

# The Business Case for Early Childhood Investment

**SPECIAL  
INVITATION  
INSIDE  
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 **Child Care Council  
of Westchester, Inc.**

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# Quality Early Childhood Programs:

*Benefits for Children, Families and Communities*

“Achieving a world-class education system and creating a highly skilled work force begins with high-quality early learning opportunities.” Ready, Set, Go: How Business Can Support Early Childhood Education.”

– U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Institute for a Competitive Workforce, September 2010



“Early childhood education fosters cognitive skills along with attentiveness, motivation, self-control and sociability — the character skills that turn knowledge into know-how and people into productive citizens.”

– James J. Heckman, Nobel Laureate economist, University of Chicago, 2011

## Early Investments Yield the Biggest Returns

Driven by evidence that our work force increasingly lacks the skills needed in the “knowledge economy” and that K-12 reform efforts have not reversed this alarming trend, business leaders across the U.S. are looking at early childhood differently. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, America’s Partnership for Economic Success, the Committee for Economic Development, Society of Human Resource Managers and others, recognize that quality early childhood programs may be the best way to improve educational outcomes for children AND increase work force skills and economic productivity for us all.

## The First Years Are All Important

The most rapid phase of brain development occurs in the first five years.

The architecture of the brain is determined by the intellectual and social-emotional influences young children experience.

Children who start behind, often stay behind.

Children who do catch up often require extensive and costly services to do so.





“...if done right, high-quality, parent-focused, early childhood development programs that began at birth can make an extraordinary difference in outcomes both for the child and society.

We found excellent longitudinal studies that strongly suggest there's a very high public return, but you must invest at birth and you must do it right.”

– Art Rolnick, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2011

“Over the long term, high-quality early childhood programs have been shown to increase job growth to a greater degree than business subsidies, a mechanism traditionally used for state economic development. From a national perspective, quality early childhood programs provide earnings effects at least three times greater than business subsidies.”

– Timothy J. Bartik, *The Economic Development Effects of Early Childhood Programs*, 2008

**Among Westchester children under five years of age, nearly 17 percent live in families below the federal poverty level, currently \$18,530 for a three-person family.**



## **The “Achievement Gap” Happens Before Kindergarten**

Many Westchester children will attend the best public and private schools in our nation, followed by admission to elite colleges and universities, good jobs and financial security. But there are thousands of Westchester children for whom the trajectory will be very different. They will arrive at kindergarten already behind their peers, struggle academically and fail

to graduate high school. Some will be chronically unemployed; others will rely on expensive public benefit programs. Far too many will end up in our corrections system. We expect our education system to “level the playing field” for children with economic disadvantages, but the schools will be far more successful when children arrive ready to learn.



# Quality Child Care Needed

*for Our Changing World*

“To respond to the changing work force and the need for educated, flexible employees, we need to shift from viewing early care and education as a private responsibility to creating a system that offers families the support they need to care for and educate our nation’s children.”

*—Why America Needs High Quality Early Care and Education,” Corporate Voices for Working Families, March 2009*

## We’re Not in Kansas Anymore

The notion that young children are home with their parents until they start kindergarten has been replaced by a far different reality. Neighborhoods full of adults at home looking out for each other’s children are not as common as they once were. Single parents are working and the percentage of dual-career households has increased, too. Nationally, more than 11 million children under age five regularly spend time in some type of child care

setting every week (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2010). Fifty percent of infants have their mothers back at work by six months.

At present, many U.S. parents are largely on their own when it comes to paying for early childhood programs. Full-time child care may be the highest household cost, second only to rent or mortgage.

## Child Care Also Supports the Bottom Line.

63 percent of American Business Collaboration member employees reported improved productivity while using quality dependent care (Abt Associates, 2000).

Child care breakdowns leading to employee absences cost businesses \$3 billion annually in the United States (Karen Shellenback, Child Care and Parent Productivity: Making the Business Case, 2004).

## All Child Care Is Not Created Equal

Parents assume that all early care and education programs are subject to regulation and inspected frequently, which is not true. In New York, programs that care for more than two children for more than three hours a day must be licensed or registered by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). OCFS regulations address basic health and safety issues and establish staff to child ratios. But regulatory compliance is no guarantee of quality. Indeed, our regulations are thought to represent a minimum rather than optimal level of quality. That’s why the Child Care Council believes it is so critical for parents to be knowledgeable about child care options and best practices so they can obtain quality services for their children.

For more information on NYS

OCFS regulations, visit: [www.childcarewestchester.org/parents\\_regulations.htm](http://www.childcarewestchester.org/parents_regulations.htm).

For a national report on child care regulatory standards and oversight and to see how NYS compares, visit: [www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications](http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications).



## Quality Matters

Research shows that only quality child care programs really deliver the expected benefits to children. To improve child care quality, many states have established quality rating improvement systems or QRIS, a systematic approach to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs, similar to a Zagat’s star rating system for restaurants. New York state currently lags the country, behind 23 states with implemented quality rating improvement systems. The state just completed a field test phase of its own QRIS, QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY) and efforts are underway to move QSNY to full implementation. When operational, QSNY will arm consumers with new information to bring to the child care marketplace.





## Quality Stars— Building Child Care Quality in New York

Any child care program regulated by the state of New York or the city of New York can participate.

Programs can earn one to five stars, with a one star rating available by simply completing an application.

Higher ratings will require evidence of meeting additional quality

standards in four categories: Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Qualifications and Experience and Leadership and Management.

Westchester County was one of 13 QSNY field test sites with the Child Care Council serving as lead agency. For more information, visit [www.qualitystarsny.com](http://www.qualitystarsny.com).



## One of the Most Important Decisions a Parent Will Ever Make

Many parents are anxious about leaving their young children in care. This is especially true for first-time parents or those who are new to the area. Parents with multiple children, non-traditional work hours or children with special needs may find it harder to locate what they're looking

for. Infant care is at a premium in some communities. The early care and education marketplace can be an overwhelming place for parents, but assistance is available however, through the Child Care Council of Westchester..



## Is Your Child Care as Great as Your Child? *Children need caregivers who:*

- Are warm, welcoming and pay attention to every child;
- Use positive guidance techniques and do NOT yell, spank or use other negative punishments;
- Read to them every day and do not use TV and offer them freedom to explore; and continue their own professional development.

For more information on indicators of quality child care, call (914) 761-3456, ext. 140, or visit [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org).

# Investing in Child Care...

## *Yields Big Returns*

“Three-quarters of parents rate affordable child care as the most (31 percent) or one of the most (45 percent) important factors in helping working families”

– *The Economy's Impact on Parents' Choices and Perceptions About Child Care*, NACCRRRA, 2010

Despite the high cost of child care for parents, salaries for teachers are modest despite steady gains in educational credentials in the early care and education work force.

## Child Care Sticker Shock



Because most early care and education settings are small and regulations demand high staff to child ratios, annual child care fees for parents are high.

In 40 states, the average annual cost for center-based infant care exceeded a year's tuition and fees at a four-year public college (Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2010 Update, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2010).

Nationally, New York is second only to Massachusetts with the highest average child care cost. In New York, Westchester is one of the most costly regions for child care with full-time preschool care for one child averaging nearly \$14,000, more than double the cost of a SUNY tuition.

## Investing Early in Westchester's Children

Most parents, even those at the middle-income level, will find it difficult to pay for reliable, quality child care. They face high child care bills at a time when their earnings are generally at their lowest level. In Westchester, working parents whose household income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level may

qualify for the child care subsidy program administered by the Westchester County Department of Social Services; a family of two working parents with a child would be ineligible if their household income is more than \$36,620. There are thousands of Westchester families over the limit for the subsidy program and priced out of the

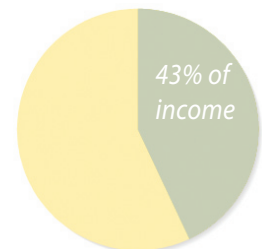
quality child care market.

While scholarships for college-bound students have been seen as a legitimate public and private investment for decades, the notion of providing financial assistance for our youngest children during the most pivotal phase of their intellectual development, is just catching on.



## The High Cost of Child Care in Westchester

- Infant care in a licensed center ranges from \$13,000 to \$24,000; the average is \$16,430.
- Preschool care in a licensed center ranges from \$10,140 to \$19,500; the average is \$13,676.
- Two working parents with a child and household income of \$38,000 are over-income for the public child care subsidy; the average infant care fee of \$16,430 is more than 43 percent of their entire household income.







## **Future Leader Awards – Helping Children, Strengthening Families, Building Economic Prosperity**

The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. is launching the Future Leader Awards, child care scholarships for working families, from the council's Sally Ziegler Scholarship Fund. This program will target Westchester families with children from birth to age 12 who enroll their children in regulated child care programs that are nationally accredited, participated in the QUALITYstarsNY field test or have engaged successfully in one of the council's quality improvement programs. The application process will be announced shortly on [www.childcarewestchester.org](http://www.childcarewestchester.org).



## **Investors Needed for Westchester's Young Children**

The Council's scholarship dollars are very limited with only five scholarships currently funded. A child care scholarship program funded by Westchester County, before it ended in the spring of 2010, was assisting more than 200 families annually. Help us respond to this very real need with your contribution to this new program. To make your investment, or for more information, contact Kathy Halas, executive director at (914) 761-3456, ext. 102.

## **National Accreditation is Indicator of Quality**

Achieving national accreditation is one indicator of program quality. Current programs as of March 1, 2011, in Westchester that have met this high standard include:

- Country Children's Center-Baby Blue
- Country Children's Center-  
The White House
- Country Children's Center
- East Ridge Enrichment Center
- Easter Seals Project Explore
- Good Shepherd Early  
Childhood Center
- Greenville Church Nursery School
- Greyston Family Inn  
Child Care Center
- Kids' B.A.S.E. and The Little School  
@ Scarsdale School Student
- Kids S.P.A.C.E. of Rye Inc.  
@ McDonald House
- Larchmont Avenue Church  
Pre-School
- Lissie's Katonah Playschool
- Maria's Loving Child Care
- Memorial Methodist  
Early Childhood Center
- Montrose Child Care Center
- Oak Lane Child Care Center
- Purchase Children's Center, Inc
- The Children's Center at Purchase  
College, Inc.
- The Robin's Nest
- The Seed Day Care Center
- Timber Ridge Family Center
- TLC Transitional Learning Center
- Virginia Marx Children's Center at  
Westchester Community College

# Quality Childcare

*Moves Westchester Forward*



**“Regional economic impact analysis shows that in New York state each dollar invested in child care generates a total of \$1.52-\$2.00 in the state economy as a whole.”**

*—“Investing in New York: An Economic Analysis of the Early Care and Education Sector”, Cornell University Department of City and Regional Planning for the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, 2004.*



## Early Care and Education is Big Business in Westchester

Child care is an important sector of our economy in its own right, made up of more than 750 regulated child care businesses with capacity to serve more than 31,000 children from birth through age 12 years.

- Westchester’s child care work force exceeds 5,000 men and women.
- The number of child care businesses grew by 6 percent in 2010.
- Child care business receipts are spent almost entirely in the regional economy.

## How the Council Can Help Employers:

Helping prospective and current employees satisfy their child care needs enhances worker recruitment, retention and productivity.

The council is eager to support the business community with a range of services:

- Trained child care specialists available 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (914) 761-3456, ext. 140;
- Access online child care search 24/7 at [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org);
- Consumer information and resources on child care options, regulations, quality standards and helpful checklists to use in decision-making;
- Information on child care financial assistance, including tax credits;
- Assistance applying for the public child care subsidy for lower-income workers;
- Subscription to our E-Parent Newsletter full of information and resources;
- Materials and workplace seminars on Born Learning, a public education campaign in partnership with the United Way of Westchester-Putnam, Inc.; and
- Workshops at the workplace on child care and child development.



## Another Way to Generate Better Outcomes for Children: Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting programs for pregnant women and/or families with young children featuring trained professionals providing support, parenting education and connection to resources have been linked to better educational outcomes, increased work force productivity and reductions in criminal behavior and teen pregnancy.



- The Nurse-Family Partnership in Elmira, N. Y., resulted in fewer arrests and convictions for children and helped to reduce child abuse and neglect among poor unmarried mothers.
- Nurse home visitation programs are associated with a \$17,200 lifetime return per youth and save \$2.88 for every dollar spent.
- The Westchester Children's Association created the Westchester Home Visiting Workgroup to expand and improve these services within the county. For more information, contact Cora Greenberg, executive director, at (914) 946-7676, ext. 301

## Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Stimulate Economic Activity Nationwide

The Child Care Council of Westchester delivers services in Westchester County but is also a part of an impressive network of CCRR agencies. (child care resource and referral agencies) helping children, parents and communities all over the U.S.

For more information about the NYS network, contact the Early Care and Learning Council at [www.earlycareandlearning.org](http://www.earlycareandlearning.org).

For more information about the national network, contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, or NCCRRAA at [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org).



## Need Help Paying for Child Care?

**We will advise you on the costs of care and financial assistance options, determine if you may be eligible and help you apply. Call our subsidy support services at (914) 761-3456, ext 122.**

“ Individually, the cost of these lost opportunities is tragic; in the aggregate, the impact on our economic future is disastrous. ”

—Kathleen Halas, Executive Director,  
Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.

You Know  
Your Child,

We Know  
Child Care

**REFERRALS:** Our trained child care specialists will provide you with potential programs from our comprehensive, one-of-a-kind database of Westchester's early care and education programs, including school-age programs.

**RESOURCES:** We'll share our tips on indicators of quality, sample interview questions, information on regulations, financial assistance and much more.

**RELAX:** We'll answer all your questions so you will be informed and confident as you carry out your child care search and selection.

Call us at (914) 761-3456, ext. 140, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or visit [www.](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org)

[ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org) and click on Quick Links Find Child Care, anytime, 24/7.



The county's leading authority on early care and education, the council is one of the largest child care resource and referral agencies in New York state. A nonprofit, 501(C)(3) agency, the Council plays a unique role in Westchester, delivering a variety of services that benefit families at every income level, support the economic activity of the region and strengthen the child care industry itself, a significant sector of our regional economy. Established in 1968, the Council is governed by a voluntary board of directors comprised of community leaders, parents, early care and education professionals, educators and members of the business community.

The Council's mission, to champion the healthy development of children, families and communities by promoting quality early care and education, is accomplished by:

- Linking families and businesses to child care and providing the information and resources they need to be knowledgeable consumers in the child care marketplace;

- Supporting new and existing child care businesses so that they meet regulatory requirements and achieve higher standards of quality;
- Educating decision-makers and other stakeholders in the importance of accessible, high-quality early care and education programs; and
- Promoting policies, resource development and strategies to strengthen our child care system.

The Council also works closely with nonprofit and governmental partners to address policy and programmatic needs of children in related arenas, including health, mental health and child abuse prevention. An active participant in the state and national networks of child care resource and referral agencies, the Council strives to advance the field of early care and education. For questions regarding the Child Care Council of Westchester, call Kathy Halas, executive director, at (914) 761-3456, ext. 102, or [kathyh@cccwny.org](mailto:kathyh@cccwny.org).

For more information on New York State's network of child care resource and referral agencies, call Kathy Halas, executive director, at (914) 761-3456, ext 102, or visit the Early Care and Learning Council at [www.earlycareandlearning.org](http://www.earlycareandlearning.org).







The Westchester Children's Association (WCA) is an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization. Since its founding in 1914, WCA has been a leading voice for the needs of the county's children and youth. "We find out what children need, make those needs known to the public and policy makers, and then see that they are met by promoting effective public policies and programs," said Cora Greenberg, executive director of the organization. WCA maintains a comprehensive data website with information about various aspects of children's lives in Westchester County. In addition, the organization undertakes studies of various issues, publishes reports, convenes coalitions and sponsors several public education events each year featuring national experts on current children's issues.

In recent years, WCA has had a particular focus on promoting the well being of the county's youngest citizens, children from birth to five years of age. Young children need the basic building blocks of health care, good nutrition, safe and nurturing families, adequate food and shelter and opportunities to develop their cognitive, physical and social skills. "Most children in Westchester are doing fine. They have families and communities that can give them the support and opportunities they need to reach their potential," said Greenberg. "But too many children, even in our wealthy county, face enormous challenges and obstacles to meeting even their basic needs."

For more information on home visiting or the Westchester Children's Association, visit [www.wca4kids.org](http://www.wca4kids.org) or contact Cora Greenberg, executive director, at (914) 946-7676, ext. 301.







# Supporting Westchester's Work Force of Today and Tomorrow: *Early Childhood Education* • Friday, March 25, 2011 at 8:00 AM

JPMorgan Chase is sponsoring a complimentary breakfast and program on the importance of quality early care and education for business growth and prosperity Friday, March 25, at 8 a.m. at The Gateway Center featuring:

**DR. JOSEPH HANKIN**, Welcome by Westchester Community College President,

**KIM JASMIN**, Northeast region executive for the JPMorgan Chase Foundation;

**DR. FARHAD AMEEN**, professor of Economics at Westchester Community College; and

**KATHLEEN HALAS**, executive director of the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.

The Child Care Council of Westchester and the Westchester Children's Association are co-sponsors of the breakfast. To register, please go to [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org).

The program also features tours of the Virginia Marx Children's Center, a nationally accredited center on the grounds of the college. An integral part of campus life, the center has been caring for the children of students, faculty, staff and the community since 1986. The licensed and nationally accredited center serves children between six weeks and 5.9 years, fully attuned to the physical, intellectual and social-emotional development of each unique child.



The Child Care Council of Westchester and the Westchester Children's Association are co-sponsors of the breakfast.



To register, please go to  
[ChildCareWestchester.org](http://ChildCareWestchester.org)

