



January/ February 2026 Child Development Today

Happy New Year! Thank you for everything you do to nurture, educate, and inspire young children every day. January is the perfect time to reflect on your program and set fresh goals. Whether it's improving routines, enhancing your learning environment, or trying a new idea, small steps can lead to big changes. Here's to a year of growth, collaboration, and joy.



CSEA/VOICE Professional Development Training Program

Civil Service Employee Association (CSEA)/Voice Of Independent Childcare Educators (VOICE) is a union that is open to NYS Registered Family, Licensed Group Family and Legally Exempt child care providers. Their Professional Development Training Program offers trainings and educational support at no cost. This program helps providers to meet OCFS requirements. You can earn your Child Development Associate (CDA) or receive Early Childhood Education (ECE) Tuition Assistance toward a degree. You can participate in the free college program or Legally-Exempt "Enhanced Rate" training, learn the ins and outs of the business side of family child care, attend Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) trainings, and more. The program's goal is to make professional development easier, more accessible, and more affordable, so that providers can stay compliant, build skills and strengthen their child care business. Providers are not required to join, but many choose to because of the protections, trainings, and resources available through the union.

How to Use this Program:

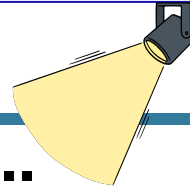
1. If you don't know your CSEA ID, call CSEA to get it and then go to:
<https://csealarningcenter.org/programs/cseaprofdev.cfm> and enter your license/registration/enrollment number and CSEA ID
2. Select a participating training organization where you would like to take training and click "Get authorization" (You may receive authorizations from any number of training providers).
3. Contact the participating training organization directly to register for training classes.

When using a CSEA/VOICE training provider there is no cost to you, and you can take as many classes as you want to enhance your program. For more information contact David Sanchez at david.sanchez@cseainc.org or at 518-782-4428 or 855-472-6848 (toll-free) or go to <https://csealarningcenter.org>.

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Spotlight On...

Funding for Child Care

The Council's Community Child Care Supply Growth Initiative can cover start-up funding for new child care businesses as well as funding for existing ones that want to expand their capacity in Tompkins County. We are here to support you if you are thinking of expanding or opening a new child care business.



We know there are many steps involved in creating quality child care. We can support you in helping make your child care dream a reality. Council staff can offer feedback about the layout of your space, make suggestions about the learning materials you may need and support you through the process of opening or expanding your child care business. Grant funds can cover the costs of materials and equipment needed for expansion and start up.

New child care businesses often need to fence in a safe play space. This can be a barrier to becoming a provider. Grant funds can be used to cover the cost of fencing, as well as other required renovations needed to comply with child care regulations.

If you are thinking about expanding your child care business, or you know someone who would like to open a child care program, please reach out to our Child Care Development Director, Barb Mechalke at 607-273-0259 x 127 or barb@childdevelopmentcouncil.org



Bookworm Banter

For Ages 0-2



Baby's First Words by Stella Blackstone

With clear colorful illustrations this is a perfect book for learning and having fun with first words. Featuring two dads, a little girl and a woolly mammoth, there are pages for food, clothing, emotions, bedtime, animals (including their sounds), outdoors, and more. The little girl speaks in single words often used by babies such as again, uh oh, more, go, up, no and please. This board book is also available in a washable, bendable, chewable format, and in Spanish.

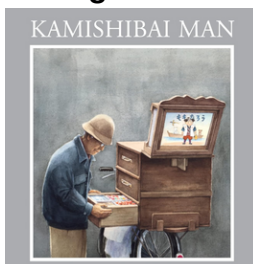
For Ages 3-5



Night Job by Karen Hesse

At sunset, a young boy climbs onto the back of his Dad's motorcycle. They ride the "dusky highway" to the school where Dad is the night custodian and he "hauls out a ring of keys as big as the rising moon". The boy shoots baskets in the gym to the swoosh of Dad's broom and races along a cafeteria counter with a sudsy mop. They snack on egg salad sandwiches. As Dad polishes the library, the boy reads aloud to him, then falls asleep on the green vinyl sofa. A sweet nighttime story about a young boy and his Dad.

For Ages 5-8



Kamishibai Man by Allen Say

Long ago in Japan, The Kamishibai Man called to the city's children with his wooden clackers and entertained them with stories and sweets from the big wooden box mounted on the back of his bicycle. With the advent of television, fewer and fewer children gathered to listen to his stories, so he stopped riding his bicycle into the city. Now the Kamishibai Man has grown old and longs for the old days. He sets up his box with his stories and sweets and rides once again into the city. You will have to read the book to find out what happens.

Reframing Behavior

When children use challenging behavior it can certainly be upsetting to adults. You may have your own emotional reaction that may cause you to react negatively toward the child. Reframing helps us take a moment to rethink what may be happening and look at the challenge from a different perspective.

Directions:

- 1) Challenge the "original" thought and reframe with a new, more objective thought.
- 2) Choose a thought you have that you'd like to challenge and reframe with a new thought

Original:

Johnny whines the moment he arrives and continues throughout the day. He doesn't like being here.

Reframed:

Johnny must miss his family.
It takes time to adjust...

Original:

Sally clings to her parents at drop-off and to certain teachers. She does not seem interested in me.

Reframed:

Original:

Reframed:

Supporting Respectful Mealtime Practices

Using Ellyn Satter’s Division of Responsibility (sDOR)

Picky eating is common in child care settings, but mealtimes don’t have to be stressful. Ellyn Satter’s Division of Responsibility (sDOR) offers a supportive, child-centered approach that encourages healthy eating habits and reduces mealtime pressure.

According to sDOR, **adults decide what, when, and where food is offered, while children decide whether and how much to eat.** This balance helps children feel safe, respected, and open to trying new foods.

Key Strategies for Providers:

- Offer meals and snacks at consistent times.
- Include at least one familiar “safe food” at each meal.
- Serve food family-style, when possible, to build independence.
- Use neutral, non-pressuring language such as “These carrots are bright orange today.”
- Allow children to explore food through sight, smell, and touch.
- Avoid comments like “Just try one bite.” Pressure often increases resistance.
- Model enjoyment by eating the same foods calmly and confidently.



Why This Works:

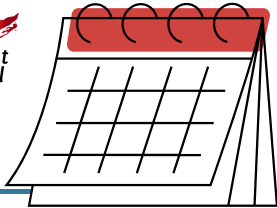
Repeated, low-pressure exposure helps picky eaters gradually accept new foods. A predictable routine and a calm atmosphere support children in listening to hunger and fullness cues, building a foundation for lifelong healthy eating.

Be patient. Even small steps—looking at a food, smelling it, or touching it—are real progress. Your consistent support makes mealtimes positive and successful for everyone.

CACFP-Compliant Weekly Snack Menu Suggestions!

A simple, child-friendly snack plan for child care providers. Each snack meets CACFP requirements for milk, fruit/vegetables, grains, or meat/meat alternates. Remember to serve water through-out the day as needed!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Honey Dew & Cheddar Cheese Cubes Water	Blueberry & Yogurt Parfait <i>Layer yogurt, fruit, and granola in small cups.</i> Water	Veggie Dip Cups <i>Baby carrot and cucumber sticks, hummus, Whole-grain pita triangles</i> Water	Home Made Trail Mix <i>Wheat Chex Cereal, raisins, unsweetened coconut, unsalted sunflower seeds</i> Water	<i>Egg salad Triangles</i> <i>Egg salad served on whole grain rich bread</i> Water



Agency Calendar

Closings:

December 25, 2025 - January 2, 2026

January 19 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 16 - President's Day

Meetings:

January 6- No Meetings

February 2- Center Directors -10:00am-11:00am

February 2- SACC Directors -10:00am-11:30am

Provider Corner

In our last newsletter we shared information about self-regulation. Adults need to self-regulate in order to help children self-regulate. Many of the self-regulation strategies that work for children also work for adults. Reframing behavior is one way for adults to self-regulate. Children learn self-regulation through games and open-ended free play. Music that includes movement prompts like fast and slow, loud and soft, and act like an animal, foster self-regulation. Barb O'Neill, Ed.D. – founder of the Transform Challenging Behavior Teachers' Club created a list of songs to help children practice self-regulation. Her "Songs for Self- Regulation" playlist includes twenty-four songs including: The Floor is Lava, Freeze Dance, Hokey Pokey, If You're Happy Clap Your Hands, and Wheels on the Bus.

NYS Early Learning Guidelines state; "Adults support children's self-regulation by being warm and reassuring and providing the predictable limits and consistent routines children need to feel safe." Educators can prepare to care for children by taking good care of themselves, resting and eating well, reflecting with trusted colleagues, and asking for help when they need it.

Hometown Happenings

Here's your round-up of free, fun, and family friendly events happening across Tompkins and Cortland counties. Mark your calendar's and share with families!

Family Playgroup

Six-week free series with Baby Doll Circle Time, story time, free play, songs & movement, healthy snack prep, and a nutrition Q&A. Each family receives a free gift. Ages 1-4

Wednesdays from Jan. 7th- Feb. 11th
11:30am-12:30pm

Location: Cornell Cooperative Extension,
615 Willow Ave. Ithaca

*It is free but registration is required:

<https://ccetompkins.org/events/2026/01/07/family-playgroup-winter26-round-1>

Tompkins Families: "Stronger Together Resilience" Family Day

Outdoor and indoor family event with free lunch, sledding, snow painting, animal tracking (weather permitting), crafts (like "sugar bubbles" and refurbishing stuffed animals), plus time for family connection. Each family receives a free gift.

Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026 10am-1pm

Location: 4-H Acres, 418 Lower Creek Rd., Ithaca

*It is free but registration is required:

<https://www.tcpl.org/event/families-learning-science-together-54074>

Family Storytime at the Tompkins County Public Library

Weekly Family Storytime with stories, songs, and hands-on fun for children of all ages and their caregivers

Saturdays, program resumes Jan. 10, 2026 continues weekly. 11-11:30am

Location: Tompkins Public Library, 101 E. Green St., Ithaca

*Free and Open to the public

Preschool Story Time

Weekly themed stories, songs, and activities; designed for ages 3-5, but all ages welcome.

Thursdays in Jan. & Feb. 2026 10:30-11am

Location: Cortland Free Library, 32 Church St. Cortland, 13045

*Free and Open to the public



Training Calendar January- February 2026

Date	Time	Location	Title	Description	Instructor	OCFS Categories
1/22	6:30-8:30pm	Ithaca Office	Using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire with Infants and Toddlers	The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a screening tool that can help determine how a child is developing and if there may be areas of development that need more support. In this training participants will practice using the ASQ and develop ways to support lesson planning and engagement.	Lisa Potter	1,3
2/24	6:30-8:30pm	Cortland Office	Mindfulness in Infant and Toddler Settings	Mindfulness is being aware of what you're sensing and feeling, without judging those feelings. In this training participants will focus on mindfulness strategies that both adults and children can practice in infant and toddler settings.	Lisa Potter	1,3



To register for training: call (607) 273-0259 or email training@childdevelopmentcouncil.org

The Child Development Council is happy to offer convenient on-site training for child care programs. Our Team is available to travel to your program, or provide a Zoom link, and teach one of our many training workshops to your staff. Email or call for a training catalog and applicable fees.

Current Child Development Council Team

Administrative:

Diane Feldman
Margaret Tinker
Melissa Perry
Michael Hoit

Family Services:

Amy Riotto
Ashaneé Brooks
Cassandra Carlton
Elizabeth Wolff
Jessi Soto-Moyer
Ken Cassano
Lisa Bowman
Lisa Drake
Malinda Rees

Child Care Services:

Alexxis Strauf
Allison VanGalder
Ann Turcsik
Barb Mechalke
Don Yeager
Hannah Behrens
Joanie Slatoff
Lisa Potter
Ruth Williams
Sara Sandritter
Sue Sopp
Vickie Mundy- Hebert

HOW TO CONTACT US

- 📍 609 West Clinton Street, Ithaca, 14850
- 📍 100 Grange Place, Rm 205, Cortland, 13045
- ☎ 607-273-0259
- ✉ Info@childdevelopmentcouncil.org
- 🌐 www.childdevelopmentcouncil.org
- 📘 Child Development Council
- 📷 [@child.development.council.cny](https://www.instagram.com/child.development.council.cny)