



## THE TICONDEROGA COMMUNITY CHILDCARE PROJECT

**THE SITUATION:** We don't need any studies to tell us that we are in childcare crisis in Ticonderoga, throughout the entire North Country, and for that matter, in all of rural America. We see it in everyday life in our community. But a number of national, regional, and local studies have quantified the problem so that we can truly understand the depth of the childcare gap and what is needed to begin to bridge that gap.

### Nationally

The Bipartisan Policy Center performed a childcare gap analysis in 35 states by congressional district and found that New York's statewide gap is 46.3% higher than the 35-state average, rural communities in New York are far more underserved than urban communities, and the 21<sup>st</sup> District of NY in particular has the deepest gap in the state of between 18,751 and 20,126 childcare slots.

### Regionally

The Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country released a study of the Childcare Desert in February 2022, and updated the data in the February 2023 report. 46% of the census tracts in the North Country are defined as childcare deserts. Regionally they identified 5.8 children for each licensed spot, and within Essex County, 86% of tracts are deserts, with 25.8% of children in the county living below the poverty level. In addition, they identified a loss of 208 child slots between November of 2019 and November of 2021, two more providers closing between November 2021 and April 2022, and no new providers in our area since November 2019.

### Locally

The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance performed a local study in Ticonderoga and the immediate surrounding communities through local employers, schools, libraries, and public surveys. The data revealed that childcare for people who live and work in the area is nearly non-existent with just 16 licensed slots for hundreds of children. With 105 respondents, 84% of parents work full time. 42% indicated that a lack of reliable childcare prevents someone in their household from working full or part-time. Most of these families struggle financially trying to live on a single income.

From the employer's perspective, 73% of respondents lose work monthly due to childcare issues, and 30% lose work 3 or more days/month. This represents an enormous productivity loss and burden on our employers.

Ultimately just this small survey identified 87 children under the age of 6 that would attend a childcare center full time if one existed in Ticonderoga.

We must meet the challenge of childcare in the Ticonderoga Area. Regionally, various agencies are working on advocacy for subsidy funding for families and staff training opportunities. But in our area, the core of the challenge lies in creating new childcare resources, both home-based and publicly based. Home-based resources alone cannot reasonably cover the vast deficit of slots for children, nor can they address the vulnerability and reliability issues inherent in home-based care. We need at least one public childcare facility to provide the volume and stability our residents and workers need.

**PROJECT PLAN:** The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance, a 501(c)3 non-profit Local Development Corporation is leading a team called The Ticonderoga Community Childcare Alliance (TCCA) in an effort to develop a public childcare facility in Ticonderoga. The team consists of community leaders, employers, parents, and agencies that can help us create the best plan for a sustainable childcare center. Members of the TCCA team include:

Donna Wotton, Executive Director, Ti-Alliance

Cynthia Ford-Johnston, Superintendent, Ticonderoga Schools

Dr. Kristin Mack, Director, Hudson Headwaters Health Network Ticonderoga

Scott Burdick, Essex County Day Care Licenser, NY State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

Josh Bender, Essex County Day Care Fire & Safety Officer, OCFS

Rose Blanchard, CCRR Project Director, Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country (CCCCNC)

Kathy Bogdziewicz, Program Director, Adirondack Community Action Programs (ACAP)

Kate Ryan, Program Director, Birth to Three Alliance, Adirondack Foundation, and parent

*Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance is a 501c3 non-profit, local development corporation whose mission is to restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.*

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Nicole Justice-Green, Executive Director, PRIDE of Ticonderoga  
Joe Vilardo, Architect, Vilardo Architecture Inc.  
Ken Romano, Start-Up Specialist, Romano Consulting  
Christine Romano, Program Director, Mass General Brigham  
Philipp Graf, Engineer, Sylvamo Corporation, & parent  
Evan Cohen, Retired IT Professional, Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity  
Scott Hearburg, Retired Businessman and Board Member of Ti-Alliance

Utilizing industry best practices, in consultation with other providers, and enlisting the experience of agency personnel on our committee, TCCA has created a start-up and 3-year business operating plan for a 52-child childcare center. The plan includes two continuous care rooms, each with 8 children, ages infant to 36 months, and two rooms each with 18 children, ages 3-5 years. These parameters will enable us to maximize our capacity and staffing requirements for the most viable business plan. In addition to the properly appointed rooms, we will have separate rooms for medical pickups, offices, and a multipurpose space that could be used by physical and occupational therapists to support the center's children, or as an additional childcare room if needed.

**PERSONNEL:** Staffing is an industry-wide challenge in childcare but we are actively doing outreach in our community and through our networks to build our staff in parallel with our business and facilities planning. We have identified two potential candidates for Center Director, and a number of other former teachers and childcare providers that are interested in working at a public center. We're finding that some of these people just didn't want to provide care in their own homes anymore, or didn't want the administrative responsibility of running their own business, but would gladly work for someone else running the business side. They just want to take care of kids and have a normal life schedule. In addition, we are working with BOCES CV-TEC and area universities to recruit recent graduates with certifications, classwork, and degrees in early childhood development/education. We are also actively reaching out to childcare management companies that might be compatible with our plan. Our center will be staffed with local talent as much as possible.

**LOCATION:** Our center will be located in a local private school building. The school is closing at the end of the school year in June, 2023 and the school is looking for a new tenant. OCFS has inspected the space and provided us with the modifications that need to be made for childcare. We're confident that we can accomplish this work in a few months.

**BUDGET and FUNDING:** We have a well-vetted start-up and business plan. Because the building was recently updated and has been used as an elementary school, it is up to current code. The budget for renovating to meet additional OCFS requirements is approximately \$360,000. One-time start-up equipment and related costs are budgeted at \$119,600. The cost for the first full year of operation is budgeted at \$624,000.

We are committed to paying everyone that works at TCCA a living wage. We believe the critically low wages paid to childcare workers is fundamental to discouraging people from pursuing education, certification, and careers in childcare. They create a revolving door of childcare providers, reduce the quality of care, and promote poverty among childcare workers. We will not participate in this practice. Everyone that works at TCCA will earn at least a living wage.

Our goal is to raise the funding required for renovation/build, start-up, and one full year of operation to create an endowment fund that can help bridge the expected ongoing salary gap between minimum wages and living wages and benefits to our childcare workers. The total funding required for this project is approximately \$1,100,000.

#### **Isn't there money from the federal or state government to pay for new childcare?**

Well yes and no. As with most public funding, childcare funding is very specific. Here's what they have funded in the past few years, and what's available now:

- PPP and ARPA Covid recovery funds have made existing childcare providers whole from their Covid losses (both public and home-based), and also provided funds for expansion of their operations. Unfortunately, we don't have any existing providers in Ticonderoga.
- New funding is available to help new home-based providers get certified, modify home settings to meet OCFS regulations, purchase equipment and supplies, and even business services to help them with billings and payroll. To qualify you must be in a home setting with 8-12 kids. Unfortunately, they have only had 2 applicants from our area in the past 2 years, one is about to get licensed, the other did not complete licensing. We just can't find people that want to do childcare in their homes. Oddly, we have found former home-based providers that would like to work in our public center. They just weren't able to do it in their homes anymore.
- Family subsidies have been increased to help families pay for childcare. Any family with income up to \$83,000/year income can get most of their childcare costs covered (sliding scale above that threshold). But if there's no childcare providers to spend it on...you get the picture.

Unfortunately, neither the federal or state governments have public funding to actually create new public childcare. We are working with our legislators and lobby groups to have the state address this gap, but that's probably a minimum 2 years down the road. They did not address it in this year's NY State budget. So we're kind of on our own.

**COMING TOGETHER:** This is going to be a community project with many people lending their expertise, funds, and elbow grease to the planning, financing, building, and sustaining aspects of creating a true Community Childcare Center. But we can do it. We have to do it.

# New York

THE SUPPLY OF, POTENTIAL NEED FOR, AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE GAPS IN CHILD CARE IN NEW YORK IN 2019

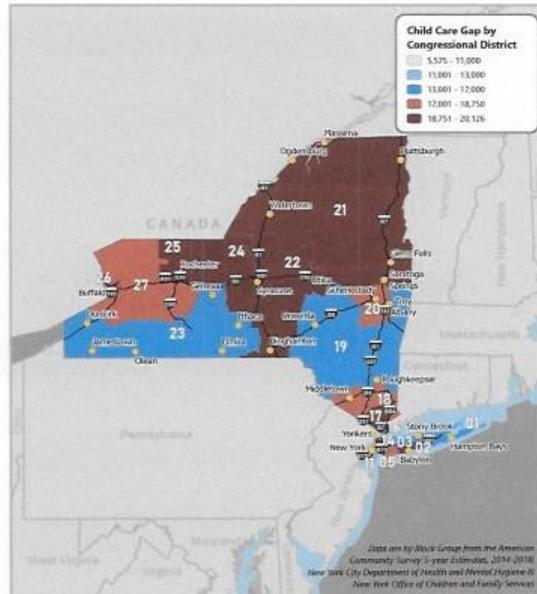
In recent years, there has been increasing bipartisan support at all levels of government to ensure working parents have access to high-quality, affordable child care. But amid these efforts, an important underlying question has yet to be answered: **how much additional child care does the country need?**

Without a clear understanding of the actual supply versus the need for care—the child care gap—it is impossible to quantify either the actual child care spaces needed or the corresponding costs associated with closing that gap. Without this information, America is unable to develop a plan to ensure that all families have access to affordable, reliable, and quality care for their children.

Incorporating the most comprehensive child care supply data collected from **New York** to date, and an advanced methodology incorporating parent choice, this analysis provides a long overdue starting point from which the country can understand how much child care is needed. With such data, policymakers can produce evidence-based strategies to improve the supply of child care in a manner that reflects the quantity and type of child care communities actually need.

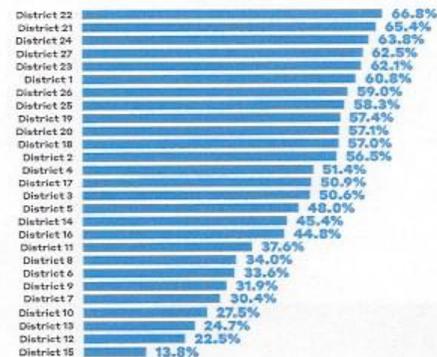
## UNDERSTANDING PARENT CHOICE

As policymakers review this data and consider how and where to address child care gaps in their communities, it is especially important to consider parent choices and preferences. While this data can be used to calculate the amount of child care needed, the *potential need* for child care should not be construed with the *actual demand* for care. These findings offer a starting point from which **New York** can work to close its child care gaps, but more work needs to be done to both understand parent preferences and incorporate them into policy decisions at the federal, state, and local levels.



- Supply** Number of slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers
- Potential Need** Number of children aged birth through five with all available parents in the labor force
- Gap** Number of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access formal child care

### Percent Gap by Congressional District



# NEW YORK

## New York Child Care Gap Findings

Potential Need <sup>1</sup>	877,263 children
Supply <sup>2</sup>	471,788 slots
Gap	406,167 children
Percent Gap	46.3% of children
Economic Impact (long term loss)	\$18.3 to \$27.8 Billion

## Child Care Supply Across New York

Facility Type	Count	Capacity
Day Care Center	2,052	152,120
Family Day Care	3,119	18,560
Group Day Care	2,178	140,360
Group Family Day Care	7,797	92,900
Pre-K Center	1,569	64,450
School Age Child Care	17	480
Additional facilities from Office of Head Start	60	1,750
Department of Defense	3	1,180

## COMPARISON WITH 35 STATES

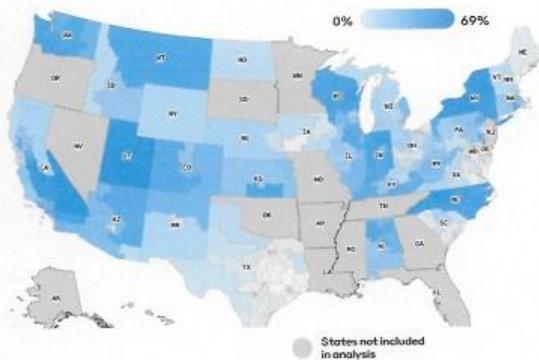
BPC performed a child care gap analysis in 35 states (including the District of Columbia). **New York's** statewide gap of **46.3%** is **higher** than the 35-state average. Rural communities in **New York** are **more underserved** than urban communities—**consistent** with trends across the 35-states.

**11,109,000 children**

have the potential need for child care.

- » There is a supply of **7,807,000** child care slots.
- » Child care gap: **31.2%** of the potential need.
- » Long term impact: **\$142B to \$217B** loss.

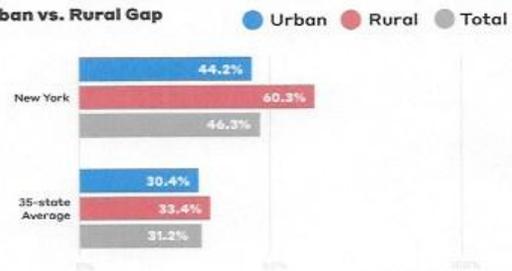
### Percent Gap by District



### New York Long Term Economic Impact



### Urban vs. Rural Gap



See the full report for additional data, the methodology, a discussion about how to properly interpret these findings, and to view an interactive map detailing child care access data by a number of other geographies.

<https://childcaregap.org/>

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/early-childhood/>

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/parent-survey-resource-center/>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Public Use Microdata Samples, December 17, 2019. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acsmicrodataaccess.html>

<sup>2</sup> BPC worked directly with state child care and education agencies to build comprehensive datasets of each provider's location and capacity, as well as the Federal Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Defense to incorporate Head Start and military child care data.

<sup>3</sup> The long term economic impact estimates represent the initial year's economic loss plus the residual burden over the next 10 years produced by the initial year.

The infographics below display the state of child care in each North Country county, at a particular recent moment in time (Nov 2019).

*Hamilton County is not shown due to low population and lack of accurate census estimate.*



## OVERVIEW

The North Country region of New York State is comprised of predominantly rural communities covering seven counties—Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence. 86% of census tracts in the region are identified as child care deserts, defined as areas in which the potential need for child care based on population far exceed the capacity of the regulated child care provider system. It is no coincidence that the locations not designated as child care deserts are almost exclusively the small cities and most populous villages that dot the region: Plattsburgh, Watertown, Canton, Potsdam, Massena, and Malone. It is clear the demand for child care is great, given the region-wide rate of 5.8 children per regulated child care slot (or full-time opening for enrollment within a child care center or day care home licensed by or registered with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services).



Like many rural landscapes, the North Country is also a region with a high level of poverty, with 32.5% of children from birth to age 6 living at or below poverty level (9,079). This makes affording the cost of child care extremely difficult for many families, especially given that, across the region, only 1,237 children are provided with child care subsidies through the local Department of Social Services.

Child Care Deserts in the North Country Counties and Region								
Data	Clinton	Essex	Franklin	Hamilton	Jefferson	Lewis	St. Lawrence	Region
Children under age 6 (estimates)	4,729	1,907	3,066	115	10,264	1,640	6,165	27,866
Children age 6 through 11 (estimates)	4,847	2,121	3,204	332	10,269	2,063	7,564	30,400
Regulated Child Care Slots	2,566	929	1,571	48	3,051	472	1,422	10,058
Ratio of Children to Slots	3.7	4.3	3.9	9.3	6.7	7.8	9.6	5.8
Number/Percent of Census Tracts that equate to Child Care Deserts (3 or more resident children per slot)	11/66%	15/83%	14/74%	8/89%	23/100%	17/94%	17/89%	105/86%

\*Data extracted from a mapping tool developed by the Center for American Progress <https://childcaredeserts.org/index.html?state=NY&split=true&urbanicity=Rural> and from **Child Care Demographics**, NYS Office of Children and Family Services <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/2017-NY-Child-Care-Demographics-Report.pdf>

# OVERVIEW

In February 2022, the Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance partnered with Ticonderoga Central Schools to conduct a childcare survey of families that live and work in our local community (Ticonderoga, Hague, Putnam, Crown Point, and Moriah).

We distributed an online survey through employers and schools and publicized it widely through the local newspaper and many social media partners. The schools promoted it through their employee and parent notification systems. Our employers large and small emailed the surveys to their employees. A hard-copy version was made available at individual employers, town offices, schools, and other public locations who returned them to Ti-Alliance for tabulation.

## CHILDCARE DEMAND PROFILE

Total Respondents: 103

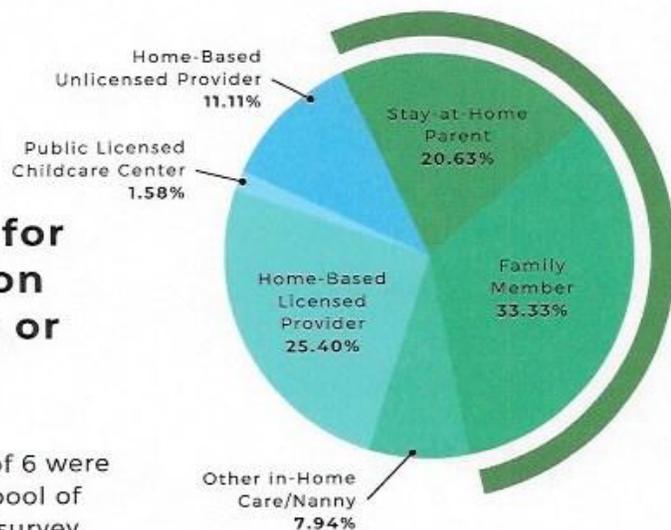
Over **50%** of childcare for young children relies on a stay-at-home parent or family member.

**129**

children under the age of 6 were identified as a possible pool of children to serve by the survey.

**33%**

of respondents say their childcare provider's hours **do not** accommodate their current work schedule.



# A LACK OF CHILDCARE AFFECTS EMPLOYERS

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If we think childcare is just a family problem, consider the financial and productivity impact to employers and our economy as a result of childcare issues for employees.

**73%** of respondents indicated that unreliable or unavailable childcare causes them to lose work time monthly.

**29%** indicated that they lose work **3 or more times** per month.



# CHILDCARE IS AN URGENT NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY

**29%** of respondents provided additional testimony about how their family is impacted by the challenge of childcare.

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Parents say that if a public childcare facility was available to them, they would send their kids... **87** of them!



Infant - 18 months = 29      18 months - 3 years = 27  
3 - 5 years = 31

That's **64%** more kids than the average class size at Ticonderoga Central School District.

**70%** of parents say their child/children would attend a public childcare center 4 or 5 days a week.

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