



**Child Care Council  
of Westchester, Inc.**  
Investing in our children's future Since 1968

Child Care Council of Westchester  
**2021 Annual Report**



*I am very grateful for the support of the Child Care Council during the pandemic. The **staff stayed informed** on the ever-changing landscape of rules and regulations and provided much needed supplies! We appreciate the opportunities for training and professional development and the great support and knowledge of our health care consultant. Having **a resource we can turn to** makes all the difference. Child care is needed in Westchester County and child care centers need the Child Care Council of Westchester.*

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*The Child Care Council has been **a pillar of strength** for me over the past 20 years. During this dreadful pandemic they generously stepped in and gave great support to the child care community.*

---

*I appreciate all the **dedicated employees** at the Child Care Council. The Council has offered support for all providers, especially during the difficult and trying times over the past year. My program was open during the pandemic and the Council was always there, checking in to offer **emotional and financial support** to the families and to me. Keep up the great work.*

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*The Child Care Council of Westchester has helped a lot over the years, providing **great trainings and guidance** at all times. Even through the pandemic, they made sure to help providers and all those in need. We are so thankful to be a part of this organization.*

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*The Child Care Council of Westchester has been the most **consistent and reliable resource** throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They have professional and caring employees.*



# From the Executive Director



## Child care is too important to be a luxury.

- ✓ Working parents need child care to earn a living, build their careers, and further their education.
- ✓ Children are open for learning long before kindergarten. They need quality care starting at birth: freedom of movement, responsive support, stimulation, developmentally-appropriate books and manipulatives – and more. Only then will they thrive later... academically, emotionally, socially, physically, financially.
- ✓ A diverse and talented workforce where employers thrive and the economy grows is predicated on the participation of parents – including and especially women.
- ✓ Child care professionals are usually women, and the industry itself is a critical employer.

When it comes to child care, everyone is a stakeholder. If safe, quality care is not affordable and accessible, there are dire consequences: women driven from the workforce in record numbers (often sacrificing longtime earning potential and retirement savings), workforce shortages, children spending their days in front of the television or in unsafe conditions.

At the Council, we work on a broad scale to repair the broken child care system, while simultaneously meeting the daily needs of children, families, child care professionals and employers in our county. We are a small but mighty team of 41, and I would be remiss if I didn't call out the extraordinary work of our staff during the last two years since the pandemic began. Our regular work never stopped, and we stepped up to meet new and additional needs almost every day.

Of course, we do not and could not make this impact alone. We are grateful for the support of our dedicated Board of Directors, and all our nonprofit colleagues, donors, funders and elected officials from every level of government who are our partners in the truest sense.

Thank you,

Kathy Halas





The Child Care Council works with families to help them understand why quality child care is so important, what it looks like, and how to find and pay for it. And, we work directly with providers to help them run successful businesses and improve the quality of the care they provide. Keep reading this report for details about both.

But, we can only do so much inside a fundamentally broken system. So, at the same time, we advocate for meaningful investment in child care at the county, state and federal level. In 2021, we made exciting progress toward a more sustainable system.



## Historic Advocacy Victory: **\$10+ Million** for Westchester Child Care

In the 2022 budget, Westchester County Executive George Latimer and the Board of Legislators made an investment in child care that will have a multi-generation impact for children, families and all of Westchester. It includes \$4.1 million to expand Title XX child care subsidy slots, \$3.3 million to reestablish the Westchester Child Care Scholarship Program, and \$2.5 million to raise the subsidy reimbursement rates for contracted child care providers up to NYS market rates.

How does this help? The scholarship will be available to families who earn just a little “too much” to qualify for subsidy, but not enough to afford child care. Child care providers will be closer to earning/paying fair wages, and able to provide better care. Long term, fewer Westchester families will struggle to meet basic needs (reducing the stress and trauma caused by poverty), more children will reach their potential, and Westchester will be safer and healthier.



# The Advocacy Process



More than 200 child care professionals, parents and business, community and nonprofit leaders gathered for the Westchester Child Care Advocacy Hour we hosted in October, joined by Ken Jenkins, Deputy Westchester County Executive and Ben Boykin, then Chair of the Westchester County Board of Legislators. We shared the findings from our Child Care Access Report, heard stories from business, child care and nonprofit leaders about the importance of child care, and made our "ask" for the County budget.



Council Executive Director Kathy Halas advocated with and to elected officials throughout the year. She spoke at Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's press conference about the Child Tax Credit, visited St. Peter's Child Care Center when they hosted Senator Jabari Brisport and Assemblymember Andy Hevesi on their "Child Care Listening Tour," presented at the New York State Legislative Women's Caucus with Governor Kathy Hochul, Assemblywoman Amy R. Paulin and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef, spoke at a press conference hosted by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at the White Plains YMCA Early Learning Center, and joined Congressman Mondaire Jones at the Lois Bronz Children's Center to call for \$700 billion for child care in the Universal Child Care and Learning Act that he re-introduced with Sen. Elizabeth Warren. And, much more!



We are so very grateful that the Business Council of Westchester includes child care in its list of legislative priorities each year. Child care is essential to business and our economy.





# Day to Day: Keeping Kids Safe and Helping Families Thrive

## Connecting with Care

We helped more than 2,300 families find and pay for child care in 2021!

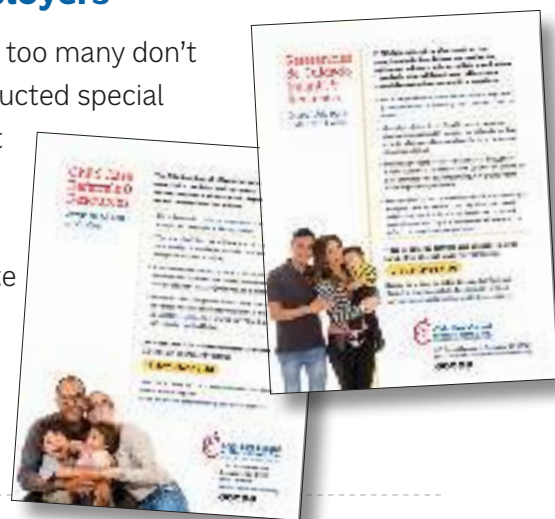
- ✓ More than 1,000 families came to us for subsidy support services, and we helped 300+ with their application.
- ✓ We continued to administer CARES scholarships. In 2021, we awarded scholarships to 199 children in 148 families.
- ✓ From August to December, we paid \$248,000 to 45 providers through the Westchester Department of Social Services Child Care Scholarship, to support care for 93 children.

We relaunched our own Key to the Future Scholarship Fund in November and awarded four scholarships by the end of December. The eligibility was revised to include grandparents, victims of domestic violence, undergraduate students, and families without a home. That is, people who might miss out on subsidy or other scholarships.

## Reaching Parents Through Their Employers

We don't wait for parents to come to us, because too many don't know there's free help available. In 2021, we conducted special outreach to the employers of essential workers at local healthcare providers and nonprofits.

On a regular basis, our child care counselors participate in employee orientations and distribute materials to healthcare workers through major medical institutions. This year, we also presented at the annual meeting for the regional North Atlantic State Carpenters Labor Union.



## Did You Know?

### We inspect child care providers!

In 2021, we inspected 246 regulated and 26 legally exempt child care providers to check health and safety standards, and investigated 17 complaints from parents and others. And, as part of our work to administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – designed to ensure children in care get nutritious meals and snacks – we conducted 199 food monitoring visits. We also enrolled 35 new providers in the program, designed and implemented virtual trainings for participants, and processed 2,799 menus and issued \$2,651,620 in meal reimbursements to in-home child care providers.

*One of our child care counselors working in person and virtually to provide resource and information to parents.*





Families get what they need



Annual Toy Drive to benefit Toys for Tots



Volunteers from PGA Superstore were book-sorting superstars!



Student volunteers from Manhattanville College helped distribute books to families at our first Book Fair.

## Above and Beyond

Families have needed additional support for the last two years. So while our job is “child care,” we stretched far beyond our typical scope of work in 2021:

- ✓ Thanks to monthly deliveries from 914Cares, we regularly distributed diapers, wipes, books and more.
- ✓ In partnership with Feeding Westchester, we supplied food to more than 100 families each month. Our staff volunteered their time to unload trucks, pack bags and distribute to child care programs. We also provided grocery store gift cards during the holiday season thanks to the Frog Rock Foundation.
- ✓ With generous funding of the Westchester County Office for Women, we created and distributed “Basics” kits to families: a month’s supply of diapers and wipes, baby blankets, towels and crib sheets, along with a supply of wonderful children’s books donated by Gardner Media.

*Thanks to Nonprofit Westchester for recognizing these efforts! We were honored to be selected as a 2021 Organization Changemaker, for going “above and beyond with innovative approaches in partnership and collaboration to ensure that our Westchester communities remain thriving.” Throughout the pandemic, every request from a parent or child care provider was met with creative problem-solving, innovative solutions, and a selfless determination to just step up and get it done.*







*Special thanks to Assemblywoman Amy Paulin for a grant that enabled us to provide a range of important health and safety resources to child care programs.*

## Health and Safety First

58 child care programs received direct Health Care Consultant Services. We approved/updated 126 Health Care Plans, and conducted 81 site visits to help child care providers comply with regulations concerning:

- ✓ Health and infection control
- ✓ Health care plans
- ✓ Administration of medication
- ✓ Care of infants and toddlers
- ✓ Care of mildly ill children
- ✓ Special health care needs, including asthma, allergies, diabetes, and seizures

We also updated all plans and policies to be in compliance with Elijah’s Law, which authorizes legally exempt group programs to stock non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injectors and changes the schedule of visits by a health care consultant for programs administering medication from every two years to every year. The law is named after 3-year-old Elijah Silvera from New York City, who died after he was given a grilled cheese sandwich while at day care despite having a known severe dairy allergy.

## Day to Day: Helping Providers Improve Quality and Support Families

In 2021, our team registered 23 new child care programs, and renewed 45. We also processed 313 enrollments/re-enrollments for legally exempt providers.

Nearly 250 child care providers maintain membership in the Council, we have 3,480 as email subscribers who rely on us for resources, and many non-members (future members!) participate in trainings. Here are just a few ways we helped them continue their professional development in 2021:

- ✓ 20 group family providers and center classrooms enrolled in the “Joy of Exploration,” funded by the Sexauer Foundation, received training and materials to help them build engaging and developmentally-appropriate curriculum focused on transportation, gardening and weather.
- ✓ 12 Spanish-speaking providers received training, intensive technical assistance and materials in year four of the Quality in Action Program supported by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation and the St. Faith’s House Foundation. The families in their care also received emotional support, resources, guidance on child development, help with referrals and more through a bilingual Mental Health Specialist through FSW.
- ✓ Two groups of professionals, working with infants/toddlers or preschoolers, took our 9-month course to qualify them for the national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- ✓ Nearly 200 professionals attended our two virtual conferences:
  - Spring Infant Toddler Conference: “Building Resiliency in Uncertain Times”
  - Fall Early Childhood Conference: “Rethinking Play: Bringing Joy Back into Learning”







*Joy of Exploration*



*Infant Toddler Teacher Network meeting*



*CPR and first aid training*

- ✓ We conducted hundreds of virtual trainings in 2021, on topics ranging from fostering empathy and resilience to core business operations. And, we resumed in-person intensive technical assistance projects to support programming in infant, toddler and preschool classrooms as well as family child care programs.
- ✓ We're so proud that 8 Group Family programs have earned the Caring Spaces endorsement, and 19 more are on their way. We provided training, evaluation, assessment and equipment to all programs as they completed this important initiative to improve infant environments.



*Spanish-speaking providers learning new developmentally-appropriate art projects to do with children in their care.*



## Stabilization Funds

With our help, 600+ child care providers accessed more than \$45,000,000 in federal American Rescue Plan stabilization funds through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

## More Responsive

We launched the Child Care Advisory Council, a group of 20+ plus child care professionals who meet regularly to advise us about issues facing their industry and how we can help, and to lend their voices to our advocacy work. We quickly learned that one of the biggest concerns is lack of staff to operate at full capacity. While deep issues regarding wages within the industry need to be addressed through government funding, we reached out to the public through legislators, colleges, libraries, community organizations, virtual career fairs, employment websites and media outlets, encouraging qualified applicants to consider a career in child care. We connected aspiring child care professionals with employers on our website, and offered free training through our partnership with Westchester County.

## Prioritizing mental health and social/emotional development

Our Infant Toddler Mental Health Consultant provided one-on-one support to help child care professionals build coping strategies, solve problems, work more closely with families, and ultimately improve their capacity to provide responsive care.



# Some Good Stuff!

## Congratulations to our 2021 Early Education Hall of Heroes Inductees



*Carla Casanga,  
Pelham Children's  
Center*



*Gina Egan, Weekday  
Nursery School United  
Methodist Church*



*Adrienne Harper, Jump  
For Joy Day Care  
Center, Inc.*



*Debbie Imperia,  
Harrison's Children's  
Center*



*Dawn Meyerski,  
Mount Kisco Child  
Care Center, Inc.*



*Ana Rojo, Little  
Angelicals Day  
Care, Inc.*



*Y-COP of Mount Vernon, Inc.*



## We Love Our Interns

Students and volunteers from Manhattanville College, College of Westchester and VolunteerNY joined us to help out in 2021.

*"I am grateful that I had an opportunity to do my internship at the Child Care Council of Westchester. I was able to experience what it would be like working in an office environment. Everyone was very respectful and welcoming to me. They also assisted me with any issues or questions I had. I was able to work on time management skills; meeting deadlines in a fast paced work environment. I feel as though this will be expected of me by future employers. This internship has helped me discover my strengths and weaknesses and how to improve in areas I'm struggling in. Overall, I had a wonderful experience working at the Child Care Council of Westchester."*



## Week of the Young Child

We celebrated the Week of the Young Child all month long in April 2021, with virtual cooking classes, a virtual wellness day, and more.



## Congratulations



Congratulations to Carmelita Bota and Jami Flynn, who earned their New York Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) Teaching Credential in 2021. Our Professional Development department now has five full time credentialed trainers and three credentialed CDA instructors!

## A Star Among Us

In 2021, we celebrated Juanita Pope's selection as a Business Council of Westchester 40 Under 40 Rising Star!



## We Couldn't Do It Without You

Our thanks to Westchester County (Office for Women and the Department of Social Services), NYS Office of Children and Family Services, United Way of Westchester and Putnam, Feeding Westchester, 914CARES, the Glick Shoolman Foundation, the Frog Rock Foundation, the Sexauer Foundation, Bundles of Joy, the Westchester Human Resources Management Association, NYS Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, NY Hospitality Group, Gardner Media, PGA TOUR Superstore, and many generous community members who donated funds and materials for families in need. To see a full list of funders and donors, turn to pages 10 and 11.



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**We are immensely grateful for your vital support!**

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

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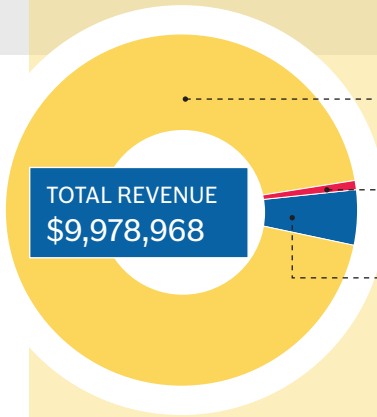
New York State Office of Children and Family Services

Westchester County Department of Social Services

Westchester County Office for Women

Westchester County Office of Workforce Investment

U.S. Administration for Children and Families - Head Start (through grantee WestCOP)

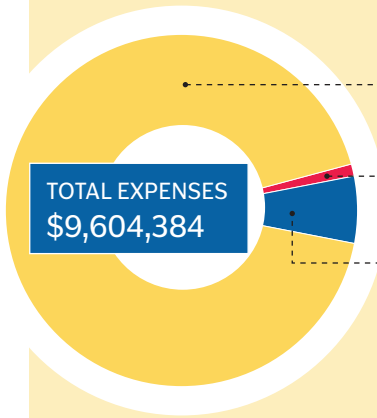


**94%** PROGRAM REVENUES  
\$9,346,437

**1%** INVESTMENT INCOME  
\$125,362

**5%** CONTRIBUTIONS  
\$494,215

**>1%** OTHER INCOME  
\$12,954



**93%** PROGRAM SERVICES  
\$8,890,459

**1%** FUNDRAISING  
\$124,192

**6%** GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE  
\$596,037

## Grants

Grants received from our generous business, individual and nonprofit partners allow us to offer important and innovative programs that improve early care and learning for children in Westchester.

GRANTOR	PURPOSE
Frog Rock Foundation	Basic Needs
Mother Cabrini Foundation	Quality Improvement for Spanish-Speaking Family Providers
St. Faith's House	Quality Improvement for Spanish-Speaking Family Providers
Sexauer Foundation	Hands-on Exploration Programs for Children, Early Literacy
Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation	General Support
Philip and Lynn Straus Foundation, Inc.	General Support
Anonymous (2)	General Support
Anonymous (1)	Enhanced Employee Compensation



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# Staff

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**Michael Goldman**  
Finance and  
Administration Director

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Provider Services Director

**Dana Lawless**  
Development Director

**Katherine Mancini**  
Health Care Consultant  
Services Director

**Nicole Masucci**  
Family and Employer  
Services Director

**Juanita Pope**  
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