



**Westchester County Child Care  
Capacity and Enrollment Report  
2007**





**Issued by the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.  
March 2008**



## *Why Early Care and Education Matters*

Westchester County is home to almost one million people. A recent estimate by the American Community Survey put the total population at 949,355 with about 18% of those residents children from birth to 13 years old (2006 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau). Nearly half of our residents are in the labor force: over 41,000 Westchester children under 6 years of age have working parents (2006 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau).

Quality early care and education keeps Westchester working. It is also the “feeder system” for our schools. Though some may continue to think that a child’s “real education” does not begin until he or she takes a seat in kindergarten or even first grade, recent brain research offers a compelling argument – most of a child’s brain is fully developed by age 5 and the nature of that development is influenced by the stimulation and nurturance the child has received – or not. Longitudinal studies show that a quality early childhood experience pays off in multiple ways with improved school performance, higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and increased lifetime earnings; those children also register lower levels of legal system/court involvement and special education services.

For older children, participation in quality after school programs supports and enriches school learning, builds social skills, and provides a critical alternative to gang involvement, criminal behavior, and experimentation with drugs and alcohol.

The availability of quality early care and education is of significant importance to every child, every parent, every school district, every employer and every taxpayer in the Westchester community.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2005 the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. (the Council) issued a child care report which documented unexpectedly high vacancy levels in regulated early care and education settings in Westchester County. That report, combined with anecdotal information from child care business owners and directors attesting to low enrollments, financial difficulties and lagging child care subsidy utilization, led to County Executive Andrew Spano’s decision to obtain a comprehensive market study of child care by a national research team. Released in March 2007, the 2006 Westchester County Child Care Utilization Study (the ETC Report) found that the high cost of Westchester child care, in combination with parents’ dissatisfaction with hours, location and quality, had caused many parents to opt out of full-time regulated care. The report called for a series of short and long-term changes to the Westchester early care and education industry to improve access, affordability, program quality and financial sustainability. To begin that process, the Department of Social Services contracted with the Council to fund Early Care and Education Forward (ECE Forward), an initiative to “re-design the shape of early care and education in Westchester County”. For more on the ETC Report and ECE Forward, please visit the Council’s website, [ChildCareWestchester.org](http://ChildCareWestchester.org).

Because of the unexpectedly low enrollment levels observed in 2005 and the Council’s new focus on quality improvement and financial sustainability for child care businesses, it was decided to conduct a fresh survey in 2007 to capture new capacity and enrollment information.

This report describes the estimated capacity and enrollment of regulated child care in Westchester County which includes licensed child care centers, registered school age programs, licensed group family providers and registered family providers. Capacity is derived from the number of approved child care slots a child care business is allowed per the regulations of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Because of resource limitations, the Council did not survey the large number of Westchester legally-exempt programs including nursery schools and school-based pre-kindergarten programs, though it is clear from the results of the ETC Report that many parents are using this care rather than regulated early care and education. This report also does not address child care demand because the ETC Report did so at a level of comprehensiveness and sophistication not available to the Council. However, this report does compare 2007 results with that of the prior 2005 report.

## REPORT PROCESS AND FORMAT

With essentially the same survey instrument as in 2005, the Resource and Referral Department used its child care resource database, NACCRRAware, to identify approximately 655 Westchester regulated child care businesses to participate in the survey. The goal was to obtain at least a 50% overall response rate in the most populous communities (Greenburgh, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Ossining, Peekskill, Port Chester, White Plains and Yonkers). The regulated child care businesses were either mailed or emailed the survey in July 2007 asking for documentation of their May 2007 enrollment by age group. The survey also included questions on reasons for running below licensed capacity, referral sources, presence of subsidy, scholarship and other non-parent revenue, and knowledge/use of the Westchester County Scholarship Program. Bookstore gift certificates were offered as an incentive to encourage survey responses. The emailed survey was sent out again in August. Since only 110 surveys were received by the Council as of August 22nd, additional surveys were completed by Council staff via phone interviews and other activities such as meetings, trainings and technical assistance visits. The original target date for survey completion was August 30th, which was later extended to September 30th. Outreach, however, continued into October in order to meet the desired number of participants. The intensive survey follow-up was focused on center-based programs because of their larger licensed capacity relative to home-based programs. Overall, the Council obtained a 60% response to the enrollment survey.

The regulated capacity information for 2007 is as of May 1, 2007. The regulated capacity statistics for the 2005 report were based on November 2004 information in the Council's referral database. The regulated capacity comparison then spans a period of 2 and one half years.

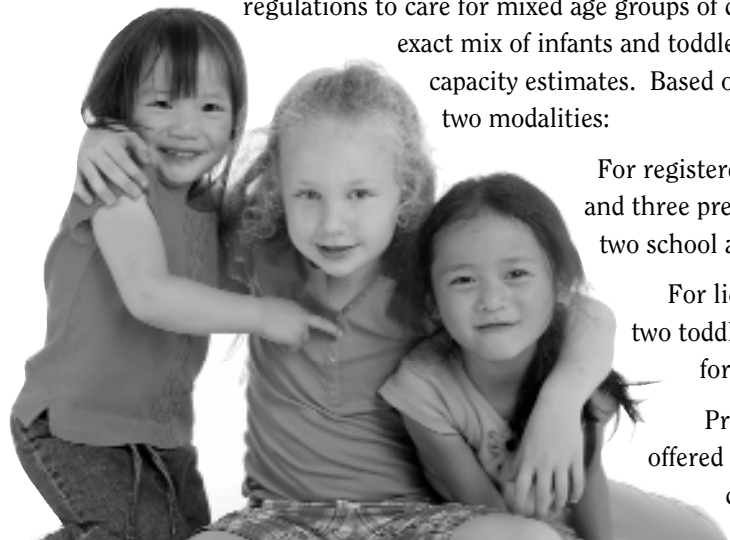
## ASSUMPTIONS

Registered family child care providers and licensed group family child care providers are permitted under New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulations to care for mixed age groups of children. The flexibility that registered family providers and licensed group family providers have over the exact mix of infants and toddlers that they choose to serve at any given point in time limits the precision of our infant and toddler slot capacity estimates. Based on our general experience, however, we used the following formulas in describing the capacity for those two modalities:

For registered family child care providers, an average of five children per provider including one infant, one toddler and three preschoolers. Providers with an expanded license were assumed to have the capacity to care for an additional two school age children.

For licensed group family child care providers, an average of ten children per provider including two infants, two toddlers, and six preschoolers. Providers with an expanded license were assumed to have the capacity to care for an additional two school age children.

Previously, the Council had found that the preponderance of regulated center-based child care programs offered primarily full-time care. During this survey, it became clear that more programs are providing part-time care, which made the interpretation of the survey results more complicated. For the purposes of this





report, we treated all part-time children as enrolled at 50% or half-time. Future enrollment surveys will be modified to more precisely capture variations in enrollment schedule. Given the ETC Report’s finding that many Westchester parents are looking for part-time care for their children, this change on the part of regulated child care settings is appropriate and welcome.

## FINDINGS

**What is the current capacity of regulated child care in Westchester?** There are 25,466 slots of regulated child care in Westchester or 1 slot for about every 7 children from birth to 13 years in our county.

<b>Estimated Capacity of the Regulated Child Care Industry in Westchester</b>						
<b>Modality</b>	<b># Child Care Businesses</b>	<b>Infant Slots</b>	<b>Toddler Slots</b>	<b>Preschool Slots</b>	<b>School Age Slots</b>	<b>Total Slots</b>
Licensed centers	161 (26%)	901	2,316	8,208	1,342	12,767 (50%)
Registered school age programs	109 (17%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	9,564	9,564 (38%)
Registered family providers	197 (32%)	185	185	627	234	1,231 (5%)
Licensed group providers	158 (25%)	292	292	1,020	300	1,904 (7%)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>625 (100%)</b>	<b>1,378 (5%)</b>	<b>2, 793 (11%)</b>	<b>9,855 (39%)</b>	<b>11,440 (45%)</b>	<b>25,466 (100%)</b>

The Westchester regulated child care system is diverse with all four modalities well-represented. Although over half (57%) of the regulated child care businesses are home-based, an overwhelming majority of the licensed slots (88%) are found in center-based programs. Capacity estimates suggest that only 16% percent of the slots are potentially available for infants and toddlers.



**What does enrollment look like?** Our survey showed an overall enrollment level of 74% across all regulated modalities and age groups in Westchester County.

**By Modality** - Licensed centers recorded the highest overall enrollment at 83%, followed by licensed group family providers, registered school age programs, and finally, registered family child care providers:

<b>Enrollment in Regulated Child Care by Modality</b>					
<b>Modality</b>	<b>Infant Slots</b>	<b>Toddler Slots</b>	<b>Preschool Slots</b>	<b>School Age Slots</b>	<b>Total Slots</b>
Licensed centers	82%	87%	82%	79%	83%
Registered school age programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	64%	64%
Registered family providers	70%	100%*	25%	65%	56%
Licensed group providers	75%	100%*	33%	72%	70%

\*Note that some registered and licensed group family providers actually had more toddlers than the above chart suggests as they used “infant slots” to serve additional toddlers, which they are allowed to do under state regulations.

**By Age Group** - Overall enrollment by age group ranged from a high of 99% for toddlers to only 67% for school age slots:

<b>Enrollment in Regulated Child Care by Age Group</b>				
<b>Infant Slots</b>	<b>Toddler Slots</b>	<b>Preschool Slots</b>	<b>School Age Slots</b>	<b>Total Slots</b>
79%	99%	73%	67%	74%

**By Municipality** - Individual municipalities displayed wide variation in enrollment levels, ranging from 100% in Pound Ridge to 49% in Port Chester. A majority of municipalities reported enrollment levels running between 70% and 89%:

Looking at the 25 municipalities in the context of the overall County enrollment average of 74%:

Sixteen reported enrollment levels above that of the County average with Pound Ridge (100%), Eastchester (93%) and Pelham (92%) the highest.

Nine had enrollment levels below that of the County average with Port Chester (49%), North Salem (53%), and Lewisboro (56%) registering the lowest numbers.

There was no apparent relationship between north/south county location and enrollment level.



<b>Enrollment Levels by Municipality</b>	
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Enrollment Level</b>
Pound Ridge	100%
Eastchester	93%
Pelham	92%
Scarsdale	88%
Mamaroneck	87%
Bedford	87%
Harrison	86%
Rye	86%
Greenburgh	85%
Mount Kisco	83%
Mount Pleasant	81%
New Rochelle	79%
Peekskill	79%
Cortlandt	77%
Ossining	76%
White Plains	75%
New Castle	67%
Yorktown	72%
Somers	72%
Mount Vernon	72%
North Castle	67%
Yonkers	58%
Lewisboro	56%
North Salem	53%
Port Chester	49%

**More about Low Enrollment** - Additional questions to probe enrollment difficulties were included: 379 responses were received and tabulated. Overall, two thirds of the respondents stated that their businesses were running below capacity though there was some slight variation according to modality. Licensed centers and licensed group family were more likely to be operating at capacity than registered school age or registered family businesses.



<b>Municipal Enrollment Levels Compared to County Average of 74%</b>		
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Overall Enrollment</b>	<b>Over/Under County</b>
Bedford	87%	+13%
Cortlandt	77%	+3%
Eastchester	93%	+19%
Greenburgh	85%	+11%
Harrison	86%	+12%
Lewisboro	56%	-18%
Mamaroneck	87%	+13%
Mount Kisco	83%	+9%
Mount Pleasant	81%	+7%
Mount Vernon	72%	-2%
New Castle	73%	-1%
New Rochelle	79%	+5%
North Castle	67%	-7%
North Salem	53%	-21%
Ossining	76%	+2%
Peekskill	79%	+5%
Pelham	92%	+18%
Port Chester	49%	-25%
Pound Ridge	100%	+26%
Rye	86%	+12%
Scarsdale	88%	+14%
Somers	72%	-2%
White Plains	75%	+1%
Yonkers	58%	-16%
Yorktown	72%	-2%





### Child Care Businesses Running at/below Licensed Capacity

<b>Modality</b>	<b># respondents</b>	<b>Below capacity</b>	<b>At capacity</b>
Licensed centers	107	61%	39%
Registered school age programs	61	74%	26%
Registered family providers	114	73%	27%
Licensed group providers	97	61%	39%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>

Overall, three factors were identified by respondents as most related to low enrollment: difficulties with the child care subsidy system, too much competition from other child care businesses and the cost of child care. Center-based child care businesses were more apt to list the cost of care as the top factor while the home-based child care providers identified competition:

### Factors Related to Low Enrollment

<b>Modality</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>
Licensed centers	Cost of care 38%	Competition 34%	Subsidy system 31%
Registered school age programs	Cost of care 43%	Subsidy system 41%	Parents not working 30%
Registered family providers	Competition 36%	Subsidy system 33%	Cost of care 29%
Licensed group providers	Competition 30%	Subsidy system 26%	Choose to limit capacity 21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Subsidy system 32%</b>	<b>Competition 31%</b>	<b>Cost of care 30%</b>



## HOW DO THE 2007 RESULTS COMPARE WITH THE RESULTS REPORTED IN 2005?

Overall licensed capacity is flat, with 25,466 slots in 2007 compared to 25,413 in our previous report, yet there has been a reduction in the number of child care businesses over that same period, from 707 in 2005 to 625 in 2007, a loss of almost 12%. The primary reason that capacity remained relatively constant while the number of providers declined is because the largest provider decrease was among providers with the smallest capacity – registered family providers. However, the decline may be further understood by looking more carefully at modality, age group and municipality.

**Capacity by Modality** - The decrease in child care slots was observed primarily in the registered school age and registered family provider sectors; the latter modality showing a decline of nearly 30%. Only the licensed group family child care modality gained with 20 new businesses, some of them coming from successful registered family child care business owners who expanded into larger licensed group settings. The licensed group family sector continued to grow closer in size to the registered family child care sector, which has traditionally been the dominant modality in the Westchester County child care industry mix.

<b>Regulated Child Care Businesses by Modality</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Licensed Centers</b>	<b>Registered S/A</b>	<b>Licensed Group</b>	<b>Registered FCC</b>	<b>Total</b>
2005	166 (23%)	124 (18%)	138 (20%)	279 (39%)	707 (100%)
2007	161(26%)	109(17%)	158 (25%)	197 (32%)	625 (100%)
<b>Change '05 to '07</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>-82</b>	<b>-82</b>

**Capacity by Age Group** - With only modest growth in overall regulated capacity, there were slight increases in toddler and preschool supply, accompanied by decreases in infant and school age slots:

<b>Regulated Child Care Capacity by Age Group</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Infant Slots</b>	<b>Toddler Slots</b>	<b>Preschool Slots</b>	<b>School Age Slots</b>	<b>Total Slots</b>
2005	1,416	2,661	9,747	11,589	25,413
2007	1,378	2,793	9,855	11,440	25,466
<b>Change '05 to '07</b>	<b>-38 (-3%)</b>	<b>+132 (+5%)</b>	<b>+108 (+1%)</b>	<b>-149 (-1%)</b>	<b>+53 (+.02%)</b>

**Capacity by Municipality-** Regulated child care slots increased in 14 municipalities, decreased in 10 and remained the same in 1, evidence of the relatively dynamic nature of child care supply. In many instances, the actual change in slots in either direction was modest but 6 municipalities (Greenburgh, Mt Vernon, Ossining, Peekskill, Yonkers and Yorktown) each experienced supply shifts of several hundred slots:



<b>Regulated Capacity by Municipality</b>			
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2005 Report</b>	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>Change</b>
Bedford	489	496	+7
Cortlandt	596	623	+27
Eastchester	374	386	+12
Greenburgh	1933	2266	+333
Harrison	479	474	-5
Lewisboro	122	149	+27
Mamaroneck	595	651	+56
Mount Kisco	532	499	-33
Mount Pleasant	1454	1354	-100
Mount Vernon	2296	1949	-347
New Castle	478	530	+52
New Rochelle	1386	1351	-35
North Castle	583	568	-15
North Salem	107	163	+56
Ossining	1013	1257	+244
Peekskill	753	459	-294
Pelham	146	245	+99
Port Chester	731	722	-9
Pound Ridge	35	35	0
Rye	347	441	+94
Scarsdale	809	923	+114
Somers	211	347	+136
White Plains	3374	3243	-131
Yonkers	4844	4367	-477
Yorktown	1726	1968	+242

**Enrollment** - Overall, enrollment remained constant. Roughly equal numbers of municipalities experienced increased enrollment between 2005 and 2007 as did report decreased enrollment.

**Enrollment by Age Group** - Enrollment levels increased in toddler and school age slots, declined in infant slots, and remained about the same for preschool.

<b>Regulated Child Care Enrollment by Age Group</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Infant Slots</b>	<b>Toddler Slots</b>	<b>Preschool Slots</b>	<b>School Age Slots</b>	<b>Total Slots</b>
2005	84%	90%	72%	58%	68%
2007	79%	99%	73%	67%	74%
<b>Change '05 to '07</b>	<b>- 5%</b>	<b>+9%</b>	<b>+1%</b>	<b>+9%</b>	<b>+6%</b>

**Enrollment by Municipality** - The 2005 survey revealed very high enrollment vacancies among Westchester’s larger municipalities, where it had always been assumed that more supply was needed. By 2007, enrollment levels had increased in all five municipalities, but the number of providers – and the licensed capacity of regulated programs –declined in four of the municipalities over the same period:

<b>Select Municipalities with Low Enrollment in 2005</b>						
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Regulated Slots</b>			<b>Enrollment Levels of Survey Respondents</b>		
	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Yonkers	4,844	4,367	-477 (-10%)	47%	58%	+11%
Peekskill	753	459	-294 (-39%)	51%	79%	+28%
Ossining	1,013	1,257	+244 (+24%)	58%	76%	+18%
New Rochelle	1,386	1,351	-35 (-3%)	64%	79%	+15%
White Plains	3,374	3,243	-131(-4%)	68%	75%	+7%



**What public and private funding is supporting children in regulated care?** - Respondents were asked to identify if they had served children in 2007 whose tuition fees were paid by non-parent sources including the child care subsidy administered by the Westchester County Department of Social Services, program-generated funds, or other child care scholarship sources. We found that children with the child care subsidy were served in all modalities, with center-based programs showing slightly higher percentages. Licensed centers also reported the most diverse funding sources in 2007, including the Westchester County Child Care Scholarship, the Council’s Sally Ziegler Scholarship and the United Way Child Care Scholarship. Almost half of the center-based programs indicated that some of their children had been recipients of their own scholarship funding (e.g funds raised by the center itself.) Home-based child care programs reported serving subsidized children at slightly lower levels. Licensed group family providers tapped the Westchester County Child Care Scholarship and the Ziegler Scholarship to a greater extent than the registered family providers:

<b>Children’s Funding in Regulated Child Care Programs in 2007</b>						
<b>Modality</b>	<b>Public Child Care Subsidy via DSS</b>	<b>Westchester County Scholarship</b>	<b>Ziegler Scholarship</b>	<b>United Way Scholarship</b>	<b>Own Scholarship</b>	<b>Other (fundraisers by provider)</b>
Licensed centers	75%	41%	28%	26%	42%	12%
Registered school age programs	74%	53%	37%	5%	47%	24%
Registered family providers	62%	24%	1%	n/a	3%	15%
Licensed group providers	64%	39%	17%	n/a	9%	19%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>16%</b>



**HOW WIDESPREAD IS FAMILIARITY WITH AND UTILIZATION OF THE NEW WESTCHESTER CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?**

The survey also contained several questions about the Westchester County Child Care Scholarship Program, which debuted as a demonstration in the summer of 2006 and was expanded in 2007. This program was funded by the Westchester County Board of Legislators to help working families who have incomes just above the eligibility ceiling for the public child care subsidy. The Council was interested in gaining additional insight into the level of understanding and utilization of the scholarship program by the early care and education industry in Westchester County.

We found a high level of recognition of the scholarship program. It appears that most child care businesses do inform parents of this opportunity for financial assistance, although most do not help parents with the application process. While application rates were fairly uniform, center-based programs were more likely to have parents who actually received the awards. An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the scholarship program was helpful to parents:

<b>Feedback on Westchester County Child Care Scholarship Program</b>						
<b>Modality</b>	<b>Familiar w/ Scholarship Program</b>	<b>Told Parents about Program</b>	<b>Helped Parents Apply</b>	<b>Had Parents Apply</b>	<b>Parents Received Awards</b>	<b>Found Helpful to Parents</b>
Licensed centers	82%	75%	35%	43%	36%	76%
Registered school age programs	75%	76%	45%	45%	50%	84%
Registered family providers	84%	69%	34%	45%	24%	69%
Licensed group providers	80%	70%	40%	47%	29%	74%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>74%</b>

## DISCUSSION

This capacity and enrollment survey revealed several important findings that can be used to help guide program and policy decisions within the Child Care Council as well as the county as a whole. These include the following:

*Encouraging child care businesses to pay more careful attention to child care market demand, and begin to develop new business strategies, is a key goal of ECE Forward.*

**(1) Most of the children in regulated child care settings are enrolled in center-based programs.** This finding underscores the key role that child care centers play in early care and education. To this end, strengthening the quality of care and education offered in these programs – including fiscal and program management capacity – must continue to be a key goal for the Council.

**(2) Fewer child care businesses are operating while slot capacity has remained stable, suggesting a movement toward fewer and larger child care operations.** Municipalities with the lowest enrollment levels in 2005 all showed increases but with only one exception, they had experienced declines in regulated capacity as well. This finding is potentially positive, since larger and more stable businesses are often more able to provide high quality early learning opportunities. However, it is too early to know whether this will be the case in Westchester. Nevertheless, it appears that an increasing percentage of Westchester child care program operators are taking market conditions into consideration and developing strategies to adjust supply to more accurately meet perceived demand. Encouraging child care businesses to pay more careful attention to child care market demand, and begin to develop new business strategies, is a key goal of ECE Forward. This finding suggests that the Council’s work may be beginning to have a positive impact.

**(3) Although there is a slight increase in overall enrollment levels, existing regulated child care businesses are still experiencing high vacancies.** The good news is that vacancy rates have declined somewhat—particularly for toddlers and school-age children. However, vacancy rates for infants appear to have risen and preschool vacancy rates are essentially flat. These latter findings are curious and troubling. The high cost – and price -- of infant care is one potential reason for high vacancies among this age group; another is that our assumptions regarding the potential supply of infant care may be too high.

Consistently high vacancy rates in preschool slots pose a serious concern, but also a unique opportunity. Preschool age children (3-5 years of age) are the largest target market for most ECE programs. Thus, ensuring that preschool slots are fully enrolled is a key strategy for financial viability. If, on average, only 73% of the preschool slots in a child care program are full the program is losing substantial amounts of money. On the other hand, new state funds have become available for four year old children, via the NYS universal pre-kindergarten initiative (UPK). Only a third of Westchester school districts actually applied for these funds in 2007. Districts that choose to participate in UPK are required to spend at least 10% of their allocation in contracts with community-based programs—although they can spend more. (In fact, a district could choose to spend all of its UPK funding via contracts.) Given the unused capacity of preschool slots in Westchester community-based organizations, and the fact that most programs identified funding shortages as a key reason for high vacancies, it may indeed be possible to match available funds with unused supply. This should be a key goal for the 2008-09 school year.





**(4) There is no obvious geographic explanation for enrollment findings as child care businesses with high and low levels can be found in every part of the County.** In 2006 the Council comparison of child care prices and family income revealed that families at all income levels pay a significant percentage of their income for regulated child care. Thus, while low-income families need child care subsidy in order to afford regulated care, many moderate and middle-income families struggle as well. Since public subsidy is not available to these families, they often choose less expensive care provided by family, friends or neighbors – in addition to part-day, regulation exempt nursery schools.

Clearly, additional financing options are needed to help families with incomes above the eligibility ceiling for child care subsidies. This year the Child Care Council worked closely with the County Board of Legislators to implement a scholarship program for these families. Additionally, the Council worked with County Government to expand the use of Dependent Care Assistance Plans by their employees as a way to help moderate and middle income families pay for child care. Both of these efforts are significant, but insufficient. Future efforts need to focus on ways to help lower market prices, most especially in high-quality center-based programs.

*Given the unused capacity of preschool slots in Westchester community-based organizations, and the fact that most programs identified funding shortages as a key reason for high vacancies, it may indeed be possible to match available UPK funds with unused supply. This should be a key goal for the 2008-09 school year.*

*Without question, careful attention needs to be paid to gathering comprehensive data on all types of early care and education in all locations, and using these data to guide decision-making with regard to the allocation of funds and efforts to expand supply.*

**(5) Center-based programs are more likely to identify cost of care as a contributing factor to low enrollment while home-based providers cite too much competition in the industry.** This finding is not surprising, given that the gap between the cost of providing high-quality early care and education and the prices families can afford to pay is much larger in center-based than in home-based care. However, it also suggests that home-based child care programs are more aware of potential competitors than are center-based programs. Indeed, if community-based child care centers viewed public school pre-kindergarten programs and nursery schools as potential competitors – which they are – concerns about competition might increase. Without question, careful attention needs to be paid to gathering comprehensive data on all types of early care and education in all locations, and using these data to guide decision-making with regard to the allocation of funds and efforts to expand supply.

**(6) Regulated child care businesses depend on a variety of payment sources for their tuition costs.** A high percentage of child care businesses, center-based in particular, served children whose tuitions were paid from the public subsidy program and several scholarship programs, especially the new Westchester County program. Nearly half the licensed centers and registered school age programs also contributed their own funding. Westchester County is an expensive place in which to live and

to do business. Many families need financial assistance to afford child care and clearly many businesses could not operate without substantial revenue from non-parental sources. The Council must continue its efforts to identify alternative funding strategies, working closely with Westchester County and the Westchester Partnership for Early Care and Education, a broad-based coalition promoting quality ECE.



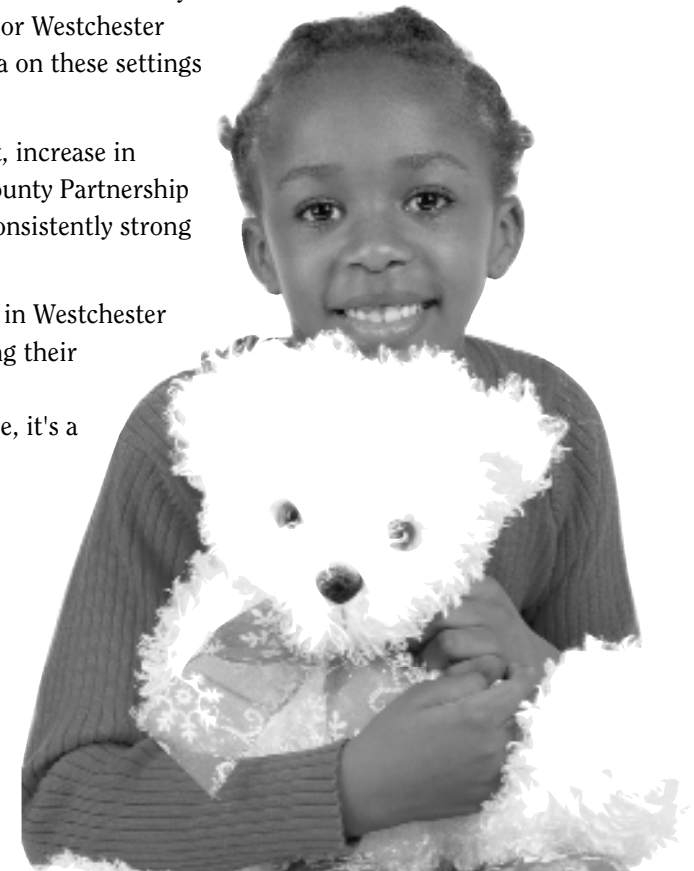
**(7) Subsidized children are being served all over the county in all types of child care programs.** Child care businesses still cite the public subsidy program as a barrier to higher enrollment. The Department of Social Services Child Care Subsidy Program is a significant source of funding for many Westchester child care businesses. The ETC Report revealed many concerns with this program – including an overly complex application process and documentation requirements and uneven customer service. DSS and the Council have been working together closely to address these issues. The County’s reduction of the parent co-pay to 10%, the lowest allowable rate, and its recent permission from the State Office of Children and Family Services to eliminate the child support requirement for subsidy recipients are very positive changes which should boost utilization.

## CONCLUSION

The Child Care Council survey offers helpful -- but limited -- information on regulated early care and education programs in Westchester County. The primary data limitation is the term regulated. New York State does not regulate many early care and education settings, including part-day preschool programs operated by public schools (prekindergarten) or private entities (nursery schools). The ETC report underscored that part-day preschool programs are the top choice for many Westchester families. Thus, they play an important role in early care and education markets. Without comprehensive data on the capacity and location of these programs, our analysis is limited. Gathering data on these part-day preschool programs is an important, but challenging, goal for the Council. Without a state or local requirement that part-day programs meet regulatory requirements, or even register their presence with a governmental body, it is difficult to accurately count the number of slots available in these settings. To this end, the Council strongly encourages New York State or Westchester County to require some form of regulation or registration for part-day preschool programs, and to make data on these settings publicly available.

Westchester County government, with its steady reduction in the parent share of the subsidy co-payment, increase in subsidy reimbursement rates, funding of infant-toddler expansion, active participation in the Westchester County Partnership for Early Care and Education, and support of the Council’s quality improvement efforts, has demonstrated consistently strong leadership in the area of early care and education.

Westchester County needs to attract and retain young families. However, it is expensive to live and work in Westchester County--especially for young families, who not only pay high prices for child care but are often just beginning their careers and therefore have limited incomes. In short, ensuring that families have access to the high-quality, affordable early care and education they need to live and work in Westchester County is not just a social issue, it's a bottom line economic issue.





## APPENDIX

### BREAKDOWN OF MUNICIPALITIES

#### BEDFORD

Bedford  
Bedford Hills  
Katonah

#### CORTLANDT

Buchanan  
Cortlandt  
Cortlandt Manor  
Croton  
Croton-on-Hudson  
Montrose  
Verplanck

#### EASTCHESTER

Bronxville  
Eastchester  
Tuckahoe

#### GREENBURGH

Ardsley  
Ardsley-on-Hudson  
Dobbs Ferry  
Elmsford  
Greenburgh  
Hartsdale  
Hastings  
Hastings-on-Hudson  
Irvington  
Tarrytown

#### HARRISON

Harrison  
Purchase  
West Harrison

#### LEWISBORO

Cross River  
Goldens Bridge  
Lewisboro  
South Salem  
Vista

#### MAMARONECK

Larchmont  
Mamaroneck

#### MOUNT KISCO

#### MOUNT PLEASANT

Hawthorne  
Mount Pleasant  
Pleasantville Village  
Pocantico Hills  
Sleepy Hollow  
Thornwood  
Valhalla

#### MOUNT VERNON

#### NEW CASTLE

New Castle  
Chappaqua  
Millwood

#### NEW ROCHELLE

#### NORTH CASTLE

Armonk  
North Castle

#### NORTH SALEM

Croton Falls  
North Salem  
Purdys

#### OSSINING

Briarcliff Manor  
Ossining  
Scarsboro

#### PEEKSKILL

#### PELHAM

Pelham  
Pelham Manor Village  
Pelham Village

#### PORT CHESTER

#### POUND RIDGE

#### RYE

Rye  
Rye Brook

#### SCARSDALE

#### SOMERS

Amawalk  
Baldwin  
Granite Springs  
Lincolndale  
Shenorock  
Somers

#### WHITE PLAINS

#### YONKERS

Crestwood

#### YORKTOWN

Crompond  
Mohegan Lake  
Shrub Oak  
Yorktown Heights  
Jefferson Valley

### Definitions of Child Care Modalities

#### Licensed Child Care Centers:

All child care centers that provide care for more than three hours a day must be licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Licensed child care centers are governed by regulations that dictate the number of children they are allowed to serve, the ratio of adults to children, the educational qualifications of the caregivers, and the health and safety conditions of the facility. Care may be provided for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. If the center is accredited, it has voluntarily gone through a rigorous examination and meets the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which exceed the requirements for state licensing.

#### Registered School Age Programs:

School-age care programs provide care for children 5 years to 12 years of age outside of regular school hours. Run by schools, nonprofit organizations and independent business owners/operators, this type of care is offered in a variety of settings including public or private schools, recreation centers, churches and other facilities. Group sizes are determined by state regulations, and programs are required to be registered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Typically run by a director and a staff of teachers, quality after school programs provide positive environments and enriching age-appropriate activities. National accreditation through the National School-Age Alliance is achieved through extensive examination; successful completion indicates a level of quality above state licensing requirements.

#### Registered Family Child Care:

Registered family child care homes offer care in a personal residence for more than three hours a day for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Registered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, family child care homes are governed by regulations that dictate the numbers and ages of children, the qualifications of the caregiver and the health and safety conditions of the facility. An accredited provider has successfully gone through a rigorous examination and meets the standards set by the National Association of Family Child Care, which exceed the requirements for state registration. The family child care provider may care for a mixed age group of children.

#### Licensed Group Family Child Care:

Group family child care is run from a personal residence, typically staffed by a provider and an assistant. Care is provided for more than three hours per day to children from 6 weeks through 12 years of age. Licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, group family child care homes are governed by regulations that dictate the numbers and ages of children, the qualifications of the caregiver and the health and safety conditions of the facility. An accredited provider has successfully met the rigorous standards of the National Association of Family Child Care, which exceed the requirements for state registration. Group Family Child Care Homes may care for a mixed age group of children.

For more information, please visit the website: [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org).

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**Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.  
champions healthy development of children, families, and communities  
by promoting quality early care and education.**

**The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.  
470 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605  
Telephone: 914-761-3456  
Fax: 914-761-1957  
Website: [ChildCareWestchester.org](http://ChildCareWestchester.org)  
E-mail: [childcare@cccwny.org](mailto:childcare@cccwny.org)**