



NEWS & VIEWS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

The mission of Family Enrichment Network is to provide supportive services for the optimal development of children, adults, and families.

The vision is that all children, adults and families in our service area have the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential.

24 Cherry St.
Johnson City,
New York
13790
Phone:
607.723.8313
Fax:
607.723.6173

From the Desk of the Executive Director

In the last edition I talked about the spring programs winding down and planning for the summer programs. This time we are winding down our summer programs and looking forward to regular fall programming. How time flies!

One of our biggest challenges over the next few months be will filling vacancies. As we all know, nonprofits find it difficult to compete with private corporations pay scales but we offer a number of attractive benefits and will continue our recruitment efforts.

COVID protocols were winding down and most people believed that when schools returned in the fall there would be even be fewer restrictions. In fact, the number of cases are rising and we are reverting to past precautions, such as masking and social distancing. The easiest solution to combatting COVID is getting the COVID vaccine and adhering to CDC guidelines. We continue to encourage all our staff and parents to do so.

In regards to future program development, we continue our pursuit of housing opportunities as they present themselves. Housing Connections, the housing project on Virgil St., is complete and full. We have identified the greatest need as one bedroom apartments. ESSHI and HHAP are still available and we are researching a couple 10 single one bedroom units.

We continue to write grants and look for program development that meets our community assessment needs and have been very successful in that area. We are in a position where we have had continued growth over the past couple of years. We need to spend a little time developing and assimilating those programs into what we do, but will always take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

We are also currently assessing our organization structure to make it more streamlined and efficient.

If there something we are doing well, please tell us. If there is something we could do different or better, please tell us. Our sole purpose is to meet your needs and community needs. Your feedback will help us do that.



Darrell Newvine,
*Family Enrichment Network
Executive Director*

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Head Start

A Virtual Orientation to Head Start

As summer turns to fall, Family Enrichment Network Head Start staff are busy preparing for children and families who are entering the 2021-2022 program, and one of our primary objectives is to ensure a successful transition to the program for each child participating in our programs in Broome and Tioga Counties.

This year is no exception, even as COVID-19 is still present in communities across New York State, transitioning to program is vital for children and their parents. So, prior to their first day at Head Start, all families are offered an opportunity to participate in a virtual orientation event. Each family is able to learn more about what to expect from their child's Head Start experience, and they have an opportunity to share that experience with their Head Start bound children. Our Head Start staff will provide information on child development, literacy, health, nutrition, mental health, dental, transportation, family partnership, and parent involvement opportunities that families will participate in throughout the program year. This orientation event assists families as they transition into the program. For children and parents who have never experienced preschool, it gives them an opportunity to begin that journey together, while alleviating the anxiety that can be a part of their new experience. Additionally, families receive a program calendar and handbook at their enrollment visits, and their Family Advocates review the information contained in both during their first home visits.

Meaningful transitions are an important part of the Head Start experience, and throughout the program year, each transition that families experience occurs with preparation and planning to ensure that they are meaningful to both the child and family.

If you are interested in learning more about the Head Start program, please call Family Enrichment Network at 723-8313.

Childcare Resource & Referral

CHILD CARE STABILIZATION GRANTS

New York State has allocated over \$1 billion to child care stabilization grants! All registered/licensed child care programs are eligible to apply. This funding can be used for a variety of purposes to keep child care programs going.

Child care programs have suffered tremendously the last year with low enrollment, temporary closures, and increased safety requirements. Applying for this funding is quick and easy! Call CCR&R today for assistance.



New Programs:

Broome Child Care Center
Cub Care Children's Center

Housing and Community Services

ERAP – Emergency Rental Assistance Program



The New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) will provide significant economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance and utility arrears assistance.

Eligibility

New York residents are eligible for ERAP if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Household gross income is at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). These income limits differ by county and household size. A household may qualify based on current income or calendar year 2020 income that is at or below 80% AMI.
- On or after March 13, 2020, a member of the household received unemployment benefits **or** experienced a reduction in income, incurred significant costs or experienced financial hardship, directly or indirectly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The applicant is obligated to pay rent at their primary residence and has rental arrears (rent overdue) at their current residence for rent owed on or after March 13, 2020.
- The household must be at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, which can be demonstrated by having rental arrears owed on or after March 13, 2020.

Households approved for ERAP may receive:

- Up to 12 months of **rental arrears payments** for rents accrued on or after March 13, 2020.
- Up to 3 months of **additional rental assistance** if the household is expected to spend 30% or more of their gross monthly income to pay for rent.
- Up to 12 months of electric or gas **utility arrears payments** for arrears that have accrued on or after March 13, 2020.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord/property owner and utility company on behalf of the tenant. Tenant applicants will be notified of the amounts paid on their behalf. If a landlord is difficult to locate or does not otherwise provide information needed to complete the application, funds will be held for up to 180 days to allow sufficient time to locate the landlord and collect required information as well as to provide tenant protections and maximize landlord participation.

Search otda.ny.gov for application information



Are you struggling to get enough to eat because of COVID-19?

SNAP benefits have increased during the pandemic. If you are eligible, you will have more to spend on food.

The Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) can tell you if you may be eligible for SNAP. We can also help you complete and submit your application.

Call today. It is free and confidential.

Family Enrichment Network

Broome County NOEP

607-723-8313 Ext. 827

607-765-0425

jeichler@familyenrichment.org

Department Spotlight

Program Nutrition Information for Head Start and Early Head Start

Health interviews are conducted during the pre-screening process, and at that time information about the child's health history including information pertaining to child nutrition is gathered. Before enrollment to the program, that information is shared with other program staff including the classroom, food services, and family services. During the enrollment visit, Family Advocates obtain information about food preferences and allergies to ensure that all children are receiving appropriate meal offerings while participating in the Head Start and Early Head Start program.

Infant feeding forms are completed with the parents of enrolling infants during the Enrollment Visit. The form provides Health and Food Services Staff with information about whether the infant is fed breast milk or formula; the type of formula (including brand); what solid food the infant has eaten; and allergies, preferences.

Family Enrichment Network Community Assessment Group and Health Advisory Committee are responsible for identifying health and nutritional successes and concerns. These committees include community health agency representatives, Head Start/Early Head Start staff, and parents.

Head Start and Early Head Start children will receive nutrition programming as they: are introduced to a wide variety of nutritious foods through meals and creative food activities; are taught basic concepts about good nutrition and its relation to health; develop manipulative and cognitive skills through food experiences; are assisted in gaining independence and assertiveness by allowing for individual choice and selection of foods; enjoy mealtime; are introduced to traditional foods eaten in other cultures; and are taught appropriate use of eating utensils and how to set a proper place setting. Family Enrichment Network will utilize the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide meals and snacks to Head Start and Early Head Start children. The Agency will abide by the CACFP eligibility criteria to serve all eligible children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Program requirements will include accurate tracking of meal counts, menu and food production records, and meeting the required food groups and serving sizes for child age groups. Head Start and Early Head Start funds will be used to cover costs not covered by CACFP for items such as food service equipment repairs, salaries, and fringe benefits for food service staff.

Ongoing planning and implementation of new and varied nutrition services is ensured through the HS and EHS Menu Planning Committee, Health Advisory Committee, and through parent participation in program surveys.

Department Spotlight, Continued

Children will be introduced to a variety of nutritious foods through their meals and snacks. They will broaden their food experiences by seeing/tasting foods, which demonstrate:

- o foods are most nutritious when fresh (i.e. locally grown apples)
- o foods come from animals and plants (i.e. eggs, beans)
- o meats, eggs, beans, nuts, and seeds are proteins
- o healthy bodies need whole grain foods, and they are served at least twice during each program day.
- o our bodies need milk or foods made from milk such as cheese to help our bones grow
- o putting lots of different foods together can taste good (i.e. fruit and vegetable salads)
- o grown-ups and children need the same nutrients
- o the way food is handled influences its nutrient value, safety, appearance, and taste

Through hands-on activities, children learn many things about food: its source, color, flavor, texture, uses, size, shape, which food group it belongs to, names of its parts, and care and safety in handling and preparation. In addition to typical American foods, children will experience foods from many different countries, many of which are represented in Family Enrichment Network's Head Start and Early Head Start program. Various ethnic foods are served at these celebrations as culture and customs are discussed during mealtime conversations.

Family Enrichment Network's feeding policy for infants stipulates that infants are held while being bottle-fed, until they are old enough to feed themselves. The propping of or laying down with bottles is strictly prohibited.

Staff and our Nutrition Consultant work closely with families in assessing actual or potential nutrition problems and will offer individual assistance to families of children with special dietary concerns. Special emphasis will be placed on menu planning to ensure that children with allergies will receive one-third or more of required nutrients. The meal plan will contain alternate sources of protein and calcium.

Toddler and preschool children participate in monthly food/nutrition activities in their classrooms. These activities are initiated by both teachers and food services staff.

Department Spotlight, Continued

Parents will share their skills and knowledge about nutrition with staff and each other by: completing the child and family nutrition assessment portion of the Child Health Record; commenting on printed materials such as menus, newsletters, pamphlets and bulletin board information. Topics covered will include healthy heart recipes, exercise programs, effective food budgeting, fast meal preparation tips, and kitchen safety/sanitation; joining the Health Services Advisory Committee or Menu Planning Committee and participating in self-assessment monitoring of food service and menu planning; preparing ethnic meals and celebrations and participating in food projects; suggesting workshop topics. Parent training sessions will be planned to meet needs identified through personal contact or surveys completed at parent meetings. The Food Services Coordinator, Nutrition Consultant, and representatives from such agencies as Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County and the Broome County and Tioga County Health Department will be utilized as trainers. Workshops will explore expanded uses of products distributed by the WIC Program and demonstrate ways to stretch a family's food budget.

Sanitary conditions are maintained in every aspect of food service delivery. The Broome County Health Department requires Family Enrichment Network to post a Food Service Permit at each of its sites and will make routine inspections of all kitchen facilities. The Permits will be renewed annually without cost. We monitor meals on a monthly basis and perform a sanitary check of all food service areas. The Nutrition Consultant will work with the self-assessment team members to review and monitor meals, food service operations, and sanitation throughout the program year. Food storage and preparation/service areas will be regularly sprayed for insects by a commercial service.



Employee Spotlights

Joseph Sullivan, Food Services Coordinator

I grew up in the town of Maine, NY but have lived many places including Maryland, Delaware, South Carolina and Colorado. I enjoyed my time in those states, especially the warmer ones (I hate the cold and snow) but settled back in the Southern Tier region because my family resides here. I obtained my degree in nutrition from SUNY Oneonta in 2010 and have worked as a Dietetic Technician in two Nursing and Rehabilitation centers, as well as being a Personal Trainer, Deli Supervisor and a Bakery Manager.

My favorite hobbies include traveling and hiking with my wife Karen and 15 month old son Jacob. I also enjoy gardening, a good book and kayaking. I have a passion for healthy eating and exercise because the combination of the two

can greatly improve a person's overall quality of life. I personally believe that we should always strive for self-improvement and for things beyond our reach. If we do this we will never be bored and will gain much wisdom. My short time at the Family Enrichment Network has been a wonderful experience and I am grateful to work alongside so many caring and compassionate people!



Gina Ritter, Head Start Lead Teacher

My name is Gina Ritter and I teach UPK at the Cherry street site. I will be going into my 6th year of teaching. My favorite part of being an early education educator is making a difference in each child's life. The children learn from you, but you also learn so much from them. You learn how to be yourself, love yourself, and know what it's like to be accepted. They allow you to be creative, and strive to be better. It takes a big heart to shape little minds!

I am looking forward to continuing my career as an early education teacher at the Family Enrichment Network.



Employee Spotlights, Continued

Barbara Walker, Community Habilitation Specialist

My name is Barbara Walker. I grew up in Owego, NY. I am a Community Habilitation Specialist and a Community Pre-Vocational Specialist. It is the beginning of my 4th year at Family Enrichment. I have worked in a variety of work settings, including the Endicott Nursing home as a nurse's aide and night time Nourishment aide, and at a nurse's aide in Tucson, where I gained experience in working at Nursing Homes, Hospitals and private homes. Upon my arrival back to NY, I worked in manufacturing while I helped care for family. When the company I was working for closed their doors, someone introduced me to the idea of Family Enrichment. I had friends and relatives that had Developmental and Physical Disabilities but I had never considered one way or the other. At FEN, there have been so many lessons learned about people and the possibilities for their growth. This is evident in both Community Habilitation and Community Pre-Vocational. Seeing the individuals that I serve each day, growing even a little is wonderful. Really, it is about them blossoming through the help from each person they encounter in a positive way.



On my weekends and time off I enjoy working with my flowers, wood burning, being outside, mowing my lawn, listening to the peepers on a warm summer night, riding my bike, spending time with my sisters, my four legged and two legged friends, and taking day trips. I am active in my church, and like going to prayer meetings, singing and playing my flute in the choir on Saturday and Sunday, and teaching Faith Formation on Sundays. My favorite reads are about

Courtney Kimble, CCR&R Specialist

Hello, my name is Courtney Kimble and as of early July I am the CCR&R Specialist in Chenango County. In my previous roles I have been the lead teacher in a school age classroom, a domestic violence advocate and an early head start home based visitor.

I have an AAS degree in Human Services. I am so excited to get to know the providers and my coworkers. Also, I am very passionate about the safe and fun care of our children! In my free time I am with my family. We are either working on our dairy farm or traveling to the children's sporting events.



Job Opportunities

We have a number of job opportunities available at our Broome, Chenango, and Tioga sites. If you are interested in working with children and families, adults with disabilities or serving the greater community, Family Enrichment Network has an employment opportunity for you. We offer competitive benefits and paid time off. We are recruiting for a number of openings from entry level up to senior level positions, and are willing to provide education and training.

Please go to www.familyenrichment.org to see our current list of openings or email your resume to mdifulvio@familyenrichment.org.

Years of Service



Five Years

Jennifer Anderson

Gina Ritter

Twenty Years

Lisa Rosa

FamilySM



Enrichment Network



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please call Laura at (607) 723-8313 ext. 815.