New Hampshire Child Care Advisory Council
c/o Administrator, Child Development Bureau and
Head Start Collaboration
Department of Health and Human Services,
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www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/cdb/index.htm

NEW HAMPSHIRE CHILD CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

2018-2019 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Advisory Council on Child Care was created through legislation (RSA 126-A:17) in 1995 to serve as an advisory body to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services and to inform and communicate with the legislature, the Commissioner of Education and the Governor on any issue related to child care in New Hampshire.

The purpose of the NH Child Care Advisory Council is to:

- further the development of quality & affordable child care;
- provide a forum for groups concerned with child care and related services;
- advise the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services on policies and legislation regarding child care;
- communicate with the Governor and the Commissioner of the Department of Education on early childhood initiatives and needs; and
- advise the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration on priorities.

More information can be found at this link: http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcyf/ccac.htm

The Child Care Advisory Council has continued working on statewide initiatives to raise awareness of the economics of child care and the need for universal access for low income families and others who may be driven out of the system by high costs. Our work has included:

- bimonthly meetings featuring guest speakers who are working on different initiatives that have the potential to impact child care statewide. These meetings create a forum where stakeholders can learn about the work that is occurring and discuss the impact of these activities on their programs.

- bimonthly reports from the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration. We advocate for transparency in the use of child care scholarship funds and the budgeting process to ensure that all funds available are used to keep child care in NH affordable and accessible.
- bimonthly reports from the Bureau of Child Care Licensing to ensure that regulations are not causing an increase in cost or decrease in availability of child care.
- council members sitting on statewide committees, including the child care Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS) work group and leadership team, Spark NH Executive Committee, Spark NH Policy and Workforce and Professional Development Committees, the Statewide Early Learning Alliance, and the Emergency Preparedness Taskforce.

At all times, and in all activities, the Child Care Advisory Council promotes the idea that a healthy economy requires strong businesses and a skilled and productive workforce. Child care provides both short- and long-term returns; it supports today's workforce and builds the workforce of tomorrow. Child care is critical to today's economy and is a keystone to our future economy - it allows parents to take and keep a job while ensuring children get a strong educational start.

This has been a challenging time for child care programs statewide. New Hampshire's low unemployment rate has meant that the demand for child care has increased, but qualified, well-educated child care workers have been leaving the field for positions in higher paid professions. Child Care does not follow traditional supply and demand economics; ultimately a program cannot charge more for tuition than their families can afford to pay, even though many times this does not cover the actual cost of care. Child care facilities statewide have closed classrooms and even centers because of the inability to hire teachers who meet the state licensing standards.

The future prosperity of NH depends on our ability to attract and retain talent and steward the next generation. To this end, child care must be integrated into local, regional, and state economic development plans. Economic developers, business people, planners, and public officials should collaborate with child care specialists to support and sustain today's strong economy and promote the well-being of NH's children.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Executive Committee, Child Care Advisory Council
Anne Grassie, Chair
Marti Ilg, Vice Chair
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