

Child Care Needs Assessment Survey Results 2015

As part of its ongoing mission to promote, support and enhance the healthy development of all children, Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. (CCRR) in 2015 undertook a Child Care Needs Assessment with a goal to receive feedback and insight on child care needs in our county. Modeled after a survey conducted in 2013 by the Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc., CCRR distributed its survey between February 1 and February 28, 2015 to over 7,000 individuals and groups via email and social media. Participants were asked to base their responses on the previous six months. The following is a summary of the results.

General Demographics – Rockland County, NY¹

- Total Population: 315,069
 - Age 0-5: 23,883
 - 5-9: 24,888
 - 10-14: 24,062
- Median Household Income: \$84,591
- Median Family Income: \$99,649
- Households earning less than \$75,000/year: 43,691

General Survey Results

At the end of the survey period, CCRR received 217 responses representing 502 children between the ages of 0 and 14 years of age:

- Infants (0 to 17 months) – 87
- Toddlers (18 to 35 months) – 90
- Preschoolers (3 to 5 years old)– 150
- Elementary School Age (Kindergarten through 6th Grade) – 121
- Middle School Age (7th through 9th Grade) - 54

¹ As of 2013 as provided by American Community Survey

In order to get a general sense of where respondents live, we asked that respondents indicate in which of the five Rockland County towns they reside. Six respondents, 2.7%, did not provide residence information:

- Clarkstown – 78/36.4%
- Haverstraw – 30/13.8%
- Orangetown – 39/17.9%
- Ramapo – 39/17.9%
- Stony Point – 25/11.9%

Family Income

The majority of respondents were employed:

- 79.6% of respondents indicated both parents working
- 18.8% were single parents
- 17.5% of single parents work outside the home

- 43.3% of survey participants earn less than \$85,301 per year, just slightly over the Rockland County median income of \$84,591
- 11% of respondents indicated an income below \$31,000

Need

In the six months prior to the survey, parents utilized several child-care options

- 206 children ages 0 to 5 were served by a Child Care Center, Licensed Home-Based Center, Head Start, Nursery School or Preschool
- 212 children were served in a home (child's, relative's, non-relative's)
- 30 children were cared for by a friend, neighbor, older sibling
- 60 School Age children were served by a before/after school program or Library program

Survey participants indicated they chose their current child care arrangement by ranking their first, second and third priorities: (were ranked priority 1,2,3)

- An average² of 65% of responses ranked **program proximity to home/work** as a priority
- An average of 25% of responses ranked **cost** as a priority
- An average of 22% of responses ranked **operating hours** as a priority
- An average of 19% of responses ranked **program quality** as a priority

Paying for Child Care

For their first child, per week:

- 69% of respondents pay between \$50 and \$349

² Average was calculated by adding the responses for each sub-group (infant, toddler, preschool, school-age, middle-school) and dividing by five

- 5.5% pay \$350-\$599
- 2% pay \$600-\$1500

For their second child, per week:

- 37% pay between \$50 and \$349
- 1% pay \$350-\$599
- 2% pay \$600 to \$1500

- 44% of respondents said they have had trouble paying for child care at some point in the previous six months
- 91 respondents indicated they had to borrow money/use credit cards to pay for child care always/often/sometimes
- 145 respondents indicated they had to make alternative arrangements because of cost
- 37 respondents cut back working hours to offset child care costs

Families receiving child care subsidies:

- Of the 5.5% of respondents who indicated they receive a child care subsidy from the Department of Social Services, all but one were having trouble paying their family share, and one was behind in their payments.
 - Respondents employed various means to resolve payment issues, including cutting back working hours; cutting back child care hours; cutting back household spending; and borrowing funds/using credit cards.

Customer Satisfaction

- 81.5% of survey participants indicated they were **satisfied or very satisfied** with their child care arrangements
- 7.2% indicated they were **dissatisfied or very dissatisfied** with their child care arrangements
- 30.3% had to change child care arrangements in the 6 months prior to the survey. Of those:
 - 11.8% changed because they or their child were unhappy with the program/provider
 - 10.1 % changed jobs or work hours
 - 6.4% changed because school started

Conclusions

Based on the survey data, CCRR has found:

- A lower ratio of survey participants from the three towns where we generally find a more mixed and lower-income population
- About half of survey respondents have relied on someone else to care for their child in their own home - an unstructured, unregulated setting

- For many families, the cost of child care is high compared to family income
- Almost half have had trouble paying for child care and/or have had to sacrifice child care hours or working hours
- Lowest-income families struggle most with paying for child care
- Customer satisfaction does not equate to program quality

Action Steps

In light of the data collected, Child Care Resources of Rockland will:

- Use the data to inform our Strategic Plan and subordinate agency plans
 - Determine and address our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
 - Adjust our goals and measureable outcomes to target needs identified in the survey
 - Child care quality, costs, and availability (location and hours)
- Use the data to inform our advocacy work and improve our strategic partnerships
- Further explore the data collected to determine:
 - Why we received a higher response from some geographic areas than others
 - How to increase survey responses
- Review the survey itself to determine where questions should/could be modified/added to gain a better insight into the county's child care needs
 - Determine if follow up surveys targeting particular data should be implemented
 - Plan for the survey to be administered annually with a review of data year over year
 - Work with strategic partners to increase the opportunity for survey completion
 - Rockland County Department of Social Services – distribute the survey to families receiving child care subsidies
 - Family Resource Centers and Rockland 21C – distribute the survey to participants
 - Include in Universal Prekindergarten and New York State Full Day Pre-K applications
 - Providers – CCRR Staff will be more intentional in educating providers about the importance of completing the survey and encouraging families to do so
 - Seek additional funding to support the agency's Child Care Tuition Scholarship Program to serve additional families