



## **Annual Report**

**July 1, 2024  
to  
June 30, 2025**



**Administered by Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.**

**July 2025**

## United to Promote Quality

Each year nationwide businesses lose \$4.4 billion to employee absenteeism from child care breakdowns. On average, a parent or guardian will miss from 5 to 9 days of work due to a child care crisis. The work schedules for 67% of parents are affected by child care challenges.

Quality child care programs serve young children as well as parents/guardians who might be less effective in their jobs without access to quality child care programs for their children. In turn, employers benefit by the enhanced performance of their workers. Quality child care prepares young children for success in school, job training, employment and community life.

Quality child care is defined as high quality early learning experiences that help a child thrive. It is those events, activities, environments, relationships, and factors that have a positive impact on a young child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. Quality includes age-appropriate curricula, highly skilled staff, warm and responsive interactions, small class sizes and a language rich environment.

Quality child care is vital for young children, families and communities. The "United to Promote Quality" state wide initiative is intended to educate whole communities including families, early learning service providers, businesses, and community leaders about the importance of quality.

Quality awareness is the goal of the "United to Promote Quality" partnership between the Early Care and Learning Council and the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in New York State. Quality awareness efforts within a community will demonstrate how quality promotes "robust brain development" over the first 4 years of life, gives "peace of mind" to parents/guardians so they can be more focused and productive employees, and "lays the foundation" for the future economic development of our communities, state and nation by better preparing children to become successful in school, work and life.

For more information on "United to Promote Quality", please visit <http://www.earlycareandlearning.org/quality-investments-for-children.html> or contact the Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara at 716-285-8572 or 1-800-701-4KID.



United to Promote Quality

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07/1/24 – 6/30/25

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## Message From the Board Chairperson.....

I have been honored to have served as board chairperson for Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. for the last two years. We continue to remain committed to our mission by collaborating, initiating, and conducting programs of self-sufficiency with the goal to empower people to reach their fullest potential. Many residents of Niagara County are in need and rely on our program as they take a first step toward self-sufficiency.

Many committed members of the organization and volunteers work to fulfill our mission. Dedicated employees focus on the matters at hand. Our employees' supportive and professional dedication make the difference to those who need the support. To assist them, our Board of Directors are critical in executive level oversight and knowledge of where the support is most needed. Tying all these elements together is our outstanding CEO.

It takes a full commitment from our federal and state funding sources, including Niagara County, cities, and towns, who provide financial resources to assist our needy families through these challenging times. I thank them for their acknowledgement of our worth by supporting the agency. I offer a special thank you to the many partners in the community and the public who collaborate and support us in providing these many programs and services.

When people ask me what the Niagara Community Action Program does, I tell them it is all about helping others in need. I am proud to say that we do this well and the entire team is committed to doing their very best.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lombardi III", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Lombardi III  
Board Chairperson  
NIAGARA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.

## **Message From The CEO.....**

I am pleased to present to you Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.'s, Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara's annual report for the fiscal year of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

This report highlights the program's accomplishments. It is through the combined and collaborative efforts and resources that our agency has been able to provide services to Niagara County residents.

Our world and our country continue to face enormous challenges with far reaching consequences in years to come. Locally, our economy continues to struggle. The programs and services offered by Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. brought temporary relief and assistance to our County's struggling families.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to federal, state, and local grantors who have provided guidance and financial resources to facilitate the delivery of services to our families. Special thanks goes to the Board of Directors for their time, dedication, and support in setting policy and providing direction; to the employees who dedicate their efforts in providing the delivery of services; and to the many contributors, volunteers and organizations who have unselfishly provided their resources because they believe in the agency's mission. Your continued support over the past 50 years has been greatly appreciated.

If you have a question on the contents of this document or any program administered by Niagara Community Action Program, Inc., please contact me at 716-285-9681 x 103.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Shears,  
CEO  
Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## 2024-2025

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara would like to express our sincere appreciation to our Board of Directors for their continued dedication to the children and families of Niagara County.

John Lombardi III Board Chairperson Public Sector	Andrew Kirsch Vice Chairperson Private Sector
Andrea Haseley Secretary Private Sector	Tim Beach Treasurer Private Sector
Michael Lee Public Sector	Gary Heuck Community Sector (Member-at-Large)
Bridgette Myles Public Sector	Kateri Serpas Community Sector
Kimberlyann Meal Private Sector	Kathryn Hall Community Sector
James Pyra Private Sector (Member-at-Large)	Joyce Scott Community Sector
Dennis Stachera Community Sector	Owen Steed Public Sector (Member-at-Large)
Robert Pecoraro Public Sector	

**NIAGARA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.  
CURRENT EMPLOYEE LISTING BY PROGRAM**

**-ADMINISTRATION-**

SUZANNE SHEARS  
PAUL WILSON  
SUSAN PENNINGTON-BURNS  
GEORGINA CLARKSTON  
BETTY MCARTHY

CEO  
FISCAL DIRECTOR  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
ACCOUNT BOOKKEEPER  
RECEPTIONIST

**-WEATHERIZATION-**

DAVID HARRIS  
DANIEL RHINEHARDT  
JENNIE ROWLAND  
NATHAN MCKENZIE  
RICHARD STEWART  
MILO QUARANTILLO  
JOHN ZALENSKI  
THOMAS WACHT  
NICK ZARILLO

WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM SUPERVISOR  
HEATING SPECIALIST/TECHNICAL ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM MONITOR  
CREW FOREMAN  
FIELD ASSISTANT  
FIELD ASSISTANT  
FIELD ASSISTANT  
FIELD ASSISTANT  
CREW FOREMEN

PAUL CRAWFORD

RURAL PRESERVATION-  
HOUSING COORDINATOR

**-NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS-**

JAQUINDA SMITH  
LINDA HARRINGTON  
CAROL OWENS  
NANCY MILLARD  
RICHARD OLKA  
AMBER LESTER  
MIARANDA BENNINGO

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT & NUTRITION SUPERVISOR  
OUTREACH WORKER- NORTH TONAWANDA  
OUTREACH WORKER-LOCKPORT  
PROGRAM AIDE/PT  
FOOD CENTER WORKER/PT  
SNAP COORDINATOR  
OUTREACH WORKER-19<sup>TH</sup> ST.

**-CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL-**



ANGELA BURNS  
MARY VANCE  
DONNA STRIFFLER  
CHRISSY PARFINSKI  
DEBRA PERRICELLI  
NICHOLE JEFFORDS  
KIMMARIE BROWN  
CYNTHIA DUGAN  
KRISTINA CLARK  
STEPHANIE LONG  
ERIN CRUMP

CHILD CARE SUPERVISOR  
REFERRAL SPECIALIST  
BUSINESS SPECIALIST  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST  
LEGALLY-EXEMPT MONITOR  
PROGRAM ASSISTANT/LEGALLY EXEMPT  
LEAD REGISTRATION MONITOR  
REGISTRATION MONITOR  
REGISTRATION MONITOR  
INFANT TODDLER SPECIALIST  
INFANT TODDLER MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANT

## The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara **Program Overview**

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara is funded by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services and is a member of Child Care Aware of America the National organization of Resource and Referral programs and the New York State Early Care and Learning Council which is the State's network of New York State Child Care Resource and Referral programs.

The program year for the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara ran from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. The operating budget for the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara was \$327,697.

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara provides the following services to parents, providers, businesses and the community:

- Information and Referral Services
- Child Care Training, Education, and Technical Assistance
- Technical Assistance for Infant and Toddler Teachers
- Mental Health Consultation for staff working with infants and toddlers
- Support with Best Practices for child care programs
- Advocacy
- Community Education
- Start-up funds for family and group family day care providers
- Quality initiative grants for family and group family day care providers, day care centers and school-age child care programs
- Assistance with registration and licensing for family/group family child care providers, day care centers and school-age child care programs
- Enrollment for legally – exempt child care providers

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara is committed to ensuring high quality, equitable child care services that are available within our community and encourages everyone's support in joining our effort to promote this public policy initiative in our community.

The Early Care and Learning Council and our Child Care Resource & Referral network are committed to supporting the 2024-2025 public policy agenda that includes policies such as subsidy reform and quality child care which can make a difference in a child's ability to succeed in school and in life. Quality child care can also affect the social, emotional and physical health of children in child care settings.

It is important to note that provider training, technical assistance and on-site intensive technical assistance have a direct correlation to the quality of a child care program. The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara provides both technical assistance and on-site technical assistance to all registered, licensed and legally-exempt child care providers in an effort to improve the quality of child care in Niagara County.



The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara also administers a Quality Initiative project that is available to registered and licensed child care programs in Niagara County. This project provides program assessments, program support, and quality incentive grants to registered and licensed child care providers.

The items included in the grant help to improve the curriculum and/or support the health and development of children enrolled in registered and licensed child care programs.

The program assessment includes an onsite evaluation of each program, assistance in creating an individualized quality improvement plan, site visits as necessary, and a re-evaluation of the program to measure the increase in the program's quality using a standardized quality rating assessment tool.

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara provides start-up grants to prospective child care providers who wish to open a family or group family child care program in their home. The items distributed through the start-up grant assist potential child care providers to bring the home into compliance with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services child day care regulations.

Health and Safety grants are also distributed to in-home child care providers that are exempt from licensing or registration (legally-exempt) to help improve the quality of care provided to the children in those child care environments.

## Community Partners

In addition to the direct services provided to parents, child care providers, businesses and the community, the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara works together with the following community partners in an effort to further increase the quality of child care in Niagara County:

- Western New York Infant/Toddler Resource Network- provides information on the social, emotional and physical health of infants and toddlers to parents, child care providers, businesses and the community.
- New York State Infancy Leadership Circle Project of New York Zero-to-Three- provides resources and creates materials for parents, child care providers, businesses, and the community relating to the social, emotional, and physical development of infants and toddlers.
- Niagara County Department of Social Services- collaborates on all child care issues.
- Niagara University- collaborates on improving the quality of child care for day care centers in Niagara County.
- Family and Children's Services of Niagara- collaborates through their home visiting program for parents.
- Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center- collaborates through a variety of programs designed to help the Niagara community with health coverage, housing, clothing and food assistance, prenatal care and diverse health issues.
- Pinnacle Services- Collaborates through a variety of programs that serve single and teen parents.
- Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.
- Healthy Moms/Healthy Babies
- Western New York Leadership Initiative
- Niagara County Early Intervention
- Niagara County Department of Social Services
- QualitystarsNY



The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of our community partners for their continued dedication in improving the quality of child care in Niagara County and keeping our children safe and healthy.

## Program Statistics

Listed below are the milestones completed by the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara for the 2024 - 2025 program year.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)	Number of Milestones Required	Number of Milestones Completed
Parents referred to registered and licensed child care providers	119	136
Parent accessing internet referrals	21	25
Basic Technical assistance to regulated child care providers	126	131
Intensive technical assistance projects hours to regulated child care providers	25	78
Health Care Consultant Services	30	31
Start-up grants distribute to potential family and group family child care providers	5	4
Health and safety grants distributed to legally-exempt child care providers	-	20
Quality incentive grants distributed to family and group family child care providers	12	12
Quality incentive grants distributed to day care centers and school-age child care programs	12	12
Number of Trainings Held	-	26
Number of child care providers that received training	-	154
Legally-exempt child care providers enrolled	-	91

Program Budget  
Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara  
07/01/2024 to 6/30/2025

<b>Expense Category</b>	<b>Local Share Funds</b>	<b>Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Funds</b>	<b>Total Program Expenses</b>
Personal Services			
Personnel	\$0	\$191,303	\$191,303
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$52,551	\$52,551
Non-Personal Services			
Contractual Consultant	\$0	\$8,721	\$8,721
Staff Travel/Per Diem	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Equipment	\$0	\$8,698	\$8,698
Supplies	\$0	\$,7058	\$7,058
Other Expenses	\$0	\$58,367	\$58,367
Total Program Budget	\$0	\$327,697	\$327,697

## Policy and Advocacy

Today, most young children in New York have no parent at home during the day. Families need affordable, high-quality options. Child care providers need professional development and working conditions that reflect the important work they do each day.

Friends and family, who provide care, need acknowledgement, support, and opportunities for growth.

Children who attend high-quality early childhood programs are healthier and perform better in school, and, as adults, are more likely to own their own home. They're less likely to smoke, abuse alcohol and illegal drugs, engage in risk-taking behavior, and be arrested and incarcerated.

Even parents and their employers reap the advantages of high-quality early childhood programs. Parents who feel confident about their early childhood program are more productive employees.

There are over 14,987 child care businesses across New York State. Child care services are responsible for generating \$4.7 billion in our economy and support the employment of over 750,000 parents. But quality child care can be costly, and universal access is not yet achieved. That's why we advocate across New York State and in Washington, D.C. to ensure that quality, affordable child care is available for all New Yorkers.

[Click here](#) to access the most recent Zero to Three policy agenda and to learn more about issues, find facts and figures on their resource pages, and begin to take action in helping us advocate for quality, affordable child care for all New Yorkers. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

