

COVID-19 DURING WINTER: 8 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MENTALLY PREPARE

Winter can be a difficult time for some people. Long, dark days coupled with cold weather and social isolation can lead to feelings of sadness, anxiety or depression. The coming winter could be especially difficult as infectious disease experts recommend that we "hunker down" to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Proper preparation can help ease this transition and help you feel mentally ready for a pandemic winter.

Here are 8 things you can do to prepare to get ready:

1. Schedule virtual interactions.

Earlier in the pandemic, many people used technology to virtually connect with loved ones. For some, the frequency of this type of interaction slowed during warmer months of summer. Fall is a good time to schedule regular virtual times throughout winter to safely reconnect. A regular check-in schedule gives you something to look forward to, and provides the emotional and mental support you need. Everyone needs a varying amount of real social contact, so find a routine that works best for you.

2. Change your screen time routines.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many children and adults are incorporating more screen time into their work or school days. That's why it's more important than ever to evaluate your use of electronics the rest of the day. Screen time tends to increase during the winter because we spend more time indoors. However, there are health benefits related to reducing screen time, including improved physical health, decreased obesity, and more time to play and explore. Take time this fall to set expectations with your family for the number of hours per day along with creating phone-free zones or times.

3. Evaluate how much and what type of news you consume.

It's important to be informed about the world around you, but 24/7 access to news reports can be overwhelming. Ongoing negative news coverage can significantly affect your mood, especially if you consume news that tends to highlight suffering and emphasize feelings of fear or sadness. This fall, track the amount of time you are spending watching television, listening to the radio or reading online news coverage. Set a goal to consume only reliable news sources that report facts, and avoid media that sensationalizes emotions. Limit your exposure or take a break from news and social media if you find that it makes you anxious.

4. Acknowledge changes in holiday traditions.

Social distancing and masking recommendations likely will change some of your holiday traditions this winter. Start a conversation early with your loved ones

about expectations and necessary changes. Be mindful of the little things that bring you joy and look for ways to celebrate safely together, even if it is virtually.

5. Learn a new relaxation exercise.

Relaxation techniques are a great way to help with stress management. Practicing relaxation techniques can have many benefits, including slowing heart rate, lowering blood pressure and fatigue, improving concentration and mood, and reducing activity of stress hormones. There are many different types of relaxation exercises, including deep breathing, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation and others. These techniques take practice, so start in the fall so you can reap benefits during the winter. Talk with your health care provider for recommendations. Or you can check out a book at your local library or find an online resource to guide you. There are also meditation apps that can lead guided meditations and be helpful. Some cost a monthly fee but many give one month free as a trial period.

6. Plan ways to give back.

Look for ways to help your community, such as blood donations, checking on older people in your neighborhood, or donating supplies or money to local organizations. Helping a cause larger than yourself can give you a sense of purpose and fulfillment and focus your thoughts on the present and things to be grateful for today.

7. Engage in play.

Find an activity to engage in, such as something you enjoy so much that you lose track of time while doing it. It may be an activity you haven't done for a while, a new one you've been meaning to try or something completely out of your comfort zone. This kind of play gives us the opportunity to relax our bodies and minds and take a break from the constant pressures of daily life. Engaging in these types of activities also decreases feelings of irritability and increases social, emotional and physical connections.

8. Seek professional mental health.

Feelings of stress and anxiety are common and normal. It's your body's way to warn you of harm. If your stress and anxiety seem to be taking over your life, it's time to seek professional help. Starting the conversation with your health care provider or establishing care with a licensed therapist in the fall can help you find solutions as we go through winter with COVID-19 in our communities.



mayoclinichealthsystem.org
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From the Director's Desk

In Otsego County, with its estimated population size of 60,244 people, available, affordable, quality childcare is crucial. During uncertain times such as the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that our kids are taken care of daily is a concern for many parents and guardians. Unfortunately, with school-age children staying home during the day for remote schooling and parents forced to return to work, it becomes difficult to find adequate childcare. Many schools tend to be where after-school programs would take place. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started in March, many schools are meeting virtually, thus many school age programs are not currently operating. Many child care centers with school age programs are not operating them due to the need for social distancing. Social distancing comes with an increase in cost from having to hire more staff and purchase additional equipment and supplies. With many factors influencing childcare, access to viable options can be quite challenging which can have detrimental effects for families. Home based care is a beneficial resource for families with children that are looking for child care.

There are two primary types of home-based care programs. Family Day Care is a program for up to 8 children where care is provided in a family home. Care can be for any age group, with a limit on the number of infants that can be cared for by one provider. Group Family Day Care programs care for 16 children of all ages with a limit on infants and requiring 2 caregivers. In New York State, child care programs are regulated by the Office of Children and Family Services. Home based child care programs have been on the decline for more than a decade. Recruiting new family or group family child care providers was difficult prior to the pandemic and is nearly impossible now.

Accessible childcare does not only impact parents, children, and families, but it also trickles into the workplace as well. According to Early Care & Learning Council, employers see first-hand that lack of access to affordable childcare translates to lower productivity, higher absenteeism and turnover, additional costs in hiring and training new employees, and difficulty recruiting skilled employees (2020 Annual Report, pg. 14). When parents and guardians do go to work, they oftentimes are too distracted and focused on how their kids are doing to complete their tasks. The National Survey of Children's Health shows that about 2 million families with a child 0-5 had a parent quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change a job in the past year because of childcare problems (2020 Annual Report, pg.14). As of the writing of this article, there are currently 30 registered or licensed child care programs in Otsego County. Of those programs, 7 have been

closed since March and over half of the remaining programs are operating below their approved capacity due to the need to social distance and the cost associated with having additional staff. All of the programs who are able to operate at their capacity currently are home-based.

Increased home-based programs can help to fill the gaps in care that exist, as it has in the past. Less expensive to run than a center because of the difference in overhead costs and low staff costs, home-based programs can make their ends meet while providing quality programs. In New York State, many Registrars work in a Child Care Resource and Referral office. These programs exist to bridge families and child care programs. The support provided to the programs can make the difference for programs when making improvements and increasing the quality of care. Because families and their needs are all different, we need to have a variety of programs to meet those needs including centers and home-based programs. Parent choice continues to be one of the most important considerations after the needs of the child. If we think of a system of care, there is a place for all types of care. However recruitment continues to be nearly impossible.

We no longer see all of the young moms who want to stay at home with their own children while having a career and having an income. There may be multiple reasons for this however the expense of meeting the regulatory requirements on a new program is one that we hear often, making it a tremendous hurdle for those with minimal funds. The system needs to change; to develop ways to support new and existing programs to grow, improve and thrive. We know from experience that involves a balance of regulatory requirements and funding to programs for both start-up costs and continued quality improvements. But we need investors who are willing to support the child care system both on the back end in development and the front end with helping to pay caregivers what is a fair wage for their skills and work that will allow them to reinvest in their programs. Employers can help by offering on-site child care centers, by offering to help pay for regulated care as one of their employee benefits, by collaborating with local child care programs to offer slots to their staff in exchange for subsidizing the program, and by collaborating with the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency to provide information and referrals to new staff looking for child care. If we work together, we can make a system that works.

Christy Houck
Kierrah Hamer

- Kierrah is a senior at SUNY Oneonta majoring in Sociology with a concentration in Human Services and is currently an intern with Catholic Charities

Training Committee

One of Child Care Resource and Referral's goals is to provide high quality training across a range of topics and for a variety of skill and knowledge levels. In order to meet the needs of the greatest amount of providers we are looking to create a Training Committee to determine training needs and brainstorm topics for future trainings. We are looking for volunteers from all modalities and all experience levels. Please reach out to Kim (kahearn@charitiesccdo.org) if you are interested.

Make Your Own Snow Globe

Jar Snow Globe

Use a jar with a screw top lid. Remove any labels from the jar and paint the lid any color you choose. Attach your snow globe items to the inside of the jar lid and fill your jar with water and glitter (you can also add baby oil or glycerin to slow the settling of the glitter, 2-3 teaspoons per cup of water). Keep in mind that you will not want to glue anything close to the edges of the lid so that you can fit the items in the jar and tightly close the lid.

Ornament Snow Globe

Use a clear plastic ornament with a removable top. Place items in the snow globe and put the top back on. You may not want to fill with water if you plan to store and use this ornament year after year.

Large Glass Container Snow Globe

Use a large glass container with a heavy lid. Place your snow globe filler in the bottom of the glass container. Pour in water and glitter if you choose.

You are only limited by your imagination as to what to fill your snow globe with but here are some ideas:

- Laminated pictures of your child(ren) or whole family. You can have them pose for a picture to look as if they are stuck in the snow globe.
- Pine boughs, pine cones, or bottle brushes spray painted green to create a tree.
- Use stickers to decorate the inside of the container
- Small trinkets or toys
- Small ornaments or decorations
- Candy canes
- Figures from your child's favorite movie or show (Olaf, or Mickey Mouse)

Welcome Emily!

Hi there! My name is Emily, and I am the new Registrar for Catholic Charities Child Care Program. Before having the opportunity of working for Catholic Charities, my background has been focused on Child and Family Services -- I graduated with my degree right here in Oneonta at SUCO! My career thus far has primarily been Human Services, where I have spent the last few years helping families in need. My role has also been to help facilitate the growth and development of young children. Coming from Building Healthy Families, I have extensive experience in how to enhance the life of a child through activities, knowledge and parent/child interaction. I am very happy to be a part of the Catholic Charities family, and am eager to learn and grow. Feel free to contact me at: ejohnston@charitiesccdo.org

Provider Shout Outs

There is no doubt that this year has been one of the hardest in recent memory. We want to thank you for all the extra time, extra money, extra elbow grease, extra brain power that you have been putting in to keep your program up and running. Now we are looking to you to give a shout out to your program, or a team member that has gone above and beyond the call of duty in the face of the pandemic. You can submit a short write up about your program or staff member so that we may feature them in a future newsletter.

Please send your submissions to:
childcare@charitiesccdo.org

Get Crafty!



Professional Development

Upcoming Trainings

Playful Planning

Date: January 23, 2021 - 9:30 - 11:30 am

Location: Virtual Platform

▪ This training will introduce participants to Interest Based Learning and strategies to start building it into their caregiving practices. Interest-based child learning opportunities include activities where child preferences, things a child likes to do, and things that make a child smile and laugh are the foundation for learning new skills and abilities. Interest-based child learning includes experiences that capture and hold a child's attention, maintain a child's engagement with people and materials, and providing a child opportunities to practice existing abilities and learn new skills.

Goal: Participants will gain a working knowledge of how to plan for and create Interest Based Learning opportunities in their care environments.

Call to register: (607) 432-0061

SUNY Training Strategies Group

Funding for Training

(518) 443-5940

- Medication Administration Training Grant Program
tsg.suny.edu/matgrant.shtm
- NYS Educational Incentive Program
tsg.suny.edu/eip.shtm

New York State Credentials

NYAEYC - Promoting excellence in early care and education services for New York State children and families, through education, advocacy and the support of the profession (Family Child Care, Infant/Toddler Care, Children's Program Administrator) - nyaeyc.org

Network for Youth Success - The New York State Network for Youth Success administers the New York State School Age Care (SAC) Credential, which promotes quality services to children and families by providing specific standards, training, and evaluation for afterschool professionals - networkforyouthsuccess.org

Upcoming Provider Forums

Center Director Forums will be held via Zoom on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2:00 PM. We will have an open agenda to discuss successes, issues, and concerns. If there is a specific topic you would like to discuss please let me know by the Monday before the forum. Here are the upcoming dates – January 20th, February 17th, March 17th, April 21st.

Family and Group Family Provider Forums will be held via Zoom once a quarter, unless there is interest in holding them more frequently. We will have an open agenda to discuss successes, issues, and concerns. If there is a specific topic you would like to discuss please let me know before the date. Our next provider forum will be held on Wednesday January 26th at 6:30 OR Saturday January 23rd at 9:30 AM. You can choose to attend one or both. **Please RSVP to Kim by 1/23 if you plan to attend.**

Find a Degree Program

[Earlychildhood.org](https://earlychildhood.org) - Find a college near you that offers Early Childhood courses and degrees.

SUNY Learning Network - Find an online degree program - sln.suny.edu

Regulatory Information

Group Family Day Care / Day Care Center

Office of Children and Family Services

155 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210

(518) 402-3038 | ocfs.state.ny.us

Family Day Care / School Age Child Care

Child Care Support Services, Catholic Charities

176 Main Street, Oneonta, NY 13820

(607) 432-0061 | charitiesccd.org

Fingerprinting for Child Care Settings

L1 Identity Solutions

IdenToGo.com

(877) 472-6915

CCR&R Agency Training Resources

- Delaware Opportunities - Hamden
(607) 746-1620 | delawareopportunities.org
- Family Enrichment Network - Johnson City
(607) 723-8313 | familyenrichment.org
- Capital District Child Care Coordinating Council - Albany
(800) 521-5437 | cdcccc.org
- Child Care Solutions - Syracuse
(315) 446-1220 | childcaresolutionscny.org
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County - Oriskany
(315) 223-7850 | cceoneida.com/child-care-council

Health and Safety Competencies For Becoming a FDC/GFDC

This competency based 15-hour training provides a foundation for practices that promote and protect the health and safety of children in home-based child care. This is required training for becoming a Licensed/Registered Day Care Provider. This training spans multiple days and all days must be attended. You will receive 15 hours of training credit if your day care application is in process at the time of the training. Trainings are available at different times throughout the year at the child care resource and referral agencies listed on this page.

News, Updates and Training Opportunities

Health Care Consultancy & Medication Administration Training

Child Care Support Services has partnered with Otsego County Public Health Nursing to provide Health Care Consultancy Services to child care providers in Otsego County, as well as the Medication Administration Training / MAT Renewal Training.

To contact the HCC/MAT Trainer:
Susanne Smith, BSN
smiths@otsegocounty.com
(607) 547-7518

SCR Clearance Fees

All prospective daycare providers (**FDC, GFDC and Legally Exempt Child Care**) and applicants for employment in day care programs will be charged a \$25 fee for any SCR database check. Payment can be made by certified check, postal or bank money order made payable to "New York State Office of Children and Family Services" and submitted with the SCR form DSS-3370.

Questions? Call Cindy at (607) 432-0061

Child Development Associate

CDA Council - The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is a key stepping stone on the path of career advancement in early childhood education - cdacouncil.org

Accreditation

National Association for the Education of Youth Children - NAEYC's two quality assurance system levels equip programs with the tools to provide the best learning experiences for young children and provide the highest quality professional preparation of educators by meeting national standards of quality - naeyc.org

National Association for Family Child Care - NAFCC sponsors the only nationally recognized accreditation system designed specifically for family child care providers. Accreditation is awarded to family child care providers who meet the eligibility requirements and the Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation - nafcc.org

Online Learning

- ecetp.pdp.albany.edu
Select sign up for early childhood e-learning
- tsg.suny.edu/elearn.shtm
Various childcare learning opportunities to choose from
- carecourses.com
Book & Online Training for Early Childhood Professionals

REQUIRED TRAINING FOR RE-ENROLLING LEGALLY EXEMPT CHILD CARE PROVIDERS!

All non-relative legally exempt child care providers are required to take **5 hours of training** prior to their re-enrollment date. Proof of training must be submitted with the re-enrollment packet to our office. Training must be in specific areas described in Social Services Law.

For more information on the topics, as well as where to obtain free training, please contact our office at (607) 432-0061.

Winning Beginning New York

Winning Beginning NY is a statewide coalition working toward the goal of high-quality, affordable and accessible early care and learning for all New York families. Its' members include parents, employers, children's advocates, service providers, labor unions, educators, pediatricians, law enforcement, research and community groups.

View the Winning Beginning New York State's Executive Agenda:
winningbeginningny.org

How do you contact your legislators?

NY State Assembly: nyassembly.gov
NY State Senate: nysenate.gov

Enrolled Legally-Exempt Providers...

The New York State Department of Health's **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** pays for meals and snacks served to children up to age 13 enrolled in Legally Exempt homes. The major focus of CACFP is to serve nutritious meals and snacks in day care homes which care mainly for children from low income households. However, all Legally Exempt providers meeting eligibility guidelines may take part in CACFP! Please call our office for more information:
(607) 432-0061.



Child Care Support Services has **Start-Up Reimbursement Grants** available for newly Registered or Licensed providers in Otsego County!

Reimbursement grants can total \$500 and are meant to help defer the cost of starting your child care business.

For more information, Contact Kim:
(607) 432-0061
kahearn@charitiesccdo.org

Child and Adult Care Food Program Food for Thought

CACFP BEST PRACTICE

Support mothers who choose to breastfeed their infants by encouraging mothers to supply breastmilk for their infants while in child care and offering a quiet, private area that is comfortable and sanitary for mothers who come to the center or child care home to breastfeed.

Limit serving purchased pre-fried foods to no more than one serving per week.

Serve only natural cheeses and choose low-fat or reduced fat cheese.

Gingerbread Pancakes

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups of whole wheat flour
1 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
½ teaspoon dried ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 egg
½ tsp vanilla extract
¼ cup molasses
1 ½ cup water



Directions:

Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, and cinnamon in a bowl; set aside. Beat the egg in a separate mixing bowl with the vanilla and molasses until smooth. Whisk in the water until completely incorporated. Stir the flour mixture into the molasses mixture until just combined -- a few lumps are okay.

Heat a lightly oiled griddle over medium-high heat. Drop batter by large spoonful's onto the griddle, and cook until bubbles form and the edges are dry. Flip, and cook until browned on the other side. Repeat with remaining batter.

Makes 10 servings



CACFP Enrollment Renewals for 2021 must be returned by

February 5th!

Be sure to have parents sign their re-enrollment when you see them during the month of January!

Packets will be in the mail in the beginning of January!

Quick & Easy Bean Soup

1 can (28 oz) petite diced tomatoes
1 can (15 oz) black beans
1 can (15.5 oz) cannellini beans
1 can (16 oz) garbanzo beans
3 cups frozen corn
3 cups vegetable or chicken broth
1 packet of taco or enchilada seasoning

Combine all ingredients in pot and heat on stove top for 15 minutes. Serve with ¾ c milk and roll for 12 children, ages 1-5, for lunch or supper.

Slow Cooker Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients

1 yellow onion, chopped
1 1/2 cups carrots, chopped
1 1/2 cups sliced celery, chopped
1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 cup chicken stock
2 cans (10.5 ounce) cream of chicken condensed soup
1 to 3 boneless skinless chicken breasts, totaling 2 pounds
1 1/2 cups frozen peas
1 can (15 ounce) corn
1 can (16.3 ounces) refrigerated biscuits, baked

Directions

1. Place onions, carrots, celery, parsley, paprika, oregano, salt, pepper, and chicken in the bowl of a slow cooker. Stir to combine. The mixture will be thick.
2. Nestle the chicken breasts in the mixture and spoon the mixture over the breasts to cover.
3. Cook on low for 8 hours. Thirty minutes before the end of cook time, remove the breasts and shred the chicken using two forks. Return shredded chicken back to the slower cooker and add the peas and corn. Stir and allow to finish cooking.
4. Serve topped with a biscuit.



The Family Corner

Keep children Warm This Winter! Dress Them in Layers!

- 1 First Layer:** Several layers of lightweight clothing, including snug thermal underwear
 - 2 Second Layer:** Turtleneck, sweater, or a sweatshirt, plus sweatpants or snow pants
 - 3 Third Layer:** Tightly-woven, water resistant jacket, plus gloves/mittens and a hat and/or ear warmers
- *check fingers, ears, nose and toes ever 15 minutes to make sure they are staying warm.
For more preparedness tips, visit childcareprepare.org*

HEAD START

From Pregnancy to Preschool - Head Start offers education, health, nutrition, and family support services throughout Otsego County. With many families having lost wages due to COVID-19, those who would not be eligible for Head Start before may now qualify. Learn how we can help you adjust and support your family.



(607) 433-8055 | ofoinc.org

ONLINE AND PHONE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

Family Resource Network offers online and phone family support groups for families of individuals with special needs. Two groups are offered per week. Registration is required.
For more information, call: (607) 432-0001

Did You Know?

It is required of your child's daycare program to provide daily supervised outdoor play, except during inclement or extreme weather. Make sure you are sending your child with the necessary clothing for this season like hats, gloves, coats, etc. so they are prepared to play! If you or your child is in need of winter clothing, please contact us for available resources.



START YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

Become a Family Child Care provider today! We are seeking registered and licensed providers for traditional and weekend child care.
For more details contact Catholic Charities at: (607) 432-0061 or see our website: CharitiesCCDOS.org

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free books to children from birth to age five in participating communities within the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Republic of Ireland.



Children living in Delaware and Otsego Counties are eligible to participate in this program! For more information and to register, visit: www.ImaginationLibrary.com

Free Online Child Care Referrals!

Are you a parent searching for child care in Otsego County?

You now have the ability to search for child care any time of the day or night!

Access our online referral packet which includes information to help you make an informed child care decision!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!
WWW.CHARITIESCCDOS.ORG

Parent Training Resources

Family Service Association

Family Service Association provides information, advocacy, and referral services for individuals and families in need.
277 Chestnut Street, Oneonta | (607) 432-2870

Family Resource Network

The Family Resource Network Inc. (FRN) provides family support services to families who have a child with special needs.
46 Oneida Street, Oneonta | (607) 432-0001

Community Maternity Services

176 Main Street, Oneonta
(607) 432-0061 ext. 113

CMS is an agency which has provided home-based support services to families and their children in Otsego County since 1971. Today, they have three types of educational programs: Maternity Outreach, Parent Education, and NYS Parent Education and Awareness Program.

The Maternity Outreach Program

Designed for pregnant and/or parenting teens and young adults. Some of the services we offer in this program are: goal directed counseling, childbirth preparation, adoption, advocacy for education, life skills, parent education, referrals for pre and post natal care, nutrition education, child development education, and milestone testing for children. Referrals for this program can come from any entity.



Child Care Support Services
A Program of Catholic Charities
of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie Counties
176 Main Street
Oneonta, New York 13820

CHILD CARE NEEDED

CALL US FOR MORE INFORMATION

In Otsego County we are in need of registered and licensed child care providers. Traditional weekday hours are needed, however non-traditional work requirements of health care and retail in our area create the need for evening, overnight or weekend hours. Lack of child care options create a burden for working parents and employers.

SOME BENEFITS TO BECOMING REGISTERED:

- You are able to be home and care for your own children
- Up to \$500 for start-up costs for your new business
- \$500 per year from CSEA
- Health Insurance - including dental and vision

CALL (607) 432-0061

