



## New York State Budget Reduced Child Care Funding

*The New York State budget reduced funding that helps low-income working families afford child care and enacted a small increase to the tax credit available to middle class families for child care expenses.*

The final New York State budget for the current fiscal year cut funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) statewide by \$7 million. The intent of the federal CCDBG is to help families earning up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$48,600 for a family of four) afford child care through subsidies.

Only 17 percent of eligible children in New York State are currently being reached by the child care subsidy program. In Suffolk County, the eligibility level for the child care subsidy program is one of the lowest in the state at 125 percent of poverty – that is **\$30,375 for a family of four**. This is **\$18,225** less than the federal poverty level for a family of four in a county that is ranked as one of the most expensive places to live in the United States! It remains unclear how the New York State cuts will impact Suffolk County's child care program; but the deep cuts to all social service districts raise concern that even fewer families will have access to child care subsidies.

The budget also failed to address the new health and safety requirements for child care programs in New York State. This will make it much harder for the child care industry to comply and will further jeopardize the ability of child care providers to offer affordable, quality care.

The state budget did include a new tax credit that would increase the amount of the current New York State Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit. This change will benefit families earning between \$60,000 and \$150,000 by raising the **total** credit from \$169 to \$376 per household on average.

On the federal level, the current budget includes a \$95 million increase to the CCDBG. This will be distributed among all 50 states. The budget proposed by the Administration for the next fiscal year, which starts October 2017, includes massive cuts to domestic spending. While no specifics have been provided, the proposal would cut the budget for the Health and Human Services Department by 19 percent. This is the federal agency that funds and manages the child care program.

The Child Care Council of Suffolk joins with other New York children's advocates in stating that: "This budget does not reflect the State's commitment to its children"! CCCS will continue to partner with other New York children's advocates "to redouble our efforts to improve services, systems and policies that strengthen families and enable all our children to thrive."

### Champions of Children



The Child Care Council of Suffolk honored Long Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President Luis Vazquez at the 31st Annual Champions of Children Luncheon. Pictured here (l to r): Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn, Best Back Stretch Executive Director Paul Ruchames, CCCS Executive Director Janet Walerstein, Luis Vazquez, CCCS Board of Directors President Michele Lauer-Bader and Board of Directors Member Elizabeth Custodio.



# Council Communications

## Message from the Executive Director

### Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.

60 Calvert Avenue, Commack, NY 11725  
Tel: 631-462-0303

**Janet Walerstein**, *Executive Director*

Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc., is the non-for-profit planning and coordinating agency dedicated to making child care work for all of Suffolk County's diverse communities. Through advocacy, education and resource and referral, the Council takes a leadership role in supporting children, families, providers, employers and the public to ensure that quality child care takes its place as an integral part of society.

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**Janet Walerstein**  
*Executive Director*

As an early childhood educator and child care advocate for parents and quality programs for more than four decades, I must point out that the basic tenets for early care and education have remained constant. Children need an experiential learning environment that encompasses social, emotional as well as cognitive development. Learning happens as a result of this whole child approach, which is a more meaningful long-term interactive experience.

The Child Care Council of Suffolk (CCCS) has offered education and training for child care professionals using many research-based programs (e.g., HighScope)

for more than 30 years in Suffolk County. It is increasingly evident that the most successful child care programs embrace these philosophies; and parents can feel secure that their children are in an environment that best meets their developmental needs in these types of child care programs.

As we enter into the next state and federal fiscal year, however, it is deeply disturbing to witness the proposed cuts to child care and what that means for parents, children and programs. We know that the critical years of brain development happen during early childhood, and skilled early educators are necessary to create quality programs. This takes funds to support staff and to comply with licensing regulations. Parents are challenged with increasing child care costs already; it rapidly is becoming cost prohibitive for child care programs to pay teachers what they need to remain in this severely underpaid profession.

The key issue in this equation, however, is what is happening to children. Are they being compromised in this scenario? Are we giving children – our future workforce – the best possible experiences and foundations upon which to build their own and our country's future?

Here in Suffolk County, parents are being squeezed out of child care programs because the subsidies are being cut and eligibility levels are so low – \$30,375 for a family of four. This figure is completely unsustainable for such a high cost area as Long Island, which was cited as one of the most expensive places to live in the entire country. Some parents have reduced their hours, and some do not take pay raises in order to be eligible to qualify for some help with their child care costs. (N.B.: All eligible parents who qualify for a subsidy still pay a portion of their child care costs despite the common misconception that they do not.)

These proposed cuts are a tragedy, not only for children, not only for the parents, not only for the child care industry, but also for the economic impact on our area, and ultimately, for the future of our country.

# Parent Leadership Initiative Participates in Project Impact Study



Parent Leadership Initiative (PLI) is now in its 23rd year in Suffolk County and offers programs in various locations in Suffolk and Nassau Counties as well as a Spanish-language program in Patchogue. The PLI Graduate Coalition continues to grow and offer PLI graduates an on-going opportunity to participate in regional and local activities.

Last year, PLI participated in the Project Impact evaluation process that helps nonprofits develop skills to perform a data-driven analysis to evaluate the outcomes of their work. “This process helped us truly capture and convey the transformative nature of PLI,” described Director Danielle Asher. The evaluation process used individual interviews and surveys to identify how PLI graduates have changed since they first began their PLI participation. The graduates’ responses were aggregated to identify the strengths of the overall program as well as the components that may need improvement.

“The overall impact has been overwhelmingly positive with clear indicators of the powerful impact PLI has had on the participants,” Danielle stated. The evaluation revealed a number of common outcomes among PLI participants, highlighted by:

- They learned about the importance of active community involvement and achieved an increase in confidence.
- They developed a greater appreciation of relationships and the importance of networking.
- They learned about the need to have patience in the “process” and to surround themselves with like-minded people to achieve a collective goal.
- They experienced an overwhelmingly greater awareness of injustice.
- They learned the value of building relationships with people that are different from themselves.
- They recognized the need to find a common thread so people can come together across issues to create a caring community for children.

“PLI will continue to foster these positive transformative changes in our participants,” said Danielle. “Going forward, we will focus more on advocacy skills development to enable participants to better understand local issues in the context of the larger systemic factors that affect Long Island communities.”

You can receive a copy of the published report for all of the participating organizations on Amazon.com under Project Impact Reports Long Island.

## CCCS Board Goals

### CCCS Strategic Plan for 2017 and Beyond

The Board of Directors updated the Child Care Council of Suffolk’s Strategic Plan for 2017 and beyond at their annual retreat. The key goals of this Plan are:

**Program and Services** – Maintain the quality and level of Child Care Council’s services, programs and partnerships; deepen the impact and reach of the Council’s programs; and ensure that each of the Council’s programs are viable and vital.

**Fund Development** – Create and implement a fund development plan that ensures continuing, stable support for the Child Care Council’s programs and services, operations and other activities that are essential and key to fulfilling the Council’s mission, implementing the Council’s plans and to meeting the funding challenges that emerge.

**Marketing, Visibility, Positioning** – Increase visibility via expansive marketing campaign to educate providers, current and potential supporters, parents and partners on the need for quality programming and accessibility to child care in order to ensure positive outcomes for children and society.

**Organization/Infrastructure** – Ensure that the Child Care Council has the capacity and infrastructure to sustain the organization and support and grow its programs and services.

As always, CCCS needs strategic partners to help us achieve these goals. Please contact Enza Britos, [ebritos@childcaresuffolk.org](mailto:ebritos@childcaresuffolk.org), 631-462-0303 extension 131, if you would like to partner with the Child Care Council of Suffolk to support children, families, providers, employers and the public to ensure that quality child care takes its place as an integral part of society.

# News from the Child Care Council of Suffolk

## Sammy Chu, Tracie-Holmberg-Cohen and Jeffrey Yonkers Join CCCS Board of Directors

Child Care Council of Suffolk welcomed Sammy Chu, Tracie Holmberg-Cohen and Jeffrey Yonkers to their Board of Directors. “We greatly appreciate the diverse skills these Board members bring to our mission,” stated Janet Walerstein, CCCS executive director.



**Sammy Chu** is chief innovation officer for Edgewise Energy, located in Plainview. A proven leader in promoting market adoption of residential energy efficiency, Sammy was the founding director of the Town of Babylon’s Long Island Green Homes Program – the first operationalized property assessed clean energy program (PACE) in the country. He previously worked in County

Executive Steve Bellone’s administration as director of Operations and as commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing & Consumer Affairs. Sammy also serves as chairman of the Long Island chapter of the US Green Building Council, a board member of the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island and second vice chairman of the Suffolk County Planning Commission.



**Tracie Holmberg-Cohen** works as the executive assistant to Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. Prior to this, Tracie was director of Long Island Regional Affairs for Governor Andrew Cuomo where she oversaw all Long Island-related issues and was a liaison to local governments and elected officials; business leaders; labor unions; and civic, charitable and advocacy organizations.

As a member of the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council, Tracie helped secure hundreds of millions of dollars in state funding for local projects. She also served as special assistant to the commissioner of the New York State Department of Labor.



**Jeffrey Yonkers, CPA**, is the chief financial officer at Best Market, headquartered in Bethpage. Jeffrey has worked for more than 20 years in both public and private accounting across a wide variety of industries. He has extensive experience working with closely-held, private-equity and publicly-held businesses with matters involving reporting issues, financial disclosures and

financial statement preparation. He additionally is skilled at handling lender relations, internal reporting, budgeting, cash management and financial covenants. Jeffrey is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants and also serves as treasurer for the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 184.

## CCCS Appoints New Associate Executive Director and Parent Counselors

CCCS welcomed Jennifer Marino Rojas, Tinamarie Bernocco and Millie de la Concha-Gonzalez to the agency and is very enthusiastic about the myriad talents they each bring to their positions.



**Jennifer Marino Rojas** joined the Child Care Council of Suffolk as associate executive director. She also serves as a consultant to the Long Island Pre-K Initiative. Jennifer has devoted nearly two decades working to improve policies and programs in New York that affect children and families. Prior to joining CCCS, she was vice president of Grants and Operations at the Rauch Foundation

in Garden City, where she was responsible for grant-making and daily operations. From 2007 to 2012, she was the deputy executive director for the Children’s Defense Fund – New York, where she managed the policy, legislative and advocacy efforts around children’s health, juvenile justice, child welfare, education and early childhood learning. Prior to that, Jennifer served in the City of New York’s Administration for Children’s Services in various capacities, including: Family Court attorney, chief of staff and associate commissioner for the Division of Child Care and Head Start.



**Tinamarie Bernocco** joined the Child Care Council of Suffolk’s Resource & Referral Department as a parent counselor. Tinamarie previously was the center supervisor, EAC Network, The Children’s Center at Cohalan Court, Central Islip. She has more than 20 years of experience in the early childhood field having also worked as a pre-k teacher, trainer of early childhood teachers and administrator of early childhood NFP programs.



**Millie de la Concha-Gonzalez** joined the CCCS Resource & Referral Department as a bilingual parent counselor. She previously worked as a bilingual school counselor at Murry Bergstraum High School in Manhattan. She greatly enjoys having the opportunity to assist families in their search for child care programs and community resources.

## Professional Development Day for Child Care Providers

The Child Care Council of Suffolk recently hosted a free Professional Development Day for registered child care providers. CCCS was pleased to welcome many Spanish-speaking providers who were able to participate in the program via translation services from World Class Language Solutions.

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## Long Island Pre-K Initiative

The Long Island Pre-K Initiative was established in 2014 as a partnership with Nassau BOCES, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Western Suffolk BOCES and the Child Care Councils of Suffolk and Nassau in an effort to build a stronger relationship between school districts and the child care community. With such limited funding for child care and Pre-K on Long Island, the Initiative is coordinating and leveraging existing resources to strengthen school- and community-based Pre-K programs. The Initiative also is creating a regional voice for early childhood education that represents Long Island's unique needs.

"This effective model of local collaboration has elevated the Child Care Councils of Suffolk's and Nassau's early childhood expertise within the public education system," stated Jennifer Marino Rojas, CCCS associate executive director. "We are working to help public schools understand developmentally appropriate practice while also helping to position child care programs' readiness to partner with school districts to offer Pre-K education. As Pre-K funding continues to grow and child care funding continues to decrease on the state and federal levels, the Child Care Council of Suffolk remains steadfast in its commitment to make child care an integral part of Suffolk County's diverse communities."

## CCCS Board of Directors Reorganization

The Child Care Council of Suffolk appointed Michele Lauer-Bader as president and Louis Hirschfield as vice president at its past Annual Meeting. The agency's other officer appointments include: Immediate Past President Linda Army, SVP, Bethpage Federal Credit Union; Vice President Thomas Buonaiuto, CEO, Empire National Bank; Vice President Patricia Quiason, VP, Estee Lauder Companies, Inc.; Secretary Alicia Marks, owner, Marks of Excellence; and Allen Breslow, Esq. "Strong leadership on a Board of Directors is a vital component that significantly enhances a NFP agency's ability to provide essential services and resources to the constituents it serves," stated CCCS Executive Director Janet Walerstein.



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### Professional Development Day for Child Care Providers

The 67 Professional Development Day attendees enjoyed a keynote address from Holly Elissa Bruno – award-winning, best-selling author, international keynote speaker, ground-breaking radio host and seasoned team builder. The providers received professional development training hours as well as participated in several programs and/or received important information about:

- how to help prevent burn out from "care givers syndrome,"
- "Legal and Ethical Issues During Pick Up,"
- the Quality Stars New York program,
- Parent Leadership Initiative (PLI) and
- other helpful resources to assist providers with their child care programs and also as individual care givers, such as: practicing self-care, yoga, Zumba and physical fitness. In addition, onsite massage and wellness services were donated by Block Chiropractic Services.

One provider described the Professional Development Day programs as restorative, stating: "Today restored my belief that my work is important. I feel proud to be a child care professional."

### Suffolk Action for Empowering Resiliency (SAFER)

Funding from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has enabled the Child Care Council of Suffolk to offer free training to child care professionals located within zip codes affected by Super Storm Sandy to help them implement the Pyramid Model (adopted by New York State for social emotional development in young children through the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) into their child care programs.

The affected zip code areas are: 11757, 11701, 11702, 11706, 11726, 11951, 11795, 11717, 11769, 11743, 11704, 11746, 11772, 11725, 11722, 11967, 11798, 11787, 11779, 11770, 11731, 11729, 11901 and 11751. Child care providers in these locations can obtain six hours of high-quality, OCFS-required training at no cost in the following topics: principles of child development, program development, and safety and security procedures.

This special training provides child care professionals with technical assistance and support to help children build resiliency, coping skills and self-regulation.

## Child Care Provider Information Sessions

R.S.V.P. required, 631-462-0303

### Child Care Council of Suffolk, Commack (English Info Sessions)

9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday – June 13, July 11, August 8, November 7, December 5

Thursday – September 7, October 12

### Child Care Council of Suffolk, Commack (Spanish Info Sessions)

9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Thursday – June 8, August 10

Wednesday – October 11

Thursday – December 7

### SAVE THE DATE

#### 2017 Annual Meeting of the Child Care Council of Suffolk

Friday, June 16, 2017, 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Touro Law School

225 Eastview Drive, Central Islip, NY 11722

**Keynote Speaker:** Lawrence Levy, Executive Dean, National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University

**Advocate of the Year:** Monica Martinez, Suffolk County Legislator, District 9

#### Champions of Children Luncheon

Friday, December 1, 2017, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Hamlet Golf & Country Club

One Clubhouse Drive, Commack, NY 11725

## CCCS on Social Media

We invite you to visit the Child Care Council of Suffolk's updated website [www.childcaresuffolk.org](http://www.childcaresuffolk.org) and social media sites for information about important child care issues, advocacy efforts, membership, events, trainings and more. "Like" the Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc. on Facebook and follow us @ChildCareLink or @PLILongIsland on Twitter. Please join the discussions to help us make these sites an educational, engaging resources for all!



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