

2016

2015

2014

the
measure
of
quality

2014
Report to the
COMMUNITY



Capital District
Child Care
Council

Mission

The Capital District Child Care Council is a resource and referral agency dedicated to promoting quality, accessible child care for all of the Capital Region's diverse communities. The CDCCCC assumes a leadership role in supporting children, parents, child care professionals, and employers through referral counseling, education, training, and advocacy.



Dear Friends,

Measuring early childhood and school-age program quality can be challenging, but it is possible. Over the past year Council Educators, Child Care Providers, and Community Partners have worked to establish a system of quality evaluations that include both process and structural measures. Process measures use standardized tools such as the Environment Rating Scales (ITERS, ECERS, FCERS, SACERS), the Program Administration Scale, and the Business Administration Scale. Structural measures examine caregiver characteristics such as education and training, adult to child ratios, and class size.

The Council has made an effort to examine teacher-child interactions as an important component of educational quality. To do this we have invested in comprehensive training for Council Educators in the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (C.L.A.S.S.). The C.L.A.S.S. evaluates teacher child interactions, emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

Child Care Providers and Educators in the Capital Region have worked hard to embrace standards set forth through QUALITYstarsNY as a means of achieving excellence. The measure of excellence in early childhood and school-age programming encourages and supports each child's development with rich and stimulating learning environments. Quality is realized when competent and skilled educators plan, observe, evaluate, and nurture each child's inborn learning potential. Quality education embraces the family and provides opportunities for purposeful play and hands-on learning.

This annual report is an account of the many ways in which the early childhood and school-age community has set about the hard work of quality improvement. Recorded on the following pages are anecdotal and statistical accounts of the work completed by individual care providers, programs, and entire communities representing the quality improvement efforts that have had a positive impact on children and families.

In this report we recognize the commitment of early childhood and school-age educators, administrators, community partners, and advocates. The message is clear; early childhood development and out-of-school time have a remarkable impact on the growth and well-being of children. The Council is committed to supporting quality programming through the collection and examination of ongoing quantitative and qualitative outcome measures through traditional and innovative professional development opportunities.

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QUALITYstarsNY...Rating for Improvement



“In 2011, I attended my very first QUALITYstarsNY information session.

I walked out of that meeting feeling very overwhelmed and thinking, ‘this looks like a lot of work and I am already stretched way too thin.’ I later realized that I was already meeting many of the requirements, so with the assistance of Anne Gresco, I got to work. The first step was to have a Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale done on my program. The journey of QSNY had begun. Three years later, **I am a 4 Star program and working on my 5th Star!**

It is important to note, QSNY focuses on the positive aspects of your program, never the negative. QSNY has supported me financially with materials, curriculum and assessment, and screening tools.

It has even supported my pursuit of the Family Child Care Credential.

The hidden jewel in all of this has been the Child Care Council. Their resources are endless. The help and guidance I received from them has been incredibly valuable.

The staff of the Child Care Council are there to serve us and they are truly committed to helping us all be the best we can be.”

~Debbie Collins, Family Child Care Provider and QSNY Participant

The goal of providing young children with high quality early care and education is clear. Early childhood is a critical period for development and high quality education programs can have a significant impact on improving the cognitive, academic and social skills of all children, especially those most at risk for later school failure.

For the Capital District Child Care Council the quality rating system called QUALITYstarsNY is an important tool for measuring and improving child care in New York’s Capital Region. QUALITYstarsNY provides a framework to evaluate and improve the early childhood programs for young children from birth through entry into kindergarten. Focusing on child care centers, family child care homes, pre-kindergarten programs and Head Start sites, QUALITYstarsNY uses research-based program standards to assess the level of quality that each early learning program provides. Initiatives dedicated to improving the quality of child care programming, such as QUALITYstarsNY, support the efforts of programs to improve the quality of their services and to give families the information they need to make a more informed choice.

“Excellent early childhood programs encourage children’s development with stimulating environments in which highly skilled and qualified teachers plan, observe, evaluate, and nurture each child’s innate drive to acquire new skills and knowledge...”

Over the past several years child care, Head Start, and Universal Pre-kindergarten programs in Albany and Schenectady have met the quality challenge. This year the Capital District Child Care Council and United Way of the Greater Capital Region have partnered to make quality early education possible for the children in the City of Troy. The initiative, known as QUALITYstarsNY: TROY, includes eight family child care providers, four child care centers and the Head Start program all of whom are engaged in the rigorous task of assessing and improving components of care related to best practice benchmarks. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, quality improvement systems award quality ratings to child care programs that meet a set of defined program standards.

Learn more about QUALITYstarsNY by visiting qualitystarsny.org

One Book at a Time

Summertime occupies a special place in the imagination of young and old alike; conjuring up images of fresh air and freedom, rest and relaxation. It is during the summer season that many children are afforded the opportunity to expand their horizons, find their true passions, and master new skills; all experiences that foster learning and development.

The notion of expanding and enriching child experiences during the lazy summer days took hold this year as Legally Exempt Child Care Providers participated in the Summer Reading Program. The main objective of the Summer Reading Program was to promote language and literacy skills in young children receiving care through informal arrangements. The outcome proved to have a positive impact; pairing fun, imagination, and adventure with school readiness skills.

Through a generous donation provided by CDCCCs former Executive Director, Patricia Skinner, one hundred high quality children's books were distributed to children ages birth to twelve years. Books were coupled with a literacy packet that consisted of

- an age appropriate book,
- two palm cards explaining the benefits of reading with young children;
- suggestions for appropriate books for each age group;
- [15 Ways to Read to a Child](#) Guide;
- a list of local libraries.

This enabled the caregiver to be creative in their delivery of materials and support of each individual child's emerging literacy skills. In fact, research on summer learning tells us that these types of non-academic experiences support learning. This learning shows up in myriad ways, including, but not limited to, reading and test scores. Informal activities at child care and camps or with families provide a conceptual framework and context for learning; they cultivate such things as reading for pleasure and experimenting out of sheer curiosity; exploring interests and developing passions; a sense of mastery in something one cares about; and opportunities to practice and see the meaning of skills in the course of everyday life.



Creating Life-long Health Habits through Empowering Children

Five year old Alyssa was a tough food critic. Never a fan of green, leafy foods, Alyssa was positive that there was nothing at the Farm to Preschool Market that she would like. Then, after receiving her very own Sprout Scouts Coupon to redeem at the market stationed outside her school, she became more and more curious.

One evening, she informed her mother at the dinner table, "I've thought about it and **I want to try the broccoli** from the market, but if I don't like it, I'm not trying it again!" Mom agreed and they redeemed Alyssa's coupon for some broccoli to try at home.

Alyssa's reaction?
"MMM, that's good! Can I have **all the rest?**"



The Farm to Preschool program encourages families and children to create life-long health habits to reduce their risk of chronic disease. Childhood obesity in several Capital Region counties is higher than both the New York State and national averages. Nearly 20% of children in Schenectady County are overweight or obese leading to early onset diabetes, heart disease, orthopedic conditions and other chronic disease these children would not normally experience until in the elder years. Farm to Preschool aimed to change unhealthy habits for approximately 100 families in three local communities this summer.

Through the Healthy Active Living grant with the YWCA NorthEastern NY, children were enrolled in the Sprout Scouts Club, encouraged to try a new fruit or vegetable every week, explore the farmer's market, talk with farmers and participate in a short physical activity. Children became accustomed to receiving the Sprout Scouts coupon every week and eagerly lead their parent to the farmer.

The Sprout Scouts Club distributed 273 coupons over fifteen weeks at the Farm to Preschool Market based at the YWCA. With 77% of the coupons being redeemed, children learned the importance of making healthy food choices for themselves and their families. In the other two communities where Farm to Preschool operates, parents received a \$2 Eat Smart New York! coupon. While some parents opted to include their children in the purchases, the majority did not and 15% fewer coupons were used than the coupon given directly to children. Empowering children to make their own healthy food choices and purchases at a young age helps them to create and maintain these habits throughout their life.

In 2014:
273 Sprout Scouts coupons distributed with a 77% redemption rate

463 Sprout Scouts coupons distributed with a 62% redemption rate

Total sales: \$8,000

Families Learning Together, Experiences to Last a Lifetime

Over the past year the Child Care Council has made a commitment to provide more parent educational opportunities through Parent Cafés. The Parent Café is designed to engage families through the building of protective factors, and to promote individual self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning. Parent Cafés are based on the principles of adult learning and family support; and provide parent leadership opportunities. The Parent Cafe engages families in meaningful conversations about what matters most- building a supportive path to success for their children.

Designed for caregivers of children birth through twelve years, Cafés takes place at community organizations such as Schenectady Community Action Program, Parsons Early Learning Center, Albany Community Action Program, the Schenectady City School District, churches, and libraries. Café sessions begin with a welcome, review of protective factors, community meal, followed by networking. Children are joined by qualified caregivers in child classrooms while parents gather in small groups to engage in guided discussion around a specific topic. Participants examine their own beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and actions. Retrospective post tests are used as a means of understanding parent growth.

Over the past year parent engagement across many Capital Region communities has increased as a result of monthly Parent Café opportunities. Café parent evaluation summaries indicate: 99% report the café was helpful, 98% would recommend Parent Cafés to a friend and family member, 97% plan to attend a future café, 60% followed through on a commitment from a previous café, and 85% report an increased awareness/knowledge of the protective factors overall as a result of their participation in the café. Another strategic family engagement activity is evident in the Council's increased purposeful community outreach efforts. At each event we provide important information about selecting child care, child development, and community services for families; along with fun and developmentally appropriate activities for children. The Council has developed a line of educational activity "recipe cards" as a means of family engagement. The cards include an activity, directions on playing with children, and an outline of the skills developed as they engage in the activity.

In 2014

43 Parent workshops *servicing* **261** adults and **300** children

3,218 referrals given for quality child care programs *and* **1,839** referrals for Summer Camp

"I never knew the Council offered parent workshops throughout the community. **My child looks forward to the fun activities** and I look forward to learning about the skills my child is learning. **A bonus is that we get to attend together!**"

A parent of a three year old-Albany County

"My son and I came to the Container Garden workshop at the library. Not only did my son get to try different kinds of vegetables, **I learned new ways to introduce and serve healthy foods at home.** My son had a great time getting his hands dirty planting his own seeds in a small container garden and together we have been watching them grow into vegetables we can eat."

A parent of a four year old-Schenectady County



Healthy Eating Habits through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

“When I go to the grocery store now I don’t hesitate to purchase new fruits and vegetables for the children because I’m spending the Food Program’s money, not mine. This week the children tried star fruit and kiwi”.

~Claudia Wolfgang a licensed child care provider for more than 20 years who recently joined the food program.



For over 25 years we have provided financial support and nutrition education to hundreds of licensed, registered and legally exempt child care providers in our six county region. Thousands of young children receive nutritious meals and snacks each day and learn about the importance of healthy eating because their child care provider participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

The important role the child care provider plays in providing quality nutrition to the young children in their care cannot be underestimated. Participating in CACFP is a win for child care providers and children alike. This year there was an increase in the federal reimbursement rate and the average Tier One child care provider reimbursement, with 5 full-time children enrolled in care for one month is almost \$500 per month. At the Tier Two rate, the reimbursement averages about \$250 per month.

NYS Department of Health continues to improve the nutritional quality of the meal and snack standards in CACFP. Low-fat milk is now required for children over age two. A variety of fruits and vegetables are encouraged while sweetened cereals and sugary treats are limited or simply no longer allowed. Providers are increasing the quality of meals and snacks by using more fruits, vegetable and whole grains and limiting processed foods. The New York State Department of Health encourages family child care providers to support breast feeding moms as they go back to work. Currently 73 CACFP participating providers have been certified as breast feeding friendly homes.

In 2014:

305 Providers participated in CACFP feeding 6,456 children

In an average month:

30,210 Breakfasts

29,227 Lunches

44,335 Snacks

6,310 Dinners

are served in CACFP participating child care homes

Promising Practices

Eat Well Play Hard (EWPH) in Child Care Settings is in the eighth year of working to improve the dietary practices and increase the physical activity of children in low-income child care centers. Registered Dietitians (RDs) work intensively with thirty child care centers each year and conduct six parent sessions, six child sessions and two staff trainings. The health promoting lessons of EWPH aim to influence the nutrition and physical activity environment of children, their families and their teachers.

The interventions are organized around the following three strategies:

- Increase developmentally appropriate physical activity.
- Increase consumption of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk and dairy.
- Increase consumption of vegetables and fruits.

Eat Well Play Hard in Family Child Care Homes is in the fourth year of working with Family Child Care Providers who participate in CACFP. EWPH in Family Child Care Homes is designed to occur in two main phases with supporting materials and resources distributed throughout the year.

Group workshops are considered “phase one,” and are delivered by an RD in a series of five sessions. They include presentations, handouts about child nutrition and physical activity, facilitated discussions, and interactive demonstrations of nutrition and physical activities for children.

Following each workshop, an RD conducts a home visit with each Family Child Care provider, which is “phase two” of the process. During the first two visits, the RD demonstrates how to lead nutrition and physical activities with the children. By the fifth visit, the provider is expected to lead a nutrition and physical activity independently with the children.

In support of the group workshops and home visits, provider resource kits and educational materials are distributed. They include sample lesson plans for children’s nutrition and movement activities, materials providers can use to help implement these activities (e.g., storybooks, music CDs, healthy food cards), child-size serving utensils, and portable play equipment.

After the workshops and home visits are complete, the RDs distribute bi-monthly lesson extenders by mail to continue educating providers and encouraging them to improve their eating and physical activity environments. The lesson extenders include information on obesity prevention, nutrition, physical activity, or screen time; and new nutrition and movement activities for children.

“I always thought feeding kids family style meals would be hard, but in fact it has made meal time easier and the children love being more involved.”

~Diane Fisher, Director, Schenectady Day Nursery



Making a Difference: A DIY Approach to Professional Development



photo from
Make a Difference: Light Boxes

It seems that the field of education is amid a learning renaissance, and that the Do-It-Yourself movement is one of its most powerful catalysts. In the quest to improve professional development, Educators at the Council have been inspired by multiple sources of technology. The combination of traditional coaching and mentoring practices, the creation of classroom make-over videos, and do-it-yourself tutorials invite the adult learner to process information in ways that are more appealing, enjoyable, and potentially more effective for some individuals. Technology frees us from professional development that is lockstep, covering the same material at the same pace at the same time by listening to presentations in the same room. It invites tinkering with different concepts, shifting from source to source, integrating the ideas of others, and reflecting to create room for new concepts.

What do these new concepts look like? They include content that gives everyone with an internet connection access to free lessons on early childhood and school-age education best practices. The Council has developed videos and tip sheets that help pre-service and experienced early educators alike to play with developmental concepts through toy making and room arrangement.

Currently the Council has eleven videos posted on our “Make a Difference” YouTube Channel. Topics range from tutorials on handmade toys such as Tutus, Sock Babies, and Wrinkly Rings to classroom make-over videos. To date, the combined videos have been viewed almost 7,000 times. The series has been viewed by individuals from across the United States with one twelve-year-old viewer videotaping her own sock babies to share with others. The classroom “Make a Difference: One Play Space at a Time” video series, a simple idea stumbled upon during a coaching visit to a preschool classroom, has had a tremendous impact on quality changes to early childhood environments. A classroom make-over starts with a coaching visit between a Council Educator and a Child Care Provider. Together they assess the learning environment through the use of the appropriate environment rating scale. Once the quality improvement plan is developed teachers, families, administrators, and Council Educators set about the task of making over a learning space.

These experiences create “makers” of all of the participants as they tinker with toy making, and room arrangement. Fathers apply paint, Mothers label toy bins, Grandparents build shelves, and Teachers re-imagine each child’s potential through the examination of every aspect of the learning environment. Remarkably the shared creative experience realized as part of the video making is passed to viewers who transform their learning environments. In the end teachers, families, administrators, and volunteers share a deep appreciation for the potential of early learning and the work of supporting that learning.

After

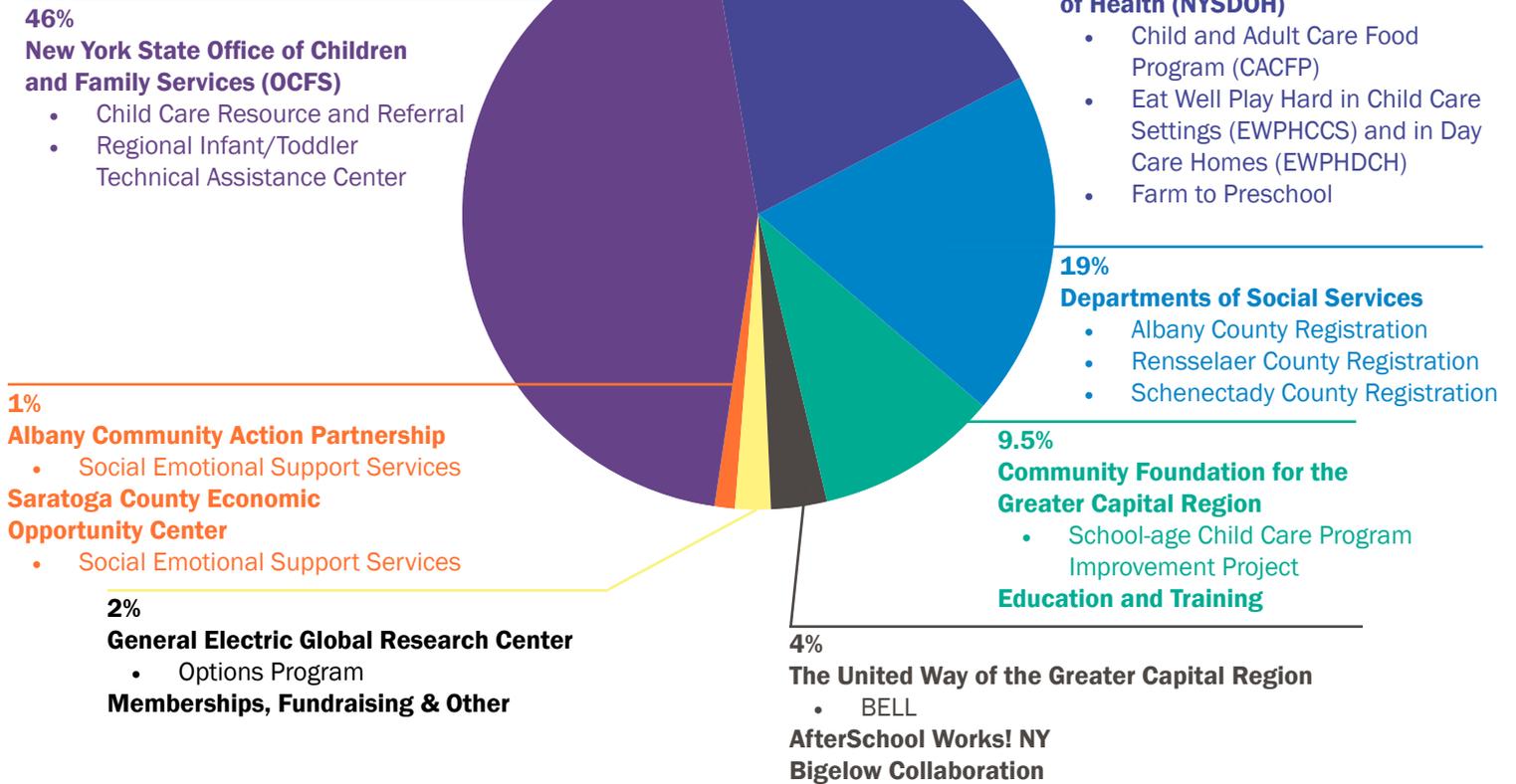


Before



before and after photos from
Make a Difference: One Play
Space at a Time, Pumpkin Patch

2014 Funding



CDCCCC Statement of Financial Position

Year end 2013

ASSETS	
<i>Current Assets</i>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$406,475
Accounts and Grants Receivable	\$292,492
Prepaid expenses	\$29,123
Total Current Assets	\$728,090
Property and equipment net of accumulated depreciation	\$118,985
Other Assets, security deposits	\$5,333
TOTAL ASSETS	\$842,709
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
<i>Current Liabilities</i>	
Accounts Payable	\$18,780
Accrued expenses	\$64,774
USDA provder claims payable	\$119,545
Deferred revenue	\$56,020
Total current liabilities	\$259,119
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	\$579,132
Temporarily restricted	\$4,458
	\$583,590
	\$842,709

Annual audit performed by The Bonadio Group with no financial findings

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