

2025

St. Lawrence County Child Care Report

St. Lawrence Child Care Council, Inc.

314 Ford Street Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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

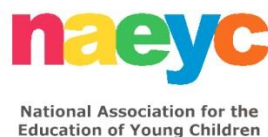
The St. Lawrence Child Care Council is a leader, a community resource and partner in local, state and national efforts to improve outcomes for children through parenting support and the provision of safe, nurturing, affordable and high quality child care and early education services.

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:



2025 Board of Directors

Chair

Donna Seymour League of Women Voters & Host - North Country Matters Video News Magazine

Vice Chair

Tammy LaPoint Assistant Director, SLC Head Start

Treasurer

Angela Gray CPA, Gray & Gray CPAS PC

Secretary

Caitlin Gollinger St. Lawrence Supreme & County Courts

Michelle Ladouceur Attorney & St. Lawrence County Surrogate Court Judge

Dr. Maureen Maiocco Early Childhood Degree Program Coordinator SUNY Canton College

Nancy Fox Director Canton Day Care Center

Lori Moulton Director, SUNY Potsdam Child Care Center

Staff

Bruce Stewart, Executive Director & Registrar Supervisor

Dee Burlingame, Program Coordinator

Katy Pinkerton, Provider Services Coordinator & Registrar Supervisor

Shana Wisdom, Legally Exempt & CCAP Services Coordinator

Renee Armstrong, Family Day Care/School-Age Child Care Registrar

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

Ashleigh Carter, Administrative Assistant/Referral, LE & CCAP Specialist



Introduction

The St. Lawrence Child Care Council has prepared this report in an attempt to detail the state of child care within St. Lawrence County. While we make every effort to provide clear and accurate data, it must be noted that the early care and learning environment is constantly changing. The number of child care providers/programs operating in the county can fluctuate on a monthly basis as existing programs close and new programs open.

St. Lawrence County is the largest county east of the Mississippi River covering 2,685 square miles with a total population estimated to be 108,505. The physical size and rural setting 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.

We continue to have a significant need for quality affordable child care as more families are faced with working multiple jobs or increased non-traditional hours in our area. Without increased public and private investment families in St. Lawrence County will struggle to find quality early care options for our most important resource ... our children.

Community Partners

In order to deliver high quality services and programs, we are proud to work with many area community organizations including, but not limited to:

St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services
St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency
St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board
St. Lawrence County Public Health Department
St. Lawrence County Head Start
St. Lawrence Health Initiative
St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES
North Country Small Business Development Center at SUNY Canton College
Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County
Early Care & Learning Council
NYS Region III Infant/Toddler Resource Center
SUNY Canton College Early Childhood Program
New York Power Authority



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 (NACCRRRA). In 2012 this process culminated in attaining our national Child Care Aware of America Quality Assurance Certification. This means the St. Lawrence Child Care Council has demonstrated the highest standards of quality service for all aspects of the agency. Our Board of Directors and staff continue to be actively engaged in the on-going continuous improvement process of our services.

In 2020-21 the St. Lawrence Child Care Council completed the New York State Standards of Excellence certification process with the Early Care and Learning Council. In June of 2022 the St. Lawrence Child Care Council received our New York State Standards of Excellence certification, once again, demonstrating the highest standards of quality service of the agency.

Child Care Resource &Referral (CCR&R) Program Description

The New York State Office of Children & Family Services provides funding and supervision to support and enhance the child care services delivered by CCR&R agencies for children and families throughout New York State as specified in Title 5-B, Section 410 p-r, of SSL. Parents, child care providers and employers throughout New York State consider CCR&R agencies an integral component of the child care service system. CCR&R agencies provide multiple services to the child care community, including:

- Assisting families in making informed decisions about child care by offering them centralized information on available services and by facilitating the process in finding care that meets their needs;
- Educating families regarding the evaluation process necessary to determine quality child care; the assessment data provides families with necessary information when selecting a new child care arrangement and for the important process of monitoring care for their children;
- Assisting families in locating financial aid to pay for care;
- Expanding the supply of child care by working with NYSOCFS Regional Offices and Local Departments of Social Services to recruit and train new providers;
- Working with NYSOCFS Regional Offices to supply Health Care Consultancy services to assist providers in meeting the regulatory requirements of administering medication to children in care;
- Enrolling and monitoring legally-exempt child care providers as required by the NYS Code of Rules and Regulations, Title 18 (NYCRR Parts 415.4 and 415.9);
- Serving as sources of information to employers who want to assist their workers find quality child care



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. In past years New York State Assemblywoman Addie Russell was a keynote speaker at our 2015 Annual Early Childhood Conference at SUNY Canton College. In August of 2020 US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand hosted a press conference in collaboration with the St. Lawrence Child Care Council in Ogdensburg to introduce the “Child Care is Essential” bill seeking historic funding for child care initiatives.

Our key annual public policy messages remain:

- 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.
- The COVID Era brought child care to the forefront as critical infrastructure to keep essential workers on the front lines. In the worst of the pandemic child care providers were still on the job each as they remain each and every day. “Quality child care keeps St. Lawrence County working!”
- Early care and education in St. Lawrence County is a multi-million dollar industry employing over hundreds of individuals. The child care field is one of the leading employers in St. Lawrence County with a significant impact upon our local economy, our workforce and economic development.
- We support the 2025 Top Policy Priorities of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care
 - ✓ Provide sustained and reliable compensation and benefits to all members of the child care workforce. (\$1.2 billion)
 - ✓ Ensure ALL New Yorkers can access child care, starting with guaranteeing child care assistance (CCAP) to eligible low-income New Yorkers (\$400 million).
 - ✓ Help eliminate barriers to accessing child care for children with developmental delays and disabilities (\$5 million).

For more information on the Empire State Campaign for Child Care please go to:

<https://empirestatechildcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ESCCC-Top-Priorities-January-2025-1.22.25.pdf>



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. 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. 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. 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.

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 Exempt 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 in New York State covering 2,685 square miles with a total population estimated to be 106,198. The physical size and rural setting 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 41,666 households. Consider the following:

- Children under 6 years of age with all available parents working = 3,557 (60.7%)
- Labor Force Participation of mothers with children under 6 years of age = 71.6%
- There are an estimated 4,094 children under the age of 6 years who are not in school of which 60% or 2,456 may be in need of child care due to all parents being in the workforce
- There are an estimated 8,266 school age children of which 50% or 4,133 may be in need of child care during the school year, breaks, snow days and summer vacations.

With the loss of regulated child care slots during and since the COVID era there is a significant need for quality, affordable child care for children due to the growing number of two worker and single parent households.

Child Care & Family Finances

Family Income

According to the American Community Survey, the median household income is \$61,900 resulting in 16.8% of all people in St. Lawrence County living in poverty. This includes an estimated 3,045 children under 6 years of age below 200% of Federal Poverty Line.



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. For example:

- One infant needing child care for 52 weeks in a Child Care Center = \$16,640.00 - - in a Family/Group Family Child Care home = \$14,508.00.
- With a median household income of \$61,900.00 that means between 23-27% of that household income is devoted to paying for 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 market rates listed below were compiled by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services 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	\$320	\$279	\$279
1 1/2 - 2 years	\$300	\$265	\$265
3-4 years	\$277	\$263	\$263
6-12 years	\$257	\$236	\$236

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 shows the number of families who received child care referrals in 2017 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.



The St. Lawrence Child Care Council provided 63 referral consultations with families during 2025. Follow-up outreach efforts are made 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 is very difficult. Finding child care during non-traditional hours or on weekends is extremely hard to locate and is typically not available in regulated child care settings.

Many areas of the county still do not have adequate regulated care options as requested by families. Finding child care in St. Lawrence County for sick children poses difficulties as well. Having a sick child is 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 regulated providers in the county chose not to care for children who are ill to avoid infecting other children in their care that could result in a significant loss of income for the provider.

Fewer parents are requesting 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 some parents indicate it is an important factor in deciding upon a child care provider.

The following chart 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	6 of 35	17%
Group Family Day Care	2 of 22	9%
Day Care Center	4 of 6	66%
Head Start	8 of 8	100%
School-Age Child Care	0 of 6	0%
TOTAL	20 of 77	26%

Child Care Supply

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 a recent “snap shot” of information on the various types of regulated child care slots available.

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	35	70	140	70	280
Group Family Day Care	22	88	172	88	348
Child Care Centers	6	80	532	126	738
Head Start Centers	8	0	233	0	233
School-Age Child Care	6	0	0	1,221	1,221
TOTAL	77	238	1,077	1,505	2,820

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 as they do 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. Many Family or Group Family day care providers do not accept up to their full infant capacity.

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

Type of Legally Exempt Child Care	# Providers	Total Slots
Family Child Care	28	56
In-Home Child Care	39	78
TOTAL	67	134

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



Universal Pre Kindergarten

School District	UPK Slots (Full Day)	UPK Slots (Half Day)
Brasher Falls	36	17
Canton	0	63
Clifton-Fine	13	0
Colton-Pierrepont	0	16
Edwards-Knox	29	0
Gouverneur	54	15
Hammond	14	0
Harrisville	21	0
Hermon-DeKalb	20	0
Heuvelton	35	0
Lisbon	26	0
Madrid-Waddington	0	23
Massena	86	0
Morristown	15	0
Norwood-Norfolk	50	5
Ogdensburg	56	0
Parishville- Hopkinton	15	0
Potsdam	45	51
TOTAL	515	185



NOTE: All St. Lawrence County School Districts offer some form of Pre Kindergarten. The chart shows the potential number of children served by each district and represents a significant number of children who may need “wrap around care” after attending the program as not all programs operate for the full day. It is very likely 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 On-Site Consultations (hrs. of service)
137	10 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.

- NYS Child Day Care Regulations require training in 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.
- 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/organizations that are qualified to lead and instruct professional development sessions and provide consultation to providers or programs.

The chart below shows the number of professional development offerings, total number of professional development hours and number of participants who attended the professional development offerings in 2017.



# Professional Development Offerings	11
# Professional Development Hours	109
# Participants	68

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, rest 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.

Several of our center based and home based child care programs are now participating in QUALITYstarsNY. The St. Lawrence Child Care Council will continue to encourage providers to participate and take advantage of the tremendous resources, training and technical assistance this program offers.

Provider Recruitment & Expansion

Provider recruitment efforts are on-going throughout St. Lawrence County. We collaborate with local school districts to inform parents and prospective providers across the county of the significant lack of regulated child care slots. We also utilize media outreach and other avenues as well. 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. Modest health and safety start up 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.

SLCCC staff continues to work with the Ogdensburg Bridge & Port Authority and SUNY Canton College who are both committed to constructing new child care center facilities in the next two years.



Economic and Social Impacts of Quality Child Care ...

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.

New York State Department of Labor on Child Care ...

Child care problems impact the ability of New York parents to work, which impacts employer revenue and profitability.

- Family Friendly Policies result in 80% of employees more loyal to employers.
- Family Friendly Policies result in 41% of employers report lower absenteeism.
- Family Friendly Policies result in 21% of employers report higher profitability.
- 41% of New York parents with children under 5 years of age report child care challenges have affected their ability to work, attend school or other commitments 2 or more times in the last month.
- 140,236 children under age 6 years of age had a parent leave a job, take a leave of absence, or cut back hours due to challenges with child care.
- 45% of parents frequently had to leave work early due to child care challenges.



“Child care must be an integral component of any economic development plan. Like workforce development, transportation and information technology it is an essential part of the infrastructure puzzle. If families do not have quality affordable child care options, we will never fully reach our economic development goals or potential.”

*Bruce Stewart, Executive Director
St. Lawrence Child Care Council, Inc.*

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. 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>

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
- Legally Exempt Child Care Enrollment

St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services

- Family Day Care/School-Age Child Care Registrar

St. Lawrence Child Care Council

- Local/regional contracts with other agencies
- Training Fees
- Fees for Services



Summary

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 no regulated or significant child care supply issues.
- Insufficient 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.
- The median household income is \$61,900. The average annual cost of infant care in St. Lawrence County in a child care center is \$16,640 (27%) and \$14,508 (23%) 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 public funding for child care subsidy assistance are in danger of being reduced.

If you would like to discuss the 2025 St. Lawrence County Child Care Report contact:

Bruce Stewart
Executive Director
(315) 393-6474 Ext. 12
bruce.stewart@ocfs.ny.gov

Dee Burlingame
Program & Quality Assurance Coordinator
(315) 393-6474 Ext. 14
dburlingame@stlawrencechildcare.org

