

SLCCC Public Policy 2012

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The St. Lawrence Child Care Council [SLCCC] is a community leader committed to promoting high quality child care services for families, child care providers, businesses and community members. Public policies at the local, state and national level impacts the quality of early care and education and the SLCCC participates in activities to support early care and education.

The SLCCC is a proud member of the New York State network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, guided by the New York State Early Care & Learning Council and Winning Beginning NY, a statewide coalition working to inform policy makers and the public about the many benefits of early care and learning. Nationally, the SLCCC is a member of Child Care Aware of America, formerly NACCRRA, which has been working to improve the system of early care and learning for children across the country since 1987. These organizations are recognized leaders in Public Policy and Advocacy for the field of early care. As a small rural CCR&R with limited resources the SLCCC will rely upon these organizations to identify current issues that impact our work. The SLCCC is a 501(c)(3) organization which receives a majority of its funding from Federal and State and sources and is not registered and does not intend to register with the NYS Lobbying Commission at this time.

Nearly 11 million children under the age of 5 are in care with someone other than a parent. 50% of infants typically see their mothers back in the workforce by 6 months of age. The average working parent misses nearly two weeks of work each year because of child care problems. A report by Cornell University projects the cost to businesses at \$3 billion per year. When quality child care programs are available, businesses report less absenteeism and turnover, while enjoying greater worker retention and productivity. *The St. Lawrence Child Care Council provides families of all incomes with information, consultation and referrals to child care options in their communities and has the unique ability to link parents, child care providers, community agencies, local governments and employers.*

Parents know child care is not a substitute for parenting. Parents want a quality child care setting where their children are safe and cared for by individuals who will offer a variety of activities and engage them in a way that partners with parents. Research indicates 85% of brain development occurs before a child enters school. The quality of caregiver relationships and early experiences can enrich this development and lays the foundation for success in school and life. *The St. Lawrence Child Care Council helps educate parents about high quality care and helps them identify potential options; supports low income families to access local financial assistance for child care; recruits, trains and supports child care providers; and encourages government, business leaders and the public to support the expansion of high quality services.*

All regulated child care providers and program staff in New York State must participate in appropriate training, technical assistance and support to help them provide high quality services, improve their business success and to maintain their registration or license. *The St. Lawrence Child Care Council provides on-going support and resources to child care providers and program staff. This includes workshops, seminars and conferences to educate and help caregivers meet regulatory requirements, links to certification courses and college credit coursework.*

As economic development plans for St. Lawrence County are developed, child care must be recognized as an integral part of the local infrastructure requirements. Without appropriate child care for working parent's roads, bridges and technology will not be enough to support future economic growth or expansion in the North Country. *The St. Lawrence Child Care Council is an important resource for local business and community leaders as they develop plans for the future. We collect and analyze child care data that must be incorporated into development plans for the future. It must also be recognized that child care itself is a \$17million+ industry in St. Lawrence County.*

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council supports the following efforts on behalf of children and families in 2012:

St. Lawrence County:

- Ensure full utilization of funding in the county budget for child care.
- Increase child care allocations in the 2013 county budget
- Expand access to safe, high quality child care by increasing awareness of the benefits of using regulated child care options vs. illegal or unregulated child care
- Build upon the recognition of child care and the St. Lawrence Child Care Council in the North Country Regional Economic Development Council planning to increase the understanding of and support for a quality child care system by the local business community

New York State:

From the Winning Beginning NY Legislative Agenda 2012:

- Invest \$20 million for Year 1 implementation of QualitystarsNY [QSNY] to provide direct and indirect program improvement supports
- Preserve \$39 million for subsidies in the 2012 Executive Budget and make an advance on the proposed \$215 million in child care preservation funds for FY2031-2014
- Direct \$53 million from the competitive grants as proposed in the Executive Budget to Universal Pre-Kindergarten to expand the program to cover thousands more children, prepare qualified teachers and provide the technical support necessary to ensure sustainable quality
- Invest \$30.3 million to sustain evidence-based home visiting programs and for additional home visiting support services for the State's most vulnerable children and families
- Address certain concerns with the proposals in the 2012 Executive Budget so that access to high quality Early Intervention services are protected and driven by the child's needs rather than the child's insurance coverage
- Restore the Advantage After School Program to the FY 2010-11 funding level of \$22.5 million as well as support the priorities of the New York State Afterschool Network

For more information:

http://www.winningbeginningny.org/advocacy/documents/wbny_legask_feb2012.pdf

From the Early Care & Learning Council 2012 Public Policy Agenda:

- Child Care Resource & Referral Agency Capacity:
 - Build services, assuring that all families have access to information to make the best child care choices to meet their family needs
 - Incorporate CCR&R into QualitystarsNY, particularly training and technical assistance, as an integral part of the implementation and delivery of QualitystarsNY
 - Support Early Childhood Professionals by aligning professional development services with State initiatives designed to improve knowledge, competencies and dispositions, ensuring professionals have adequate support including scholarships and wage supplements
 - Expand research and evaluation by building the capacity to assess CCR&R services and how they can adapt and expand
 - Increase public education by promoting CCR&R services to parents and providers and increasing messages about the importance of early childhood

- Child Care Subsidy Reform:
 - Maintain funding for child care subsidies to support working families and ensure that young children have access to quality early care and education programs; reimburse care for children with special needs at a higher level
 - Seek child care subsidy reform by creating a subsidy system that bases parent co-payments on their ability to pay and ensures equitable eligibility rules across the state; examining the subsidy allocation formula and the legally exempt provider sector of care

- Social and Emotional Health:
 - Increase funding to Infant and Toddler Resource Centers to provide social-emotional consultation in early care and learning settings to identify problems early, improve access to care and provide effective interventions which are central to children's mental health needs

- Physical Health & Well-being:
 - Support Obesity Prevention in early childhood, establishing a comprehensive, coordinated effort to prevent childhood obesity by improving the quality of early learning environments

For more information:

<http://www.earlycareandlearning.org/news/documents/2012PublicPolicyAgendaInBrief.pdf>

Federal:

From the Child Care Aware (formerly NACCRRA) Public Policy Agenda for 2011-12

- Reauthorize and strengthen the CCDBG (Child Care and Dependent Block Grant)
 - Require complete background checks for all paid providers who regularly care for unrelated children
 - Require quarterly unannounced inspections of licensed providers
 - Require all paid providers to complete adequate training – 40 hours initially and 24 hours every year
 - Increase the quality set aside from 4% to 12% and further increase it to 25% over time
 - Require accountability for CCDBG funds by requiring licensing, inspections, training and screening for all paid providers who regularly care for unrelated children

- Ensure affordable child care for families
 - Require states to conduct and use current market rate studies
 - Provide resources to strengthen the quality of child care
 - Eliminate disincentives to work by requiring more gradual sliding fee scales to avoid the “cliff effect”

- Limit potentially unsafe licensed-exempt care
 - Require child care providers who receive federal subsidies to have a license or be subject to oversight
 - Require background checks for all providers receiving federal funds, including a fingerprint check
 - Require states to disclose publicly their rationale for any category of licensed-exempt care

- Make child care part of disaster planning
 - Require states to include child care in disaster planning, response and recovery efforts
 - Designate a lead agency to coordinate federal support to child care
 - Create a federal disaster contingency fund within CCDBG
 - Authorize HHS to expand assistance to families significantly affected by disasters

For more information:

http://www.naccrra.org/policy/docs/PublicPolicyAgendaInBrief_Color_022311.pdf