



child development council

Offices in Cortland and Tompkins Counties

607-753-0106 or 607-273-0259

ChildDevelopmentCouncil.org

January - February - March 2015

Parenting Playground

Parents and the High Cost of Child Care

It isn't exactly news to families who have both children and one or more jobs, but child care is a major expense in many family budgets, according to a new study by Child Care Aware of America. Children ages 0 to 5 are not only being 'cared for' but are learning every day of their first five years. In the United States system of education, families pay 60% of the cost of educating these youngest children, before public school takes over, usually at age 5.

Compared to other basics of a budget such as housing, food and transportation, the cost of child care sometimes takes young families by surprise. Perhaps the parents remember the grandmotherly neighbor who cared for them and assume no money changed hands, or arrangements where the oldest siblings in large families were each responsible for a younger child – the 'cheaper by the dozen' model of child care.

Today we have the internet, ATMs and smart phones; child care has changed, too. We now know that 90% of a child's critical brain development happens by age 5, and the growth and development of children is critical in these formative years. No more children go off to factory work instead of elementary school, and our society has learned not to leave child care to chance in the first 5 years.

Child Care Aware of America (CCAofA) is a national network of child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R), including ours, the Child Development Council of Central New York, Inc. The recent research looks at the amount of money families pay when they hire others to provide early childhood care and education. Several charts show comparisons of child care costs relative to other family expenses.

Also, CCAofA has included Three Solutions to the High Cost of Child Care, featuring ideas such as involving business organizations and employers, policy changes in individual states, federal money to assist low-income families, and increasing the supply of care options. Find the full report at www.childcareaware.org; under Parents and Families click on Cost of Care Report.

Here in Tompkins County, one financial resource for parents is the Council's Emergency Child Care Scholarship. If you find yourself unable to keep up with payments for your child's care, call Darla at (607)273-0259 for more information about short term assistance.

High costs make child care especially unaffordable for many low-income families.



50%
The average annual cost of center-based care for an infant is nearly half of the income of a family of three living at the poverty level.

Research shows 90% of a child's critical brain development happens by age 5.



Yet, child care providers are one of the lowest paid professions.

The average income for a full-time child care professional in 2013 was

\$21,490

Unreliable child care also hurts business.



Lack of child care options lead to employee absences – costing businesses **\$3 billion** annually in the United States.



29%

of employed parents experienced some kind of child care breakdown in the past three months which were associated with absenteeism, tardiness, and reduced concentration at work.

Parents Apart® a workshop for parents who want to learn how to help their child(ren) adjust during separation and divorce.

Pre-registration is required. Please call Jennifer Gray at CCE Tompkins 272-2292 X 243, email her at jcg33@cornell.edu or register on line at <http://ccetompkins.org/sites/all/files/63/2014-parents-apart.pdf>

These 6 hour workshops are held once a month alternating between two Monday evenings from 6 - 9 pm and one Saturday from 9 am - 4 pm with a 1 hour break.

Here are the dates for 2015 *Parents Apart®* workshops

February 14, Saturday	March 9 & 16 Mondays	April 18, Saturday
May 4 & 11, Mondays	June 13, Saturday	July 6 & 13, Mondays

Parents of the same child(ren) are placed in different workshops.

Parents may attend voluntarily or may be referred or ordered to attend by Family Court or the Supreme Court, Matrimonial Part.

Attendance requirements, concerns about safety or other special circumstances may be discussed with the *Parents Apart®* Program Coordinator, 607-272-2292.

The New York State Parent Education & Awareness Program of the New York State Unified Court System (see www.nycourts.gov/ip/parent-ed) certified and oversees *Parents Apart®*.

Tompkins County Public Library weekly storytimes for babies, toddlers and families.

The following storytimes are free and open to the public and will be held in the Library's Thaler/Howell Programming Room:

- **Babies, Books, and Bounce Time** -- Caregivers and newborns up to 18-months-old are invited to join Library staff Fridays at 10:30 a.m. from February 6 through April 24 for music, rhymes, movement and books. This storytime is followed by an hour-long "Baby & Toddler Playtime."
- **Toddler Storytime** -- Caregivers and toddlers will have an opportunity to enjoy stories, songs, and fingerplays each Tuesday at 11 a.m. from February 3 through April 28. "Toddler Storytime" will be followed by an hour-long "Baby & Toddler Playtime."
- **Family Storytime** -- From February 7 through April 25, children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to attend Family Storytime each Saturday at 11 a.m. for great books and fantastic family fun.

All children must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. For more information, contact the Youth Services Department at (607) 272-4557 extension 275.

Library Storytimes have been made possible by the Tompkins County Public Library Foundation through a grant from Elmira Savings Bank.

Catholic Charities Fatherhood Initiative is a family-centered & solution-focused case management program which promotes engagement with each child's village.

We partner with fathers and potential fathers to provide individualized services to those who are involved in divorce, shared parenting, custody, child support and other related challenges. In addition we have created an emotionally safe space to facilitate support groups to assist fathers in gaining increased skills that lead to more effective fathering of children.

Formal or informal self-referrals are welcome and encouraged for custodial and non-custodial fathers.

Services are free & open to all community members. Pre-registration for support group meetings is available - however walk-ins are welcome.

Groups are presently held Mondays 1 - 2:30 pm at Catholic Charities on Buffalo Street, Ithaca but are subject to change based upon preferences of participants.

To enroll in the program or support group please contact: Tommy Miller - Family Services Department Director at 607-272-5062 X 28 or Gale Smith, Mentor/Support Group Facilitator at 607-272-5062 x16.