



Quality Early Care and Education... where our future begins

Westchester County Child Care Status Report 2012

SUMMARY

The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. continued its efforts to monitor enrollment levels and the financial status of regulated child care businesses in the county through a survey of directors and owners. All modalities of regulated care were included such as licensed child care centers, registered after school programs, licensed group family providers and registered family providers. Two rounds were conducted to obtain information on May 2012 and October 2012. The response rate was 10% and 17% respectively, with the majority of respondents from licensed centers. Survey participants tended to have high percentages of private pay children enrolled vs. children paid through the public Child Care Subsidy Program, although those businesses with subsidized children reported subsidized enrollment at 75% or more of all enrollment. Many municipalities were represented with the highest percentage of respondents doing business in Yonkers.

Major findings:

- A significant percentage of Westchester regulated child care businesses are operating well below their licensed capacity with sharp decline from May 2012 to October 2012. This is true across the industry, regardless of the revenue streams (private pay vs. public child care subsidy).
- Parents' job loss, children aging out of a program, family relocation and parents' difficulty paying for child care are the primary factors contributing to declining enrollment.
- More child care businesses are cutting staff salaries, benefits and hours to keep afloat.
- Year-end financial projections have improved slightly since 2010 but are still concerning.
- The continued increase in child care supply by the addition of new businesses, in the face of a slow economy and reduced child care financial assistance makes a competitive market even more so. This environment puts more pressure on child care programs/providers to reach or sustain the enrollment levels they need and to obtain other revenue sources.

"Since September 2011 our numbers have been down. We are just hanging on hoping to survive the economic storm."

REPORT PROCESS

The goal of our survey was to obtain information from regulated child care programs and providers on their enrollment levels and financial status. We sought representative responses from a diverse population of child care businesses serving children in care through the Westchester County Department of Social Services Child Care Subsidy Program as well as those paid by private parent fees. The survey was distributed twice to capture data for May 2012 and then October 2012 to approximately 760 child care businesses each time. To facilitate the process, we used SurveyMonkey.com. Approximately 760 child care businesses on the Council’s email lists received the surveys.

In both the May and October 2012 surveys, we used the same questions in the same format. We asked about overall enrollment level, enrollment by age group and source of payments, comparisons with the prior year, changes in staffing and licensed capacity, status of cash flow and projection of year-end financial status.



For the May 2012 survey, 77 responses were received, approximately 10% of the total audience. This was a significantly lower response rate than prior years. However we received 133 surveys for October 2012, an overall response rate of 17%, closer to the previous years’ levels. About half of the October respondents also participated in the May survey.

RESPONDENTS

Modality

For both May and October, about half the surveys came from licensed centers. Family-based providers were the next largest group, representing slightly more than a third of the respondents. School age programs accounted for around 10%.

Respondents by Type of Child Care Modality				
<i>Modality</i>	<i>May 2012</i>		<i>October 2012*</i>	
	#	%	#	%
Child Care Centers	40	52%	61	46%
School Age Programs	7	9%	16	12%
Group Family Child Care Providers	22	29%	33	25%
Family Child Care Providers	8	10%	21	16%
Other (non-regulated)	0	0%	2	2%
<i>Totals</i>	77	100%	133	101%

*Total percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Location

Respondents were mostly from southern and northern Westchester. However, in the October survey, representation from southern Westchester increased.

Respondents by County Region		
Westchester Region	May 2012	October 2012
Southern	28 (36%)	61 (46%)
Northern	27 (35%)	43 (32%)
Central	22 (29%)	29 (22%)

Many municipalities were represented in the survey, particularly in October, although Yonkers was by far the top business location, reflecting the distribution of regulated child care businesses in the County.

Cities/Towns with > 2 Respondents		
City/Town	May 2012	October 2012
Yonkers	13	32
Yorktown Heights	6	7
New Rochelle	5	7
Scarsdale	5	5
Harrison	3	
Hastings-On-Hudson	3	
White Plains	3	7
Peekskill	3	5
Mount Vernon	3	9
Mamaroneck		5
Chappaqua		4
Tarrytown		3
Dobbs Ferry		3
Bedford Hills		3
Briarcliff Manor		3
Cortlandt Manor		3
Ossining		3
Somers		3

Revenue Sources

Child care businesses serving predominantly private pay families constituted the majority of the responses in both the May and October surveys, though there were differences by region. Respondents doing business in the southern region were much more apt to report high levels of subsidized children than those in the central or northern regions.

High Levels of Subsidized Enrollment by County Region						
Westchester Region	May 2012			October 2012		
	All Respondents	High Levels of Subsidized Children		All Respondents	High Levels of Subsidized Children	
		#	%		#	%
Southern	28	12	43%	61	24	39%
Northern	27	6	22%	43	5	12%
Central	22	1	5%	29	1	3%
Totals	77	19	25%	133	30	23%

Although only about a quarter of the respondents reported significant reliance on the Child Care Subsidy Program, of that group most indicated that 75% to 100% of their children were subsidized. This high concentration was predominantly true for group family providers.

High Levels of Private Pay Enrollment by County Region						
Westchester Region	May 2012			October 2012		
	All Respondents	High Levels of Private Pay Children		All Respondents	High Levels of Private Pay Children	
		#	%		#	%
Southern	28	17	61%	61	30	49%
Northern	27	19	70%	43	36	84%
Central	22	17	77%	29	22	76%
Totals	77	53	69%	133	88	66%

However, the respondents with significant private pay enrollment also indicated that many of their children received partial assistance from other sources including Universal Pre-K or private scholarships funded by their own child care programs. Clearly child care businesses often rely on a mix of revenue streams.

Family child care businesses had high levels of subsidized children at a rate of almost three times that of the other respondents.

High Levels of Subsidized Enrollment by Child Care Modality						
Modality	May 2012			October 2012		
	# of All Respondents	# of Subsidized	% of All Respondents of Modality	# of All Respondents	# of Subsidized	% of All Respondents of Modality
Child Care Centers	40	5	13%	61	8	13%
School Age Programs	7	0	0%	16	2	13%
Group Family Child Care Providers	22	11	50%	33	13	39%
Family Child Care Providers	8	3	38%	21	7	33%
Totals	77	19	25%	131	30	23%

Respondents running center-based programs in particular had high levels of private pay children.

High Levels of Private Pay Enrollment by Child Care Modality						
Modality	May 2012			October 2012		
	# of All Respondents	# of Subsidized	% of All Respondents of Modality	# of All Respondents	# of Subsidized	% of All Respondents of Modality
Child Care Centers	40	31	78%	61	42	69%
School Age Programs	7	5	71%	16	13	81%
Group Family Child Care Providers	22	13	59%	33	20	61%
Family Child Care Providers	8	4	50%	21	11	52%
Totals	77	53	69%	131	86	66%

Respondents in both May and October that reported serving high levels of children receiving the public child care subsidy, tended to have at least 75% subsidized enrollment. This was true of 72% of the respondents in May and 73% in October.

Range of Subsidy Enrollment in Programs with High Levels of Subsidized Children				
<i>Modality</i>	<i>Respondents May 2012</i>	<i>All (100%) Subsidized</i>	<i>Majority (75%) Subsidized</i>	<i>Half (50%) Subsidized</i>
Child Care Centers	5	1	2	2
School Age Programs	0	0	0	0
Group Family Child Care Providers	11	4	4	3
Family Child Care Providers	3	1	1	1
	<i>Respondents October 2012</i>			
Child Care Centers	8	2	4	2
School Age Programs	2	0	2	0
Group Family Child Care Providers	13	3	5	5
Family Child Care Providers	7	3	3	1

ENROLLMENT

In May 2012 only 34% of the respondents reported being enrolled to licensed capacity, which dropped to 23% in October. In both surveys, a majority of respondents reported being under-enrolled and that trend accelerated alarmingly in just a few months. Under enrollment was most pronounced for school age programs.

Respondents Below Licensed Capacity by Modality		
<i>Modality</i>	<i>May 2012</i>	<i>October 2012</i>
Child Care Centers	73% (29 out of 40)	76% (32 out of 42)
School Age Programs	86% (6 out of 7)	77% (10 out of 13)
Group Family Child Care Providers	55% (12 out of 22)	74% (14 out of 19)
Family Child Care Providers	50% (4 out of 8)	100% (10 out of 10)
<i>Totals</i>	66% (51 of 72)	76% (66 of 84)

Under-enrollment was very high for all respondents regardless of modality or revenue source (private pay vs. child care subsidy). For October 2012 however, 100% of child care center, school age program, and family child care providers with high levels of subsidized children reported enrollments under licensed capacity. The picture for respondents with high levels of private pay children was mixed. Child care centers and school age programs reported lower frequencies of under-enrollment and family providers reported higher.

Respondents Enrolled Below Licensed Capacity by Revenue Source & Modality				
Modality	Respondents with High Levels of Private Pay Children		Respondents with High Levels of Subsidized Children	
	May 2012	October 2012	May 2012	October 2012
Child Care Centers	87% (27 out of 31)	76% (32 out of 42)	60% (3 out of 5)	100% (8 out of 8)
School Age Programs	100% (5 out of 5)	77% (10 out of 13)	No Responses	100% (2 out of 2)
Group Family Child Care Providers	54% (7 out of 13)	70% (14 out of 20)	64% (7 out of 11)	62% (8 out of 13)
Family Child Care Providers	75% (3 out of 4)	91% (10 out of 11)	33% (1 out of 3)	100% (7 out of 7)

May 2012 enrollment levels were low across age groups, but particularly so for kindergarten and up, which had less than 40% of the respondents indicating they were at or above 75% of capacity. Less than 50% of respondents were enrolled at 90% or above of capacity for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. A third of the respondents reported that their enrollments had remained somewhat steady in the last year, but most also noted that the enrollment process had become more challenging.

Enrollment Levels by Age Group - May 2012							
Age Group	# of Respondents Serving Age Group	% of Full Enrollment*					
		100%	90%	75%	50%	25%	0%
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	42	29%	14%	12%	14%	10%	21%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	57	26%	21%	9%	19%	16%	9%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	67	21%	21%	28%	12%	9%	9%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	40	20%	10%	8%	28%	5%	30%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	34	18%	12%	9%	18%	9%	35%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6 th)	29	17%	14%	4%	10%	14%	31%

*Total percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The enrollment patterns in October reflected the further decline in overall enrollment. Rates of 100% enrollment in every age group fell even further with the exception of children 6 to 8 years, which remained steady at a dismal 18%.

Enrollment Levels by Age Group – October 2012							
Age Group	# of Respondents Serving Age Group	% of Full Enrollment*					
		100%	90%	75%	50%	25%	0%
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	84	27%	11%	13%	11%	26%	12%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	94	23%	12%	22%	18%	19%	5%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	112	14%	17%	22%	15%	21%	11%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	74	19%	11%	9%	11%	20%	30%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	71	18%	14%	6%	10%	23%	30%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6 th)	62	15%	13%	3%	8%	23%	39%

*Total percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Looking specifically at respondents serving high levels of subsidized children from May to October, enrollment levels at 100% of licensed capacity increased significantly for infant groups (19% to 35%) and remained fairly stable for other age groups. When one combines 100% and 90% enrollment levels, however, except for infants, there was a significant decline across all age groups. For example, toddlers went from 48% to 25% and preschool age groups fell from 37% to 19%.

Enrollment Levels by Age Group – Respondents with High Levels of Subsidized Children May 2012							
Age Group	# of Respondents Serving Age Group	% of Full Enrollment*					
		100%	90%	75%	50%	25%	0%
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	16	19%	25%	13%	19%	6%	19%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	17	24%	24%	6%	24%	24%	0%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	19	11%	26%	21%	16%	16%	11%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	16	19%	19%	6%	19%	6%	31%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	17	18%	18%	12%	12%	12%	29%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6 th)	14	21%	21%	7%	7%	21%	21%

*Total percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Enrollment by Age Group – Respondents with High Levels of Subsidized Children October 2012							
Age Group	# of Respondents Serving Age Group	% of Full Enrollment*					
		100%	90%	75%	50%	25%	0%
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	28	35%	12%	8%	4%	38%	4%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	27	21%	4%	21%	25%	29%	0%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	29	15%	4%	19%	26%	33%	4%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	21	10%	5%	0%	15%	40%	20%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	25	22%	4%	0%	17%	30%	26%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6th)	22	15%	10%	0%	15%	25%	35%

*Total percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Looking at respondents serving high levels of private pay children, enrollment at 100% of licensed capacity was very low in both May and October. When one combines 100% and 90% enrollment levels, there were declines for infants and toddlers over this period (46% and 44% in May to 37% and 36% in October), but increases for all other age groups.

Enrollment by Age Group – Respondents with High Levels of Private Pay Children May 2012							
Age Group	# of Respondents Serving Age Group	% of Full Enrollment <i>Total may not equal 100% due to rounding</i>					
		100%	90%	75%	50%	25%	0%
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	26	38%	8%	12%	1%	8%	23%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	41	27%	17%	10%	24%	12%	10%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	45	16%	20%	31%	16%	9%	9%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	24	17%	4%	4%	33%	8%	33%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	18	17%	0%	11%	22%	6%	44%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6th)	15	13%	7%	20%	13%	7%	40%

Enrollment by Age Group – Respondents with High Levels of Private Pay Children October 2012							
Age Group	# of Respondents Serving Age Group	% of Full Enrollment <i>Total may not equal 100% due to rounding</i>					
		100%	90%	75%	50%	25%	0%
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	51	29%	8%	16%	14%	20%	14%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	62	24%	12%	26%	19%	16%	3%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	74	18%	28%	24%	11%	20%	9%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	48	19%	20%	15%	13%	8%	35%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	42	17%	20%	10%	10%	19%	26%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6th)	37	14%	14%	5%	8%	22%	38%

Some experts assert that child care programs must operate at a minimum of 90% enrollment for financial viability. The survey results for both May and October 2012 demonstrate that none of the respondents regardless of age group served or revenue source approached that level. Further, the respondents with high levels of subsidized children showed declines in 90% plus enrollment levels from May to October for every age group. Respondents with high levels of private pay children showed improvement in October for preschool, kindergarten and school age children. Respondents with high levels of subsidized children had comparable or higher 90% enrollments in May 2012 compared to those with high levels of private pay children; this relationship was reversed in October 2012 with the exception of the infant age group, where 90% plus enrollment remained higher for respondents with high levels of subsidized children.

Comparison of Enrollment at 90%+ by Revenue Source and Age Group						
Age Group	High Levels of Subsidized Children			High Levels of Private Pay Children		
	May 2012	Oct 2012	Change	May 2012	Oct 2012	Change
6 wks to 18 mos (Infant)	44%	47%	-3%	46%	37%	-9%
19 mos to 3 yrs (Toddler)	48%	25%	-23%	44%	36%	-8%
3 to 4 yrs (Preschool)	37%	19%	-18%	36%	46%	+10%
5 yrs (Kindergarten)	38%	15%	-23%	21%	39%	+28%
6 to 8 yrs (1st thru 3 rd)	36%	26%	-10%	17%	37%	+20%
8 to 12 yrs (4th thru 6th)	42%	25%	-17%	20%	28%	+8%

Respondents indicated a number of factors causing low enrollment, with parental job loss as number one. While children aging out and only needing summer hours could be considered both predictable and routine business challenges, in the October survey, there was increased impact on enrollment by loss of the child care subsidy or inability to afford child care and/or to pay the parent share.

“The economy is influencing our numbers. We cater to working class parents and many have lost their jobs.”

Frequency of Enrollment Loss Factors (duplicated count)	
<i>Factors</i>	<i># of Respondents</i>
	May 2012
Lost their jobs	29
Children outgrew the program/aged out	29
Relocated/moved out of Westchester County	28
Could no longer afford care	23
Lost hours at work	19
Relocated/moved within Westchester County	15
Lost DSS Child Care Subsidy	12
Parents only needed summer care	12
Could not afford co-pay (subsidized parents only)	6

IMPACT ON PROGRAM CAPACITY

Despite on-going enrollment issues and both business closures and contractions, other child care businesses expanded. Seven centers and one school age program closed classrooms and three family home providers decreased their slots. At the same time, eight centers and two school age programs opened classrooms and two family home providers expanded. These changes occurred all over the county.

IMPACT ON BUSINESS DECISIONS

The survey questions were scaled back for the October survey; this data was not collected in that survey.

May 2012 (only)

Nearly half (47%) of the respondents reported that their financial situation had an impact on personnel, prompting them to make adjustments in the past year in staffing hours, salaries and benefits:

- 33 lowered staff hours
- 16 laid off staff
- 14 reduced salaries
- 14 cut benefits

Slightly over a quarter (27%) of the respondents reported that in the past year they increased staffing or compensation:

- 19 increased salaries
- 19 hired new staff
- 12 increased staff hours
- 6 added of staff benefits

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Meeting Operating Expenses

In May 2012, a little more than half of all respondents reported that their monthly revenues covered all their business expenses. In October, this situation was even less promising, as 60% felt that their revenues would be either inadequate (38%) or sometimes adequate (22%). Both respondents with high levels of subsidized children and those with high levels of private pay children registered growing concern from May to October. Nearly 70% of respondents with high levels of subsidized children however, indicated that their revenues would be either inadequate (55%) or sometimes adequate (14%) in October. Two respondents indicated that their financial survival is due to other revenue sources including Head Start funding and/or Universal Pre-K and by reducing their expenses.

"There have been no raises in 4 years and my salary was cut in half."

Adequacy of Monthly Revenues to Expenses		
Total percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding		
Status at Year End		
All Respondents	May 2012 N=75	October 2012 N=125
Adequate	52% (39)	39% (49)
Inadequate	33% (25)	38% (48)
Sometimes Adequate	15% (11)	22% (28)
Respondents with High Levels of Subsidized Children	May 2012 N= 19	October 2012 N=29
Adequate	37% (7)	31% (9)
Inadequate	47% (9)	55% (16)
Sometimes Adequate	16% (3)	14% (4)
Respondents with High Levels of Private Pay Children	May 2012 N= 52	October 2012 N= 85
Adequate	54% (28)	45% (38)
Inadequate	33% (17)	29% (25)
Sometimes Adequate	13% (7)	26% (22)

Year End Financial Outlook

There was a significant change in respondents' financial outlook from May to October. In May, nearly 60% expected to break even or realize a surplus at year-end, but by October this had fallen to 42%. Respondents projecting a year end deficit increased from 23% in May to 34% in October. Although the respondents with high levels of private pay children were less optimistic about running a surplus (22% to 17%) or breaking even (39% to 31%), the picture for the subsidized group deteriorated significantly. Of that group, 48% stated that they projected a year end deficit in October, up from 16% in May.

In May 2012, 9 respondents (12%) were concerned that they would need to close and another eleven (14%) reported that they might need to consider closing.

In Oct 2012: 22 respondents (17%) were concerned that they would need to close and another twenty (16%) reported that they might need to consider closing.

Projected Financial Position at Year End		
Revenue to Expense		
All Respondents	May 2012 N=75	October 2012 N=128
Break Even	40% (30)	27% (35)
Deficit	23% (17)	34% (43)
Surplus	17% (13)	15% (19)
Unsure	19% (14)	24% (31)
Respondents with High Levels of Subsidized Children	May 2012 N=19	October 2012 N=29
Break Even	42% (8)	21% (6)
Deficit	16% (3)	48% (14)
Surplus	11% (2)	14% (4)
Unsure	32% (6)	17% (5)
Respondents with High Levels of Private Pay Children	May 2012 N= 51	October 2012 N= 87
Break Even	39% (20)	31% (27)
Deficit	27% (14)	29% (25)
Surplus	22% (11)	17% (15)
Unsure	12% (6)	23% (20)

COMPARISON WITH PRIOR SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's *Westchester County Child Care Supply and Demand Survey 2005*, *Westchester County Child Care Capacity and Enrollment Report 2007*, *Westchester County Child Care Status Report 2010*, *Westchester County Child Care Status Report 2011*, and licensed capacity information obtained from the Council's referral database were used in the comparison with the May and October 2012 results. It should be noted that the actual respondents and response rate has varied but there has consistently been county-wide participation with the largest single participating group that of licensed child care centers serving high levels of private pay children.

Enrollment

There has been a persistent issue with enrollment in Westchester's regulated child care market, according to the Council's survey results with slight improvement in May 2010 and steady increases in low-enrollment since. Enrollment is stronger in May than October, as in the fall, child care businesses are still gaining new customers, most of whom stay in place through the following May/June. It must be noted however, that the levels of under-enrollment in May are still concerning and trending upwards. In the 2012 survey, respondents reported that the actual process of enrolling children has become more difficult. Only 12% described enrollment as easier in 2012 than the prior year, while about 56% indicated it was more difficult.

Respondents Below Licensed Capacity May 2004 to October 2012				
May 2004	May 2007	May 2010	May 2011	May 2012
63%	66%	62%	65%	68%
		October 2010	October 2011	October 2012
		76%	80%	79%

"The negative impact is hitting us for our 2011-2012 enrollments; for the first time."

Factors Influencing Enrollment

Several factors should be considered when trying to understand the persistent and deepening low-enrollment in Westchester's regulated early care and education sector including unemployment, the poverty rate, child care affordability, and the size of the industry itself.

Unemployment

According to Lohud.com, Westchester County unemployment has more than doubled from May 2004 to May 2012.

Westchester County Unemployment Rate ¹ May 2004 to May 2012								
May 2004	May 2005	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008	May 2009	May 2010	May 2011	May 2012
4.30%	3.90%	3.80%	3.40%	4.50%	7.10%	7.00%	6.50%	7.10%

Poverty

Not surprisingly, in 2011, the poverty rate for children under the age of 18 reached 13.6% in Westchester County according to the *U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)* program. This is a 33% increase since 2005, when it was 10.2%. The County poverty rate also reached 10%, a 43% increase since 2004.

Westchester County Poverty Rate (All Ages) ² 2004 to 2011							
2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
7%	8%	7%	7%	8%	9%	9%	10%

Child Care Affordability

The cost of child care in New York is second in the nation, behind only Massachusetts. Westchester County's cost of child care is always at or near the top of New York State, with a year of licensed care for a preschooler averaging over \$14,000. Costs have continued to inch up each year, and child care remains the second highest bill for most families after rent or mortgage.

Over the past decade, Westchester County has moved from offering one of the highest family share rates in the state, close to the maximum allowed, to the lowest; it is now on its way back up. In 2004, Westchester's family share was 33%. With strong advocacy, the County gradually lowered the rate, reaching 10% in 2008. Increases followed to 15% and then 20%; as of February 2012, the family share is now at 27%. Equally problematic was the change in child care subsidy availability for families over 200% of the Federal Poverty Level; in March 2010, this program was closed to new families and remains closed. Participation has declined substantially from over 400 children to well under 100. The Westchester Child Care Scholarship Program, funded by the County Board of Legislators in 2006, also ended in spring 2010 and has not been refunded. This program, administered by the Council, awarded annual scholarships averaging \$3,600 to approximately 250 low-wage earning families. At a time when the economy was deteriorating, unemployment was climbing, and child care costs remained steep, help paying for child care was significantly reduced. It should also be noted that the Council was funded for several years to provide child care subsidy support to both parents and child care programs and providers; this staff person helped families obtain the subsidy and providers with contracting, billing and reimbursement. This position was phased out and finally ended on December 31, 2012.

¹ http://data.lohud.com/labor/laus_form.php

² *By the Number*, found on <http://data.wca4kids.org/datafinder>

Regulated Child Care Slots

In a seven-year span, from 2005 to 2012, there was a 7% increase in the total number of regulated child care programs. The total number of slots available rose by 26%. This growth occurred at a time when existing child care businesses were struggling to enroll children and the Council was advising prospective child care businesses of the competitive nature of the industry and the financial realities.

Regulated Child Care Programs and Licensed Capacity 2005 to 2012		
Year	Total # of Programs	Total # Slots
2005	707	25,413
2006	664	26,171
2007	666	26,444
2008	694	28,285
2009	710	30,577
2010	751	31,283
2011	761	31,937
2012	757	32,193

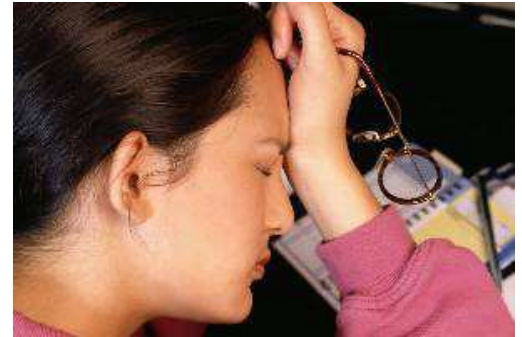
CONCLUSION

The Council's surveys illustrate the challenges of operating in Westchester's regulated child care industry, a situation which grows more serious according to our 2012 results. Despite growing scientific evidence that quality early learning could make the difference not only in the lives of individual children and families, but also in our regional economies and national competitiveness, adequate resources have yet to be invested at any level of government and they have been significantly reduced by Westchester County.

In 2012, the Council observed increased interest on the part of many child care business leaders to improve program quality as preparation for QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY), our state's quality rating improvement system, which is being slowly implemented. Competition in the child care industry will become more, not less intense and we expect that parents' expectations will increase as well, as they become more knowledgeable about quality standards.

The Council has offered business training and technical assistance in the past, with only a lukewarm response by participants. Perhaps with greater communication to the industry about the enrollment difficulties and the accompanying financial challenges, we might enlist more business leaders in this activity.

Finally, the need for more financial assistance to reduce the child care affordability barrier is clear and the Council will redouble its efforts to gain more resources for families.



A regional economic impact analysis shows that in New York State each additional dollar invested in child care generates a total of \$1.52 - \$2.00 in the state economy as a whole.¹