

**WORKING PARENTS' NEED FOR HOME-BASED FAMILY CHILDCARE  
SERVICES IN DELAWARE COUNTY, NEW YORK STATE**

A POSTION PAPER  
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Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes

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First Reader: Sandra Raviv  
Second Reader: Mildred Warner

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### Abstract

This position paper examines the causes of and solutions needed to address the decrease of licensed childcare providers for working parents in Delaware County, New York State. The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 and subsequent family policies, coupled with scientific research on child development, challenge perceptions of the childcare provider's job description and training requirements. In Delaware County childcare may be an "invisible" business, that acts as a babysitting service, with little economic value. Solutions and family friendly policies are reviewed here to identify key elements needed to address the multiple issues that influence the parent's decision to use childcare, an individual's decision to enter the childcare profession, and the County civic leadership's decision to invest in childcare services as an industry crucial to Delaware County's economic vitality. Implementation and maintenance of a solution require participants from each sphere within the bio-ecological family system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to collaborate as stakeholders.

### Acknowledgements

The following individuals graciously agreed to be interviewed and provided data:

Elizabeth Davis, family childcare provider.

Debra Davis, Work Experience Coordinator-Early Childhood Program, Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES, Harrold Campus, Delaware County, New York State.

Paul R. Eberts, PhD., Cornell University, Department of Development Sociology.

Betsy Feuerstein, Coordinator, Capital District Child Care Coordinating Council, New York State.

Shirley Forman, Senior Family & Child Services Specialist, Delaware Opportunities, Inc., Delaware County, New York State.

Annette Friedrich, Assistant Director, Rainbow Day Care and After School Program, Sidney, Delaware County, New York State.

Glenn Nealis, Director, Delaware County Department of Economic Development, New York State.

Carol Saginaw, Executive Director, New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, Albany, New York State.

Director. Delaware County Office of Employment & Training, New York State.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction and Statement of the Problem

### *Introduction*

This position paper examines the causes of and solutions needed to close the growing lack of licensed (formal) family home-based childcare providers for working parents in Delaware County, New York State. Delaware County is designated as a “rural periphery” county (Eberts & Merschrod, Chapter 2), in which its communities have less than 6,000 people, and “relatively low commuting rates” (ibid., p. 16). Here the scarcity of licensed providers can be felt acutely by those working parents with children ages birth to school age, as providers are mandated by NYS Office of Children and Family Services Title 18 for the number of children simultaneously in care. Thus, parents are left with few options, and may look to informal, unlicensed care provided by family, a neighbor or local teenager.

### *Methodology*

To research this issue, I reviewed welfare legislation and subsequent family policies, studied county data and socio-economic trends, and examined family friendly and workforce initiatives developed elsewhere to identify key elements needed to encourage parents, providers, educators, agency staffs, *and* employers to be stakeholders in implementing a flexible and responsive solution. Also, I met with:

- educators, county agency staffs, and childcare providers, and attended conferences to appreciate how current scientific research on family issues and child development direct professional development and trainings for childcare providers;
- Delaware County staff involved with the economic development and workforce training;
- and state agency staffs to understand of the impact of family policies and the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 that have led to the increase of working parents now needing childcare.

*Contacts*

Mrs. Elizabeth Davis is a licensed family home-based childcare provider, who entered this field to be a stay-at-home parent for their youngest child while earning an income. She currently cares for her daughter and two-three other children on a schedule that meets those parents' needs. Partly because of the low income she earns and the erratic schedule of her clients, she is considering looking for full time work with benefits once her daughter starts Kindergarten.

Debra Davis now works for the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES in their Harrold Campus-Delaware County site as a Work Experience Coordinator in the Early Childhood Program. She connects students who have completed their Child Development Associate degree with regionally based childcare centers. Prior to this position, she coordinated the Early Childhood Program as the lead educator in Harrold Campus site for 15 years.

Paul Eberts co-authored with Kris Merschrod *Socioeconomic Trends 2000 and Well-Being Indicators in New York State, 1950-2000*. This, coupled with several email correspondences from Dr. Eberts, provides essential information about Delaware County to document working parents' need for childcare.

Betsy Feuerstein (Coordinator, Capital District Child Care Coordinating Council) and Carol Saginaw (Executive Director, NYS Child Care Coordinating Council) provided background information that educated me about the complexities of legislation, funding, and professional development on the childcare profession.

Shirley Forman, in her capacity as Senior Family & Child Services Specialist at Delaware Opportunities, Inc., shared Delaware County data on requests for childcare services. Delaware Opportunities, Inc., as Delaware County's Community Action Program agency, has the

registering and certification oversight responsibilities for family and group family home-based providers. Delaware Opportunities, Inc. is also a member of the Capital District Child Care Coordinating Council.

Annette Friedrich is Assistant Director to her husband of the Rainbow Day Care and After School Center, a non-for-profit service located in Sidney, Delaware County. They have operated this business for over 20 years, which business is one of four childcare centers in that community.

Glenn Nealis, Director of the Delaware County Department of Economic Development, provided data on employers to encourage their participation in addressing childcare needs of their employees that supplemented county data from Eberts and Merschrod, and US Census reports, and shared personal experience as his wife is a family childcare provider.

The Director of the Delaware County Office of Employment & Training, spoke about this agency's services of "soft skills" training and connecting employers with applicants.

### *Literature*

From social policy and cultural perspectives, childcare has historically been viewed as a mother's non-paid responsibility, within the private domain of the home and family, and outside of public and legislative support and scrutiny. Nevertheless, the line between private and public domains for families has become blurred (Zimmerman, p. x) since the mid-1960s. National and state family policy legislation, stemming from President Johnson's War on Poverty, were developed to address the impact of poverty on low income and working poor families' abilities to care for themselves and move back into economic self-sufficiency. The Welfare Reform Act of 1996, and current reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families impact welfare recipients' lives through the work participation requirements.

However, the problem of working parents needing and finding childcare is no longer only a welfare issue of single parent families, or of families living in economically depressed areas nor no longer only in localized geo-spatial clusters of poverty (Rupasingha & Goetz). It is a growing financial problem for middle class families, who may find their dual-incomes insufficient to cover the costs for the family's basic needs and for raising children (Reisman, quoted by Louv, February 10, 1999). Based on trends identified by Eberts and Merschrod, in rural counties like Delaware, residents are seeing economic and employment opportunities decline in their agricultural industries while experiencing growth in manufacturing and retail/wholesale skills to high technology and human services skills (Eberts & Merschrod, p. 71).

I will compare the NYS Self-Sufficiency Standards and Census Data with the US Department of Health and Human Services' poverty guidelines and thresholds. These are updated annually and are based on the US Department of Agriculture's structure and definitions for a family's cost for food established in 1965. Such comparison highlights the discrepancies between working parents' expenses and income, and government's identification of the minimal financial base individuals and/or families need to cover basic necessities. The government's levels are based on data collected in the previous year, thus showing a time-lag behind current earnings and the dollar's purchasing power. These levels cannot and do not reflect the financial juggling of family expenses parents go through when seeking and paying for childcare.

### *Statement of the Problem*

#### *Exchanges and Choices*

The family is society's smallest reproductive unit and transmitter of social and cultural values, thus it is important that society protects and nurtures the family's well-being. The family "is the fundamental reproductive, socialization, and economic unit of society" (Eberts &

Merschrod, p. xv; Zimmerman, p. x). As seen by the bio-ecological family system (Zimmerman, Chapter 15), “the family unit exists within an ecological system of nested environments and relationships that are interdependent and interrelated” (Bronfenbrenner, referred to by Zimmerman, p. x), and families’ internal well-being is dependent upon, impacted by and influences societal external systems (ibid.). “Family policy is concerned with the *problems* of families in relation to society, and its goal is the *advancement of family wellbeing*” (p. ix, emphasis added).

The exchange and choice theory “refers to the choices made by families and their members, [while] the concept of exchange necessarily implies and involves the choices of systems with which families interact” (Zimmerman, p. 303). Working parents apply an exchange and choice approach to evaluate their childcare needs and to identify their threshold level of stress when addressing this need in the context of the family’s well-being. Low and middle class parents with children ages birth to school age face the dilemma of staying home to care for their children with a loss of income vs. working, usually outside of the home, with increases in income and expenses.

They examine their values and priorities against financial needs, because perceptions of financial stress, as in experiencing economic hardship or economic pressure (Conger et al., 1994, quoted by Dunifon, 2002a), negatively impacts the parents’ ability to protect the family’s well-being (Dunifon, 2002a). The lack of money, or poor stewardship of the family’s finances, can lead to marital conflict between the adults, who then executive less effective parenting skills. Poor parenting or disciplining skills potentially lead to “negative child outcomes such as increased behavior problems” (Skinner, Elder, & Conger, 1992, quoted by Dunifon, 2002a) and “lower school achievement” (Dunifon, 2002a).

Other concerns that can result in stress are the availability and proximity of work and commuting time, work schedules (e.g., part time, full time, or second or third shifts), and the reality of what marketable skills parents possess to land a job with benefits and attractive wages. Also, parents rely on family support structure (e.g., grandmother provides child care, or relatives to help out with expenses and transportation) and accessibility of community resources, and how close a fit community resources and family friendly policies meeting their needs.

For parents to feel competent in caring for their children, their resources and bi-directional connections with other adults need to be adequate and not jeopardize by long-term crises, and “adverse social and physical environmental conditions” (Evans, quoted by Lang, April 9, 2004). The family’s resiliency arises out of the collective assemblage of their strengths and assets and buffered by accessible community resources that enables them to “bounce back from stress and crisis” (McCoy, p. 3).

### *Three Sub-Problems and Hypotheses*

The problem of the scarcity of qualified, affordable and accessible family childcare providers (henceforth “providers”) can be split into three primary sub-problems and hypotheses that are grounded in welfare reform and subsequent family policies, psychological dilemmas, financial needs, societal or cultural expectations, scientific research, and funding supports.

#### *First Sub-Problem*

Identify working parents’ decisions to find quality, accessible, and affordable home-based family childcare providers.

#### *Hypothesis*

The gap in the demand/supply of home-based family childcare providers becomes more visible as more parents decide to use licensed childcare.

*Parental Decision to Use Childcare*

The lack of home-based family childcare services is an acute problem for parents with children ages birth to school age. These parents may be seeking employment, be it first time, re-entry, or in compliance with regulations under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. They may be commuting to jobs 60+ miles from home or are assigned second or third shift. They need childcare beyond the 8a.m.-5p.m. hours and during school vacations and summer months. For many parents, whose children are between 6 weeks to 24 months old, finding accessible and affordable home-based providers is difficult; some mothers, while pregnant, begin their search for a provider as soon as possible. The mandated ratio between provider and this age group is 1 adult to 2 children (Scram, February 26, 2003, p. 2; NYS Office of Children and Family Services, Title 18, Section 413). Many of the County's licensed providers already meet that quota, and cannot accommodate current or new clients with newborns.

It is assumed that parents seek caregivers whom they can trust, and with whom they enjoy open communication and common social values. Parents use caregivers who provide safety and supervision, and, secondarily, prepare young children for school success and future careers. Quality care shapes young children's socialization, language, and socio-emotional skills which are the foundation blocks to academic readiness (Newberger, 2000; Phillips, 2001; Shonkoff, 2004). With the emphasis on all students doing well academically through the Leave No Child Behind Act, quality care and educational enrichment in a child's early years becomes a focal point in licensed providers' training and professional development.

Further research on the family/work balance issues shows that parents' work productivity can be diminished; too many absences related to child care can lead to job dismissal. Parents'

stress is not just accessing care that meets their needs and expectations, but also an issue of budgeting their time and energy, and finding reliable community and family resources. And, if childcare is split among unlicensed or informal and licensed caregivers and some after school program, the children may experience stress with multiple transitions from care to home.

### *Second Sub-Problem*

Investigate the societal benefits of having providers with early childhood training and professional development, whose time, talents, and knowledge are crucial for the children's well-being and mental health.

### *Hypotheses*

The following societal benefits of having professional trained providers are:

- providers usually have working spouses whose income covers family cost of living expenses, and therefore they themselves are not likely to be on welfare assistance.
- providers seek their professional training locally: Delaware Opportunities, Inc.'s monthly video conferences; Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Delaware County's home visitation nutrition education program; distance learning opportunities offered through the State University of New York system<sup>1</sup>; and Child Development Associate's Degree program offered in both the Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES Occupational Center and Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES Harrold Campus sites serving Delaware County.
- providers who seek locally available and "creditable" training, such as offered through Delaware Opportunities, Inc., Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, and BOCES (Shirley Forman, personal communication, November 28, 2005), can network with peers and experts.

- providers link families between their micro system as a family and their connections within the macro and exo-systems of society, as described in Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological family systems theory (Zimmerman, Chapter 15).
- providers model the community's social and moral values and family culture to the children in care (ibid.).
- providers are sensitive to children's needs because of their professional training.
- providers program enrichment experiences that promote long lasting school readiness and success outcomes for the children in care.

#### *Individual's Decision To Be A Provider*

Some individuals choosing to become a childcare provider fail to recognize the important role they can play in a child's early social and cognitive development. A primary function of a provider is to be a role model of community and social values and more, while providing discipline and guidance to the children in care, especially in terms of learning self-control over one's impulses (Child Trends DataBank, Summer 2004, Importance section). A secondary role, and one of growing importance based on the findings presented in the National Research Council Institute of Medicine's report *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (2000), is nurturing the mental health of children, especially the socio-emotional well-being for children ages birth to three, as this is a key foundation block for the children's future academic success.

#### *Data—Motivation*

According to Debra Davis (personal communication, November 4, 2005), high school and adult students receiving a Child Development Associate Degree through BOCES are eligible to work for childcare centers or to operate their own provider business. Some of her high school

students selected this program because they thought it was academically an easy route to a degree, or some one had told them they work well with kids.

During the past 17 years, she has had at least two students per year (out of 15-20 in each 2 year CDA course --approximately 30 students -- 10% of 300 students) who could barely read *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Eric Carle) to preschoolers in the Harrold Campus BOCES preschool center. Their literacy level was poor. Whether or not students find reading Eric Carle's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* difficult, Ms. Davis feels that many students also lack the understanding how to extend this reading into preschoolers' day to day experiences. Center-based childcare employers are concerned that as staff, these students may then lack sufficient training, and the broad perspective and discipline management skills needed to be effective early childhood educators.

According to Elizabeth Davis (personal communication, December 2, 2005), she uses her provider business as an opportunity to care for her two year old daughter while earning some moneys by caring for other children. This reasoning reflects a form of the exchange and choice theory, as she and her husband prioritize and value their time to be with their child and to guide their child's development during her early years.

### *Third Sub-Problem*

Generate public awareness that there is a dire need for professionally trained providers and provide incentives that increase the numbers of applicants; and generate public awareness that these childcare businesses contribute to the economic well-being of Delaware County.

### *Hypothesis*

County collaborators and stakeholders would be committed to developing and implementing solutions that reward individuals entering the childcare profession with financial, benefits, and

training incentives. Stakeholders, like employers, parents, and civic leaders would recognize the importance of family well-being and how “quality of care for today’s children has significant implications for tomorrow’s workforce” (The Early Education Partnership, Investing in Early Education section) as the stabilizing and building blocks to Delaware County’s economic vitality. Civic leaders would identify childcare profession as part of the family-friendly environment to encourage both new residents and businesses to called Delaware County “home”.

### *Solution*

Thus, the holistic solution to satisfy the supply/demand for providers in Delaware County should encompass social, cultural, academic, scientific, legislative, and psychological elements. Examples of some elements are: young children’s socio-emotional and cognitive skills as academic preparation; parental values, priorities, and needs in the home and workplace; providers’ training, and financial incentives and stability to encourage new and current providers to stay in the profession; State legislative mandates for childcare vs. County level oversight to ensure consistent and quality training and licensing; and employers’ support to be flexible to their workers’ needs on the job and at home.

A working solution needs to include parents, providers, county leadership, schools, *and* employers as stakeholders. They too can apply the exchange and choice approach in evaluating their investments against potential profits through cost-benefit analyses. Employers rely on employees’ productivity levels to be high in order to maintain optimum business flow and customer service. As they are encouraged to view adequate quality childcare services as beneficial to employees’ work and attitude, they may willingly share their expertise to develop and implement an economic strategy for Delaware County that meets working parents’ needs for non-parental childcare.

*Conclusion*

There are three interlocking circles that describe the attributes of communities supportive of families (1<sup>st</sup> Annual NYS Conference On Infancy, Implementation Planner for Supportive Communities, 2004). The first priority is strong families, whose children are to be ready to process information from their environment and relationships. These attributes provide guidance for Delaware County's stakeholders to develop a solution in working parents' need for childcare. Each circle addresses the importance of communities' services and assets need to be better coordinated, more comprehensive and holistic, and streamlined.

The first circle focuses on Healthy Children – “the whole child and encompasses all developmental domains...environmental safety, positive nutrition, healthy pregnancies, and positive birth outcomes”. The second circle supports Strong Families – “the child in the context of his family and identifies the critical attributes of healthy relationships...the needs for adequate basic economic supports [and] the health and mental health of adult caregivers and preparation for parenting.” The third circle points out to the socio-emotional development of children as crucial to their Early Learning – “How do relationships and responsiveness affect [the child's] early development? And lay a foundation for success?”

This position paper is an initial step that points to the importance of a county-wide investment in childcare services. One anticipated outcome is that this paper will trigger funded needs assessment research and program developments to clarify working parents' needs, recognize new uses for county resources and assets, and develop and implement creative solutions to reward childcare providers as professionals.

## Chapter 2 – Delaware County: Legislation and Socio-economic Trends

This Chapter addresses two interlocking issues that impact on working parents' need for childcare. Part 1 of this Chapter shows how the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), and subsequent family policies impact families' growing need for childcare. There are gaps in family well-being that these pro-family policies fail to rectify. These gaps exist in part because of complexity of the legislation and some legislative contradictory policies, and the unforeseen downward socio-economic shifts since 2000 in Delaware County.

Part 2 examines the socio-economic trends in Delaware County to show the lack of career opportunities with competitive wages and benefits to attract and retain young adults who may wish to live here and raise their families. Lacking is the recognition of the important contribution of a support services infrastructure for county business employers and their employees. Childcare professionals, like nurses in the healthcare industry, provide services that entail long hours and are labor intensive jobs, and are dependent upon by the "sandwich generation" of working parents fraught with the dual responsibilities of caring for their young children and elderly parents.

Also, existing pro-family policies leave gaps in supporting family well-being in part because of the lag between the time to accumulate and analyze census data and to devise timely responses. Economic shifts that jeopardize or weaken families' strengths and community links are best handled on a grassroots or local level. Part 3 in this Chapter 2 proposes that what can be better addressed and, specifically what are the "disconnect" or gaps between the poverty thresholds, as determined by the US Department of Health and Human Services, and actual income levels working parents need to become and remain self-sufficient. Families battling

these gaps experience stress, and juggle their choices to minimize stress and to optimize outcomes for family well-being.

Other impacts on these childcare issues come from scientific research. Chapter 3 presents several ways this research on child development is shaping the expertise training for providers. There is a growing public awareness that quality childcare experiences boost children's academic success. However, quality childcare is expensive for both parents and providers. More working parents are stressed over stretching and juggling their budgets to afford, and to access, quality childcare, and may opt for inexpensive, informal and unlicensed care from a relative or neighbor. Both center based and home-based childcare entrepreneurs struggle to make a profit and to stay in business, while keeping up with training requirements for licensing and certification.

Chapter 4 explores employers' concerns and responses to employees' needs for childcare and for balancing family and work responsibilities. Pro-family policies in the workplace, like the Family Medical Leave Act and tax deferred Flexible Spending Plans, are discussed in both Chapters 2 and 4. The NYS Child Care Coordinating Council, under the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, sponsors the Child Care That *Works* campaign coalition with the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy. Employers are updated on family legislation and tax credits to share with their employees. Internet searches using "parenting", "families", "child development" provide links to other advocacy groups, e-newsletters, and research. Philanthropic funders, like the Ewing Marion Kauffman and Annie E. Casey Foundations, support research of various job initiative programs, and employer sponsored childcare services for their employees.

Employers are concerned about profits. In order to encourage their participation as stakeholders in Delaware County, two actions are needed. One, their concerns need to be

identified and recognized. Based on national examples of corporations that adopt family friendly policies, employers' support pays off with intangible benefits of more productive employees and employees' job satisfaction that translate into better customer service and company profits. Two, an economic environment needs to be developed and implemented that encourages more businesses and services agencies to set up shop in this County, whose employees would be young parents.

Chapter 5 reviews elements needed to develop county-wide solutions that could be considered by Delaware County stakeholders. The solutions barely scratch the surface, and should be viewed only as catalysts for brainstorming. Solutions will not be realistic nor implemented until the stakeholders "own" the problem and work creatively together to develop and implement a county-wide practical and flexible program. Unfortunately, solutions may not occur county-wide as the size and mountainous terrain of Delaware County seem to foster isolation and individualism, or self-dependence.

#### Part 1 – Welfare Reform Act of 1996 and Subsequent Legislation

The persistence of poverty may seem distasteful to many Americans, who are perhaps tired of rising taxes on their income to support programs that should have eliminated or reduced poverty's existence. People tend to expect legislation to be individual or problem specific, and can be frustrated when they see how little family policies seem to achieve. Chambers and Wedel point out that:

Public policies generally are not designed with the needs of individuals in mind; rather they are designed for groups of people who share a common social problem. It is of utmost importance....to understand that because of this feature, social policies and programs will fail some, perhaps many, individuals on some occasions....The more

unique a citizen's situation is, the less likely it is that policies and programs will meet his or her need (*Social Policy and Social Programs*, pp. 2, 4).

Current social attitudes, as reflected by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), propose that families in poverty need to be "enabled" (Gilbert & Terrell, p. 37) to move themselves out of poverty and into economic stability through work. Some funds in this Act are also earmarked for agencies' staffs to be trained to "empower" individuals and parents as part of the case management process between the agencies and clients (Dean, 1994). Empowerment tactics include educational outreach to equip these clients with parental, budgeting, workforce training, and healthy lifestyles skills.

Federal and state pro-family/childcare policies, and fiscal supports are government's top-down responses to working parents' needs for childcare. These need to be analyzed against the attributes of supportive communities identified on the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual NYS Conference On Infancy Implementation Planner for Supportive Communities handout (see Chapter1):

- How successfully do these responses empower parents to control their balancing the demands of work and family;
- What other responses need to be developed to strengthen parents' roles as the primary caregiver for their children; and,
- In what ways do these response nurture young children's early learning experiences and successful bonding in their relationships with others?

#### *Federal Legislation – Welfare Reform Act of 1996*

In the restructuring of the Aid to Dependent Families into the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) under the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), legislation moved national policies and program eligibility decisions to be

implemented as the states' discretionary responsibility. Ideally this enables the states to be responsive effectively, efficiently, and timely to their citizens' needs, while empowering participants in finding and retaining employment. States able to decrease their caseloads while maintaining eligibility levels free up TANF dollars, and the Federal government's matching dollar component, to fund other programs aimed at strengthening families, improving childcare providers' certification, and increasing childcare services.

However, there are serious problems with implementation of PRWORA and distribution of TANF moneys; different components of welfare programs that dictate distribution of welfare funds contradict the overall goal of family well-being. (Cancian, September 2005). Dollars and eligibility requirements define individual programs, while seemingly ignoring a parent's needing to satisfy eligibility requirements to receive benefits in another program. One example is the work requirement for parents, while ignoring their required parental involvement if their child is in a Head Start program.

#### *Delaware County's Caseloads from 1996 to Present*

One goal of PRWORA is to move welfare recipients into employment. During the first five years post PRWORA the national economy improved. Welfare recipients moved into jobs, got some training to retain work, and received TANF dollars that subsidized their childcare needs. Even New York State's economy showed improvement. The report Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of TANF Recipients states "In FY 2001, 27 percent of adult recipients were employed, about 2.44 times the 1996 employment rate of 11 percent and four times the rate of the early 1990's" (US Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/character/FY2001/characteristics.htm>).

Delaware County's caseloads also showed decreases in enrolled recipients. According to Department of Social Services Commissioner Moon, "Between 1970 and 1990, Delaware County's social services client base...usually fluctuated between 1,250 and 1,700 (approximately 480 to 740 cases)... By March of 1994, the rise had come to about 2,3000 persons (1,014 cases)...By the close of 1999, there were just 350 assistance clients, or 180 open cases" (Eberhard, March 2000, Foreward section, pp. iv-v). Much of this decline was due to both improvements in the national and state economies, and "with the advent of 'work first' in New York State" (ibid, p. v).

*TANF Reauthorization Bill of 2006 Threatens Working Parents' Self-Sufficiency*

Carol Saginaw, Director of NYS Child Care Coordinating Council (personal communications, January 27, 2006 and March 9, 2006) is "greatly concerned about the future of childcare funding" because the complexity of funds shifted around at the national level impacts the federal funding distribution to New York State and allocations within New York State's funds to individual counties.

Recent policy briefs discuss the potential effects of the anticipated legislation on the 2006 Reauthorization of TANF. Writers for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center for Law and Social Policy, National Women's Law Center, National Center for Children in Poverty (Columbia University) warn of more financial struggles for working parents and welfare recipients. They voice concerns over the decreasing supports for these families to become economically self-sufficient, through finding and retaining work and workforce training, while accessing and paying for quality childcare and other community resources.

Additionally, the anticipated absorption by Congress to shift TANF financing from being its own program for reauthorization to being included under the Budget Reconciliation bill may

decrease further states' allotment to operate welfare services and family well-being programs. Working and single parents may feel a shrinking safety net that jeopardizes their move into financial self-sufficiency and security. In 2003, Delaware County's Social Services Commissioner needed to reduce the eligibility requirements for TANF benefits to the 150-185% threshold above poverty income from the 200% threshold in order to stretch his funds further (McAdam, 2003). Further financial complications for county agencies and residents include the shrinking value for the dollar and rising fuel and gas costs in the past two years.

The Center for Law and Social Policy's briefs discuss the "troubling provisions" in the Federal Budget Reconciliation bill and with the Welfare Reauthorization Bill. Crucial concerns are that reductions in TANF funding means that families will lose child care assistance; states will have fewer funds for child care; and states will be required to increase work participation by 69% while receiving less funding to support the costs related to this increase, and states will still be penalized for non-compliance, even though the Child Care and Development Block Grant "has been funded at the same level since 2002". (<http://www.clasp.org/NewsFlash/Reconcil>, updated January 26, 2006).

Because the initial 2000 data showed caseload decreases and economic upturns, Congressional legislation added credit incentives to states that successfully reduced their caseloads without reducing eligibility. In 2003, only Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin and Wyoming were not penalized as they satisfied the 50% work participation of welfare individuals and 90% work participation for two-parent families requirements. This enabled them to receive "a caseload reduction credit which allowed them to maintain a much lower work rate"(National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, TANF Reauthorization and Child Care, 2006).

Under the 2006 TANF Reauthorization guidelines, states like New York have three options to “re-earn” this caseload reduction credit. Caseload reduction can reflect either the 50% of individuals on public assistance or 90% of two-parent welfare recipients entering the workforce (NACCRRRA, 2006). This ruling ignores the ages of the children in the family, and contradicts or jeopardizes a family’s well-being by removing children’s primary caregiver – a parent -- out of the home. There is controversy over the long-term impact on children’s socio-emotional and self-management behaviors if they are in childcare for 30+hours/week (Loeb et al, November 2005).

#### *Federal Fiscal Supports for Low-Income Working Parents*

Examples of Congressional legislation in response to working parents’ needs are the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) , federal and state wage/tax credits to parents, and incentives for employees to set aside tax deferred accounts for retirement and flexible spending accounts for dependent care assistance plans. These policy and fiscal supports are valuable resources. Parents are empowered to act for themselves by managing and balancing their family needs with work responsibilities, and are encouraged to put aside what pre-taxed moneys they can afford from their earnings.

#### *Family Medical Leave Act*

However, according to Munoz’s article in *The Wall Street Journal* about FMLA, employers have concerns that staff would and do abuse the provision, causing employers and fellow employees to feel unfairly burdened. Employees need to submit their requests for a leave of absence for their employers’ approval and determination that they qualify under FMLA’s guidelines. The administrative reporting and record keeping “cost business \$203 million to \$247

million a year, according to Ed Potter, president of the Employment Policy Foundation, a research institute in Washington” (Munoz, January 24, 2005).

Yet for staff whose requests are approved, this Act does provide considerable relief from stress and worry about caring for a dying parent or a sick child, or recovering from major surgery or pregnancy, while being assured of job-guaranteed upon return to work. “‘FMLA has made an extraordinary difference in the lives of over 50 million Americans who haven’t had to choose between their jobs and caring for a family member,’ says Jodi Grant, director of work family programs for the National Partnership for Women and Families, an advocacy group in Washington” (Munoz, January 24, 2005).

#### *Earned Income Tax Credit and Flexible Spending Accounts*

The tax benefits, like Earned Income Tax Credit, Federal Childcare Tax Credit, and Flexible Spending Accounts are available for working parents. Earnings need to be at or below the 185% of poverty guidelines (the income guidelines for the Women, Children & Infants program). The Federal tax credit “covers from 20% to 35%” of a family’s childcare annual expenses. Parents can claim childcare tax credits on both their Federal (even if they owe nothing) and New York State income taxes. “By using both the Federal and State tax credits [on income earned in 2002], a family can save up to \$,2,205 for one child or \$4,410 for 2 or more....[Using] Earned Income Tax Credit....A family with one child earning less than \$28,000 can receive up to \$2,428” (Child Care is Expensive... We Can Help! The Day Care and Child Development Council of Tompkins County brochure, May 2002).

Flexible Spending Accounts allow parents, regardless of income, to set aside pre-tax up to \$5,000. In cases where this payroll deduction reduces total income to or below the 185% income guidelines, parents have further incentive to claim tax childcare costs credits (ibid).

Yet if parents do not use these moneys, they cannot carry them over to the following year.

*New York State Pro-Family/Childcare Efforts*

According to the New York State Association of Counties, there is a relationship between New York State and its counties that is unique within America: “In New York, unlike any other state in the nation, counties are bound to tremendous mandated responsibilities that account for the lion’s share of local budgets and the tax dollars that support them” (Counties at a Crossroad, 2001-2002, pp. 26-27). Two Budget Priorities for New York State’s Budget 2001-2002 were:

a) Family & Children’s Services—“Support reform of the Children’s Services Block Grant to ensure adequate funding and local flexibility to meet the needs of the population served by the child welfare system.” Perhaps Governor Pataki’s Flexible Fund for Families addressed this in previous years, but how large will his Flexible Fund be in this year’s budget?

b) Economic Development/Environment—“Support expansion of the Empire Zones Program.” – as seen in *The Daily Star* for January 4, 2006, Delaware and Schoharie Counties “will have to continue waiting to get Empire Zones” status. Other New York State legislation supports, identified in 2000, have moneys earmarked for early education programs, such as Universal PreKindergarten (which parallel Head Start’s services and require parental involvement), Experimental PreKindergarten, Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program (for families and infants at high-risk), and Partners for Children (such as the Success by 6 program).

Part 2 -- Socio-Economic Trends

From 2000 to 2005, Delaware County residents experienced economic and workplace market downturns, while their household expenses, notably utility and fuel costs, rose. TANF dollars in the individual states’ budgets were not increased or re-funded by Congress. In New

York State, the gaps between the well-to-do vs. both the middle and low classes widened considerably (Income Inequality, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities/Economic Policy Institute, January 2006), while the state's population decreased as workers moved out of the state and from rural communities to cities for job opportunities and better pay.

Economic conditions, coupled with stricter federal and state welfare to work policies, threaten Delaware County's families and businesses to stay on track with financial self-sufficiency and savings. An examination of the socio-economic trends since 1950 shows a potential decline in families' well-being that can have serious consequences for the County's economic future. An underlying negative attitude, a graying population, and divergent expectations about the quality of life in Delaware County present a contradictory image of economic opportunities and support services infrastructures. Perceived obstacles and attitudes are not viewed as opportunities and assets. Assets and strengths remain unrecognized, and concerns and solutions from one community to another are not shared county-wide. Many civic leaders and county agencies' directors have held their positions for over 20+ years, leaving little room for competition, new ideas, and aggressive searches for economic vitality and development opportunities.

#### *Socioeconomic Trends in Delaware County*

Delaware County is home to the Catskill Mountains and trout filled streams. Its size of 1,446 sq. miles (<http://quickfacts.census.gov>) makes it as large as Rhode Island. The County's mountainous terrain and farmland beauty, protected by environmental legislation and accessibility from Long Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, attracts a steady growth of micro-enterprise businesses in real estate, recreation, tourism, crafts, residential construction, and agricultural niche produce and extractive products. Visitors and new residents

see an image that life in Delaware County is both safe and peaceful. However, many newcomers may have less need for childcare than the indigenous families with young children. Newer residents are older couples with either school aged or grown up children, retirees, or individuals in their mid-40s-50s whose New York City earnings are capital for a second career that relies on computer technology and high-speed internet.

*Shifts in the Workforce, Wealth, and Population*

Delaware County's economy shows a growing lack of opportunities for young adults seeking to live here and to raise a family. Newer residents, who are older adults, may have sufficient financial resources and incomes to live comfortably, start new micro-enterprises, or retire. There is a potential conflict of needs and concerns between these two groups, as young people want careers that offer advancement, better wages, and good benefits, and older adults already possessing these, who look for a quality of life that the rural farm life suggests.

Operating farms are shrinking in numbers as it becomes harder to make profits on mountainous terrain<sup>ii</sup> and in light of environmental regulations. In 1950, there were 3,234 farms and by 2000 there were 717, even though typical farm acreage in 1950 was 48 and by 2000 this had increased to 96 (Eberhard, p. iv; Eberts & Merschrod, p. A-26). Profits from traditional dairy and farming productions are shrinking: in 1950 Farm Sales per acre were \$950, and in 2000 \$634 (Eberts & Merschrod, p. A-26). Farm employment opportunities are decreasing, and young adults raised on farms, now needing new training and opportunities either move or commute to jobs elsewhere.

Farming families are viewed as self-sufficient in feeding themselves, however, as one indirect outcome of the decrease in farms and as one key indicator for poverty, more families or young parents seem to experience greater food insecurity. Under the Social Security program,

farmers were not perceived as earning an income and therefore had no or little retirements funds socked away. “On the family farm, the margin between selling out and staying in business had become significantly contracted and fewer than twenty [welfare] clients were being placed by social services in farm jobs during 1999” (Eberhard, p. iv).

Historically farmwives sold homemade foods and crafts, or found part time work that was flexible around their needs to be at home for school aged children or elderly parents while providing cash for retail products and machinery. Yet, whether 20 years ago or today, these women and divorced or single parents may not be receiving needed health and pension benefits if they are working part time, or full time in retail service jobs, at Wal-Mart or Pizza Hut and earn minimum wage. Many need to find non-parental childcare that is flexible to their work schedules, yet may have no option other than relative and informal care. This kind of care a) may strengthen family bonds; b) provide little academic enrichment experiences; and, c) not be licensed for the child’s safety by NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Research and studies done by Roy et al, and Votruba-Drzal et al. show for non-white families in Chicago single low-income mothers who juggle tasks around work, family, and reporting to their case managers are most vulnerable for retaining employment. It is assumed that Delaware County working low-income mothers are similarly vulnerable. They may experience difficulties in finding and retaining work if they need time to care for a sick child.

Policy briefs that compare wages between genders also document that women earn two-thirds or three-quarters salary of their male peers for similar positions (Institute for Women’s Policy Research #C350; Associated Press, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 2005, p. A9). The poverty data below are based on the actual 2000 Census. Only estimates are available for later years, and may not provide clear indicators. US Census data dated December 2004, shows

poverty levels range between 13.1% for all ages or 6,004 individuals, or 19.1% for youth ages 0-17 years old, and 18.2% of the youth subgroup ages 5-17 years old.

Table 1 Poverty Data (NYS Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse)

Total Population in 2000	46,003 <sup>1</sup>	% of Pop.	2003 Estimated Population: 47,226
Poverty levels by population			
All ages in Poverty	5,915	12.9	
Children, Ages 0-17	2,052	4.5	
Children, Ages 5-17	1,463	3.2	
Children, Ages 0<5	589	1.3	
18 to 64	3,152	6.9	
64 to 75	368	.8	
>75	343	.7	

With the work incentives, or requirements, under the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, welfare recipients, especially single parents, are required to enter the workforce. The rising rates of both divorce and out of wedlock births are “significant contributing factor[s] to long term caseload increases. In 1960 only 3.7% of all births were out of wedlock. By 1990, this had increased seven fold to 28% “(Eberhard, p.iv). For Delaware County’s 50 year data overview on pages A-26 and A-27, Eberts and Merschrod show these rising percentage of women in workforce:

Table 2 Women in the Workforce (Eberts & Merschrod)

Persons Employed	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Employed	16,738	16,227	16,304	18,260	20,169	20,840 <sup>2</sup>
% Unemployed <sup>3</sup>	4.4	5.8	5.3	7.6	7.7	6.2
Women as % of the Work Force	24.4	30.4	36.2	41.6	45.4	51.8
Women as % Managers, Professionals in Work Force	15.5	17.7	19.8	19.4	21.9	31.6
Women as % Self-Employed in Work Force	29.3	10.9	14.7	13.3	13.7	12.8

<sup>1</sup> This website, for this Delaware County data, counts total population as 46,003; elsewhere in this website, Delaware County’s total population is counted as 48,055.

<sup>2</sup> Eberts & Merschrod count Delaware County’s total population as 48,055 for the year 2000.

<sup>3</sup> This might represent both the Unemployment Rate and those not looking for work or without significant work earnings.

In assessing the effectiveness of the Welfare Reform Act, county data shows that total caseloads from January 1995's level of 821 total cases dropped to June 1999's level of 219, representing a 73% reduction (Eberhard, p. 1). This reduction was the third most dramatic decrease in New York State. However, this outcome is not necessarily due to recipients transitioning from welfare to work, as growth in Delaware County's economy showed a 2.3% of jobs added by 1999 (ibid.). Other explanations can be offered: families and individuals found work outside of the county or moved elsewhere to collect welfare benefits as new recipients; individuals stopped applying for benefits as stricter controls could pinpoint fraudulent claims; recipients died, found work that is not reported, or started their own businesses and were able to claim startup expenses and credits that decreased what they owed in taxes.

The county's working population is decreasing, and aging out. The growing population of seniors is changing the business climate, but also points to a serious healthcare services need. According to the Director of Delaware County's Office for the Aging, Delaware County with its 20-25% senior population, has the highest senior population in New York State, and not enough young people are entering the healthcare profession (April 24, 2006). NYS Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse shows Actual Population in 2000 48,055, and New York State's QuickFacts website for Delaware County shows an Estimated Population in 2003 47,226 (July 1, 2003). This represents an -1.7% growth.

Table 3 Adult Population by Gender and Household Size (NYS Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse)

Total Population	48,055 <sup>4</sup>		
All Married Couple Families	10,143		
With own children 0-5 years	2,016		
All own children 0-17 years	7,566		
All Men	23,637	All Women	24,418
Between 18-64 years	14,041	Between 18-64 years	14,017
>65 years	3,863	> 65 years	5,063
Male Householders	901	Female Householders	1,676
With children 0-5 years	320	With children 0-5 years	410
All male children 0-17 years	5,733	All female children 0-17 years	5,338
Grandparents living with and responsible for own grandchildren <18 years	207		
With own children <5 years	102		

*Environmental Legislation and Computer Technology Affect Employment Potential*

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYC Department of Environmental Protection, and eventually the Chesapeake Bay Watershed through the Mid-Atlantic River Basin Task Forces (Glenn Nealis, personal communication, October 7, 2005), enact environmental regulations for both the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers Watersheds to maintain water purity. The Delaware Watershed and its two reservoirs are part of the New York City Water Supply System, while the Susquehanna River feeds into Chesapeake Bay. These regulations restrict the types of manufacturing businesses that can operate here, and govern farm operations to control animal waste contamination into the streams that feed the County's two reservoirs (ibid).

Computer technology affects employment opportunities by providing higher-paying jobs (DePalma, September 17, 2005, p. B4) and dictates stronger technical and people skills. It also demonstrates that distance between producer and customer, and in some cases, between employer and employee, is irrelevant. Individual business entrepreneurs, such as

<sup>4</sup> This website, for this specific data, counts Delaware County's population as 48,055.

“photographers, graphic designers, Web designers, publicists, writers and real estate agents are finding ways to conduct their business in the mountains” and stay connected with urban clients (ibid) through broadband or high-speed connections, fax machines, and digital camera as they work from home.

Data on the Top 30 Industries in Delaware County (Nealis, March 2002) show only two manufacturing companies with 1000+ employees, six businesses with between 500 and 100, seventeen with 90 and 20, and five companies with 12 to 19 employees. One company, Tyco HealthCare -Mallinckrodt, frequently expands its floor space and has about 440 employees. It is located in Hobart, one of the smallest communities in Delaware County. Nearby, a communication equipment manufacturing business with less than 100 employees, has received a major refinancing loan that enables employee retention and plant improvements (*The Watershed Advocate*, Autumn 2005, pp. 2, 3).

Nealis points out that these types of large businesses are important for Delaware County for several reasons: local work and health benefits are available for residents, especially for families with young children; financing is available through lenders investing in the County’s economy; contacts for the businesses come from distant markets; and I-88 is easily accessible. Computer technology spurs growth and facilitates business growth with new customers, without running counter to environmental regulations. This technology has dramatically modified the heavy labor-intensive and manufacturing jobs to mechanized or computer programmed work that women, or fewer employees, can perform. However, those small businesses with 10 or less employees may operate as sole proprietorships and micro-enterprise operations. Glenn Nealis, quoted by DePalma, sees “that while Web-based entrepreneurs are important, they cannot

provide the jobs the country needs, which will come from big projects” that hire large numbers of employees on a steady basis, and with health benefits (DePalma, September 17, 2005).

Businesses with lower staff numbers may not have available health benefits, pension fund, and full time employment for these staff<sup>iii</sup>. Also, if working parents need to take time to care for a sick child or elderly parent, they may be let go or not rehired because their work productivity decreased. The larger number of smaller size businesses indirectly highlights the growing gap of earnings power between those whose children enjoy quality licensed childcare vs. those whose children experience informal, unlicensed care.

#### *Empire Zone Status Awarded in Communities with Manufacturing Businesses*

The Job Impact Statement describes Empire Zone programming as “a job creation incentive....and investment for economically distressed areas” (NYS Register, November 9, 2005, p. 10).

Empire Zones are geographically defined areas where businesses have access to vacant land, existing industrial and commercial infrastructure, a skilled workforce and abundant resources such as power and water supplies. These zones are very attractive because they offer numerous tax incentives such as credits and exemptions, for qualifying businesses located with the zone. ‘Obtaining an Empire Zone designation for the county will level the playing field for attracting new jobs and enable us to positively influence business investment decisions’ stated Nealis (Pattison, August 19, 2005, p. 1).

Glenn Nealis, with county leadership, continues to seek Empire Zone or economic development status for some of the larger communities in Delaware County. This is one way to encourage more businesses to re-locate here, to create low environment impact products and

services, train and provide career advancement for employees, and hire young people graduating from area colleges<sup>iv</sup>.

According to *The Daily Star* for January 4, 2006, Delaware County did not receive Empire Zone status, but according to Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, may be awarded this status in the next go around (Delaware, Schoharie not given Empire Zones, p. 3). This means that Delaware County remains one of eleven New York State Counties still seeking the tax breaks and incentives to encourage businesses to locate or expand in this county.

Meanwhile, in Fall 2005, the Catskill Watershed Corporation awarded “a planning grant” for the establishment of an e-Commerce business incubator facility in Delhi for local start up business entrepreneurs (*The Watershed Advocate*, Catskill e Center will help launch businesses, August 2005). Nealis agrees that this service, coupled with assistance from the Delaware County’s Department of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Administration, and NYS Department of Labor, will be available for women and minorities entrepreneurs seeking to operate childcare businesses. Yet, by April 2006, this building is still empty.

#### *Unchanging Civic Leadership Can Impede Economic Growth*

In their report *The Causes of Enduring Poverty: An Expanded Spatial Analysis of the Structural Determinants of Poverty in the US*, Rupasingha and Goetz identify three key scenarios that contribute negatively to an area’s economic growth. They see these three indicators as having been “excluded” in previous analyses of persistent poverty in non-metropolitan rural counties (Executive Summary section, p. 1). The first indicator is that lack of “greater political competition in a county” which “is associated with lower poverty rates” (p. 1). In Delaware County, almost two-thirds of the town supervisors and their boards continue to be re-elected

every two years as there is little opposition and a sense of “why fix something that ain’t broke?” While these supervisors are not dishonest brokers of their constituents’ trust, they seem eager to protect their own fiefdom and lack the vision of a bigger picture.

The other two indicators include the replacing of the “mom and pop” community businesses with the big box retailers, like Home Depot, Wal-Mart, etc.; and a lack of recognizing the role that self-employment has for moving welfare recipients into stable work. It is possible for county economy to stagnate if county leadership does not encourage the growth of localized community businesses that contribute to the social capital to be found within that community, and that foster the establishing of an entrepreneurial, can-do spirit and civic participation. Rupasingha and Goetz point to Putnam’s concepts of social capital, civic engagement and a community’s trust in its leadership as indicators of that community’s economic well-being (p. 3). “We [Rupasingha and Goetz] hypothesize that many of these variables, such as degree of centralization of political power, degree of commitment of leadership to economic development, extent of government participation in economic activity, and strength of the labor movement also play a significant role in poverty alleviation or perpetuation in rural America” (p. 5)

*Socio-economic Trends—Support Services Infrastructure and Income Levels*

In socio-economic terminology, Delaware County is classified as a “rural periphery” county. Neighboring counties have urban centers with 9,500+ populations (Eberts & Merschrod, p. vii), while Delaware’s largest communities of Delhi, Sidney, Walton, and Stamford have less than 6,000 individuals ( <http://www.delawarecounty.org>). Delaware County is one of eight such counties in New York State, and ranks fifth for total population, between Sullivan County at 73,966 individuals, and Hamilton County’s population at 5,379 (Eberts & Merschrod, p. 19).

While the unemployment rate from 2000 through 2002 fluctuated from 4.2% to 5.2%, it decreased to 4.4% in December 2003 (ibid., p. 18). The median income estimated for 2002 is \$32,265 (www.census.gov, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, final release December 2004), while the US Census data for 2000 shows median household income as \$32,461 and median family income as \$39,695. The next table depicts the latest available incomes, but it must be remembered that these figures could be reflecting an economic upswing and the initial successes of the Welfare to Work initiatives from PRWORA. If these figures are relatively similar for families and households in Delaware County in 2004-2005, they do not reflect the rising household expenses and childcare costs:

Table 4 Employment and Family/Household<sup>v</sup> Income Levels for 1999 (US Census for 2000)

Population 16 years and over	38,528
Females	19,793
All Household	19,245
Earnings < \$10,000	2,048
Earnings \$10,001-\$34,999	8,267
Earnings >\$35,000	8,930
All Families	12,791
Earnings <\$10,000	715
Earnings \$10,001-\$34,999	4,876
Earnings >\$35,000	7,200

The State of the Workforce Report, compiled by the Chenango/Delaware/Otsego Counties Workforce Investment Board (March 2004), shows these indicators for 1990-2000 (Executive Summary section, p. 6):

- “CDO’s population [in this three county region] grew at very slow pace...with an increase of only 1% compared to a 5.5% for the state and 13.2% for the nation”;
- “The per capita income...is significantly lower than the statewide and national averages”;
- “The areas typical unemployed worker is a white, blue-collar worker between the ages of 40 and 44 who graduated from high school and last worked in construction or manufacturing”;

- “The skill gap in our region is becoming larger and larger based upon how our workers are trained as well as what is expected from our workers when they obtain the necessary skill requirements.”

The State of the Workforce Report shows that job increases are noticeable in the services and education sector (p. 14) that require computer and people skills. In the education field, 39% of professional staff in area schools near retirement, starting as young as 49 years old (p. 16). Meanwhile, the “retail/service occupations (twenty-three percent) reflects the area’s strong involvement in the tourism industry.” These positions include “cooks, waiters and waitresses, maids and housekeeping attendants” (pp. 9-10), which grew in three years (2000-2003) by 1,300 jobs, and jobs in the Food Services and Drinking industries grew 553 (p. 14). Many of these jobs are entry level, and the earnings are low, hours are long, and work can be tedious. Yet the available jobs are offered by the big box retailers and fast food restaurant chains that operate along the Otsego County portion of I-88. Delaware County’s economy loses valuable income and tax revenues as Wal-Mart, Loews, Home-Depot, BJ’s, and Hannafords hires Delaware County residents, whose income and sales taxes go to Otsego County.

*Fiscal Stability Challenges from Taxpayer-Funded Employment and Services*

On the other hand, the CDO Workforce Investment Board’s report highlights a warning found in the Public Policy Institute’s<sup>5</sup> 2004 report on New York State’s economy: “...the state’s economy has been heavily dependent on taxpayer-funded employment to provide job growth....proves self-defeating....Taxpayer-supported jobs are totally dependent upon the existence of taxpayers....Steadily growing the taxpayer-supported economy at the expense of the tax-paying economy is a one-way street leading to permanent decline.” (p. 12).

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<sup>5</sup> The Public Policy Institute is the research affiliate of The Business Council of New York State, Inc.

As Delaware County's population continues to age out, there is an increase need for healthcare services, professionals, and nursing care facilities. As more seniors, and welfare recipients use Medicare and Medicaid, and other government funded health and medical insurance, and less local doctors and dentists accept such coverage, there is an economic drain on the County's fiscal well-being. By mid-2004, Delaware County was down to three community hospitals; Public Health Nursing December 2004 data<sup>vi</sup> for births shows parents traveling easily two hours to hospitals in Binghamton, Kingston, Albany, Cooperstown, and Dutchess County, as there is no longer obstetrics and ob/gyn services locally for young parents. The Workforce Investment Board's The State of the Workforce Report warns that the numbers of qualified health professionals, aides, assistants, and therapists are shrinking due to aging out and retirement of the workers, lack of interest in health care as a career, and job dissatisfaction. The decrease of services from the professionals, who put in long, labor-intensive hours, is important because similar decreases and causes for such decreases exist for childcare providers, as presented in Chapter 3.

### Part 3 – Family Stress

Parents decide to use non-parental childcare or to be a stay-at-home parent emotionally, intellectually, or economically, applying the exchange-choice principles. They examine their values and priorities against financial needs and anticipated long-term positive outcomes. Because of the shortage of licensed providers, parents may seek out alternative care, such as older siblings, relatives, or neighbors to baby sit; others may juggle work schedules or eliminate one income so that there is one parent at home; and in some cases, children become “latch-key” who are required to care for themselves. Parents are therefore confronted with the choices of

needing to find childcare yet struggle financially to pay for this service because of insufficient income to meet higher expenses for food, transportation, housing, and health care.

### *Family Stress*

The lack of accessible and affordable home-based family childcare can be psychologically stressful for parents seeking work, be it for the first time, re-entry, or in compliance with Welfare-to-Work requirements. Non-traditional work schedules, commuting time, and distance may further dictate a parent's choice between licensed or unlicensed care, or a parent's need to split his/her children's care among several caregivers as providers have met their mandated adult:child ratio. Many Delaware County preschool centers, like Head Start, rarely provide care beyond the normal workday hours or during summer months and school holidays.

School-age children in care may experience stress as they transition from home to care to school to after school care and back home. Younger children, ages birth to three, and preschoolers may exhibit signs of inappropriate behaviors and acting out due to being in care for more than 30+hours/week (Loeb et al, Figures B2 and C2), experience frequent illnesses, and/or have some difficulty bonding with their parents and caregivers.

### *Familial Financial Stress*

Perceptions of financial stress, as in experiencing economic hardship or economic pressure (Conger et al., 1994, quoted by Dunifon, 2002a), negatively impacts working parents' abilities to parent and to protect the family's well-being (Dunifon, 2002a.). Poor parenting or disciplining skills potentially lead to "negative child outcomes such as increased behavior problems" (Skinner, Elder, & Conger, 1992, quoted by Dunifon, 2002a), and "lower school achievement" (Dunifon, 2002a).

Dunifon describes how financial strain is measured by not only the visible reality of not being able to pay one's monthly bills, or not having adequate food at month's end, but also by families' perceptions, experiences and time spent worrying and arguing about their finances. This component of living in poverty affects children's lowered school achievement, socially appropriate behavior, and sense of well-being (Dunifon, 2002a) but also according to Gary Evans research "the cumulative effect of multiple-risk exposures is highly significant" (Evans, quoted by Lang, 2004b) for young children's academic readiness and long-term school success if they are children living in poverty.

Yet, if risks are minimal, as in working parents earn wages and benefits that meet their needs and some luxuries, then their children can benefit from being in non-parental childcare. Ricciuti's research studies found parents working outside of the home, leaving their children in care, and, specifically, their sense of well-being and satisfaction with their jobs can foster their child's positive educational and behavioral performances (Ricciuti, quoted by Lang, 2004a).

Needing childcare is no longer just a problem facing low-income families and welfare recipients. This is a problem for all working parents. The 2000 Delaware County data showed 51.8% of 20,840 working individuals were women (Eberts & Merschrod, p. A-26) – just below the New York State 55.6% of working women (p. 57). Within this population, 9,242 women had children ages birth to 17 years old, of whom almost one-third or 7,474 women's children required care and supervision, be it all day or to supplement before and after school programs.

In her article *As Cost of Child-Care Rises Sharply, Here's How Some Families Are Coping* (*The Wall Street Journal*, October 21, 2004), Sue Shellenbarger discusses the rising costs of child-care for middle class working parents. These parents identify other ways to address this problem: cutting or reducing expenses; relying on family members to help out

through tax-free gifts to the grandchildren; diverting the children's college-savings accounts; or by "taking out home –equity loans and starting sideline businesses to pay childcare bills." While one wonders if these families might survive adequately on one parent's income and need to reprioritize their need of self-satisfaction to putting their children first, the issues of rising costs for quality and licensed childcare impact all working parents with young children.

*Federal Poverty Guidelines.*

The US Department of Health and Human Services provides oversight for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding from the federal level to states implementation using the poverty guidelines and thresholds developed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)<sup>vii</sup>. In 1965, USDA used the cost of food<sup>viii</sup> as a primary basis of a family's need to survive. Pearce and Brooks (2000) in their NY State Self-Sufficiency Standard report show this basis is insufficient in measuring the different needs and values each family has, and that these definitions for poverty are outdated because the family structure has changed and with both parents working, there is an increased need and expenses for non-parental childcare (ibid.)

Annually, these guidelines are updated, and are broken into the following categories: Poverty Threshold (100%), 130% of poverty, 185% of poverty, and 200% of poverty. Additionally, USDA annually updates its cost of living expenses to determine the minimum level of income, or poverty threshold, that a family, based on size and age composition, needs "to have an adequate standard of living (Fisher, 1998)" (Fisher, quoted by Dunifon, 2002b). Thus, "to determine whether a family is living below or above that threshold, the family's pre-tax income is divided by the threshold level for that family size and age composition. This is the 'income-to-needs ratio'" (ibid).

Income-eligible parents can access or participate in various benefits programs, depending upon which guideline their income falls under. Head Start is mandated to fill its slots first with families within the 100% -130% range. The Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) can serve pregnant mothers and families with children < 5 years old whose income is below or at 185% of poverty.

While this ratio is useful for the generalization of poverty data for statistical and administrative purposes, it does not reflect the truth. Different families have different needs. Under the federal guidelines for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, each state has discretionary use of those dollars in determining who within the poverty guidelines will be eligible for benefits. In some cases, even the county Social Services Commissioner, as seen below, has some discretionary leeway in designating eligibility when state and federal funds are tight. This discretionary use leads to conflicts and contradictions that low-income families face when attempting to access public assistance and benefits, especially in terms of needing and paying for childcare.

At one point, Delaware County families whose income was at or below 200% of poverty could receive childcare subsidies to defray part of this expense as they satisfied the Welfare-to-Work requirements. Because of tightening budgets at the state and county levels, this has changed.

In his article, reporter Todd McAdam (May 11, 2003) gives the example of Sandy Taylor, a single mother with two girls, ages 6 and 7 years old, one of whom has cerebral palsy, who loses some public assistance towards paying for licensed childcare. She lives in Deposit, a community that is split between Broome and Delaware Counties; many businesses in Deposit are in the agriculture extractive processing fields of lumber, construction, and quarrying.

For her, juggling between choices of expenses is at a very personal level: whatever expenses she plans to eliminate in order to pay for food, mortgage, gas, childcare, and cerebral palsy treatment for her older child, she and her children will still be in a vulnerable position if another crisis occurs. While one option would be to quit her job and reapply for TANF dollars for food stamps, day care assistance, and health care, Ms. Taylor feels strongly that “I’ve come too far to do that” (p. 10A).

On a county level, government administrators also struggle with choices in spreading already too-thin a layer of benefits to eligible recipients: which programs should be cut or how to decrease eligibility levels and thereby reduce the number of applicants while attempting not to add to welfare rolls. By working, and with some public assistance, Ms. Taylor is an example of those recipients who contribute to the economy and pay their own way. “Take that boost away, however, and the problems compound.... Suddenly a contributor to the economy becomes a welfare recipient” (McAdam, *ibid*).

“The combination of a late state budget and reduced state and federal allocations has left counties strapped” (McAdam, p. 1A). Delaware County’s Department of Social Services’ Commissioner reduced “eligibility to 150 percent of the poverty level instead of 200 percent” (McAdam, p. 10A) just to stretch his Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) budget to address other equally crucial welfare needs. This leaves working parents with incomes around 200% of poverty stretched thin as they juggle to cover their expenses and childcare needs.

According to Nancy Dingee, of Schoharie County Community Action Program Inc, the childcare needs in that rural county, just north of Delaware County, found that the lack of subsidies from New York State’s Office of Children & Family Services made it “harder for parents to afford day care. Dingee said she had heard of parents choosing to stay home instead

of working, or making creative arrangements with other parents who work different shifts to watch each other's children" (Scram, February 26, 2003, p. 2). This kind of shortage may lead to more unlicensed or illegal providers, who, perhaps, may not "give bad care, but licensed providers are monitored to ensure the children's safety" (ibid.).

*Data on Household Expenses for Families*

"As many parents leave welfare and enter the labor market, they join a growing number of families who are unable to stretch their wages to meet the costs of basic necessities. Even though many of these families are not poor according to the official poverty measure, their incomes are inadequate....The poverty measure, however, has become increasingly problematic as a measure of income adequacy. The most significant shortcoming of the federal poverty measure is that it is plainly too low; for most families, in most places, it is simply not high enough" (Pearce & Brook, Introduction section).

Pearce and Brook's NYS Self-Sufficiency Standard report for 2000 breaks down the expenses for eight different family types and the percentages of these expenses against the family income on a monthly basis, and provides this data county by county. The five top expenses for most families with young children are: Housing, Child Care, Food, Transportation, and Health Care.

This report describes a family of one to two adults with three children, infant, preschooler, and school age, and include both monthly and hourly self-sufficiency wages. "The Standard uses the best available estimates of the specific costs of providing food, housing, child care, transportation and health care....[where] there is significant geographical variation, county-specific cost estimates are used....For all jurisdictions in New York State, the self-sufficiency standard documents that families require incomes significantly higher than the federal poverty

thresholds to meet basic needs” (Executive Summary section, pp. 1, 2). The hourly wage starts at \$6.48 (which is above the minimum wage) and ends at \$14.75. These wages reflect how much the adult or both adults need to earn individually in order to meet their monthly expenses.

These wages reflect annual earnings in 2000 that range from \$13,748 to \$39,562, which are similar to the median income data for Delaware County families presented earlier: The median family income in 2000 was \$39,695, while the median household income was \$32,461. Median earnings for men full-time, year-round was \$27,732, and for women, \$22,262, showing a gap of \$5,470. When the male median earnings is divided by 2080 hours/year (40 hours/week), the hourly pay is \$13.33; for women, the hourly pay is \$10.70.

When compared to the Poverty Thresholds Table for 2000, which breaks down income levels by number of persons (with up to eight children) in the household, the hourly wage ranges from \$5.71 (in which the household is two persons, one of which is a child) for an annual income of \$11,869 to \$9.89 (in which the household of five persons has three children) for an annual income of \$20,550. The differences in wages of actual poverty thresholds and actual median annual income in Delaware County show that Delaware County families are not earning enough to be self-sufficient financially. This median annual income of \$39,695 is around 150% of the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and three children<sup>ix</sup>.

In his Expenditures on Children by Families, 2003, Mark Lino uses several charts to show the percentages of expenses against family income “of total child-rearing expenditures”. Housing – 34%; Child Care (and education) -- 11%; Food – 17%; Transportation – 14%; and Health Care – 7%. A second chart of Family Expenditures on a child is broken into three income categories and based a child’s incremental ages. If the family annual income is less than \$40,700, their expenditures for a child from birth to 11 years old equals about \$7,000/year; if the

child is a teenager, this expenditure is just under \$8,000/year. Even if a family's income ranges between \$40,700-\$68,400, their child expenditure remains about one-sixth of income.

### *Summary*

One irony presented in this Chapter is that while science, working parents, and advocacy groups recognize the need to address childcare issues of quality, affordability, and accessibility, pro-family policies and childcare subsidies by government are insufficient. "Quality child care is critical for helping mothers [and fathers] *attain and maintain employment* (emphasis added) and for promoting healthy childhood development" (Henry, Werschkul & Rao, October 2003). "Weak families, weak neighborhoods, and weak economies are mutually reinforcing...this pernicious cycle gets going it takes on a life of its own that becomes difficult to reverse" (Barry & Gunn, Summer 1996). Without stable and economically strong communities which contain the key components for social capital, families struggle financially and psychologically, as seen in McCubbin and Patterson's "Double ABCX Model of Family Stress" (Zimmerman, p. 329; McCoy, National Network for Family Resiliency, 1995).

The second irony is that welfare policies, that have been developed and implemented to move low-skilled or economically disadvantaged adults into better paying jobs, contradict other policies and other factors in these adults' lives and commitments. Two examples are: Requiring low-income mothers to re-enter the workforce soon after their child's birth, thus necessitating their use of childcare; and, tax credits, like the Earned Income Tax Credit, diminish as the working parent's income increases, thus jeopardizing that parent's ability to move into fiscally stability.

A third irony is found the woman's role as the incubator for society's next generation. A quick perusal of parenting and women's magazines, and Shellenbarger's articles for *The Wall*

*Street Journal*, focus on this topic and show how divided women feel about having careers, and how successfully they view men would handle being the stay-at-home Mr. Mom. Carol Hymowitz, writes that Women Often Discover Their Business Talent After Kids Are Raised because they successfully transferred family “management skills” into the workplace (June 14, 2005, p. B1).

The fourth irony is the realization that the ideology and rationale for developing solutions to family issues are evolving. Problems can no longer be viewed as fixable with just the right amount of money, educational head starts, and employment fair practices to make the problems go away. The welfare crises of the 1960s publicized issues of single parenthood and dysfunctional families, geo-spatial clustering of poverty, drugs, racial discrimination, educational inequalities, and widening income gap of the low and middle classes from the upper class and rich. These issues have not disappeared nor diminished in the 40 years since President Johnson’s War of Poverty, and are still viewed as external threats to society’s families’ well-being.

This Chapter discusses how parents’ decisions to be stay-at-home or employed can be influenced by perceived economic stress and evaluating current options vs. perceived long-term outcomes that threaten or strengthen the family’s well-being. There are no easy answers, but solutions need to be at the grass roots level to provide parents flexibility as they make their decisions, and to provide parents recognition that their decisions have lasting importance for their child’s mental health and development.

### Chapter 3 -- The Childcare Profession

In Delaware County, NYS, family home-based childcare may be perceived as an “invisible” business, that acts no more than a babysitting service and adds little or no financial value to the County’s economy. This may be in part because it is a field filled predominantly by women. Ideally, the childcare business would be profitable, and the provider’s own family’s health and pension/savings supports could be covered through her business or her husband’s employment.

However, ideally really occurs. The childcare business’s “invisibility” may be for two reasons. First, women traditionally have filled the family care responsibilities without pay. Second, many providers might not incorporate their businesses, with themselves as the sole employee. Further, their income and status, as self-employed entrepreneurs, are not entered on the Census Data<sup>x</sup>, in part because they might or might not report their business income. Alternatively, this income might be combined with their spouses’ income for tax purposes, and they might offset the family’s amount of owed taxes with their childcare businesses expenses, TANF subsidies, and food reimbursements from the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Based on needs assessment research done in 1999 by Cornell University Cooperative Extension in Delaware County (CCE-Delaware), providers indicated they wanted hands-on and practical financial management training to boost financial security in their business through stronger bookkeeping skills. With Delaware Opportunities, Inc.’s Child Care Resource and Referral staff, CCE-Delaware prepared several proposals to address this need, but each proposal was denied.

Meanwhile, CCE-Delaware does offer home-based providers free nutritional education in the home (their place of business) that satisfy their credential and licensing requirements, as

many meet the 185% of poverty income guidelines as individuals and/or through the preschoolers in care's families' incomes.

*Data—Policy & Training Changes*

Under the NYS Quality Child Care and Protection Act of 2000 Title 18, center-based and home-based providers have more paperwork, and their training requirements have doubled from 15 to 30 credit hours. This top-to-down mandate looks good and sensible. It is both to improve a child in care's safety and to strengthen the provider's professional development. For those operating a center-based child care service these mandates encourage staff to obtain training that reflects current research on child development and age-appropriate discipline strategies; to purchase new equipment and publications; and to network with other early childhood educators, and with staffs from the NYS regional Child Care Coordinating Councils, the Child Care Resource and Referral county-level agencies, and the NYS Office of Children & Family Services.

In 2004 and 2005, Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Department of Early Childhood Faculty partnered with NYS Office of Children & Family Services, regional Child Care Coordinating Councils, and state representatives of the Zero to Three Initiative to present the 1<sup>st</sup> (Binghamton) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tarrytown) Annual New York State Conferences on Infancy. These conferences were well attended by university faculty, state agencies and childcare center based staffs, NYS government representatives, and Cooperative Extension program educators. The need for professionally trained childcare providers and early childhood educators was validated through the research findings shared by guest speakers, including Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff, and workshop presenters.

Nonetheless, for family home-based providers, the mandates outlined in the Quality Child Care and Protection Act represent almost an impossibility— to access quality trainings that usually are several hours away and on a work day; to fit this training into their busy schedules in a timely manner coupled with having to find back up services for their clients' children; to charge an hourly rate comparable to their growing level of expertise and time spent in professional development, and yet to keep this fee at a level their clients can afford; and to pay for upfront expenses for licensing and start up costs for equipment and insurance.

Unless they have had some college coursework, the newer research presented in these regional and statewide conferences may not be clear or available in a hands-on method they can use with the children in care. Providers who have been in the profession for several years may decide that the requirements and training are too burdensome and drop out; and, potential applicants may drop the idea of registering. Unless these providers are in a center-based operation, many work in isolation from other adults.

### *Child Care Rising Costs*

Sue Shellenbarger generalizes that childcare costs and demand are rising, with the supply of care “stagnating, largely because of stepped-up regulations and quality standards and rising liability-insurance rates” (As Cost of Child-Care Rises Sharply, October 21, 2004). The New York State Assembly-Task Force on Women’s Issues of May 1989 recognizes the lack of childcare impacted “working families in all income groups who must arrange a patchwork quilt of pre-and after-school care...and women juggling careers and family” (p. 12). However, there is a crucial point in this Task Force report: “A large part of the child care problem is due to the poverty-level wages paid to child care workers” whose average salary in 1989 was “a little more than \$7,000 per year”, home based providers “receive no benefits at all”, center based care

experienced “A high annual turnover rate”, and colleges had diminishing numbers of “students enrolling in early childhood education programs” (ibid.).

Mohan et al’s report *Breaking the Piggy Bank* for the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies’s (NACCRA) was released on February 2, 2006. It shows that parents’ child-related expenses are high. This report adds for further comparison how the percentage on income for child related expenses is almost half (48.2%) for a single parent while for a two-parent family the expenses represent approximately one-third or 13.7% (Table 2, p. 5).

The national average childcare expense for a four-year child ranges from \$3,016 to \$9,628, while that expense for an infant ranges “from \$3,803 to \$13,480 a year”. “In 47 states, average annual child care for a pre-school age child are greater than 10 percent of the median household income”. New York State, using averaged out expenses statewide, ranks 4<sup>th</sup> highest for infant care, and 1<sup>st</sup> for 4-year old child care, with childcare care being about 40.4% of the median single parent family income and 11.5% of the median two-parent married family income” (*Breaking the Piggy Bank*, Table 1, p. 3).

The NYS Office of Children and Family Services’ market rates (NYS Register, December 28, 2005, pp. 6-11) for childcare services to show that the annual gross income a licensed provider could receive is approximately \$30,000. Yet some Delaware County providers find caring for more than three or four children in care while caring for their own toddler is exhausting, thus reducing their potential annual income to \$20,000. At this level, a provider’s expenses leave little for profits.

Thus, the discussions in these Chapters point to the need for a county-wide investment from employers, schools, and agencies need to be in place to enhance, in a ripple effect: a)

children's readiness as the next generation of workers; b) an expansion of work opportunities; and c) economic growth in Delaware County.

#### *Family Home-Based Childcare Providers Data*

According to Shirley Forman, Senior Family & Child Services Specialist, Delaware Opportunities, Inc. (personal communication, November 28, 2005), Delaware Opportunities, Inc. oversees 61 registered family daycare providers (1 adults to 5/6 children) and 9 group licensed providers (2 adults to 10/12 children). Also, there are 15 day care centers in the county, plus nine Head Start preschool centers, three of which have two classrooms, and one of which has about 10 home-based families. There are about 101 unlicensed home-based family childcare providers who accept children whose care is subsidized by TANF. These providers are informal and exempt from the licensing and certification requirements, but may only care for non-related children up to three hours/day.

NYS licensing regulations allow providers to care for up to five children "ages 6 weeks to 12 years, AND 2 additional school age children" (Forman, personal communication, November 28, 2005). If they operate a group home-based service, in which there is a second adult also supervising the children, they can care for up to "12 children, ages 2 years to 12 years, AND 2 additional school-aged children" (ibid.). However, many providers are caring for their own children and that "reduces the paying customers" (loc.cit). While parents may choose or need to choose a relative, neighbor, or an older sibling, there are scant records documenting these unlicensed providers, and the rules and fees for their licensing becomes very detailed if they decide to accept childcare subsidies.

There are several childcare centers, and many of the County 13 schools are funded to provide after school programs until 5p.m. However, children attending these sites may still need

care as their parents' work days begin earlier and end later due to commuting to and from work, or working second shifts. Thus, to care for 8,859 children between birth and 1<15 years olds, approximately 1,478 adults would be needed if the adult:child ration averages to one adult to six children. Some of these adults, specifically those caring for school-age youth, would be found in center based and after school programs, and not necessarily as home-based providers. For the 2,929 children younger than 6 years old, approximately 489 adults would be needed to satisfy the 1 adult:6 children ratio.

Table 5 Children by Age for 2000<sup>6</sup> (Kids' Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse)

Male Children Birth to 5 years	1,452	Female Children Birth to 5 years	1,477	Total Children Birth to 5 years	2,929
Male Children 6 to <15 years	3,075	Female Children 6 to <15 years	2,855	Total Children 6 to <15 years	5,930
Total Male Children	4,527	Total Female Children	4,332	Total Children	8,859

The Child Care Resource and Referral program Summary Reports data, highlighted below in Tables 6 and 7, show how the gap between requested childcare and availability of services has widened between October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2001, and October 1, 2004-September 30, 2005 (Forman, personal communication, November 28, 2005), and many working parents are on a waiting list, or seek out unlicensed care and “cross their fingers”.

Table 6 Number of Home-Based Providers

Time Period	Providers <sup>7</sup>	Time Period	Providers <sup>8</sup>	Difference
October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2000	74 family and 13 group providers - Total: 90 home-based providers	October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2001	n/a	
October 1, 2001 to September 30, 2002	Approximate Total: 82 family providers	October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005	61 family providers and 9 group providers - Total: 70 home-based providers	-20, or <5%

<sup>6</sup> This website, for this specific data, counts Delaware County's population as 48,055.

<sup>7</sup> These figures comes from CCE-Delaware's proposals of January 2001, and June 2002 to provide financial management training to Delaware County's home-based family childcare providers.

<sup>8</sup> Forman, personal communication, November 28, 2005.

Table 7 Requested Childcare

Year	Outcomes— families given referrals <sup>9</sup>	Outcomes— children referred	Comparison of Center based vs. Family or Group based care requested	Family Composition (not counting Teen and Other)
October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2000	432	763	Center based 30 Family/Group 641	Single Parent 198 Two Parents 141
October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2001	388	635	Center based 112 Family/Group 617	Single Parent 140 Two Parents 134
October 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002	Subtotal: 228	Subtotal: 412	Center based Subtotal 134 Family/Group Subtotal 295	Single Parent Subtotal 110 Two Parents Subtotal 103
October 1, 2004- September 30, 2005	615 <sup>x1</sup>	1,041	Center based 364 Family/Group 1,279	Single Parent 303 Two Parents 229

Melissa Scram, staff writer to *The Daily Star*, wrote in February 2003, how counties surrounding Delaware County were also struggling with insufficient numbers of licensed providers to serve working parents' needs for childcare. One nurse, whose work day at a hospital in Otsego County, started at 6 or 7a.m., finally found a licensed provider who would take her two daughters as early as 5a.m.. Otsego County "gave referrals to 474 parents for 676 children" (Scram, 2003). Catholic Charities, operating as the Child Care Resource and Referral agency in Otsego County, "estimated 2,638 children ages 5 and under who live with working parents" needed care, and yet there were only "70 registered family-care providers" (ibid.). Chenango County Child Care Council "said the county has 2,043 slots in 73 day-care programs, while there are 3, 054 children under age 5" (ibid.). The concern is that informal child care services offered by those not licensed and certified through NYS Office of Children and Family Services' local Child Care Referral and Resource Agency, one-tenth of which may be reported and fined, are not monitored to provide safe environments for the children in care.

<sup>9</sup> The difference between Families Given Referrals and Children Referred may be due to families with multiple children, thus needing multiple referrals.

*Market Rate vs. Actual Earnings*

NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) posted in the NYS Register for December 28, 2005 the market rates for childcare providers in Delaware County. Delaware County is grouped with other rural and rural periphery counties, based on “five groupings of social services districts” (NYS Register, p. 6). The weekly top market rates for registered family day care in the New York City for a child 18 months or younger is \$150, while in Long Island/Rockland, Westchester, and Putnam Counties the rate is \$250. Table 8 provides a brief overview to point out the a) the market rate can be too high for working poor parents living in Delaware County whose incomes are just above the subsidy levels; and b) if providers charged this rate or a higher rate to reflect their expertise and professional training, they would be out of business.

Table 8 NYS OCFS’ Market Rates for Delaware County’s Registered Family Day Care

	Age of Child <18 months	Age of Child 18-24 months	Age of Child 3-5 years	Age of Child 6-12 years
Weekly	\$135	\$130	\$125	\$125
Daily	\$ 31	\$ 31	\$ 30	\$ 30
Part-Time	\$ 21	\$ 21	\$ 20	\$ 20
Hourly	\$3.18	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00

The NYS OCFS’ Child Care Title 18, Definitions & Regulations Sections 417, 416, and 418, of the NYS Quality Child Care Act of November 2000, provide this information:

**Family Day Care** – is a home which is a personal residence and occupied as a family residence which provides child day care on a regular basis for more than three hours per day per child for three to six children for compensation or otherwise. The Maximum capacity allows the following: Six children plus two before and/or after school children, with specific concern about the ratio of adult to children under the age of two years, maximum capacity is five with two

before and/or after school children, and no more than two children under the age of two may be cared for at any one time.

An annual gross income for the provider, using the hourly rate of \$3.18 x 2080 work hours/year per child in care is \$6,614.40. This dollar figure multiplied by the average maximum number of children in care, five, provides \$33,072.00/year. However, the reality is that to care for five or six children, who are not one's own, of various ages, needs, and capabilities, is an exhausting job (E. Davis, personal communication, December 2, 2005). If the provider cares for her own toddler or preschooler, and three to four non-relative children, her income decreases to approximately \$26,000 or less. Nor does this hourly rate compete with the minimum wage, does not reflect moneys needed for health insurance, retirement planning, and savings accounts.

### *Expenses*

Celeste Frye of Cornell University Child Care and Economic Development Project prepared a Child Care Home Budget based on monthly expense sheets for informal, family, and group childcare homes in Tompkins County. "Expenses include things from food to office supplies to child's portion of rent and utilities" (Fyre, 2003). After comparing hourly wages between Tompkins and Cortland Counties, she averaged and assumed "an hourly rate of \$7 for home childcare labor in Tompkins County", for approximately 10 hours for 21 days/month (versus the average of 168-176 hours/month) for a monthly gross income of \$1,470, or \$17,640/year. This totals 2,520 hours/year, or 440 hours more than the average worker.

The detailed list of expenses and anticipated monthly costs show that providers, if they are serious about being entrepreneurs, need to have good bookkeeping skills and records.

"[T]hat providers often don't know the cost of the care they provide and may even be unaware of

their income/sources of revenue” (Fyre, p. 7); and feeling financially strapped by registration fees and initial set up costs to provide a safe environment for children in care.

Table 9 Expenses for a Registered Family Childcare Provider, using the Delaware County 2005 Market Rate of \$3.18/hour x 176 hours/month for Monthly Income of \$559.68

Monthly Expenses	% of Monthly Income	\$ of Monthly Income
Social Security & Medicaid Taxes	15.3%	\$225
Food, as reimbursed by Child and Adult Care Food Program		+ \$3/day per child
Supplies		\$30 toys \$60 household supplies \$30 office supplies
Mileage (to and from recreational activities, food and supplies shopping)		\$60 for about 170 miles/monthly or 8 miles/daily
Maintenance & Repairs		\$100
Parents' newsletter/flyer		\$5
Equipment		\$30
Time/Space use of the home, including rent, mortgage, and utilities	25%	\$340
Accountant's fees		\$150 divided by 12 months
Property Tax		\$63
House depreciation		\$35
Daycare Liability Insurance		\$33
Furniture/Appliance depreciation		\$12
TOTAL	40.3%	\$1038

The provider would need to bring \$2,508/month, to cover her expenses of \$1,038 and \$1,470 payment to herself (Fyre, 2003), for barely \$30,000 gross annual income. Providers working in Ithaca, Tompkins County, the site of two colleges and as the county seat, may be able to charge and earn \$7/hour. However, this same \$7/hour in Delaware County would cover a provider's hourly rate for 2-1/3 children. In her equations above, county medical expenses and insurance are not included.

A look at the Delaware County's Chamber of Commerce website reveals the costs for different medical insurance policies for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Based on 2005 figures, a family childcare provider needing medical coverage for herself and family would pay

out approximately \$550 per month, thus bringing her expenses to \$1588 and monthly gross income to \$3,058. In this County, the maximum a provider could earn would be \$18/hour for six children in care at \$3.00/hour per child, thus grossing an annual income between \$37,440 for 2,080 hours/year, or \$43,360 for 2,520 hours. While these look good on paper, such pay does not reflect income for sick or vacation days, or days when the provider cares for fewer children.

#### *Scientific Research Directs Professional Development and Training*

Recent research, as detailed in *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (2001), show scientific bases for family policies to support the family's psychological well-being and for professional development for childcare providers to keep them posted with child development research. The CIVITAS Initiative et al. national benchmark survey *What Grown-Ups Understand About Child Development* (2000) documents that its respondents define quality childcare as providing educational enrichment. This is seen as an essential advantage for providing their children with future opportunities for upward economic mobility.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of the surveyed parents of young children and 61% of non-parents "think the government should provide financial assistance to help families afford quality childcare" (*What Grown-Ups Understand*, p. 173). Yet 60% of parents with young children strongly thought "that neither government nor employers are doing a very good job at making changes in the workplace to meet the needs of workers with very young children" (p. 13). One serious fault with this survey is that 78% of the 3,000 participants were White (p. 24), thus lacking a cultural diversity of American parental views and not being truly representative of American society as claimed by the authors.

*Socialization – Healthy Relationships through Child-Caregiver Bonding*

Scientific research on human development documents the individual's potential for self-change, and motivation to be responsible for self-change. According to Shonkoff et al., in *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*<sup>xiii</sup> early education, with a primary emphasis on the academic learning of shapes, colors, numbers, and alphabet, be it with flash cards or computerized games, is not appropriate for children ages birth to preschool. Fetuses and newborns process and respond to information in their environments. Their environment needs to support a secure grounding for that child's need for attachment and relationships with his/her caregivers—first the parents/family, and second, non-family individuals. Lacking a supportive environment and healthy bonding can sabotage the infant's socio-emotional development and hinder that child's future scholastic success. “In actuality, nurturing very early learning is really about supporting and encouraging parents to cultivate healthy relationships with their children” (Wilensky, *Ready for School*, p. 2).

Children's earliest mental health and well-being experiences are socializing relationships, while their earliest pre-language communication is rooted in their emotions. Socialization reflects the maturing process of self-regulatory choices and behaviors, in which process adults train children in the socially appropriate moral, legal, and familial values and culture. Five other sources supporting the scientific research are:

- How Are the Children? Report on Early Childhood Development and Learning, September 1999, US Department of Education, which emphasizes that childcare providers “can meet young children's needs—but don't take the place of Mom or Dad”;
- Zero to Three's Healthy Minds website quotes from the American Academy of Pediatrics' *Nurturing Your Child's Development* that parents' relationships with their child are the foundation of that child's healthy development;

- Benton Foundation's Connect for Kids' website provides articles that corroborate these facts, such as Susan Phillips's A Voice of Experience, in which "The number one thing is a really strong emphasis on social and emotional development and interaction. Without that, children will struggle later on." This site keeps parents and educators informed of current research, public policies, and media sources that address parenting and child care issues.
- Captain Kangaroo – Bob Keeshan, national spokesperson for the Coalition for America's Children – encourages parents to  

Focus on building a warm bond with your child, but don't sweat the flashcards....'More than anything, more than specific information or teaching, good parenting is an attitude, passed from parent to child'....And the essence of that attitude is that a kid is worth your time....Learning is a byproduct of the bond between parent and child, and brain development is the end product....For parents, the goal shouldn't be to push our children to be smart, but to be there for them—to let them hear our voice, know our face, our smell, our love (Keeshan, quoted by Louv, 1997).
- David Popenoe, addressing the Parenthood in America 1998 Conference, reinforces the point that children learn their values and moral behavior under the influence of those "who are most meaningful to them, and the most meaningful adults are those to whom the child is emotionally attached. If a child does not have a strong emotional attachment to a parent, the effectiveness of the parent as a teacher and moral guide is greatly diminished." (How Children Learn Moral Values and Develop Character section). He quotes Social Psychologist William Damon: "the child's respect for this authority is the single most important moral legacy that comes out of the child's relationship with the parent'....If learned well, these traits are then transferred beyond the family to dealings with society at large" (ibid.)

*Implications for Family Policy*

Parents' growing awareness about the importance of quality childcare services comes from many sources: Internet websites and popular magazines, books and articles by pediatricians like Drs. Spock and Brazelton, columns by Dave Barry and Sue Shellenbarger, and cartoon strips like Calvin and Hobbes and Zits. Simultaneously, all pinpoint the complexity and challenges of parenting. While parents across all income levels do see education readiness and success as portals into better jobs and higher income, the latest scientific research points to the need for adult caregivers to strengthen young children's socio-emotional needs through bonding, stability, and security.

The lack of registered, trained family home-based providers confronts Delaware County's potential for economic growth, yet is being ignored or misunderstood by residents, employers, and civic leaders. The six points briefly described below challenge the development of family policies. Economic disadvantages and "psychosocial environmental risk factors" (Evans, quoted by Lang, April 9, 2004) "aren't randomly distributed but co-occur much more frequently" Such frequency and quantity of risk factors leave an accumulated adverse impact on low-income working parents and their children (ibid).

- Dr. Evans points out that researchers and policy makers have traditionally examined one risk factor at a time, and not in the context of other risk factors, and "consider just one 'magic bullet' response. He calls for a "broader perspective for intervention" (Evans, quoted by Lang) that recognizes the importance of looking at a family holistically, that both father's and mother's care contribute significantly to their child's mental health (Child Trends, Family Structure, Spring 2005), and not only through economic needs.

- The National Center on Birth Defects & Developmental Disabilities's link on Child Development warns that there are deterrent costs if society does not "ensure that children grow up in environments where their social, emotional and educational needs are met" (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/default.htm>).

Cost to society of less than optimal development are enormous and far-reaching.

Children who grow up in environments where their developmental needs are not met are at an increased risk for compromised health and safety, and learning and developmental delays. Failure to invest time and resources during children's early years may have long term effects on the foster care, health care, and education systems. Therefore, it is in the public's interest to ensure that children develop in safe, loving, and secure environments.

- Author Mary Eberstadt recognizes that not all mothers should stay at home. Parenting is a job that can be shared with or filled in by fathers. She is concerned that the issues of child-rearing have shifted away from parents' roles and too much towards daycare. She feels strongly that her readers need to "put children and adolescents front and center [and] to ask what the empirical and extra-empirical record shows so far about this relatively new and unknown world in which many parents, children, and siblings spend many or most of their waking hours apart" (Eberstadt, quoted by Blyth, December 13, 2004).

- In her March 31, 2005 *How Much Child Care Is Too Much?* Sue Shellenbarger discusses two studies due to be published by The Urban Institute and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (*The Wall Street Journal*). Both address the stress young children experience when in childcare for 30+ hours/week depending upon the child's age and developmental needs, and show how increasing levels of such stress leads to increased misbehavior. NICHD, whose funds sponsored *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, published its

long-term study on children in day care. “[I]t said that a lot of day care made children both ready for school and harder to manage” (Shellenbarger, March 31, 2005; Loeb et al., November 2005). This report offers a paradox that challenges legislation, fiscal supports, and employers’ responses, and puts childrearing responsibilities back in the parents’ hands.

- Interviews with Shirley Forman (Delaware Opportunities, Inc.), Debra Davis (DCMO BOCES), and Glenn Nealis (Delaware County Department of Economic Development) indicate that there is a growing decrease in the quantity of qualified, accessible and affordable providers for Delaware County’s working parents. There is no county-wide infrastructure and partnership in place for supporting childcare professionals’ service as a key component to economic stability and community well-being.
- Conversations with Betsy Feuerstein (Capital District Child Care Coordinating Council) indicate that while there is a variety of training options and resources, there is no consistent format of standardized training and ongoing professional development for the individual family childcare provider. One avenue of standardized training and credentialing for childcare centers is National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

### *Summary*

As more women enter the non-home based workforce and have work schedules that provide less flexibility for their parenting responsibilities, the need for childcare becomes more pressing. Therefore, at a time when parents, policy makers, scientists, and early childhood educators are recognizing the importance of laying a strong foundation for children’s mental health and socio-emotional well-being during their early years, funding and training opportunities at the grassroots levels are dismal. According to the National Center for Children

in Poverty's Map and Track 2000: State Initiatives for Young Children and Families, this may be on par with national trends for state initiatives:

Overall, significant growth has occurred in state child development and family support efforts since *Map and Track 1998*. But gains have been uneven and efforts to promote family economic security also vary widely. No single state made significant efforts across all the family economic security indicators in addition to making substantial investments in child development and family support (December 2000).

## Chapter 4 Employers' Concerns and Responses

Nationally rural communities like Delaware County, NYS are experiencing employment declines with lower demands for employees in the agriculture and manufacturing industries. Meanwhile, work opportunities are growing in the services and technology sectors, especially in the fields of education, health care, food services, etc. (Warner, et al. Economic Development Strategies, 2004b, p. 2; Chenango-Delaware-Otsego Workforce Investment Board, 2004; Eberts & Merschrod, 2004). These expanding jobs require job applicants to have secondary education, good people skills, and strong technical and critical thinking skills.

Simultaneously, economic development is being linked more to quality of life by economists like Richard Florida and Amartya Sen. Florida “argues that economic development should work to enhance the creative features of a community to improve the quality of life and attract a creative class or workers—those who work in creative fields such as technology and innovation (Florida,2002, quoted by Warner et al, 2004b, p. 35). Nobel Prize winner Sen presents a “human capabilities” measurement for communities and society to determine “the extent to which all people are able to fulfill their potential” (Sen, as quoted by Smith & Ribeiro, Towards a Broader Definition of Economic Development section). “Fulfill their potential” sounds like human well-being!

### *Employers' Concerns About Poorly Trained Employees*

While the number of businesses with family-friendly policies and career advancement opportunities is growing, many seem to be big corporations. But for owners of smaller business, the tradeoffs are risky. They do not want their role of civic engagement to be at the expense of profit losses generated by staff turnover and customer complaints due to the poor soft and technical skills of disadvantaged workers (Taylor & Rubin, pp. 4, 8).

Employers need applicants with strong soft skills; “participation in soft skills training was the single most important predictor of retention in the first three months after placement in a job” (Taylor & Rubin, p. 9). A primary example of soft skills is the applicant’s ability to show up to work on time, and yet poor attendance “is often the consequence of inadequate public transportation, a failing automobile, unreliable child care....Many employers...recognized this, but at the same time, they believed that social reform was beyond their corporate role” (ibid).

These concerns identify important barriers for low-income parents seeking work. Employers do not want to deal with applicants’ poor work skills and work ethics that jeopardize profits and work delivery schedules, or hamper communications between worker and supervisor. One employer said “In my opinion, most welfare reform programs are...sending people out to work before they are ready, while they still have child care and transportation problems that will cause them to fail at work. This winds up irritating employers like me, who become reluctant to hire from this source” (loc. cit.).

### *Employees’ Productivity*

#### *“When Work Works”*

Under Ellen Galinsky’s leadership, the Families and Work Institute staff, along with staffs from Catalyst and Boston College Center for Work & Family, provide extensive research on the issues of balancing family commitments with job responsibilities in their National Study of the Changing Workforce and Business Work-Life Study reports. These studies are some of the earliest that document the psychological toll working parents experience in juggling their work and family lives, and their growing frustration over less time for personal pursuits. Lowered employee productivity results from both increased work hours and “less supportive

workplace experience” (Executive Summary of the 1998 Business Work-Life Study, p. 1) and stress in finding and affording childcare.

In another research project, *When Work Works*, Excerpt from A Status Report on the Workplace Flexibility (2004), Galinsky, Bond, and Hill identify further causes of employee workplace stress, that impact and drive parents’ needs for childcare and family time together. The 40 hours/week are still perceived “as the standard work week....But the reality is that unscheduled hours have been climbing” to approximately 5 more hours for men and 3.8 hours for women.

#### *Society’s Relative Value vs. Revealed Preferences*

Human Ecology researchers like Larry Bumpass, David Poppenoe and Urie Bronfenbrenner voiced their concerns about employers’ demands on working parents at the Parenthood in American Conference, April 19-21, 1998. “The environment of childrearing has deteriorated” and, “work becomes their home, and home becomes work” (Poppenoe, 1998). And yet, the payoffs of putting family values and parental childcare first shows quality differences. Middle class parents, Hogan and Tina Hilling, took the risk of losing his income. Together, they decided that “Quality daycare is expensive, but the quality of care a child gets at home is priceless....We concluded that the quality of our life as a family was more important than the quality of our lifestyle....You can see the difference it makes with the kids, and I know it’s made me a better person” (Hinds, *Our Nation’s Kids*, p. 6).

Bumpass describes one paradox as a “sociological context of family change”. This family change is a “result of the interplay between individualism and market economies” and not as “consequences of policies, such as welfare or no-fault divorce or even the increased employment of women” (Bumpass, 1998). “Well-intentioned parents try to do the impossible:

raise families with hardly a pause in their dual-income pursuit of the American Dream of better jobs, bigger houses, and fancier cars” (Hinds, *Our Nation’s Kids*, p. 7). Families need to “step off this treadmill of consumption, scale back their lifestyles and work schedules, and give children what they need most – parental time” (ibid.).

Bumpass says in our market driven economy, the individual is valued more and perceived as successful by the money s/he can generate. “As a result occupational roles take priority over family roles....There is a symbiosis between our market economy’s need for us to behave as if we were not tied in obligatory ways to others and our cultural emphasis on individualism” (Individualism and the Market Economy section). What we say are important values compared to our actions and choices reveal our preferred values, speaks clearly of the contradictions and competition of values in wanting the best for our children without being penalized for being unattached to our children (Relative Value and Revealed Preferences section).

Bronfenbrenner confirms that there is a “growing conflict between the demands of work and family (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). In the Afterword for Bronfenbrenner’s most recent book, *Making Human Beings Human* (2004), Stephen F. Hamilton writes that “The threats Bronfenbrenner identifies to the realization of human developmental potential spring from society’s neglect, its failure to attend to the ways in which economic and social change undermine families and thereby constrain development” (Hamilton, quoted by Lang, March 2005).

### *Employers’ Responses*

There are national examples of large corporations and employers being responsive to employees’ needs either by providing flextime and non-traditional or job-sharing work schedules, enacting pro-family policies, or supporting a center based childcare facility for

employees. AT&T's Family Care Development Fund grew from a "groundbreaking labor contract signed in 1989 by AT&T, the Communications Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers" (Stahl, 1990) and AT&T's Foundation.

Businesses that sponsor on-site childcare centers for employees' children include: SAS Institute Inc., in Cary, NC, and Corning Glass in Steuben County, NYS (Maxwell, April 1997), At-A-Glance/Mead/Westvaco Industry and Tyco-Mallinckrodt Healthcare (Delaware County, NYS).

These businesses offer career advancements with good salaries, that would be or are adaptable to the environmental regulations governing Delaware County, while providing role models of employer responsiveness to employees' needs and responsibilities as parents.

#### *One Successful Workforce Development Model*

Taylor and Rubin's report *Engaging Employers to Benefit Low-Income Job Seekers: Lessons from the Jobs Initiative* (June 2005) discusses the Annie E. Casey's Foundation's successful workforce development model. The Jobs Initiative report describes how the Casey Foundation resolves employers' concerns in hiring low-income applicants. With the Foundation's dollars workforce intermediaries had a "dual customer" approach with both employer and applicants (Taylor & Rubin, p. 5).

Intermediaries provide applicants with marketable "soft skills" (or "people skills") that focus on good first impressions, attendance, and intrapersonal skills. This way employers can "pre-screen" applicants who have potential as reliable employees. Simultaneously, the intermediaries work with employers to recognize the importance of offering above minimum wage pay, family friendly policies, and technical skills trainings in order to meet the applicants' needs for "better job placements" (Taylor & Rubin, Introduction section, p. 1), long term economic stability, and pride and family well-being. Some employers took advantage of

national or state level “public workforce development funds” (p. 11), subsidies, and tax credits as they hired and retained welfare applicants for more than six months.

### *Workforce Incentives for Businesses*

There are several tax incentives or subsidies associated with the welfare-to-work initiatives to encourage employers to hire and to retain welfare applicants long term through training, and possible career advancement opportunities. Historically, many recipients may be at-risk young adults, have poor workforce skills and abilities, and be less qualified than better educated job applicants. What is important about these work opportunity tax credits is that they are primarily available for employers and welfare recipients in designated empowerment or economic development Enterprise Zones. These credits seek to remove barriers of traveling distance to work, and to revitalize local service and retail business sectors, while improving the quality of life through meaningful earnings in economic distressed communities.

Sarah Hamersma, Assistant Professor of Economics, University of Florida, writes that while these are worthy ideas, it is still hard to document how successfully such tax incentives are in achieving their primary goal: improving “employment rates among the disadvantaged”. There seems to be low participation, poor employee retention (October 2005, p. 4), or poor marketing to employers about these subsidies, or employers’ sense that administration of these subsidies needs to be simplified (ibid, p. 6).

Further, she refers to research by Hotz and Scholz (2002) that shows “the EITC [earned income tax credit] has been demonstrated to improve employment rates while the WOTC [work opportunity tax credit] and WtW [welfare-to-work] which were designed specifically for this purpose, have not succeeded” (Holz & Scholz, quoted by Hamersma, p. 5). Because of this gap

of information, such tax subsidies program may not be reauthorized in President Bush's 2006 budget or may be consolidated as funds being allocated to states' legislations (p. 3).

*Investment in Childcare Industry Results in Long-Term Workforce and Economic Potential*

Robert Grunewald, with economist Arthur Rolnick, researcher for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, coauthored a report that emphasizes the joint public and private support of the child care industry has tremendous potential as economic development. In another report, *Early Childhood Investment Yields Big Payoff*, Robert G. Lynch documents that "a high-quality, large-scale, publicly funded ECD [early childhood development] program" has potential benefit. It would "reduce costs for remedial and special education, criminal justice, and welfare (p. 9), with additional benefits to our nation's Social Security system" (p. 1). Economist and Nobel Prize winner James Heckman sees "Early childhood investments of high quality have lasting effects...In the long run, significant improvements in the skill levels of American workers, especially workers not attending college" (Heckman quoted by Lynch, p. 2).

*Employers' Responsibility to be Investors in Childcare Industry*

The Child Welfare League of America produces data to prove that "The child care industry is not catching up to the growing demands of today's economy, nor are most programs equipped with the knowledge that research in the child care and development field has yielded" (*Child Care and Development: Facts and Figures*, 2005). The 1999 *How Are the Children?* report points out that business leaders "increasingly acknowledge that they share significant responsibility for the well being of the families with young children who count among their customers, employees, and neighbors. They are keenly aware that today's tots are tomorrow's workforce" (*Business Leaders*, section IV p. 4). They recognize that their investments lead to "basic skills trainings for employees" and "that their employees can work more productively

when they are free from worry about the care that their young children are receiving during the workday” (ibid.).

*Delaware County’s Workforce Development*

For those applicants who maintain their jobs and seek training for advancement, “a major lesson has been that even good entry-level jobs often don’t suffice to support families well” (Taylor & Rubin, p. 16). Table 10 below shows several jobs listed by the Chenango-Delaware-Otsego Workforce Investment Board’s State of the Workforce Report (March 2004) with salary ranges that start below minimum wage for entry level positions. In some cases, the annual income is below the 200% level of poverty, thus classifying working parents as low-income families.

Table 10 Entry Level Wages x 2080 hours/year

Position	Hourly Range	Annual Range
Food Preparation Workers	\$5.86-\$7.63	\$12,188.80 - \$15,870.40
Janitors and Cleaners	\$6.10 - \$7.85	\$12,688.00-\$16,238.00
Childcare Workers	\$6.12-\$7.64	\$12,729.60-\$15,891.20
Tractor Trailer Drivers	\$10.63-\$12.14	\$22,110.40-\$25,251.20
Construction Carpenters	\$12.70-\$14.39	\$26,416.00-\$29,91.20
Operating Engineers	\$13.00-\$18.94	\$27,040.00-\$39,395.20

This CDO Workforce Investment Board (WIB) now offers to employers and applicants “one-stop career centers” locally. In its report, the Workforce Investment Board states its mission is “to provide quality service in a coordinate, user-friendly manner that meets the employment and training needs of our job seekers, workers, and businesses” (p. 7). The services for businesses range from explanations on worker policies, tax credit information and opportunities, to recruitment, pre-screening, and referral of qualified applicants.

As part of the CDO Workforce Investment Board, Delaware County's Office of Employment and Training staff provide income-eligible applicants with the BEST course – Better Employment Skills and Training. This program focuses on soft skills...the “first impression” preparations for an interview, inter personal skills necessary between employee and supervisor, timely attendance at work, and work ethics.

### *Conclusions*

This Chapter 4 focuses on the responsibilities and roles of employer/employee. One danger is that a possible blurring or overlapping between the private sphere of families and the public spheres of businesses and government could occur. Also not discussed in this Chapter is the long term cost *ineffectiveness* of serving and working solely with low-income families and youth who may be at-risk or dysfunctional populations with low education and marketable skills.

If perceptions continue that taxpayer supported programs for childcare and early childhood education are solely for welfare recipients and working poor parents, the point is made in Chapter 3 that this dependence can lead to an area's economic demise. It is unreasonable to expect only one group of the participants in this childcare issues to be burdened with the complexity of solving working parents' needs for childcare. Government cannot shoulder the burden of financing and mandating childcare; neither low-income parents should work while lacking access to community supports that strengthen their family skills and protect the quality of family relationships; nor employers should not be held accountable for employees' family needs over appropriate business practices to make money.

*Summary*

While multi-dollar corporations seem willing to adopt and implement pro-family and pro-employee policies and practices, in reality such actions may be impractical for many of Delaware County's small businesses whose staff number less than 20 people. These employers want their concerns to be heard, yet may initially feel that they haven't got time to be involved with the childcare needs of their workers.

In making their business decisions, employers also use the exchange-choice principles. Before committing their participation and investments of time, energy, talents, and funds, employers will want to hear arguments that point to both immediate and long-term benefits and tax credits associated with workforce development. The overall benefits of employers' responses to working parents' needs and invitation to working parents to devise solutions result in increased employees' productivity and satisfaction on the job, and with less staff turnover and profits jeopardized by employees' poor "soft skills".

Simultaneously, working parents want time to strengthen their parent/child relationships, and to take advantage of the recreational outlets Delaware County is known for: skiing, hunting, fishing, etc. Their abilities as parents and employees suffer when demands from the workplace overwhelm their caring responsibilities and leisure time.

## Chapter 5 Solutions and Conclusions

In addressing working parents' need for childcare services in Delaware County, it is important to do a reality check to identify what barriers and challenges exist, and whether these obstacles are opportunities in disguise and worth surmounting. Solutions can be spearheaded by legislators and state leaders. However, solutions should be rooted locally in the economic advantages of sharing the responsibilities among parents, providers, employers and county/state agencies to foster quality childcare services. Quality childcare results comes from coordinated and standardized trainings, higher wages and good benefits, and fiscal supports.

### *Challenges on County Level*

#### *Language*

If perceptions continue that this is women's work or "a women's issue", childcare remains an invisible and underpaid service: "it ceases to be a problem that concerns all of us" (Smith & Ribeiro, Weaker Frames section). Further, childcare is rarely linked with early education. This is important, because once childcare is perceived as a component of, or the building block for, early education, it gains public recognition. The language of early education "has always recognized the importance of human development, quality of life, choice, and sustainability" (ibid, Towards a Broader Definition of Economic Development section).

The appropriate language can facilitate how the childcare issues of quality, affordability, and accessibility will be understood better by non-parent stakeholders, like employers and civic leaders who focus on profits, return on investments, and ways to encourage business retention and expansion. Smith and Ribeiro emphasize that the appropriate language is necessary in communicating to politicians and employers that the issue of accessible and affordable childcare for working parents is no longer a private issue but a public community responsibility. If family

issues are perceived politically as within the private domain of parents' responsibilities, or as "an issue of private morality" (ibid., Ideologies of Care in the US section), then the failure of the family or the market to provide adequate care is perceived as a private failure (loc.cit.), and not as society's or government's failure in protecting the well-being of the family and society.

Shonkoff reiterates that "we have to reframe the public dialogue...[by] finding an appropriate balance between individual (private) and shared (public) responsibility for the health and well-being of all children. It means establishing common ground for an enlightened approach to early childhood policies and programs that is guided by science, value, and values" (Shonkoff, *Closing the Gap*, p.11).

#### *Financial Inequality*

Financial inequality is a social injustice that ignores the positive influence of well-paid providers' caring on young children's sense of security and stability in three ways. First, such inequality of inadequate support, training structures, and low earnings tend to keep these providers invisible (Nelson, 2001). Second, future benefits of such care point to decreasing expenses on two levels: reducing negative or anti-social behaviors of dysfunctional families and their at risk children; and, according to research from the Families and Work Institute and other organizations, working parents' stress is decreased and their productivity on the job improves when they enjoy quality and dependable care for their children.

Not addressed in this thesis is the long term cost *ineffectiveness* of serving and working with dysfunctional families and at-risk youth once they are school aged, are drop outs, teen parents, or low-skilled applicants looking for work. While these costs can be minimized or avoid through quality early childhood programs of care, yet few family providers would be willing to care for such children.

Third, financial inequality invites a serious discussion on the overlapping responsibilities and roles of employer:employee and of government:parent. Chapter 3 discusses briefly the how a county's dependence on taxpayer supported programs can spell the demise of that county's economic vitality and growth. There is a serious drawback when measuring means-tested childcare fiscal supports or subsidies. These are subject to legislative cutbacks and containment, and to some extent negative public opinion. They may even act as a backwards discrimination by excluding families whose earnings are just above income guidelines and yet struggle in affording childcare. A universal available of childcare services, like public education, removes the perception of injustice or inequality.

The vision and the economic supports for universal childcare need to be shared by members of both public and private spheres of society. Nelson points out that if policy makers and society in general continue to cast

early education and care issues in terms of private family budget alone, an apparent impasse arises....But once it is recognized that the level of funding for any sort of early education and care is, in fact, a political issue, and a matter of social and economic priorities, the impasse of costs versus budgets starts to loosen up. What would spending look like in a society that put a high priority on guaranteeing quality early education and care to all its youngest members? (Nelson, p. 12).

#### *Other Fiscal Inequalities*

Susan Phillips lists four issues confronting families, especially as more mothers of young children enter the workforce, in *What the Under-Threes Need Most* (Connect For Kids, 2001):

1. Future of Children's report *Caring for Infants and Toddlers* shows "poll respondents favor a stay-at-home parent who is devoted to the young child's needs and receptive to early forays into language and play."
2. "...the U.S. public – including parents of young children – puts the burden of [child care]...firmly on the shoulders of individual families, rather than employers and governments."
3. Many young parents lack sufficient time and high wages to building up savings "to withstand an economic downturn or some other shock....As a result, the economic stability and well-being of two-parent families increasingly depends on the income provided by working parents."
4. While demand for childcare has increased, the quality of childcare is still erratic – There is recognition that "The early years lay the foundation for the child's later cognitive achievements, mastery of social skills, and emerging sense of self-esteem and respect for others."

#### *Weaknesses in Legislative Funding Streams*

##### *Unrealistic Expectations of Government's Responsibility*

Policy analysts are correct that the current and proposed levels of federal dollars in the TANF Reauthorization and the Budget Reconciliation Bills are insufficient to continue in assisting families already paying for childcare (Parrott, revised December 12, 2005).

Expectations that national and state level budgets shoulder this fiscal responsibility ignore that without raised taxes, these increased expenses result in budget deficits. A decreasing pool of available funding is not replenished by reallocation of funds and tighter limits on eligibility for benefits and assistance. "The lack of adequate funding will not lead to better welfare reform

efforts; rather, it will create tremendous pressure on states to cut child care for other low-income working families, cut the number of families receiving TANF assistance, or both”, according to Greenberg for Center for Law and Social Policy (Greenberg, revised January 6, 2006).

On the State and County levels, revenue is being squeezed. NYS Association of Counties’ 2001 report Counties at a Crossroads warns that the flow of federal dollars to support TANF programs and policies and the flow of business earnings were decreasing. “According to estimates released as part of the executive budget proposal, New York State may miss the federal spending minimum by as much as \$197 million during the next state fiscal year” (p. 15). Also, in their State of Counties 2002: County Budget Survey Highlights report of 2002, 79% of New York State counties were “pessimistic about their county’s financial health over the next five years, with 60% indicating that they are unable to take on additional responsibilities or cost shifts that come from the state” (p. 2). Their budgets were weakened by decreased sales taxes, increased local expenditures for Medicaid caseloads, and both the “growth in state mandates (39%)... , and the impact of new state mandates (23%)” (p. 1).

#### *Weaknesses in Family Friendly Legislation*

Further, because of the role and life cycle differentiation, and the shifting of both the sequential performances of family tasks and the re-allocation and burdening of family members to perform tasks traditionally associated with one parent vs. the other, as described by Esping-Anderson (Zimmerman, p. 28), it is impossible, nor was it ever intended, for federal and state level legislation to address families’ multiple needs holistically (ibid., pp. 293, 294). “What has not changed in this regard are the contradictions and ambiguities embedded in family policy activities and discourse—and indeed, in all policy discourse—and the ambivalence such discourse evokes” (ibid., p. 24).

There are inadequate funding sources and cycles on the federal and state levels and inadequate financial allocations between family-friendly programs and benefits. The National Center for Children *in Poverty* 2000 updates show “significant growth” since 1998’s report on states’ “level of commitment to young children and families” as seen through their family economic security policies. “But gains have been uneven and efforts to promote family economic security also vary widely. No single state made significant efforts across all the family economic security indicators in addition to making substantial investments in child development and family support” (Map and Track 2000, December 2000).

Policies cannot be both family friendly and efficient in fiscal responsibility and management. The very nature of policy making results in time lags that decrease or minimize effective or equitable responses to working parents’ needs (Lynch, p. 9). No family policy can be tailor made to respond to the multi-faceted layers of parents’ needs for their current well-being, and for the long-term or future well-being of their children. Legislation addresses one family need or issue at a time, and fails to take into account how other policies addressing other needs may be countermanded, or rendered duplicative or ineffective. Gilbert Steiner (1981) in *The Futility of Family Policy*, “concluded that the search for a comprehensive national family policy, though high sounding, was a futile endeavor and that the problems that family policy would be required to address were simply too complex to fit into a coherent package with universal appeal.” (Steiner, quoted by Zimmerman, p. 22).

Nor is it a realistic expectation that at-risk individuals and working parents have the educational and networking resources to become self-sufficient within the five year limit for accessing public assistance. Yes, for some individuals and parents needing public assistance may be a temporary solution as they do get back on their feet, but their success is due more to an

effective family and community support network, social capital, and personal motivation. For others, “They need to be able to take care of themselves first before they can take care of their own children” (Harvard University’s FINE Member Insights, January 2005, How can early childhood settings encourage parents to advocate for their child? section). “Events outside their control...easily disrupt their delicate balancing act. When community support for families is inadequate, getting back on track is difficult” (Family Strengthening Policy Center, Policy Brief No. 9).

*Dis-Satisfaction Measurement of Family Friendly Policies*

Satisfaction with government family policy happens when programs are visible *and* effective for voters and welfare recipients where they live. “If families do not perceive and define family policies and programs as fostering their well-being, they in effect do not....[T]he obvious implication with regard to relative deprivation is to either change people’s expectations relative to family policies and programs or put into place policies and programs that match their expectations – or both” (Zimmerman, p. 322). Further dissatisfaction with family policies and programs occurs when there is a disconnect between legislators’ perception of families and “the ways in which families *themselves* perceived and defined their situation; (b) to the meanings *they* attached to their roles as defined by different policies; and (c) to the satisfactions *they* derived from such roles, rather than always focusing on how policy makers, interest groups, and political elites perceive and define the situation” (ibid, pp. 322-323).

While American voters seem to lay the responsibility on government to protect and support family well-being, in a Yankelovich survey of 1994 respondents did not “necessarily connect government policies and programs to the problems families are experiencing” (Zimmerman, p. 83). In CIVITAS Initiative’s survey What Grown-Ups Understand About

Child Development (2000) , “More than 60% of parents of young children think that neither government nor employers are doing a very good job at making changes in the workplace to meet the needs of workers with very young children” (p. 13).

According to Susan Phillips, “...researchers argue that one reason the public has not called for greater government attention to quality [childcare] may be ‘the skepticism many American have about the ability of “government institutions” to help address children’s needs for safety, love and attention. The image of a faceless, domineering bureaucracy seems the antithesis of the intimate, caring relationships that children need.’” (Phillips, 2001).

### *Solutions*

#### *Context for Solutions*

Solutions to the childcare issue presented in this position paper starts with the family unit as nested in the context of society’s macro and exo systems (Bronfenbrenner, quoted by Lang, March 2005). If local childcare services are not adequate in quality, accessibility, and affordability, working parents will move, leave the workforce, and/or face economic deprivation. Parents choose their residence in communities with good schools; parents prefer employment in communities with good childcare, or will rely on relatives or neighbors for informal childcare.

Next, solutions place the family’s well-being and needs for childcare in the context of a holistic vision, supported by multiple stakeholders. Stakeholders need to include parents and providers, civic leaders, and employers (Smith & Ribeiro, Weaker Frames section). The advantage of involving all the stakeholders in a community such as Delaware County is that solutions and their outcomes are kept in the hands of and controlled by the consumers and the suppliers at the grassroots level.

Community resiliency and social capital reflect the presence of “supportive family relationships, good communications, and a culture of sharing” (Hogan, 2001). When facing critical financial strain or familial crises, it is important to examine one’s resources to determine solutions that may dictate alternative or new uses of such resources. Hogan refers to Robert Putnam’s “agenda for creating social capital in communities. He challenges schools, churches, political parties, neighborhoods, communities, workplaces, and other social organizations, to find ways to ensure more [public] participation and civic engagement.”

These stakeholders are empowered to find, design, and implement timely and effective solutions to meet their needs. They are knowledgeable about the financial and non-financial resources, assets. Also, they personally experience that the labor-intensive caring for children can no longer be considered the private responsibility of parents, especially of parents who need to work as part of their caring for their children. Within the parameters of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, financial assistance for childcare is a crucial component of support that enabled welfare parents to enter and stay within the workforce.

#### *Solution of Universal Childcare*

There are several arguments in favor of morphing existing childcare services into universal childcare, just as Universal PreKindergarten is part of the public education in New York State.. The primary advantage of this approach is how it changes the perception of childcare. Childcare would no longer be viewed as a babysitting service doable by almost anyone to being understood as providing the key socio-emotional building block for children’s future education and academic success and as a service that is delivered by qualified and appropriately paid early childhood educator professionals.

Alice M. Atkinson points out that “The economic structure of society has significantly influenced how families care for their children...[and, more importantly] Because children’s early experiences and relationships with caregivers have a significant influence on their future development and achievements, the quality of their care is an important concern for all” (Atkinson, in *International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family*, pp. 230-236). In a May 16, 2003 press release from the Institute for Educational Leadership, Dr. Hodgkinson is quoted as arguing “that key assumptions driving standards-based school reform and accountability testing do not fairly and adequately deal with the effects that poverty, low parent education levels, child abuse, neglect, and other factors, including race, have on a child’s chances *before they start first grade*”(emphasis added) (Slaughter, 2003).

#### *Other Advantages*

Research evidence from human development and social science academia demonstrates that children’s scholastic and social successes are linked together and originate in successful emotional development during their first three years of life: “Moreover, your ability to pay attention to the teacher is heavily influenced by your early brain wiring and not simply by your willpower...[It] should not be a competition between early literacy experiences and mental health. Both are essential, and the science of social and emotional development is as sophisticated as the science of cognition“ (Shonkoff, *Closing the Gap*, p. 7).

In their *Early Years Are Learning Years – An Important Bond: Your Child and Your Caregiver*, the National Association of Education for Young Children emphasize that:

Specific training in early childhood education is critical because even the most supportive caregivers may not fully understand children’s needs at different stages of their development. Also, working with groups of young children is very different from

relating to one's own child and neighbor's child....Good caregivers know that children's learning occurs in informal activities as much as in formal instruction. Children's language development, for example, begins with their earliest human interactions (1996).

Children's level of social behavior skills and future academic successes seem to be predicated more on pre-center base/preschool or preKindergarten experiences, and specifically on a poor or rich bonding and attachment relationship with their primary caregiver, be it mother or not. Here are two key points:

“For some outcomes (math skills and problem behaviors), children whose mothers had lower levels of education – children who often are at risk of not doing well in school – were more sensitive to the negative effectives of poor quality child care and received more benefits from high quality child care. Moreover, for these children who attended typical childcare centers, these influences of child care quality were sustained through second grade” (Executive Summary for The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go To School, p. 1).

- “Children who had closer relationships with their child care teachers had better classroom behaviors and social skills...through early elementary school...High quality child care experiences, in terms of both classroom practices and teacher-child relationships, enhance children's abilities to take advantage of the educational opportunities in school” (pp. 1-2).

### *Standardizing Childcare Training*

The movement to develop and to standardize content of childcare training is driven by multiple, sometimes overlapping or conflicting, perspectives from researchers, educators, providers, parents, agencies, and policymakers. There are still criticisms that the quality of

training and standards for credentialing or licensing are not consistent nationwide. In the September 1999 report, *How Are the Children?*:

The trouble is that high quality, affordable childcare is hard to come by. Researchers who have observed and rated childcare programs (including both childcare centers and family day care settings) say that many are poor to barely adequate. They may have unqualified or poorly trained staff; too many children for each staff member; inadequate facilities; or other shortcomings. Programs for infants and toddlers appear to be the worst of all<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, childcare schedules often do not mesh with parents' work schedules. Many parents resort to makeshift arrangements; their children may be in several locations or programs during a single day. (*We Know What Works*, section III).

#### *State Agency Oversight Issues*

In shifting childcare to be an universally available service, the next question to address is the state agency oversight: Should childcare remain classified as health and human services or should be re-classified as education services?. One reason for the gap in supply of providers and the erratic levels of quality of care is that the profession is not permitted to be regulated by marketplace economics. Like Head Start, childcare regulation and licensing, is linked through the US Health and Human Services Department and the US Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program to serve a target audience who is identified by income levels. On the state level, child care services and benefits are overseen by the Office of Children and Family Services and Office of Temporary Disability Assistance.

If childcare services were considered educational, then programs development and delivery, and professional development and training would be under the jurisdiction of federal and state Education Departments. Two key advantages to this shift, beside standardizing the

training content, are: a) licensing and certification oversight within the Education Department that already has standardized a degree program for early childhood/elementary education K-12 through the Child Development Associate Degree for high school students and Human Ecology and Education courses in state sponsored colleges; and, b) streamline funding from the No Child Left Behind Act would complement current Child Care Development Block Grants, NYS Family Flexible Fund, and unused TANF dollars.

According to Sharon L. Kagan, in an interview with Pew Trusts, “The American public needs to see early care and education as a social imperative. There needs to be a sense that we are not doing right by our children or doing right for our future if we don’t support such programs. Early childhood education should be every American’s child’s birthright” (Pew Trust, Fall 2002, pp. 30-31). Nelson concurs, “If early education and care is to be valued as *care*, then a strategy to raise wages must also develop a way of recognizing and articulating the relational and responsive component of the work, so that it becomes visible and valued for itself” (p. 14). Kagan adds, “We need to make the point that early education programs need to be considered part of the policy structure of the nation—they need to be seen as *routine*, as *normative*. We also need to have policymakers thinking much more systemically and more about quality and the infrastructure supports that are necessary to achieve quality” (Pew Trusts, p. 31).

#### *Professional Recognition*

The Child Care That *Works* campaign coalition represents “...a statewide coalition of parents, employers, children’s advocates, child care providers, labor unions, educators, research and community groups” who are “working toward the goal of high-quality, affordable and accessible child care and early education programs for all New York families” (The Child Care That *Works* Campaign, 2004-2005).

support and dollars within the community and between community and non-community partners. There are two businesses and SUNY Delhi that support childcare centers for employees and the public. While these examples focus on one or several issues at a time, and therefore seem to be fragmented responses to county issues, they do demonstrate that the possibility exists for a county-wide vision and implementation of solutions to the childcare gap. Nonetheless, for the moment, there is “the absence of a vision for rural America” and recognition that economic development is in a changing context wherein “entrepreneurship appears to fit” (Brian Dabson, 2005, p. 1).

Now is the time for county leadership be actively seeking and attracting new businesses and encouraging young employees, ready to start families, to chose to live and work in Delaware County. Businesses that would satisfy the environmental regulations of Delaware County’s watersheds are in the health, finance, insurance, advertising, tourism, recreational, technology, and education fields-non agriculture and manufacturing industries! Many of these businesses offer competitive wages and benefits to retain staff and to generate profits that could be re-invested into the county’s workforce support businesses and infrastructures, like childcare, emergency medical, fire and services. Business opportunities that would appeal to young adults should include computer technology, services, graphic arts, crafts, and micro-enterprise or sole entrepreneur operations.

Now is the time for Delaware County’s civic leaders, employers, parents, micro-enterprise and entrepreneurs, and agencies’ staffs to collaborate in putting together a county-wide vision and implementation of solutions influence and affect family well-being right where parents live and work. Their vision needs to have pro-active approaches that encourage constructive thinking and tap into creative energy. By building linkages, businesses, civic

leaders, and financial services can educate parents and childcare providers about economic development and profit making strategies, while parents and providers can lead them to see the bi-directional connection between childcare and family/community well-being (Warner et al., *Economic Development Strategies*, p. iv).

#### *Components Needed in County-Wide Childcare Solutions*

The childcare solutions must be strength-based, and include three layers or levels of support in addressing the needs for family well-being as nested within the needs of the community well-being. The primary layer focuses on a holistic strengths-based vision that fosters supportive communities, strengthens current workforce development trainings, and connects all stakeholders to various forms of capital investments for businesses and innovations.

The secondary layer addresses ways to reward childcare providers' ongoing professional development and standardization of childcare operations and training in compliance with State University of New York (SUNY) and/or National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation. Childcare providers, especially those operating within their homes in Delaware County, need to decide that they are *not* in the babysitting business, and that an annual income below \$17,000 is *not* okay for their services and does not provide satisfactory compensation for their time consuming service and devotion to young children's developmental needs.

The tertiary layer proposes that a tax reform using a flat tax rate on incomes at 300% above poverty threshold be established. This position paper focuses what needs to be in place for the strengths-based vision, while the remaining two layers, as important as they are, could be explored later.

### *Strengths-Based Vision*

According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family Strengthening Policy Center website, listed under the National Assembly organization, family strengthening is "within the context of its community" (National Assembly, About Us, November 12, 2004, p. 1) "A deliberate and sustained effort to ensure that parents have the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks and supports to raise their children successfully, which includes involving parents as decision makers in how their communities meet family needs" (ibid., p. 2). "Individuals, families, and communities demonstrate resiliency when they build caring support systems and solve problems creatively" (McCoy, ed., July 1995, p. 3).

Individuals involved in resolving the childcare issues in Delaware County need to identify their responsibilities and roles in both the public and private domains. They need to be willing to address barriers and differences of opinion, and to think outside of their rural isolation and cultural experiences. They need to learn each other's language and *modus operandi*. By exploring ways to use their talents, knowledge, and availability as human capital is one way to begin strengthening Delaware County's families and by connecting the 19 separate communities together (Rupasingha & Goetz, p. 8; Hogan, 2001).

### *A Strength-Based Vision Can Be Implemented in Delaware County*

Two power point presentations from Center for Rural Entrepreneurship delivered in Burlington, Vermont on September 29, 2005 discuss the unique environment of rural communities: *What works! Rural Entrepreneurship and Community Development in the Northeast* by Brian Dabson and *Changing the Face of Rural Entrepreneurship* by Karen Dabson. Ms. Dabson shows "Why Entrepreneurship Fits Rural America" on slide 7:

- Critical – Drives local and national economies;

- Appropriate – Entrepreneurship offers a scale of activity better suited to smaller communities;
- Achievable – Better able to match skills and resources with unique market opportunities;
- Relevant – Rural economies are essentially composed of small enterprises.

She defines “Entrepreneurs – people who create and grow businesses” (ibid, slide 8).

Her examples start with successful craft business owners who overcome the challenges of finding customers by marketing aggressively, of poorly educated, low-skilled workers by retraining them into hands-on aspects of operating their own business, and lack of capital by tapping into underappreciated community assets of talents, vacant buildings, friendliness, cooperation, and time. In Delaware County since 2001, the collaborative effort of Department of Economic Development and Small Business Administration has provided micro-enterprise courses for business start ups with a focus on marketing and business planning.

Examples of other supports for fostering micro-enterprise businesses are the Poverty USA’s campaign and website, sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Charles Mott Foundation, and New York State’s Small Business Administration. The Poverty USA works with families living in economically distressed rural and urban communities who wish to improve their lives through grassroots based collaborations and operations. These families receive support, encouragement, empowerment, and training as part of the start up steps they need to take. The Charles Mott Foundation provides a long-term commitment to low-income entrepreneurs who seek to create thriving businesses and build critical assets in part because they were living in “communities decimated by structural unemployment” (Litzenberg quoted by Edgcomb & Klein, Foreward, pp. iv-v, 2005).

New York State's commitment and recognition of the growing micro-enterprise field is seen in these opportunities through the Small Business Administration offerings, tri-county websites and rural enterprise electronic newsletters, e-commerce and business incubators operations within the Catskills region, and the statewide Support Services Alliance, Inc<sup>xiii</sup>. Many of these sites promote opportunities specifically for business women. The Chenango-Delaware-Otsego website <http://www.tri-countyny.net/funding/fund3.htm> provides links for employers to access subsidies for hiring recent college graduates; for individuals to identify loans through local banks and grants through the Community Revitalization Act and NY Smart; and for employment services through the NYS Department of Labor's regional office

#### *Benefits of a Strength-Based Vision*

##### *Child Development and Family Well-Being*

Descriptions of the determined rates of return on community investments in child care are written up in Lynch's *Early Childhood Investment Yields Big Payoff* (2005), and in Grunewald's and Rolnick's *Early Childhood Development on a Large Scale* (June, 2005). These report on longitudinal studies that documented long-term academic successes of low-income preschoolers participating in the Perry Preschool Project or the Abecedarian Project. A key component in these successes is the home-based outreach to parents, both as an educational opportunity and support for parents to strengthen their discipline skills.

##### *Opportunities for Businesses through Community Investments*

It is important that employers and business owners generate profits and reinvest into Delaware County as incentives and write offs to encourage further economic growth. Many of the county's businesses are small, with less than 25 employees (Delaware County Department of Economic Development, [www.dcedu.net](http://www.dcedu.net) Top 30 Industries in Delaware County, March 2002). By using

collective management practices, they could pool together their expenses for employee benefits and payroll and bulk orders for equipment and supplies, while sharing innovative ideas, customers, technologies, skills base, and infrastructure (Warner et al., *Economic Development Strategies*, p. 24).

A perusal of *Financing Child Care in The United States* report by Mitchell, Stoney, and Dichter (2001) shows there are national models of businesses supporting families' needs for childcare that can be replicated in Delaware County. Local businesses (that hire less than 25 employees) and regional businesses, like Kraft Foods, Inc., Mead/Westvaco, and Tyco-Mallinckrodt Healthcare, (that hire more than 100 employees) could pool together members' resources and expertise to be visible investors in community development. They could form their own version of the American Business Collaboration (ABC) for Quality Dependent Care, or partner with the major national companies who form the core "Champions" within ABC (Mitchell, et al, pp. 116-117).

Further, by pooling their resources together, businesses could leverage funds from philanthropic organizations and state and federal block grants. Increased funds would enable businesses greater flexibility in distributing or offering loans or grants to local childcare providers, or in operating public awareness and fund raising campaigns to assist providers with bigger purchases for equipment and building upgrades. Employers would see their supervisory and training efforts improve employee retention and generate profits.

#### *Business Opportunities for Providers*

Family home-based providers could be connected with businesses' personnel staff for client referrals, thus providing both employers and their employees with one-stop operations for finding childcare. One way this connection could work effectively is with several small

businesses to pool together their and employees' financial resources to pay for childcare services as one action towards providing universal access to childcare.

Center based and home based providers have difficulty raising or obtaining capital for start up expenses, construction or remodeling, and equipment to supplement NYS Office of Children and Family Services' grants. In a partnership with local businesses, they could obtain funding from banks regulated by the Community Reinvestment Act, in which banks "become more deeply intertwined with the development goals of the community" (Warner et al, p. 31); or even receive financial management training, expertise, and mentoring from retired business people, bank officers, and financial investors

### *Summary*

These county-wide initiatives, workforce development, economic growth incentives enable both employers and working parents more choices and the means to "evaluate and compare the costs and rewards of their situation." (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, referred to by Zimmerman, p. 307). "The most obvious application of rewards and costs is that they can be used to assess the *relative rewards and costs* associated with a specific family policy or program. The greater the rewards associated with a particular policy or program and the lower its costs, the most likely it is to meet the family well-being standard." (Zimmerman, p. 310) while the "symbolic interaction perspective tend to focus on internal family relationships, the framework itself also speaks to the connections between families and the larger society." (ibid., p. 313).

The childcare business can no longer be considered an invisible service provided by women and relatives out of the goodness of their hearts, nor should it be viewed as a luxury babysitting that only well-to-do and middle class parents can afford. The negative costs associated with low quality or unavailable childcare are: women seeking undeclared income,

working parents' lowered productivity at work because they worry about their child's safety and care being at risk, demands from employers and legislation that conflict with parents' familial responsibilities, and the children's socio-emotional and academic development are stymied. The repercussions of these negative costs are felt in the present and in the future.

There are four primary benefits for Delaware County leadership and residents in designating childcare professionals as providing key economic contributions to strengthening families, supporting working parents' productivity on the job, and building community well-being:

- Childcare professionals provide a service that enables parents to work and earn a living, and that enables parents transitioning from welfare to work to obtain the necessary education and training for better paying jobs.
- Childcare professionals earn taxable incomes that contributes to the County's coffers; are not on welfare rolls; spend earnings for start up and equipment expenses; use business and computer services through the Departments of Labor, Workforce Development, Economic Development, Small Business Administration, banks and insurance companies, the County's eCommerce Building (in Delhi); and, receive training through SUNY Delhi, BOCES, Delaware Opportunities, Inc., and Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Delaware County.
- Qualified licensed childcare professionals are trained to be sensitive to young children's developmental needs for bonding and socializing with others, and to transfer parents' and communities' culture and mores to the next generation through enrichment experiences, thus laying in an important foundation of human development in the next generation of consumers and capitalists.

Page Two  
October 1, 2005  
Request to Interview

Before submitting my Thesis, I will verify your comments and permission to use your name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for considering my request to interview you on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS. I look forward to meeting with you on Friday.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Informed Consent Form  
Abstract

- Delaware County will be seen as family friendly, thus replenishing a working population that is aging and graying with young parents who would choose to live in this County for its natural beauty and clean air, recreational and tourism activities, and proximity to cities and airports.

### Conclusions

Working parents' need for affordable, accessible, and quality home-based family childcare in Delaware County is an economic issue that impacts negatively on Delaware County's economy and quality of life. The family is the smallest unit needed for society to replicate and replace itself, and to transmit and hand down cultural values and mores. If family well-being is not encouraged nor strengthened through community and county infrastructures and through employment, then Delaware County will lack workers and a strong tax base as its current population continues to age and needs health care related services.

Meanwhile, because of recent scientific research on child development and family well-being, the childcare profession is in transition from being viewed as a babysitting service from one's neighbor or a local teenager to being recognized that quality child care is important for both the child's mental well-being and the parents' stability and functioning within its community and productivity in the workplace. New York State legislation and funding supports for childcare providers in both centers and home base needs to be consistent, and simplified, while the training and professional development needs to be standardized to ensure decent wages with benefits for all providers.

It seems doubtful that a county-wide vision of recognizing how negatively the decreasing numbers of providers impacts Delaware County's economic health and attraction to new businesses and young families seeking employment and homes may happen. The political

culture in Delaware County appears stagnant, as civic leaders and residents in each of the 19 communities respond to problems within their boundaries. Even though each community's town supervisor attends a monthly Board of Supervisors' meeting in the county seat to address county issues, each seems to represent his or her community's interests. These meetings are open to the public, but generally are attended only by other county agencies' staffs.

The county's Community Action Program agency is Delaware Opportunities, Inc.. The Executive Director for Delaware Opportunities, Inc. works closely with the Department of Social Services' Commissioner to deliver public assistance benefits to income-eligible recipients and to provide supervision of home based family childcare providers, foster parents and youth, and Head Start. Because there are many programs under the Delaware Opportunities, Inc. umbrella, it may be challenging for the Director and Commissioner to take the lead in seeking a win/win solution to encourage more individuals to enter the childcare profession.

Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Delaware County's staffs are primarily funded through grants, Cornell University moneys from US Department of Agriculture, and NYS 224 Funding. Much of its work is education of skills – business, micro-enterprise, farming, child development and family strengthening, life style and health. Outreach paraprofessionals receive client referrals either as self-referrals or from Delaware Opportunities, Inc. and Department of Social Services. These educators work with child care providers who need to satisfy nutrition, child development, and food and home safety components for licensing. Stronger links between Extension and providers with the state level of conferences with their research updates and child care strategies need to be established.

If funding proposals are developed to encourage an increase in home-based family child care providers, data, information and assumptions presented in this position paper would need

further updating and verification. An advisory group of county leaders, parents, providers, employers and agency staffs would raise public awareness of this situation as a county-wide crisis, and establish forums to identify gaps, needs, and solutions. Members in this advisory group would need to be committed to resolving working parents' childcare needs for the long haul, as there is no quick and easy fix to this issue. Compilation and assessments of each stakeholder's needs, along with continuous dialogue, will take time.

Each stakeholder also needs to be his/her own advocate and to be an advocate for the solution. Providers need to see themselves as professionals delivering an important service that affects family well-being and community economic vitality. Providers need to advocate for themselves in stronger business skills and operation strategies before both their clients and county civic leaders. Providers need to seek out more New York State level support for their county level Child Care agency to be more supportive and funded to be responsive to providers' needs for better wages, benefits, start up and ongoing business expenses, and professional development. Webcast and satellite technology, along with high speed internet, would facilitate providers' access to research, trainings, and networking.

Parents need to invite their employers to participate in the discussions about childcare being quality driven while being affordable and accessible. Employers need to recognize the value quality childcare as giving peace of mind to their employees increases or improves work productivity. The economic value of home-based family child care providers is not only what their services and expertise are worth now, but what is the long-term economic contribution and value their services provide in community well-being and economic development.



Appendix A – Supplemental Tables that show income levels and expenses for working poor parents

Supplemental Table #1  
**US AVERAGE COST OF FOOD AT HOME—Family of 4, 2 adults between the ages of 20-50 & 2 children under the age of 5**

(source: United States Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, <a href="http://www.cnpp.usda.gov">http://www.cnpp.usda.gov</a> )												
WEEKLY LEVELS (June in each year)												
MONTHLY LEVELS (June in each year)						ANNUAL LEVELS (June in each year)						
YEAR	Thrifty	Low Cost	Moderate Cost	Liberal	Thrifty	Low Cost	Moderate Cost	Liberal	Thrifty	Low Cost	Moderate Cost	Liberal
2000	86.90	109.50	134.20	165.10	376.60	474.50	581.50	715.30	4519.20	5694.00	6978.00	8583.60
2001	90.40	114.20	139.90	172.10	391.80	494.80	606.30	745.70	4701.60	5937.50	7275.60	8948.40
2002	93.00	116.40	142.20	174.80	403.00	504.40	616.20	757.40	4836.00	6052.80	7394.40	9088.80
2003	94.10	118.80	145.30	179.00	407.70	514.80	629.60	775.60	4892.40	6177.60	7555.20	9307.20
2004	99.80	125.40	153.90	190.10	432.40	543.00	666.70	823.90	5188.80	6520.80	8000.40	9886.80
2005	100.80	126.80	155.80	192.20	436.80	549.30	675.30	832.80	5241.60	6591.60	8103.60	9993.60

Supplemental Table #2  
**GROSS INCOME GUIDELINES for Household Size of 4**

(source: (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/figures-fed-reg.shtml>) & <http://www.scanny.org/resources/guidelines.php> (rounded to the nearest dollar))

	100% of Poverty (Head Start) Weekly	100% of Poverty (Head Start) Monthly	100% of Poverty (Head Start) Annually	130% of Poverty (Food Stamps & School Free Meal Level) Weekly	130% of Poverty (Food Stamps & School Free Meal Level) Monthly	130% of Poverty (Food Stamps & School Free Meal Level) Annually	185% of Poverty (WIC & School Reduced Meal level) Weekly	185% of Poverty (WIC level & School Reduced Meal level) Monthly	185% of Poverty (WIC level & School Reduced Meal level) Annually	200% of Poverty (Subsidized Childcare level) Weekly	200% of Poverty (Subsidized Childcare level) Monthly	200% of Poverty (Subsidized Childcare level) Annually
1997					1739.00							
1998	316.00	1371.00	16450.00	411.00	1782.00	21385.00	585.00	25361.00	30433.00	633.00	2742.00	32900.00
1999	321.00	1392.00	16700.00	412.00	1783.00	21396.00	594.00	2575.00	30895.00	642.00	2783.00	33400.00
2000	328.00	1420.00	17050.00	426.00	18471.00	22165.00	607.00	2629.00	31543.00	656.00	2842.00	34100.00
2001	339.00	1471.00	17650.00	441.00	1912.00	22945.00	628.00	2722.00	32653.00	679.00	2942.00	35300.00
2002	348.00	1508.00	18100.00	453.00	1961.00	23530.00	644.00	2791.00	33485.00	696.00	3017.00	36200.00
2003	354.00	1533.00	18400.00	460.00	1993.00	23920.00	655.00	2837.00	34040.00	708.00	3067.00	36800.00
2004	363.00	1571.00	18850.00	471.00	2042.00	24505.00	671.00	2906.00	34873.00	725.00	3142.00	37700.00
2005	372.00	1612.00	19350.00	484.00	2097.00	25164.00	689.00	2984.00	35808.00	744.00	3224.00	38700.00

Eligibility for these programs is based on a percentage of the federal poverty guidelines as indicated in the chart. However, the departments that administer these programs sometimes make small adjustments to the poverty guidelines that have the effect of creating very slight differences between the numbers on the chart and the actual eligibility guidelines for the programs. (<http://www.scaany.org/resources/guidelines.php>)

Supplemental Table #3

**GROSS HOURLY INCOME, either for 1 earner or split between 2 earners in a family or household of 4, using the Annual % of Poverty Levels above and estimating 2080 hours/year (rounded to the nearest dime):**

Year	100% of Poverty Annually			130% of Poverty Annually			185% of Poverty Annually			200% of Poverty Annually		
	Annual Income	Hourly Rate	Daily Rate (8hr/day)	Annual Income	Hourly Rate	Daily Rate (8hr/day)	Annual Income	Hourly Rate	Daily Rate (8hr/day)	Annual Income	Hourly Rate	Daily Rate (8hr/day)
1998	16450	7.90	63.20	21385	10.30	82.40	30433	14.60	11.70	32900	15.80	126.40
1999	16700	8.00	64.00	21396	10.30	82.40	30895	14.90	11.90	33400	16.10	128.80
2000	17050	8.20	65.60	22165	10.70	85.60	31543	15.20	12.20	34100	16.40	131.20
2001	17650	8.50	68.00	22945	11.00	88.00	32653	15.70	12.60	35300	17.00	136.00
2002	18100	8.70	69.60	23530	11.30	90.40	33485	16.10	12.90	36200	17.40	139.20
2003	18400	8.80	70.40	23920	11.50	92.00	34040	16.40	13.10	36800	17.70	141.60
2004	18850	9.10	72.80	24505	11.80	94.40	34873	16.80	13.40	37700	18.10	144.80
2005	19350	9.30	74.40	25164	12.10	96.80	35798	17.20	13.80	38700	18.60	148.80

Supplemental Table #4 PATTERNS OF HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL EXPENDITURES<sup>xiv</sup> – Percentage Estimates of Gross Annual Income based on U.S. Dept. of Labor “Quintiles of Income Before Taxes: Average Annual Expenditures and Characteristics, Consumer Expenditure Survey” Table for 2003<sup>xv</sup> (source: <http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm>) (rounded to the nearest \$10)

The Top Five Household Expenditures	Expenditure Percentage	100% of Poverty	130% of Poverty	185% of Poverty	200% of Poverty
Total Food	22%	\$4050	\$5260	\$7490	\$8100
Housing	36%	\$6620	\$8610	\$12250	\$13250
Transportation	17%	\$3130	\$4070	\$5790	\$6260
Clothing	5%	\$920	\$1200	\$1700	\$1840
Utilities	9%	\$1660	\$2150	\$3060	\$3310
Subtotals	89% of annual household expenditures	\$16380 of annual income \$18400, balance is \$2020	\$21290 of annual income \$23920, balance is \$2630	\$30290 of annual income \$34040, balance is \$3750	\$32760 of annual income \$36800, balance is \$4040



## APPENDIX B Definitions

### NYS Office of Children and Family Services

According to its website's home page, this state agency "serves New York's public by promoting the well-being and safety of our children, families, and communities" through "setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services" (<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main>). Among its many responsibilities is the oversight of the childcare and referral programs.

### Terms

**Group Family Day Care-** A family home which is a personal residence and occupies as a family residence which provides child care for more than three hours per day regularly for 7 to 12 children between the ages of 6 weeks through 12 years for compensation or otherwise. Child care is provided through the child care provider and at least one assistant present during the hours that care is provided for more than six children.

**Child Care Center** – a program or facility in which child day care is provided on a regular basis to more than six children for more than three hours per day per child for compensation or otherwise, except those programs operating as a group family day care home.

**Small Day Care** – is provided in a location that is not a personal residence for more than three hours regularly for 3 through 6 children for the ages between six weeks and 12 years.

### **Informal Childcare Providers.**

Informal Childcare – an individual who is not licensed by NYS Office of Children & Family Services and who provides child care, usually in either the caregiver's home or the child's home and personal residence. Care givers range from a babysitter, to a neighbor, and more recently the

growing trend of grandparents, who may be seeking custody of their grandchildren (Dunifon & Taylor, 2004; Colosi, Dunifon & Lee, 2003, Guzman, 2004).

**Quality Childcare Act of 2000** – A brochure put out by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services with details on the new training requirements for Day Care Providers. The primary change is that “The number of training hours for each registration/license period [a two year period] has been increased” from 15 hours to 30 hours/period. New registrants, however, must complete “15 hours of training...within the first six months” of their first registration or employment period (Brochure, 2000). There are mandatory topics, and the training is to provide “more knowledge and skills” (ibid.) to help providers meet children’s needs in the five areas as identified by Erikson: Physical, Emotional, Cognitive, Social, and Spiritual.

**Preschool or center-based early education and care** – this includes prekindergarten, day care centers, nursery schools, and Head Start (National Institute for Early Education Research quoting National Household Education Survey).

**Non-Parental education and care** – include non-parental care which can include center-based and home-based care offered by relatives or family providers (National Institute for Early Education Research quoting National Household Education Survey).

## APPENDIX C

Letters to Interviews, with Informed Consent Form, Thesis Abstract, and Questionnaires

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
424 Carr George Road  
Denver, New York 12421

Ms. Doree Huber  
P. O. Box 855  
Margaretville, New York 12455

January 2, 2006

RE: Request for Information for Thesis

Dear Doree,

Happy New Year!

As I mentioned on the telephone, I noticed your name as the contact person for the Catskill Women's Network. My Graduate Thesis explores the gap between home-based family childcare providers and working parents in Delaware County for a M.A. in Social Policy through Empire State College. I would interested in interviewing some of the business women who have or who have had a need for childcare, to discuss some of the challenges they face in finding affordable and accessible childcare, and their expectations of this service.

Several people have been most helpful with information: Ms. Shirley Forman, Delaware Opportunities, Inc., Glenn Nealis, Director, Delaware County Department of Economic Development, and Betsy Feuerstein, Capital District Regional Child Care Coordinating Council. From our conversations, I sense that financial barriers are a key factor in the shrinking numbers of providers in our County.

This creates an important crisis: Public awareness and academic research point out the growing need of home-based childcare to nurture young children's mental health and future school readiness. Simultaneously, I sense there is on the state side an increasing encouragement for providers to become early childhood experts to meet working parents' expectations or needs for their child to do well academically.

However, working parents who need childcare struggle to locate affordable and accessible quality care in this County, while the income licensed providers earn is insufficient for them to pay for ongoing professional development, and to set aside moneys for health benefits, savings, and retirement. I would appreciate hearing your views on this topic, along with suggestions to address the issue and to identify appropriate community/county/state partners and stakeholders.

My email is [tg32@cornell.edu](mailto:tg32@cornell.edu); as I am on the road a lot for Cooperative Extension, reaching me via email makes the most practical sense. If there is an upcoming meeting, perhaps I could make a presentation to recruit interviewees? This is a voluntary participation: participants can withdraw at any time and decline answering any questions in the interview and questionnaire

Page Two  
January 2, 2006

processes. There is no stipend. I have also attached an Informed Consent Form for your signature. It is hoped that the data gathered for this Research Proposal will be useful in identify working parents' need for home-based family childcare in Delaware County. The data gathered from interviews will be kept for one year, then paper shredded.

Before submitting my Thesis, I will verify participants' comments and permissions to use their name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored. If there are any questions concerning one's rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for your assistance in my work on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS. Again, the easiest way to reach me is by email: [tg32@cornell.edu](mailto:tg32@cornell.edu), but my home telephone number is 607 326-7662 (answering machine available). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Informed Consent Form

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
424 Carr George Road  
Denver, New York 12421

December 10, 2005

Ms. Carol Saginaw Director  
NYS Child Care Coordinating Council  
230 Washington Avenue Extension  
Albany, New York 12203

RE: Request to Interview for Thesis

Dear Ms. Saginaw.

My Graduate Thesis explores the gap between home-based family childcare providers and working parents in Delaware County for a M.A. in Social Policy through Empire State College. One of my readers is Dr. Mildred Warner of Cornell University, who recommended I contact you with my questions.

Several people have been most helpful with information: Ms. Shirley Forman, Delaware Opportunities, Inc., Glenn Nealis, Director, Delaware County Department of Economic Development, and Betsy Feuerstein, Capital District Regional Child Care Coordinating Council. From our conversations, I sense that financial barriers are a key factor in the shrinking numbers of providers in our County.

This creates an important crisis: Public awareness and academic research point out the growing need of home-based childcare to nurture young children's mental health and future school readiness. Simultaneously, I sense there is on the state side an increasing encouragement for providers to become early childhood experts to meet working parents' expectations or needs for their child to do well.

However, working parents who need childcare struggle to locate affordable and accessible quality care in this County, while the income licensed providers earn is insufficient for them to pay for ongoing professional development, and to set aside moneys for health benefits, savings, and retirement. I would appreciate hearing your views on this topic, along with suggestions to address the issue and to identify appropriate community/county/state partners and stakeholders.

Would you be available for an interview, either by email or phone? This is a voluntary participation: you can withdraw at any time and decline answering any questions in the interview and questionnaire processes. There is no stipend. I have also attached an Informed Consent Form for your signature. It is hoped that the data gathered for this Research Proposal will be useful in identify working parents' need for home-based family childcare in Delaware County. The data gathered from interviews will be kept for one year, then paper shredded.

Page Two  
December 10, 2005  
Request to Interview for Thesis

Before submitting my Thesis, I will verify your comments and permission to use your name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for considering my request to interview you on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS. The easiest way to reach me is by email: [tg32@cornell.edu](mailto:tg32@cornell.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Informed Consent Form  
Cc: M. Warner, PhD

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
424 Carr George Road  
Denver, New York 12421

October 26, 2005

Ms. Debra Davis  
DCMO BOCES  
Harrold Campus  
Sidney Center, New York

RE: REQUEST TO INTERVIEW

Dear Debra,

Thank you for agreeing to chat with me on Friday, October 28 after 1p.m. I do have a face to face interview with Glenn Nealis, Department of Economic Development at 1p.m, and will call you at the School as soon as I am finished.

I am investigating working parents' need for family childcare providers in Delaware County, NYS as my research thesis for Empire State College, M.A. in Social Policy. I am modifying my usual line of questions as you have been more involved with the training and job placement of students interested in entering the childcare field. I have attached a copy of these questions with this letter. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: (607) 326-7662 (answering machine for messages).

I am attaching a copy of the Abstract of my thesis, in which I hope to identify in Delaware County:

- a) if working parents prefer or need family childcare services;
- b) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for working parents to access family childcare services;
- c) how working parents may perceive these barriers or challenges as impacting their work productivity;
- d) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for individuals interested in operating a home-based family childcare service;
- e) how do family childcare providers perceive their service;
- f) and, why individuals do choose to operate a home-based family childcare service.

This is a voluntary participation: you can withdraw at any time and decline answering any questions in the interview and questionnaire processes. There is no stipend. I have also attached an Informed Consent Form for your signature. It is hoped that the data gathered for this Research Proposal will be useful in identify working parents' need for home-based family childcare in Delaware County. The data gathered from interviews and questionnaires will be kept for one year, then paper shredded.

Page Two  
October 26, 2005  
Request to Interview

Before submitting my Thesis, I will verify your comments and permission to use your name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for considering my request to interview you on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS. I look forward to chatting with you on Friday.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Informed Consent Form  
Abstract  
Questionnaire

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
424 Carr George Road  
Denver, New York 12421

October 14, 2005

Ms. Teddie Storey  
Office of Employment & Training  
One Gallant Avenue  
Delhi, New York 13753

RE: REQUEST TO INTERVIEW

Dear Ms. Storey,

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me on Friday, October 21 at 9a.m. I am investigating working parents' need for family childcare providers in Delaware County, NYS as my research thesis for Empire State College, M.A. in Social Policy. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: (607) 326-7662 (answering machine for messages).

I am attaching another copy of the Abstract of my thesis (even though I left one with after meeting with Glenn), in which I hope to identify in Delaware County:

- g) if working parents prefer or need family childcare services;
- h) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for working parents to access family childcare services;
- i) how working parents may perceive these barriers or challenges as impacting their work productivity;
- j) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for individuals interested in operating a home-based family childcare service;
- k) how do family childcare providers perceive their service;
- l) and, why individuals do choose to operate a home-based family childcare service.

This is a voluntary participation: you can withdraw at any time and decline answering any questions in the interview and questionnaire processes. There is no stipend. I have also attached an Informed Consent Form for your signature. It is hoped that the data gathered for this Research Proposal will be useful in identify working parents' need for home-based family childcare in Delaware County. The data gathered from interviews and questionnaires will be kept for one year, then paper shredded.

Page Two  
October 1, 2005  
Request to Interview

Before submitting my Thesis, I will verify your comments and permission to use your name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for considering my request to interview you on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS. I look forward to meeting with you on Friday.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Informed Consent Form  
Abstract

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
424 Carr George Road  
Denver, New York 12421

October 1, 2005

Mr. Glenn Nealis, Director  
Department of Economic Development  
One Gallant Avenue, Suite 2  
Delhi, New York 13753

RE: RE:      REQUEST TO INTERVIEW

Dear Glenn:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me on Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. I am investigating working parents' need for family childcare providers in Delaware County, NYS as my research thesis for Empire State College, M.A. in Social Policy. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: (607) 326-7662 (answering machine for messages).

I am attaching a copy of the Abstract of my thesis, in which I hope to identify in Delaware County:

- m) if working parents prefer or need family childcare services;
- n) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for working parents to access family childcare services;
- o) how working parents may perceive these barriers or challenges as impacting their work productivity;
- p) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for individuals interested in operating a home-based family childcare service;
- q) how do family childcare providers perceive their service;
- r) and, why individuals do choose to operate a home-based family childcare service.

This is a voluntary participation: you can withdraw at any time and decline answering any questions in the interview and questionnaire processes. There is no stipend. I have also attached an Informed Consent Form for your signature. It is hoped that the data gathered for this Research Proposal will be useful in identify working parents' need for home-based family childcare in Delaware County. The data gathered from interviews and questionnaires will be kept for one year, then paper shredded.

Page Two  
October 1, 2005  
Request to Interview

Before submitting my Thesis, I will verify your comments and permission to use your name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for considering my request to interview you on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS. I look forward to meeting with you on Friday.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Informed Consent Form  
Abstract

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
424 Carr George Road  
Denver, New York 12421

September 15, 2005

Ms. Shirley Forman  
Delaware Opportunities, Inc.  
47 Main Street  
Delhi, New York 13753

RE: REQUEST TO INTERVIEW

Dear Shirley:

My name is Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes, and I am investigating working parents' need for family childcare providers in Delaware County, NYS as my research proposal for Empire State College, M.A. in Social Policy. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: (607) 326-7662 (answering machine for messages).

For this Research Proposal, I would like to interview you and ask you to answer a questionnaire (copy attached) to document the local availability of family childcare providers for working parents in Delaware County. This proposal will identify in Delaware County:

- s) if working parents prefer or need family childcare services;
- t) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for working parents to access family childcare services;
- u) how working parents may perceive these barriers or challenges as impacting their work productivity;
- v) what are barriers or challenges, if any, for individuals interested in operating a home-based family childcare service;
- w) how do family childcare providers perceive their service;
- x) and, why individuals do choose to operate a home-based family childcare service.

This is a voluntary participation: you can withdraw at any time and decline answering any questions in the interview and questionnaire processes. There is no stipend. I have also attached an Informed Consent Form for your signature. Kindly indicate clearly whether you are interested or not in participating in this investigation, sign and date for the Form, and mail it back in the stamped, self-addressed envelope.

It is hoped that the data gathered for this Research Proposal will be useful in identify working parents' need for home-based family childcare in Delaware County. The data gathered from interviews and questionnaires will be kept for one year, then paper shredded.

Page Two  
September 15, 2005  
Request to Interview

Would you be available for meeting with me for approximately 30 minutes, one or two times, during August 22 – November 22, 2005? I will verify your comments and permission to use your name and comments for my proposal. All requests for anonymity will be honored.

I will call you next week to discuss a convenient time for us to meet in you home/office or by phone. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a subject, contact:

Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358.

Thank you for considering my request to interview you on working parents' need for family childcare services in Delaware County, NYS.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes  
Att.: Questionnaire  
Informed Consent Form

WORKING PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE  
For  
"Working Parents' Need for Family Childcare Providers in Delaware County"  
Research Proposal

1. If available, is home-based family childcare services your first choice?  
or
2. If available, is having a neighbor or relative to care for your children your first choice?
3. What other childcare services might you use?
4. How do you define "quality" home-based family childcare?
- 5.. In selecting child care, you look for: (check off all that apply)  
 accessibility;  affordability;  educational enrichment;  
 child's comfort level with caregiver;  flexible care service with work schedule;  
 parent's comfort level with caregiver;  child's safety;  
 transmission of societal and cultural values;  
 opportunity for women to achieve economic or opportunity equality;  
 other
6. Approximately how many hours/week do you need childcare? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is this a regular number of hours/week  Yes;  No  
 Is your work schedule:  daytime;  second shift;  third shift;  includes weekends
7. What is the range you pay per hour for childcare:  
 \$2.00 - \$4.00;  \$4.00 - \$6.00;  \$6.00 - \$8.00;  > \$8.00
8. What difficulties did you experience in finding home-based family childcare?
9. What might be some other barriers or challenges for other working parents to find home-based family childcare?
10. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the greatest level, how would you rank stress in not finding accessible, affordable, and reliable home-based family childcare?
11. Any closing thoughts or comments.

Thank you for participating.

**HOME-BASED FAMILY CHILDCARE PROVIDERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**For**  
**“Working Parents’ Need for Family Childcare Providers in Delaware County”**  
**Research Proposal**

1. As an individual providing childcare, kindly rank the following terms on a scale of expertise, with 1 = minimum expertise and 10 = greatest expertise:

Babysitter	Informal Childcare Provider	Having a Child Development Associate (CDA) Degree:
Center Based Childcare Provider:		Licensed Family Childcare Provider:

(1)

(10)

2. Using the scale above, “X” the term that best describes your expertise and service
3. What reasons motivated you to become e a home-based family childcare service?
4. How long have you been operating a home-based family childcare service?
5. How long do you want to continue to operate a home-based childcare service?
6. How many children do you care for \_\_\_\_\_  
 their ages \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_;  
 how many hours/week do you work? \_\_\_\_\_  
 what is the hourly rate you charge? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is approximate annual net income you earn?
8. Approximately how much are you able to put aside as savings annually?
9. What would you like to use this savings for?
10. Can you identify some challenges or barriers for individuals interested in operating a home-based family childcare service?
11. Kindly check off below what traits working parents look for in a home-based family childcare provider:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ accessibility; \_\_\_\_\_ affordability; \_\_\_\_\_ educational enrichment;  
 \_\_\_\_\_ child’s comfort level with caregiver; \_\_\_\_\_ flexible with parents’ work schedule  
 \_\_\_\_\_ parents’ comfort level with caregiver; \_\_\_\_\_ child’s safety with caregiver;  
 \_\_\_\_\_ transmission of societal and cultural values;  
 \_\_\_\_\_ opportunity for women to achieve economic or opportunity equality;  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other

Thank you for participating.

EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE  
For  
"Working Parents' Need for Family Childcare Providers in Delaware County"  
Research Proposal

1. As an educator who has assisted students in being trained and in finding work as a childcare provider, kindly rank the following terms on a scale of expertise, with 1 = minimum expertise and 10 = greatest expertise:
- |                                 |                             |   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Babysitter                      | Informal Childcare Provider | Having a Child Development Associate (CDA) Degree |
| Center Based Childcare Provider |                             | Licensed Family Childcare Provider                |

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (10)
2. Approximately how many students have you taught and assisted in finding jobs in this field in Delaware County?
3. How many of these students have stayed in the field, either working in the field and/or seeking a college degree?
4. What are some reasons students select childcare training? (kindly use the backside for your answer)
5. Which of the following reasons parents might use in selecting childcare that you and your students identify as important:  
 accessible;  affordable;  flexible to working parents' job hours;  
 child's comfort level with caregiver;  child's safety with caregiver;  
 parents' comfort level with caregiver;  provide educational enrichment;  
 transmission of societal and cultural values;  
 opportunity for women to achieve economic or opportunity equality;  other
6. How many hours/week do students estimate working parents need childcare?
7. What dollar value have students estimated working parents place on finding childcare that meets their needs?
8. What barriers or challenges, if any, do students see for working parents to access home-based family childcare services?
9. What barriers or challenges, if any, do students feel they face in becoming a home-based family childcare provider?
10. What do students estimate is the annual net income a home-based family childcare provider earns?
11. What percentage of that annual net income do students plan to put aside for savings? 132@cornell.edu
12. How many hours/week do students estimate they will work as a home-based family childcare provider works?
13. In what ways do students see their home-based childcare services as an industry contributing to the economy of Delaware County?
14. What solutions do you and your students see could be developed to facilitate working parents' need for home-based family childcare?
15. Do you and your students see these solutions best developed as the grassroots level, at the state government and social policy level, or both? Explain:
16. Whom would you recommend to be invited as partners in developing and implementing these solutions?

Thank you for participating.

AGENCIES' STAFFS' QUESTIONNAIRE  
For  
"Working Parents' Need for Family Childcare Providers in Delaware County"  
Research Proposal

1. As an individual providing childcare, kindly rank the following terms on a scale of expertise, with 1 = minimum expertise and 10 = greatest expertise:
- |                                 |                             |   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Babysitter                      | Informal Childcare Provider | Having a Child Development Associate (CDA) Degree |
| Center Based Childcare Provider |                             | Licensed Family Childcare Provider                |

(1) (10)

2. What are some reasons working parents have when selecting home-based family childcare services in Delaware County?
- accessible;  affordable;  flexible to working parents' job hours;  
 child's comfort level with caregiver;  child's safety with caregiver;  
 parents' comfort level with caregiver;  provide educational enrichment;  
 transmission of societal and cultural values;  
 opportunity for women to achieve economic or opportunity equality;  other

How many hours/week do you estimate working parents need childcare?

4. What dollar value would you estimate working parents place on finding childcare that meets their needs?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 = greatest level, what stress level would you estimate working parents experience when unable to find affordable, accessible, and reliable home-based family childcare?

(1) (10)

6. Kindly mark with an "X" on this scale where you would estimate their stress impact their work productivity.
7. What barriers or challenges, if any, do you see for working parents to access home-based family childcare services?
8. What barriers or challenges, if any, do you see facing individuals interested in becoming a home-based family childcare provider?
9. What might be some reasons individuals would choose to become a home-based family childcare provider?
10. What do you estimate is the annual net income a home-based family childcare provider earns?
11. What percentage of that annual net income do you estimate a home-based provider is able to put aside for savings?
12. How many hours/week do you estimate a home-based family childcare provider works?
13. In what ways do you see home-based childcare services as an industry contributing to the economy of Delaware County?
14. What solutions do you see could be developed to facilitate working parents' need for home-based family childcare?
15. Do you see these solutions best developed as the grassroots level, at the state government and social policy level, or both? Explain:
16. Whom would you recommend to be invited as partners in developing and implementing these solutions?

Thank you for participating.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM  
For  
“Working Parents’ Need for Family Childcare Providers in Delaware County”  
Research Proposal

- A) DO CONSENT AND AUTHORIZE  
B) DO NOT CONSENT AND DO NOT AUTHORIZE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby indicate my willingness to be interviewed and to answer the attached Questionnaire on “Working Parents’ Needs for Family Childcare Providers in Delaware County” Research Proposal. I understand that my answers may be used as data to identify working parents’ need for home-based family childcare services in Delaware County, New York State. I understand that there is no stipend for my participation in this Research Proposal, and that all data gathered for this Research Proposal will be kept for one year and then paper shredded. Further, I am satisfied with the explanation of there are no or minimal risks, and that some benefit for working parents may occur from my participation in this Research Proposal.

- A) DO GIVE PERMISSION THAT MY NAME BE USED  
B) DO NOT GIVE PERMISSION THAT MY NAME BE USED  
C) *and DO REQUEST ANONYMITY*

By not consenting, authorizing, or giving permission, I understand that any comments I make will not be used nor shared in any way that may jeopardize my standing in Delaware County. Further I understand that if I have any questions about my participation in this Research Proposal, I will contact:

Ms. Lorrie Anthony, Compliance Officer  
Empire State College  
One Union Avenue  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518 587-2100, Ext. 358

I certify that I am the individual named herein and am authorized to sign this INFORMED CONSENT FORM.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>10</sup> CSREES stands for: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

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 ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> View the SUNY Website at [www.tsg.suny.edu](http://www.tsg.suny.edu). (Forman, email correspondence).

<sup>ii</sup> According to Eberts & Merschrod (xii), Delaware County farms used to cover 100-120 acres with small herds of milk producing cows. In flatter parts of New York State, farmers are now operating on large scale farming operations of 1000+ acres.

<sup>iii</sup> One business is a construction design and building company. Their contracts are nationwide to build or restore sports complexes, conference centers. They have their staff oversee construction done elsewhere by local workers; yet the middle winter months are their slowest work period and staff may be laid off temporarily during this time of the year (Nealis, personal communication, October 7, 2005).

<sup>iv</sup> Youth graduating from Delaware County high schools have options to attend State Universities and private colleges in the contiguous counties of Broome, Ulster, Schoharie, and Otsego; other colleges that are about 3-4 hours drive away are in Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, Cortlandt and Tompkins Counties. Many of these provide computer technology and health services degrees for entry and middle level positions.

<sup>v</sup> US Census defines *household* in which the children may not be related biologically to another adult living with them, and *family*, the traditional unit in which the children are related biologically to the married parents (Eberts & Merschrod, p. xv).

<sup>vi</sup> Data from Delaware County's Public Health Nursing for January – September 2004 shows 389 total births, whereas for 2003, there were 437 total births.

<sup>vii</sup> For definitions of poverty guidelines, poverty threshold, and income, refer to these websites: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/05poverty.shtml> and <http://census.gov/hhes/poverty/povdef.html>.

<sup>viii</sup> Mollie Orshansky, an economist for the Social Security Administration, wanted to develop an assessment tool that measures the relative risks of low economic status or “the differentials in opportunity” among different groups of families with children based on demographic characteristics. “She actually developed two sets of poverty thresholds, one derived from the Agriculture Department's economy food plan and one derived from its somewhat less stringent low cost food plan” (Social Security Administration, 1). Initially these were based on “the dollar costs of the foods in the two food plans” based on two different ratios of people successfully accessing a “fair or better diet: vs. “getting a good diet” (ibid., 2) Later these thresholds were expanded to four levels of income, and to account for different family sizes:

Poverty Thresholds – “are the statistical version of the Federal poverty measure and are released annually by the Census Bureau. They are used to estimate the number of persons in poverty in the United States or in states and regions” (Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plan Guidance, 2006, 79).<sup>viii</sup>

Poverty Guidelines – “are an administrative version of the Federal poverty measure and are issued annually by the Department of Health and Human Services in the Federal Register. Sometimes referred to as the Federal Poverty Level, these guidelines are often used to set eligibility for certain programs” (loc.cit).

Household – US Census defines this as “a group of people, related or not, who together occupy a housing unit” (Bitler et al., Summer 2004, p. 19).

Family – US Census defines this as “two or more people living together [who] are related by birth, marriage, or adoption (ibid.).

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Head of Household – US Census defines this as the individual “whose name is on the mortgage or lease—the rent payer” (ibid.).

<sup>ix</sup> “According to the Congressional Research Service, the median income for a two-parent family with a non-working parents was \$36,027 in 1997, compared to \$60,669 [in 2000/2001] for families with two working parents” (Phillips, 2001).

<sup>x</sup> According to Dr. Eberts, the data he and Dr. Merschrod used in the *Socioeconomic Trends 2000 and Well-Being Indicators in New York State, 1950-2000* reflect “only the primary employment of a person” who works at least 35 hours/week. “Much self-employment is part-time, and the Census does not include this aspect of employment” (Eberts, personal communication, November 26, 2005).

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<sup>xiii</sup> The Support Services Alliance, Inc. is a small business membership organization of nearly 15,000 members across New York State.