



Issue 57

April 2022

NETWORK NEWS

Enriching the Community

A Message from the CCR&R Director

I can't believe it is already spring. I'm feeling hopeful this year. I'm feeling a sense of growth and new and I'm optimistic things are improving.

The mask mandate for child care programs was eliminated from OCFS on March 2, 2022. I know this was a huge sigh of relief for many providers and parents. Let's all remember to keep alert to changes though. Stay vigilant on cleaning and sanitizing to keep those spring germs out of your program. And let's hope another wave of COVID, or another variant, doesn't come around.

The subsidy system has seen many changes over the last year. We need your help letting parents know! If a parent previously was not eligible for subsidy, they might be now. Let all your parents know that child care subsidy payments through DSS could be available. I've included a "Parent Page" at the end of this newsletter. You can copy that to hand out to, or post it in your program for, all your parents.

If you haven't accepted subsidy payments before because of issues or concerns, things have changed, so now is a great time to start accepting it again. Some of the changes we have seen include: each county has increased the number of allowed absences, so if a family misses due to sickness or quarantine, you can still submit those days for payment. The number allowed by each county is different, but the state minimum is 24. Parent co-pays were decreased, so there is less that the parent is required to pay. The new market rates will be released soon and we anticipate an increase. Parents only have to reapply or recertify every year now. And if a parent's income increases making them over income, they are not immediately dropped from receiving subsidy. There is a grace period.

These changes, and more, were much needed and will help parents and providers both. Let your parents know so they can look into the subsidy program with their local DSS again.

Jennifer Penney

Family Enrichment Network
is a proud member of:



Early Care &
Learning Council

United to Promote Quality



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Happy Provider Appreciation Day!

To celebrate you and Provider Appreciation Day, we will be doing prize giveaways all day on Friday, May 6th on our Facebook groups.

If you have not joined yet, do so now!

We have 3 different groups:

- ⇒ Family/Group Family Child Care Program
- ⇒ Center/SACC Director
- ⇒ Center/SACC staff

Join the one that you belong in today!

We will post some fun contests and have random giveaways, so don't miss out!



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Self-Care: It's Not Selfish

By: Leslie Vermaat, Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. All of these things have a big impact on your ability to do your important work of caring for children!

Here are some tips to help you get started with self-care:

Get regular exercise. Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.

Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated. A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Also, limit caffeinated beverages such as soft drinks or coffee.

Make sleep a priority. Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.

Try a relaxing activity. Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy such as journaling.

Set goals and priorities. Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.

Practice gratitude. Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night, or replay them in your mind.

Focus on positivity. Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.

Stay connected. Reach out to your friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it's important to find what you need and what you enjoy. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you.

Come to our training on May 19 when we will focus on the mental health side of self-care. Take some uninterrupted time to focus on yourself! You will receive some new tools and fuel to get you going in a good direction!





BEST OF LUCK ANN!

After 25 years with Family Enrichment Network, Ann Shear will officially be retiring this summer.

Throughout her career in the CCR&R, Ann has offered assistance to the Tioga County providers, conducted tons of trainings and workshops, has been the CDA trainer and advisor since the program started in 2011, helped our Agency through both national and state accreditations, and is our data/database guru. We will miss Ann and all her knowledge and expertise!

Join us in wishing Ann the best of luck in the next phase of her life!



COVID Home Test Kits

You need them, we have them! Give us a call and we can set up a time to get you more test kits.



Congratulations New Child Care Programs!

Chenango Group Family
Child Care Provider

Pitter Patter Daycare: Micah Boyd



INGREDIENTS:

- 8 large eggs
- 2 ripe, fresh avocados, pitted and peeled
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley (optional)
- For assembly: 2 slices of whole wheat bread per serving

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place eggs in a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil, remove from heat, and let eggs stand in hot water for 10 minutes.
2. Remove eggs from hot water, cool under cold running water, and peel. Chop eggs and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, mash the avocados with a fork or potato masher until mostly smooth. Stir in the eggs, mustard, parsley (if wanted), lemon juice and salt.
4. Spread between whole wheat bread, then slice as desired into bite-sized sandwiches.
5. Prepared avocado egg salad can be stored sealed in the refrigerator for 3-5 days.

Comforting Infants and Young Children with ACEs

You may have heard about ACEs. If not, ACEs stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences. Even in infants and toddlers, adverse childhood experiences may increase a child's risk of health problems. To help a child who has had childhood trauma, relationships with supportive adults go a long way toward reducing their stress. Below are some ways to reduce stress for infants and young children.



- Tune in and learn the child's signals. Help them calm down when you sense that he/she is stressed or scared. Soothe the child, and teach ways to calm down when feeling upset.
- Talk and play with the child. Babies like to be rocked, cuddled, and massaged. Toddlers thrive on hugs, shared stories and songs, and daily routines. These actions can help children feel seen, heard, and understood.
- Focus on managing your own stress. This can help you better adjust the way these feelings impact how you respond to the child. Having a calm parent/caregiver will help protect a child during periods of stress.

Other ways to help a child deal with stress:

- Stick to daily routines. They help children know what's happening next, which can reduce stress
- Have your child exercise regularly. Make sure your child is getting at least an hour per day of active play.
- Help your child eat well. Good nutrition builds brain health and protects the body. Serve fruits and veggies at meals and avoid junk food.
- Turn to supportive relationships
- Practice being in the moment; try breathing and meditation. It can help the body manage stress.

ACEs don't just affect children, they affect families. Some of the most important things you can do to stop the effects of ACEs include learning to manage your own stress so you can be a healthy, stable, and caring presence for your child. This includes making lifestyle choices such as eating healthy food, getting regular exercise, making a good night's sleep a top priority, and practicing mindfulness. The good news is that science shows how bodies and brains grow and change every minute of the day! This means that by starting today, putting some of these lifestyle choices into action and getting the right help when you need it, can help build a healthier future for you and your family.

Resource: www.acesaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/3-How-to-Reduce-the-Effects-of-ACEs-and-Toxic-Stress-English.pdf

For any help, new activities, or to just brain-storm ideas, reach out to Infant/Toddler Specialist Cortney at cnornhold@familyenrichment.org or call (607) 723-8313 ext. 826 or (607) 687-6721 ext. 1187.



Read and Feed!

By Cathy Lipski Health and Wellness Coordinator

Spring is on its way bringing fresh thoughts of local fruits and vegetables. But how do they grow and where do they come from? Children might enjoy their veggies even more with stories that inspire imagination and healthy eating. Here are a few good reads to teach children about food, where it comes from and why they just might want to try something new!

How Did That Get in My Lunchbox? The Story of Food by Chris Butterworth

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

Up, Down and All Around by Katherine Ayers

If you need Board Books for the little ones I would suggest:

We Are Going to the Farmers Market by Stefan Page

Rah, Rah, Radishes – A Vegetable Chant by April Pulley Sayer

Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert

For humor to entice your picky eaters and try some new recipes, you might want to try reading:

How to Feed Your Parents by Ryan Miller



Message from The Referral Specialist

A few helpful tips for providers as we “Spring Ahead” into a new season:



Please be sure to update us if your phone number, email or other contact information changes!

This includes contact information for your business and also your non-published info, so that we may contact you.

Let us know when you have vacancies!

I'll do everything I can to make sure I am sending referrals your way, when I know who has vacancies and who doesn't.

Don't forget to answer your phones and check your voicemails!

I get a lot of people telling me that they called the providers to whom I gave referrals, but didn't get an answer or a response—or that the voicemail was full. We understand that you've got your hands full most of the day; so perhaps you can set your outgoing voicemail message to let folks know if you have openings, or when they can expect a return call from you (e.g. “I try to return all calls within 48 hours of receiving them”). You can also provide us with a text number or email address to provide to referrals, if that would be an option for you.

Feel free to give me a call or send an email, and I can assist you in updating your current information (Including address, contact information, rates, schedules and hours of care, certifications, etc.)
Kami Paiz, CCR&R Child Care Referral Specialist. Kpaiz@familyenrichment.org

Next Level Provider Collaborative

We have started the new Staffed Family Child Care Network, (SFCCN) called the Next Level Provider Collaborative.

The Next Level Provider Collaborative will be coordinated by Lisa Rosa. You may remember her from her days as the CACFP Coordinator. Lisa has been with Family Enrichment Network for almost 20 years and has had several different positions.

About this new project, Lisa says, "This is a new opportunity for me and I am so excited to get started with the project. The SFCCN is a free program to help you and your child care program make more money, reduce your administrative task list, and relieve the stress that running a business can bring. You will be a part of the first cohort with other family child care professionals and gain the support of business coaches to help you implement software tools, refine your business goals, and find ways to increase your revenue and bottom line."



Some of the frequently asked questions that are asked of the SFCCN are:

- *I'm worried that the technology will be too complex for my program.* We're providing simple, fast and free software to help you manage your program from a phone, computer or tablet. The software will be designed for, and is used by, hundreds of family child care programs across the country. The network of providers will pick the software used and we will provide support every step of the way, from onboarding to implementation.
- *I'm just getting started.* As long as you have been in your role for at least 18 months ,you are encouraged to apply.
- *I'm not organized enough and I'm embarrassed to have someone else see my information.* We understand how challenging it can be to stay on top of all of the administrative demands of your business. If your files are unorganized, then you need the help of automation and a business coach! No judgement; just help in tidying up your operations and reducing your administrative burdens.
- *I don't have time to learn how to do this.* Spending a few hours per week (2-3!) to learn and use the software will save you time day in and day out. Meeting with your coach to analyze your data and improve your business and quality practices will improve your program and your bottom line. The time you spend learning the software is a long-term investment in your business.
- *Why did you create the SFCCN?* Child care is an essential service, and COVID highlighted this and the fact that child care programs need more support to survive and thrive. Our mission is to help you build a sustainable business, increase your revenue, and eliminate business struggles that keep you from growing.

The first application period has closed, but we can always accept new, interested providers! Please call Lisa @ (607) 723-8313 ext. 1619 or Jenn Perney @ (607) 723-8313 ext 872 with any questions.



The Business of Child Care

Stabilization Grant:

Funds you received under the Stabilizationn Grant may be used to pay expenses/debt incurred on or after January 31, 2020, if those expenses/purchases were made in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. While the program does not need to submit receipts or documentation to OCFS, the child care program MUST keep all documentation regarding the use of these funds for a period of five (5) years.

All funds must be spent by 9/30/2023.

Funds can be used for one or a combination of the following:

- Personnel costs, including payroll, salaries, similar employee compensation, employee benefits, retirement costs, educational costs, child care costs; and supporting staff expenses in accessing COVID-19 vaccines;
- Rent (including under a lease agreement) or payment on any mortgage obligation, utilities, or insurance; also, may include late fees or charges related to late payments;
- Facility maintenance or improvements, defined as minor renovations, including outdoor learning spaces/ playgrounds, and minor improvements to address COVID-19 concerns;
- Personal protective equipment, cleaning and sanitization supplies and services, or training and professional development related to health and safety practices;
- Purchases of or updates to equipment and supplies to respond to COVID–19;
- Goods and services necessary to maintain or resume child care services;
- Mental health supports for children and employees; Health and safety trainings for staff, including but not limited to CPR, First Aid, and medication administration.

* Keep in mind if you use the money to pay yourself, you must keep a good written record of the payment to yourself. All records regarding how you spent the grant money must be kept on file and accounted for when preparing taxes.

Invest in New York – Child Care Deserts Grant:

The Desert Grant can assist those wishing to open a new program as well as those looking to expand. This expansion could include going from Family to Group or a Center, looking to expand age groups that you care for, as well as expanding care outside of normal business hours (night/weekends).

You will need to be part of Quality Stars in order to be eligible.

The Desert Grant application submission begins in April. You will need to complete your provider orientation in order to request an application.

You can find detailed information on the OCFS website.

Please call Julie Henry at 607-723-833 Ext. 1616 with any questions.



“P” is for Pilates

By Cathy Lipski, Health and Wellness Coordinator



Have you thought about Pilates for your children in your care? When Joseph Pilates developed his exercise program, over 100 years ago, he hoped that it would be taught to children from a young age to encourage good movement habits that would be carried into adult life. You might want to consider Pilates as an alternative way for your children to keep moving, keep active and relieve stress.

What are the benefits of Pilates for children?

1. Good movement habits: Exercise and movement in general have been proven to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury as well as reducing multiple medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. This means that getting children moving and exercising can help their health throughout their life.
2. Muscle strength: Pilates is a very safe way to get your children’s muscles working well by using only body weight. Having good muscular awareness and strength supports children’s bodies as they develop.
3. Balance and coordination: This is often one of the main areas of difficulty for children as they develop and grow. Having awareness of where your body is in space is what we need to maintain balance and coordinate our movement. Balance, coordination and strength help improve body awareness. This will enable children to cope with growth spurts and keep good control of their muscles and joints.
4. Body confidence: Moving well and exercising contributes to body confidence. It puts the emphasis on what your body can do rather than what your body looks like.
5. Managing stress and mindfulness: Pilates is often described as a mind-body exercise. It gives the opportunity to take the focus away from outside stresses and bring your focus into the moment. It gives children time out from other stressors, time to concentrate on themselves and a way to feel confident about how they are moving.
6. Posture: For a lot of us the pandemic has meant a lot more sitting and screen time, this can have an effect on our posture. Prolonged poor posture can cause stiffness in the spine which can contribute to back and neck ache or headaches. Pilates focuses on bringing the body into alignment.

To try Pilates for yourself and learn how you can incorporate Pilates into your Daycare programs, register for **“P” is for Pilates**. Details can be found in the April-June Professional Development Calendar.

OCFS Update

There are many changes happening in the Syracuse Regional Office of OCFS. Some licensors are retiring and new ones are coming on board.



We are planning an Open House-Meet and Greet late spring/early summer. This will be an opportunity for the CCR&R staff and OCFS licensors to be available to meet and interact with all the child care programs and providers in the community in an informal way.

Be on the look-out for those dates and times! There will be one afternoon/evening in each county. We will announce them when finalized.

APRIL 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Bing	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 JC Bing	20 Chen	21 JC	22	23
24	25	26 JC	27 Bing	28	29	30

MAY 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Vir	4 Vir	5	6 Vir	7
8	9	10 Owego Vir	11 Vir	12 Chen	13	14 Bing
15	16	17 Bing	18 Bing	19 JC	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JUNE 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Bing	3	4
5	6	7	8 Bing	9 JC	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Bing Chen	17	18
19	20	21	22 Bing	23	24	25
26	27	28 Owego	29	30		

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Broome County (**JC** or **Bing**):

April 7: 6-8pm—Watch Me!- Fayette St., Bing

April 19, 21, & 26: 8am-2pm—15 hour Health and Safety - Cherry St., JC

April 19: 6:00-7:30pm—Small Talk: P is for Pilates—Fayette St., Bing

April 27: 6-8pm—Understanding Behavior of Infants and Toddlers—Fayette St., Bing

May 14: 9am-12pm—Foundations in Healthy Sexual Development - Fayette St., Bing

May 17: 6:00-7:30pm—Small Talk: When Good Food Goes Bad—Fayette St., Bing

May 18: 6:30-9:30pm—CPR/First Aid—Fayette St., Bing

May 19: 6:30-8:30pm—Self-Care—Cherry St., JC

June 2: 6-8pm—Playing with Loose Parts—Fayette St., Bing

June 8: 6-8pm—DAP for Infants and Toddler—Fayette St., Bing

June 9: 6:30-8:30pm—Exploration & Experimentation: Science for Preschool—Cherry St., JC

June 16: 6-8pm—Watch Me!- Cherry St., JC

June 22: 5:30-9:30pm—CPR/First Aid—Fayette St., Bing

Chenango County (**Chen**):

April 20: 6-7:30pm –Business: Site & Liability—Broad St., Norwich

May 12: 6-7:30pm –Provider Talk: Sit and Chat—Broad St., Norwich

June 16: 6-7:30pm—Provider Talk: Summer Bucket List—Broad St., Norwich

Tioga County (**Owego**):

May 10: 6-8pm—What Infants and Toddler Need—Owego

June 28: 6-8pm—Infants and Toddler With Disabilities—Owego

Virtual (**Vir**):

May 3, 4, 6, 10 & 11: 8:30-11:30am—Director Health and Safety

Please see the April through June Professional Development and Training Calendar for full workshop descriptions or visit our website at www.familyenrichment.org.



Paying For Child Care

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, a family should pay no more than 10% of their income on child care. (Some economists even say 7%).) Using the 2021 data and average cost of child care locally, two children in care would cost between \$16,300 and \$21,000 a year with no assistance. That means a family of 4 needs to earn more than \$163,000 a year to afford having 2 children in child care. When the medium income in Broome County is just over \$52,000, a family should not pay more than \$5,200 a year for child care.

Paying for child care is a problem. It's expensive.

Paying for child care is more expensive than paying for college. How many parents do you know that just write a check for their child to go to college? Not many. There are many forms of assistance available to help, student aid, student loans, scholarships, etc. Everyone looks to these programs to help.

So did you know that there is subsidy assistance to help pay for child care? Many parents are not aware of, or don't think they would qualify for, subsidy assistance through the local Department of Social Services.

Some think they don't need the help, but you would apply for student aid or scholarships for your college-aged child? Some think it's too much work, but to save \$10,000 a year?

There have been many improvements and positive changes in the subsidy system over the last several years. It's time to again look at if you are eligible for child care subsidy assistance. Currently, each DSS will pay up to 200% of the federal poverty level. But, there is a possibility it will be increasing! That means more families will qualify and be eligible! Keep a look out on our website and social media accounts for when it does increase.

Call your local DSS's child care subsidy unit to ask for more information and see if you can qualify for child care subsidies today!

Broome County: (607) 778-2628

Chenango County: (607) 337-1500

Tioga County: (607) 687-8500





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Through partnerships with families and community agencies, Family Enrichment Network provides supportive services and programs for the optimal development of children, adults and families.

To learn more about our mission, and share in our vision that all children and families have the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential, please visit our website at www.familyenrichment.org.