

The CHAT

August 2025



Chautauqua
Child Care Council

Child Care Keeps Chautauqua County Working

2025-2026

GRANTS

HEALTHY SPACES, SAFE PLACES GRANT

The Healthy Spaces, Safe Places grant for child care providers is to improve health and safety within their programs. Grant funds can be used for items such as first aid supplies, cleaning and sanitation materials, safety equipment, or health-related training. This grant helps ensure that all children thrive in environments that are both safe and supportive.

QUALITY CARE MATERIALS GRANT

The Quality Care Materials grant for child care providers is to purchase materials that directly enhance the quality of care in their programs. This may include educational toys, sensory tools, classroom furnishings, or professional resources that support developmentally appropriate practices. The goal is to strengthen learning environments and promote high standards of care across early childhood settings.

CLICK THE LINK TO APPLY NOW!

Grant Application



Office of Children and Family Services

Regulations Review

Safe Childcare Spaces

SACC 414.5(a)
GFDC 416.5(a)
FDC 417.5(a)
DCC 418-1.5(a)

Suitable precautions must be taken to eliminate all conditions in areas accessible to children which pose a safety or health hazard.



To ensure that the children in your care are safe and healthy, you must always be compliant with OCFS Safety Regulations. Listed below are some of the most often seen deficiencies in childcare programs.



Sufficient ground surface cushioning under and around play equipment

Proper storage of toxic and hazardous materials

Keep all paths of egress free and clear of obstruction

Electrical outlets covered when not in use

Full and ready to use fire extinguishers

Non use of wading pools, fill and drain pools and spa tubs

Functioning smoke detectors and Carbon monoxide detectors

Inaccessible swimming pool areas

Current pet vaccinations

Proper window/glass protection





Professional Development

AUGUST IS SELF AWARENESS MONTH

It is important to focus on your own self awareness and understand your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. This will help to better manage your overall health and well being.

Taking time each day to focus on your own self care can help relieve stress and tension, and promotes a healthy immune system.

"Mental Wellness Moments"

How would you like to provide some self care activities to your program... provided FREE of charge?

Contact us at the Child Care Council to discuss your plan for a few moments of "Ahhhhh".

Contact Becky Reed
(716) 366-8176 x3216, (716) 410-0587
call/text or email rreed@chautopp.org



Self
CARE

Trainings



Chautauqua Chapter NYAEYC

Early Childhood Conference

SAVE the DATE: Saturday, October 18, 2025

8:00 am-3:30 pm

Keynote: Kenneth Sherman

Chautauqua Lake Central School

100 North Erie St. Mayville, NY

UPCOMING VIRTUAL TRAININGS

Please email bfaulkner@chautopp.org to register and receive the link

NATURE BASED EDUCATION/LOOSE PARTS (OCFS TOPICS 1. 3. 4)

Date: Saturday, September 13, 2025

This training will familiarize you with the concept of Nature-Based Learning and its benefits.

We will look at how to incorporate natural materials and loose parts into both indoor and outdoor experiences for children birth to 5. In looking at Nature Based Education, we will discuss the 4 pillars of this philosophy/approach. (1-consistent time, 2-predictable spaces, 3-open-ended materials, and 4-observant instructors) We will end our time discussing and exploring how to plan for safe exploration in your program.

ENGAGING ENVIRONMENTS (OCFS TOPICS 1. 3)

Date: Saturday, November 1, 2025

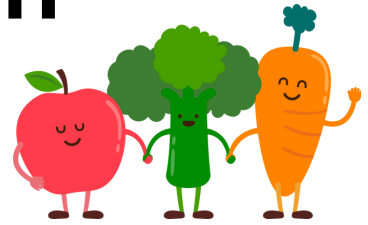
In this training we will explore strategies to develop engaging learning environments. This training will help you to adapt your space and program to meet the needs of the children in your care. We will reflect on how to use physical space, materials and purposeful planning to engage children. We will also cover how to make your program effective and engaging through reflection as an educator or caregiver.

REFLECTIVE TEACHING (OCFS TOPICS 1. 3)

Date: Saturday November 15, 2025

This training will include a discussion of reflective teaching and how to use reflection to focus on your teaching practice and plan engaging interactions with the children in your care. We will look at the Inquiry Learning Cycle and how that informs you of your intentions as an educator. (Wonder, Observe, Reflect, Respond) Exploring the concept of Wonder, we will explore how this view of the world can change current practice for educators and children. We will end our time discussing how to build reflection into your current practice.

MY **FOOD** PROGRAM **CACFP & Nutrition**



Important Announcement: Our CACFP will be switching from Kidkare to My Food Program November 1, 2025. Please note that if you currently use paper menus, you can still use paper menus.

WELCOME TO MY FOOD PROGRAM

We are excited to offer this software for managing the CACFP and SFSP. We know that change can be hard, so here are some great reasons why you will love using our software.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

We have so many ways to get in touch with a real person who can help right away. You can start a live chat (with no AI bots!), make a phone call or send an email and our knowledgeable and helpful team will assist you right away.

FEATURE UPDATES

Do you have an idea about how to make My Food Program better? We absolutely want to hear from you! We keep it fresh with monthly software updates and all ideas for improvements come directly from our customers.

SPANISH

¿hablas español? So does our team! Chat, phone and email support is available in Spanish. You can also toggle My Food Program so that the entire software is displayed in Spanish, and print menus in Spanish to post for parents.

MOBILE OPTION

We have a mobile version of My Food Program optimized for tablets and phones. You can do all your daily recordkeeping right on your mobile device, including menus, infant menus, and attendance and meal counts.

HELP CENTER

Our online Help Center is available 24/7 and jam-packed with articles about how every box and button in My Food Program works. Our articles always include visuals and many have videos.

WARNING BEFORE SUBMITTING CLAIM

Do you ever wonder if you did your CACFP records “right”? We have a feature that allows you to see the errors on your claim before you finalize it. This will let you know if any meals will be disallowed and allow you to correct genuine recordkeeping mistakes while ensuring that only meals valid for reimbursement will be included in the claim.

EXCITED? SO ARE WE!

You will receive your login credentials and training materials directly from your sponsor. As always, if you have questions about CACFP requirements or recordkeeping policies, direct those to your sponsor. If you have questions about how the software works or you are experiencing a glitch, the My Food Program team stands ready to help.

CLICK THIS LINK TO LEARN MORE!



CACFP reimbursement rates increased slightly effective July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. All child care providers in Chautauqua County are Tier 1 eligible by school district:

Breakfast increased 4 cents - new rate is \$1.70

Lunch/Dinner increased 7 cents - new rate is \$3.22

Snacks increased 3 cents - new rate is \$.96

Informational Meetings

OCFS

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

AUGUST 12, 2025
8 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Join the OCFS
Division of Child Care Services
for our live Community
Conversations call with child
care providers and early
educators!
This call will feature Spanish
interpretation!



THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:
OCFS Updates

Send questions to:
ocfs.sm.dccsinfo@ocfs.ny.gov

**CLICK HERE TO
REGISTER** ←

CHAUTAUQUA OPPORTUNITIES, INC. Community Conversations

Virtual Meeting
August 14, 2025 at 5 PM



Join us to discuss the needs in
Chautauqua County



Topics:

- Impact of funding changes
- Childcare
- Health Care
- Business
- Housing

**A CHANCE TO
WIN**

Mastercard GiftCard

\$50 (1)

\$100 (1)

\$150 (1)

**3 PEOPLE WILL BE CHOSEN
AT RANDOM AT THE END OF
PRESENTATION**



Zoom Meeting Meeting
ID: 868 1704 5879
Passcode: 640244





CHAUTAUQUA OPPORTUNITIES, INC.
HELPING PEOPLE... CHANGING LIVES

SURVEY



**Chautauqua County
Residents!**

**Take our 2025 Community
Needs Survey and enter to win
one of five gift cards!**

**We'd love to know
your thoughts on:**

- Economy & Employment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Health
- Childcare
- Youth
- Technology
- Services

English



Spanish



Scan the QR Code

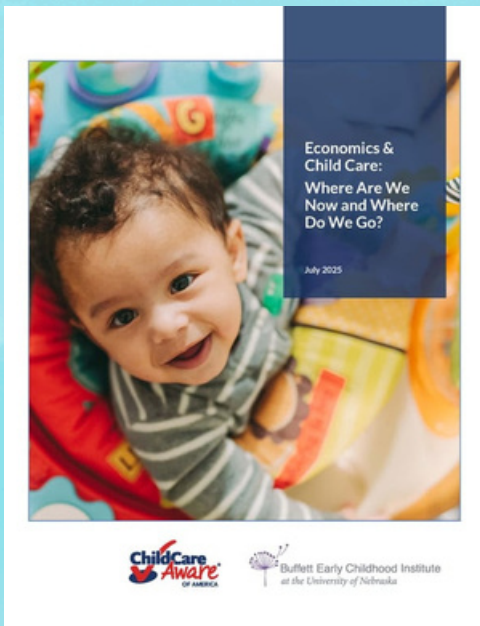
Child Care Advocacy



“When government makes investments, we want those investments to focus on the external benefits, the societal benefits.”
— Rob Grunewald

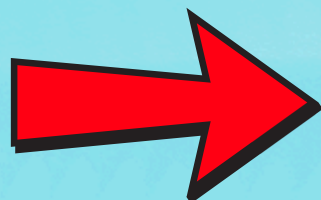
**20 Experts and Economists agree
We all need to work together to support and sustain the child care system.**

Child care is essential to our families, workforce, and economy, but the current system is failing on all fronts. In this new report, Child Care Aware® of America and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska assess the state of the child care market, highlight the barriers holding back progress, and lay out suggestions to build a stronger, more sustainable future.

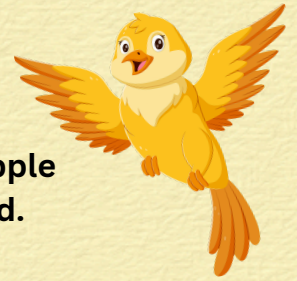


- The current system is unsustainable. Families face costs that far exceed what’s considered affordable. Providers are leaving the field due to low pay and burnout.
- Traditional affordability metrics are misleading. The commonly cited “7% of income” benchmark doesn’t reflect real-world costs or family budgets.
- Deregulation isn’t the answer. The report rejects the idea that loosening regulations (like raising child-to-staff ratios) will solve the crisis, arguing instead for investment strategies that address both supply and demand, by growing available slots and helping parents find and afford child care.
- Shared responsibility is essential. Economists agreed that child care benefits parents, businesses, and the broader economy, so cost-sharing among federal, state, local, and private entities is critical.

**Click this link
to learn more!**



Activities Page



One of the easiest DIY bird feeders for kids involves taking apple halves and stuffing them full of peanut butter and bird seed.

Here's what you need:



apples
peanut butter
bird seed
twine
large nail

Cut your apple in half. Using a spoon, dig out the core of the apple to create a hollowed-out space. Then, stick the nail through at the top to create a hole. String the twine through and tie it in a loop for hanging.



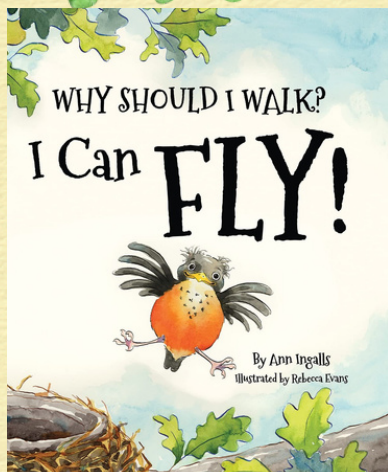
If your kids are younger, you might want to do this bit of prep before they get involved. This step is a bit tricky and it's probably best to have the apples ready to fill once your kids have been invited to help.

This way they're able to get involved right away rather than sitting around losing interest while waiting for the apples to be ready.

In a bowl, mix together peanut butter with birdseed. Have your kids spoon the mixture into the center of the apples until all of them have been filled.



Once that's finished, you're ready to head outside and hang your bird feeders in the trees! Watch as the birds flock around to enjoy the tasty treat!



THE BOOK NOOK

A little bird, a big sky, and the first time out of the nest! A robin's first flight is a gentle reminder about what we can accomplish if we just keep trying. As reviewer Sue Lowell Gallion says, "Children (and parents!) experiencing the many firsts of growing up will relate to this lively story of a young robin learning to fly. Playful, rhyming text and winsome water color illustrations give readers a birds' eye view of the baby birds' emotions and adventures on its way to solo flight."

Community Events



July 30th - August 2nd
Gerry Rodeo VFD Grounds
4351 Route 60, Gerry, NY 14740



National Comedy Center
203 W 2nd St., Jamestown, NY 14701



Join us at Bergman Park on Sunday August 31st 2025 for the 44th Annual Jamestown NY Labor Day Festival and help us celebrate our Labor Force! We will have live music, craft vendors, food vendors, kids' activities and additional activities. The best fireworks show in the area will be at 8:30 pm!

Bergman Park
487 Baker St, Jamestown, NY 14701

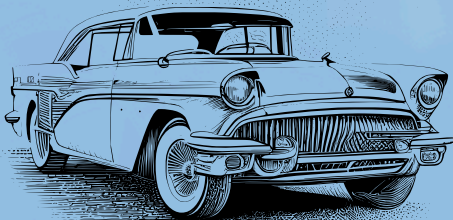


CAR SHOW

Saturday, Sept. 6th
12:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Rain Date Sept. 13th

Connections North Parking Lot
10825 Bennett Rd.
Dunkirk, NY

Sponsored by Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
Fatherhood Program



Car Seat Safety Checks
available from the NYS Troopers

Replacement Car Seats available
to those whose car seats do not
meet safety standards!



Resources



CHAUTAUQUA OPPORTUNITIES, INC.
HELPING PEOPLE... CHANGING LIVES

www.chautauquaopportunities.com



[www.chautauquaopportunities.com/
chautauqua-child-care-council/](http://www.chautauquaopportunities.com/chautauqua-child-care-council/)



www.empirestatechildcare.org



naeyc.org



childcareaware.org



www.earlycareandlearning.org



www.zerotothree.org



MyPlate
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

<https://www.myplate.gov>



<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/>



The Chautauqua Child Care Council

works to foster collaborative relationships in order to build a strong responsive child care support system meeting the needs of all of Chautauqua County's families, child care providers, businesses and communities.

Share The Chat with your employees and your families!

**The Chautauqua Child Care Council is a division of
Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.**



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