would be positive for their organizations and their employees.

The Child Care Council can help! Our professional staff work with employers and directly with parents to provide resource and referral information related to finding, evaluating and paying for child care.

For full survey results, visit

www.childcarewestchester.org.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

In one day, the Council raised more than \$22,000 to help 1,200 children.

All funds will be used to purchase brain-building kits for child care providers who serve children from low income families. The kits are filled with items that are critical for early brain growth: books, math manipulatives, building blocks, art supplies, instruments, science tools, dress-up items, and more. Kids who have access to these materials are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn, move grade to grade on time, avoid risky behavior, graduate high school, earn good wages, and be healthy as adults.

THANK YOU to everyone who supported our campaign this year. Special thanks to TD Bank for once again sponsoring an exciting \$2,500 social media challenge, and to our Board of Directors for generously matching donations, up to a total of \$3,000.

Together, we are making a tremendous difference for Westchester's children, not just today, but for a lifetime.

Time to Celebrate!

TD Bank hosted a fun, free #GivingTuesday celebration event.



CCCW Board President Craig Ruoff, Board members Rob Kissner, Jeff Samuelson and Korey Kross, Executive Director Kathy Halas, and TD Bank representatives Steve Moroney, Chris Galayda and Adam Kintish.



The fundraising competition was tight all day long on #GivingTuesday between Board members Jeff Samuelson and Korey Kross. All in good fun to benefit Westchester's kids!

Educating the Child Care Workforce



Infant/Toddler Conference participants work together during a breakout session

"The keynote speech was very informative and offered an enlightening look at how a child's habits, feelings and personality develop... and my part in that."



Congratulations to the graduates of the Council's first Spanish Child Development Associate (CDA) Course! We are so proud of these 15 child care providers who have attended classes for the past eight months and made a tremendous commitment to increasing their skills and knowledge to better serve young children and their families. Next, they apply to the Council for Professional Recognition to become Child Development Associates.

Professional Development Conferences

Professional development for child care providers is a key element of ensuring quality early care and education for Westchester's children. To that end, we hosted two successful and well-attended conferences this fall.

In October, 80 directors and staff attended this year's "School Age" conference held at Burke Rehabilitation Center. Todd Mohrman of Dynamic Training Inc. delivered a keynote address that asked: "Is Your Curriculum Due For a Check-Up?" Afterward, breakout sessions focused on curriculum, sensory learning, regulations, professionalism, children's mental health, and technology. In addition, there was a 3-hour session for program directors on Building an Effective Team that "Shows Up." All participants came away with a broader understanding of after school program curriculum and how they can create an exciting learning environment.

In November, we welcomed 110 infant and toddler educators working throughout Westchester to another curriculum-themed conference, held at the St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Development Program. Early Childhood Consultant Fern Fisher delivered the keynote, and participants chose from a variety of interactive breakout sessions addressing early literacy, appropriate social-emotional curriculum, music in early childhood settings and early intervention services. These professionals came away with a more thorough understanding of the importance of the relationship they build with each child, how it will impact that child's ability to learn, and how curriculum must be based on the developmental stage, needs, and interest of each infant and toddler.

Cathryn A. Riley Leadership Fund Scholarship Awarded

Susan Zucker, Director of the Virginia Marx Children's Center (VMCC) on the campus of Westchester Community College, has been selected as the Council's 2016 recipient of the Cathryn A. Riley Leadership Fund Scholarship, which will fund her participation in Leadership Westchester (LW). LW is a program of Volunteer New York!, featuring a rigorous nine-month curriculum designed to sharpen leadership skills and give participants an in-depth understanding of how various non-profits work.



Our selection committee agreed Leadership Westchester could prepare our early care and education leaders for more visible and significant public roles, and offer us a way to share the impact of our critical work with emerging leaders from all over the county. Following a rigorous selection process, Susan was chosen for her leadership of an outstanding child care center, her expertise as a trainer and mentor in the field, and her eloquence in representing the importance of our industry.

The Leadership Westchester program kicked off on October 18th. After graduation, Susan will share the highlights of her experience with the Council's Cate Riley Fund Committee and the early education community.

Advocating for Accessible, Affordable, Quality Care

Westchester County Budget

As we go to press, there's mixed news for child care in 2017. County Executive Rob Astorino's proposed budget maintained the child care subsidy specialist position at the Council and subsidy funding at 2016 budgeted levels. But actual subsidy expenditures are projected to exceed what was budgeted by over \$4 million. In a particularly difficult budget year, the Board of Legislators did add \$1 million to the subsidy program, which helps tremendously. Still, the actual number of children able to participate in the subsidy program will be lower in 2017 than this year. That's grim news. Also troubling, it's unlikely that reimbursement rates to contracted child care providers will be increased and they nervously await a minimum wage increase in the face of flat revenues.

The Council led the charge for child care funding via testifying at public budget hearings, meetings with the administration and legislators, on social media and through a letter writing campaign. We did this in the company of directors, teachers, and parents as well as our nonprofit partners around the county. We thank everyone who raised their voice in support of children and child care.

Calling on Governor Cuomo

Immediately following the County budget, we turn our attention to New York State, where a critical issue is on the table: funding to cover the implementation of new, and very important, requirements for the federal "Child Care and Development Block Grant" that will increase health, quality and safety for children who are in child care.

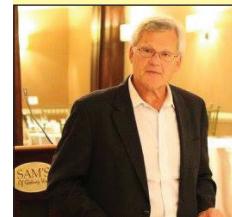
These requirements are necessary, but without additional funding from NYS, providers may have to push some costs on to families, the number of actual subsidies available to children and working families will be reduced, and children from low income families will lose out on quality care. We're also advocating to raise reimbursement rates, so they match real operating costs - again, to protect children and families and keep subsidy spaces open for those who need them.

In October we launched a social media photo campaign, featuring Westchester parents and children, to ask Governor Cuomo to invest New York's children and families by funding child care. The idea caught on statewide when Council Executive Director Kathy Halas brought it to the attention of the NYS Early Care and Learning Council, where she serves on the Board.

Search #fundchildcare on Facebook to see photos from all over New York!



The Art of Advocacy



The Council is working to inspire child care providers and community leaders countywide to add their voices to the call to make quality early child care and education affordable and accessible to all. In September, our Board of Directors hosted an interactive "Art of Advocacy" event at Sam's of Gedney Way in White Plains, and invited child care center Board members and directors to participate. Council Executive Director Kathy Halas offered an overview of public child care funding and talked about the rules and guidelines related to advocacy; Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer and Westchester County Legislator Alfreda Williams shared their thoughts about what makes advocacy particularly effective; and CCCW Board members Sue D'Emic, Rori Sagal, Jeff Samuelson and Byron Smalls discussed the advocacy techniques they've used successfully.

SAVETHEDATE

Annual Awards Breakfast • May 19, 2017
Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown

Improving Health through Nutrition

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which ensures children have nutritious meals and snacks while in child care settings, has grown consistently this past year. As part of an expansion grant, we were able to add 32 providers to the program over the last 6 months, and we expect a drastic increase in participation due to a new additional standard Westchester Department of Social Services is putting in place. It will require all Legally Exempt (LE) Providers providing care in their own home for more than 30 hours a week to fully participate in CACFP. As a result, this will also increase the number of monitoring visits we make to the LE homes each year, and benefit LE providers through reimbursements for the meals and snacks served.

Tech Fun @ the DAE

Kids of all ages, some dressed in Halloween costumes, had a blast at our annual Family Tech Day at the Digital Arts Experience in White Plains in October. Thanks again to our community partners: Greenburgh Nature Center, Hudson River Museum, LEGOLAND, March of Dimes, Once Upon a Child, TD Bank, Trinity Sports, and the Westchester Library System.



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