



**Community
Assessment**

2022-2023

Community Assessment

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FAMILY ENRICHMENT NETWORK, INC.

Agency-Wide Community Assessment

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11/1/21 – 10/31/22

GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION:

Geographic Features

The Family Enrichment Network offers the majority of its programs and services throughout the Southern Tier Region of New York. The Southern Tier includes two metropolitan areas, a number of smaller cities, and extensive rural areas on New York State's south-central border with Pennsylvania. It is 7,185 square miles, and it is located at the crossroads of three major New York highways (routes 17, I81, and I88) that extend north/south and east/west. The Southern Tier has the highest potential flood risk in New York State.¹

The Agency operates over 30 programs in Broome County through five departments within the corporation, offering Head Start/Early Head Start, Child Care Resource & Referral, Family Support Services, Special Education Services, and Housing and Community Service programs for youth, adults, and families. Broome County is located in south-central New York State, directly north of the Pennsylvania border in a section of the state called the Southern Tier. The Chenango River joins the Susquehanna River, which flows through the county. The County covers 706 square miles and consists of 25 municipalities. Binghamton is the largest city and serves as the county seat. Broome County has the fourth-highest risk of flooding in New York State. The city of Binghamton has the sixth highest risk in the state and Elmira has the eighth highest risk.²

The Agency offers Special Education Services and Child Care Resource and Referral programs in Chenango County, which is located in the center of New York State. Chenango

County is also part of the Southern Tier. The county is named after its most significant waterway, the Chenango River, a tributary of the Susquehanna River. The County has a total area of 899 square miles and consists of nine municipalities. The City of Norwich is the largest of these and serves as the county seat. The major development is located around the City of Norwich and in the Village of Greene. NY Route 12 is the major north/south route through the county.

Family Enrichment Network also offers Child Care Resource & Referral services and related support programs, a Kinship Care Program, Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Tioga County. Tioga County is located in southwest New York State, west of Binghamton and directly north of the Pennsylvania border. The Susquehanna River flows into Pennsylvania from this county. The county is part of the Southern Tier region of New York State. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 523 square miles, of which 519 square miles is land and four square miles is water. Tioga County is the county with the sixth highest flood risk in New York State.³ The largest private sector employer in the county seat of Owego is Lockheed Martin.

Economic Features

The New York State Department of Labor's Division of Research and Statistics prepared a report to the Workforce Development System in 2019 which identified "Significant Industries" in the Southern Tier Region. The report is based on several factors including: wage levels; employment levels; 2013-2018 job growth (both net and percent); and expected job growth as based on industry employment projections through 2026. All industries identified shared one or more of the following characteristics: rapid growth (percentage basis); large growth (absolute basis); high wages (average annual wage above the regional average of \$49,200 in 2018); or

strong expected growth through 2026. The report identified 12 significant industry groups in the region, falling into six major industry groups. The major industry groups are: construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, professional and business services, educational services, and health care.⁴

Private sector employment in the Southern Tier decreased by 4,600, or 2.2%, to a total of 209,600 by December 2021. Job gains were largest in leisure and hospitality (+3,400), trade, transportation and utilities (+600), other services (+400), manufacturing (+200), and professional and business services (+200). Job losses were the greatest in education and health services (-300). Government employment increased by (+600).⁵ From December 2020 to December 2021, the unemployment rate in the Binghamton Metro Area decreased from 6.6% to 3.1%. In Broome County, the rate decreased from 6.8% to 3.3% while in Tioga County the rate decreased 5.7% to 2.7%. Chenango County also saw a decrease in the rate of unemployment, from 5.8% in December 2020 to 2.8% in December 2021.⁶

The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC), notes in their 2021 Annual Report that the Southern Tier has demonstrated economic improvement over the past ten years, but growth has not been equitable between a gap exists and continues to increase between household median income in minority and white communities. Minority populations also had a disproportionality high unemployment rate. The report also notes that the gap between minority and white communities continues to grow.⁷ The Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce reported in their “Broome County’s 2021 Economic Outlook Guide” that 34% of respondents expected the economy to expand, which is a decline from 2020 (47%) and 2019 (43%). There was a historic high in respondents expecting a decline in the economy (37%). Overall, 57% of respondents had a less optimistic future. With this less optimistic outlook, only

45% of businesses expect their sales revenue to increase (down from 57% in 2020). Instead, 27% of respondents expect their revenue to decline, compared to only 8% in 2020.⁸

According to the US Census Database, the median household income in Broome County is \$52,226, which is less than the national average of \$62,843.⁹ The Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce reports in the Broome County's 2021 Economic Outlook guide that the civilian labor force is 57.6% of the population.¹⁰ The top three industries in the county are health care and education, tourism and hospitality, and aerospace, computer and electronics manufacturing.¹¹ The employment rate in Broome County is 53%, which is under that national average of 60.2% and New York state average of 60.5%.¹² Unemployment spiked in January 2021 with a high of 7.5%, however as of November 2021, the unemployment rate in Broome County was 4%.¹³

The median income in Chenango County is \$52,002, according to 2020 US Census Data, which, like Broome County, is under that national average.¹⁴ In the second quarter 2021, average weekly wages in Chenango County were \$1,032, under the United States average of \$1,241.¹⁵ The five most common industries in the county, as of 2019, are manufacturing (3,773 people), health care and social assistance (3,615 people), educational services (2,569 people), retail trade (2,265 people), and construction (1,566 people).¹⁶ While retail is one of the most common industries, it is also one of the lowest paying, with median earnings of \$22,210.¹⁷ The highest paying industry in the county is Utilities (\$68,984 median earnings in 2019), but this is the second least common industry, only 157 people in workforce in 2019.¹⁸ As of November 2021, the unemployment rate in Chenango County was 3.4%. Unemployment spiked to 6.7% in February 2021, but has since decreased.¹⁹

The only county with a median income above the national average (\$62,843) is Tioga County, where the median income is \$62,999.²⁰ The most common industries in Tioga County, as of 2019, are manufacturing (3,293 people), health care and social assistance (3,255 people), educational services (2,881 people), retail trade (2,729 people), and accommodation and food services (1,706 people). However, retail trade and accommodation and food services are in the bottom five lowest earning industries. In 2019, the median earnings in retail trade were \$20,271 and in accommodation and food services it was \$17,370.²¹ As of November 2021, the unemployment rate in Tioga County was 3.4%. Unemployment spiked in February 2021 at 6.8%.²²

Demographic Features

The demographics of our Agency's population have continued to change over the years, from people living longer and the migration of the younger population, to an increase in diversity. By 2050, the Census Bureau actually expects the number of Americans aged 65 and older to double to 84 million people,²³ and according to Genworth's annual Cost of Care Survey, seven out of ten people will require some form of long term care in their lifetime.²⁴ In 2018, the median age for all New York residents was 39, which is close to the national median age of 38.2. However, in Upstate New York, the population aged 65+ was 18.2%, as compared to 14.8% in New York City. In Broome County, the share of 25 to 34 year-olds (that is, millennials) actually decreased to 11.3%,²⁵ whereas millennials comprise 18% of New York City residents.²⁶ The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC) projects that the population of the Southern Tier will decline through 2040.²⁷ From 2010 to 2019, Chenango County suffered one of the worst population losses in the state at 6.5%.²⁸

The Southern Tier also realized a change in the racial diversity of the population between 2000 and 2010. According to the 2020 census, the Southern Tier is one of the most diverse labor market regions in New York State. In Broome County alone, the diversity index, as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau, increased by 12 percentage points.²⁹ The population is largely white (non-Hispanic), 83.4%. Black or African American (non-Hispanic) comprises 5.15% of the population and Asian (non-Hispanic) comprises 4.33%. These are the largest three ethnic groups in the county. Only 4.21% of Broome County is Hispanic.³⁰ In Tioga County, the population is also majority white (non-Hispanic), 95%. The next two largest ethnic groups in Tioga are multiracial (non-Hispanic), 1.39%, and white (Hispanic), 1.27%.³¹ In Chenango County, 94.7% of the population is white (non-Hispanic). Similar to Tioga County, the next two largest ethnic groups in Chenango County are multiracial, 1.43%, and white (Hispanic), 1.35%.³² Of the three counties, Broome County has the largest foreign-born population, 7% in 2019,³³ although all three counties had an increase in foreign born population from 2018 to 2019. Broome increased from 6.87% to 7%, Tioga from 1.75% to 2%,³⁴ and Chenango from 1.55% to 1.57%.³⁵

According to the most recent US Census Data, Broome County had a total population of 198,683.³⁶ The poverty rate for the county stands at 18.8% with 24.1% of children under 18 living in poverty.³⁷ Nationally, the poverty rate is 12.3% while in New York State it is 13.0%. In New York State, the average for children living in poverty is 18.1%.³⁸ The disabled population of Broome County is also larger than both the national and New York State average. Nationally, the average is 12.7% and in New York State the rate is 11.6%.³⁹ However, Broome County's disability rate is 15.5%.⁴⁰ The average family size is 2.89 children.⁴¹ From 2015-2019, 65.2% of the housing units were owner-occupied.⁴² The median monthly owner cost, with a mortgage, was \$1,202 and without a mortgage it was \$516.⁴³ The median gross rent is \$779 per month.⁴⁴ With

regards to education, 90.7% of the population 25 years or older is a high school graduate or higher⁴⁵ and 27.1% has a Bachelor's degree or higher.⁴⁶

Chenango County has a total population of 47,220.⁴⁷ The current poverty rate is 13.5%, which is higher than the national rate, 12.3%, but is comparable with the New York State rate of 13.0%. The rate of children living in poverty is 17.1%,⁴⁸ which is less than the New York State rate of 18.1%.⁴⁹ The average family size is 2.76, and 20.8 % of the population is under 18 years old. The disability rate of Chenango county is 19.1%, which is higher than the New York state rate 11.6%.⁵⁰ The owner-occupied housing rate from 2015-2019 was 74.5%. During this same period, the median monthly owner costs with a mortgage were \$1,148, while without a mortgage the costs were \$465.⁵¹ The median gross rent in Chenango is \$678.⁵² Between 2015 and 2019, 88.1% of the population, age 25 years and older, was a high school graduate or higher, and 18.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher.⁵³

Tioga County's population, according to recent census data, is 48,455.⁵⁴ The poverty rate is 10.2% while the poverty rate for children under 18 is 12.6%.⁵⁵ According to the 2019 American Community Survey, in Tioga County 44.7% of grandparents are responsible for grandchildren, and 14.8% are responsible for grandchildren for five or more years.⁵⁶ With regards to housing, from 2015-2019 76.9% of housing units were owner occupied, the median monthly costs (with a mortgage) was \$1,292 and without a mortgage \$526. During this same range, median gross rent was \$751.⁵⁷

COVID-19

In the Southern Tier, 68.5% of the population age 18+ have completed the vaccine series and 73.7% have had at least one vaccine dose.⁵⁸ Broome County has the highest vaccination rate, 78.3% of people 18+, then Chenango at 75.2%, while Tioga County trails 59.9%.⁵⁹ The

Southern Tier began 2021 with 6.5% positive cases daily and a 5.7% seven day rolling average. By December 31, the positive daily cases were 12.4% with a seven day rolling average of 12.2%. By June 6th, cases were at a low of .2% positive daily and seven day rolling average of .4% with 2 persons testing positive. Cases peaked on December 18th, with 1,011 persons testing positive.⁶⁰ Broome County has been hit the hardest by the pandemic, with 508 deaths total. Chenango County recorded 117 fatalities and Tioga 82.⁶¹

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Child Care Resource and Referral Program

The Family Enrichment Network’s Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program serves parents, child care providers, businesses, and the community in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties.

QUALITY CHILD CARE

Quality child care is a daily concern for millions of American parents. Early childhood experiences have a long lasting effect on a child’s future. Studies have shown that quality child care practices in the formative years result in a greater cognitive development, improved teacher-student relationships, better classroom behavior, longer attention spans, and desirable social skills.

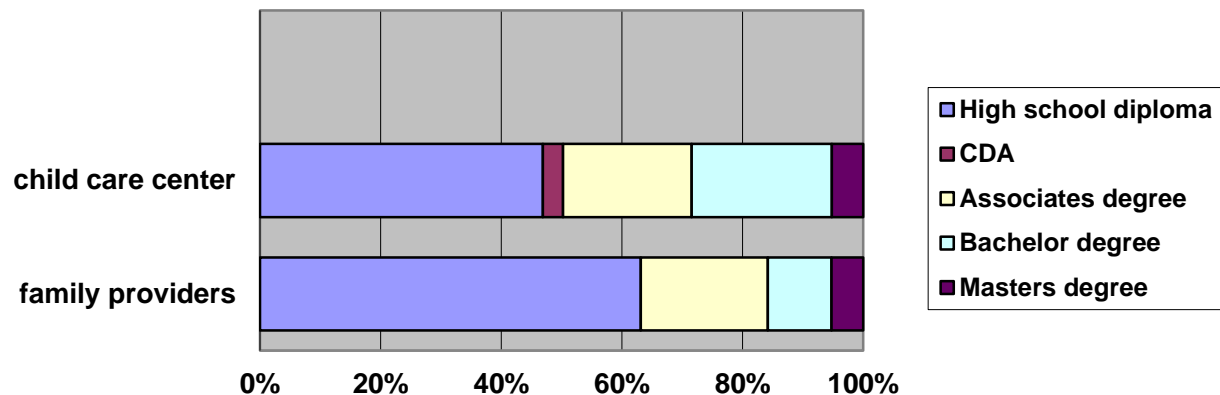
Research is especially showing the importance of the first few years of life in brain development.¹ Toxic stress, such as abuse, poverty, or neglect or other “ACEs” (Adverse Childhood Experiences), damages developing brain architecture, which can lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health. These ACEs are being identified as an important public health issue.² Because of the importance, in January 2021, OCFS added ACEs as a required training category for child care programs.

There is information available in the community to aid parents in finding quality child care and the importance of early experiences. When parents call Family Enrichment Network’s referral service, they are given information on what to look for in a quality program and questions to ask prospective providers. This information can be accessed on our website as well. Parents can review violations on registered or licensed providers on the OCFS website by conducting a Child Care Facility search. Information on finding quality child care can be found online at Child Care Aware of America or the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) websites. Links can be found on our website.

Education of the Child Care Workforce

Child care programs in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties are surveyed about the educational qualifications of providers and child care center staff annually. According to Child Care Aware of America's *Child Care in America: 2012 State Fact Sheets*, 44% of family child care providers across the country have a high school diploma or lower.³ Our survey shows a little over 60% of local family and group family child care providers have a high school diploma, while less than 40% of family providers have a college degree, with an associate's degree or higher.⁴ The national average for child care center staff, teacher, or assistant teacher with a high school diploma or lower is 20%.⁵ Chart 1 shows the local education of our child care workforce.

CHART 1: % of Education of Child Care Workforce



Turnover

One of most important elements in a high quality child care experience is the teacher or primary provider. In the earliest years of life, children are developing attachments to the adults in their lives. Strong emotional attachments allow children to develop a sense of trust and to build healthy relationships with other people. When these attachments are not strong and secure, children may suffer the emotional consequences for the rest of their lives. Changes in a child's

teacher or primary care provider can interrupt a child's development and cause a period of transition and readjustment.

Staff turnover varies by program and type of program. When a program closes, a family needs to find alternate care. Due to the nature of family child care, there is no turnover in provider. When the provider leaves, the program closes. Center based staff turnover is much different and varies by program. In a survey of local child care center directors, the turnover rate varied greatly by program in 2021, with programs experiencing anywhere from 10% to 50%.⁶

Lack of Staff

There is a shortage of child care program staff across the country which has been compounded by the pandemic. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conducted a survey in 2021 which showed 87% of programs in New York State are experiencing a staffing shortage.⁷ Our local survey indicates 70% of programs had difficulty finding staff prior to the state of the pandemic. Since the pandemic started, 89% of local child care programs are having a problem finding staff.⁸ Many problems contribute to this, including low pay, lack of benefits, lack of respect, difficult working conditions, high stress, and little support.

Quality Child Care

The quality of child care programs in our community is hard to determine due to the lack of a full quality rating system. The number of accredited programs is low due to the cost of accreditation. One licensed child care center, Campus Preschool at Binghamton University, is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).⁹ There are no family child care programs accredited through the National Association of Family Child Care at this time.¹⁰

New York's quality rating and improvement system, QUALITYstarsNY, is a voluntary program with limited community reach. According to the website search, Broome County has 19 participating sites, Chenango County has eight sites, and Tioga County has three sites.¹¹ Most of the participating sites are the Head Start/Early Head Start sites because of their federal requirement to participate. Only nine of the Broome County sites are non-Head Start programs. The star rating for programs participating in QUALITYstarsNY is not public, so there is no way to determine the overall quality of care in the community.

In July 2021, the state announced an expansion of QUALITYstarsNY. Using federal stimulus funding, an additional \$35 million will expand the program to an additional 1000 sites across the state, which will more than double participation.¹²

CCR&R Resource for Child Care Quality Improvement

Family Enrichment Network's CCR&R offers many resources to help child care providers and programs in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties improve their quality.

- Technical Assistance: Specialists offer basic support to answer questions for providers. In 2021, Specialists offered 466 technical assistances to 116 providers and programs. Specialists can offer onsite/intensive visits to programs to help with best child care practices. In 2021, Specialists offered 48 onsite/intensive technical assistance visits to 23 providers and programs.¹³

Due to the pandemic, onsite assistance was limited in 2021.

- Infant Toddler Project: Family Enrichment Network has an Infant Toddler Specialist as part of the Regional Infant Toddler Network. The Infant Toddler Specialist works in the three counties of Broome, Chenango, and Tioga. The Infant Toddler Specialist offers mentoring, technical assistance, onsite intensive technical assistance, and training to parents, providers, OCFS licensing staff, CCR&R staff, and the community on infant/toddler best practices and the

importance of offering high quality care to infants and toddlers. Table 1 below shows the numbers for our Infant Toddler Specialists in the 2020-2021 program year (July 2020-June 2021).

TABLE 1: 2021 Regional Infant Toddler Milestones ¹⁴	
Basic Technical Assistance	400
Number of Training Hours	275
Intensive Technical Assistance	292

There are 55 Infant Toddler Specialists across New York State. The Syracuse OCFS Region currently employs 8 Infant Toddler Specialists.

In 2020, the Infant Toddler Project received funding to implement Infant & Toddler Mental Health Consultation across the state. Infant & Toddler Mental Health Consultation is an intervention that benefits infants and toddlers by providing a service in partnership with adult caregivers in their lives. The goal of the mental health consultation is to improve the ability of staff, families, programs, and systems to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of mental health problems amongst young children.¹⁵ In 2021, the Infant Toddler Mental Health Specialist connected with two centers.

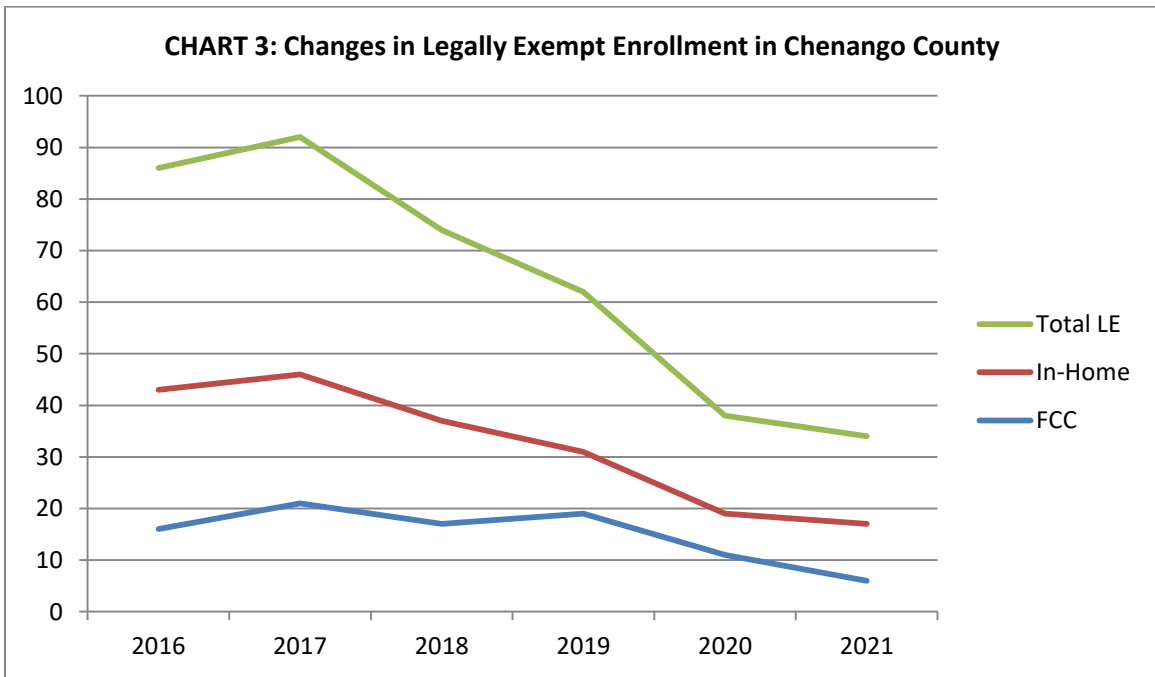
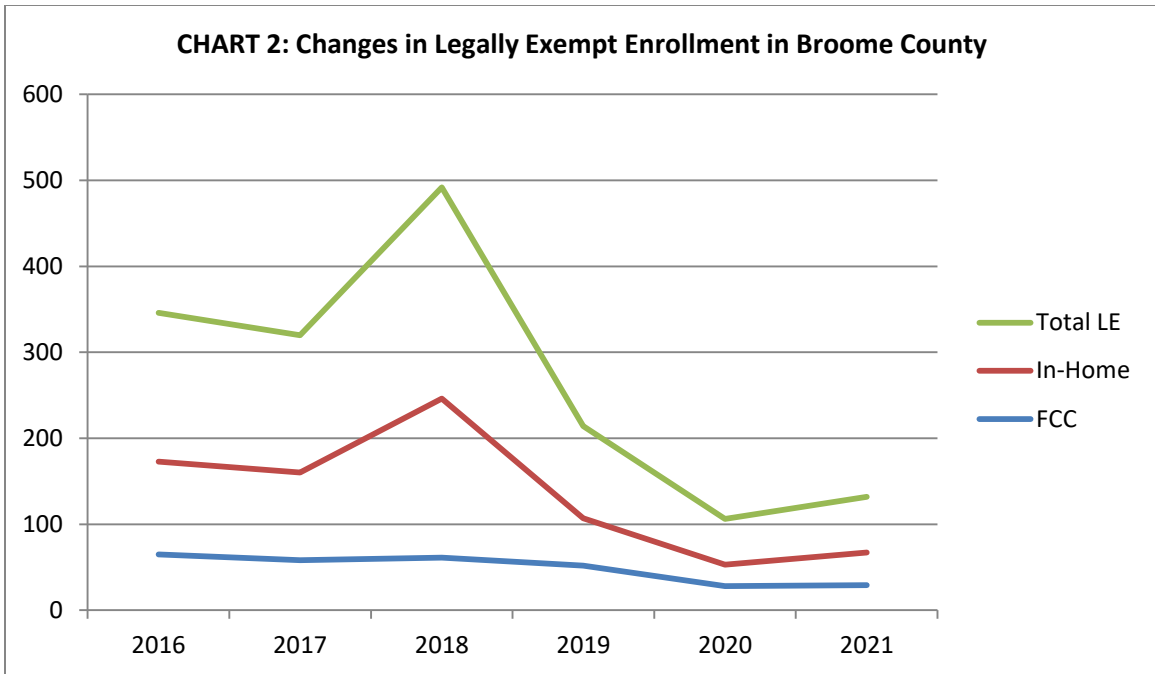
- **Legally Exempt Enrollment:** Since July 2006, the CCR&R has been the Legally Exempt Enrollment Agency for Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties, working collaboratively with the local Department of Social Services (DSS) in the respective counties. If a provider is not registered or licensed by OCFS, and the parents are receiving a child care subsidy to help them pay for child care, the legally exempt provider must complete the enrollment process through the CCR&R to receive the subsidy payment from DSS.

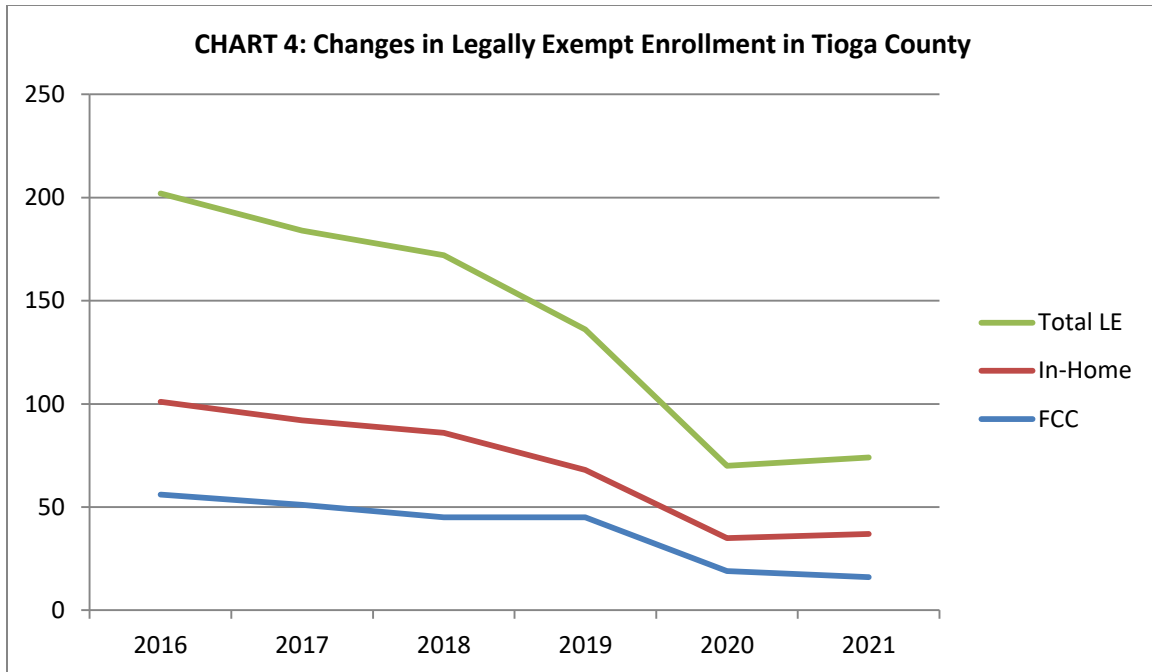
The federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) has brought many changes to the New York subsidy system, including for legally exempt providers. As of September 2019, new legally exempt enrollment requirements were put into place. Upon the receipt of a completed enrollment application packet, non-relative providers must undergo a comprehensive background check, which includes the NYS Sex Offender Registry, the Staff Exclusion List checking for abuse and neglect against individuals with special needs, the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR), and fingerprints for criminal conviction history in any state the provider has lived. The SCR has a \$25 fee to conduct the check, which was temporarily waived in 2020 due to COVID-19. Relative providers, including grandparents, siblings, aunts or uncles, are exempt from the comprehensive background checks.

Additional new requirements include an annual training requirement for non-relative providers, in addition to a five-hour pre-service online health and safety training, as well as written documentation of evacuation and shelter-in-place drills. These new requirements have resulted in fewer enrolled legally exempt providers.

Table 2 below shows the number of legally exempt providers in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties. The following three charts show the decline in enrolled legally exempt providers over the five years from 2016 to 2020, with the number of programs leveling out and increasing slightly in 2021.

TABLE 2: 2021 Legally Exempt Enrollment By Type ¹⁶			
	FCC	In Home	Group
Broome County	29	38	1
Chenango County	6	11	0
Tioga County	16	21	1





Inspections of legally exempt providers resumed mid-2021, after they were temporarily paused in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. OCFS temporarily halted entering the homes of legally exempt providers unless there was a complaint filed. We now conduct inspections on all non-relative legally exempt providers, regardless if they are in the provider’s home or in the parent/child’s home. In 2021, CCR&R conducted ten inspections of legally exempt providers, ten in Broome County and one in Tioga County. The contract requires an inspection of a new legally exempt non-relative within 90 days of approval. When existing programs go through the annual renewal process, they will come up for an inspection.

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program: The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care. CACFP ensures that all children in child care have access to a nutritious meals and snacks and learn how to improve their eating habits through early nutrition education. The New York State Department of Health together with the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) allocates funds to Family

Enrichment Network to be the regional sponsoring agency for family child care providers. Family Enrichment Network in turn reimburses eligible registered, licensed, and enrolled legally exempt family child care providers for nutritious meals and snacks served to children in their care. CACFP offers ongoing training to participating providers in relevant areas such as the nutritional needs of children, food safety, menu planning, and physical activities. A CACFP representative from Family Enrichment Network visits each site at least three times a year providing assistance and nutrition training. The monitoring visits are allowed virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. USDA issued a waiver to allow all sponsoring organizations to conduct virtual monitoring visits/desk audits until the pandemic is over.

Tables 3 and 4 below show the numbers of providers enrolled in CACFP.

TABLE 3: 2021 CACFP Participation Numbers: ¹⁷				
	Registered Providers in CACFP	Licensed Providers in CACFP	Number of Registered/Licensed Providers NOT in CACFP	Percentage of Total Providers in CACFP
Broome County	14	16	20	60%
Chenango County	13	15	6	82%
Tioga County	4	6	3	76%

TABLE 4: 2021 Legally Exempt Participation in CACFP			
	Legally Exempt Providers in CACFP	Legally Exempt Providers Eligible But Not in CACFP	Percentage of Total Eligible LE Providers in CACFP
Broome County	1	27	3%
Chenango County	0	6	0%
Tioga County	0	15	0%

- Child Care Provider Professional Development and Training: Research has shown that caregiver professional development or training has a direct correlation to the quality of child care provided.¹⁸ Regulated child care providers are required by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to complete 30 hours of training every two years, in ten categories of training.¹⁹

CCR&R Training Opportunities

CCR&R publishes a quarterly calendar of all training offered to meet OCFS requirements. The CCR&R ensures that each category is offered at least twice annually in each of the three counties in the service delivery area. CCR&R also publishes a quarterly newsletter containing Agency news, updates on regulations, best practices information, and educational articles.

Table 5 shows the trainings offered by Family Enrichment Network’s CCR&R and the number of attendees in 2021, both duplicated and unduplicated numbers of providers trained. The trainings numbers for 2021 are much less than previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment and registration for trainings was low. Out of 47 scheduled trainings, 11 were cancelled due to lack of enrollment. In 2021, we offered both in-person and virtual training options. OCFS continued with the waiver to offer virtual trainings for credentialed trainers.

TABLE 5: 2021 Training Attendance ²⁰			
	# of sessions scheduled	Total # of providers trained	Unduplicated # of providers trained
CCR&R Trainings	47	108	92

Onsite Training

CCR&R trainers have previously conducted workshops and trainings onsite at child care centers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, onsite trainings were limited in 2021. Only one onsite training was conducted as part of an OCFS corrective action plan for regulatory violations. CCR&R conducted 11 center trainings, with six onsite and five virtual in 2021.

The CCR&R contract includes funding for Childcare Program Onsite Training as a Community Based Strategy. This allows child care centers and SACC programs to request one free onsite or virtual training each program year.

Director Academy Training

CCR&R works with the Early Care and Learning Council and the OCFS Region to host Director Academy training opportunities. In 2021, CCR&R offered the six hour The Director's Role in Ensuring Developmentally Appropriate Practice virtually. Due to the virtual offering, participants could be from anywhere in the state, with 27 directors completing the two three-hour session training.

Health and Safety Competency Training

CCR&R offers the initial 15 hour Health and Safety Competency Training, which is required for any new family or group family child care registration/license. The OCFS-approved curriculum requires that it be presented to a minimum of two and a maximum of ten potential providers after their daycare application has been submitted to OCFS. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, OCFS still required it to be offered in-person. CCR&R offered four sessions of the Health and Safety Competency Training with ten providers.

Family Enrichment Network also offered the new 15-hour Health and Safety Training for Directors, for center directors, school-age child care center directors, and enrollment legally exempt group directors. OCFS approved the Health and Safety Training for Directors to be conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CCR&R offered three sessions of this training for ten directors in 2021, with all conducted virtually.

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a credential that early childhood educators can earn to demonstrate certain competencies to advance their career. CCR&R offers the 120 training hours of formal classroom instruction which is needed for CDA. In addition to the formal instruction, CDA candidates must submit an application to the national organization Council for Professional Recognition and take a test at a qualifying testing site. A Professional Development Specialist who contracts with the Council for Professional Recognition conducts a classroom observation, reviews the candidate's portfolio, and conducts an interview with the candidate for final credentialing approval. In addition to the classroom instruction, the CDA classes offered at Family Enrichment Network assist candidates with their portfolio and prepare them for the test, observation and interview.

The CDA classes resumed in September 2021 with 20 participants enrolled. This current series will be completed in March of 2022. The pandemic continued to disrupt the classes. Due to quarantines or sickness, many sessions were changed from in-person to virtual.

CPR and First Aid Training

CPR and First Aid training is mandated for every family child care provider and large programs need at least one trained staff person onsite during hours of operation. CCR&R meets the majority of the family child care community needs for this training.

TABLE 6: 2021 CPR/First Aid Class Participation		
	# of Trainings Offered	# of Providers Trained
Broome County	15	71
Chenango County	14	48
Tioga County	5	20

Due to the ongoing pandemic, CPR/First Aid classes were offered both in-person and virtually. The virtual option allowed the provider to review the materials on their own and then came onsite for a skills demonstration with the trainer. Onsite sessions were conducted with smaller groups, sometimes only one provider. All Department of Health guidance was followed to be able to conduct these sessions.

Training Challenges

Training challenges continued in 2021 due to the pandemic. CCR&R was able to utilize virtual platforms for trainings, as approved by OCFS. Only classes which were previously approved by SUNY PDP to accept EIP funding and were conducted by a Credentialed Trainer continued to be approved to offer virtually. No new curriculum could be approved for virtual training. Trainers who were not credentialed were still not able to conduct virtual training without a co-trainer who was credentialed. Certain classes

still needed to be conducted in-person, such as the Health and Safety Competency Training for new family child care providers and the CPR/First Aid skills demonstration. Many participants struggled with virtual trainings, due to internet issues or no camera and/or microphone to allow for full participation. The training staff found many who registered for a training opportunity would not show up for the virtual event without cancelling their registration. CCR&R did find some providers became more comfortable with the virtual options and began to prefer them to reduce the health risks.

Training Needs

In the annual Provider Survey, the only requested training topics were for CPR/First Aid certification and children with disabilities. Request for other forms of assistance, such as grants, new supplies, and emotional support were needed. The pandemic and related issues, such as quarantines, program closures, and lack of staff, has taken a toll on programs and created a lot of stress for the field. More social-emotional support is needed.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF CHILD CARE

Parents needing child care while they work or go to school have various care options: child care centers, registered/licensed family child care homes, informal or legally exempt providers, school age child care programs, or in-home child care providers (nannies). Nursery schools, preschools, and Universal Pre-kindergarten programs do not typically offer full time child care and often do not meet the needs of working parents. Head Start programs are moving toward full-day classes, but typically still only offer care for six hours and do not meet the needs of working parents. Wrap-around care is still needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to show the importance of child care for a community's infrastructure. Remote schooling and school closures proved the need for safe places for children so parents can work.

Tables 7, 8, and 9 show the breakdown by community of providers in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties in December 2021.²¹ A new column named Special Child Care Centers was created to track the unique programs that do not necessarily meet the needs of working parents. These include Head Start/Early Head Start programs, UPK programs, part-day licensed preschool programs, and preschool Special Education Programs.

TABLE 7: Child Care Providers in Broome County - 2021					
	Child Care Centers	Special Child Care Centers	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	SACC Programs
Binghamton	8	7	7	11	10
Endicott/Endwell	4	3	9	2	3
Johnson City	3	1	6	1	1
Vestal	3	1	1	2	5
Surrounding Areas	1	3	7	3	0
Broome County Totals	19	15	30	19	19

TABLE 8: Child Care Providers in Chenango County - 2021					
	Child Care Centers	Special Child Care Centers	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	SACC Programs
Afton	0	0	1	0	0
Bainbridge/Guilford	0	1	0	1	0
New Berlin	0	1	1	2	1
Norwich	1	3	6	5	2
Oxford	0	1	4	1	1
Sherburne	0	0	2	4	0
Greene	0	1	3	4	1
Surrounding Areas	0	0	1	0	0
Chenango County Totals	1	7	18	17	5

TABLE 9: Child Care Providers in Tioga County - 2021					
	Child Care Centers	Special Child Care Centers	Family Child Care	Group Family Child Care	SACC Programs
Apalachin	1	0	1	1	0
Candor	0	0	2	0	0
Newark Valley	0	1	0	1	1
Owego	1	1	1	1	0
Waverly	0	1	0	2	0
Surrounding Areas	0	0	3	1	1
Tioga County Totals	2	3	7	6	2

There continues to be a lack of affordable child care to meet the needs of the community. This is especially true for parents looking for child care for their infant or toddler.

According to a report by The Center for American Progress, “Costly and Unavailable: America Lacks Sufficient Child Care Supply for Infants and Toddlers,” there are far more infants and toddlers across the country than there are licensed child care spots.²² This is true for our area as well. Table 10 shows the population of infants and toddlers compared to the percentage who can be served by registered/licensed child care spots.

TABLE 10: Lack of Infant and Toddler Child Care Spots		
	# Infants and Toddlers	% Who Could be Served by Licensed Child Care
Broome	3,273	28.8%
Chenango	742	22.6%
Tioga	921	16.4%

As you can tell from the table, there wouldn’t be enough registered/licensed child care spots available to serve all the infants and toddlers of county, if they were needed. With the maternal labor force participation rate of about 70% for each county, substantially more infant and toddler spots are needed to meet the community need. This lack of available child care to meet the needs is being referred to as “Child Care Deserts.”

Decline In Child Care

Over the last decade, the number of child care programs has decreased across Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties.²³

Chart 5: Decline in Broome Child Care Programs

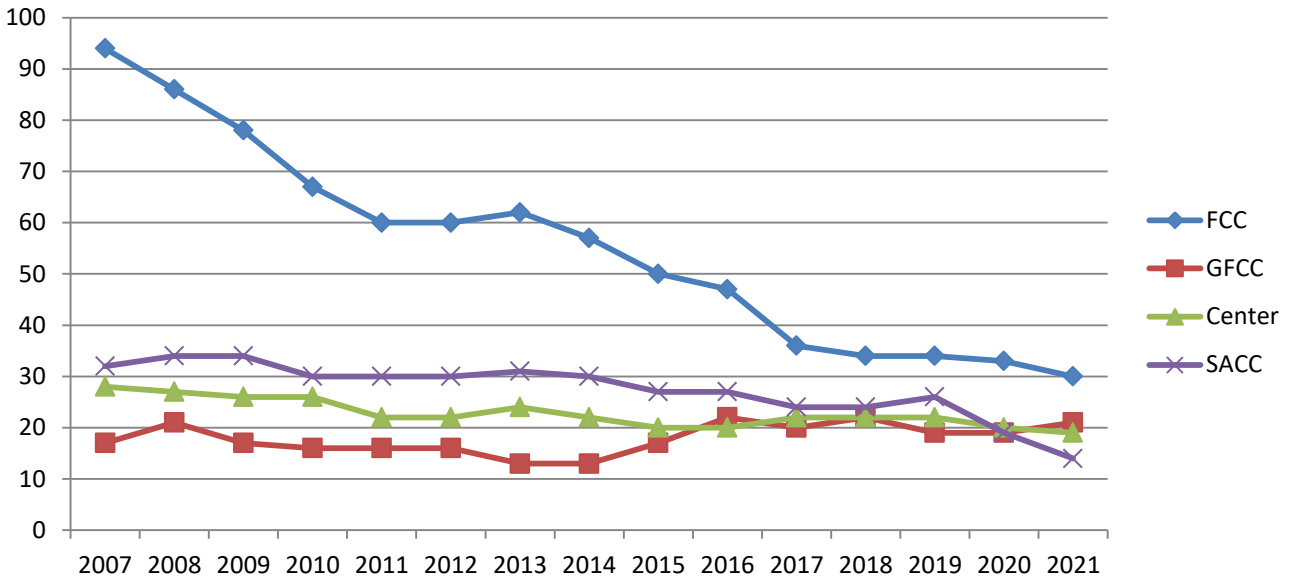
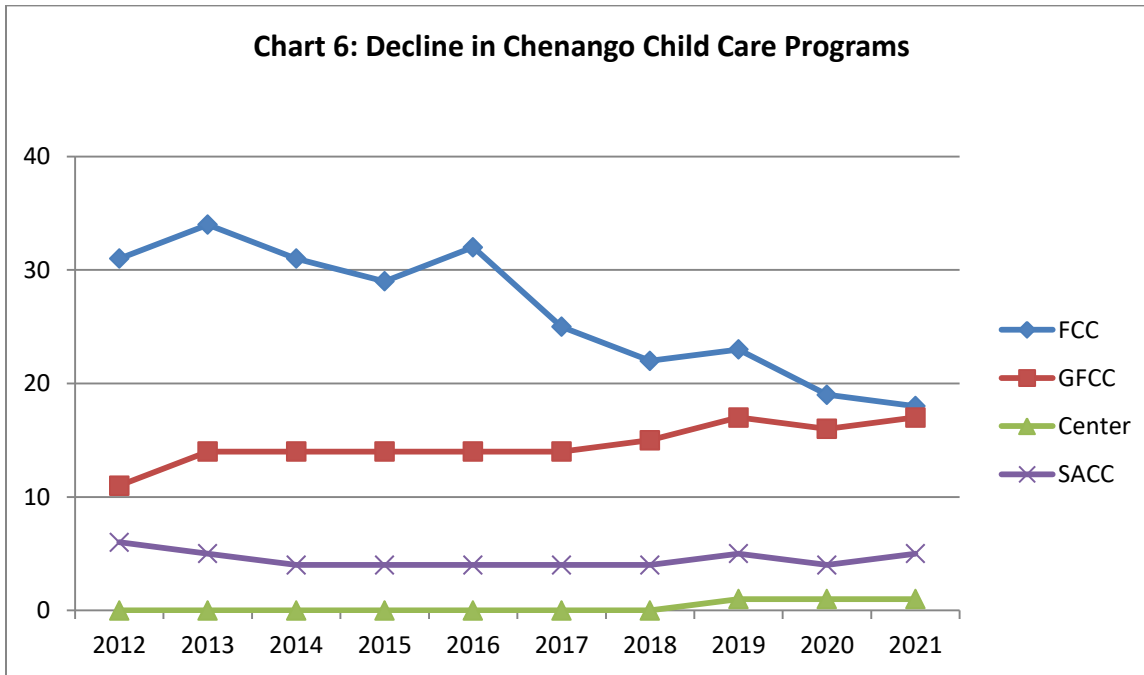
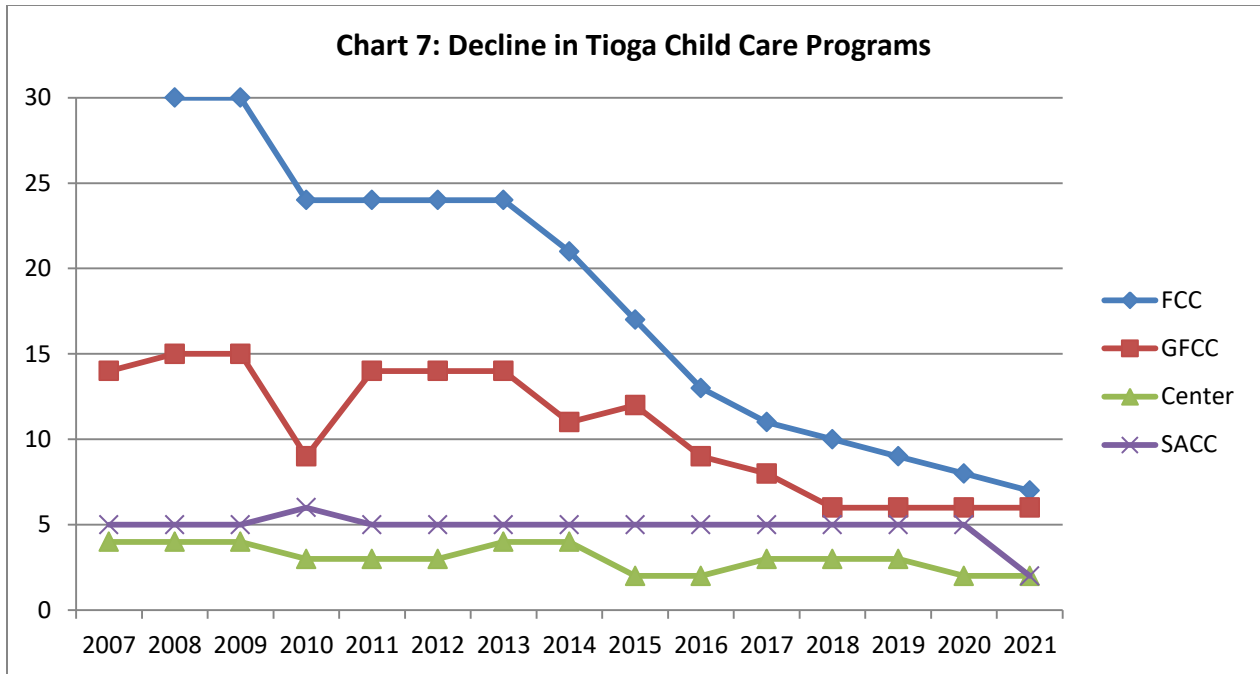
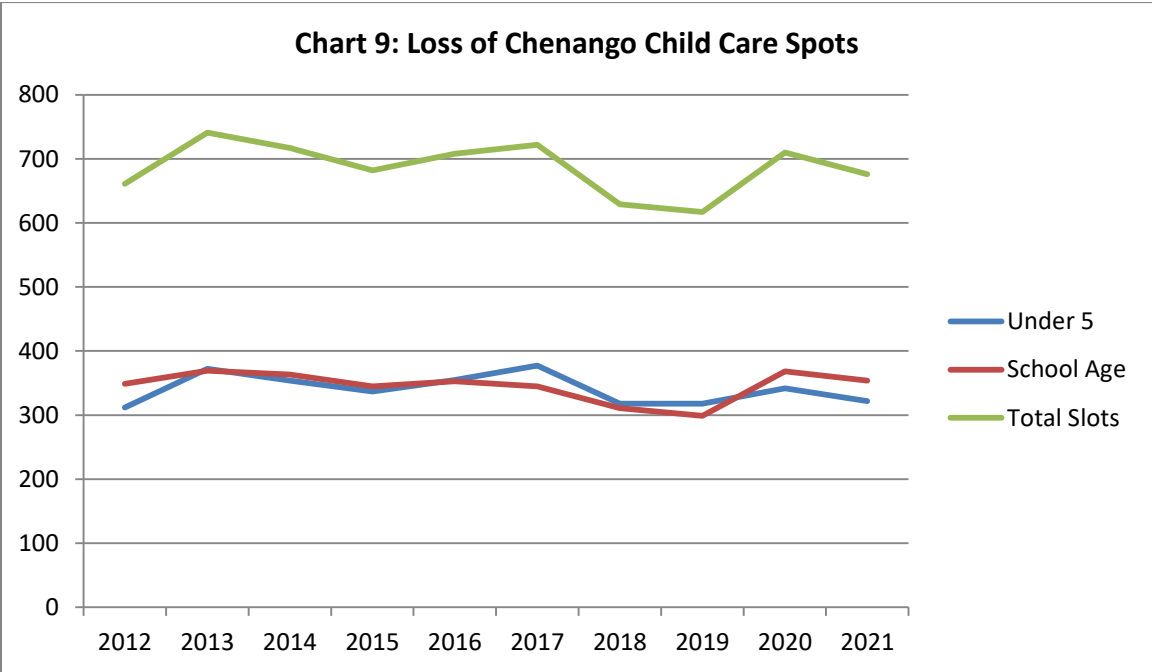
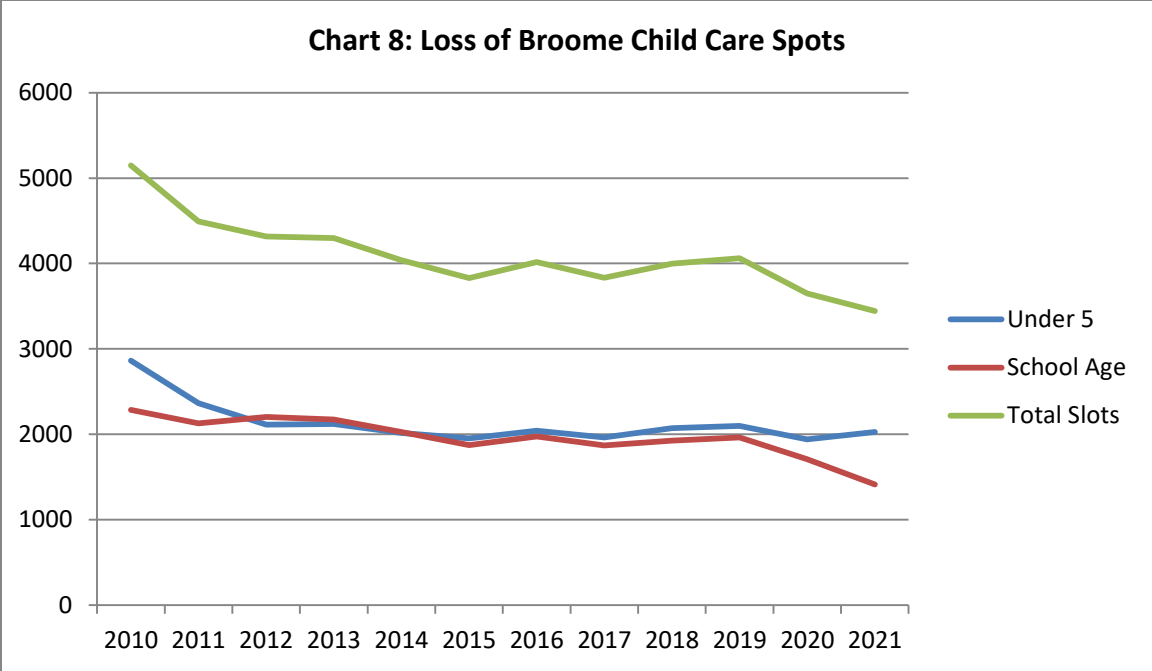


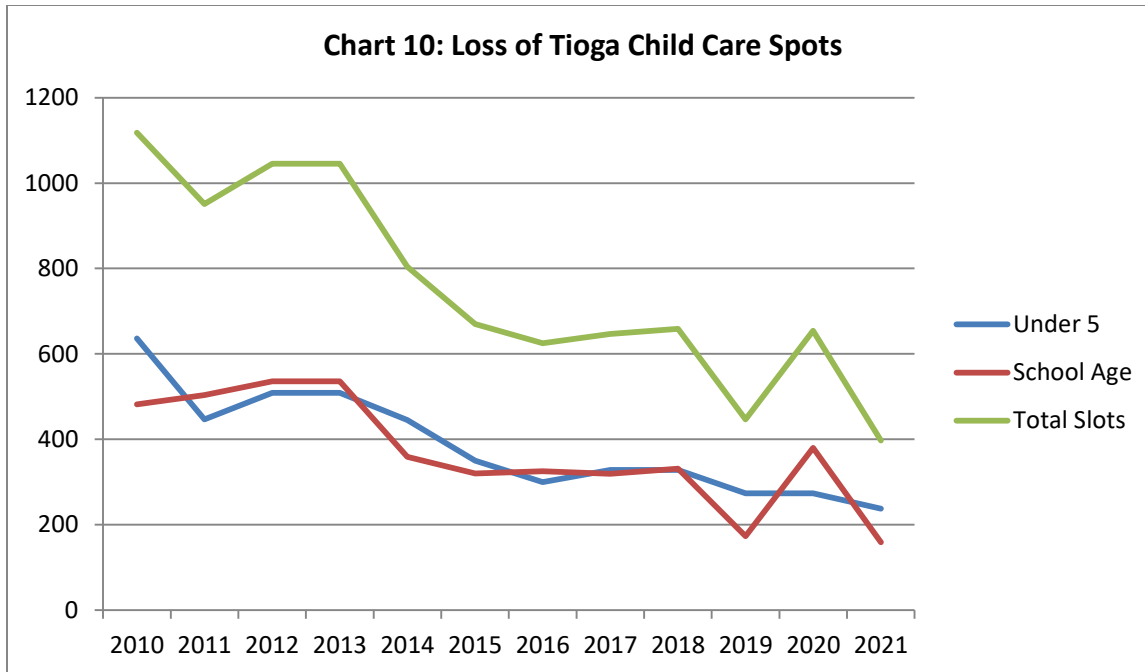
Chart 6: Decline in Chenango Child Care Programs





Broome and Tioga Counties have 2/3 less family child care providers than were available ten years ago. When we look at the actual child care spots available to parents in the community, both Broome and Tioga have lost a significant number over the last ten years. Chenango County has seen a loss in the number of programs, but an actual gain in the number of available registered or licensed child care spots. That could be explained if a family child care provider changed to a group family child care provider, which doubles the numbers for which they can provide care. The last year has seen a leveling off of child care programs, with the most losses in school-age child care programs. Several school age programs, which were located within the school districts, had to close because of the pandemic and limiting activity within the buildings.





Care in Greatest Demand

Besides the care for infants and toddlers, the pandemic has shown the need for temporary care while programs closed for quarantines or had to close for a staffing shortage. Parents are also looking for part-time care to cover the hours their free program, such as UPK with school districts, doesn't serve or to cover their part-time work hours. If a program is part-time, parents need transportation to a second child care program as well.

The five biggest areas in which child care requests are greatest:

1. Infant Toddler Care
2. Child Care Deserts
3. Temporary or Part-time Care
4. Transportation
5. School Age Child Care

1. Infant Toddler Care: In 2021, 853 children were served using the referral services in Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties. 44% of the care needed in all three counties was for children under the age of three. Referral Specialists state that infant and toddler spaces fill quickly when they are available in programs. In family child care, a child is considered an “infant” until the age of two. A family child care provider can only care for two children under the age of two (without an approved assistant), so spots are limited, and many family child care providers do not want to care for children under the age of two. Child care centers lose money in infant classrooms due to the needed staffing ratios, so there is no incentive to open more classrooms for this age. More care for infants is needed in the community.

2. Child Care Deserts: The Center for American Progress released a report showing areas of the United States where there is a lack of child care.²⁴ For the report, the Center for American Progress collected and analyzed data on the location and capacity of registered/licensed child care in every state, comparing it to the estimates in population, family income and labor force participation for every U.S. census track. The analysis shows 51% of Americans live in a child care desert.²⁵ Most of Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties are identified as being a child care desert.

The report shows that rural areas have a higher concentration of child care deserts, which is consistent with our area. As shown in Tables 8 through 10, there are 11 family/group family child care providers in the rural areas of Broome County, one in Chenango County and four in Tioga County. There is only one center in the rural areas of Broome County and none in Chenango or Tioga Counties.

In addition to the rural areas of Broome County, which include Windsor School District, Susquehanna Valley School District, Whitney Point School District, and Harpursville School

District, there are school districts with limited child care programs, including Chenango Valley School District, Chenango Forks School District, and Vestal School District.

3. Temporary or Part-Time Care: When a child care program or a school closed due to quarantines but a child wasn't quarantined, the parents had nowhere to send their child. Parents do not need a permanent spot in this situation, but just something short-term to cover the closure. 2021 also saw many programs close due to staffing shortages. If a teacher was quarantined or called in sick and there were no available substitutes, a program had to close the classroom due to not being able to cover required ratios of staff to children. These closures caused many difficulties for working parents.

Another similar need was for part-time care. Some parents chose to work limited hours, so only needed part-time care, which is difficult to find. If a child attend a UPK program within a school district but the program ends early, parents need care to cover the remainder of their work day. This afternoon part-time care was often difficult to find.

4. Transportation: Similar to the need for part-time care, if a parent needs to find care for their child after a part-time or shortened-day program, such as UPK in the school, transportation to a second program is difficult to find. Many school districts do not provide transportation for their UPK programs, so it is up to a parent to find a way to get their child to the program and back. If a parent is working, they often can't leave work to provide the transportation themselves. This becomes a problem for many parents.

UPK programs within a child care center; when the school-district uses a community-based organization to provide UPK, do not have this issue as they can provide the needed wrap-around care. Keeping the child within the same program helps parents remain employed and also helps the child care program not lose income for the loss of serving preschool age children.

5. School Age Child Care: 2021 saw many school age child care programs within school districts close. This sudden closure of programs caused issues for parents in those specific school districts. Consistent before-school and after-school care is needed.

According to our database, 853 children were served using the referral service in 2021. Of these children, 28% were school age children in the three counties.

MARKET RATES OF CHILD CARE

Child care is expensive. Middle and lower income families struggle to find affordable child care. The local Department of Social Services offers child care subsidies to help lower income parents pay for child care. To be eligible, families must be at 200% of poverty or less. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundations Kids Count Data Center, 20% of families in New York State are low-income, which is 200% of poverty.²⁶ Families who fall just above this threshold must pay the entire cost of childcare themselves as they do not qualify for subsidies. This can be over 20% of their income.

A family of four, with two working parents each making just over minimum wage, do not qualify for subsidy assistance. With a family income of \$53,500 a year, the family would not qualify for assistance paying for child care so they would have to pay the full cost themselves. If both children were in a local family child care home (the least expensive option for child care), paying \$150 per child a week, the family would pay \$15,600 a year on child care or nearly 30% of their income on child care.

In Broome County, a total of 616 families in Broome County are receiving child care assistance.²⁷ There are 39 families in Chenango County receiving child care assistance²⁸. There are 98 families in Tioga County receiving child care assistance.²⁹ The New York State Child Care Block Grant (NYS CCBG) projected allocation is \$5,254,436 to Broome County from

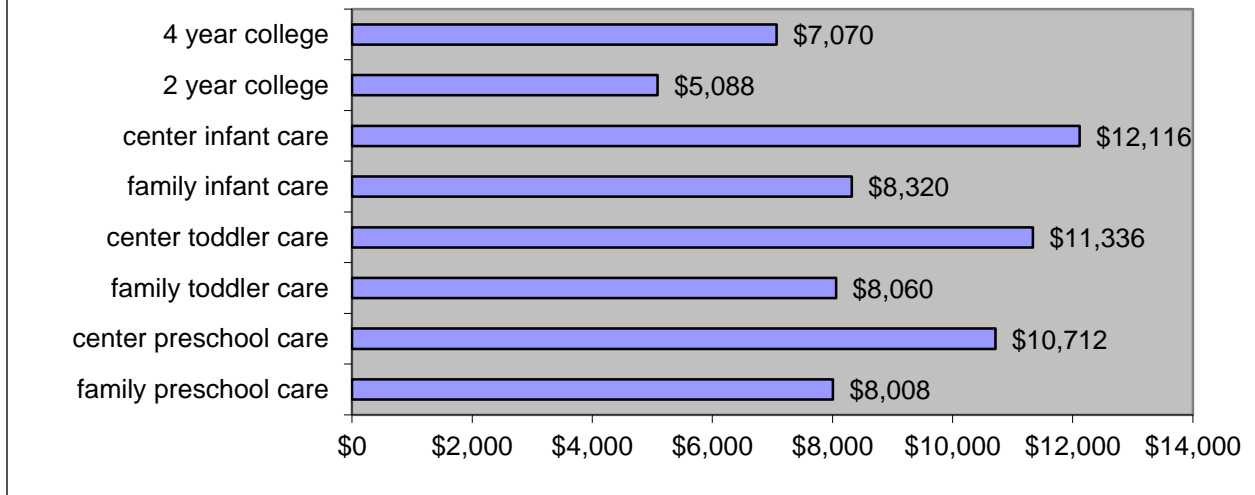
2021-2022, \$512,090 to Chenango County for 2020-2021 and \$1,196,205 to Tioga County for 2021-2022.

The average cost of full-time child care for infants in Broome County is \$8,320 per year per child in family child care and \$12,116 for center based child care. The average cost of full time child care for a preschooler in Broome County is \$ 8,008 per year per child for family child care and \$10,712 per year for center based child care.³⁰

TABLE 11: Subsidized Rate (Market Rate) Versus Private Pay Rates for Child Care ³¹		
Child Care Center		
	DSS Market Rate Weekly Rate	Private Pay Rate Weekly Rate
Infants	\$220	\$233
Toddlers	\$206	\$218
Preschool	\$195	\$206
School Age	\$180	\$181
Family/Group Family Child Care		
	DSS Market Rate Family care Weekly Rate	Private Pay Rate Family care Weekly Rate
Infants	\$160	\$160
Toddlers	\$150	\$155
Preschool	\$150	\$154

Both the subsidized/market rate and the private pay rate is more than the cost of public college tuition in New York: \$7,070 per year for a four year state college³² or \$5,088 for a local two year college, not including room and board or books.³³

CHART 11: Cost of Child Care Compared To College



As you can see from Chart 11, the cost of infant care is nearly twice as much as the annual cost of college tuition at a four year college. Not many families can afford to outright pay for their child to go to college. There are student loans, grants, etc. But parents are expected to cover the full cost of child care. This is often when they are young and new in their career with a lower salary. The child care system needs to change. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, care is considered affordable if it is 7% or less of a family's household income. New York State continues to rank in the top ten of the least affordable states for child care for children under the age of five.³⁴

Although the cost of child care to parents is extremely high, child care centers are still struggling financially. The price charged to parents is less than what it costs a center to provide that care. The "True Cost of Care" for area programs is between 25% to 50% more than what they charge. For example, before the COVID-19 pandemic, at one area center, the cost of an infant spot really costs the program \$300 a week, but they only charge parents \$225 a week. After the COVID-19 pandemic, those costs have increased due to the need for increased cleaning

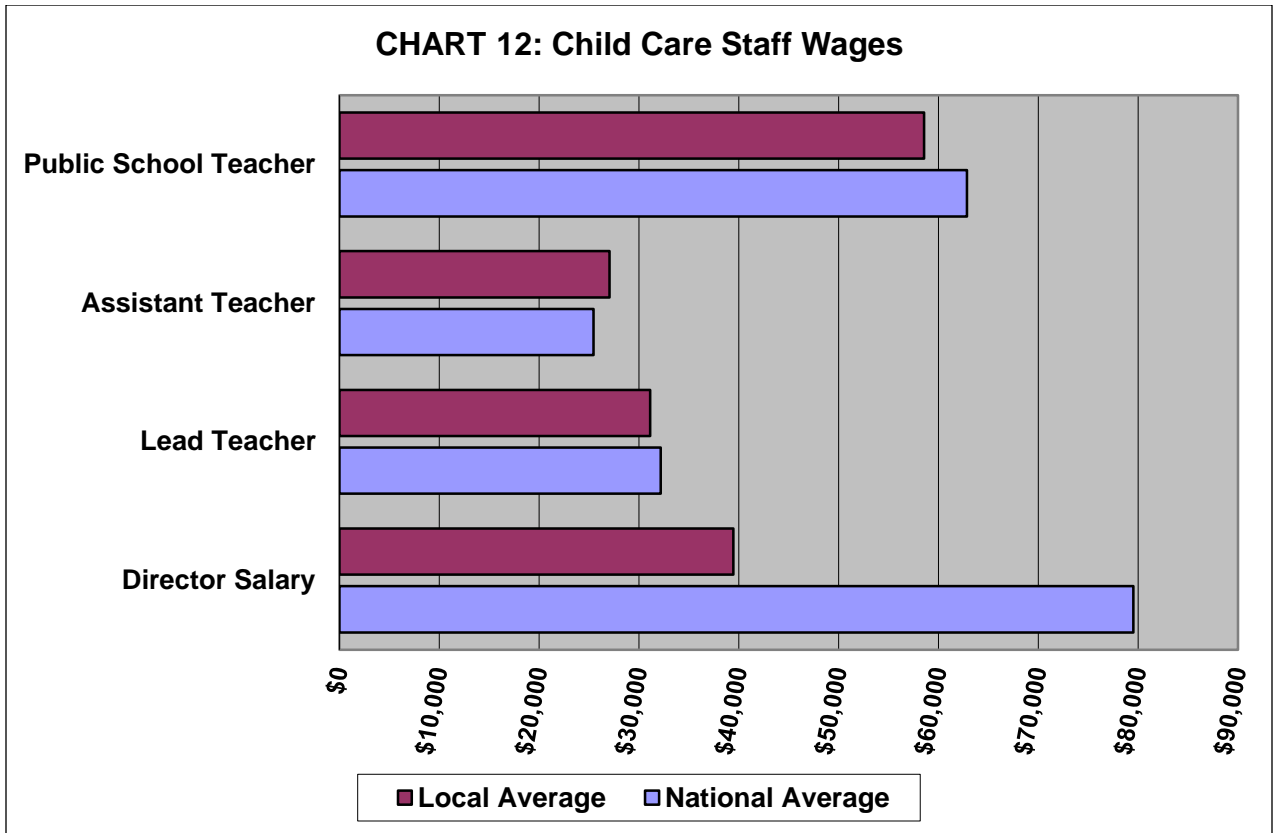
and sanitizing products, masks and other PPE, as well as decreased enrollment to allow for social distancing and low group numbers.

Roadblocks To Increasing Child Care Supply

Center Reasons

The biggest cost for a child care center is salaries for staff. NYS OCFS regulations dictate required staff-child ratios. Even if a program can accommodate more children in the physical space, it is often not cost effective to add additional staff. Qualifications of child care providers are critical to high quality child care. However, the people we entrust to provide quality child care for our children are often not well compensated which does not attract highly qualified staff to the field. In 2021, on average in center-based care, an assistant teacher earned slightly above minimum wage, or \$13.01 per hour. With the continued increase of minimum wage, programs will have to increase the wage of these staff. The wage for a lead teacher varied by education, but the average is \$14.97 per hour. Lead teachers are mandated to have further education, such as a Child Development Credential or an associate degree or higher.

The hourly rate teachers are paid is often determined by what a center can afford and not based on teacher qualifications or education. OCFS regulations determine the qualification and educational requirements for lead teachers or assistant teachers in centers. Higher education for a teacher may not necessarily mean higher compensation, especially enough to repay student loans for obtaining a degree. Many early childhood teachers leave child care for higher paying jobs in the public school system since public school teachers earn double to triple what a teacher with the same qualifications makes in child care.³⁵ The pay for child care providers across the country is an issue, but as indicated in Chart 12, local child care professionals earn right around the national average.³⁶



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With the low wages, child care center staff are struggling to provide for their own families. If the teacher does not have a working spouse or partner contributing to the family income, then she would fall below the 200% of poverty line and be eligible for public assistance benefits. The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at the University of California, Berkeley conducted a study of teachers working in a QUALITYstarsNY program and issued a report “Teachers’ Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality-New York.” The study found 40% of teaching staff resided in families that utilized at least one form of federal public support.³⁸

Family Child Care Reasons

Increasing the supply of family-based child care programs also faces challenges. As noted in Charts 5 and 7, our area has seen a 66% decrease in family child care programs over the

last ten years in both Broome and Tioga Counties. A variety of reasons are stated as to why programs close when exit surveys are conducted. Family providers often state the difficulty complying with regulations in their own home as a primary reason for closing their program. The second reason is that long standing providers are retiring due to age.

New, prospective providers are not opening to fill the void of the ones leaving the field. This was especially noted in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2020, OCFS limited the onsite inspections conducted, therefore limiting the number of prospective new family child care providers completing the registration or licensing process.

On average, three new family child care applications are ordered each month in all three counties. Barriers to completing the process include the difficulty meeting the regulation requirements, lack of communication with the licensor, costs, and necessary time to complete the background checks and training. Despite CCR&R staff assistance through the process, more support for the registration and licensing process is needed. In 2021, there were only a handful of new programs opened.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Across the US, there is increasing recognition of the economic importance of child care. Early care and education is being recognized as an important economic sector in its own right, and as a critical piece of social infrastructure that supports children's development and facilitates parents' employment. Child care is an essential service so parents can work.

The local numbers of the child care industry show the importance to the local economy.

- **170 Small Businesses:** Child care centers, school age child care programs, and family child care programs are small businesses and contribute to the economic activity of our region.

- **54.6 Million Dollars:** The yearly cost of all regulated child care spots in our region is over \$54.6 million in child care payments.
- **1000 Workers:** Early care and education workers, directors, teachers, assistant teachers, and family child care providers is a large employment sector.
- **6,000 Children of Working Parents:** Parents are able to work because their children are in a child care program. Child care keeps other businesses running. Employers benefit by enhanced performance of their workers who use child care, because parents do not have to worry about their child's safety and can focus on work.

IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF CCR&R ISSUES

This assessment indicates that the following community priorities need to be addressed by CCR&R programming:

1. Need to expand services for infant and toddler care throughout the service area.
2. Need to advocate for increased funding to support minimum wage increases.
3. Need to advocate for increased funding to meet the true cost of child care, through increased market rates and supportive funding for programs.
4. Need to advocate for increased funding to support child care programs as the business model does not work. Parent tuition payments alone do not cover the costs of operating a child care program, but parents cannot afford to pay more.
5. Need to expand child care programs in all areas of Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties.
6. Need to expand services for children with challenging behaviors through mental health supportive services, including Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation projects.

Endnotes:

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- ¹ developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/
- ² www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Findex.html
- ³ Child Care Aware of America Report “Child Care in America: 2012 State Fact Sheets” for New York.
- ⁴ Family Enrichment Network’s Family/Group Family Child Care Provider Needs Assessment Survey, October 2021.
- ⁵ Child Care Aware of America Report “Child Care in America: 2012 State Fact Sheets” for New York.
- ⁶ Family Enrichment Network’s Center/SACC Needs Assessment Survey, October 2021.
- ⁷ The National Association for the Education of Young Children, September 2021 survey, https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/user-74/naeyc_survey_statedatawithquotes_sep2021.pdf
- ⁸ Family Enrichment Network’s Center/SACC Needs Assessment Survey, October 2021.
- ⁹ The National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation search at families.naeyc.org/find-quality-child-care
- ¹⁰ The National Association for Family Child Care Program Accreditation search at www.nafcc.org.
- ¹¹ QUALITYstarsNY website search, <https://qualitystarsny.org/find-a-program-in-your-area/>
- ¹² <https://qualitystarsny.org/lieutenant-governor-kathy-hochul-announces-35-million-expansion-of-qualitystarsny/>
- ¹³ Empire State Child Care Search database, January 2022
- ¹⁴ Regional Infant Toddler Milestone chart for 2020-2021 program year, by Child Care Solutions.
- ¹⁵ Infant & Toddler Mental Health Project in New York State outreach flyer from ECLC.
- ¹⁶ Child Care Facility System (CCFS) Legally Exempt Database search, January 2022.
- ¹⁷ Family Enrichment Network CACFP Minute Menu and CIPS search, January 2022.
- ¹⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/49322232.pdf>
- ¹⁹ New York State Office of Children and Family Services Child Care Regulations, www.ocfs.state.ny.us.
- ²⁰ Family Enrichment Network CCR&R Training Spreadsheet, 2021.
- ²¹ CCFS Database search, January 2022 and Empire State Child Care Search database, January 2022.
- ²² Center for American Progress, “Costly and Unavailable: America Lacks Sufficient Child Care Supply for Infants and Toddlers”: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2020/08/04/488642/costly-unavailable-america-lacks-sufficient-child-care-supply-infants-toddlers/>
- ²³ Family Enrichment Network’s Empire State Child Care Search database, January 2022.and CCFS search, January 20212 compared to previous Community Assessment numbers since 2012.
- ²⁴ The Center for American Progress, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-care-deserts-2018/>
- ²⁵ Rasheed Malik and Katie Hamm, “Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017)

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- ²⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center; Updated December 2020: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/10381-low-income-working-families-with-children?loc=34&loct=2#detailed/2/34/false/1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133/any/20052,20053>
- ²⁷ Broome County Department of Social Services, January 2022.
- ²⁸ Chenango County Department of Social Services, January 2022.
- ²⁹ Tioga County Department of Social Services, January 2022.
- ³⁰ Empire State Child Care Search database, January 2022.
- ³¹ New York State Office of Children and Family Services Market Rates, 2019.
- ³² www.suny.edu, 2021-2022.
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- ³⁴ Child Care Aware of America: “Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2018 Report”.
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Family Support Services Program

2021 PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Family Support Services

Over the past year, the Family Support Services Department of Family Enrichment Network offered four programs, the Nutrition Outreach & Education Program (NOEP) and Walk With Me, in Broome County and the Kinship Care program in Broome and Tioga Counties. The Courthouse Children's Center located at the Broome County Family Court was kept closed all 2021 by the Office of Court Administration due to COVID-19 restrictions. Please note that the NYS Health Department did not refund any of the statewide WIC Help NY programs past September 2020 and these programs did not exist in 2021.

The Courthouse Children's Center

All Courthouse Children's Centers across New York State were closed by the Office of Court Administration on March 16, 2020 and they stayed closed for the remainder of that year and then stayed closed for all of 2021. The Children's Center will reopen again when Broome Family Court decides it is safe to do so.

When the Center is open it is a free drop-in childcare facility at the Broome County Family Courthouse, operated as a joint partnership between Family Enrichment Network and Broome County Family Court. This partnership is 20 years old as the Center opened its doors in September 2001. The professional early childhood staff cares for children six weeks to 12 years of age while their adult caregivers attend to business in either Family or Drug Courts. Changes in the Governor's budget in 2013 resulted in the opening times of the Center being changed three times and finally, in June 2013, the funding was stabilized to provide four and a half days of childcare a week, which has continued through to March 2020. The Center was opened full day Monday through Thursday from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and half day on Friday mornings, 8:45

a.m. to 12 p.m.. The Children's Center staff offer a changing monthly curriculum to provide children with fun, educational, and safe experiences away from the high tensions that can erupt in the family court waiting room. Adults who leave children in the center are also offered a variety of community referrals and resources.

The Kinship Care Program

“Kinship” families, refer to those families that are raising someone else's child, because of upheavals or unhappy circumstances in the child's original family group. The task of taking over the raising of children from fractured families or families in crisis often falls on those outside of the nuclear family unit. Kinship families are frequently headed by grandparents, however aunts, uncles, great aunts, great uncles, siblings, cousins, great grandparents and other family members as well as family friends and neighbors can also take on this responsibility. The sudden addition of children to a family group and the task of parenting a second time around can create unexpected financial hardships and emotional turmoil for these newly blended kinship families.

The numbers of children being raised by someone other than their parents has been steadily growing. As of the U.S 2010 census, in New York State 129,522 grandparents are responsible for the grandchildren living with them and over 439,654 children under the age of 18 live in households headed by a grandparent or other relative.¹ In Broome County, there are 2,371 grandparents reported as caregivers in a home with grandchildren under the age of 18 years. Of those, 1221 or 51.5% are fully responsible for 2,226 grandchildren. This is well above the state level of 35%. Nearly 19% of grandparent caregivers live below the poverty level.² Grandparents and non-parent caregivers can have many questions about raising children in today's society and many may not know where to turn for guidance and support.

Family Enrichment Network has been providing kinship care services to the community

for 17 years, since November 2, 2005. The Kinship Care Program was one of the original funded Kinship Programs through the Office of Children's and Family Services and provided an informational help-line and a friendly ear, advocacy, referral services, monthly workshops and up-to-date information on the legal rights of kinship caregivers. Support groups designed specifically to address the needs of kinship caregivers and in-home parenting classes were offered along with social activities and community connections. This funding stream was consistent until September 30, 2012.

From October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2015 the Kinship Care Program was funded through the Kinship Navigator's Children's Bureau Grant. Initial funding included money for a Kinship Navigator Coordinator, whose position was primarily to work with the statewide Kinship Navigator Program in Broome County to distribute and collect *Permission to Contact* forms that funneled families needing kinship care first to the Kinship Navigator phone banks and then onto the FEN Kinship Program. In late summer of 2013, this funding was more than doubled so that from October 1, 2013 the Kinship Navigator Program provided extra funds to allow the program to continue to provide direct kinship services to kinship families through the Kinship Advocate and Kinship Counselor positions.

In September 2014 the Kinship Navigator Children's Bureau grant was refunded by Congress but for a smaller amount of funding, cutting one third of the program's grant amount. This resulted in the loss of the Kinship Navigator Program Coordinator and a reduction in the hours for the Broome County Kinship Advocate and the Broome County Kinship Counselor.

On September 1, 2015, the Kinship Care program was funded by an Office of Family and Children's Services (OCFS) grant with a five-year funding shell. This funding stream provided for a fulltime kinship advocate to continue kinship services in Broome County with some limited

advocacy services in Tioga County. The grant also provided some limited counseling hours for kinship families in Broome County.

From September 2015 through August 2016 the Kinship Care Program collaborated with Mother's & Babies Perinatal Network to provide Kinship Caregiver support groups and the Kinship youth services. The new OCFS funding for the Kinship Program enabled the program services to be opened up to kinship families of any income level. In previous funding streams the program had been limited to providing services only to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) eligible families. Starting September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2020, the Kinship Care Program took over providing the support groups and parenting classes as required by the OCFS grant and was able to meet all the required targets. The OCFS funding ended in August 2020 and NYS Kinship Navigator stepped up to provide extra funds for our Kinship Care Program.

The Kinship Navigator funds actually began in September 2018 when they awarded supplemental funding to a few kinship care programs across NY State to provide peer mentor services and to strengthen the kinship caregiver's support groups. This funding enabled the program to add two peer mentors to the staff and to begin offering weekly kinship caregiver's support groups. Both these activities strengthened the services offered to kinship caregivers. When the OCFS funding ended in August 2020, NYS Kinship Navigator was able to increase their funding to the FEN Kinship Care program to allow kinship care services to continue. This was wonderful as it allowed the program to continue but the Kinship Navigator funds were not able to fully replace the OCFS funds so the kinship program continued with reduced staff hours. This also meant that the kinship counselor's position was eliminated. This reduction in staff hours along with the drop in community referrals from the pandemic restrictions meant our final numbers were lower than in previous years. However we still exceeded our revised lower targets.

In the past Kinship Navigator funded grant year, October 1, 2020 to September 31 2021, the Kinship Program enrolled 100 new unduplicated families into the program, assisted 113 kinship families with two or more community connections, which included referrals, advocacy service, DSS assistance and material supports. Case management services were provided for 151 kinship families and 96 families were assisted with the Non Parent Caregiver (NPC) grant available through the local Departments of Social Services.³ Please note that on average, the kinship program staff continued to work with 35 Kinship families a month; including both new families and those already in the database. In-person kinship care program services were curtailed in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, however, by the start of 2021 staff were all working again from their offices. Throughout the COVID restrictions, the kinship staff were considered essential workers and continued to help families apply for the NPC grant, assisting by phone then safety stopping at homes to collect the necessary paperwork signatures while following all the social distancing and mask wearing mandates. Later in the year in-home visits began again based on kinship families' preferences.

Nutrition Outreach & Education Program (NOEP)

NOEP

Family Enrichment Network's Nutrition Outreach & Education Program (NOEP) offers free assistance with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) process in Broome County. The Broome NOEP Coordinator (NC) at FEN provides confidential prescreens for potential SNAP eligibility over the phone or in person. If the applicant appears to be eligible after the pre-screening process, an appointment is set up for the NC to assist with application process, which includes guidance on paperwork, copying of necessary documents and the completion of the application form. The NC can make home visits or meet with applicants in a

convenient location of their choice or in the FEN office if the applicant prefers. As part of the application assistance the NC and the Broome County Department of Social Services SNAP unit have developed a system that allows the NC up to ten interview slots once a week for the SNAP phone interviews needed to complete the process. The NC provides technical assistance regarding the application and educates individuals about their rights and responsibilities, regarding SNAP. Usually the SNAP unit faxes an outcome sheet to the NC about each applicant and if they were approved for SNAP. This communication allows the NC to follow up on any SNAP denials to determine if there were any problems with the application. The NC answers any questions about SNAP through presentations and outreach efforts at area Senior Citizens Centers, disabled housing facilities, WIC Sites, local food pantries and the Mobile Food Pantry distribution sites. This is a partial list of the outreach sites at which the NOEP Coordinator addresses the application process, works to reduce the stigma attached to SNAP, and attempts to remove any other barriers to SNAP participation.

In 2014, FEN reapplied for the four year NOEP contract in Broome County and for a new NOEP contract in Tioga County. Both these proposals were successful and NOEP ran in both counties from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018. The next grant contract was for another four years from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022, but only for Broome County. As of 2021, FEN has been operating a NOEP in Broome County for 18 years, since 2003.

The COVID-19 Pandemic that started in March 2020 has had far reaching effects on the NOEP program. The NC was deemed an essential worker and continued to assist households with the SNAP application process, mainly by phone during 2020. However, the NC still went to people's homes to collect the requisite application signatures and the documents that needed to be copied and submitted with the application. All COVID-19 safety measures were followed.

The pandemic restrictions stopped all forms of community outreach, which was a main source of SNAP referrals. In the 2021 the NOEP Coordinator was able to restart in-person and home based meetings. However the referral numbers for SNAP applicants remained low until after the extra government COVID benefits were discontinued. Families with children in child care or school were automatically eligible for Pandemic Electronic Benefit (EBT) funds and any households receiving SNAP were automatically eligible for maximum SNAP benefits, providing important assistance to households but interestingly led to a much lower usage of the local food pantries as reported to the NOEP Coordinator from the Catholic Charities food pantries in Binghamton and Endicott. The SNAP referrals finally started to increase in the last quarter of 2021 and the local DSS SNAP unit was overwhelmed and required the SNAP intake staff to work on Saturdays to catch up on the backlog.

During the 2020-2021 grant year, the NC provided 255 prescreens and enabled 192 households to receive SNAP. These lower numbers reflected the far fewer families seeking to enroll in SNAP. The NC shared information about the SNAP process with 2,034 individuals across Broome County at visibility events and community presentations which was an increase of 375 people from the previous year. U.S. Census data of 2013 states that 47% of children in the City of Binghamton live in poverty compared with 22% statewide, and 67% of school-age children are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Recently, the USDA Economic Research Service reported that children in 9.4% of U.S. households are food insecure and that in Broome County, the food insecurity rate for children is 24%.⁴ This data also reveals that almost one in four children in Broome County struggle with hunger.

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's premiere defense against hunger, designed to support low-income households in need of nutrition assistance.

Permanently authorized by Congress in 1964, SNAP is an entitlement program, which means that any individual who applies and meets the established eligibility requirements may receive benefits. Eligibility standards are uniform nationwide, as a result of Federal legislation in 1977. In New York State, SNAP is funded and governed by the United States Department of Agriculture and administered by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), local county Departments of Social Services, and the Human Resources Administration in New York City.

Eligibility for SNAP is based on factors such as household income, immigrant status, and meeting work requirements. SNAP also has special eligibility rules for households that contain a senior or disabled member or a working family with dependent child care or adult care costs. In order to receive SNAP benefits, certain guidelines must be met. A household without an elderly or disabled member must have monthly gross income below 130% of poverty guidelines. A new rule enacted in July 2016 increased the amount of money (up to 150% of the poverty income guidelines) that households with a working individual can earn and still be eligible for SNAP. This represents a 20% increase in gross income, thus a family of four can earn \$410 more per month and still have the potential to qualify for SNAP.

Elderly and/or disabled households and/or working families with dependent child care or adult care costs related to employment or training can have a monthly gross income up to 200% of poverty guidelines. Individuals may apply for SNAP benefits at the Department of Social Services at any time during regular business hours and approval or denial of SNAP is required within 30 days of the intake interview. Applications eligible for expedited SNAP benefits must have a determination made within five calendar (not business) days. Benefits in New York State are now issued in the form of an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, used like a debit card at

grocery stores, retail locations and senior centers. SNAP can be used to purchase seedling/vegetables plants, Meals on Wheels, meals at Senior Centers and at Farmer's Markets that have an EBT card reader.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic a number of COVID-19 relief bills were passed by the government to address the food issues facing so many people across the nation who had lost their jobs because of the restrictions. Pandemic EBT was a special program that awarded any family with children, extra food stamp benefits to offset the fact that children were no longer attending school and unable to get their school lunches. This extra benefit was available to everyone with children, regardless of income. The government also increased the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit so that everyone receiving SNAP benefits was eligible for the maximum allotment based on family size.

In 2021, 14,745 households (3.63% less than 2020), consisting of 25,570 individuals, (2.01% less than 2020) received SNAP assistance in Broome County. Of these, 9,442 households consisting of 18,739 individuals were SNAP Only cases, which means that 73.3% of the individuals receiving SNAP were working or collecting some form of benefit but not receiving any temporary cash assistance. The much smaller group of 5,303 households with 6,831 individuals, or 26.7% of SNAP recipients, received cash assistance as well and are counted as our poverty population.⁵ These numbers suggest that those in Broome County who participate in SNAP are largely the working poor, disabled and/or senior citizens. Please note that many more households applied for SNAP but were denied because they did not meet the financial eligibility requirements; however, these families were still facing food and hunger insecurities. Hunger Solutions New York states that 40% of SNAP recipients are children.⁶

Alternative Food Assistance Networks / Emergency Food Systems

Originally intended as a last resort for those in need of immediate assistance, more and more working families, single adults, students, children, and senior citizens are relying on the emergency food system as a regular source of food. State guidelines determining who may receive emergency food do not currently exist; however, individual emergency food providers often establish their own income guidelines and may limit the number of allowed visits. For over the past 25 years, New York State Department of Health's Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) provided State and Federal funds to improve the quality of food distributed to an estimated total of 2,600 Emergency Food Relief Organizations (EFRO) such as food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters in New York State, which provide over 195 million meals each year to people who are in need.⁷

Eight regional food banks in New York, responsible for the solicitation, warehousing and distribution of bulk food donations, also provide technical support and mini-grant funding to emergency food providers. The NOEP Coordinators at Family Enrichment Network work closely with the staff of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier and the local food pantries to ensure that any client utilizing the food banks, but not receiving SNAP benefits, is referred to the NOEP Coordinator. Likewise, individuals who learn about NOEP from other sources are referred by the NOEP Coordinator to food resources in the community. These collaborative efforts account for many referrals to NOEP.

It is important to note that the Food Bank Southern Tier (FBST) serves six Southern Tier counties, and in Broome County in 2019 (the most recent data available) the Food Bank of the Southern Tier (FBST) distributed 4.6 million pounds of food in collaboration with the Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW). There were 218 Mobile Food Pantry

distributions in Broome County that distributed 928,000 pounds of food. 9,772 senior visits were made to Mobile Food Pantries. In Broome County, one in eight individuals are at risk of hunger and one in five children are at risk of hunger. This was an improvement over 2018 but does not reflect the increase in hunger brought on by all the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions. The Back Pack distributes weekend meals to needy school children throughout the school year and 992 children in 12 school districts participated in the program (an increase from 2018), with a total of 33,000 food backpacks being distributed (also an increase). In Broome County, a total of 25,180 people are food insecure.⁸

Walk With Me

Walk With Me (WWM) is a reentry program for those individuals recently released from the Broome County Jail. WWM has been in operation running for the past three and half years, beginning on June 1st, 2018 and was funded through the United Way, the Community Foundation of South Central New York and the Binghamton United Presbyterian Church (UPC) through to June 30, 2019 for the first year of operation. The second year, WWM was funded through UPC and a special grant from the Broome County District Attorney's office from their Crime Prevention Funds. This funding ran from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. The last six months the WWM program was solely funded by the UPC.

In 2021 the program was funded by a Town of Union Block grant from October 1, 2020 to September 31, 2021 that was renewed in October 2021 through to September 2022. This funding was specifically for reentry residents from Endicott, Endwell, Johnson City, and Maine. All other Broome county residents were served in WWM through continuing funding from the Binghamton United Presbyterian Church from January 1, 2021 to December 30, 2021.

Initially, the Walk with Me program (WWM) was a collaboration between Family Enrichment Network , Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier (JUST) and the Broome County Urban League’s ATTAIN Lab with the aim to optimize resources and work efficiently to address the challenges an individual faced when released from the Broome County Jail. As there are limited options available in Broome County to promote successful reentry, the collaboration sought to increase opportunities for individuals through a holistic approach. One such effort was offering a digital literacy program and basic computing skills through the ATTAIN Lab, however, experience revealed that newly released individuals had far too many challenges getting stabilized and meeting their basic needs. The digital literacy and computer skills had to take a back seat to finding housing and employment, getting their health care and medications set up and meeting all the requisite appointments they had with probation and other required services, like mental health and substance abuse treatments.

The issues that recently incarcerated individuals face are compounded within the local jail systems. National reports indicate that there are a number of incarcerations that are avoidable, with an increasing majority of inmates being jailed due to substance abuse and/or mental issues that are not being treated. The publication dated March 2017, *Documenting Injustice in Broome County: The need for an Investigation of the Abuses of Over-incarceration* Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier Prepared by: William Martin and Andrew J. Pragacz, points out that “very few of the persons held in the jail are the ‘drug kingpins’ paraded for the media: over 70% of those held in the jail are waiting unconvicted and too poor to afford the excessively high bails imposed in county courts for relatively minor offenses.” Martin and Pragacz highlight that “The Public Defender and Public Prosecutor have publicly stated that over 80% of those incarcerated have substance use disorders.” In a January 26, 2018 news interview

with WBNG, Sheriff Harder stated, "We've taken in over 20,000 people within the past five years with all kinds of illnesses and problems." What's startling is that according to the Press and Sun Bulletin there have been nine deaths at the Broome County Jail since 2011.⁹

Jails are not therapeutic nor do they have the resources or services in place to help promote successful reintegration into the community once an inmate is released. Research indicates that successful reentry programs for inmates rely on addressing mental health issues, providing mentoring, offering educational opportunities and job training, and connecting them with community resources.

In our community, we have limited services available for those coming out of the Broome County Jail. Data revealed by the 2015 Community Foundation of South Central New York Needs Assessments for Broome County indicates funding recommendations for programs supporting families with incarcerated or newly released parents. Family Enrichment Network's most recent Community Assessment reveals that 21% of our families have been or are affected by incarceration. The Walk With Me program provides advocacy, peer mentoring, assistance with securing employment and critical services for those who are leaving the Broome County Jail ONLY and reentering the community. These services include assistance with:

- Applying for cash assistance through the local Broome County Department of Social Services
- Reestablishing benefits such as SSI and SSDI, if applicable
- Obtaining stable housing before emergency shelter is exhausted
- Obtaining valid identification and documents need to start a job search such as birth certificate, transcripts, rap sheet, and Certificates of Relief of Disabilities
- Access to support groups focusing on self-esteem and confidence builders

- Job search skills, identifying marketable skills, developing a resume and reference list
- Completing job applications and soft skills training; practicing mock interviews
- Education on how to address convictions and incarceration with prospective employers

The mission of the Walk With Me project is to aid in the successful reentry for those who do not have any supports when leaving the jail system. Typically, Walk With Me services are for those individuals with the least amount of family/friend supports and the highest number of personal needs. The program has served 60 individuals over the course of the year with “boots on the ground” crisis management and stabilization supports. JUST provides support groups and advocacy efforts to help further the successful reintegration of those reentering our community. Together with our key supporters, we have been able to ensure a successful program implementation.

From January 2021 to December 2021, the third year of the program, the following services were provided. Please keep in mind that the COVID-19 Pandemic and ensuing restrictions provided many challenges for the reentry staff. In 2021, even though the reentry staff were considered essential workers and still provided most services, many local agencies still had closed doors, which made accessing services problematic.

- 61 intake assessments were completed and 57 participants enrolled in the program.
- 50 participants received benefits assistance, 53 made a meaningful community connection, and 53 received referrals.
- 25 participants received employment skills training. Please note that not all participants required employment skills training because of their physical or mental health status and their receiving SSI or SSDI benefits. Some participants were

required by their probation officers to attend mental health or substance abuse programs, before they were allowed to seek employment.

- 36 participants received help finding stable housing. This number was down from last year in large part because of the absolute dearth of housing options. Some participants ended up living in DSS emergency hotels for over seven months because of the lack of housing available.
- 56 participants received financial assistance that helped with cell phones and minutes (extremely important for making and keeping appointments, finding housing and eventually employment), basic hygiene items, clothing (underwear and work clothes), bus passes, household items, laundry tokens and food.
- 40 individuals graduated from the program with only 14 withdrew from the program, either because they left the area or declined to stay involved.¹⁰

IDENTIFICATION OF UNMET PROGRAMS NEEDS

Courthouse Children's Center

- Reopen the Courthouse Children's Center: The Center has been closed since the March 16, 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions and is waiting to reopen at the behest of the Broome County Family Court.
- Increased funding to address the state mandated minimum wage: Governor Cuomo signed legislation enacting a statewide \$15 minimum wage plan that lifted the earnings, in all industries across the state of more than 2.1 million New Yorkers, as part of the 2016-17 State Budget. On December 31, 2016, the first in a series of wage increases went into effect and the minimum wage was established for upstate New York as \$9.70 an hour. On December 31, 2021 the minimum wage was increased to \$13.20 an hour.¹¹ The

Courthouse Children's Center has been flat funded for the past year four years and this well-deserved increase is putting a large strain on the already thin budget to run the Center.

- Restored Funding for Full Operation: During 2020 funding was reduced because of the state budget woes linked to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Previous to that the budget for the Center had not changed since 2016 and the Center was unable to provide child care services on Friday afternoons. Restoring the funding to pre-2016 would provide Center services for a full five days a week and would be of the most benefit to families who need to use the Center. In January 2015, Broome County added another Family Court judge and when all judges and magistrates are in session, seven courtrooms are in operation.

Kinship Care Program

- The most important priority is continued funding for the kinship program. At this time funding is slated to end September 2022 with no new funding streams apparent. COVID-19 has impacted funding sources while at the same time the need for kinship care services has not diminished. In the coming year there is a potential crisis looming with the loss of kinship care services for families in Broome and Tioga counties.
- Legal and Pro Bono Legal Services: Legal Assistance for Kinship Caregivers has been an ongoing unmet need identified in the last nine community assessments. Many of the families in the kinship database indicated a need for legal information or legal services to help them with their kinship situation. Some kinship families are still being told that they must seek temporary custody before they can apply for cash assistance which is incorrect. For other families, the amount of SNAP can be impacted when kinship children are added into a family. Kinship families need legal advice to protect their incomes and many

kinship providers report spending thousands of dollars for lawyers to help them negotiate the legal system and protect their kinship children while seeking full custody or working toward a permanent living situation. When kinship children's parents are unable to pay for an attorney, family court can appoint one, but unfortunately, if the kinship provider cannot afford an attorney, there is generally no court appointed attorney available unless the kinship provider is disabled. This means that many kinship providers can be pulled into court and no have recourse but to use life savings or take out loans to pay for necessary legal representation or else run the risk of losing custody of their kinship children. In previous grants the Kinship Program was funded to provide free one-time legal consultation for up to 50 Kinship families. The plan was designed to help a kinship caregiver determine if they needed a lawyer to pursue their case in family court and to establish how much legal representation they would need. However, experience has shown that in too many cases one legal consultation was not enough as kinship custody issues are complicated and protracted and most kinship families could not then afford the lengthy legal fees. Kinship caregivers need pro bono legal services to help them resolve their complicated custody issues.

- Reinstate Free Kinship Counseling Services: In Broome and Tioga Counties, there are not enough free mental health services or providers that accept Medicaid. Trauma based counseling services are needed to stabilize kinship families and help kinship children deal with the grief and loss they experience because of their kinship situation. OCFS funding for the Kinship Program required the use of the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) survey to help determine the amount of toxic stress a kinship child may have experienced. Even the community at large has become aware of ACEs studies and the

recommendation that any amount of toxic stress should be addressed to prevent long term health problems. The higher the ACEs score, the greater the chance of the child experiencing serious physical and mental health problems, addictions, homelessness and suicides.

In September 2020, the new funding stream for the Kinship Care program did not provide for any counseling services and families must now be referred to other community resources. The biggest drawback for using community counseling services is that many agencies cannot provide counseling supports to children unless the kinship caregiver has custody. This is not always the case and even when kinship caregivers have applied for custody it can take months for a determination to be made. During that time a child in need goes unserved. Since COVID-19 the Family Courts have slowed down, adding to a family's distress.

- Respite Care: Respite Care is very important and mostly unavailable for kinship families. For kinship families, respite care is defined as the opportunity for kinship caregivers to spend an extended period of time away from their kinship children. This does not apply to babysitting offered during a meeting to allow a caregiver to participate. Family Enrichment Network's Kinship Program has been unable to fulfill any requests received from kinship caregivers for daylong, overnight or weekend respite care. Currently in our community respite care is available through Catholic Charities for families who have children with a mental health diagnosis. Respite Care is provided in a number of formats: community-based, out of home, recreational or group. However, kinship families whose children do not have a mental health diagnosis have no extended respite care available to them at all. Based on responses from local kinship caregivers at support group meetings,

there is a strong need for this service. The extended family that generally is available to help family members with occasional child care is over utilized once these same family members become kinship caregivers. Since the tables have been turned for kinship families there are often no other family resources available to help out.

- Transportation: Transportation in rural areas remains a mainly unmet need for many kinship families. Access to services is a problem for families that live in rural Broome and Tioga counties as public transportation is limited to the urban core and the country services are very limited if not non-existent in some areas. Even though Medicaid can provide medical transportation for medical appointments, therapies and substance abuse counseling, this does not help kinship families get to all their counseling appointments, support groups, workshops and appointments they must attend. Without reliable, available transportation, children can and do miss out on the help they really need.
- Increased substance abuse treatment programs: In 2021 the number of children coming into kinship families has remained very high because of the ongoing issues with drug addictions exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions. Local community resources were limited and those with substance use issues had to rely on virtual platforms for their addictions services. The Kinship Program data shows that addiction often with mental health issues is the most frequent reason that children are not able to stay with their parents. While there has been a concerted effort by the community to increase services for those with addiction there are still challenges and barriers for those with addiction problems and demand exceeds the availability of services.
- Kinship Resource Bank: So many kinship families need infant and child care items such as clothing, cribs, crib sheets, diapers, and other resources that it would be helpful to have

a resources recycling bank to allow kinship families to help each other. Giving kinship families the opportunity to pass on the child care items when they no longer need them.

NOEP

- Access to free Summer Meals for rural children: In both Broome and Tioga counties many SNAP eligible children rely on the free and reduced school breakfast and school lunch programs for their daily meals. This was identified as a major problem in 2015 by the Tioga County Anti-Hunger Task Force. Broome County Child Hunger Task Force developed and implemented some strategies in 2015 to start addressing the needs of hungry rural children as well. However, this problem still needs more solutions as at this time the participation rate of SNAP eligible children at Broome County summer meal sites is only 22%. In 2021, the number of children receiving summer meals improved because of the introduction of Pandemic Electronic Benefit (EBT) Cards for every family in New York with school age children. This assistance was not income based and was designed to make sure that children could access food during the COVID-19 restrictions.
- Access to healthy affordable fruit/vegetables in food deserts and rural areas. This problem goes hand-in-hand with the lack of grocery stores; in 2015 the addition of two more CHOW buses, (a mobile community Farmer's Market that provides healthy, low-cost produce to the public) has helped improved access for fresh fruits and vegetables for some of those located in the food desert in Broome County. However, this extended CHOW bus program was reduced in 2018 once again leaving underserved communities. This included the CHOW bus that visited the FEN Cherry Street site each week that was cancelled because of the reassignment of CHOW's AmeriCorps students to other programs.

In 2017, the City of Binghamton, CHOW, and the Lee Barta Community center started a North Side Grocery Shuttle bus to give the residents of Binghamton's North Side (a food desert) access to free transportation to two local grocery stores. This has helped one of the urban food deserts but the rural families are still struggling with access to affordable fruits and vegetables.

Finally, in 2020, the Broome County Council of Churches built a new community supermarket on the Eastside of Binghamton, a region that had been a food desert for 25 years.¹²

- Access to and participation in school breakfast programs: In Broome County the number of SNAP eligible children who participate in the free and reduced school breakfast programs is lacking. Children require proper nutrition to focus and learn. The public needs more education on this program and schools need to remove the barriers that prevent children from participating. In 2015 the Binghamton School District was designated as a free school meals district because of the high percentage of income eligible families. This means that all children can eat for free at school, however social stigma and cramped morning schedules still remain as barriers.
- Assist More College Students to obtain SNAP: Although there are special rules that limit the eligibility of students, NOEP must continue to develop collaborations to educate and advocate for eligible college students in Broome County at the local University, the Community College and Business Schools. In 2020, as part of the government's COVID-19 relief bills, the rules for college students were changed to allow greater access for students to SNAP benefits; however this is only a temporary change.
- Access to Specialized Food for those with Medical Conditions: Those who suffer from

celiac disease (gluten intolerance), diabetes or other medical conditions requiring specific types of food, are particularly vulnerable when faced with hunger. These individuals have a difficult time finding the correct food at local food pantries and can have no other option but to eat food that is harmful for their medical condition. Currently there is no system in place to provide for those with a nutritional/dietary condition. Please note this does not refer to people who are trying to lose weight, but those with serious food allergies and/or food restrictions.

Walk With Me

- Affordable housing: All of the people being released from the Broome County Jail without family supports struggle with finding immediate and affordable housing. Although there is a county-wide centralized system for homeless people to access housing, the system has not been very successful for the formerly incarcerated population. Removing the barriers for this population is essential. In 2020 through 2021 the government placed a moratorium on evictions as one way to prevent homelessness during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was a very positive step however it also stalled the availability of housing in our local area. It has been exceedingly difficult for newly released individuals to find any housing at all and some of the program participants have spent over seven months in emergency shelters and motels instead of a few week because there is no affordable housing available.
- Transportation issues: Bus passes are expensive for unemployed individuals and bicycles can offer an affordable option of transportation. Increased options to provide bicycles for this population would increase employment opportunities and help address the issues that arise from a public transportation system that does not have good services for second and

third shift workers and those that live outside of the urban core. For the first three months of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Broome County Transit Authority made all the bus routes free to travel on. This was a wonderful economic boost for the participants in the program who had very limited incomes. In some towns in the United States, there has been a move to making the public bus system free, which greatly helps those in poverty situations and increases ridership.

IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES COMMUNITY WIDE NEEDS

1. Mental Health / Addiction Services

- a. Increased access to mental health counseling and support services for the uninsured and underinsured.** In 2017 there was a small increase in access to mental health services being provided by a number of local agencies. Family & Children’s Society established walk-in appointments to speed up the intake services for counseling services. They also increased the number of therapists available. Lourdes Center for Mental Health has also increased the number of mental health providers they have. The Greater Binghamton Health Center has developed walk-in hours for children with mental health issues as well. There has been a concerted effort to improve access to services; however these providers have also reported that the number of individuals seeking services has also increased. In 2021 the gaps in services for mental health remain. Kinship families cannot access counseling services for their kinship children without custody, which means many children in need of mental health cannot get the services they need.
- b. Increase mental health and wellness services for young children.** This has been an

ongoing problem in our community for years. There are very few providers who can offer mental health counseling for children less than five years of age.

- c. Increase access to no cost mental health medications. The community has seen a small improvement in access to medications for those without insurance or those under insured with the opening of the Hope Dispensary, an off-site service of Lourdes Hospital. However, specific psychotropic medications are not always available at this location, which can be problematic for those who require a specific medication to keep their mental illness in check.
- d. Increase community wide education about mental health resources. There is a definite lack of awareness about the mental health services that are available in the community. This particularly affects middle class families who are not familiar with accessing services. Also increase the number of preventive programs for mental health and substance abuse. Our community needs more programs that emphasize harm reductions techniques.

2. Housing

- a. Increase safe, affordable, permanent, low-income housing options. Broome County is suffering from a well documented lack of affordable low income housing. The Broome County Department of Social Services is desperate to find more landlords to put on their housing lists. The area has seen a building boom for upmarket and luxury apartments and many of the usual low income housing options have changed to housing for college students. This has left a huge gap in availability for low income residents and increased the rents for substandard housing. This also affects large families who are forced into substandard housing because houses with enough

bedrooms are overpriced and unaffordable even to working families. These families are often faced with choosing between rent and heating their homes.

- b.** Increase code inspections and enforcement to help reduce substandard housing. DSS does not pay rent to landlords who are out of compliance with housing codes. Across Broome County, however, there is a lack of conformity in code violation inspections. This contributes to the continuing presence of substandard housing being utilized by low-income families.
- c.** Increase appropriate well maintained emergency hotels that are up to code and located in areas with services, such as bus stops and supermarkets. Currently two of the emergency motels utilized by Broome County DSS are over a mile away from the closest bust stop and a few miles from a supermarket and drug store. This means that our reentry participants are placed well outside of a livable service area which only increases the challenges they face in trying to take care of themselves and get to and from their necessary and often mandated appointments. This is compounded in winter snow and ice and creates a set up for failure.
- d.** Increase transitional housing and expand housing options for vulnerable populations to include those who are: developmentally delayed, domestic violence survivors, homeless, mentally ill, returning from jails and prisons and seniors.
- e.** Increase the number of housing shelters that operates on a Housing First Model for mentally ill and/or chemically dependent individuals who are acting out or off their medications. There is a serious lack of housing in the community for these individuals, because if they are not dangerous to themselves or others, they cannot be admitted to a psychiatric ward and there are almost no other housing options available

for them. In 2020 Family Enrichment Network started building a 19 apartment building for homeless individuals and families following Housing First Model. The apartment complex opened early 2021 and provides supportive case management services to the tenants.

- f. Increase housing for sex offenders. There is an acute lack of acceptable, legal housing for sex offenders in our community. This also becomes a problem for our re-entry population. In 2020 it became impossible to find housing for those released from jail with a sex offender status. This situation has only become more difficult in 2021 with the complete lack of housing options and the restrictions that prohibits these individuals from living within a certain distance of schools, libraries, parks and other places that children may congregate. Also landlords do not want to rent to individuals once they find out about their crimes.

3. Food Insecurity

- a. Increase the number of supermarkets in Binghamton. At the start of 2020 Binghamton's Eastside and the Center City did not have any supermarkets and were considered food deserts. The only place families could purchase food were at some Dollar Stores and the more expensive small corner markets and gas stations. In 2017, a North Side Grocery Shuttle bus was instituted and provides residents with a chance to shop at a supermarket two days a week. This is a wonderful start but is not the same as having a permanent supermarket in the area. In 2020 the Broome County Council of Churches started building a community grocery store on Binghamton's Eastside which opened in early in 2021. This has now helped one of the food deserts in our area.

- b. Offer more Mobile Food Pantries in Western Broome.** Endicott and Johnson City are underserved by the Mobile Food Pantry (MFP) and both these towns have large populations of low income households. In 2019, the MFP sites continue in Endicott with two distributions and four distributions a year at the Cherry Street FEN location in Johnson City. The COVID-19 MFPs changed from the usual walk-up format to a drive-through format. This was useful for the larger number of households that didn't usually access MFP but a detriment for the lower income, carless population.
- c. Increase evening hours at food pantries.** More food pantries need to offer evening hours for those people who work during the day, as the number of individuals suffering food insecurity has increased in the county.
- d. Increase WIC Clinic hours and locations.** Currently there are only three satellite WIC clinics in Broome County: the Endicott clinic is open twice a month, one Monday a month from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and one Tuesday a month from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; the Johnson City clinic is open one Thursday a month from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and the Whitney Point clinic is open one Thursday a month from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.. Only one satellite clinic, once a month, is open past 3 p.m.. For those families living in rural Broome County this presents an access barrier to WIC, particularly if transportation is an issue. Lack of evening hours is also a barrier for working families. The Binghamton clinic is open every Wednesday until 6:30 p.m. but no Saturday morning hours are offered.
- e. Reduce social stigma and increase participation in SNAP.** The elderly population in particular needs more education about SNAP and that it is a benefit program available to all who are eligible. Senior's often think their participation will preclude others

who are eligible from receiving food.

- f. Provide allergy free foods at Food Pantries. Individuals facing food allergies have limited options at food pantries. Even those who have been medically recommended to avoid certain foods cannot follow their doctor's orders because of limited food choices at local food pantries.
- g. Increase community awareness on the importance of funding for SNAP to keep our children, seniors and community at large strong and healthy. During 2020 the Johnson City Presbyterian Church tracked the individuals, children, families and seniors using their food pantry and community meals and determined that 80% of their participants were at high risk for malnutrition. They also cited that many families were unable to prepare nutritious food because their housing had no stoves or microwaves, which means that living in substandard housing increases people's hunger insecurity problems.

4. Affordable Quality Child Care

- a. Child care for younger children has become a growing problem in the community over the past few years as the number of child care slots have been gradually reducing. Parents are forced to choose between no childcare at all or substandard child care. There is a severe lack of infant and toddler child care and the price for these remaining slots has sky rocketed. New York State has increased the regulations and requirements for in-home child care providers, which at first glance seem to make sense, but there are now so many rules to follow that in-home child care providers are closing their businesses. This has left families with limited to zero options. COVID-19 and the pandemic restrictions and rules have added to the number of child care

centers and in-home child care providers shutting their doors. The child care crisis is only increasing.

- b. Increase options for school aged care and support. More programming for school aged youth is need in the area. After school and support groups are particularly needed for youth impacted by parents with mental health and substance abuse issues. More trauma-informed care needs to be offered to help children suffering from Adverse Childhood Experiences.

5. Services for Teens /Young Adults

- a. Increase services for teens and those 18-21 years old. The 18-21 year old population straddles the gap between the world of minors and adults. In some instances, 18 year olds are considered adults but legally, parents are still financially responsible for them. This is a huge problem for families with out of control teenagers, or those dealing with teens with mental illness or substance abuse. In these situations, the medical field or community agencies may choose to treat the teen as an adult, but their illness or addiction make it very difficult for the teen to function as an adult and they need the advocacy services of a parent. There is a lack of services in Broome County that specifically address the needs of this age group when it comes to mental illness and substance abuse.
- b. Increase Pregnancy and Dating Violence Prevention Programs. The Love U 2 (LU2) curriculum provides a series of fun informative classes on healthy relationships for teens and tweens. The curriculum also incorporates pregnancy prevention and healthy life choices. This curriculum was used very successfully with teens and tweens in a parenting and relationship program offered though Head Start. It was also a

successful facet of the 2012 to 2013 Kinship Program year when funding provided for a Kinship Youth Advocate who offered this program to Middle School students from kinship families. Funding is again needed to provide the opportunity for all middle and high school students to be able to participate in these classes.

- c. Increase Support Groups for children and adolescents dealing with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as those from households with Domestic Violence, substance abuse, mental illness, physical abuse or neglect.

6. Formerly Incarcerated Individuals.

- a. Ban the Box. Take the question regarding former criminal convictions off employment forms. Currently it is legal to ask a prospective employee if they have been ever convicted of a crime. This often provides a reason to deny employment to formerly incarcerated individuals, which turns into another form of punishment. It also keeps them low income with no prospects of improving themselves or their family's lives.
- b. Improve Access to Cash Assistance Those individuals just released from prison must wait 45 days before they are eligible for cash assistance through Broome County DSS. This becomes an immediate hardship for an individual who is trying to start their reintegration in a positive manner.
- c. Increase Paid Transitional Employment to allow the individual to gain work experience, build their resume, and receive a source of income. Too many parolees are underemployed or lack any employment for many years after being released. See Ban the Box at the top of the list.
- d. Improve Employer Education to encourage more local employers to consider hiring

those with criminal histories and to keep them up to date on the incentives available for hiring felons.

7. Transportation

- a. Restore the Tioga County bus service that was eliminated November 30, 2014. Since this date there has been no bus service or public transportation available in Tioga County at all. This significantly reduces the ability of low income families to access employment and services.
- b. Restore and Improve the Broome County bus service. In 2014 the community assessment noted that the county bus service needed to be improved. In 2017, the bus service still needs to be reinstated to at least the services offered in 2010. In 2012, the County increased the cost of bus fares, combining this with the 2011 reduction in bus routes and bus schedules created a weakened bus system. For many low income residents, employment options are limited by the availability of bus routes and the frequency of the bus schedules. Broome County did not have a strong bus schedule for second shift workers, had no schedule for third shift workers and a limited schedule for weekends. Many outlying regions in Broome County did not have a regular bus service at all. In 2016, the situation did not improve. The reductions created a loss of fundamental transportation services for our county and an added burden for our residents. As noted under the previous Walk With Me, section, during the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Broome County Transit Authority made all the bus routes free. Apart from the concerns of people contracting the virus while on the buses, this was a huge asset for the financial status of many low income people.

- c. Restore funding for the Wheels for Work Program. The loss of OTDA funding for the Wheels for Work program has reduced the ability of families to move out of poverty as a vehicle provides to opportunity to expand job options and/or seek higher education.

8. Parenting Classes

- a. Increase options for parenting classes. This continues to be a need in the community as there are few options for parents. Currently there is a shortage of parenting classes in the community. Program participants that have been court ordered find they are on waiting lists for months for this service or the few classes are offered at a time and location that is not convenient for parents. To fully meet the needs of parents in our community there needs to be a variety of classes offered at different times (day and evening) and in different locations.
- b. Increase Supervised Visitation Sites. Parents who are hoping to regain custody of their children may be required to have supervised visitations. There is a lack of options for supervised visitations in the community and we need more family friendly locations and more supervised visitation staff. Mothers & Babies perinatal network provide a supervised visiting site at their PAL Center but this location is geared for the preschool and younger population. This means that there are really no options for school age and older children who need to have an age appropriate site for supervised visitations.
- c. Provide Parent Education classes for parents of special needs children. Currently there are no parenting classes available for parents with special needs children such as those with mental health issues, substance abuse issues and intellectual or

developmental delays. Attending a discipline class designed for children with normal development is not useful for parents whose children may have Autism or other special needs.

- d. Reinstate the Fatherhood program focusing on At-Risk Parents and Children. The 24/7 Dad, fatherhood program was offered at FEN for five years and was the best received parenting class in Broome County. The program provided parenting classes for men and women along with case management services. The fatherhood program also received high praise from many different community agencies and as well as many of the court-ordered parents who rated the program highly in follow up surveys. When this program ended it left a large gap in services for the difficult and hard to reach parents. Even though the program ended more than a year ago FEN still receives requests for fatherhood program services.
- e. Provide a Perpetrator's Domestic Violence program. In the past a Broome County not-for-profit agency provided a program for men who abuse. However this program is now only available through a private practice. The financial requirements are different and the program is not available to as wide an audience. Broome County needs a low to no-cost option.
- f. Anger Management classes. Currently the only class in Broome County is geared toward parents; however there is a need for a general anger management class for adults as well.

9. Rural Communities

- a. Increase support and services to the rural areas of Broome and Tioga Counties. Family Support Services programs work with many rural-based families who do not

have reliable transportation. Requiring families to travel to city hubs for services leads to many needy families missing out on important supports and assistance because of transportation needs.

10. Financial Supports for Low Income Households

- a. Provide vouchers for personal care and hygiene items. Low-income families can find the cost of these items overwhelming as they cannot be purchased with SNAP. Many social service agency personnel reported that families have to rely on donations to receive many essential items. Last year Catholic Charities was able to assist families reducing some of the burden in the community, however the problem still exists.
- b. Increase the number of pantries providing assistance with personal care and hygiene items. West Presbyterian Church on Chenango Street Binghamton runs a Care and Share Program the second Wednesday of the month. Any person with a benefit card can receive personal care, hygiene and laundry items. More of these programs are needed county wide.
- c. Increase accessibility to laundry facilities. The cost of laundry is an ongoing problem as laundry detergent, softener and stain removal products are not covered by SNAP and families must dip into the small amount of cash they receive each month. Some families seek out clothing donations because they cannot afford to wash their clothing.
- d. Diapers are expensive. Decisions on potty training by parents can be based on cost rather than a child's developmental stage, which can add to the stress of parenting and potty training.
- e. Improve low wages which continue to keep families poor in our area. There is a real

need for more job opportunities that pay a living wage and for many front-line essential workers to see an increase in their pay. This also extends to not-for-profit agency staff who also should be earning a living wage. Too many not for profit and child care center staff rely on SNAP benefits to make ends meet.

- f. Increased assistance with medical and dental costs. The working poor still struggle to find the resources to pay for medical treatment. Many who are over income for Medicaid still cannot afford health insurance and do not use doctors when they should. Other families cannot find dentists who will accept their specific type of dental insurance.

11. Moving Assistance

This problem continues to be an issue in our community as there is never any funding to address the stressors around moving for low-income families. When moving, they are often forced to leave all their belongings behind. This becomes an ongoing burden on the donation community as the same families have to repeatedly collect new donations to furnish their apartments and clothe their children. This may occur because of one of the following reasons:

- Lack of finances to pay for a moving service as many families simply don't have the cash.
- Lack of credit cards and driver's licenses necessary to rent a moving truck.
- Lack of physical manpower necessary to lift and carry large items. This is particularly true for single mothers, elderly, and those with disabilities.

Sources:

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 - ⁸ <https://www.foodbankst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-Broome-County-Facts.pdf>
 - ⁹ <https://www.pressconnects.com/story/news/local/2020/03/03/broome-county-jail-inmates-dead-after-lack-medical-health-care-ny-new-york/4857588002/>
 - ¹⁰ FEN Walk With Me Database 2021
 - ¹¹ <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-states-minimum-wage/new-york-states-minimum-wage>
 - ¹² <https://wbng.com/2021/01/04/greater-good-grocery-opens-up-on-the-northside-of-binghamton/>

Housing and Community Services Programs

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Introduction

Family Enrichment Network's annual Community Assessment has identified safe and affordable housing as a community need for the last nine years. In July of 2013 Family Enrichment Network created their Housing Department to address this chronic need. The Housing Department currently consists of two programs: the Caring Homes program and the Housing program.

THE CARING HOMES PROGRAM

The Caring Homes Program is a housing assistance program funded with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds through the City of Binghamton. The goal of this program is to prevent homelessness through financial assistance and supportive services for homeless individuals/families and those at risk of becoming homeless. For those who meet eligibility requirements, financial assistance can be obtained for rent arrears, security deposits and utility arrears. In addition, case management services are provided to create a plan for housing stability. These plans may include finding stable employment, furthering education, obtaining childcare, enrolling children in educational programs, improving budgeting skills, and access to additional resources within our community.

Over the course of nine years we have worked directly with the city of Binghamton, through the ESG grant, to provide housing stability for families in the city of Binghamton. In those nine years we have received 1,769 referrals and have supported 294 families. We have provided 134 families with security deposits and 160 families with rental arrears.

In September 2017, Coordinated Entry System was created. The Coordinated Entry System, also referred to as CES, provides a single point of access to homeless assistance services

to reduce the burden of system navigation for households who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Regardless of a person's location within this continuum, if they are facing a housing crisis, they can call 2-1-1/First Call For Help to connect to CES staff for assessment and referral assistance.

Caring Homes ensures that all callers, regardless of program eligibility, are provided referrals. 2-1-1 and Coordinated Entry manage the referrals that come into the call center and then either refer to the Caring Homes program or appropriate service provider. While we provide intensive case management, we are able to determine what additional services and supports families may require. Referrals related to physical and emotional well-being are made to resources such as:

- Volunteers of America for emergency financial assistance.
- Mother Theresa's Cupboard for food pantry and emergency financial assistance.
- Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW) for food pantry resource.
- Women, Infants & Children (WIC) for food and nutrition service for families with infants and small children.
- American Civic Association for citizenship resources and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.
- Family Resource Center for parenting classes, children's clothing closet.
- Nearly New Shop for vouchers for clothing.
- United Way of Broome County 211 for centralized system for community resources and referrals.
- Family Enrichment Network's annual Coats for Kids coat drive.
- Lee Barta Community Center for food pantry and educational classes

In combination with our efforts to end homelessness, FEN works closely with The Southern Tier Homeless Coalition (STHC). The STHC is a collaborative nonprofit organization committed to providing solutions for homelessness in New York's Southern Tier. Designated by the federal Department of Housing & Urban Development as the region's Continuum of Care (CoC NY-511), STHC encompasses the housing crisis response system across Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, and Tioga Counties and is comprised of over 40 member agencies offering homeless assistance services to households in need.

In March 2020, COVID-19 shuttered the state of New York. Housing, employment, schools, daycare and most day-to-day activities were directly impacted by COVID-19. During this time, the governor of New York State instituted a state moratorium on residential and commercial evictions to ensure no tenant was evicted during the height of the public health emergency. The Governor signed the Tenant Safe Harbor Act on June 30, 2020, which went into effective immediately. The moratorium protected renters from being evicted should they directly be impacted by COVID-19. New York State granted the city of Binghamton monies to financially support those directly impacted by COVID-19. It provided tenants with financial assistance for up to three months to help with rent arrears. Initially the moratorium was expected to end on May 1, 2021 but given the instability of the economy and COVID still on the forefront the moratorium was extended to January 15, 2022. Still very much impacted by COVID, the City of Binghamton recognized the need for additional financial assistance to support those facing eviction. In April 2021 the city of Binghamton allocated additional monies to fight the eviction battle. The monies provided up to 9 months in rent arrears and three months moving forward (12 months total) as well as security deposit with a maximum of 12 months of financial support.

Furthermore, FEN received a grant through the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability

Assistance (OTDA) to assist those in Chenango County directly impacted by COVID-19. This again supports families with financial assistance with rent arrears to stabilize their housing or a security deposit to relocate to safe and affordable housing. The Caring Homes Program was re-funded for 2021-2022. Family Enrichment looks forward to continuing their efforts to assist families at risk of homelessness.

HOUSING

Family Enrichment Network recognizes the need for safe, affordable, and permanent housing. FEN is committed to ongoing efforts to address the community's needs. That said FEN has identified housing as a need and created a housing program to meet those demands.

11 Roberts Street (Johnson City)

In April of 2013 Family Enrichment began its commitment to address the need for safe and affordable housing. FEN purchased their first property at 11 Roberts St. Johnson City. The two-family property consists of a first floor two-bedroom apartment and a second floor one-bedroom apartment. FEN collaborates with Binghamton Housing Authority working together to gain housing for those approved for Section 8. This helps to ensure we are providing quality housing to those in direct need. Since occupancy in late fall 2013, we have had stable tenants. Binghamton Housing Authority is happy to have another property available to their clients, as their current Section 8 wait list of over 500 plus families.

51 Roberts Street (Johnson City)

The developmentally delayed population was identified as a population in need of safe affordable housing in the community. In September 2015, 51 Roberts St. Johnson City was developed for this purpose. The house allows multiple (two to three) individuals to reside in a single family home. This model allows individuals with developmental disabilities the

opportunity to live independently in the community while having roommates to share and support that experience. The home currently houses two individuals that share common space in the kitchen, dining room, living room and bathroom. They have their own individual bedrooms. The dwelling has been occupied since December 2015.

241 Charles Street (Johnson City)

In our continued effort to provide safe and affordable housing options for families a single family home at 241 St. Charles St, Johnson City was purchased. The three-bedroom, one-bathroom home is Section 8 approved. Again, FEN worked in partnership with Binghamton Housing Authority (BHA). The home has been occupied since February 2016.

29 Virgil St - Housing Connections (Binghamton)

In December 2018, Family Enrichment Network was awarded their first Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) and Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) grants, which allowed us to construct a 19-unit structure comprised of one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom units that will offer safe, affordable and quality housing. In February 2020, the project broke ground at 29 Virgil St. Built on vacant city-owned land in Binghamton's North Side neighborhood, the two-story 12,000-square-foot structure includes four one-bedroom units, ten two-bedroom units, four three-bedroom units, and one four-bedroom unit. It provides tenants with supportive services, including rental assistance, case management, childcare assistance, job readiness training, and counseling referrals. The focus population is young families and individuals ages 18-25; individuals with developmental disabilities; domestic violence survivors; veterans; chronically homeless; and formerly incarcerated individuals. The project was completed in March 2021. We opened our doors in March and were at full capacity by July 1, 2021. As we approach our one year anniversary we are happy to say that we have maintained full capacity.

Tenants work closely with both the case manager and life skills instructor. Through support staff we have offered tenants educational programming through Cornell Cooperative Extension, offering after school programming; healthy family/healthy choices series; ServSafe certification (food safety); parenting/nutrition class; NY Project Hope (mental health); Greater Good Grocery store presentation; CHOW distribution (onsite); CHOW warehouse distribution; Phil Nelson – financial advisement; Career Bound – job readiness; Crime Victims Assistance Center (CVAC); clothing giveaway; Rise Shelter – domestic violence support services; coping with domestic violence for families and children; TruthPharm – NarCan training; BC Fire Department; Attain lab; Lee Barta – community resources; ACBC – alcohol and drug education; MHASt – group counseling; Veterans Center – volunteer opportunities; STAP – STD screening and PREP; Mothers & Babies; VINES wellness wagon/garden; BC Council of churches; Thanksgiving baskets; Adopt-a-Family; BC Health Department; BOCES educational services; Salvation Army – food pantry; NYSEG – Heap presentation; Fidelis Health Care navigator; and PAL Center. Tenant engagement varies based on interest but overall participation has been steady. Tenants expressed an interest in holding a Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas brunch. Through the support of staff and tenant engagement the events were a tremendous success. Year two will consist of a continuation of services along with additional resources in the community.

11 Crocker Ave (Johnson City)

In December 2021 FEN purchased the newest addition to the housing program. The home underwent extensive renovations ensuring it was safe and quality housing. The two-family property offers two one-bedroom apartments. We continue our partnership with the Binghamton Housing Authority to offer housing to Section 8 tenants. Tenants are projected to move in April 1, 2022.

LOOKING AHEAD

Lack of safe and affordable housing remains a problem in Broome and surrounding counties. Many housing options are considered substandard, and tenants often complain about absentee landlords and/or maintenance repairs that go unattended. In addition, many complain that options in their income range are typically located in unsafe, drug-infested neighborhoods. Families are especially concerned with this, as they fear for the safety of their children. Rental costs have dramatically increased due to the pandemic. The increased cost of housing paired with a housing shortage is putting tenants at risk of homelessness. Families are being displaced due to buildings being condemned and building safety issues. Furthermore, there is an increased strain on the local housing market directly related to student housing. Landlords are converting family housing over to student housing leaving the housing stock depleted.

Family Enrichment Network will continue to work closely with the Southern Tier Homeless Coalition and City of Binghamton to identify gaps and needs in housing throughout Broome and surrounding counties. We are currently working on our next project that will help close the gap on homelessness in our area.

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Head Start and Early Head Start Program

OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE GRANTEE

Family Enrichment Network’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs operate under two grants. The Broome County program’s origins reach back to the 1970’s and the program has grown in its many years to provide UPK partnership services; full day and full year programming; full day programming; and Early Head Start. Our new grant began in July 2020, and we were pleased to make changes in that grant to best meet the needs of our Head Start and Early Head Start communities. The Tioga County program was originally awarded in 2014, and we began our second five year funding award in July 2019. We are pleased to offer full day programming at all centers and in both Head Start and Early Head Start.

The Broome Grant offers center based services to 287 three and four year old preschool children and their families at four locations throughout its Broome County service area and Early Head Start offers center based services to 96 infants and toddlers and prenatal services to 16 pregnant women, which operates at three locations throughout the Broome County service area; our five locations serve children and families from Binghamton, Johnson City, Conklin, Kirkwood, and the Town of Binghamton. The centers are located in Johnson City and Binghamton, and include the following addresses. All five centers are located in locations that support Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children and families and they are all licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Center	HS Children	EHS Children
Cherry Street Center 24 Cherry Street; Johnson City, NY	177	48
Carlisle Center 150 Moeller Street; Binghamton, NY	0	16

Saratoga Center 25-35 Felters Road; Binghamton, NY	32	32
Fayette Street Center 29 Fayette Street; Binghamton, NY	42	0
Woodrow Wilson Elementary School 287 Prospect Street; Binghamton, NY	36	0

[16 pregnant women are assigned to our Saratoga Center where the Socialization Specialist is located.]

Tioga County offers Head Start center based/full day programming to 62 three and four year old children and their families in three locations throughout the service area and Early Head Start center based/full day programming to 32 infants and toddlers and their families at one location in the service area. The buildings are located in Owego, Newark Valley, and Waverly. All three centers are located in locations that support Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children and families, and they are all licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Center	HS Children	EHS Children
Owego Center – 1277 Taylor Road, Owego, NY	30	32
Newark Valley Center – 117 Whig Street, Newark Valley, NY	16	0
Waverly Center – 12 Cooper Street, Waverly, NY	16	0

METHODOLOGY

The Community Assessment (CA) Committee consists of the Head Start Director and Management Team. In October 2020 the Community Assessment Survey was sent to all families for completion. It was sent electronically as well as via paper copy. At the same time, the Family Advocates completed a Family Profile for every Head Start and Early Head Start family. These practices allow us to get an internal look at our present Head Start and Early Head Start community. In January 2021, the team which includes the Head Start Director as Organizer of the Assessment, and the Program Operations Coordinator; ERSEA Coordinator; Special Services and Mental Health Coordinator; Health Services Coordinator; Food/Nutrition Services Coordinator; Family Community Partnership Coordinator; Transportation Supervisor; Socialization Specialist met to begin planning for the 2021-2022 Community Assessment process. We used the PMFO Community Assessment version for completing the Community Assessment. We moved from a more traditional model that we have used for many years; but it did include some of the same community partners that have been part of our assessment for many years. After our orientation to the new CA process; each of the subgroup leaders listed above began working on their area of assessment with staff, parent, and community members. The areas included: Child and Adult Education; Special Education Services; Health Services including dental, nutrition, and mental health; Child Care; Employment; and Transportation Services. The subgroups reviewed survey information; gathered additional information from staff, parents, and community members as they delved into their service area sections. With their teams they discussed the strengths and needs that exist in our community, and they revised the Community Resource section of this document. Furthermore they began planning for the CA Managers Meeting where the team identifies and prioritizes our five year areas to be addressed

by the program and its overarching community. The CA Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2021. The management team came together to discuss our five year priority issues, and it was no surprise that COVID-19; other natural disasters and closings; remote/virtual programming; food insecurities and healthy foods; and mental health dominated our meeting and subsequently our priorities for the coming five years.

SERVICE AREA DATA

Family Enrichment Network serves the communities within the Binghamton, Johnson City, Susquehanna Valley school districts, Town of Binghamton, and a portion of Port Dickinson in Broome County and all of Tioga County, specifically Candor, Newark Valley, Owego and Waverly.

Impacts of Demographic Change

Population estimates decreased within our service areas by 5.1% in Broome County and 5.6% in Tioga County compared to the national increase of 6.3%, according to the latest census information available. During this same time period children living in our service area under the age of five are 5.2% in Broome County, 4.9% in Tioga County, slightly under the national 6.0% of the population. Persons living in poverty within the same areas are significantly higher in Broome County at 17.8%, slightly lower in Tioga County at 9.4% when compared to the national level of 10.5%.¹ Homelessness within Broome County in 2019-2020 totaled 332 compared to 30 in Tioga County.²

TABLE1: BROOME AND TIOGA COUNTY RACIAL AND ETHIC DATA

Broome County						
WH	BL	AS	HIS	NAT	OTHER	MIX
89	113	22	21	0	10	65
28%	35%	7%	7%	0%	3%	20%

Tioga County						
WH	BL	AS	HIS	NAT	OTHER	MIX
49	0	0	0	0	1	1
96%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2%	2%

TABLE 2: LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE HOME OTHER THAN ENGLISH:

Broome County

Languages	Number of Families	Percentage of Families
American Sign Language	1	.3%
Arabic	33	10.3%
Creole	3	.9%
Dagbani	1	.3%
Kurdish	4	1.3%
Laotian	2	.6
Poshto	11	3.4%
Spanish	23	7.2%
Urdu	5	5.6%
Vietnamese	3	.9%
Yemen	1	.3%
Zakhawa	1	.3%
Total	88	27.5%

Tioga County

Languages	Number of Families	Percentage of Families
Gujarati	1	2%

Through ongoing recruitment, interested families complete the application process throughout the year, providing a waitlist for openings as they occur. Current waitlists are lower than usual compared to previous years which can be attributed to the effects of COVID-19 on the families we serve.³

TABLE 3: WAITLISTS BY COUNTY

Broome County	Head Start	Early Head Start	Pre-Natal	Tioga County	Head Start	Early Head Start
2019-2020	17	164	2	2019-2020	27	10
2020-2021	13	79	0	2020-2021	3	2
2021-2022	46	117	0	2021-2022	0	2

As can be seen by comparing the waitlists year to year in Table 3, there are more children on the HS Waitlist this year, but that can be attributed to an open classroom and additional recruitment efforts. Recruitment efforts have been adapted to meet current restrictions and social distancing, less grassroots methods and more electronic means of communicating program benefits to community and local populace. More targeted recruitment methods aimed at specific areas, contact with service agencies who work with our shared families, digitizing recruitment materials to be shared electronically with medical offices, religious programs, school districts, television community calendars, websites, Facebook pages, community non-for-profits and more, are ways to provide outreach for current openings and future program years. Recruitment outreach used in the past will need to be updated and targeted to help encourage families to feel comfortable placing their child in a Head Start or Early Head Start program. Staff will need to share with families how our programs have grown through COVID-19 and what strategies have been implemented, permanently, to ensure their child’s safety. Current outreach has begun moving to more remote measures with material follow up after contact has been established, collaborating with a greater variety of small business owners who are willing to share information with their clientele.

Impacts of COVID-19

Due to ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, many changes have taken place and are here to stay (for a time) to ensure the safety of the families/children we serve and staff

members. COVID-19 overall restrictions have required changes in staffing, program design, child services, family participation, and transportation. Head Start is completely ‘in-person’ for both Head Start and Early Head Start except in the three classrooms that do not have teachers to support in person learning. Those children and families are receiving services from their Family Advocates. Classroom hours for both Head Start and Early Head Start have been reduced to six hours each day to allow for in-depth sanitizing of each classroom. Families have had to learn to communicate, for the most part, with staff by electronic means; each site has developed procedures that provide no in-classroom contact for anyone other than classroom staff to ensure child safety; home visits are still completed remotely for many of our families, this includes pre-screenings and health interviews; transportation of children has been decreased to a maximum of ten Head Start children with two monitors per run, five Early Head Start children with two monitors. Protocols have been developed to ensure safety regarding social distancing and masks for staff and families, children are encouraged but not required to wear masks as they become comfortable doing so. Families who provide their own transportation are limited to the number of persons allowed into the buildings at a time; parents are screened regarding their child and temperatures are taken, parents wait with their child for classroom staff to meet them in the hallway and parents then leave through another exit; most sites have the ability to have classrooms entered through an external classroom door. Throughout the program year many families have expressed the need to switch their child from ‘in-person’ to virtual, either temporarily or permanently, due to changes the families have encountered. A provision has been established that will allow a child to remain as an ‘in-person’ child for a short period of time if a family becomes concerned with effects from COVID-19, with their child attending remotely, until the family feels comfortable having their child return to ‘in person’ status. We continue to

struggle with meeting full enrollment, due to a lack of teaching staff and given COVID-19 concerns of interested families.

In the 2020-2021 program year, families have expressed COVID-19 concerns of employment loss or instability, having to access unemployment, loss of medical care, total isolation, remote learning which includes having school-age children learning in home during the day, fear of being exposed, daycare closures, mental health concerns not being met, children developing stress and anxiety, continual family togetherness, having to learn how to live with scarcity of basic home needs, depression, and many more lifestyle changes. Families and staff have contracted COVID-19, requiring testing, quarantining, contact tracing, closure of classrooms and transportation runs, leading to a state of uncertainty. The constant barrage of media and internet information, family and friends conversations, and public awareness of COVID-19 have made many of our families and staff members COVID-19 wary, tired of having to deal with so many life changes that it becomes easier to ignore or shut down. Some of the issues listed above are still lingering for our families today. We are still waiting on vaccines for our youngest learners, and, in some cases, parents are still apprehensive about the vaccine for their children and themselves.

Other COVID-19 impacts for our families are financial; some families have not been affected, and have continued working at their jobs throughout the pandemic. COVID-19 restrictions caused many families to lose employment in the hospitality, child care, health/medical, education, and transportation fields.

IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS AND NEEDS BY SERVICE AREA

Education

Information about the strengths and needs of Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) educational components of Family Enrichment’s programs comes from interviews and surveys conducted with EHS and HS families and teachers.

Program’s Educational Strengths

Families identified their satisfaction with services they receive from the classroom staff.⁴ They indicated strong agreement that FEN’s programs offer a safe and clean place for their children to learn and prepare their child to be ready for school by becoming more independent, learning basic concepts in language and math, along with that the program provides quality communication and information about the program in general as well as regarding their child’s development.

Quotes from Families:

“He is growing, and FEN has a positive influence on him.”

“FEN has a passion for making many efforts to have kids learn online.”

“I really appreciate how easy it is to talk to you guys!”

“My child is excited for weekly Zoom and interaction with peers.”

“The teacher is very supportive towards my child’s needs.”

A word bubble of family and teacher responses relating to program strengths shown below:⁵

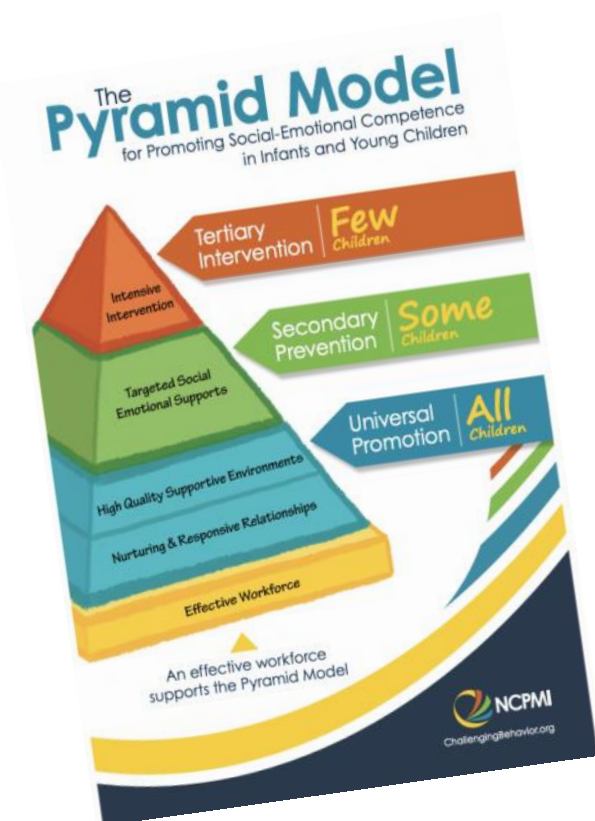


PROGRAM'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Social-Emotional Learning

These past decades there has been an increase in children beginning their education without the proper development of their social-emotional skills, their lack of how to develop positive relationships, lack of coping skills in stressful and/or new situations and lack of problem-solving skills. In many cases, this may be the cause of the rise in children that need or receive special services and therapies.⁶

These impacts make it even more important for our community, schools, and programs to embrace a community-wide social-emotional framework, such as The Pyramid Model. Studies indicate that schools and programs that focus on reliable implementation of meaningful relationships, providing opportunities for teachers to become leaders, offering administrative

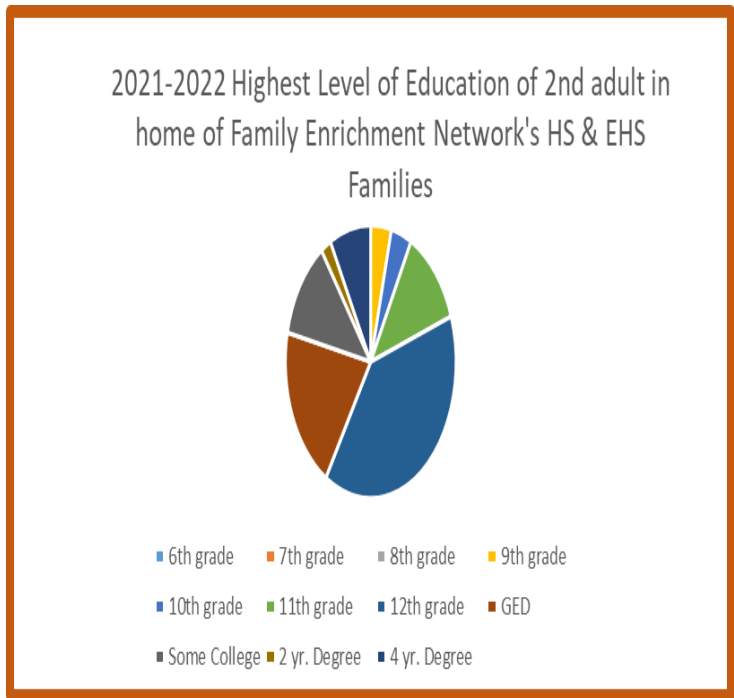
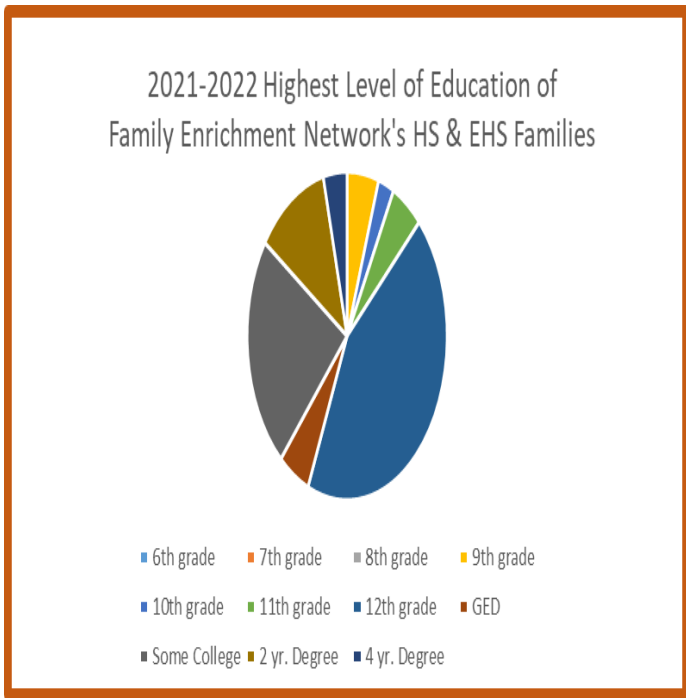


support, and creating environments that support the needs of children, families, and teachers will aide in the promotion of social-emotional development as well as retain their teaching staff.⁷ The research is showing that by implementing a research based social-emotional curriculum in our schools is the start.

To ensure all children are school ready, Family Enrichment Network’s Head Start program will need to collaborate across all our local schools, and possibly with Head Starts, day cares and other educational facilities to promote and implement the Pyramid Model.

Education Attainment

Highest Level of Education Obtained by the Children’s Family Members of Family Enrichment Network’s Head Start & Early Head Start Programs^{8 9}



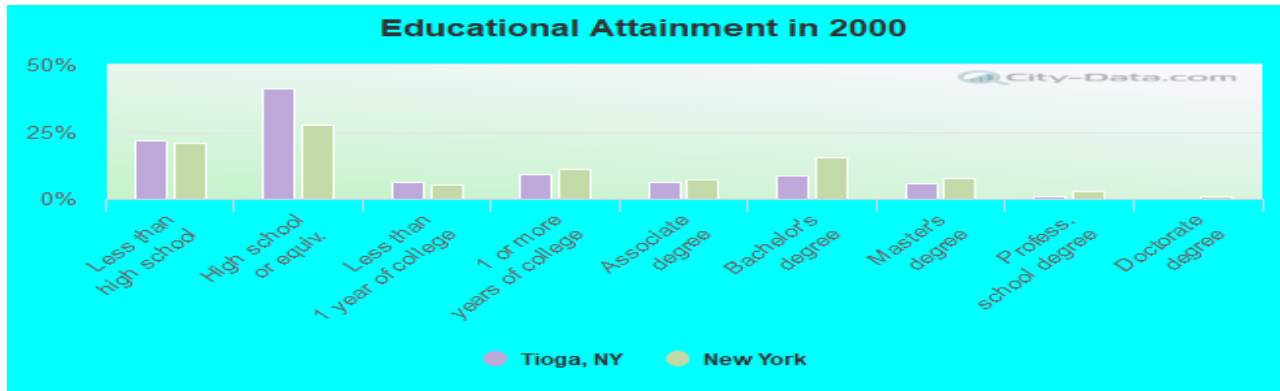
Educational Attainment for Broome County, New York State, United States, 2013-2017¹⁰

Educational Attainment	Broome County		NYS	US
	Population Estimate	Percent (%)	Percent (%)	Percent (%)
Population 25 years and over	129,802			
Less than 9th grade	3497	2.7	5.5	5.4
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	8932	6.7	7.4	7.2
High School graduated/GED	40700	31.4	26.3	27.3
Some College, no degree	23958	18.5	15.9	20.8
Associate degree	16307	12.6	8.7	8.3
Bachelor's Degree	20371	15.7	19.9	19.1
Graduate or professional degree	16.37	12.4	15.4	11.8
Percent high school graduate or higher		90.4	86.1	87.3
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher		28.0	35.3	30.9

SOURCE: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017

Educational Attainment for Tioga County

Tioga County High Schools graduation rate is slightly higher than the New York State average.¹¹



Needs of Children with Special Needs

Family Enrichment Network maintains strong collaborations with local school districts' Committees on Preschool Education and with Broome and Tioga County Health Departments' Early Intervention Programs. These mutually beneficial working relationships, characterized by ongoing interaction, communication, and cooperation are a major strength that has helped to maintain high enrollment of children with disabilities.

While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced numbers somewhat this year, Family Enrichment Network's Head Start enrollment in Broome County is anticipated to reach 11% (32 children), an additional 30% (16 children) in Tioga County and 10% of Early Head Start enrollment in both counties for the 2021-2022 program year. Successful service delivery to these children despite the pandemic has been largely due to the willingness on the part of providers to enter FEN buildings and follow the Agency's screening and safety procedures. School districts have conducted CPSE meetings through ongoing Zoom meetings attended by FEN teachers and by parents with the support of FEN staff.¹² Providers have also been conducting "teletherapy" in some cases for children attending preschool virtually, though this is considered a less effective way for children to acquire skills, and some families have chosen not to participate.

On their IEP's, local school districts classify all children as "Preschool Student with a Disability." Of children with IEP's, the greatest numbers of children receive speech therapy, followed closely by occupational therapy or a combination of therapies. The need for SEIT and physical therapy is less.

Though the community is rich in support services for children with disabilities (as detailed in the Special Services Resources section), inclusive childcare settings remain limited. A contributing factor to the lack of childcare slots, aside from provider reluctance due to limited knowledge/fear of the unknown, is the lack of financial subsidies. While the County can provide services for children with disabilities, it cannot pay tuition for a child's attendance in a private childcare setting. Neither can the County pay for a classroom aide in a child care setting for any time other than that needed to facilitate a special education service. Often, the opportunity for social development such a setting would provide is the most valuable element in the child's development. Many families are not able to afford the fees for private childcare, and there are no mechanisms in place to assist them.

The Health Department and evaluative agencies continue to report a steady increase in the number of children undergoing evaluations each year. This is attributed to the success of local early intervention efforts including identification, referral, and tracking. Providers estimate more than 90% of those referred qualify for services.

Families' lack of transportation and child care; missing appointments; and “Welfare to Work” mandates impede the process of evaluation. A major strength that is of benefit to many Head Start families is the ability of Family Enrichment Network’s Special Education Program to conduct evaluations at the children’s Head Start Sites. In addition, the Special Education Program is a valuable referral source to our Head Start program for children discharged from a Special Education placement but still in need of a preschool placement with related services.

Broome and Tioga Counties continue to experience a shortage of speech, occupational (greatest shortage) and physical therapists, as well as special education teachers and one-to-one aides for the three to five age group, particularly in January through March when most programs are full and/or private providers have reached the maximum number they can serve. Despite the shortage, children are placed on a waiting list for as limited a time as possible, with no children going without services for extended periods. The NYS Education Department is expecting all approved agencies to provide Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEIT) and integrated services. Pediatric mental health and neurological services are scarce. Countywide, there is a need for more aides and counseling services (including play therapy), to enable students to be maintained in regular education programs. Evaluators indicate an increase in referrals, especially from day care providers, in the areas of behavioral needs, autism, and sensory concerns, as well as an increase in the number of children with special needs living with grandparents or other extended family members. The most critical needs are for more Sensory Integration services in preschool classrooms and in homes, as well as ongoing training for staff and families and 1:1 classroom aides. Technology training for families is a primary need that has arisen as a result of the pandemic. A representative of the Early Childhood and School-Age Engagement (FACE)

Center reports that families are struggling with the use of technology and are in need of help with internet connections, the use of IPADs, etc. The Center is offering trainings to help meet those needs.

HEALTH/NUTRITION NEED

Health Insurance

As of 2020, 2.5% of children in Broome County and 2.5% in Tioga County were uninsured, many of whom may be eligible for Medicaid. Parents can access health insurance online at <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov> or by calling NY State of Health at 1-855-355-5777. They can also access health insurance by calling Mothers and Babies or Southern Tier Independence Center. Families that live in a rural area where there is no internet access and they have no phone may experience difficulty in accessing health insurance. Other barriers may include the cost is too high, lost job or changed employers, lost eligibility for Medicaid or, they never had or have no need for insurance.

The Broome and Tioga County Departments of Social Services operate under a mandatory managed care program, as a way to increase accessibility to primary and preventive health care and to reduce the cost of health care in general. In Broome County, about 43,794 of the 67,157 Medicaid eligible individuals are in Medicaid Managed Care (31,819 through the NYSOH). It is crucial that families receive assistance in the selection of the best-managed care plan for themselves and their families. New York Health Options (Maximus) provides this assistance in Broome and Tioga County.

As of November 30, 2020 there were 10,682 Tioga County individuals on Medicaid. 7,067 of these enrolled on the Exchange, 3,615 are still managed by Tioga County DSS.

Child Health Plus

As of December 2020, there were 3,239 Broome County children enrolled in Child Health Plus (Excellus FLBCBS -2091, CDPHP - 196, FIDELIS 868, UHC 84. In Tioga County, 871 children were enrolled (Excellus FLBCBS - 294, CDPHP - 73, FIDELIS 474)¹³

TABLE 8: Health Care Visits of Head Start Families¹⁴

HEALTH CARE	PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS		PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN	
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2020-2021	2021-2022
Medical Visits				
Every two years	5%	0%	0%	1%
Once a year	20%	24%	30%	30%
Twice a year	15%	7%	10%	13%
As Needed	60%	69%	55%	56%
Never	0%	0%	5%	0%
Dental Visits				
Every two years	0%	0%	0%	0%
Once a year	10%	13%	10%	14%
Twice a year	30%	25%	50%	41%
As Needed	55%	59%	35%	38%
Never	5%	3%	5%	7%
Vision Exams				
Every two years	20%	12%	0%	3%
Once a year	45%	30%	100%	14%
Twice a year	0%	4%	0%	6%
As Needed	20%	34%	0%	49%
Never	15%	20%	0%	28%

Oral Health/Health Plan Coverage

Broome and Tioga County Departments of Social Services operate a mandatory managed care program with several different product lines. There are currently over 43,794 individuals in Broome County and 9,209 in Tioga County enrolled in these plans. As a result of a Medicaid Redesign Proposal, dental care was added to the Medicaid managed care benefit package and those enrollees access dental care through their plan’s dental network. Child Health Plus also

offers dental care. While local data is not available for health plans supporting the safety net populations, in the Quality Reports for HMO's statewide (QARR, available at NYSDOH website), the plans reported the following: for CHP B: one annual dental visit per child; CDPHP 65%, Fidelis 64%, and Excellus 63%, UHC 63%¹⁵.

Oral Health

Broome and Tioga Counties are both designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas for the Low-Income population. Lourdes Center for Oral Health and Tioga Mobile Dental Services were established as Article 28 dental clinics, with a focus on restoring and maintaining dental health for children and adults, the center targets those who are uninsured, on Medicaid, or enrolled in a managed care plan including New York's Child Health Plus program. The services of the dental vans in both counties had been suspended since April 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, awaiting guidance from the NYS DOH to restart their services.

Between September 2019 and March 2020, over 5,000 children were provided with dental screenings, education and/or treatment on the Lourdes Mobile Dental Unit at the school-based locations. Lourdes resumed services in December 2021, seeing approximately 20 children from the Fayette Street and Saratoga site. The Tioga Smiles Dental Van staff has not yet resumed visits to Tioga County Head Start.¹⁶

United Health Services Hospitals (UHS) operates an Article 28 clinic at Binghamton General Hospital. There are approximately 700 children enrolled in the clinic at this time. The child population has been significantly reduced because many parents are taking their children to Dinosaur Dental in Endicott, which accepts many of their insurances. The fluoride varnish program has been discontinued because the hygienist that did the program has gone to the school based clinics.¹⁷

The Dental Hygiene Clinic at SUNY Broome Community College had to close after midterm in the spring 2020 due to the pandemic. They are anticipating resuming services in spring 2021 and the patient numbers should return to normal.¹⁸

Immunizations

Vaccines prevent disease and are among the most cost-effective clinical preventive services. Despite progress, tens of thousands of adults and hundreds of children in the United States die each year from vaccine preventable diseases.

New York State Public Health Law 2164 requires vaccinations or other documentation of immunity as a condition of child care, school, and college attendance. The purpose of the law is to reduce the incidence of vaccine preventable diseases and associated morbidity and mortality by increasing vaccination rates. In June 2019, the law was revised to eliminate religious exemption to vaccines and, in order to prevent frivolous medical exemptions, set specific requirements of documentation for them.

The following vaccines are required by New York State for school entrance into Day-Care, Nursery, Head Start, and Pre-K:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus Toxoid-Containing Vaccine, Pertussis vaccine (DTaP/DPT)
- Polio Vaccine (IPV and/or OPV)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine (MMR)
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Varicella vaccine (Chickenpox)
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b conjugate vaccine (Hib)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV-13)

Other vaccines that are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention including the following: Hepatitis A Vaccine for babies age 12-23 months; the rotavirus vaccine for babies at two, four, and six months of age; and the influenza vaccine for people age six

months and up, to be given every flu season. Children six months to eight years who are receiving their first flu shot will need a booster at least 28 days later.

Students entering 7th, 8th, 9th, and 12th grades in New York State public, private and parochial schools are required to be fully vaccinated against meningococcal disease according to Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)

No information as to the percentage of children who are not fully vaccinated in Broome and Tioga Counties was provided for this assessment.

Providers must enter all immunizations administered to children less than 19 years of age into the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS). This is a free, web-based statewide immunization registry. Unfortunately, some Health Care Providers are not consistent in entering immunizations into the system.¹⁹

When COVID-19 Vaccines are approved for administration to children, all parents will be encouraged to have their children immunized, as recommended by the Office of Head Start. Due to the fact that this is not currently available, Family Enrichment Network opted to make vaccines mandatory for all employees. Those with a reasonable medical or religious exemption are required to be tested for COVID-19 weekly, to attempt to protect the children’s health.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

TABLE 9: Broome County Lead Cases²⁰

Blood lead levels (ug/dL) 2019	# of identified children tested for blood lead/BLL category in 2019
5-9.9	54
10-14.9	10
15-19	1
20 and above	6

TABLE 10: Tioga County Lead Cases²¹

Blood lead levels (mcg/dl) 2019	# of Cases
5-9	15
10-+	6

Allergic Reactions in Child Care

On September 15, 2021, in response to a child’s death due to an untreated anaphylactic reaction in a child care setting, New York State enacted Elijah’s Law requiring day care centers to create a formalized plan to educate staff about allergic reactions and how to respond to symptoms. The state obtained grant money to supply day care settings with epinephrine auto-injectors and allow non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injectors to be stored in those setting. Family Enrichment Network is in the process or revising the Health Care Plans for all sites to accommodate date this. Many Center Directors have received their epinephrine auto-injectors and the training for the staff is in the planning stage. When the auto-injectors from the state were received, it was recognized that dosage was too low (0.1mg) for many of the children in the Head Start Program. In response, the agency is purchasing epinephrine auto-injector devices of 0.15 mg for larger children.

Prenatal Care

The Family Enrichment Network Early Head Start program includes recruiting pregnant women, to assist them in identifying their needs and support them throughout their pregnancy, with the intent that the infant will be placed in an educational day care setting when they are approximately six weeks of age. The expectant mothers are visited monthly or as needed by a Socialization Specialist, who supports them in meeting needs that they’ve identified. All expectant mothers are also given ongoing health support by a nurse, who visits with them during and after their pregnancy. The visits by the Socialization Specialist and Nurse are currently

conducted by telephone due to COVID-19 restrictions, hampering their ability to develop meaningful supportive relationships with the families and preventing the performance of neonatal physical assessments to identify health needs.²²

When Early Head Start was initiated in 2010, 12 pregnant women were served annually. In the fall of 2020, the Early Head Start program was expanded. Family Enrichment Network now serves 16 pregnant women annually. 132 infants have been enrolled in Early Head Start through the pregnant mothers tract since the beginning of the program.²³

Asthma

Childhood asthma continues to be a major public health problem for the pediatric population, especially Head Start/Early Head Start children due to their economic status, race, and housing conditions. Previous surveys conducted by the Decker School of Nursing at Family Enrichment Network done in 2011 and 2012 have confirmed this.

The age-adjusted prevalence of asthma in Broome County was 12.2%, higher than the 9.6% for NYS and 10.4% for Upstate NY. Age-adjusted asthma mortality rate for Broome County is 1.6 per million population, compared to NYS (1.3 per million) and Upstate NY (0.9 per million). However, asthma morbidity is relatively high. The number of hospitalizations for asthma in Broome County was an estimated 217 per year. The age-adjusted asthma hospitalization rate for Broome County was 5.4 per 10,000 population, which was significantly lower than NYS (11.4 per 10,000) but higher than Upstate NY (6.8 per 10,000). The highest morbidity is for the 0–4 age group (9.7 per 10,000) and the 5–14 age group (7.2 per 10,000). Emergency room visits for asthma were 71.2 per 10,000 for children age 0–4.²⁴

Using GIS (Geographical Information Systems) mapping of where families with asthma enrolled at Family Enrichment lived, increased asthma rates were noted in Johnson City in

Census Map 139, which has been identified as an area with low household incomes, high rates of poverty and unemployment, and high percentages of residents receiving public assistance. The median household income of this census tract is \$33,214 compared to \$52,226 in the surrounding county, with 36.8% living in poverty.²⁵ Notably, this census tract had the fifth highest number of asthma hospital discharges of all zip codes in the county.²⁶ Demographics for this tract indicate a higher percentage of Black residents, more than double that of the surrounding town and county. While age of housing was not available for this specific census tract, the majority of housing in the county (2/3) was built prior to 1960, increasing the possibility of deteriorating conditions.²⁷

Children enrolled in Head Start had been given Asthma teaching by Binghamton University Nursing students in previous years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was not possible in 2020.

WIC

In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Broome County WIC Program conducted almost 17,000 appointments and made over 15,000 referrals to community agencies. The Tioga Opportunities, Inc. WIC Program currently reaches over 1,000 families annually. Broome and Tioga County WIC staff members continue to provide nutrition assessments, nutrition counseling, and breastfeeding support. Starting in mid-March, all appointments were conducted over the phone. Staff continued to work from main site and offer curb side service to participants who needed replacement cards and breast pumps.²⁸

Greater Good Grocery

A strength for our community is a grocery store dedicated to providing the community with food accessibility and affordability. After 24 years without nearby access to fresh meats and produce, the north side of Binghamton is no longer a food desert. This grocery store opened on the North Side of Binghamton on January 4th, 2021. Located within the new Canal Plaza

affordable housing development, the store is three and a half years in the making. Greater Good Grocery will acquire its products from the Utica store at a steep discount, passing the savings on to customers while still generating some revenue for other Council programs.

Council Executive Director Reverend Joe Sellepack says access to affordable food will decrease the reliance on CHOW. “Offer people the ability to come to a grocery store to expand their budgets to the point where they don’t rely so much on the emergency food program. So, the more we’re able to get affordable food to people in areas like the north side of Binghamton, the better it is,” said Sellepack. Seman says he hopes the store and remaining Canal Plaza project serve as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of the north side.

Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Another strength of our community is the Broome County Hunger Coalition. The BCHC consists of the leaders of local food pantries, free community meals, food banks, Rural Health Network, etc. and meets every other month. In this meeting, members work together to brainstorm and collaborate on what is going well in the community and where there are still needs, if they need volunteers, have resources to share, etc. Through this coalition, which was created by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, the agency hopes to find the underserved in the community and to be able to improve services for everyone in the county.

Tioga Opportunities

Food insecurity in Tioga County is addressed by the Community Services Department at Tioga Opportunities, Inc. They provide the community with safe and affordable housing, financial education and stability, community awareness, and health and wellness programs and services. Within Tioga County, 13.6% of children live in poverty and the rate of children enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch is 58%. Economically disadvantaged children are also more

likely to be food insecure, and food insecurity in households with children is associated with inadequate intake of several important nutrients, deficits in cognitive development, behavioral problems, and poor health. In 2017, 9.7% of the population and 17.9% of children in Tioga County were food insecure.

Tioga Opportunities serves as the coordinating and oversight entity between the Food Bank of the Southern Tier in Elmira and eight pantries and soup kitchens throughout the county, located in Berkshire, Candor, Nichols, Newark Valley, Apalachin, Spencer, and Owego. The mobile food pantry is a converted beverage truck used to deliver fresh produce, dairy products and other food and grocery products directly to distribution sites where people are in need of food. When the truck arrives at the site, volunteers place the food on tables surrounding the truck and clients can choose the items they need.

CHOW

CHOW (Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse) the hunger relief and advocacy program of the Broome County Council of Churches serves individuals and families in need of emergency food assistance. Individuals and families can get food assistance every four weeks or 12 times a year. Currently, CHOW stocks over 50 pantries and distributes food to 52 shelters, soup kitchens, schools and distribution sites.

When a client visits a CHOW pantry, they are given enough food for five days. The food packages are based on family size and are designed to give adequate nutrition. A weakness in the community, CHOW has seen an increase in the number of individuals and families who are food insecure in Broome and surrounding counties and that has only grown through the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, CHOW and its sub-program Broome Bounty, the area's only food recovery program, served approximately 2,230,000 meals through its pantries and soup kitchens. Over

40% of the people served by CHOW are children. The need for food assistance for families is especially acute during the summer months when children who receive subsidized meals in school are eating all their meals at home. To combat hunger over the summer months, agencies all across Broome and Tioga County offer meals through the Summer Food Service Program. This program allows non-profit organizations to offer up to two meals and one snack per day to children ages 18 and under.

In order to serve the community in a holistic way, CHOW has partnered with Broome County Department of Social Services to implement a job training program. The program, CHOW Works, trains up to 12 participants for 12 weeks at a time. The participants receive hands on training in our warehouse and receive forklift training and certification, ServSafe food handling certification and an OSHA 10-hour certification. The participants spend the last hour of everyday learning financial literacy from SEFCU and Vision Federal Credit Union, healthy cooking classes from Cornell Cooperative Extension, and resume building training from our full-time work advocate. 90% of all graduates are placed in full-time employment within the 12 weeks of the program. 20% are placed in full-time employment within four weeks of graduation.

VINES

Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments, Inc. (VINES) is an organization committed to developing a sustainable and just community food system. They do this by bringing together diverse groups of people, with a focus on youth development, to establish community gardens, urban agriculture and community green spaces. They strive to develop and beautify urban sites throughout Broome County and empower community members of all ages and abilities.

The essence of VINES' work is captured in its simple motto: growing food, growing community. VINES program empowers people to improve their lives and communities through urban gardening and by connecting urban consumers to rural farmers.

Each program has a rippling impact throughout our area. Over 400 raised beds in the eighteen community gardens run by VINES provide local residents the ability to grow food for their families. The Urban Farm, which began on four vacant city lots, recently expanded to a total of 2.25 acres in downtown Binghamton where fresh produce is grown for the community. At this site, VINES has provided youth development and training through Grow Binghamton for the past ten growing seasons. Grow Binghamton has recently begun offering a six-week session both in the fall and spring each year, providing year-round youth employment. VINES also provides free education on food production and preservation through its Green Thumb Educational Series. Farm Share (FS) brings food from VINES and two other area farms to urban residents who otherwise have severely limited access to fresh vegetables. Over the past seven years FS has grown from 30 members to 200 members. Through FS, individuals and families are making changes to their diets that they both enjoy and can sustain. 70% of members surveyed reported that their consumption of vegetables increased during Farm Share. 85% also reported that they can better afford to eat a balanced diet because of Farm Share. Launched in April 2020, the Build a Garden program provides raised bed and growbag gardens to low-income homes. The Wellness Wagon transports residents weekly from the North Side of Binghamton (a food-desert) to grocery stores and other food access sites.

The target populations for VINES programming are families and individuals living in the Broome County area who live in or near areas that lack affordable access to healthy, local

produce and are living in poverty or categorized as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) by the United Way.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES & SUPPORTS

COVID-19 Pandemic Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent challenges have impacted the mental health and wellbeing of children, youth, and their families across the globe and locally in Broome County. Mental Health professionals have identified certain trends among children and families. Most notably, school-aged youth have demonstrated an increase in anxiety and depression due to a number of factors, including: prohibitions of participating in extracurricular activities; changes to school structure (remote) and grading rubrics stripping the identity of academic achievers while those struggling pre-pandemic are falling further behind; and finally, remote learning preventing youth from keeping their home lives private. Remote learning and various levels of quarantine have reduced the protective factors of community engagement and social connectedness as youth are not able to interact with their peers and receive support from their friends.

Conversely, not all children and youth have been impacted negatively. Children who struggled with social dynamics previously are thriving in this environment as they feel that they will have a clean slate when they return to school and their peers. Caregivers are becoming more aware and in tune to the mental health of their children and the role it plays in their children's lives. Locally, some parents are more educated on wellness activities and resources.

Mental Health clinics report a reduction in no-shows due to amelioration of transportation and scheduling barriers with the implementation of tele-mental health. The advent of COVID-19 and rapid passage of tele-health provisions has opened access and availability of these mental

health resources. Nevertheless, access is not universal as some families do not have reliable devices or internet.

Lastly, schools report struggling to gauge what is happening in their student's lives and recognize the toll these changes have had on students and staff. Efforts have been made to increase social connectedness through virtual get-togethers such as gaming clubs, art groups, etc. Teachers have been engaged through weekly, virtual self-care groups.

While the return to in-person learning for schools locally has alleviated many of the hardships related to remote learning, attendance issues continue to be a concern. In addition to children being absent for prolonged periods due to having tested positive, COVID-19 exposures and staffing shortages force temporary classroom closures on an ongoing basis.

Family Enrichment Network's Mental Health Consultants report that fewer mental health providers are accepting new clients and/or Medicaid and private insurance payments and waiting lists are even longer than in the past.

The Mental Health Consultants and the Professional Development Specialist for the South Early Childhood Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE) stress that "much more is needed in terms of mental assistance" for children.

Mental Health Services & Supports

Lourdes Center for Mental Health, Greater Binghamton Health Center and Family & Children's Counseling Services all serve children and adults as licensed NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) Clinics within Broome County. Family & Children's Counseling Services and Greater Binghamton Health Center's Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Clinic's licensed NYS OMH Clinics offer same day service appointments to address the growing need for mental health services for adults and children. United Health Services Hospitals (UHS) also operates a

NYS OMH Clinic serving adults. Family and Children’s Counseling Services operates School Based Family Support Centers in the Binghamton, Johnson City, Union Endicott, Whitney Point, and Windsor School Districts. Supports offered through this service include individual, family and group counseling, as well as parent support and education.

In October 2018, Family & Children’s Counseling Services opened an NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) licensed Outpatient Substance Use Treatment satellite clinic with same day access available Monday through Friday.

Broome County Mental Health Department’s website offers a range of assistance for families including: “Virtual Support”. “Respite Services”, “Resources for Parents”, and “Hotlines/Helplines.”

Mental Health services in Tioga County are more limited. Families must travel long distances to access services at Tioga County Mental Health Clinic in Owego or in Waverly. Both facilities offer family and individual counseling and will see children as young as five years of age. Many of the Broome County facilities cited above are utilized by Tioga County families upon referral. Franziska Racker Center provides play therapy for preschool children after they’ve completed the evaluation process and have approval from their school district’s Committee on Preschool Special Education.

The lack of mental health services for preschoolers under the age of five continues to be an area of need. Children and families not in need of a psychiatrist have several options available. Family Enrichment Network Head Start and Early Head Start programs retain the services of Mental Health Consultants who provide counseling services to families on a short-term basis and then facilitate referrals to other community resources which accept Medicaid, Child Health Plus, or have a sliding fee scale, for those in need of long-term services.

In addition to FEN's short-term services, several care coordination services are available that will help a family with their hurdles, making them more likely to achieve success overall. These services include Medicaid and Non-Medicaid Care Management as well as Family Enrichment Network's Kinship Caregiver's Program. The Kinship Caregiver's Program has provided vital support and counseling for Head Start and Early Head Start families in Broome and Tioga Counties who have taken on the responsibility for the care of grandchildren, nieces and nephews, etc., but state funding is frequently in jeopardy, rendering its future uncertain.

FEN also makes every effort to meet the need for children's mental health and social/emotional supports by implementing Conscious Discipline, NYS Pyramid, and Second Step Curriculum practices program-wide.

Children and youth with Medicaid may be eligible for Medicaid Care Management (Health Home) and those who are uninsured or have private health insurance may be eligible for Non-Medicaid Care Management (NMCM). Both services can be accessed through Broome County Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPOA). Priority for NMCM is given to children/youth who are at imminent risk of hospitalization and have private insurance.

Children with Medicaid can also be referred directly to the Health Home provider to access those services. In December 2016, the roll out for Children's Health Home started. A health home (a.k.a. Medicaid health home) — as defined in Section 2703 of the Affordable Care Act — offers coordinated care to individuals with multiple chronic health conditions, including mental health and substance use disorders. The health home is a team-based clinical approach that includes the consumer, his or her providers, and family members, when appropriate. The health home builds linkages to community supports and resources as well as enhances

coordination and integration of primary and behavioral health care to better meet the needs of people with multiple chronic illnesses.

In 2019, New York State initiated a transition to Medicaid Managed Care for children, started new State Plan Amendment (SPA) services called *Children & Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS)*, and unbundled the 1915(c) waiver programs (OMH, B2H and Care at Home I & II) to become *Children's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)*. These changes were made to enable more children to access a wider range of services, allow for greater provider choice, and ensure that children and families were receiving the services that were the most pertinent for their needs. The services are for Medicaid eligible children, but families with private insurance can go through a process to enable their child to have Medicaid.

The initial implementation of the CFTSS and HCBS has been challenging due to staffing shortages and navigating a new system for both families and providers. Children and families have begun to receive services from a range of providers in the County and new services continue to come on board. COVID-19 has further challenged the rollout of these services as they are intended to be community-based and face-to-face, both of which have been restricted during the pandemic.

Community Initiatives

BC Promise Zone supports all districts in the county that wish to become involved with the Community School framework. These activities include support in building community connections, access to professional development support, and providing a repository of resources to assist with needs or projects through the implementation of the full-scale University-Assisted Community School (UACS) model. During 2019-2020 school year, ten school districts implemented the UACS model through Binghamton University: Binghamton, Chenango Forks,

Chenango Valley, Deposit, Harpursville, Johnson City, Union Endicott, Whitney Point, Windsor, and Broome-Tioga BOCES.

Community School Coordinators work diligently with school districts to offer needs assessment to move the work forward. The Coordinators also work with Binghamton University interns from the Master of Social Work (MSW) program and a variety of majors and interests to provide support to students during and extended school day. The students operate with a social-emotional focus designed to improve school attendance and academic achievement, increase engagement, and increase access to community resources.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many challenges and issues arose due to schools switching to a virtual learning environment. Immediate areas of concern were connectivity for remote learning and the engagement of students and families. In the immediate aftermath, Coordinators, working remotely, supported engagement through enabling families to access food and transportation resources while collaborating with districts to make these connections. As the pandemic continued, supports continued virtually with some in person opportunities to support basic needs and social-emotional components for families while maintaining appropriate guidelines and safety measures.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) trainings were scheduled to be offered throughout the County by multiple agencies to a variety of audiences including Department of Social Services, Community Based Organizations, Higher Education and School Districts to support the mental health and ward off potential crisis for youth in the community. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which

psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders. With considerations of the pandemic, trainings that were initially scheduled for 2020 were put on hold. During 2020, the developers of YMHFA have been able to convert the curriculum to a digital platform. With that in mind, staff will look to strategizing the implementation of YMHFA across the community in 2022.³⁴

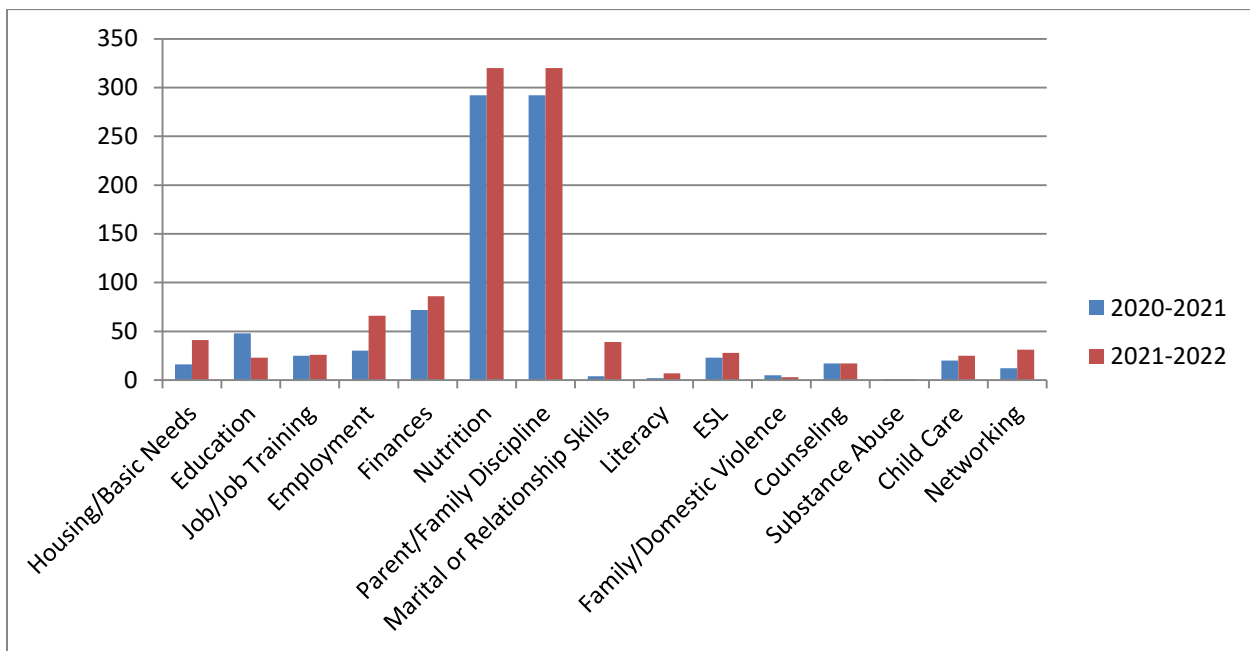
SOCIAL SERVICES NEEDS

Head Start families, through their participation in our program, work in partnership with Family Advocates to identify, assess and address their personal and family goals. Those partnerships are typically achieved through regular home visiting with the families. We continue to have precautions in place as a result of COVID-19. At this time, Family Advocates can provide services to families in person or remotely depending on the comfort level of both the staff and the family. If in person home visits occur, either in the home or at another mutually agreed upon location, social distancing and mask wearing are still required for both the Family Advocate and the family members present during the visit. As a result, building relationships and having meaningful communication with some of the families has proved to be much more difficult. In a normal Head Start program year, Family Advocates would be meeting with families on a monthly basis, most of the time in their own homes, assisting them to develop individualized goals for themselves and their families. While that service is still being provided to the families, new barriers exist for our families.

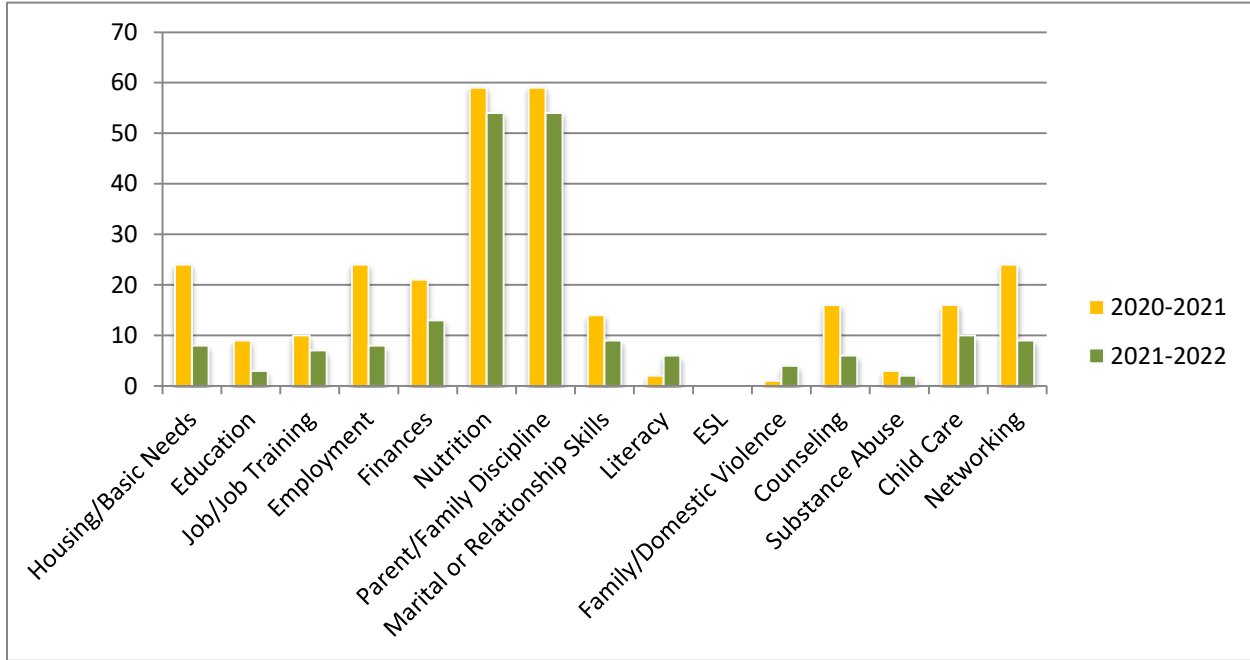
Housing and basic needs seem to have increased as identified needs for Broome families in 2021. Additionally, many of our families continue facing challenges in finding reliable and stable child care which will allow them to maintain stable employment. In past years, working on goals in the areas of finances, employment and education were typically the highest ranking

categories on the Family Profile. Families still struggle with a lack of access to community services which can lead to less support for families in need. Results from a quick “pop” survey among both the Broome and Tioga Family Advocates revealed that the most common challenges/barriers that families are struggling with right now in 2022 are lack of stable child care, saving money, and affordable/adequate housing.

Family Needs Data in Broome HS/EHS

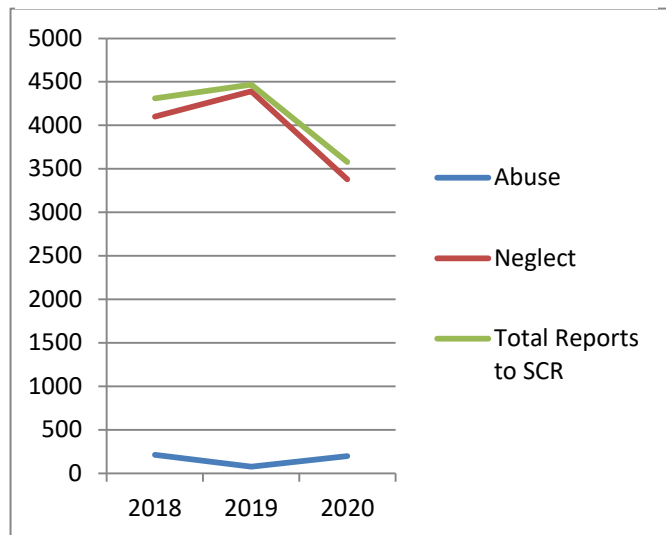


Family Needs in Tioga HS/EHS



There continues to be a decrease in Broome reports (see chart at right) made to the SCR (State Central Registry) this past year.²⁹ This is a new concern for our community and it is believed to be caused as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many school age children are not attending school in person and families are staying home

BC Child Abuse Hotline Reports



more. This means that there are fewer opportunities for children in potential abusive situations to receive the treatment or services that they need. Although current child abuse and neglect reporting data was not available for Tioga County it is highly likely that the trend of decreased SCR reports being made by mandated reporters is also occurring there. According to the Director

of Broome County Child Protective Services, domestic violence continues to play a significant role in many of the cases they investigate.

According to the Office of the Administration for Children & Families Family & Youth Services Bureau, 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year. Research has shown that 30-60% of children who have witnessed domestic violence in their home are victims of direct abuse themselves.³⁰ A child is a witness to domestic violence when an act that is defined as domestic violence is done or committed in the presence of, or perceived by the child.³¹ Law enforcement responds to approximately 550-600 domestic incidents each month in Broome County. There were 919 total reports of domestic violence in Broome County last year (2020) according to the Division of Criminal Justice Services (no information on 2021 yet).

According to Crime Victims Assistance Center, Inc., in 2021 they reviewed a total of 272 Domestic Incident Reports (DIR's) that required a hotline call to the State Central Registry be made because the children witnessed the incident. This data does not include New York State Police numbers because CVAC does not receive their DIR's; therefore the total number is likely higher.

In 2021, CVAC responded to approximately 155 victims of DV/Witness to Violence. It is important to note that CVAC was not going into the hospitals for a period of time due to COVID, so the reported numbers are likely lower than they what they would typically be. In 2020 the total was 90, which shows clearly that there has been a significant increase in the last two years.

More than ever there continues to be a need for Head Start to support and assist families. Based on the data it is clear that families are struggling therefore we need to work on enhancing

family engagement techniques and strategies so that we can adequately support families, especially in times of crisis, such as the one we are in right now with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Child Care Needs

One of the many goals Head Start families indicate they are working on is finding child care. According to the 2021 Broome County Family Profile completed by Family Advocates, 7.8% of families were in need of childcare and 9.1% were working on obtaining child care.³² Through interviews with current families, staff, and CCR&R (childcare resource and referral) it is noted that due to COVID-19 many child care facilities have been seriously impacted. Child care facilities do not have the proper staff to maintain ratios, which in turn is causing them to not have as many available open slots. Hours to facilities have also been affected causing families to have to adjust their work schedules or remain unemployed due to the hours of child care available. According to the CACFP monitor with CCR&R, many providers are not taking on new children due to the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19.³³ Families are stating they are also finding it hard to find child care that will be able to assist the younger school age child with their on-line schooling.

According to the 2021 Tioga County Family Profile, 18.5% of families were in need of child care and 13% were working on obtaining child care. In Tioga County a survey from the Family Advocates revealed that the largest need around child care is providers. Gail Woodcock, Family Advocate Waverly Head Start, stated “there are no licensed family daycare providers in the area”.

The child care need in both counties is urgent and going unmet. COVID-19 has put a large impact on child care and in order for families to return to work or find work they need to have appropriate care for their children.

Employment Needs

True welfare reform comes from a climate that encourages work, and it is necessary to have support systems in place so the environment is conducive to entering the workforce. A need still exists for low skill/entry level jobs for people with little or no work experience and limited education. Broome County Department of Social Services' Welfare to Work Unit offers programs and services to help benefit recipients work towards stable employment and self-sufficiency goals. Programs available include training on job searches, job development, assessment and planning, job readiness, placement and retention services.³⁴

According to the latest available statistics from Broome County Department of Social Services Annual Report 2020, Temporary Assistance caseloads decreased by 434 in all categories as of December, 2020. Family Assistance, Safety Net, and Emergency programs saw a decrease in applications by 24% with approved cases decreasing by 32%, denied and/or withdrawn cases decreased by 23%; additionally, an increase of 259 in other cases were open/closed, reopened, or reactivated.³⁵ Tioga County Department of Social Services' 2020 Annual Report indicates many "normal standard procedures" were suspended in 2020 such as: telephone interview waivers, employment requirement waivers, delay mandated work assignments, etc. Cash assistance cases decreased by 17; Safety Net averages decreased by 9; Daycare caseload averages decreased by 20%. Overall, in 2020, Career Center staff assisted 61% less walk-in customers, handling over 8,700 phone calls. It is noted a significant drop began in the spring due to impacts of COVID-19 and availability of facility access.³⁶

Currently, 78% of Broome County, and 87% Tioga County Head Start and Early Head Start families work full-time or part-time; 27% of Broome County and 13% of Tioga County families receive either partial or full public assistance; 21% of Broome County and 15% of Tioga

County families have other sources of income (SSI/SSD/SS). This demonstrates a significant increase in Broome and decrease Tioga County Head Start and Early Head Start working families,³⁷ which can be attributed to effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Broome County Transit buses cover approximately 80 square miles with 19 fixed routes throughout the urban sectors of the Triple Cities with over 700 bus stops. Many of these routes operate seven days a week with weekday hours continuing until approximately 10:00 p.m., Saturday hours end by 7:00 p.m. and Sunday hours end by 5:00 p.m. Broome Transit services include specialized routes to corporate/industrial plants, shopping centers and recreational parks.³⁸ Broome County Transit received a federal grant in June 2021 to purchase six long range battery electric zero emission buses in 2023, replacing older diesel-fueled vehicles. The “green” buses feature powertrain components made locally by BAE Systems of Endicott, New York.³⁹

In an article in the Press and Sun Bulletin September 15, 2014, Tioga County Legislators voted unanimously to halt public transportation as of November 30, 2014. The decision was made after legislators were unable to find an alternate resolution to the drop in ridership, after rescheduling and changing routes in hopes of providing better services to residents. New York State took over scheduling transportation for Medicaid patients in 2013, preferring to use taxi services over public transportation. This change of Medicaid services caused a drop in ridership from approximately 1000 per month to zero in January 2014. The state agreed to offset unexpected costs as a result of the change for 2014, but was not expected to go beyond that.⁴⁰

While a majority of our parents have achieved a GED, high school diploma or higher level of education, not having a high school diploma, GED, or specialized skill does hinder a job seeker from obtaining employment, which would enable them to become self-sufficient.

Minimum wage was increased to \$13.20 per hour in the upstate New York region, as of December 31, 2021.

According to the New York State Department of Labor website's "Labor Market Briefing, Southern Tier, December 2021" the Southern Tier has gained 5,200 jobs over the past year. Of the recent job gains, 4,200 have been in the Leisure & Hospitality, Trade, Transportation & Utilities, and Government areas. New York State's unemployment rate, 5.0% in December 2021, exceeds the Southern Tier Region's rate of 2.9%. Unemployment claims in both Broome and Tioga counties have dropped substantially from December 2020 to December 2021: Broome saw a decrease of 900 with Tioga seeing a decrease of 200. This drop in claims mirror both New York State and federal claims numbers.⁴¹

Christian Harris, NYS Department of Labor Southern Tier Regional Analyst, stated on the Department of Labor website's article in Employment in New York State, Research and Statistics, Southern Tier: For the 12 months ending November 2021, the number of private sector jobs in the Southern Tier region increased by 4,100, or 2.0%, to 209,700. Employment gains were greatest in leisure and hospitality (+3,200), manufacturing (+500), other services (+400), and trade, transportation and utilities (+300). Job losses were focused in educational and health services (-500).⁴²

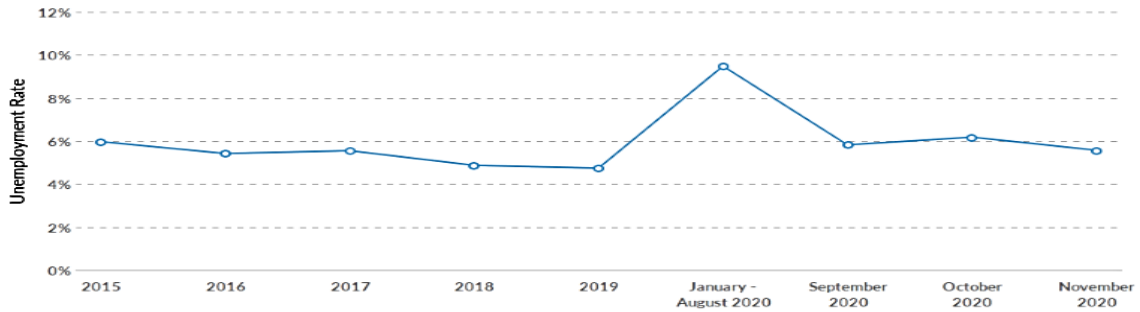
As noted in the following graph, unemployment was decreasing over the last five years but began increasing in January 2020 to almost 10% in the Southern Tier area, decreasing to near 5.5% in the November 2020.

Historic & Projected Trends

Population Jobs Labor Force **Unemployment**

Unemployment Rate Trends

Broome County, NY had a November 2020 unemployment rate of 5.57%, decreasing from 5.97% 5 years before.



Mr. Harris also shared Economists expect an uneven recovery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic where growth continues for professional groups but declines for all other sectors and income groups.⁴³

Employment and training resources are located at Broome Employment Center, 171 Front Street, Binghamton, New York and Tioga Employment Center, 1062 NY-38, Owego, New York for persons interested in employment services.⁴⁴

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND STRENGTHS

Enrichment Programs for Children

Enrichment programs provide young children with experiences that allow them to express feelings, gain new skills, and grow in confidence. Within Broome and Tioga County, numerous programs offer enrichment activities for preschoolers. Many require an admittance fee, which often prohibits families of low income from participating. Accessibility for families without transportation also presents an additional challenge. The following is a list of the programs within the county, which offer special enhancement activities for young children.

Children’s Museums

- **Roberson Center of Arts and Sciences** 30 Front Street, Binghamton, 772-0660
 Permanent and changing exhibits of art, history, folk life and natural history, hands-on science gallery. Many special activities are organized. Virtual tours and art classes available over zoom.
 Due to COVID-19 Planetarium shows are not available in-person. Free Planetarium videos available on their website.

Museum Cost:

Children 4 and under with an adult - Free
 Students and Seniors (62 & up) - \$6.00
 Adults - \$8.00

Museum Hours:

Monday and Tuesday.....Closed
 Wednesday and Thursday.....12:00-5:00 p.m.
 Friday.....12:00-9:00 p.m.
 Saturday and Sunday.....12:00-5:00 p.m.

Workshops for 4s and Under

- **Discovery Center of the Southern Tier** 60 Morgan Road Binghamton, 773-8661
 The Discovery Center is an interactive hands-on museum for children and their families. If Binghamton City School District is closed due to weather; the DC is also closed. Open to all on school holidays. The Story Garden is open every day 8am-dusk but closed to the public on Wednesdays 9am- 4pm.

Advanced online reservations for admissions are required from everyone.

Cost:

Under 1 year = Free
 General Admission = \$8.00

Individual & Family
 Memberships available

Hours:

Tuesday.....Closed
 Friday.....11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
 Saturday..... 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
 Sunday.....2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
 Monday.....11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

- **Waterman Conservation Education Center** 403 Hilton Road, Apalachin, 625-2221

Anyone is free to walk through the trails and gardens and explore the Education buildings. Trails are open dawn to dusk daily.

Center Hours:

Monday-Friday.....9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
 Saturday.....10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Finch Hollow Nature Center 1394 Oakdale Road, Johnson City, 773-8661

Fun for children ages three through five. Natural history museum with approximately one mile of scenic, easy to walk nature trails winding through field, pond, and wooded habitats. Building currently closed due to COVID-19.

Cost: Free; additional programs at a cost

Trails and grounds are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Museum hours vary.

Libraries and Story Hours

- **Broome County Public Library** 185 Court Street, Binghamton, 778-6400

All in person library programs are canceled until further notice but various virtual activities are available.

Cost: Free with library card

Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday.....9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Friday-Saturday.....9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

The following is a list of online programs the library offers:

Beginner Yoga

Every Wednesday from 5:00-6:00

Registration Required

Coloring Club

Every Wednesday from 5:30-7:30

Virtual Sound Bath Immersion

Wednesday 2:10-3:10

Summer Reading Program: designed for families to encourage life-long reading habits while we are stuck indoors. Sign up for a free account and then start reading books and completing activities at home to earn points. Once you have earned enough points, you will receive a completion certificate, and you will be entered into a drawing to win prizes! For all ages.

1000 Books Before Kindergarten: The concept is simple, the rewards are priceless. Read a book (any book) to your newborn, infant, and/or toddler. The goal is to have read 1,000 books (yes you can repeat books) before your precious one starts kindergarten. Register for the program 1000 Books before Kindergarten with us, and then start reading to child. Print and fill out the registration form here and email: bcplyouthservices@gmail.com or send it snail mail to us at BCPL Youth Services 185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY 13901. After reading 100 books either take a picture and email it to us or come in and we will accept it (when we are open again). Prizes awarded at different levels.

The *I Survived* series by Lauren Tarshis is an extremely popular and fun series. Just as the characters of the books survived their historic moment, you are surviving yours.

We want to hear about your thoughts and feelings on surviving the 2020 Pandemic. What are you doing to keep busy? Are you helping at home? What about your family members? How are they feeling about being part of this historic time? What kinds of things are they doing?

Let us know at bcplyouthservices@gmail.com. The library is hoping to compile your responses and create our own BCPL I survived the 2020 Pandemic booklet!

- **George F. Johnson Memorial Library** 1001 Park Street, Endicott, 757-5350
Some in-person offerings are currently unavailable due to COVID-19. Virtual educational resources available on *GFJ library's YouTube channel* which include: Share a Story series, Crafternoon videos, and the Basic Drawing with Brooke class.

Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday.....9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturday.....9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Take & Make Crafts – Stop by the children’s room to pick up our current take and make craft or check our Facebook page for more details!

Virtual Story Times – Each includes a story, an activity and more! Subscribe to be notified when a new story time is released.

GFJ Library’s YouTube Channel – Lots of fun, original videos for kids including our Share a Story series, Crafternoon videos, and the Basic Drawing with Brooke class.

- **Vestal Public Library** 320 Vestal Parkway East, Vestal, 754-4243
Due to COVID-19 all in person programs have been canceled until further notice.

Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday.....9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Friday.....9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Saturday.....10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Sunday.....Closed

Preschool Storytime

Preschool story time is for ages 2-6. We will read stories, sing songs, and do a craft. No registration required.

Lego Club

Join us on the 4th Wednesday of each month for Lego Club! 4:30 - 5:30PM open to ages 7-12 Registration Required! Sign up in person or by calling youth services at (607)754-4243 ext. 3

Each month we will build new Lego creations based on a challenge. Creations will then be put on display in the library! All Legos provided.

Pajama Storytime

Every third Wednesday at 6PM children and caregivers can come dressed in their pajamas! Bedtime snack provided!

Open to ages 2 - 6.

Registration required. Sign up in person or call Youth Services at 607-754-4243 ext. 3

- **Barnes & Noble** 2443 Vestal Parkway East, Vestal, 770-9505

Children’s Story Time – Wednesdays at 10:30 am

- **Coburn Free Library** 275 Main Street, Owego, 687-3520

Cost: Free with library card and preregistration

Library Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday.....10 a.m.-5p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday.....2:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Saturday.....1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

AARP Tax Help: AARP will return to Coburn Free Library in 2022. For information for this year’s tax free tax prep, please contact the Tioga County Community Center. Coburn is providing the location but the Community Center is handling all scheduling.

Tech Support Tuesdays: APPOINTMENT REQUIRED. Call the library or register below to make an appointment. Program lasts from 2pm-3pm. One on one support provided for: -Computer/laptop questions, -Help downloading to your Kindle, -Smart phone issues, - Other technology queries. Patrons ages 65+ will receive priority and will automatically move to the front of the queue. Best of all...It’s FREE!

Mystery Book Club: Registration required. Calling all mystery enthusiasts! Every month members meet to discuss the selection(s) of the month. Join us for an hour of lively banter and fun. The first Tuesday of each month at 1pm. This group sometimes meets outdoors during nice weather so be sure to register if you are a newcomer to the group. We will make sure you are added to the group information list. Happy reading!

Story Hour: On Wednesdays at 10:15 AM we share our favorite picture books with children ages birth to 5 and their parents or caregivers. Join our group each Wednesday at the library. Don’t be surprised to learn a few finger plays and active nursery rhymes. Our story times are built around books and engaging readings but also include movement, song, literacy skills, and play. I’d say that’s great for all ages.

Master Minds Club: Registration is required. The first Thursday of the month at 6pm, kids 10+ meet to have fun and exercise their masterful minds. All supplies are provided at no cost; however, donations are accepted at the desk. Each month’s activity will use Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. Each participant will practice the actions for success: listen, observe, try, fail, learn, and try again. We encourage questioning, critical thinking, measurement, and giving evidence. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Lego Club: Registration is required. On the third Tuesday of each month at 6pm, participants use Lego to make creations inspired by monthly challenges! We provide the

Legos, you provide the imagination! Must be old enough to responsibly use Legos. Younger kids will be given Duplo blocks. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Paint and Learn: Registration required. Exercise your creativity at Coburn Free Library, where learners evolve! During Paint and Learn, local artist Sandy Morris teaches basic painting techniques and helps participants unleash their inner artists. No experience required. All materials are provided at no cost. Wear clothes you can paint in! We start at one and paint until done. Donations to support our programming efforts are happily accepted. Register online, by phone (687-3520), or by visiting the library.

Stories with Sulley: Join us for story time with Sulley, the sweetest therapy dog around! Registration is requested but, if your schedule opens up on program day, we welcome drop-ins as well! We will have a segment where you can show off your reading skills to Sulley, who never cares if you make a mistake! He just loves to be read to. If you'd like to take a turn reading, bring a book you are comfortable with. Also, bring your creativity! We will do a craft to go with the story theme.

Other programs and events: Throughout the year, we also host a variety of different events, such as "Polar Express Pajama Party", teen theater, crafting programs, educational events, and more. Check back to our events calendar frequently so you don't miss out!

Summer Reading Programs: In July our story hour programs change a bit since school is out and families have more time for activities. We take this opportunity to reach out with programs for ages 0-99+. Beginning July 1, the Summer Reading Program begins complete with reading challenges. Yes, this is for ALL ages. As soon as school's out, check in at the library to pick up a reading log; anyone who keeps track of the books they read between July 1 and August 15 will win prizes! Summer brings an exciting flurry of programs. Your whole family will be entertained by the best performers, whether they be storytellers, musicians, magicians, or authors. Best of all, the programs are free and no registration is required.

- **Tappan-Spaulling Memorial Library** 6 Rock Street, Newark Valley, 642-9960

Library Hours:

Tuesday.....9:00am – 1:00pm; 2:00 – 6:00pm

Wednesday.....3:00 – 8:00pm

Thursday.....9:00am – 1:00pm; 2:00 – 6:00pm

Saturday.....9:00am – 1:00pm

**From now on, when Newark Valley School District is closed for bad weather, Tappan-Spaulling Memorial Library will also be closed! **

- **Waverly Free Library** 18 Elizabeth St Waverly 565-9341

Parks

• **County**

Cost: All Broome County Parks are free

- Aqua-Terra Park-Maxian Road, Town of Binghamton, 778-2193
- Nathaniel Cole Park-Colesville Road, Harpursville, 693-1389
- Greenwood Park-Greenwood Road, Lisle, 778-2193
- Otsinigo Park-Bevier Street, Binghamton, 778-2193
- Hawkins Pond, Windsor, 693-1389
- Dorchester Park, Whitney Point, 692-4612
- Roundtop Picnic Area, Endicott, 778-6541

• **Ross Park Zoo** 60 Morgan Road, Binghamton, 724-5461

More than 200 birds, reptiles, and mammals on the 25-acre site. Zoo includes Carousel museum, playground, and picnic pavilion. America’s 5th oldest zoo!

Cost:

- 2 years and under.....free
- 3 to 11 years.....\$7.00
- 12 years-Adults.....\$9.00
- Senior (over 55)..... \$8.00
- College Student & Military ID.....\$8.00
- Group Rate.....\$6.00 per person if 10 or more people

Cost to ride carousel..... free with admission
Picnic and Playground..... free

*Last ticket sold one hour prior to closing.

Hours:

- March 20- April 18.....weekends 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- April 26- May 28.....weekdays 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- April 24- May 23.....10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- May 29- September 6th.....open daily 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
- July and August.....every Thursday in 10:00 a.m.- 7:00 p.m.
- September 7- October 11.....weekdays 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- September 11- October 10.....weekends 10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- October 30- November 28.....weekends 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

U-Pick Farms & Animal Farms

Animal farms, farm markets (some with apple & berry picking) and gardens in Broome County.

Broome County

- **Apple Hills** - various apples, blueberries, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, petting zoo, gift shop 131 Brooks Road, Binghamton, NY. Phone: 607-729-2683. Email: sales@applehills.com. Have a unique party at Apple Hills! Our Activity Room is full of things that allow kids to explore with their imagination and learn. Kids have their own

Make-Believe Market, Apple Sorting Process, Apple Picking, The Great Purple Puff Ball Pool, The Corn Bin, Roller Racers, and Basketball. Add a Wagon Ride to the orchard for some fresh picking, and it is the best party a kid could have!

- **Cascade Valley Farm** - Blueberries, 49 E. Bosket Rd, Windsor, NY 13865. Phone: 607-655-1693. Email: yram1@tds.net. Open: Call for hours and availability. This is a beef and blueberry farm. During mid-July thru August, you can pick fresh blueberries at only \$1.00 a pound. Beef is available by the full cow.
- **Frosty Mountain Blueberry Farm - Uses Integrated Pest Management**, blueberries, prepicked produce, restrooms, picnic area 196 Bull Creek Road, Whitney Point, NY 13862. Phone: 607-692-4356. Email: tuk1025@aol.com. Open: Sunday to Saturday 7am to 8pm from the second week of July every day from 7:00am till 8pm and will stay open till berries are gone usually till the middle of September or after the late harvest berries are picked
- **Lone Maple Farm** - U Pick Apples, strawberries 2001 Hawleyton Road, Binghamton NY, 13903. Phone: 607-724-6877. Email: info@lonemaplefarm.com. We DO NOT USE PESTICIDES on our strawberries. Farm market will reopen for the 2021 season on Friday April 30, 2021. Our farm market will be open every day from 12pm to 6pm April 30, 2021 to October 31, 2021.
- **North Windsor Berries** - beans, beets, blackberries, cucumbers, onions, peas, peppers, pumpkins, raspberries (Autumn, red), summer squash, strawberries, tomatoes, school tours
1609 NY Rte. 79, Windsor, NY 13865. Phone: 607-655-2074. Open: Monday through Saturday 10am to 6pm; Please see website for additional seasonal hours. Stop in to Side Hill Acres Goat Farm in Candor to visit the goats. Call ahead to arrange a free tour to see how they make the cheese and learn more about the goats. 607-659-4121

Two local farms put on elaborate, free displays at Halloween time. Check out their web pages for spring/summer fun.

- Jackson's Pumpkin Farm is in Campville, which is between Endicott and Owego. Look for the free playground.
- Iron Kettle Pumpkin Farm is in Candor, past Owego has pumpkins are dressed up as children's favorite characters and nursery rhymes scenes. Bring your cameras! It is usually very crowded on weekends. Go during the week if you can.

Check out Cornell Cooperative Extension--Broome County for some more great activities, including the Broome County Open Farm Weekend the first weekend in October, FREE.

Tioga County

- **Gary's Berries** – Blueberries
Rt 17C (5-mile E of Owego & 7-mile W of Endicott on old Route 17C) Campville, NY 13760. Phone: (607) 341-1399. Open July-August, call for days and times.
- **Iron Kettle Farm** - Strawberries, peas, tomatoes, Rt 96 (S of village) Candor NY 13743.

- **Locust Woods Farm** - Blueberries 420 Dawson Hill Road (2 mile from Route 96 & Dawson Hill intersection) Spencer NY 14883. Phone: 607-589-4502. Open July-September
- **Maple Tree Gardens** - Strawberries, beans, peas, chili peppers
16 NY-96, Owego, NY 13827 **Phone:** (607) 687-5917 Open June-August, daily 10-6.
- **Our Green Acres** - Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, gooseberries, beans, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, flowers
Rt 17C (W of Owego) Owego, NY 13827. Phone: 607-687-2874. Email: frankwiles@aol.com. Open June-October, 8 am to 7, call first.
- **Stoughton Farm** - raspberries, beans, peas
Rt 38 North (N of golf course) Newark Valley, NY 13811. Phone: 607-642-3675. Email: info@stoughtonfarm.com. Open April-October, Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 6, Sunday 9 am to 5 pm. U-Pick: Here at Stoughton Farm, we believe the freshest fruit is the stuff you pick yourself. Therefore, we offer a variety of different fruits and veggies you can pick on your own. Pod Peas: Mid/Late June - Early July. Green Beans: Late July - Late August. Fall Raspberries: Mid-August - Mid September. Our raspberries are grown in high tunnels, so you can pick rain or shine!
- **TLC Blueberry Farm** - Blueberries
2053 Route 17C (1 mile W of Smithboro) Barton, NY 13734. Phone: 607-222-2697. Open June- July, Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm. We have wonderful blueberries for U-Pick. Also, ready picked berries. Many varieties of homemade jam and jelly. We have a road stand for fresh fruit- jam can be purchased at farm office. Also, at Owego's Farmers Market on Tuesdays.

Large Motor Activities

- **SKATE ESTATE**
Open Skate, Birthday Parties, Arcades, Miniature Golf, Water Slide, Laser Tag

Mondays.....Closed
Tuesdays.....6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Wednesdays & Thursdays.....10:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Fridays.....5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Saturdays.....10:00 am. – 10:00 p.m.
Sundays.....10:00 a.m. – 6:00 pm.
- **Hidy Ochiai Foundation:** 317 Vestal Parkway West, Vestal, 748-8480
Classes for Karate and Cardio Kickboxing offered throughout the week.
- **FMK Karate:** 782 Chenango St, Binghamton, 723-9624
Classes for Karate, Cardio Kickboxing and Zumba offered throughout the week.
- **Fairbanks Tang Soo Do:** 604 Vestal Parkway West, Vestal, 372-0936
Pre-K Karate for children ages 2-4
- **Dancescapes Performing Arts, LLC:** 14 Willow Street, Johnson City, 729-4783

Classes available in ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical/contemporary, acro, and hip hop. Recreational and competitive classes offered. Fee varies depending on the number of classes taken.

- **The Ice House Sports Complex:** 614 River Road, Binghamton, 607-343-2520
Public skating, open hockey, hockey camps, groups, and parties available. Cost varies depending on the activity.
- **SUNY Broome Ice Center:** 901 Front Street, Binghamton (SUNY Broome Community College) 778-5423.
- **Chenango Gymnastics:** 120 Chenango Bridge Road (RT 12-A), Binghamton, 648-7366
Mom Pop and Tot (2-3.5 yrs.)
Preschool (3.5-5 yrs.)
All Ability (5 & up)
(Ninja) Warrior (5 & up)
Call for fees and schedules
- **Head Over Heels Gymnastics:** 541 Vestal Parkway West, Vestal, 754-6454
Various Preschool (1-4) and School Age (5-18) classes available
Call for fees and schedules
- **Owego Gymnastics:** 748 State Route 38, Owego, 687-2458
Lions - 1 & 2 years old (walking)A half-hour class once a week where the parent helps the child on preschool equipment with the guidance of our coaches. This class will help young children to get ready for the Preschool experience. Cost: \$32 monthly School Year Times: (Sept 2021 - June 2022)Tues: 10:00-10:30 am or Wed: 5:30-6:00 pm

Tigers - 3 & 4 years old (must be potty trained)A forty five minute class that works on coordination, muscular development, attention span, following directions and interaction with other children. Learning through gymnastics those skills needed to be successful in Preschool. Cost: \$49 monthly. School Year Times: (Sept 2021 - June 2022) Tues: 10:45-11:30 am; Wed: 4:45-5:30 pm; or Sat: 9:30-10:15 am

Bears - 5 & 6 years old (Girls)An hour class one time a week which teaches not only the fundamentals of gymnastics, but also targets coordination, attention span and listening skills. Cost: \$60 monthly School Year Times: (Sept 2021 - June 2022)Mon: 4:15-5:15 pm; Thurs: 5:30-6:30 pm; or Sat: 10:15-11:15 am

Tornadoes - 5 years old & up (Boys)An hour class one time a week that utilizes all pieces of gymnastics equipment, as well as related gymnastics activities including trampoline, mini-tramp, ropes, etc to teach the beginning fundamentals of gymnastics for boys. Cost: \$60 monthly School Year Times: (Sept 2021 - June 2022)Mon: 4:15-5:15 pm

Diamonds - 7 years old & up (Girls)An hour class one time a week that utilizes all pieces of gymnastics equipment, as well as dance and related gymnastics activities including

tumbl trak, mini-tramp, etc to teach the beginning fundamentals of gymnastics. Cost: \$60 monthly School Year Times: (Sept 2021- June 2022) Mon: 5:30-6:30 pm; Wed: 6:15-7:15 pm; Sat: 10:15-11:15 am

Advanced Diamonds - 7 years old & up (Girls) A ninety minute class one time a week that utilizes all pieces of gymnastics equipment, as well as dance and related gymnastics activities including trampoline, mini-tramp, ropes, etc to teach more advanced gymnastics skills. Cost: \$77 monthly. School Year Times: (Sept 2021- June 2022) Mon: 6:15-7:45 pm

Kids R Special (Children with Special Needs) A 45 minute class to help with physical activity, socialization, coordination and other skills. Individual activities to help with the goals of each child. An adult or parent is encouraged (but not required) to participate with the attending child. Unfortunately, this class cannot accommodate siblings in the gym during class time. Cost: \$49 monthly. School Year Times: (Sept 2021 - June 2022). Wed: 4:00-4:45 pm

Little Ninjas (4 -6 year olds) This program combines gymnastics and martial arts to teach confidence, self-control, focus, balance, and improve flexibility. It forms the foundation for any athletic endeavor while having fun! Cost: \$49 monthly. School Year Times: (Sept 2021 - June 2022), Mon: 6:00-6:45 pm.

Parent Resource Centers

Designed as a place for children and parents to engage in a variety of activities while providing support, resources, and parenting topics.

Cost: Free

- Binghamton PAL Family Resource Center at 457 State Street, Binghamton 771-6334
- Family Resource Center at 601 Columbia Drive, Johnson City (423)434-5275
- Endicott Family Resource Center at 200 Jefferson Ave, Endicott 760-5755
- Owego Family Resource Center at 72 North Ave, Owego 687-1571
- Waverly Family Resource Center at 460 Broad Street, Waverly 565-2374
- Norwich PAL Family Resource Center at 27 W. Main Street, Norwich, 334-8909
- Lourdes PACT 584-4500 (Broome County) and 687-6145 (Tioga County)

Additional Programming for Children

Workshops and classes are offered for children of all ages at the following locations.

Cost for participation varies.

- Boys and Girls Club of Binghamton
- Tioga County Boys and Girls Club
- SUNY Broome Community College Classes for Youth
- Jewish Community Center
- Town of Union Recreation Department
- Town of Vestal Recreation Department
- Southern Tier Gymnastics Academy

- Binghamton YMCA
- Johnson City YMCA
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Binghamton YWCA
- Endicott Performing Arts Center
- Uncorked Creations Art Studio & Gallery (Binghamton)

Social Service Resources

Counseling Services

- **ACCORD (Broome and Tioga)** – lends support to families involved in the court system. Court Appointed Special Advocate program provides services to families navigating the family court system; families are assigned by the court. Also provides Mediation services.
- **Binghamton General Hospital** – provides outpatient mental health services for adults only.
- **Broome County Mental Health Services** – provides services to adults for mental health, mental retardation and developmental disability, alcohol and substance abuse.
- **Catholic Charities Functional Family Therapy** – provides short-term home-based counseling services for families with children ages 11 – 18 who are at risk of placement.
- **Catholic Charities Gateway Center for Youth** – provides short-term individual counseling, group counseling and anger management group for youth.
- **Catholic Charities Family Counseling Program** – provides psychotherapeutic counseling to individuals and families.
- **Community Connections Center-** Endicott- provides counseling, advocacy, and community supports for UE students and their families.
- **Family and Children’s Society of Broome and Tioga Counties** – provides family and mental health counseling, sexual abuse treatment program, school based family support centers. Now accepting Medicaid.
- **Greater Binghamton Health Center** – provides counseling and support services for children and adults.
- **Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier, Inc.** – provides prevention and intervention services to address the needs of families that have a child with social, emotional or behavioral issues. Programs provide support, education, and advocacy in a strengths-based, individualized care approach.
- **Men’s Work** – Batterers Intervention Program
- **Lourdes Mental Health Juvenile Justice** – identifies youth within the criminal justice system with mental health and substance abuse issues and coordinates needed services.
- **Samaritan Counseling Center** – provides individual, family and marital counseling.
- **Lourdes Center for Mental Health** – specializes in services for adolescents age 12 – 21.
- **Tioga County Mental Hygiene** - Offers Tioga County residents a comprehensive continuum of counseling services and supports for individuals of all ages and families coping with emotional problems, mental illness, marital issues, depression, alcoholism and substance abuse.

Support for Victims of Violence

- **RISE**– emergency housing, counseling, advocacy and support for those experiencing domestic violence.
- **Crime Victims Assistance Center** – counseling, advocacy, and support for victims of violence. Also provides community-wide education about child abuse, sexual assault, rape, elder abuse, and domestic violence.
- **Crime Victims Assistance Center CAP (Child Assault Prevention)** – offers education to elementary school children, teachers and parents about children’s rights to be safe, strong and free. Provided in local schools.
- **Crime Victims Assistance Center**– Girls Circle and Safe Date programs offers youth education for teens emphasizing personal safety, healthy dating relationships and positive self-esteem.
- **Crime Victims Assistance Center Safe Harbour Program** – works to promote awareness and identification of youth trafficking, and provides comprehensive services to potential victims of commercial sexual exploitation
- **Family & Children’s Society** – provides clinical counseling services to battered women and children.
- **Broome County Family Violence Prevention Council** – coordinates child abuse, elder abuse and domestic violence education, intervention and prevention services through the efforts of a multi-disciplinary council and other subcommittees.
- **A New Hope Center** - provides hotline, counseling, advocacy and shelter. Soon they will also be providing supervised visitation.

Alcoholism & Substance Abuse

- **A.A., AL anon & Alateen programs** – provide peer support for alcohol and substance abusers and their families.
- **Addiction Center of Broome County** – provides substance abuse outpatient treatment for individuals and families.
- **Fairview Recovery Services** – provides supportive services to individuals with chemical addictions including intensive case management, supportive living and crisis center.
- **Mental Health Juvenile Justice** - identifies youth within the criminal justice system with mental health and substance abuse issues and coordinates needed services.
- **Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center** – provides in-house, long-term drug and alcohol rehabilitation program for men.
- **United Health Services New Horizons program** – provides substance abuse in-patient treatment for individuals, outpatient services, and six-month follow-up services.
- **Tioga County Mental Hygiene Substance Abuse & MICA (Mentally Ill Chemical Abuser) program** -provides Intensive Outpatient program, beginning treatment and education, and ongoing care.
- **Trinity TCASA**- provides prevention education programs in schools and the community that focus on substance abuse, gambling, bullying, and violence prevention.

Youth Programs

- **Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network Youth Services-** provides 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classroom presentations addressing topics of “building healthy relationships”, “parenting can wait”, and “making good decisions”.
- **Broome County Urban League** – operates an after school youth enrichment center providing youth development activities and tutoring. Also provides a summer enrichment program for youth ages 5-11.
- **Broome County Public Library** – Youth services department organizes youth and family literacy activities and events.
- **Boys & Girls Club of Binghamton** – provides youth development activities for youth of all ages, school-age child care program, and sports, recreation and fitness program for all ages.
- **Boys & Girls Club of Western Broome Family Center** – provides youth development activities for youth of all ages, school-age child care program, and sports, recreation and fitness program for all ages.
- **Tioga County Boys & Girls Club** - provides youth development activities for youth of all ages, school-age child care program, and sports, recreation and fitness program for all ages.
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension Broome County – Citizen U Project** – youth development program promoting citizenship, community action and community improvement.
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension Broome County – 4-H Youth Development** – provides an experiential learning youth education program for boys and girls ages 5-19. It provides practical life skills education in healthy lifestyles, citizenship and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension Tioga County - 4-H Youth Development** – provides an experiential learning youth education program for boys and girls ages 5-19. It provides practical life skills education in healthy lifestyles, citizenship and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- **Discovery Center-** hands on museum and learning environment for children. After school program available.
- **Liberty Partnership Program** – provides case management, tutoring/mentoring, counseling and summer enrichment activities for at-risk youth identified by local high schools.
- **YMCA-** provides youth development activities for youth of all ages, school-age child care program, and sports, recreation, and fitness programs for all ages.
- **Tioga/Tompkins County Youth Engagement Services Program – YES Club** - works with youth in grades 8 through 12 within Newark Valley High School to minimize barriers that impede school performance, improve attendance patterns, improve grades and passing rates, minimize disciplinary issues, and provide additional alternative academic experiences to increase student success.
- **Tioga/Tompkins County Youth Engagement Services Program – YES Mentoring** - supports youth who are engaging in at-risk behaviors and could benefit from one-on-one mentoring from a local volunteer mentor.
- **Family Planning of SCNY** – Family Planning’s school and community-based programs for young people share medically accurate, age-appropriate curriculum about avoiding

pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV infection. These educational components are part of a broader program that shares information about healthy relationships, effective communication skills and sexual activity as part of a healthy relationship

- **Children’s Home of Wyoming Conference Southern Tier Community Center** – community center for children and families, school aged child care activities, recreation activities, and indoor pool.

Services/Programs for Families

- **Healthy Families Broome** – sponsored by the BC Health Department this program offers voluntary home-based services to support expectant families and new parents with the changes and needs that often come with pregnancy and the birth of a new child. Home visitors may work with families up until the child enters school or Head Start.
- **UHS Stay Healthy Center** - provides RN support and breastfeeding support
- **Lourdes Ascension Program** - each primary care associates office now has a registered dietician available to work with clients
- **Broome County Health Department Traffic Safety Program** - provides education on car seat safety, bike safety, and other traffic safety topics
- **Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network of the Southern Tier - Binghamton (PAL) Family Resource Center** – a free place to play with your child, find answers to your questions on child development, attend a parenting class, access the resource library for parenting information or children’s books, a place to talk with other parents and caregivers, find out about community services, and attend programs on topics you want to learn more about.
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension Tioga Family Resource Centers-** provides drop- in play space, lending library, play groups and parenting education.
- **Family Reading Partnership of Owego Apalachin-** Provides new and used books to children in the Owego Apalachin school district via Bright Red Bookshelves throughout the community.
- **Parents and Children Together (PACT)** – provides parent education and support through home visiting to Binghamton parents with children ages 0 – 3 years. Also organizes and hosts Conscious Discipline® parenting and discipline classes for parents and caregivers.
- **Lourdes PACT (Broome and Tioga)** – provides a home visitation family strengthening program for teen parents or first-time parents from pregnancy through child’s first 3-5 years.
- **Catholic Charities Early Childhood STEP Parenting Classes** – offers free parenting classes using the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) model.
- **Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network of the Southern Tier** –promoting health and education for women, infants, pregnant women and families. Also organizes and hosts Conscious Discipline® parenting and discipline classes for parents and caregivers.
- **Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network of the Southern Tier – Facilitated Enrollment Program-** provides assistance with health insurance coverage through NY’s public health insurance programs.
- **Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network PAL Family Resource Center Clothing Closet** – provides families in need with gently used clothes.

- **Broome County Department of Social Services Families First Anger Management and Parenting Classes** – open to families with a DSS Services case and provides educational classes about anger management and parenting.
- **AGAPE (Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Program for Everyone)** - A free support, information and educational program open to all adoptive families and relative caregivers who have custody or guardianship of children.

Programs for Families with Children with Special or High Needs

- **Children’s Home** – works in partnership with the Department of Social Services to provide family, foster care and preventive services.
- **Broome County Department of Social Services Families First** – provides intensive case management to families DSS referred. Also provides Anger Management groups for adults.
- **ImPACT Program – Lourdes** – for families with a child 0-10 years living in Broome County with an open DSS Services Case for the purpose of averting a disruption of the family which will or could result in the placement of a child in foster care, enabling a child who has been placed in foster care to return to his family at an earlier time than would otherwise be possible; or reducing the likelihood that a child who has been discharged from foster care would return to such care.
- **Broome County Health Department- Early Intervention Program-** coordinates and provides special services for children under the age of 3 years old.
- **Tioga County Health Department - Early Intervention Program-** coordinates and provides special services for children under the age of 3 years old.
- **Franziska Racker Center** – provides clinical and support services to children and youth with disabilities.
- **Committee for Preschool Special Education (CPSE)** - coordinates and provides special services for children ages 3-5 years old.
- **Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC)** - provides assistance and serves people with all disabilities of all ages to increase their independence in all aspects of integrated community life.
- **HCA (Helping Celebrate Abilities)** – provides clinical services, support services, and preschool programs to children.

Housing Assistance/Emergency/Crisis Services

- **YWCA Young Women’s Residential Achievement Program** – supportive living program for homeless women ages 18 – 23 years old.
- **Metro Interfaith** – low income housing, assists with improving credit and home ownership.
- **Opportunities for Broome (OFB)** – emergency housing, furniture and appliance donations, and help with housing, court, and code enforcement.
- **Tioga Opportunities** – provides rental assistance, apartments and home repair services. Also coordinates food delivery to many of the county's emergency food pantries and soup kitchens.
- **Mental Health Association Project Uplift** – housing assistance for the homeless and food pantry.

- **Cribs for Kids** – local chapter for the National Cribs for Kids program that provides education about safe sleep environments and cribs to families in need-provided by Mother’s & Babies.
- **United Way of Broome County 211** – centralized system for community resources and referrals.
- **Catholic Charities Teen Transitional Living Program** – transitional/independent living program for runaway and homeless youth ages 16 – 21.
- **Council of Churches Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW)** – emergency food service to local food pantries, CHOW bus, and infant formula available through referrals from WIC.
- **Food Bank of the Southern Tier Pantries and Mobile Food Pantries** – visit website for a complete list of sites - www.foodbankst.org
- **Lend-A-Hand** – assists with rent, utilities, prescriptions furnishings, etc.
- **Salvation Army** – provides clothing, furniture, and housing.
- **Rise** – emergency housing for victims of domestic violence.
- **Rescue Mission** – supportive/emergency housing for homeless men.
- **Volunteers of America** – emergency housing for the homeless.
- **YMCA** – emergency housing for homeless males ages 18 and older.
- **YWCA** - emergency housing for homeless females ages 16 and older.
- **Broome County Department of Social Services** – provides comprehensive social services for persons of low-income, and adult and child preventive/protective services, including the PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) program.
- **Tioga County Open Door Mission** – provides outreach that assists individuals and families to obtain food, clothing, furniture, financial assistance, infant items, and shelter for homeless men ages 18 and older.
- **Tioga County Department of Social Services** - provides comprehensive social services for persons of low-income, and adult and child preventive/protective services.
- **Catholic Charities** - provides services to those in need such as food, clothing and emergency assistance.
- **Tioga County Rural Ministry** – provides emergency financial assistance for things such as gas, rent, prescription assistance, and NYSEG shutoffs.
- **The Bridge** - a non-profit organization of churches serving Waverly, Athens and Sayre school districts. Provides crisis vouchers for shelter, utilities, food, and transportation. Also operates a furniture and clothing closet.
- **Safe Harbour (Crime Victims Assistance Center)** - provides free & confidential outreach to youth who are at risk of exploitation.
- **Family Enrichment Network Caring Homes** - provides financial assistance and case management to homeless families and families at risk of homelessness.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment indicates that the following community priorities need to be addressed by our Broome and Tioga Counties Head Start and Early Head Start program:

1. Identify and develop a plan to ensure families have appropriate access to technology and training to participate in meaningful remote/virtual programming that fully supports their child development and family engagement interests and needs.
2. Advance staff members understanding of preparing children and families for socialization and school readiness as the pandemic programming diminishes and we move back to a more complete in person program model.
3. Increase nutrition education and access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods.
4. Promote mental wellness and social wellbeing through the full implementation of curricula including Pyramid, Second Step, Conscious Discipline, and assist parents in supporting their children's mental wellness by providing an array of parenting programs/resources.
5. Develop a plan to advocate for and support families with accessing child care options including: wrap around, non-traditional, and after school care needs.

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Special Education Services Program

INTRODUCTION

Family Enrichment Network initiated its services to preschoolers with disabilities in September of 2002. The program at that time was limited to 12 students. With the consolidation of Broome County services at Cherry Street, our program expanded to serve a potential 24 children and their families. The program then continued to expand to meet identified needs in Broome and Chenango Counties. In addition, counties outside of this catchment area, such as Delaware, Otsego, Madison, and Tioga, have enrolled preschool children in our programs. The Community Assessment process has enabled us to maintain an ongoing dialogue with our county and school district partners to identify changes in service delivery/needs and to establish partnerships to address those needs. Based on these shared planning efforts our Special Class Integrated Setting (SCIS) options have grown to include:

Broome County: Approved for 60 SCIS slots – 3.5-hour duration

Chenango County: Approved for 32 SCIS slots – 3.5-hour duration

In addition, we have seen steady growth in the number of children referred to our agency for Preschool Evaluations and Related Services.

INFORMATION ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Since 1975, children with disabilities from birth through age 21 have been guaranteed a free and appropriate public education. In New York State, the Department of Health is the lead agency for birth through three year old services (called Early Intervention) and the Department of Education is responsible for children ages three through twenty-one. Each school district has established a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) to oversee the referral, evaluation, determination of eligibility, and provision of services for those children ages three through five.

The following table provides a snapshot of services provided to children ages birth-5 in Broome County for 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on referrals, evaluations, and service provisions in 2021.

Table 1: Broome County Early Intervention and Preschool Services

Source: Broome County Health Department Division of Children with Special Needs
A Multi Year Comparison of Broome County’s Early Intervention Programming

Year	Number of Active Cases	Number of Referrals
2016	706	455
2017	748	487
2018	842	532
2019	907	540
2020	815	405
2021	862	537

Eligible Services	2019 Number of Children (Duplicated Services Possible)	2020 Number of Children (Duplicated Services Possible)	2021 Number of Children (Duplicated Services Possible)
Speech Services	292	195	216
Special Instruction	231	131	150
Physical Therapy	257	134	166
Occupational Therapy	176	170	210
Family Training	16	5	3
Social Work	14	2	8
Vision Services	1	2	1
Core Evaluations	475	320	385
Supplemental Evaluations	146	98	141

Clinical Services – OT/PT/ST/Evaluations– July 2021- January 2022

Description: In order to address the global needs of identified preschool students with disabilities, the Family Enrichment Network must provide quality related therapy services to referred children in an effort to reduce the severity of needs and services upon entry into school settings. Children will benefit from increased access to qualified therapists.

Table 2: Services provided to children enrolled in the Special Class Integrated Setting (SCIS)

Services Provided by County in which the Program is located in	Year to Date (July 2021- January 2022) Total Hours
Broome	
Broome Occupational Therapy	317.75
Broome Speech/language	411.75
Broome Physical Therapy	123.83
Chenango	
Chenango Speech/language	75.16
Chenango Physical Therapy	55.42
Chenango Occupational Therapy	41.50

Table 3: Community Related Service Therapy in hours - Children not in a SCIS class.

Broome County	Year to Date (July 2021- January 2022) Total Hours
Broome Speech/language	220.00
Broome Physical Therapy	12.00
Broome Occupational Therapy	79.75

Table 4: Evaluation Components - number completed year to date (July 2021- January 2022)

ED Broome 7.00		PT Chenango 16.00
FBA Broome 1.00		OT Chenango 16.00
OT Broome 53.00		Psych Chenango 39.00
Psych Broome 88.00	PT Broome 29.00	Social History Chenango 39.00
Speech Broome 103.00		Speech Chenango 1.00

BROOME GENERAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Family Enrichment Network’s Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) program helps children with special needs address their learning deficits and build skills for future success in kindergarten and beyond. We support our children in reaching the individual goals/objectives on their Individual Education Programs (IEPs) by making the necessary accommodations in materials and activities to help them with their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. Our staff provides specially designed individual instruction, modeling, and encouragement to children while they participate in a quality inclusive preschool environment.

In Broome County, we currently offer two models. The first, in collaboration with the

Family Enrichment Network's Head Start program, is housed at Cherry Street and Fayette Street. We work with staff in two classrooms, each classroom offering two half-day sessions (morning and afternoon, 3.5 hours each). Each session serves six children with special needs integrated with ten Head Start children. Special education teachers work with the Head Start staff to create weekly lesson plans and prepare the classroom environment so that every child receives quality programming within the least restrictive environment possible. Classroom teams also work closely with the children's therapists to promote language and motor growth across all settings. In many instances, children receive related services within the classroom to reduce the number of transitions and to increase generalization of skills.

The second model of collaborative programming in Broome County is our SCIS/Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) classrooms at Horace Mann Elementary (Binghamton CSD) and at WA Olmstead Elementary (Harpursville CSD). These sites offer integration within district funded Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs. They operate using a 16:2:1 ratio with ten typically developing UPK students, six preschool students with special needs, two teachers (one general education certified, one special education certified) and one classroom teaching assistant. (The Family Enrichment Network is responsible for hiring the special education staff at Harpursville and both the special education and the certified general education teachers for Binghamton. While the districts provide assistance in referral of UPK students, FEN is responsible for completion of enrollment and intake for these students at Binghamton. The districts provide curricular oversight and training opportunities for both the general education and special education staff.

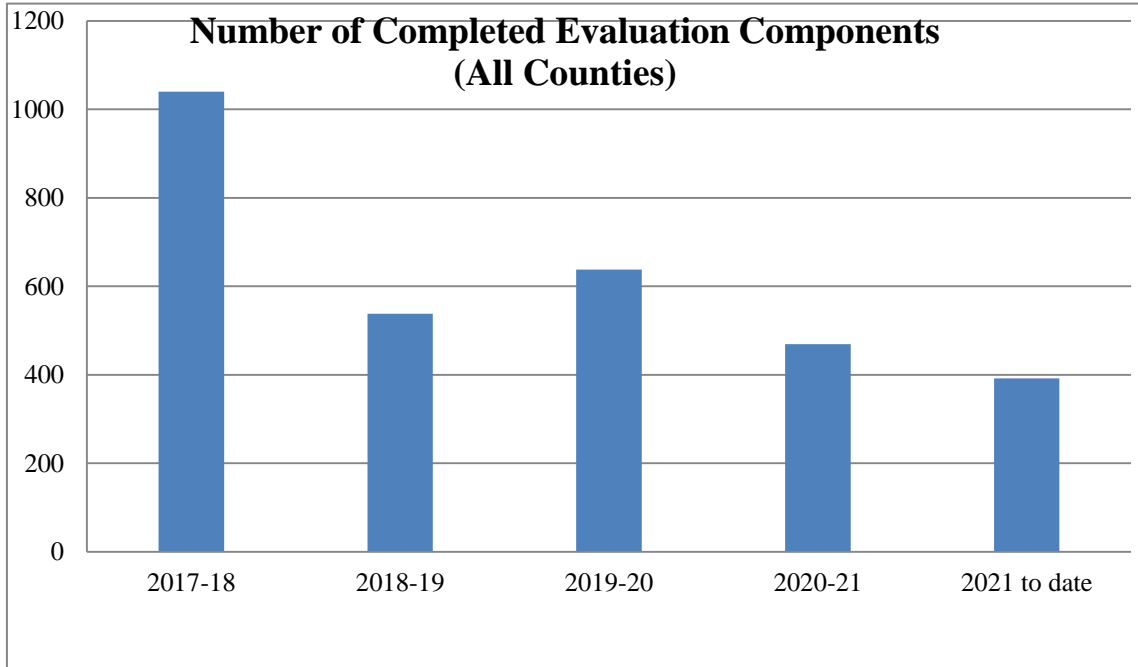
In 2014, the Binghamton CSD received additional SED funding to expand some of their UPK programs from half-day to full day. Horace Mann was one of those sites to offer full day

UPK to families. The Harpursville CSD offers full day UPK as well. Both districts have been a strong partner sharing resources and including FEN staff in trainings and local conferences.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY EVALUATIONS

When a child is referred for an evaluation, the approved agency will complete several mandated components – psychological evaluation, social history, and a speech, educational, occupational therapy, and/or physical therapy evaluation, depending on the child’s presenting needs. As of January 31, 2021, we have completed 331 evaluation components at our Broome evaluation site and 138 evaluation components at our Chenango evaluation site. This year the evaluation team in Broome County continues to receive referrals from Morris County, Tioga County school districts and from Chenango County school districts. Additional referrals have also come from Delaware, Madison and Otsego Counties. It should also be noted, that due to diminished availability of OT, ST and Psychological providers at our Norwich site during the fall of 2021, some evaluations that would have been done at our Norwich site came to our Broome County site.

We continue to be one of five approved agencies/school districts that conduct preschool evaluations within Broome County. Our agency offers 15 or more psychological evaluation slots per week. Some of our psychological evaluations in Broome County are completed by a Licensed School Psychologist which enables the County to receive Medicaid funding for evaluations completed by our team. Additionally in Broome County our evaluation team offers speech / language therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy evaluations per week. Some of our physical therapy slots are provided by an independent contractor service based on our need.



Progress on Prior Need to Improve the Timeliness of Evaluations:

An important aspect of our evaluation team is to ensure that evaluation reports are completed in a timely manner so that districts can meet SED time requirements and families have information prior to their child’s CPSE meeting. This has become increasingly challenging as the number of referrals increase, but the number of evaluators remains essentially the same or fewer. The following tables represent the timeliness of evaluations completion over a four-year period. The first table shows the time from conducting the evaluation to receiving the report from the evaluator in the SES office. The second table captures the time from the date SES receives a district referral for evaluation to the date the evaluations are sent out to the district. We continue to closely monitor these time frames in order to make recommendations to strengthen our internal process.

**Table 5: Broome Evaluation Timeframe for 2021 – 22 (through January. 31, 2022)
Timeline From Conducting The Evaluation To Receiving The Report In The SES Office.**

Evaluations Done	Number of Evaluations	0-7 days	8-14 days	15-21 days	22-30 days	Over 30 days
Psychological	78	18	21	15	13	11
Speech Therapy	78	47	14	8	6	3
Occupational	38	15	9	4	4	6
Physical Therapy	18	1	1	1	3	10
Educational	6	4	1	1	0	0
Total	218	85	48	29	26	30
Percent		39%	22%	13%	12%	14%

**Table 6: Broome Evaluation Timeframe for 2020-21 (through January 31, 2021)
Timeline from conducting the evaluation to receiving the report in the SES office.**

Evaluations Done	Number of Evaluations	0-7 days	8-14 days	15-21 days	22-30 days	Over 30 days
Psychological	118	85	14	12	3	4
Speech Therapy	93	89	4	0	0	0
Occupational	42	22	14	2	3	1
Physical Therapy	26	14	10	2	0	0
Educational	10	6	2	2	0	0
Total	289	216	44	18	6	5
Percent		75%	15%	6%	2%	< 2%

**Table 7: Broome Evaluation Timeframe for 2017-18 (through Jan. 1, 2018) – Pre COVID
Timeline from conducting the evaluation to receiving the report in the SES office.**

Evaluations Done	Number of Evaluations	0-7 days	8-14 days	15-21 days	22-30 days	Over 30 days
Psychological	110	78	24	5	2	1
Speech Therapy	97	81	14	2	0	0
Occupational	75	48	13	7	5	2
Physical Therapy	42	27	15	0	0	0
Educational	25	16	8	1	0	0
Total	349	250	74	15	7	3
Percent		72%	21%	4%	2%	<1%

Table 8: Timeline- From date referral received from the school district to completed evaluations sent back to the district July 1 through January 31 of each year.

2021-22	0-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	120+
Children Evaluated	12	31	22	18	8
Percent	13%	34%	24%	20%	1%

2019-20	0-30	31-60	61-90	90-120	120+
Children Evaluated	2	62	36	13	8
Percent	2%	51%	30%	11%	6%

2018 - 19	0-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	120+
Children Evaluated	9	86	81	5	1
Percent	5%	47%	45%	3%	<1%

2017-18	0-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	120+
Children Evaluated	21	90	76	5	1
Percent	11%	47%	39%	3%	<1%

Discussion:

SES continues to monitor the number of evaluation slots per month in order to meet the needs of districts requesting evaluations. However, the limited number of psychological and pediatric therapy professionals who can provide these evaluations limits the number of evaluations possible and does prolong the process. The number of evaluations a child is recommended to receive, can also impact the timeliness of evaluations as well. This year there has been a high percentage rate of cancellations and “no show” appointments (possibly due to COVID) resulting in children being rescheduled and extending the timeline.

Many of the evaluations taking more than 60 days to complete are due to parents’ failure to respond to phone calls, not showing up for evaluations, cancellations, child absences, quarantines, or parent/teacher failure to return paperwork in a timely manner necessary for

completion of evaluations. (i.e.: for psychological evaluations a social history packet and a social emotional questionnaire; for OT evaluations a sensory profile; for educational evaluations cognitive and social-emotional questionnaires). To address these issues, we continue to employ the use of our social worker, evaluation coordinator, and Head Start Family Advocates to deliver necessary paperwork and follow up with parents on missing items. Additionally, by mid-November, therapists have increased their caseloads which may mean there are fewer evaluations time slots available. Limited resources for clerical support may also cause delays in the process. The CPSE chairperson's response to our evaluation process indicate that we provide quality, informative and thorough evaluation reports, however, concerns still exist in regards to timeliness. As a result, we moved the evaluation scheduling and follow up process to an on-line system. The staff has worked diligently with the IT department to create a smooth transition and capture of all information. This will be a tremendous time saver and will allow therapists to free up additional slots for therapy services.

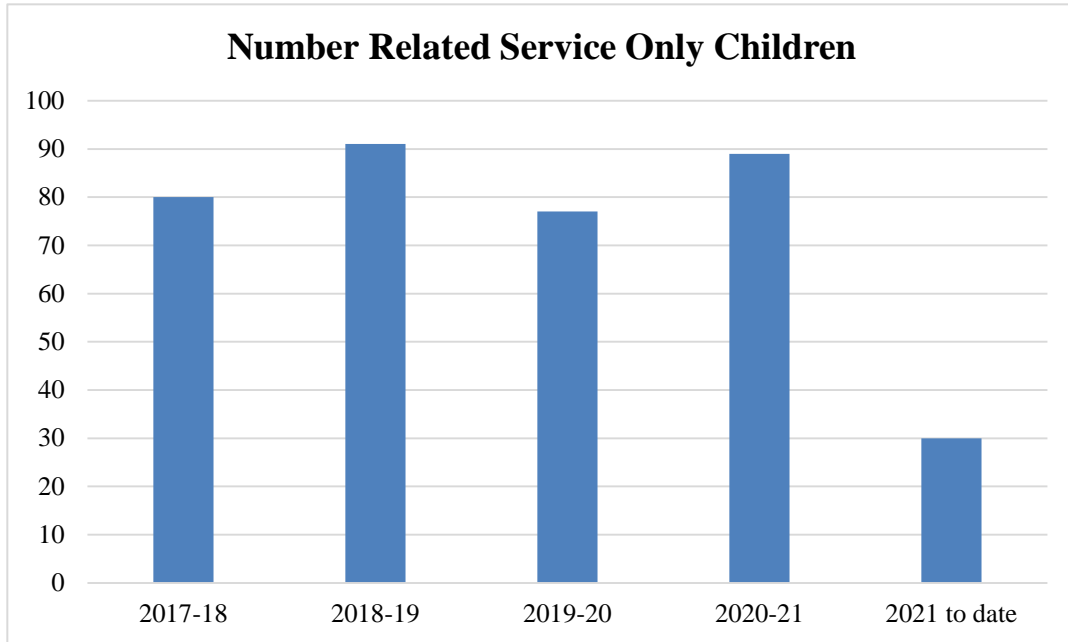
Itinerant Related Services Provided by Family Enrichment Network

In Broome County we continue to provide speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy as related services to children in their natural environments including Head Start and UPK, We have a strong Broome related services team which includes:

- Four (4) full time Speech/Language Pathologists
 - We are currently advertising for additional Speech Language Pathologists
 - We also use the services of the Binghamton University doctoral candidates in the Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) program
 - We conduct speech therapy via teletherapy with Norwich
- Three (3) full time Occupational Therapists (one of the full time OT's also covers

the Norwich site).

- Two (2) part time Physical Therapists (who are contracted employees) and one (1) full time Physical Therapy Assistant.



Note: Chart indicates total of different children receiving a related service through January 31 of each year and who are not in a SCIS class.

Discussion:

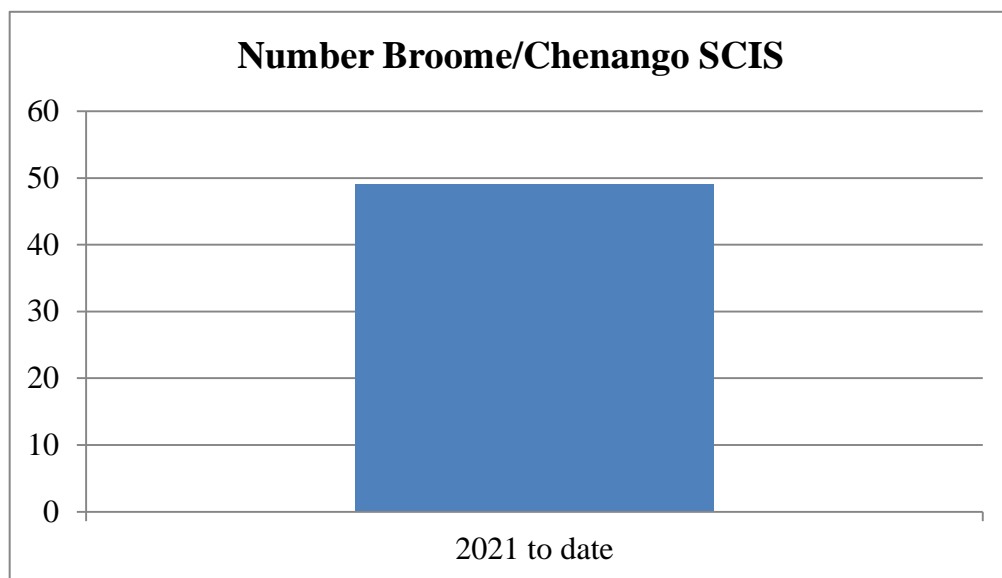
A continued concern held by all Broome County participants is the decreased capacity to provide related services in Broome County. Many therapists have left Early Intervention and CPSE due to changes in how providers will be reimbursed and because reimbursement rates have remained relatively low in Broome County and NYS compared to other NYS counties and other states. As a result, there are growing numbers of children in EI and CPSE that are waiting for services. This has created a situation in which more children enter the CPSE earlier and with greater needs. Unfortunately, related service numbers are not stable. Historically, there is a spike in need from January – June and then a dramatic decrease over the summer and fall, making it

difficult for an agency to maintain that higher level of staffing. It should be noted that Broome County only provides new contracts to agency providers and no longer to private providers. Also, numerous private providers have moved out of the area and/or retired.

The CPSE chairperson’s response to meeting therapy needs included increased funding to pay and retain therapists, and an overall need for more related service providers in Broome County to meet the children’s needs. Responses in regard to timeliness of progress reports and annual review reports ranged from “no concerns, all were done well and in a timely manner”, “inconsistent depending on the provider, we get information sometimes just 1 day before the meeting” to “more evaluation slots are needed to meet timelines”. The Broome County CPSE Chairpersons expressed that we expand to meet children’s needs.

Special Class Integrated Setting (SCIS)

The Special Class Integrated Setting has expanded since its initial opening in 2002. We have a potential of 60 openings in Broome County. As of February 2022 49/60, program openings have been filled. We have intentionally kept some class sizes small due to COVID concerns and regulations. At our Chenango site we have 32/32 program openings filled.



Discussion:

Community Assessment Committee members continue to be concerned about the placement options for children referred later in the school year. When SCIS classes are fully enrolled for the school year, SES is able to enroll a limited number of children beyond our ratio by applying for a variance. For those children who are referred to a program after April, more than likely they will begin their enrollment during the summer. The Community Assessment Team also expressed concern regarding the increase in children with severe behavioral needs. More children are being classified with severe management needs. Often these children are very bright and are able to meet preschool benchmarks, but have great difficulties with peer and adult interactions, following routines and rules, and moving through transitions. Some have been expelled from their day care or preschool programs. There was much discussion by our Broome county partners (County, districts) to develop a special education program to meet the needs of these children.

CHENANGO COUNTY'S CPSE SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS FOR 2021-22**Multidisciplinary Evaluations**

We have an OT, PT and a physiological evaluation team set up at our Chenango Broad Street site to provide evaluations to determine eligibility for initial referral as well as supplemental evaluations. Our speech evaluations are done at our Cherry Street site in Johnson City. At this time Family Enrichment Network is the only agency in Chenango County conducting evaluations.

During this past year many of the evaluations took a long time to complete due to children not showing up for their scheduled appointments; a new date then needed to be

scheduled. Due to the high referral rate, the new appointments were scheduled out two to three months.

Special Class in an Integrated Setting:

In July 2012, integrated classes were expanded to Chenango County in Norwich. Family Enrichment Network collaborated with the DCMO BOCES to provide two morning and two afternoons integrated 8:1:3 classes. The 8:1:3 designation is considered an enhanced model whereby eight children with severe needs receive support from a special education teacher and three classroom aides, eliminating the need to hire individual one-on-one aides. Since the beginning of the program, we have continued to have approved variances to increase the number of students in these classes to nine; we have continued to fill these variances in all sections of our preschool. In September 2018 Family Enrichment Network became a licensed daycare provider for our site here in Norwich. As the DCMO BOCES daycare does not meet the same criteria, our programs split. Our program is now housed at 21 South Broad Street in Norwich.

**Table 9: Chenango County
Integrated Family
Demographics 2021-2022**

Age	
Parent put 4 or nothing	2
20-24	0
25-29	4
30-34	1
35-39	1
40-44	3
45-49	1
50-54	0
55-59	0
60-64	0
Gender	
M	0
F	12
Race	
Native American	0
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	0
Black/African American	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0
White	12
Other	0
Primary Language	
Spanish	0
English	12
Russian	0
French	0
Chinese	0
Other	0

**Table 10: Broome County
Integrated Family
Demographics 2021-2022**

Age	
Parent put 4 or nothing	5
20-24	1
25-29	3
30-34	6
35-39	4
40-44	1
45-49	2
50-54	1
55-59	1
60-64	1
Gender	
M	5
F	20
Race	
Native American	0
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	1
Black/African American	8
Asian/Pacific Islander	2
White	12
Other/Bi-Racial	2
Primary Language	
Spanish	1
English	21
Russian	1
French	0
Chinese	0
Other	2

**Table11: PARENT AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION
BROOME COUNTY 2021/2022**

Question	Total Number Respondents	Responses
I feel comfortable contacting my child’s teacher and/or therapist.	25	22 - Yes 3 - Maybe 0 - No
I receive frequent feedback from my child’s teacher and/or therapist about my child’s progress	25	20 - Yes 4 - Maybe 1 - No
I would be interested in attending parent informational sessions.	25	12 - Yes 7 - Maybe 6 - No
Was your child evaluated by Family Enrichment Network? If so, was the experience a positive one?	25	17 - Yes 3 - Maybe 5 - No
I am satisfied with the overall special education program and services provided by the Family Enrichment Network.	25	23 - Yes 1 - Maybe 1 - No

BROOME INTEGRATED PROGRAM PARENTAL RESPONSES

- ✚ Response to question #1 –Thank you for your service!!!!
- ✚ Response to question#4- Yes. He’s HAPPY every day since starting his new school and he talks about everything. He never did that with his last school!!!!
- ✚ Thank you for all of you that make it possible and take the time out to dedicate your careers to giving my child a chance to learn and grow like every other child!!!
- ✚ Response to question#3- Just parent teacher conference and IEP meetings.
- ✚ Response to question #1- I have great communication with my son’s teacher and therapists.
- ✚ Response to question#2- I do receive feedback on what my son needs to work on and have learning etc...
- ✚ Response to question#3- Ways to help teach my child when his attention span is short. Ways for parents to cope when kids do well and then regress backwards.
- ✚ Response to question#5- I wish parents could be more involved at the school to be able to show my son my overall support for him.
- ✚ I understand COVID has caused a lot of restrictions for families to be involved at the school but I wish there was a way to be able to attend lunch with my son or to be able to go on school trips. I wish there was a way to be more involved. I know due to COVID that’s not possible. When will the kids ever have picture day again? When will there be trips? When will there be engagements that parents and families can participate again?

- ✚ Response to question#1- Quick to respond to my questions-very helpful!
- ✚ Response to question#2- I love the progress papers we are given with the Stickers!!
- ✚ My son is doing well with his speech.
- ✚ I'm happy my son is doing well in school with speech and his other classes.
- ✚ Ryan and the staff in B-39 have been great for Albie. He also really enjoys his time with Megan, Kelly, and Katie.
- ✚ Everyone has been awesome keeping me up to date on Albie!
- ✚ Response to question#3- Potty training children with autism. I'm available any time after 4pm.
- ✚ Response to question #5- YES/Albie loves Ryan and his therapists!! We have only nice things to say!
- ✚ We are very pleased with the staff at FEN in regards to how they interact with Albie!
- ✚ Our overall experience with FEN has been extremely positive! His therapists are always communicating with me. I am very pleased!!
- ✚ She is such an amazing teacher!
- ✚ Salem has gotten much better!
- ✚ Not much contact with therapists. I hear from the teacher. Halve days are kind of silly for a working parent!!!
- ✚ I usually get information in the mail.
- ✚ I would like to attend a parent teacher conference! Not frequent enough feedback!
- ✚ She was evaluated at Binghamton University.
- ✚ I receive a daily log from the classroom and quarterly reports.
- ✚ This program may not have been a perfect fit for my little one, but it introduced and made him more comfortable around other kids!

**Table 12: PARENT AND SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY SUMMARY
AND DISCUSSION
CHENANGO COUNTY 2021/2022**

Question	Total Number Respondents	Responses
I feel comfortable contacting my child's teacher and/or therapist.	12	11 - Yes 1 - Maybe 0 - No
I receive frequent feedback from my child's teacher and/or therapist about my child's progress	12	7 - Yes 1 - Maybe 4 - No
I would be interested in attending parent informational sessions.	12	6 - Yes 4 - Maybe 2 - No
Was your child evaluated by Family Enrichment Network? If so, was the experience a positive one?	12	11 - Yes 0 - Maybe 1 - No
I am satisfied with the overall special education program and services provided by the Family Enrichment Network.	12	8 - Yes 3 - Maybe 1 - No

CHENANGO COUNTY INTEGRATED PROGRAM PARENTAL RESPONSES

- ✚ Response for question # 3- Progress—what they are doing to help with his progress.
- ✚ Response for question #5- Frequent short staff- causing closure frequently!!
- ✚ Response for question #2- Need more information from therapists!!
- ✚ Response for question #5- If they had school when scheduled-I get being under staffed but I did app. Last year for the same reason!! New phone number 607-373-5636
- ✚ Response for question #2- Communications on a daily how the kids are doing would be better than not knowing how the kids have behaved in school all day.
- ✚ Response for question #3- How my kid acts daily in class and how he's doing. Could just send home a note how the day went.
- ✚ Response for question #5- Really don't know how my child's doing besides a 3 month progress report that's about 6 months old news!
- ✚ They always let us know how our son's day was upon picking up!
- ✚ Any parental meetings held, we would be willing to attend, anytime of the day.
- ✚ Response for question #2- I only get progress reports unless I reach out!
- ✚ I feel extremely comfortable reaching out to my child's aide. I also feel comfortable contacting Ms. Katherine. Do not know the therapists as well.
- ✚ I know how my child is doing on an almost daily basis. Thanks to Miss Abbey.
- ✚ I would like to know more about daycare options. Would love to learn techniques from the teachers of ways to get a child to comply.
- ✚ I didn't have a positive experience with my evaluation. I was not expecting or prepared to hear the autism word. I cried like a baby actually!!
- ✚ FEN has been more like family! My child has progressed in a lot of areas and I believe that is thanks to FEN!!!
- ✚ It stinks that you've had to close or cancel sessions so often lately, due to lack of staff. And although it does cause us stress in regards to childcare and work, etc... The most important point is that it's very difficult for my child who thrives on routine and loves school. We are lucky that our sitter is a grandparent, but not sure how much attention my child gets there. So, when there's no school and I'm out of the house for ten hours a day for work, I feel super guilty and terrible overall. I realize there's not much else you can do though!

RESOURCES TO ENHANCE THE OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

The reader is directed to Section 6 of the Head Start Community Assessment for an extensive list of the resources available within the community.

2021 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Last Year's Priorities and Current Status for Broome

<i>Issues from 2020</i>	<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Current Status as of 2021</i>
1. Increase SES capacity to provide more related services (therapies) and SEIT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharging children from service when goals are met instead of waiting until annual review meetings have created a few more openings for services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although SEIT is now reimbursed per session, the rate continues to be a challenge. It has been extremely difficult recruiting staff as well.
2. Continue to provide support for children with significant behavioral difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development provided on dealing with difficult children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Class Integrated Setting (SCIS) classes meet to discuss difficult cases and work with our school psychologist.
3. Increase access and implementation of technology for our children in SCIS and related service settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SCIS classes and therapists have technology devices such as computers and mobile devices to access therapy services remotely or to use in class or sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will need some support to embed use of technology into instruction. Some uses of technology observed – for visual schedules, as a verbal output device, assist with participation during circle or story time, record progress monitoring
4. Work toward establishing a FEN Speech/Language Pathologist as an expert in Alternative/Augmentative Communication. Not all staff members are able to conduct AAC evaluations in our region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have SLP's who are participating in on-line classes to support growth in this area. We have started to implement some of the PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therapy staff members are able to conduct AAC evaluations at this time. We are implementing some of the PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
5. We have made a complete revision in our evaluation process. We will continue to monitor the timeliness of evaluations, including team annual review reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to internally monitor our process for quality and timeliness as we move to make the process more digital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last year's annual review reports were sent to districts in advance of all meetings. We continue to look to hire additional staff to meet our evaluation needs.

UNMET NEEDS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES & RELATED SERVICES

Reflections of the Broome/Chenango Community Assessment Team on Current Needs for 2021-22:

- 1. Shortage of Related Service and SEIS Personnel:** Yearly, this is an expressed need. Broome and Chenango reports a shortage of providers for related services and SEIT (throughout the year) instruction when recommendation for services increase. Although we try to group children when appropriate, travel time and competing schedules limit our flexibility to be efficient from a fiscal perspective. The SED reimbursement rate for SEIS does not allow for travel time. We have seen a decline in the number of early childhood teachers and speech language pathologists and school psychologists available for recruitment. We will continue working on this goal and attempting to reinstate SEIT.
- 2. Programs and Supports for Children with Behavioral Challenges:** Committee members continue to see an increase in children who struggle to maintain self-control. Often these children are at great risk of losing their daycare/child care due to the behaviors they present and the lack of provider training in dealing with management issues. This is the sixth year that SES has focused on this population at all of our sites. The classes are fully integrated with typical UPK or Head Start children and children with IEPs who have high behavioral management needs and trauma (ACES). Staff plans age-appropriate behavioral interventions. This year we are providing targeted staff development to teachers and aides in the area of social emotional needs and counseling.
- 3. Evaluation Process:** Districts shared that they are very pleased with the quality of our evaluation and year-end reports. They noted that the SES department is a good communicator and they feel that the agency takes pride in keeping districts informed.

Although evaluations may be delayed that is a common challenge for the other 4410 state approved evaluation teams in the county as well.

- 4. Shortage of Teachers, Therapists and School Psychologists:** There continues to be a shortage of qualified staff: Special Education Teachers, Therapists and School Psychologists in NYS.

IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

This assessment indicates that the following community priorities need to be addressed in 2021-2022 by the Special Education Department's programs, services and their community partners:

Broome/Chenango:

1. Programs and supports for children with behavioral challenges
2. Staff trainings for social-emotional needs in the preschool setting
3. Continue to monitor the evaluation process timeline
4. Shortages of qualified teachers, related service personnel (therapists) and psychologists
5. Lack of funds for counseling to address our student and family's emotional needs
6. Continue to provide all evaluation appointments in one day, due to transportation difficulties of families
7. Counseling for children with mental health needs

Some of the discussed needs will be more difficult to provide than others. For example, we tried to change our evaluation schedule so that all evaluation components are held on the same day to assist parents with transportation challenges. However new challenges were discovered with the children not wanting to participate in multiple evaluations; they would tire

after the first evaluation, thus skewing the results of the next evaluations. Several of the needs are dependent upon our ability to hire qualified staff (therapists, teachers, psychologists) and there is a shortage in this area.

School district chairs expressed appreciation for the quality of services, both for the evaluation process and for integrated programming services. Suggestions have been made to open more preschool classrooms, or to open a full day SCIS section, to meet the needs to the children that are not being serviced. When we are again able to hire qualified staff, this effort will again be pursued.

Community Assessment Process

Agency program directors received a timeline of Community Assessment activities in November to familiarize themselves with the process for creating this year's Community Assessment document. From this point forward each director assembled their committee; these committees were comprised of current parents, staff members, and community representatives. The four program groups were responsible for the collection of current program data. Each program group formed a subcommittee to identify and prioritize the issues and problems evidenced by the data collected.

Information for this report was obtained from both external and internal sources. External data was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau, New York State Department of Education, New York State Department of Labor, New York State Department of Health, Broome County Department of Social Services, Regional Economic Development Council of the Southern Tier, United Way, Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga, community schools, child care providers, periodicals, and local community agencies. Internal information was compiled using NACCRRRA Ware database, the Child Care Facility Search database, the Head Start family profile, Head Start parent questionnaire, program attendance reports, CCR&R Provider Surveys and the Special Education Services Parent Survey. The NACCRRRA Ware Computer database tracks providers supplying child care in Broome and Tioga Counties and parents requesting child care referrals from Family Enrichment Network's Child Care Resource and Referral department.

The Head Start and Early Head Start Family Profile is an assessment tool that details the characteristics, needs, and goals of Head Start/ Early Head Start families enrolled in the program. The committee adhered to a strict timeline to complete this report (Table XII). Each program committee met in January for an orientation to the CA process and work group assignments. Work groups collected information, met as needed and submitted data to Family Enrichment

Network by the February deadline. The program work groups met to identify and prioritize issues and problems. The CA draft was distributed to the full committee mid-March for revision/approval of the report. Policy Council reviewed and approved the Head Start summary report on March 02, 2022. The Governing Board approved the entire summary report on March 23, 2022.

Table 1. Community Assessment Timeline

TASK	November	December	January	February	March
Director's Planning	X	X			
CA Orientation Meeting			2/5		
Data Collection			X	X	
Data Analysis/Writing Document			X	X	
Work Groups Identify Needs				2/6-2/28	
CA Committees review document					3/2
Executive Director's Review					3/9
Make Changes to Document					X
CA reviewed by Policy Council					3/2
Make Changes to Document					X
CA reviewed by Governing Board					3/23

Summary of Observations and Recommendations

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each department has identified and summarized needs in the community and in their department programming. For easy reference, please find below a list of all items identified within the Community Assessment. Further discussion of items can be found in each department section.

CCR&R

1. Need to expand services for infant and toddler care throughout the service area.
2. Need to advocate for increased funding to support minimum wage increases.
3. Need to advocate for increased funding to meet the true cost of child care, through increased market rates and supportive funding for programs.
4. Need to advocate for increased funding to support child care programs as the business model does not work. Parent tuition payments alone do not cover the costs of operating a child care program, but parents cannot afford to pay more.
5. Need to expand child care programs in all areas of Broome, Chenango, and Tioga Counties.
6. Need to expand services for children with challenging behaviors through mental health supportive services, including Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation projects.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Mental Health / Addiction Services

1. Increased access to mental health counseling and support services for the uninsured and underinsured.
2. Increase mental health and wellness services for young children.

3. Increase access to no cost mental health medications. Increase community wide education about mental health resources.

2. Housing

1. Increase safe, affordable, permanent, low-income housing options.
2. Increase code inspections and enforcement to help reduce substandard housing.
3. Increase appropriate well maintained emergency hotels that are up to code and located in areas with services, such as bus stops and supermarkets.
4. Increase transitional housing and expand housing options for vulnerable populations.
5. Increase the number of housing shelters that operates on a Housing First Model for mentally ill and/or chemically dependent individuals who are acting out or off their medications.
6. Increase housing for sex offenders

3. Food Insecurity

1. Increase the number of supermarkets in Binghamton
2. Offer more Mobile Food Pantries in Western Broome.
3. Increase evening hours at food pantries.
4. Increase WIC Clinic hours and locations.
5. Reduce social stigma and increase participation in SNAP.
6. Provide allergy free foods at Food Pantries.
7. Increase community awareness on the importance of funding for SNAP.

4. Affordable Quality Child Care

1. Child care for younger children
2. Increase options for school aged care and support.

5. Services for Teens /Young Adults

1. Increase services for teens and those 18-21 years old.
2. Increase Pregnancy and Dating Violence Prevention Programs.
3. Increase Support Groups for children and adolescents dealing with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

6. Formerly Incarcerated Individuals.

1. Take the question regarding former criminal convictions off employment forms. Improve Access to Cash Assistance.
2. Increase Paid Transitional Employment.
3. Improve Employer Education.

7. Transportation

1. Restore the Tioga County bus service that was eliminated November 30, 2014
2. Restore and Improve the Broome County bus service.
3. Restore funding for the Wheels for Work Program.

8. Parenting Classes

1. Increase options for parenting classes.
2. Increase Supervised Visitation Sites.
3. Provide Parent Education classes for parents of special needs children.
4. Reinstate the Fatherhood program focusing on At-Risk Parents and Children.
5. Provide a Perpetrator's Domestic Violence program.
6. Anger Management classes.

9. Rural Communities

1. Increase support and services to the rural areas of Broome and Tioga Counties.

10. Financial Supports for Low Income Households

1. Provide vouchers for personal care and hygiene items.
2. Increase the number of pantries providing assistance with personal care and hygiene items.
3. Increase accessibility to laundry facilities.
4. Diapers are expensive.
5. Improve job opportunities that pay a living wage and for many front-line essential workers to see an increase in their pay.
6. Increased assistance with medical and dental costs.

11. Moving Assistance

1. This problem continues to be an issue in our community as there is never any funding to address the stressors around moving for low-income families.

HOUSING

1. Lack of safe and affordable housing in Broome and surrounding counties.
2. Rental costs have dramatically increased due to the pandemic. The increased cost of housing paired with a housing shortage is putting tenants at risk of homelessness.
3. Families are being displaced due to buildings being condemned and building safety issues.
4. There is an increased strain on the local housing market directly related to student housing. Landlords are converting family housing over to student housing leaving the housing stock depleted.

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

1. Identify and develop a plan to ensure families have appropriate access to technology and training to participate in meaningful remote/virtual programming that fully supports their child development and family engagement interests and needs.
2. Advance staff members understanding of preparing children and families for socialization and school readiness as the pandemic programming diminishes and we move back to a more complete in person program model.
3. Increase nutrition education and access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods.
4. Promote mental wellness and social wellbeing through the full implementation of curricula including Pyramid, Second Step, Conscious Discipline, and assist parents in supporting their children's mental wellness by providing an array of parenting programs/resources.
5. Develop a plan to advocate for and support families with accessing child care options including: wrap around, non-traditional, and after school care needs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Programs and supports for children with behavioral challenges
2. Staff trainings for social-emotional needs in the preschool setting
3. Continue to monitor the evaluation process timeline
4. Shortages of qualified teachers, related service personnel (therapists) and psychologists
5. Lack of funds for counseling to address our student and family's emotional needs
6. Continue to provide all evaluation appointments in one day, due to transportation difficulties of families
7. Counseling for children with mental health needs