



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



From the Executive Director



Dear friends,

When tackling a complex problem, progress is often hard-fought, and rarely linear. No matter how large the victory, it seems there is always more to do. So how do we persevere? By thinking about the before and after. (And we're not talking about home renovations and orthodontic products!)

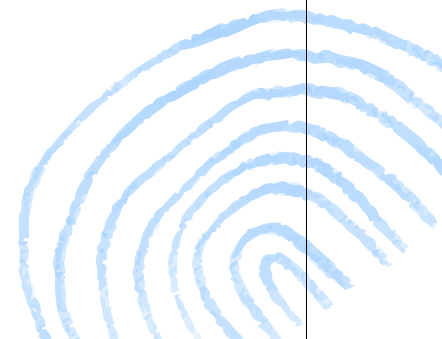
Every day, we hear from people who need assistance. Parents looking for reliable daytime and after school care so they can get to work, or a better early learning environment because they feel their child is behind. Many need help to afford child care. Child care providers need training, certifications, intensive assistance, more qualified staff. We provide all of this and more, which you will read about in this report.

But, these requests are not all we hear. More and more, it's "thank you." Sighs of relief. Success stories about what things are like *after* the Child Care Council has stepped in. Parents able to work without worry – getting promotions, engaged in professional development, growing their careers. Parents who no longer have to ration groceries or choose which bill to pay. Children on-track developmentally, feeling safe and secure, ready to read when they get to school. Every one of those "afters" is what drives us. And we know it drives you, too.

Our Council staff – 44 driven, mission-focused professionals – are supported by a committed Board of Directors, and many partners, including nonprofit colleagues, donors, funders, and elected officials at every level of government. Every accomplishment in the pages that follow is a team effort, within our organization and far beyond. Thank you.

Kathy Halas

Executive Director, Child Care Council of Westchester



Fixing the System

When it comes to child care, everyone is a stakeholder.

On a daily basis, we work directly 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
- ▶ **Child care, early learning and after school professionals** to help them run successful businesses and provide high quality care
- ▶ **Employers**, to ensure child care isn't a barrier to their workforce

At the same time, we work on a broad scale to create a more sustainable system, by advocating at the county, state and federal level for meaningful investment in child care. Our 2022 advocacy work built on the progress made the year before.

More Affordable Child Care

The 2023 Westchester County Budget makes child care more affordable by continuing the Westchester Works Child Care Scholarship and reducing the parent share for child care assistance (subsidy) from 10% to 5% of income over the federal poverty level.

The scholarship was first established with funds allocated in the 2022 budget, and is unique because of higher income eligibility levels. Hundreds of families who earn a little “too much” to qualify for other assistance, but still struggle to make ends meet, finally have relief.



Child Care Council Executive Director Kathy Halas joined Assembly Members Amy Paulin, Andy Hevesi, Michaelle Solages, and Ken Zebrowski, along with school officials and other child care advocates, in Albany to rally for fully funded universal full-day pre-k statewide.

Available through 2023
WESTCHESTER
WORKS CHILD CARE
SCHOLARSHIP

Families may be eligible if they earn up to:
 \$73,240 for a family of 2
 \$92,120 for a family of 3
 \$111,000 for a family of 4

Please help us continue to spread the word!

480 children received a Westchester Works Scholarship in 2022.



“I am one of the proud recipients of a Westchester Works Scholarship. I just wanted to take a moment to express my extreme gratitude for extending the program into 2023. This opportunity has not only provided financial relief but also an amazing educational and safe resource for my children while my husband and I are able to work.”

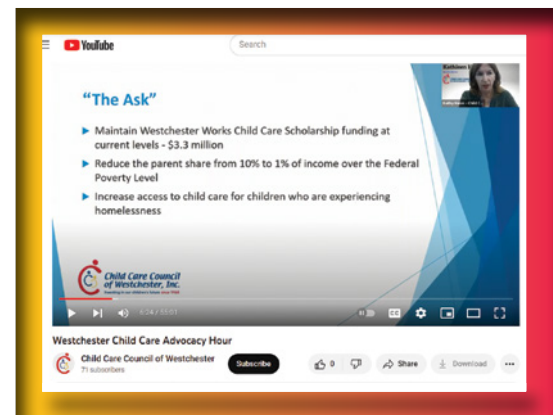
“I am truly honored and grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate in the Westchester Works scholarship program. My household is a single-parent household and the help we are receiving for child care takes so much pressure off my shoulders. It allows me use part of my income towards therapeutic activities for my autistic child.”

“I am a single parent of two. Although I work full time in the medical field, it is certainly not easy trying to juggle expenses. As you all may know, child care is extremely expensive. I don’t know what I would do if this scholarship was not available. I not only have enough money to spend quality time with my kids, but also to supply them with school supplies, shoes, clothes, and food. This scholarship makes such a difference in my life. I thank you all, the continuous help is deeply appreciated!”

“Words cannot express how grateful I am to have been given the opportunity to receive this scholarship for my daughter. It has given me the ability to go back to work and be able to provide for her. Since being in day care she has been able to develop faster and learn new things from her peers every day from all of the social interactions.”

In an opinion piece published in Lohud, Kathy Halas expressed gratitude for Westchester’s investment, but called on federal officials to step up after the Reconciliation Package was announced without the child care funding originally promised in the Build Back Better Package. (President Biden has since taken some action through Executive Order to make child care more accessible and affordable and increase compensation/job security for the child care workforce.)

“Both New York and Westchester County answered the call for child care reform that came from so many voices during the pandemic. But the continuation and expansion of such efforts will require a level of investment only the federal government can make. To federal officials, we pose this question: what the heck happened to child care? And more importantly, what steps will you undertake now to deliver on the promises made to working families and the child care workforce all over the U.S.?”



More than 100 parents, child care providers, nonprofit leaders and business executives gathered virtually at our Westchester Child Care Advocacy Hour, to share stories and discuss the importance of funding child care in the 2023 Westchester County budget. We were successful!

For Children and Families

We helped 2,690 families find and pay for child care in 2022!

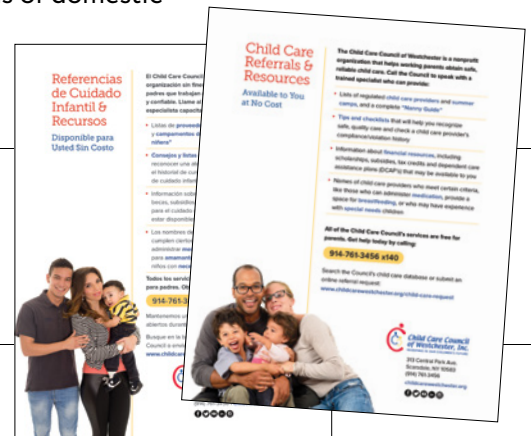


This includes many families who have never been eligible for or aware of these resources before.

- ▶ More than 1,770 families came to us for subsidy support services (almost 700 more than the previous year!), and we helped 800+ with their applications (a 154% increase from 2021).
- ▶ 480 children were approved for the Westchester Works Scholarship. Of those who applied and were not eligible, 50% were eligible for child care financial assistance (subsidy) through the Department of Social Services instead.
- ▶ 2 families who were struggling with extenuating circumstances but ineligible for other financial assistance received a scholarship from the **Natalie Duffy Scholarship Fund for the Education of Young Children**. They can now access safer, regulated child care.
- ▶ 9 children received the Council's own **Key to the Future Scholarship**. Eligibility is specifically designed to include grandparents, victims of domestic violence, undergraduate students, and families without a home. That is, people who might miss out on other financial assistance or scholarships.

Reaching Parents at Work

We established partnerships with 13 additional employers to help their employees find quality child care. These include healthcare providers, government and nonprofit organizations.



Keeping Kids Safe & Healthy

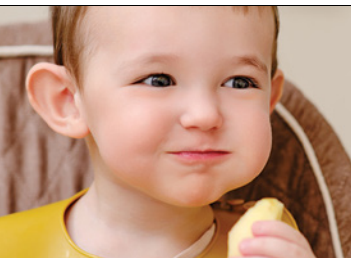
70 child care programs received direct Health Care Consultant Services; 22 more than the previous year! We approved/updated 125 Health Care Plans, and conducted 83 site visits to help child care providers comply with regulations concerning:

- ▶ Health and Infection Control
- ▶ Health Care Plans
- ▶ Administration of Medication
- ▶ Care of infants and toddlers
- ▶ Care of mildly ill children

10 site visits were for direct training related to special health care needs, including asthma, allergies, diabetes, and seizures.

Thanks to the Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation, and in partnership with the American Lung Association, we conducted an Asthma Training Program for 93 child care professionals who serve more than 630 children, and provided them with asthma-related supplies, including nebulizers, tubing, masks and spacers, as well as children's books related to asthma.





The federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which we administer in Westchester, ensures children in care get nutritious meals and snacks. We conducted 374 food monitoring visits in 2022 and met our goal of increasing enrollment by 10%, adding 49 new child care providers to the program. We processed 2,861 menus and issued \$3,251,563 in meal reimbursements to in-home child care providers.

**Did You Know?
We inspect child care providers!**

In 2022, we inspected 374 regulated and 35 legally exempt child care providers to check health and safety standards, and investigated 16 complaints, including 13 reports of illegal child care programs. We issued cease and desist notices to those that were found to be operating illegally.



Working Together to Support Families

Regularly in touch with struggling families (our Resource and Referral Department fielded 5,500 calls in 2022!), we work with community partners and funders to secure and distribute food and other essentials:

- ▶ 914Cares provides books, diapers, wipes and feminine products each month
- ▶ A Basic Needs Grant from the Frog Rock Foundation enables us to buy essential items families need but can't afford, including diapers, bedding, formula, clothing, books, book bags, sunscreen, developmentally-appropriate toys, and more
- ▶ Through United Way of Westchester and Putnam's donation hub, we obtain diapers, formula, home items, furniture, and more
- ▶ Morgan Stanley secured thousands of Covid-19 home test kits to support our "Stop the Spread" campaign
- ▶ The Sexauer Foundation provides books for families with young children
- ▶ Feeding Westchester continues to deliver food each month, which we unload, pack into bags, and distribute to families through their child care providers



far left: Diapers, pull-ups and wipes from United Way, for our families.

left: Thanks to the Frog Rock Foundation, we were able to distribute book bags to hundreds of Westchester's children just in time for the start of a new school year. They included school supplies like notebooks, rulers, scissors, glue and more, as well as tissues and sanitizing supplies.

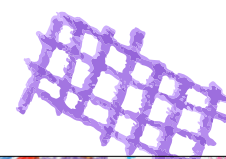
For Child Care Providers

Helping early education and after school professionals improve quality and support families

We educate and support Westchester's child care and after school workforce through our virtual and in-person trainings, and with basic and intensive technical assistance, resources and special initiatives.

In 2022:

- ▶ 70 legally exempt child care providers and the families they serve accessed clothing, furniture, educational materials, health and safety equipment, and more, through our new Resource Program.
- ▶ Three groups of child care professionals – Infant/Toddler Family, Preschool, and Spanish-Speaking – completed our 120-hour/9-month course leading to the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- ▶ Through the Sexauer Foundation's Home Literacy and Library Program, we provided 20 group family providers and center classrooms with a three-part training series and teaching materials. Every child in their care received diverse, developmentally-appropriate books for their own home libraries.
- ▶ We registered 21 new child care programs, renewed 40, and processed 411 enrollments/re-enrollments for legally exempt providers.
- ▶ 7 group family programs maintained their Caring Spaces endorsement and are working to achieve the new, fourth tier: Eliminating Suspensions and Expulsions. Infant Toddler Regional Coordinator Jami Flynn encouraged the quick implementation of this addition due to concerns about multiple suspensions in the region.
- ▶ More than 100 professionals attended our virtual spring Early Childhood conference: Working Together: Supporting Children and Responding to Challenging Behaviors, featuring a keynote from Dr. Walter Gilliam of Yale University entitled "Expulsion, Suspension, and Mental Health in Early Education."
- ▶ We expanded our infant toddler mental health consultation work with a new grant from the Robin Hood Foundation through the Early Care and Learning Council.
- ▶ We conducted more than 200 virtual and in-person trainings on a wide range of topics, including:
 - Close and Competent Supervision for Infant & Toddlers
 - CPS & First Aid
 - Designing Curriculum That Promotes Warm, Loving Learning Experiences for Infants & Toddlers
 - Meeting the Challenge: Guiding Preschool Children to Better Behavior
 - The ABC's of Learning Differences
 - The Benefits of Outdoor Learning
 - Promoting Play-Based Learning in Your Classroom



- ▶ To encourage ongoing efforts to improve child care quality with engaging, developmentally-appropriate activities, we awarded 8 Innovation Grants to centers, family child care and after school programs to create or expand experiences:
 - Amani Public Charter School – Scholar Sensory Awareness Room
 - Country Childrens Center - School Age 3D Printing Discovery Club
 - Endicotts Kids Zone - Outdoor Learning Space Expansion
 - Jump for Joy Day Care – We Are the World culture exploration
 - RABY Stem Childcare – Lil Olympics
 - RYE YMCA – Expanding After School
 - Y-COP of Mount Vernon – Hummingbirds Group at Summer Camp
 - Yosaya’s Day Care - Montessori Arts and Crafts and Outdoor Family Day



With our help, 520 child care providers were approved for \$14 million in stabilization funds in 2022, including a home-based professional in White Plains who had decided it was *time to give up and close after 20 years in business*. Ongoing challenges caused by the pandemic and economy left her unable to cover operational costs and pay her employees. *Then she heard from our Business Development Specialists Jessenia Tejada and Jayselle Trancoso that federal stabilization funds were available through the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.* Her application was approved, her employees kept their jobs, and the children in her care are safe in a loving learning environment while their parents are working. Overseen by Chief Financial Officer Mike Goldman, Jessenia and Jayselle also facilitate additional grant application processes, conduct grant info sessions, and provide business skills training to help professional child care providers become more efficient and profitable.



Council staff in the field recognized that Spanish-speaking home child care providers, a growing demographic of committed, caring professionals in the county, needed extra support. The Quality in Action Program offers intensive wraparound services: program design, no-cost materials and furniture, training – all to ensure that children’s developmental, learning and social/emotional needs are met. And it hardly ends there. Families are connected to resources to help them obtain food, transportation, legal aid, mental health services, benefits, parenting education, and even furniture. Providers, many of whom struggled through incredible losses during the

pandemic, also receive this support. And it works! Pictured here: a “moving up” ceremony where several providers were celebrated for improving quality so much they no longer need intensive services. As “graduates,” they’re still involved: able to participate in trainings and call on us when needs arise. And we know from experience that many will come back to help those who are just starting out! This incredible program, established with funding from the Frog Rock Foundation and later funded by the Mother Cabrini Foundation, is now fully supported by the Council.



Congratulations to the graduates of the Council's CDA courses!



Knowing that taking care of others can be stressful, we launched quarterly "Be Well, Care Well" events for child care professionals, hosted by Council social workers Lillieth Boniello, Amelia Monroy and Susan Panarella. Participants get to know each other, share resources, learn wellness strategies, and participate in fun activities related to art, fitness, gardening and more.

A dedicated group of child care business owners participated in a six week business training to learn more about planning, budgeting, staff recruitment, policies and more. Presented in partnership with the NYS Early Care and Learning Council and facilitated by our Director of Community Events/Office Manager Juanita Pope, the first five sessions were held via Zoom and the last, in person. Attendees enjoyed food and music, and had professional headshots taken.



ON THE COVER: Buried in toys! Council staff, Board members, community and the Bronxville Montessori School came through with tons of toys for our Annual Toy Drive, which Toys for Tots Foundation distributed to children in need of some holiday cheer.



Celebrations!



Congratulations to our 2022 Early Education Hall of Heroes inductees! These early education and after school professionals have a profound influence on the children in their care, providing a safe and nurturing environment every day, and setting the stage for a bright future.

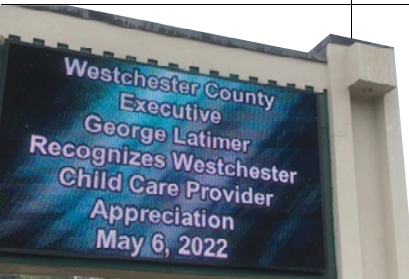
Sawudat Abraham, *Baby Cubs Daycare*
 Ester Aguzzi, *Country Kids Schoolhouse*
 Cynthia Bolding, *Blessed Beginnings Child Care*
 Michelle Dalton, *Little Lamb Child Care*
 Gina D'Amore, *Harrison Children's Center*
 Lia DaRocha, *Lia's Daycare*

Deloris and Patrick Hogan, *Dee's Tots Child Care*
 Shari Lewis, *Nana's Place Family Childcare*
 Kathy Lynam, *Rye YMCA*
 Howard Milbert, *Ossining Children's Center*
 Byron Smalls, *City of White Plains Youth Bureau*
 Aledia Vitolo, *A Kid's World Preschool & Daycare*



left: You're never too young to volunteer! Here's one of our youngest supporters painting centerpieces for the Hall of Heroes event. (Don't tell him he's actually practicing fine motor skills!)

right: How do you demonstrate just how much you appreciate early care professionals? By turning the "Week of the Young Child" into a month-long celebration! It culminated in a fun-filled parking lot gathering featuring many fun activities for child care providers, parents, and children. (Check out more photos on the inside front cover of this report.)



left: Celebrated nationally every year, we're grateful that Westchester County recognizes Provider Appreciation Day!

right: We were proud to applaud Bilingual CACFP Case Manager Jessica Cardenas, the latest Council team member to graduate from Nonprofit Westchester's Emerging Leaders program, at the Keep Westchester Thriving Awards event.



Dream Big 2022, our annual celebration, was our most successful fundraising event to date, and we were proud to have 100% Board participation in those efforts.

pictured: Congressman Mondaire Jones (Legislative Leadership award); Laura Rossi,

accepting on behalf of the Westchester Community Foundation (Transformative Impact); Jason Barnett, accepting on behalf of RXR (Give Local Leader), Council Executive Director Kathy Halas; Council Board President Emeritus Craig S. Ruoff of Colliers International (Children's Champion).



We have another Rising Star among us! Congratulations to Director of Development Dana Lawless on her 40 Under 40 recognition from the Business Council of Westchester.

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We are immensely grateful for your vital support!

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

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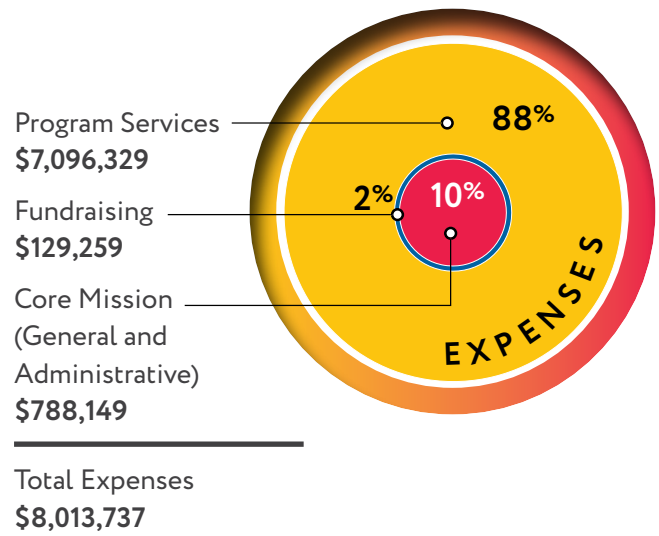
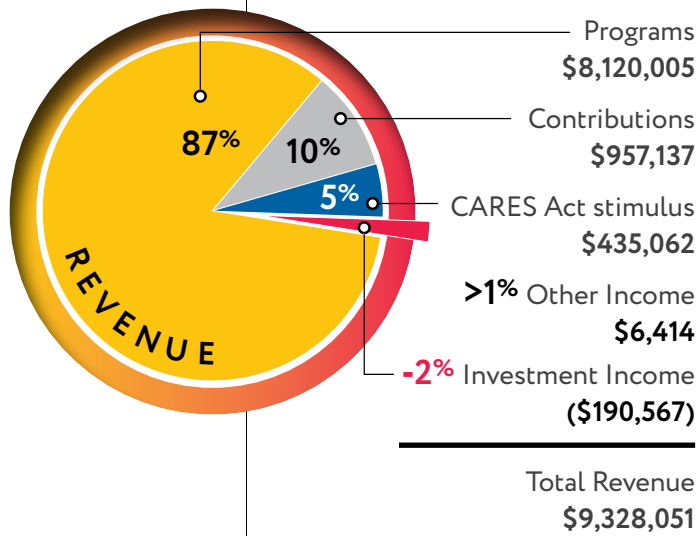
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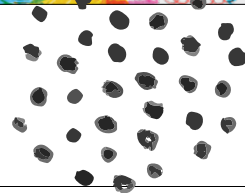
Westchester County Office for Women
 Westchester County Office of Workforce Investment
 U.S. Administration for Children and Families - Head Start (through grantee WestCOP)

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
Carvel Foundation	Pilot Asthma Program
Early Care and Learning Council.....	Infant Toddler Mental Health Consultation
Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation	General Support
Frog Rock Foundation	Basic Needs
The Jandon Foundation.....	General Support
The M&T Charitable Foundation	General Support
The Schaffer Family Foundation.....	General Support
Sexauer Foundation	Early Literacy, Pandemic Relief
St. Faith's House	Quality Improvement for Spanish-Speaking Family Providers
Zupon Family Foundation.....	General Support
Anonymous (3)	General Support
Anonymous (1)	Enhanced Employee Compensation, Program Support

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Anna Silvani - *Executive Assistant*

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Gabriella Figueroa - *Administrative Assistant of Professional Development*

Jami Flynn - *Assistant Director of Professional Development*

Maria Fredrick - *Preschool Developmental Specialist*

Teresa Garcia - *Bilingual Early Childhood Quality Specialist*

Michelle Guena - *Data Specialist*

Casey Lindwall - *Infant Toddler Specialist*

Cynthia Miller - *Baby Steps Forward Specialist*

Susan Panarella - *Infant/Toddler Mental Health Consultant*

Sarah Ruppert - *Professional Development Coordinator*

Julianne VanAlstine - *OFW Early Childhood Specialist*

Lillieth Zuckerman - *Infant/Toddler Mental Health Specialist*

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Cathy Fernandez - *Resource and Referral Database Administrator*

Arlene Leuzzi - *Scholarship Coordinator*

Andrea Rosendo - *Child Care Subsidy Specialist*

Leslie Vivaldo - *Scholarship Administrator*

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Teekeesh Corwell - *Legally Exempt Resource Specialist*

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Analidia Flores - *Bilingual Legally Exempt Case Manager*

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Jury Martinez - *CACFP Bilingual Case Manager*

Elsa Sanchez - *Bilingual Registration Case Manager*

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