

1521 Main Street  
Niagara Falls  
New York 14305



1-800-701-4KID  
Phone: (716) 285-8572  
Fax: (716) 286-9243  
ccrrniagara@prodigy.net

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**Winter**

**NEWSLETTER**

**2012**

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### **A Visit from Congresswoman Kathy Hochul**

On January 9, 2012, Congresswoman Kathy Hochul (right), New York 26<sup>th</sup> district, visited Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Congresswoman Hochul visited with Thomas Beachy (left), Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Niagara Community Action Program, Inc., and Suzanne Shears (center), Executive Director. Discussed were the numerous programs and services provided by the Agency to qualifying County residents. Highlighting the discussion were concerns regarding federal and state funding levels for all programs including the Child Care Resource and Referral Program (CCR&R).

### **Important Update for Family Child Care, Group Family Child Care, and Legally-Exempt Child Care Providers**

Beginning with child care payments issued directly to home-based providers by social services districts outside of New York City, after January 3, 2012, a 2% deduction will be taken from each child care subsidy payment up to the annual maximum amount of \$690.00. The Benefits Issuance and Control System (BICS), the payment system that issues child care subsidy payments to providers, will automatically deduct 2% from each child care payment. Included on the payment stub of each check will be information about the amount of the deduction and contact information for the Civil Service Employee Association (CSEA). All calls, inquiries, or communications about union dues/fees from child care providers residing in social service districts outside of New York City should be directed to the Union at the following address: CSEA Membership Department, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210; or by phone at: 877-483-2732; or by email at [www.voicecsea.org](http://www.voicecsea.org).

# Important Information for Low-Income and Moderate-Income Families Regarding Federal and State Tax Credits



**This information may help put thousands of dollars into your pocket!**

When they file their taxes for 2011 in early 2012, working families may be eligible to claim valuable federal tax credits, such as:

- Earned Income Tax Credit, which helps provide a wage supplement for low and moderate-income families (those earning less than \$49,078 annually). This credit is worth up to \$5,751 and is refundable.
- Child Tax Credit, designed to help families offset some of the costs of raising children. This credit is worth up to \$1,000 per child. Families who owe little or no income tax can receive some or all of this credit as a refund if they earned at least \$3,000 in 2011.
- Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, designed to offset some of the child or dependent care costs that families incur in order to work. This credit is worth up to \$2,100, though the amount that can be claimed is limited by a family's actual federal income tax liability.

In addition, many states offer their own child and dependent care tax credits and earned income tax credits, and a few offer child tax credits as well. Families have to know about the credits in order to claim them on their state and federal tax returns.

Each tax filing season, the National Women's Law Center, working with advocates and service providers across the country, conducts a national tax credit outreach campaign.

For more information on tax credits, please visit the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) Tax Credit Outreach Campaign webpage at [www.nwlc.org/LowerYourTaxes](http://www.nwlc.org/LowerYourTaxes).

To find out more about the location, dates, and hours of free tax preparation sites in your area, call the Internal Revenue Service toll-free at (800) 906-9887.

Please help spread the word regarding child care tax credits.



## Training Opportunities



**February 11,  
2012**

### **Medication Administration Training**

Child care providers who choose to administer medication to children must have a medication administration training (MAT) certificate, a current CPR and first-aid certificate, and a health care consultant. Providers successfully completing this competency-based training will fulfill the requirement for the MAT certificate.

**Location: Niagara County Community College – Room E111**  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus - Parking Lot #1)

Time: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Cost: \$100.00

OCFS Training Topics: 2, 4 & 7

**February 23,  
2012**

### **Infant, Child, & Adult CPR & First Aid**

Participants completing this training will receive a two-year certificate in infant, child, and adult CPR and pediatric first-aid.

The training will include:

- simulated rescue breathing techniques
- directions on what to do in a choking situation
- instructions in basic first aid



**Location: Niagara Falls Fire Department  
Headquarters**

3115 Walnut Ave., Niagara Falls

Time: 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Cost: \$75.00

OCFS Training Topics: 4 & 7

**February 28,  
2012**

### **WNY Infant Toddler Resource Network Providing High Quality Infant and Toddler Care**

During the first three years of life, a baby develops from a vulnerable infant into a functioning child with basic abilities in every domain. Research has shown that high quality child care can help set the stage for a happy and successful life. Come learn about the “**10 Components of Quality Infant and Toddler Care**” and leave with a better understanding of the steps you can take to offer a high quality infant and toddler program.

**Location:** Niagara County Community College – Room E111  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus - Parking Lot #1)  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
**Cost:** \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 1 & 3

**February 29,  
2012**

**WNY Infant Toddler Resource Network  
Going Beyond the Regulations**

While state regulations are designed to keep children safe and healthy, high quality child care programs put policies and practices in place that also support the positive social, emotional, and cognitive development of infants and toddlers.



**Location:** Niagara County Community College –  
Room E111  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus - Parking Lot #1)  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
**Cost:** \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 4, 7 & 8

**March 7,  
2012**

**Overview of Technical Assistance**

This training will inform child care providers of four technical assistance projects offered by the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara. Beverly McArthur, our new Resource and Technical Assistance Counselor, will facilitate this class.

**Location:** Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.  
Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara  
1521 Main Street, Niagara Falls 14305  
**Time:** 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM  
**Cost:** \$15.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 5



**March 20,  
2012**

**WNY Infant Toddler Resource Network  
Environments that Encourage Small Groups**

Environments have a powerful effect on infants and toddlers. It can alter their behaviors, their activities, and their moods. Having a nurturing, responsive environment which allows for small groups indicates a high quality program. Explore how to set up a developmentally appropriate environment that supports small groups, flexibility, and cuts down on unnecessary conflict.

**Location: Niagara County Community College – Room E111**  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus, Parking Lot #1)  
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Cost: \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 3, 5 & 7

**March 21,  
2012**

**WNY Infant Toddler Resource Network  
The Importance of Attachment**

High quality programs recognize the importance of attachment in the early years. High quality caregivers bond with the children in their care and are able to help parents understand and build secure attachments with their infants and toddlers. Learn why attachment is so important in the emotional development of children and how to support the development of these strong attachments.

**Location: Niagara County Community College – Room E111**  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus - Parking Lot #1)  
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Cost: \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 1, 3 & 6

**April 17,  
2012**

**WNY Infant Toddler Resource Network  
Play-Based Curriculum**

From the earliest of ages, play is the primary way children learn. Through play, children explore their bodies, their relationships, and the world around them. Play, more than any other activity, fuels the healthy development of children. Learn how to create a curriculum for infants and toddlers that is focused on play and watch the learning begin!



**Location: Niagara County Community College - Room E111**  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus – Parking Lot #1)  
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Cost: \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 1, 3 & 4

**April 18,  
2012**

**WNY Infant Toddler Resource Network  
Communicating with Parents**

The quality of care infants and toddlers receive in a child care setting is greatly influenced by the quality of the relationship caregivers have with families. Come learn how you can build strong relationships with families through respectful and honest communication that is considerate of each family's belief and cultures.

**Location:** **Niagara County Community College – Room E111**  
Humanities & Social Sciences Building  
(Located at the center of the campus - Parking Lot #1)  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
**Cost:** \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 2, 4 & 9

**April 25,  
2012**

**SACC How to Plan Program Activities Children Will Enjoy**

This training is offered to help select and plan activities for school age children. Participants will review children's characteristics between the ages of 5 and 12 years and learn to develop age-appropriate activities, designed for fun, and which are linked with the children's developmental needs and interests. Beverly McArthur, Resource and Technical Assistance Counselor, will facilitate this class.

**Location:** **Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.**  
Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara  
1521 Main Street, Niagara Falls 14305  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM  
**Cost:** \$30.00  
OCFS Training Topics: 1, 3 & 7

**April 30,  
2012**

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**

This training is offered for family child care, legally-exempt and group family child care providers enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. CACFP regulations will be reviewed.



**Location:** **Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.**  
Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara  
1521 Main Street, Niagara Falls 14305  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Cost:** No cost to registered, licensed or legally-exempt providers  
OCFS Training Topics: 2 & 5



The first two years of your child's life are especially important in the growth and development of his/her brain. During this time, children need positive interaction with other children and adults. This is especially true at younger ages, when learning to talk and play with others is so important.



Until more research is done about the effects of screen time on very young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discourages television viewing for children ages two years old or younger and encourages interactive play.

For older children, the Academy advises no more than one to two hours per day of educational, nonviolent programs, which should be supervised by parents or other responsible adults.

*Source: Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 (Copyright © 2009 American Academy of Pediatrics)*



### **Need to Locate a User's Manual for a Specific Product?**



All products should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If you have a product and no longer have the user's manual, please visit [www.manualsonline.com](http://www.manualsonline.com). Most product manufacturer's owner's manuals can be found on this website.



### **Fun Cooking Idea from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**

Eating healthy meals and snacks are an important part of our children's daily lives. This quick and easy activity is creditable as a snack as long as it is served with a glass of milk or water.

To be creditable as a lunch or dinner, add two fruits and/or vegetables (tomato sauce would count as one) and a glass of milk. (Not creditable for children under the age of one year.)

Directions: Poke raw spaghetti through bite-sized pieces of hot dog and boil according to the directions on the spaghetti package. This can be served plain or by adding spaghetti sauce, melted cheese, or white sauce.



This is a great activity that kids will enjoy both making and eating.

Parents, please remember to ask your registered, licensed or legally-exempt child care provider if they are participating in CACFP before enrolling your child.



If you are a registered or licensed in-home child care provider or a legally-exempt child care provider, please call 716-285-9681 Ext. 111 to join CACFP so that you can receive a partial reimbursement for the meals you are serving to the children in your care.

Day care centers and school-age child care programs, please call 1-800-942-3858 to join CACFP.

## Exploring Primary Care and Continuity for Infants and Toddlers

New York child care regulations require smaller groups and lower adult-child ratios for infants and toddlers than many other states' regulations. Small groups allow caregivers to get to know each child and his or her family intimately.



There is more we can do to ensure that secure bonds are forming between young children and caregivers and that families and caregivers are able to exchange critical information surrounding personal, cultural, and research-based child rearing beliefs and practices. Moving to a primary care model and committing to provide each child with continuity of care (one primary caregiver for three years), sets the stage for life-long security and success. Children who feel secure with families and caregivers are curious and competent explorers who feel comfortable and flourish in child care settings.

### What Do Primary Care and Continuity Look Like?

- One caregiver is assigned to providing most of the care required by a small group of 3 to 4 infants or 4 to 5 toddlers.
- Caregivers in the same room function as a team, and each of them assumes primary responsibility for

their assigned group.

Primary responsibilities include:

1. Diapering/Toileting
2. Feeding
3. Helping settle down for nap
4. Communicating at least daily with each child's family
5. Primary caregivers stay with their infants and toddlers from when they enter care until at least age three. The group either moves into a new setting each year or the setting changes over time to match the group's development.

### What Steps Can Your Program Take to Move Closer to Providing Primary Care and Continuity?

- Infants and toddlers should be cared for by the same two or three caregivers each day.
- Infants should stay with at least one of their caregivers until they are at least 12 months and up to the time they are 36 months.
- Infant and toddler caregivers should communicate with families daily and incorporate individual cultures into daily care routines.

For more information about infant and toddler care, contact the:  
WNY Infant Toddler Buffalo NY 14216  
1-866-281-4739 x 3065  
[www.wnyinfanttoddlersolutions.com](http://www.wnyinfanttoddlersolutions.com)

# Priorities and Special Considerations for School-Age Children

Priorities to be considered when choosing materials for school-age children should include:

- Taking into account the increasingly wide range of abilities and interests of children.
- Providing materials that encourage respect for individuals with differing backgrounds, interests, and abilities.
- Supporting children's growing ability to cooperate and participate in cooperative learning activities with others.
- Providing materials in a variety of areas (including art, music, and movement) so that children have multiple ways to discover and express their skills.
- Providing activities that encourage children's motivation to understand their environment and gain competence in dealing with their physical and social worlds by providing materials that support individual interest.
- Providing activities that support children's growing sense of competence by providing materials that are appropriate for all levels of challenge and for a child's developing skills.



A great activity to incorporate the priorities listed above is to have the children put on a show. The following activity is inexpensive and can be done in any home or program that provides care to school-age children. Children can set a specific theme for the activity or let their imaginations run wild.

For this activity, you will need popsicle sticks (or chop sticks), a puppet theater (a table or cardboard box with a sheet or table cloth over it), colored construction paper, markers, scissors, old magazines, glue or tape, stickers, and ribbons (optional).

Directions:

1. Have the children cut out different figures and shapes from the construction paper or pictures from magazines. (Children of all ages will enjoy this activity because they can create a puppet of their favorite music idol or celebrity or television star).
2. Let the children design their own puppet from the construction paper shape or magazine picture.
3. Have the children color and/or decorate the puppet.
4. When the children are finished and the glue has dried, have the children attach the figures to the popsicle sticks with glue or tape.
5. Let the puppets dry thoroughly.
6. While the puppets are drying have the children form groups. (Each group should work together to write a play, practice singing a song, etc.) Have each group perform with the puppets for their classmates.

This activity can be repeated often. Arrange the children into different groups each time to encourage teamwork and cooperation between all children.



## **QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project Workshops Available Throughout New York**

QUALITYstarsNY is a quality rating and improvement system that is designed to increase quality in early care and learning settings in New York State. Child care programs who participate get a star rating, similar to hotel star ratings. The child care programs also develop a quality improvement plan and receive support from QUALITYstarsNY to implement the improvement plan.

The Early Care & Learning Council, in cooperation with QUALITYstarsNY, has developed three QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project workshops that are now available throughout New York State. These workshops are intended to inform child care program administrators about QUALITYstarsNY and help those programs prepare for the star rating system. The workshops will take place in locations across the state now through May. They are offered at no cost to participants.

“We are excited to be a part of this” said Sage Ruckerstuhl, project coordinator at the Early Care & Learning Council “This is an initiative that has proven successful in other states. When fully implemented parents will have the information they need to make an informed choice and most importantly, the quality of child care in New York will continually improve.” QUALITYstarsNY is currently being implemented in select communities and will continue to roll out across the state. Program administrators have the opportunity to prepare now and begin the process of quality improvement while educating themselves about the star rating system.

The workshops - Introduction to QUALITYstarsNY, Self-Assessment: Preparing for Program Improvement, and First Steps for Quality Improvement – are facilitated by experienced early learning trainers. To learn more about the QUALITYstarsNY Readiness Project workshops or find a session near you visit [www.earlycareandlearning.org](http://www.earlycareandlearning.org)

To learn more about QUALITYstarsNY visit <http://qualitystarsny.org/>



## Updated Email Addresses



The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara is in the process of updating our email distribution lists. The fastest and most efficient way to distribute information is via email. Training calendars, newsletters, Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalls, and other important information is now being sent via email through our distribution list. If you are not currently receiving emails from the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara and would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact Angela Burns at 716-285-8572 EXT. 105 or send your current email address to [ccrniagara@prodigy.net](mailto:ccrniagara@prodigy.net).

## Non - Public Assistance Child Care Subsidy Concerns



There are currently no funds available through the Niagara County Department of Social Services for non-public assistance child care subsidies. Eligible parents are being placed on a waiting list until funds become available. Parents and providers are encouraged to contact their Legislators and Representatives and request more funds be added to child care subsidies. A list of policy makers, including contact information, can be located on the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara website by accessing [www.childcareofniagara.com/links](http://www.childcareofniagara.com/links). It is crucial for individual stories regarding child care concerns to be heard by our policy makers.



## Is Money on Your Mind?



There will be a free financial education workshop on how to manage your money on Monday, February 27, 2012, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Niagara Falls Public Library (Conference Room) located at 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305. By attending the workshop, participants will learn how to:

- Set financial goals
- Track your spending
- Save money
- Understand your credit score
- Recognize warning signs.

Space is limited and reservations are required. Please call, 716-335-7400 to reserve your spot. The workshop is being presented by Children & Family Services of Niagara Ways to Work Loan Program.

## Provider Surveys



Thank you to all providers who completed and returned the provider survey. The feedback that is provided on the survey helps the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara to make changes that will improve the quality of the services that we provide. The deadline to return the survey to the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara is February 29, 2012. A summary report of the survey results will be compiled and posted on our website at [www.childcareofniagara.com/news](http://www.childcareofniagara.com/news).