

2011

St. Lawrence County Child Care Report

St. Lawrence Child Care Council, Inc.
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www.stlawrencechildcare.org



***St. Lawrence
Child Care Council, Inc***

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council [SLCCC] is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) child care resource and referral agency established in 1989. We are committed to promoting high quality child care services for families, child care providers, businesses and community members.

Mission

The purpose of the St. Lawrence Child Care Council is to coordinate, strengthen and expand child care services in St. Lawrence County with an emphasis on education and networking to promote quality child care environments for all children regardless of income, race, ethnic heritage or family configuration.

Vision

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council is a leader, a community resource and partner in local, state and national efforts to improve outcomes for children through parenting support and the provision of safe, nurturing, affordable and high quality child care and early education services.

Values

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council's values guide the way in which we do our work and carry out our mission.

- We are committed to activities, programs, positions and goals that positively impact children's lives.
- We are responsive, professional and caring in our interactions with parents, providers and each other.
- We appreciate the diversity of our community's families and providers and respect their knowledge experiences and choices.
- We believe that we have a responsibility to the community to provide services that are accessible, effective and high quality.

Proud Members of:



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Katy Donovan, Family Day Care/School-Age Child Care Registrar

Becky Stewart, Family Day Care/School-Age Child Care Registrar

Jennifer Thompson, Administrative Assistant/Referral Specialist



Community Partners

In order to deliver high quality services and programs, we are proud to work with many area community organizations.

St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services
St. Lawrence County Public Health Department
Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County
St. Lawrence County Head Start
St. Lawrence Health Initiative
St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES
American Red Cross
SUNY Canton College
Clarkson Consulting Group - Clarkson University School of Business
Capital District/North Country Early Childhood Direction Center
NYS Region III Infant/Toddler Resource Center

Funding Sources

The services and resources provided by the St. Lawrence Child Care Council are made possible through the generous support of:

New York State Office of Children & Family Services

- Child Care Resource & Referral

St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services

- Family Day Care/School-Age Child Care Registrar
- Legally Exempt & Subsidy Assistance Services

St. Lawrence Child Care Council

- SUNY ECET Videoconferences
- Training Fees
- Fees for Services

Delivering Quality Services

In 2010 the St. Lawrence Child Care Council entered into a two year quality assurance process through the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). This process leading up to and, ultimately, attaining Quality Assurance Certification will mean the St. Lawrence Child Care Council will have to demonstrate that standards of quality service have been met for all aspects of the agency. Our Board of Directors and staff have been actively engaged in the process which has already resulted in many improvements in our services. 2012 will be the final year of this process with all final submissions due to NACCRRA by the end of December for our final assessment.



Public Policy

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council has always advocated for quality affordable child care options for families in St. Lawrence County and New York State. Our key messages in 2011 were targeted to parents, providers, employers and elected officials.

- The early years are leaning years with over 85% of brain development occurring before age 6 ... quality child care is critical to foster that development so all children are better prepared to succeed in school.
- Lost employee productivity resulting from child care issues is a significant problem for area employers ... if parents cannot find, keep and afford quality child care they may be unable to remain in the workforce. “Quality child care keeps St. Lawrence County working!”
- Early care and education in St. Lawrence County is a \$17.9 million dollar industry employing over 600 individuals ... the child care field is one of the leading employers in St. Lawrence County with a significant impact upon our local economy.

These messages were conveyed through media articles, our newsletters and messages to community leaders and elected officials.

Types of Child Care

Registered/Licensed Child Care

A **Family Day Care** home is a residence in which child care is provided on a regular basis, for more than three hours per day, per child, for three to up to eight children, depending on the ages, for compensation. In St. Lawrence County, registered family day care is coordinated through St. Lawrence Child Care Council. A family day provider care must renew their registration every 2 or 4 years. The provider must also obtain 30 hours of training every two years on the following 9 topic areas: nutrition and health needs of children, child day care program development, safety and security procedures, including communication between parents and staff, business record maintenance and management, child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care, statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment and shaken baby syndrome. Care can be provided for children ages 6 weeks to 13 years of age.

A **Group Family Day Care** home is a residence in which child care is provided on a regular basis, for more than three hours per day, per child, for seven to up to 16 children, depending on the ages, for compensation. In St. Lawrence County Group Family Day Care is licensed through the NYS Office of Children & Family Services – Syracuse Regional Office. Such a home must be operated by a provider and have at least one assistant present during the hours that care is provided. A group family day care provider must renew their license every 2 or 4 years. The provider and the assistant must obtain 30 hours of training every two years on the following 9 topic areas: nutrition and health needs of children, child day care program development, safety and security procedures, including communication between parents and staff, business record maintenance and management, child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, statutes and regulations pertaining to child day



care, statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment and shaken baby syndrome. Care can be provided for children ages 6 weeks to 13 years of age.

A **Child Care Center** is a child care program or a facility that is not a residence, in which child care is provided on a regular basis, to more than six children, for more than three hours per day, per child, for compensation. A child day care center is licensed through the NYS Office of Children & Family Services – Syracuse Regional Office, must renew their license every 2 or 4 years. The director and all employees must obtain 30 hours of training every two years on the following 9 topic areas: nutrition and health needs of children, child day care program development, safety and security procedures, including communication between parents and staff, business record maintenance and management, child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care, statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment and shaken baby syndrome. Care can be provided for children ages 6 weeks to 13 years of age.

A **School-aged Child Care** program enroll groups of seven or more children under 13 years of age during the school year before and/or after the period such children are ordinarily in school or during school lunch periods. School-age child care programs also may provide care during school holidays and those periods of the year in which school is not in session, including summer vacations. Such programs must operate consistent with the local school calendar. Care is provided in a facility that is not a residence. In St. Lawrence County, registered school-age child care programs are coordinated through St. Lawrence Child Care Council and must renew their registration every 2 or 4 years. The director and all employees must obtain 30 hours of training every two years on the following 8 topic areas: nutrition and health needs of children, child day care program development, safety and security procedures, including communication between parents and staff, business record maintenance and management, child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care, statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment.

Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive program for 3-5 year old children from income-eligible families. All services are provided at no cost to the family. All Head Start programs operate in classrooms licensed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services – Syracuse Regional Office. In St. Lawrence County, Head Start operates on a school calendar schedule. There is no fee to attend.

Pre-Kindergarten funding is available through the New York State Department of Education for pre-kindergarten programs which are known as Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK). All St. Lawrence County school districts have the ability to receive funding for UPK, but not all school districts choose to offer UPK. The UPK classrooms operate 5 days per week and follow school district calendars. Children attending UPK must be 4 years old. There is no fee to attend.

Legally Exempt Child Care (exempt from registration or licensing)

Legally Exempt Family Child Care is child care provided outside the child's own home in a residence and is not regulated but must meet all State and local health and safety requirements for such child care. This caregiver is chosen and monitored by the child's parent or guardian.



This type of care includes care for relatives within the third degree of consanguinity and up to 2 unrelated children. When caring for one unrelated child and related children the maximum number of children in care at any one time can be 8, which includes their own children.

Legally Exempt In-Home Child Care is child care provided in the child's own home by a caregiver who is chosen and monitored by the child's parent/guardian and is not regulated but must meet all State and local health and safety requirements for such child care. This type of care requires the child's parent/guardian to provide the caregiver with all employee benefits required by the State and Federal law and must pay the caretaker at least minimum wage.

Legally-Group Child Care Settings

Nursery Schools/ Pre-School Programs serve children ages 3-5 years old in a variety of settings including: public and private schools, churches, community centers and home residences. Programs meet anywhere from one to five days per week for less than three hours per session and typically follow the school year calendar.

Camp Programs are day or overnight recreational programs that operate when school is not in session. Camp programs are regulated to some degree by New York State Department of Health.

All of the above legally-exempt programs are encouraged to accept child care subsidies. If serving at least one child whose care is subsidized by the county the program must adhere to Social Services Law 415; Legally-exempt Health and Safety Requirements.

Illegal Child Care

Social Services Law 390 states that an individual may not watch more than 2 children in the individual's home, for more than 3 hours per day, if the children are not related to them, without being registered or licensed.

If an unregistered program is operating and meets all of the criteria listed below, it is considered a School-age Child Care Program (SACC) and must be registered in the State of New York with the Office of Children and Family Services. These criteria are:

- The program must serve an enrolled group of children. Drop-in programs are not SACC programs.
- The program must include seven or more children under the age of 13. If the program has six or fewer children under the age of 13, it is not a SACC program, regardless of how many children over the age of 13 may attend.
- The care must be provided on a regular scheduled basis. If the program operates only on an occasional or as-needed basis, it is not a SACC program.
- The program may only serve school-age children.
- The program must be located at a permanent site other than a residence and only operate during non-school hours (i.e. before and/or after school, during school lunch periods, on school holidays and/or during summer vacations).
- The program must be operating for more than one purpose.



Potential Demand for Child Care

St. Lawrence County is the largest county east of the Mississippi River covering 2,685 square miles with a total population estimated to be 111,931. The physical size of the county presents many challenges for families. Travel distances from home to their place of employment can be significant. The same is true for travel distances from home or work to their child care provider which results in increased child care costs due to the additional time children may be in care because of commuting distances.

According to the American Community Survey the county is comprised of 42,019 households with 28,089 families. The average family size is 2.79 and the median household income is \$42,303.

There are 12,754 households with children under the age of 18 years. The composition of these families is as follows:

- Married – couple 8,089 (63%)
- Male – no wife present 1,453 (11%)
- Female – no husband present 3,212 (26%)

There are 6,523 children from birth to five years of age. Of the families having children under the age of six, 67.3% have all parents in the workforce resulting in 4,390 children who are potentially in need of child care arrangements.

There are 6,165 children from five to nine years of age. Of the families having children in this age group, 73.5% have all parents in the workforce resulting in 4,531 children who are potentially in need of child care arrangements.

Considering only children from birth to nine years of age there could be 8,921 children who are potentially in need of child care arrangements. If 50% of these children were cared for in a non-formal child care setting by family members or friends, there could still be as many as 4,460 children who are potentially in need of child care.

There is an increasing need for quality, affordable child care for children due to the growing number of two worker and single parent households. According to our 2011 referral call records the demand for affordable infant, toddler, preschool and non-traditional hours care remains high, including evening and weekend care.



Child Care & Family Finances

Family Income

According to the American Community Survey, 16.9% of all people in St. Lawrence County had incomes below the poverty – 20.3% of families with related children under 18 were below the poverty level – 28% of families with related children under 5 were below the poverty level.

Families with a female householder and no husband present with related children under 18 had a rate of 36.5% below the poverty level and with related children under 5 had a rate of 42.3% below poverty level.

Considering these statistics and the average cost of child care rates below, one can easily see that a significant portion of a family's income may be consumed with costs associated with child care.

Cost of Child Care

Every child care provider or program operates as an independent small business and determines their own rates for child care services. The rates listed below were compiled by the St. Lawrence Child Care Council as of October 2011 and represent an average cost of care. Parents should always ask each of the providers they interview about their specific rates and if they offer any discounts or sliding scale fees based on household income.

Age of Child	Child Care Center	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care
Under 1 1/2 years	\$142	\$132	\$132
1 1/2 - 2 years	\$135	\$105	\$108
3-4 years	\$128	\$105	\$105
6-12 years	\$120	\$105	\$105

Child Care Referrals

A parents decision where they will enroll their child(ren) is one of the most important and difficult decisions any family will make. The St. Lawrence Child Care Council is committed to helping families understand the care options available to them.

We do this by helping families in their search for child care by:

- Discussing the unique child care needs of each family
- Discussing information about quality child care so families can make informed choices
- Discussing the different types of care options available that may meet their needs
- Providing referrals to providers that best meet the family's needs
- Maintaining a current data base of regulated child care providers in St. Lawrence County



The first chart below show the number of families who received child care referrals in 2011 and whether the family was eligible to receive subsidy assistance or not. The second chart shows the family configuration breakdown of those who received child care referrals. The third chart shows the ages of the children referred to child care providers.

Referrals	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Total	%
# Families Referred	72	88	77	50	287	
# Subsidy Eligible Families	55	66	52	37	210	73%
# Families Not Eligible	17	22	25	13	77	27%

Family Composition						
# Single Parent	35	44	37	22	138	48%
# Two Parent	25	36	38	23	122	42%
# Teen Parent	1	5	1	1	8	3%
# Foster Parent	1	0	1	3	5	2%
# Grand Parent/Other Relative	0	0	0	2	2	.5%
Parent Did Not Disclose	10	2	0	0	12	4.5%

Age of Children Referred						
0-11 Months	27	38	23	20	108	23%
12-23 Months	15	26	18	12	71	15%
24-35 Months	19	15	22	12	68	14%
3 & 4 Year Olds	26	23	23	17	80	19%
5 Year Olds	5	13	12	5	35	7%
6+ Year Olds	19	31	24	12	86	18%
Parent Did Not Disclose	3	7	4	2	16	4%
Total # Children Referred	114	153	126	80	473	

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council initiates follow-up with 100% of all persons contacting our office seeking child care referrals. While not all recipients respond, those who do indicate they require child care to work or continue their education. Finding child care for infants in many areas of the county can be difficult and finding child care during non-traditional hours and on weekends is extremely hard to locate and is typically not available in regulated child care settings.

Several areas of the county have been identified as not having adequate care options as requested by families. The communities of Norwood, Norfolk, Brasher Falls, Colton, Russell, Hammond and Morristown all struggle to meet the requests of families contacting the St. Lawrence Child Care Council.

Finding child care in St. Lawrence County for sick children poses difficulties as well. Having a sick child is often mentioned as one of the most common reasons for parents to miss work. If a child is seriously ill, most parents will chose to stay home to provide care. However, if a child is "mildly ill," they may not require parental care, but the majority of providers in the county chose



not to care for children who are ill to avoid infecting other children in their care that may result in a significant loss of income for the provider.

Parents often request providers who can administer medications to their children should medication be necessary. For a provider to accommodate these wishes they must obtain Medications Administration Training (MAT) and revise their Health Care Plans. Unfortunately, most providers choose not to administer medications in their programs even though parents indicate it is an important factor in deciding upon a child care provider. The chart below shows the number of providers who are MAT Certified in St. Lawrence County as of this report.

Type of Child Care Program	MAT Approved	% of Total Number of Programs
Family Day Care	14 of 73	19%
Group Family Day Care	5 of 23	22%
Day Care Center	4 of 4	100%
Head Start	8 of 8	100%
School-Age Child Care	1 of 2	50%
TOTAL	32 of 110	29%

Child Care Options

The availability of child care options for families in St. Lawrence County has decreased over the last few years as the local economy has weakened, unemployment increased and because of regulatory barriers perceived by potential new providers. The information which follows shows the various types of regulated child care slots available to families as of October 1st.

Registered/Licensed Programs

Type of Care	# of Providers	Slots for Infants (birth – 2yrs)	Slots for Preschool (2 – 5yrs)	Slots for Youth (5+ - 12yrs)	Total Slots
Family Day Care	73	146	292	145	583
Group Family Day Care	23	46	226	64	336
Child Care Centers	4	63	170	62	295
Head Start Centers	8	0	221	0	221
School-Age Child Care	2	0	0	60	60
TOTAL	110	255	909	331	1,495



NOTE: This chart represents the total available registered/licensed child care slots by modality of care and age group. Head Start children may need “wrap around care” after attending the program does not operate for the full day. These part-time children may have difficulty locating available slots in regulated programs as the program may opt for full-time children for economic reasons.

Enrolled Legally Exempt Child Care (serving families receiving subsidy assistance)

Type of Legally Exempt Child Care	# Providers	Total Slots
Family Child Care	178	356
In-Home Child Care	238	476
TOTAL	416	832

NOTE: Legally exempt child care providers may care may be of any age so it is difficult to break down the age groups served, however, care is most often provided for preschool age children.

Universal Pre Kindergarten, Developmental Kindergarten and Jr. Kindergarten

School District	UPK Slots (4-5yrs)	Developmental Kindergarten	Jr. Kindergarten	District Total
Brasher Falls	36	0	0	36
Canton	70	0	0	70
Clifton-Fine	18	0	0	18
Colton-Pierrepoint	15	0	0	15
Edwards-Knox	36	0	0	36
Gouverneur	76	0	0	76
Hammond	20	0	0	20
Harrisville	27	0	0	27
Hermon-DeKalb	26	0	0	26
Heuvelton	27	0	0	27
Lisbon	36	12	0	48
Madrid-Waddington	47	0	0	47
Massena	108	0	45	153
Morristown	24	0	0	24
Norwood-Norfolk	54	0	0	54
Ogdensburg	90	0	0	90
Parishville-Hopkinton	18	0	0	28
Potsdam	64	0	0	64
TOTAL	792	12	45	849



NOTE: All St. Lawrence County School Districts offer some form of Pre Kindergarten. The chart shows the number of children actually served by each district and represents a significant number of children who may need “wrap around care” after attending the program as the programs may not operate for the full day. These part-time children may have difficulty locating available slots in regulated programs as the program may opt for full-time children for economic reasons.

Building Child Care Supply

Technical Assistance

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council provides extensive technical assistance to both existing and potential new providers in an effort to improve the success and quality of the program.

Technical assistance is provided through two methods. The first is termed “basic technical assistance” and would be assistance typically provided via telephone, email or mail. This is the most common form of assistance when potential new providers are exploring the option of opening a child care program or when an existing provider contacts us to discuss a particular situation or need. This technical assistance is not considered intensive and is not typically provided on-site although it may be.

The second is termed “intensive technical assistance” and would be assistance provided on-site with potential new or existing providers when they encounter a particular situation that requires much more detailed assistance by our staff. These sessions are always at least one hour in duration and may consist of several consecutive sessions to address the provider concern or issue.

Basic Technical Assistance Contacts	Intensive Technical Assistance Consultations (hrs. of service)
228	96 Hrs.

Provider Professional Development

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council provides training to potential new and existing providers through a variety of professional development offerings. These options may include live workshops, conference presentations, videoconferences, distance learning and online offerings.

- Providers and staff are required to successfully complete Health & Safety and First Aid & CPR Training in order to operate or be employed by a registered or licensed child care program.
- Medications Administration Training is required by any provider/program choosing to administer medications to children in their program.



- Health Care Consulting is available to any program to assist in developing the Health Care Plan for the program.
- Providers and staff must also obtain training in each of the nine training topic content areas required by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services.

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council currently either employs or contracts with individuals who are qualified to lead and instruct professional development sessions and provide consultation to providers or programs.

# Professional Development Offerings	58
# Professional Development Hours	224.5
# Participants	241

Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

(CACFP) is a federal program which reimburses child care providers for serving meals and snacks which meet the USDA guidelines to the children in their care. All licensed, registered, and legally exempt child care providers are eligible to participate in CACFP. Child care providers who choose to be a part of the CACFP program provide meals and snacks which meet USDA guidelines to all the children in their child care. Providers keep daily menu and attendance records and submit them to their CACFP food program sponsor at the end of each month. Participants must be receive inspected four times per year and must also attend nutrition training each year. Each month participants will receive a check based on the number of meals and snacks served. Providers can be reimbursed for a maximum of two meals and one snack or two snacks and one meal per day.

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council is not a CACFP Sponsor agency. We have a strong working relationship with two CACFP Sponsor agencies who have been serving St. Lawrence County providers for decades. At this time and we refer all providers to both programs listed below and providers choose which sponsor agency they feel will be best for their program and location.

Child Care Coordination Council of the North Country, Inc.
 194 us Oval, P.O. Box 2640
 Plattsburgh, NY 12901 (518) 483-5382

Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc.
 518 Davidson Street
 Watertown, NY 13601 (315) 782-4900



Infant Toddler Resource Network

As a member of the Region III Infant Toddler Network, the St. Lawrence Child Care Council and area providers may request assistance from Infant Toddler Specialists through the Regional Infant Toddler Resource Center to provide services for this important age group. The Infant Toddler Initiative, funded by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services, works to support and enhance care for infants, toddlers and their families in child care centers, family and group family child care homes, and the community at large.

Services include:

- Information on best practices on infant and toddler care
- Technical assistance for child care providers serving infants and toddlers
- Assistance to parents of infants and toddlers
- Training workshops
- Mentoring and guidance
- Lending library of reference materials specific to infant and toddler needs
- Answering questions and concerns from providers, families and the community

QUALITYstarsNY

QUALITYstarsNY is a quality improvement and recognition system. It is designed to recognize programs that demonstrate quality above and beyond meeting New York's strong regulatory standards. An effective Quality Rating and Improvement System, whether for center-based or family-based programs, rests on the foundation of a state's regulatory system. New York ranked 2nd among the fifty states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense, on both standards and oversight for centers and ranked 21st on standards and oversight for small family child care homes. QUALITYstarsNY will be designed to improve quality and provide supports such as technical assistance and professional development. Although we now have a greater appreciation of the importance of the early years, we currently do not have a system that adequately ensures that early childhood programs are of high quality and that public and private investment in early care and education is used effectively.

Although the QUALITYstarsNY initiative is currently a voluntary program, the St. Lawrence Child Care Council is encouraging providers to actively participate in this initiative. The St. Lawrence Child Care Council provides supports to child care programs in preparation for QUALITYstarsNY through our St. Lawrence Stars Quality Improvement Initiative.

Services include:

- On-site technical assistance to guide providers through the initiative
- Program evaluations using nationally recognized environmental rating scales and assessment tools
- Small grants to obtain materials to help providers improve the quality of their programs
- Assist providers in developing quality improvement goals and plans
- Assist providers in developing professional development goals and plans



Provider Recruitment

Provider recruitment efforts are on-going throughout St. Lawrence County, but we will target the communities of Norwood, Norfolk, Brasher Falls, Colton, Russell, Hammond and Morristown as a result of the parental surveys following child care referral requests. These communities were identified as not having enough regulated slots to meet the demands of families seeking child care.

Potential new providers receive extensive one-on-one consultation and technical assistance throughout the registration or licensing process to ensure a high percentage finish the application and approval process. Small health and safety grants are available to help providers offset some of the costs associated with required training and safety equipment. These grants are subject to funding availability and have application criteria.

Economic and Social Impacts of Quality Child Care ...

Early care and education in St. Lawrence County is a \$17.9 million dollar industry employing over 600 individuals. The child care field is one of the leading employers in St. Lawrence County with a significant impact upon our local economy.

Child Care Keeps St. Lawrence County Working!

Businesses in St. Lawrence County must have a vested interest in child care for their employees. Family friendly programs and policies are wise investments in their current and future workforces resulting in improved employee recruitment and retention, increased productivity and loyalty. These important results feed directly into a company's bottom line. Without this important infrastructure service, employers will be hard pressed to have the skilled, reliable work force they need to be successful.

Business Leaders Speak Out About Child Care ...

- **Two Weeks:** The average working parent misses nearly two weeks of work each year because of child care problems. A report by Cornell University pegs the cost to companies at \$3 billion a year. Yet, when quality early care programs are available, businesses report less absenteeism and turnover, while enjoying greater worker retention and productivity.
- **Corning Child Care Center:** At Corning, Inc. executives discovered the attrition rate for female employees was twice that of men – and child care was often the culprit. They built a \$3.5 million world-class on-site child care facility and estimate they save close to that amount annually by retaining quality employees and improving productivity.
- **Birth to Five is a Critical Learning Period:** Over the past decade, research has shown that 75% of a child's brain growth occurs before age five. And children who attend quality early learning programs are twice as likely to attend college.



- Child Care Improves employee recruitment: The Childcare Partnership Project found that 85% of employer have improved employee recruitment by providing child care services.
- The return on investment is strong: For every dollar spent on child care we see back from four to seven dollars; from reduced spending for remedial services to increased earnings.
- Brain Growth Occurs before age 5: Research has shown that 75% of a child's brain growth occurs before age five. Birth to age five is a critical learning period.

These are excerpts from a video created by *Winning Beginning NY*, the statewide early childhood education coalition, in association with the *Committee for Economic Development*, the *United Way of New York State*, and *America's Edge*, the video was funded by *Birth to Five Policy Alliance*. <http://www.winningbeginningny.org/video/index.php>

Why Quality Child Care Matters:

Evidence from human development and neuroscience research makes a very strong argument that the early years of a child's life, from the prenatal period onward, when the brain is developing and growing faster than any other time, are critical and set the stage for all of later learning and adult functioning (Center on the Developing Child, 2007). Our general understanding of how young children learn has increased exponentially over the past decade. For example, we now know that a baby's interactions with humans and the environment shape the brain's architecture and that positive and nurturing early relationships develop healthy well-functioning brains that guide human beings as learners.

Quality Child Care and School Readiness:

Children score higher on tests when child care meets professional standards. Children attending programs that meet professional standards for quality score higher on school readiness and language tests and have fewer behavioral problems than their peers in centers not meeting such standards, according to a study appearing in the *American Journal of Public Health*. "These findings show that concrete standards of quality--which parents and policy makers can evaluate--make a difference in children's development," said NICHD Director Duane Alexander, MD. The researchers studied 250 children in center care who were enrolled in the study when they were 1 month of age and observed through 36 months of age for this report. These are part the larger group of children who have been studied by the NICHD research team since 1991. The children in the NICHD study of early child care are currently in second grade, and study investigators plan to follow them as they grow older. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. *Children Score Higher On Tests When Child Care Meets Professional Standards*. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/releases/daycr992.cf>



Conclusions

This report has been prepared by the St. Lawrence Child Care Council and is intended to provide child care professionals, families, elected officials, community leaders and child advocates with a profile of the current status of child care in St. Lawrence County.

GAPS and Concerns

The following were identified as gaps and concerns in the current child care situation.

- Insufficient regulated child care slots in the county as a whole with several communities having significant child care supply issues.
- Lack of regulated child care slots available for infants and an increase in the number of providers choosing not to care for infants as it reduces their overall capacity and potential income.
- Insufficient regulated child care slots for care during evenings and weekends.
- Insufficient regulated child care slots for the care of mildly ill children which impacts parents' ability to maintain employment and businesses ability to retain employees.
- Lack of regulated child care providers who are approved to administer medications to children.
- The median household income is \$42,303. The average annual cost of infant care in St. Lawrence County in a child care center is \$7,384 (17%) and \$6,864 (16%) in a family day care home. This represents a significant proportion of the total household income going to child care expenses in most families and funds for child care subsidy assistance are in danger of being reduced.
- The loss of public funds to aid in start up costs for new child care businesses, while the cost to start a child care program have increased.

If you would like to discuss the 2011 St. Lawrence County Child Care Report contact:

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