COMMUNITY CHILD CARE SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Service Area/ County: Niagara

The purpose of the Child Care Community Needs Assessment is to create a snapshot of child care demand/supply in the service area/county. Part of this assessment was achieved through utilization surveys of registered or licensed providers/programs rates and referral follow-up data.

The needs assessment will be used to identify the types of child care that is needed and/or the locations within the service area that are in most need of care. In addition, this assessment will be useful for the setting of target numbers for subsequent CCR&R contracts.

Outline of Assessment

Part I   What is the supply of regulated child care? What is the estimated utilization of this regulated care? What are the other forms of care that are available?

Part II   Based on Population statistics, what is the potential demand of child care?

Part III   What does client follow-up information reveal?

Part IV   Conclusion

PART I - SUPPLY OF CHILD CARE

Regulated Child Care

The following captures the number of regulated child care programs/providers and slots for each age group **(as reported in the Child Care Facilities System) and the approximate utilization rate. This rate was achieved by a random survey of programs and providers as the number of slots filled for each age group.**

Survey Area: Niagara County   *Date: 06/30/2021*

A) Center Based Programs (operating full time/full day)

Number of Licensed Centers running full time/full day: 23	Number of Potential Slots *(as reported in CCFS)*	# of Potential slots Available	Utilization Rate *(as determined by random sample*)*
Infant Slots	278	34	89
Toddler Slots	409	28	94
Preschool Slots	744	45	94
School Age Slots	440	56	88
TOTAL SLOTS	1871	163	91

*Number of Licensed Day Care Providers surveyed: 21

B) Other types of care available for preschool children.

Type of Program	# of Programs	Number of Slots	Number of Slots Offering "Wrap around" arrangements
Head Start Pre-K	4	242	0
Early Head Start	4	72	0
NYSED UPK (community based)	8	494	380
NYSED UPK (District run)	4	162 PT/689 FT	0

C) Family Child Care

Number of Registered Family Child Care Homes: 30	Number of Potential Slots *(as reported in CCFS)*	Utilization Rate *(as determined by random sample*)*
Ages 0-2 only total slots	60	87
Ages 2-12 total slots	180	80
School-Age only total slots	60	85

*Number of Registered Family Child Care Providers surveyed: 30

D) Group Family Child Care

Number of Licensed Group Family Child Care Homes: 18	Number of Potential Slots *(as reported in CCFS)*	Utilization Rate *(as determined by random sample*)*
Ages 0-2 only total Slots	72	98
Ages 2-12 only total slots	214	90
School-Age only total slots	58	80

*Number of Licensed Group Family Child Care Providers surveyed: 16

E) School- Age Child Care

Number of Registered School Age Programs: 31 (excludes middle school only programs)	Number of potential slots *(as reported in CCFS)*	Utilization Rate *(as determined by random sample*)*
TOTAL SLOTS K-6 grade	1482	98
TOTAL SLOTS (Holiday care)	135	88

*Number of Registered School Age Programs surveyed: 29

F) Other types of <u>non-regulated</u> care available.

Type of Program	# of Programs	TOTAL SLOTS
Nursery (running less than 3 hours per child)	2	unknown
Drop-In School-age Programs	4	unknown
Legally Exempt Family Child Care	39	0

PART II – POTENTIAL DEMAND OF CHILD CARE

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHILDREN IN **Niagara County**
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 and NYSED Data 2020 and Niagara County birth rates 2020

Age of Children	Number of Children
Under 2	4452
2 to 5	6572
Children enrolled in NYSED UPK	403 (1/2 day)/ 879 (FT)
Children enrolled in Head Start	310
Children enrolled in kindergarten (full day)	1474
Children enrolled in elementary school (grades 1-3))	5553
Children enrolled in elementary school (grades 4-6)	5792

METHODOLOGY FOR CALCULATING THE POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE
One methodology for calculating the potential number of children who are likely to need childcare is based upon the number of parents who are in the labor force. Per U.S. Census Profile 2020, **63% of children under 2 years old, 70% of children under 6 and 77% of children over 6 years old have all parents in the labor force in Niagara County.**

Simple multiplication can produce a potential demand for each age group (see formulas below).

Total # of children age 0-2 **4452** x 63% = 2804 potential demand for infant/toddler care.

Total # of children age 2-5 not enrolled in a full time Pre-K program **5693** x 70% = 3985 potential demand for full time care.

Total# of children age 2-5 enrolled in a full time Pre-K program 879 x 70% = 615 potential demand for b/a, holiday and vacation care

AND

Total # of children grades K-6 12,819 x 77%= 9870 potential demand for b/a, holiday and vacation care

PART III - RESULTS OF FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

Follow- up information from 01/01/2020-12/31/2020

Number of children referred: **254**
Number of families subsidy eligible: 83
Number of families non-subsidy eligible: 68

Follow-up information obtained for 97 families

As reported in follow-up, the total number of families who did not find care: 52
> Report the reasons why care was not located:

>> Cost of childcare too high: 0

>> No openings: 4

>> Location of care: 0

>> No transportation: 2

>> Dissatisfied with the quality: 1

>> Type of care desired was not available: 0

>> Scheduling difficulty, hours needed not provided: 0

>> Spoken language of provider not same as parent: 0

>> Have not completed search for care: 20

>> Made different choices to accommodate family needs: 8

>> Special Needs not accommodated: 1

>> Other: 16

> **Referrals per child requesting evening care: 47**

> **Referrals per child requesting weekend care: 54**

> **Referrals per child requesting overnight care: 11**

> **Referrals per child with special needs: 41**

CONCLUSION:

Data indicates the utilization rate for all modalities of child care is at 94% except for Infant Slots is 89% and Day Care Center's school-age child care slots is 88%. Although the number of Infant slots potentially available in center-based programs has decreased by 43 slots in the last year, the number of school-age slots potentially available in center-based programs has risen by 45 slots in the last year. School-age slots may not be utilized due to the cost and limitation of transportation to and from schools. Only the Niagara Falls school district provides transportation to any registered or licensed facility within the district. The remaining districts in the county limit transportation within school-zones.

Data indicates that 77% of children enrolled in grades K-6th (5-12 years old) have both parents in the workforce, pushing the demand for before and/or after school, vacation and holiday care up to 12,800 children. There are presently 4 programs that provide vacation and holiday care servicing only three communities (Lockport, North Tonawanda and Wheatfield). Family day care and group family day care programs have a potential for accommodating up to another 118 children. Day care center programs have 440 slots, bringing the total to 558 slots. The number of school-age children who may require child care indicates a great need for low cost school-age child care programs that are easily accessible and offer care during times when school is not in session.

There are less than 500 potential slots available for children under 18 months old which is less than 25% of the potential demand. Group family day care and family day care programs can accommodate additional children under the 2 years of age if there are additional approved caregivers present at the program. It is difficult for these providers to secure these additional caregivers without passing the cost on to the parents. The cost of infant and early toddler care often discourages full time employment for at least one of the parents. Of the families seeking referrals 58% are single parents and 25% of those parents were seeking care for children under 2 years of age.

Referral statistics indicate that 44% of parents are requested evening care and 44% are requested weekend care. Presently 28% of home-based programs offer evening care and 28% offer weekend care. In addition, there are no providers in North Tonawanda or rural areas of the county that offer evening or weekend care. There are no center-based or school-age child care programs that offer care beyond 6:00 P.M. or on weekends. Per the National Women's Law Center 1:4 mothers living in low-income households work in positions that require flexible schedules, including non-traditional hours and on weekends. The Office of Children and Family Services require regional office approval for providers to offer more than one shift of care, making it difficult for providers to accommodate these parents on an as needed basis. There is a need in all parts of Niagara County for non-traditional care and 55% of referrals requested are from parents living in low-income households.

Referral statistics also indicate that there is a shortage of child care programs that offer transportation. More than 11% of parents or 12% of children are seeking care requesting transportation to and from the child care location. Presently 4% of child care providers offer this service. Licensed and registered programs must meet certain requirements to offer transportation services and insurance rates providing transportation increases the cost of child care. Head Start programs and community based Universal Pre-K programs do not offer transportation, leaving low income parents/guardians to find a way to get their children to these valuable programs.

In addition, some Head Start and community-based Universal Pre-L programs do not offer full day child care. There are 494 Universal Pre-K slots that offer care before and/or after program hour's child care services. Success in school has been linked to structured pre-school programs such as Universal Pre-K and Head Start, there is a need for these programs to consider providing care before and/or after programs hour's child care. Community based Universal Pre-K and Head Start are licensed day care center programs and are free to offer

extended hours. Day care centers without community-based Universal Pre-K programs should be encouraged to incorporate Universal Pre-K into their 744 pre-school slots, thereby increasing the availability of options. In 2019 –2020, 21% of child care referrals provided to parents by the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara included requests for specialized care for children. Home-based providers reportedly do not have the appropriate training, skills and resources to care for these children. Parents report that they are unable to secure permanent placement for their children with special needs, making it difficult to work full time. By offering and encouraging child care providers to attend specialized training in developmentally appropriate health, social and emotional needs of children, the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara will encourage more providers to enroll and continue to care for children with special needs.

In conclusion, Niagara County needs to sustain school-age child care providers and encourage present and new providers to offer non-traditional hours and transportation. In addition, there remains a need for after school care for pre-school children enrolled in Universal Pre-K and Head Start programs as well as an increase in Universal Pre-K programs offered through licensed day care centers. The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara offers technical assistance and training to support child care providers in maintaining their child care programs and assists new child care programs to become licensed and registered. Through communication and advocacy with stakeholders and policy makers, the Child Care Resource & Referral program can encourage additional funding for infant and toddlers care. The Child Care Resource & Referral program through collaboration with agencies who train and support providers who care for children with special needs will work to ensure that more programs have the resources necessary to offer and continue to care for special needs children.