



Strengthening Roots, Expanding Reach

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Our Mission

Programs for Parents is a non-profit organization that ensures children get the best possible start in life. It supports children, families, and childcare providers in Essex County through advocacy and action, providing education and referrals, sharing best practices, and helping families access available financial resources.

PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS, INC.

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Message from the CEO and Board Chair

We are delighted to present our 2023 Annual Report titled *Strengthening Roots and Expanding Reach*. This year has been a testament to our collective efforts and the impact we have made. Programs for Parents, Inc. has been at the forefront of early care and learning, devising and implementing innovative solutions to address the significant challenges faced by children, families, early education, and childcare providers. This year has been a transformative journey as we pave the way for sustainable, equitable, and impactful change. We have broadened our direct services for families, including the introduction of our “Happy Families Diaper Bank,” offered prescreening for WIC benefits, extended our teen parenting work through our teen parent on the road program, and more. Through our Essex County Council for Young Children, we secured funding to expand Table Talk, a safe space for parents to share, heal, and build connections. A licensed Psychotherapist facilitated these groups utilizing multiple clinical modalities, and the counseling sessions were offered in Spanish and English.

We also invested time and effort in rebuilding the workforce for early care and learning. The pandemic exacerbated the staffing issues, which directly impacted quality care. Programs for Parents continued to grow the field with our Child Development Associate Credentialing program for both individuals working in the field and through our P4P Academy, individuals who were looking for career paths in early care and learning. We trained thousands of Family Child Care Providers, Childcare Directors, Teachers, and Family Engagement practitioners on best practices, and we fostered strong partnerships with childcare centers, working together to refer and place staff where there were vacancies.

Additionally, we continued to partner with programs like LISC to pilot a business accelerator program for our Family Child Care providers. We prioritized the well-being of our employees and began offering self-care days, opened a zen room, renovated our offices, and promoted a culture of wellness.



From the Heart, Pt. 1

Words from Our Families

“ Thank you PFP for always being there to render assistance to all families regardless of race and color. God bless America.”

“ This program helps me provide for my son while balancing being a new mom and working a full-time job I am so grateful for PFP.”

“ Being a grandmother on a fixed income, I wanted my grandchildren to have access to the best childcare. PFP has been an amazing factor in providing me with the assistance. I appreciate all that has been done for my grandkids. Thank you so much, I could not have done it without the help of this program.”

“ As the years go by I always thank PFP for all that they do for single parents. If not for them many parents would be without a job and kids without a quality education. Best program ever! Because of this program I can go to work knowing my kids are covered and they are safe.”

“ Helped my son with his motor skills, gross skills. Creating bonds that will last forever. Thank you for your support.”

“ Estoy muy agradecida con carta uno de ustedes por la atencion que me brindan a los padres e gracias a PFP por ayudarire con mis hijos, muchas gracias.”

“ Estoy muy agridecido con es subsidio de me ha ofecido PFP.”

The Childcare Assistance Program: A Lifeline for Families

The Childcare Assistance Program has been a vital support system for countless families by providing access to affordable, high-quality childcare. As we continue rebuilding the childcare infrastructure in the aftermath of the pandemic, the number of families and children we serve steadily increases. Childcare costs can significantly impact the monthly budget for many families, making our services indispensable.

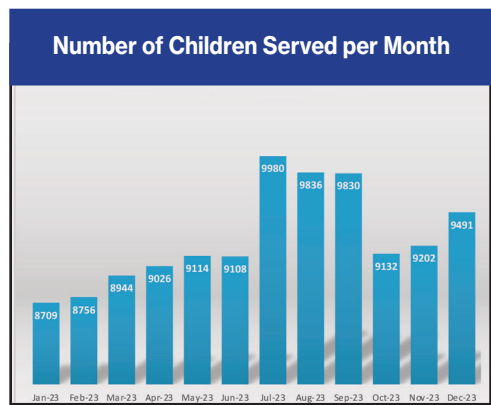
In collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Division of Family Development (DFD), the New Jersey Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) offers crucial financial assistance to income-eligible parents. These parents may work, attend school, or participate in job training programs. Each year, we assess the eligibility of thousands of families, ensuring they receive the support they need to afford quality childcare.

Our impact is evident in the numbers. In 2022, we provided subsidies to 12,195 children. By 2023, this number had risen to 14,407 children, reflecting a positive trend. Similarly, the number of families receiving assistance grew from 7,942 in 2022 to 8,985 in 2023.

The increased demand for our services is also reflected in the number of office visitors. In 2022, we recorded 9,555 visitors. This number surged by 27% in 2023, reaching a total of 12,186 visitors. One thousand two hundred thirty families, including 775 new families, received child care referrals.

These figures underscore the essential role that the Child Care Assistance Program plays in supporting New Jersey families. As we look to the future, we remain committed to expanding our reach and enhancing our services to meet the growing needs of our community.

SUBSIDY PROGRAMS IN REVIEW



14,407

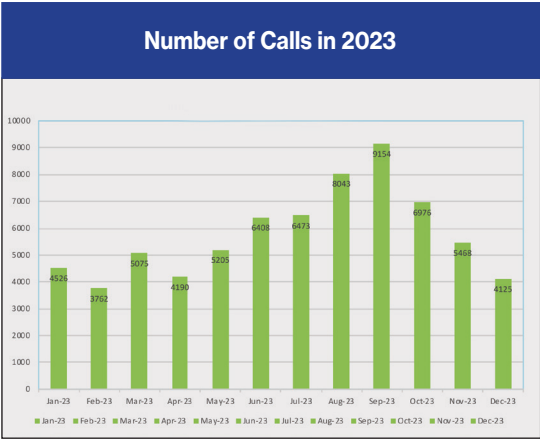
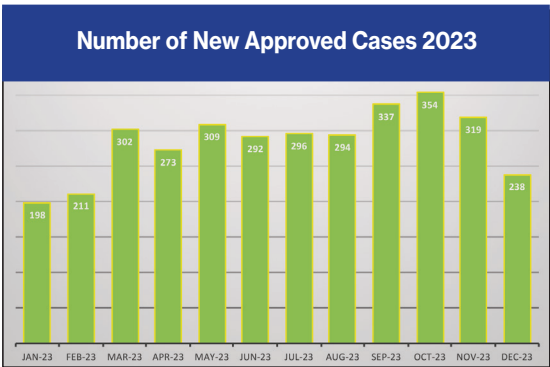
Children Served

8,985

Families Served

34,436

Documents Received



69,405

Total Calls

12,186

Total Visitors

Prioritizing Mental Health for Families, Children, and our Communities

Programs addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and trauma for families are crucial in fostering resilience and promoting positive childhood experiences. The Essex County Council for Young Children centers this mission, focusing on trauma-informed care within families. They organize programs that equip parents with evidence-based strategies and tools, such as mindfulness practices, emotion regulation skills, and positive parenting approaches, all facilitated by certified mental health professionals. A key highlight is their "Table Talk" parent support groups, held monthly in both English and Spanish. These sessions provide a supportive environment where mothers/caregivers can learn and practice mindfulness, emotion regulation, and self-care techniques, contributing to healthier family dynamics and improved mental health for both parents and children.

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) are crucial protective experiences that play a significant role in healing the brain from trauma and fostering healthy mental health in adulthood. Research indicates that PCEs can promote well-being even in the face of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). In 2023, the Essex County Council hosted several PCEs to support families and children. Events included the Harvest Fest at Clinton Hill Pumpkin Patch in Newark, NJ, attended by 40 families, and Disney on Ice at the Prudential Center in Newark, NJ, on November 2, 2023, which was attended by 23 families with 58 tickets distributed. Additionally, an ice skating event was organized at Mulberry Commons during the Newark WinterFest, with 43 parents and children participating. The Council also conducts monthly floor yoga sessions for families, with an average attendance of 10-12 families. These sessions provide a relaxing and bonding activity that supports both physical and mental well-being.

Through these initiatives, we strive to create nurturing environments where families can thrive, heal, and grow together, ultimately contributing to our community's overall health and resilience.



From the Heart, Pt. 2

Table Talk Parent Support Group

“Table talk has taught me how to practice self-care as a daily routine. Table talk has helped me in my parenting life on every tip I need to know and how to keep my kids going daily. Table Talk has given me the confidence to talk about my stress and worries and find a solution by participating in the Table Talk parent support group. My 2024 goals are to keep up with Table Talk, learn more about self-care in general for me and my loved ones, and work on being financially stable.”—**Jumoke A.**

“I am the first one at every Table Talk session, parent groups, and both monthly yoga sessions. When I missed one, everyone knew something was wrong. Table Talk has helped me find different ways to handle situations within my family and personal relationships. I have learned that self-care for myself is not selfish. What I like about talk sessions is that we get to discuss life activities for kids and the different resources or events for children and families.”—**Ty P**

“Table Talk has taught me the importance of self-care; it has taught me I need “me time” because if I don’t take care of myself, I won’t be able to take care of those that are important to me (my immediate family) and others. When we meet and talk, we pour out our hearts and learn/get one or two things from each other; it’s indeed a safe haven. I had a problem with putting my kids on the night routine; it was from Table Talk that I got different options I can use with my kids, and it’s helping.”—**A. Ogunsanya**

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Table Talk has emerged as a vital sanctuary for mothers, offering not just a monthly meeting point, but a transformative community focused on self-care, wellness, and mutual support. As vividly described by **Participant 1**, "Table Talk is a wellspring of knowledge and reassurance in parenting and personal growth, fostering a sense of confidence and a path towards financial stability." **Participant 2's** experience underlines the value of these gatherings, where self-care is redefined as a necessity rather than a luxury, and where resources and events are shared for the betterment of children and families. **Participant 3** states "When we meet and talk we pour out our hearts, we learn/get one or two things from each other, it's indeed a safe haven." This sentiment and many others highlight the empowering impact of this community, where practical support, like in the case of the mother who found a new job through group referrals, blends seamlessly with emotional solidarity, such as rallying to find better healthcare options for a child. Table Talk is more than just a group; it's a lifeline where challenges are met with collective wisdom and strength, creating a predictable, safe space that participants eagerly return to each month. The continuation of Table Talk is essential for maintaining this supportive network and nurturing and expanding a community where empowerment, healing, and shared growth are not just ideals but realities lived and experienced by each member."—**Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown**



OUR STAFF IS OUR COMMUNITY!

To prioritize mental health and well-being, our organization has implemented a series of programs designed not only for the families we serve but also for our dedicated staff. These initiatives reflect our holistic approach to mental health, recognizing that a healthy, happy staff is crucial to delivering the best possible care and support to the families we serve.

Self-Care Days Added to PTO Policy

Understanding the critical role of mental health in overall well-being, we have enhanced our paid time off (PTO) policy to include self-care days. These days allow staff to take time off to focus on their mental health and personal well-being. Whether it's a day spent in quiet reflection, engaging in a favorite hobby, or simply resting, these self-care days provide much-needed rejuvenation and stress relief.



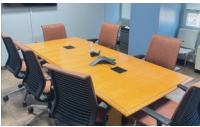
Launch of the Zen Room

To prioritize the well-being of our staff, we have launched a Zen Room—a dedicated space within our offices for relaxation and mental clarity. This tranquil retreat is equipped with comfortable seating, soothing decor, and calming elements, providing a sanctuary for staff to unwind, meditate, and recharge.

The Zen Room encourages staff to take regular breaks and practice mindfulness, helping to reduce stress and enhance focus throughout the workday, thereby promoting a culture of wellness within our organization.

Office Renovations

We have also undertaken significant renovations of our office space. Thanks to a generous furniture donation from Prudential Financial, our newly designed space provides a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes a culture of service for all.



Expanding Services for Families

Programs for Parents is excited to relaunch The Teen Parent Support and Education Program. Based on the nationally recognized, evidence-based *Strengthening Families* approach, this program is designed to reduce risk factors and promote infant-child and family well-being. By providing support services and education to parenting and pregnant teens, including teen fathers, we aim to empower and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful parenting. The program is conveniently offered monthly at Barringer High School in Newark during regularly scheduled school days, ensuring easy access. The sessions are expertly coordinated and instructed by the Programs for Parents' Parent Consumer and Education Coordinator, Essex County Family Engagement Specialist, and the Parent Resource Specialist.

The Teen Parent Support and Education Program emphasized the following:

- Advocacy and Leadership
- Attachment/ Bonding
- Child Growth and Development
- Co-Parenting
- Dental Hygiene
- Eligibility Criteria/(CCAP) for New Jersey Child Care Assistance Program Subsidy—*How to identify quality childcare*
- Nutrition
- Positive Parenting
- Safe Sleep
- Social/Emotional Regulation
- Strengthening Families Five Protective Factors
 1. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
 2. Parental Resilience
 3. Social Connections
 4. Concrete Support
 5. Social and Emotional Connections

Additionally, Programs for Parents hosted the Teen Parent Summit on the Road. The Teen Parent Summit, in partnership with the New Jersey Community Food Bank, Rutgers University Newark, and Newark Public Schools, was held at East Orange Campus High School, Irvington High School, and Orange High School. The purpose is not only to increase the teen parents' knowledge about appropriate parenting practices but also to ensure they can connect to appropriate community resources and have access to education and career training opportunities.

By providing support services and education to parenting and pregnant teens, including teen fathers, we aim to empower and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful parenting.



THE CRADLE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

Programs for Parents partnered with the City of Newark and others to host the first Cradle Project Conference.

The inaugural The Cradle Project Conference was held on December 21, 2023, at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. The conference aimed to highlight the urgency of quality maternal health delivery systems and promote early literacy to improve health outcomes for expectant mothers.

This event aligned with point six of the Newark Citywide Prenatal to 3rd Grade 10-Point Literacy Plan, which emphasizes quality prenatal care and reading to unborn children.

The conference featured seminars, workshops, and keynote addresses from notable local and national speakers who discussed implementation strategies and best practices. These sessions aimed to improve equitable experiences and outcomes for systematically marginalized and underrepresented populations.

In response to the 2022 third-grade literacy scores, Mayor Baraka developed the Mayor Ras J. Baraka Brain Trust to Address the Urgent Literacy Crisis, resulting in the Newark Citywide Prenatal to Third Grade Literacy Plan. Research indicated that third-grade literacy is a strong predictor of high school dropout rates. Children lacking proficiency by third grade are four times more likely to leave school before attaining a diploma, and those who do not acquire skills by third grade are at six times greater risk of dropout (Hernandez, 2011).



The conference provided space for learning, dialogue, and direct action. It included engaging panel discussions and keynote addresses from leaders in maternal health and early literacy. The event targeted expectant mothers, educators, administrators, non-profit staff, government officials, business leaders, and community stakeholders committed to social justice practices.

Audience:

- 50 to 100 expecting mothers
- Support teams for mothers

Pediatricians & OBGYNs:

- Philanthropists & charitable organizations
- Government representatives
- Taxpayers
- Family child care providers and early child care learning providers
- Health care providers
- Social service agencies
- Mental health professionals

Outcomes:

- Highlighted inequities in health delivery systems for expectant mothers.
- Empowered stakeholders to disrupt systemic barriers by showcasing local and national strategies to improve health outcomes.
- Utilized benchmark statistics to strategize improvements in early literacy.
- Exposed attendees to effective early literacy strategies.
- Promoted strategies to improve adult literacy.
- Enriched health providers with cultural competencies to understand and meet the needs of diverse populations, increasing medical trust.
- Promoted routine screenings (perinatal risk assessment) for early identification of clinical and socioeconomic factors affecting the health and wellness of mothers and babies.



THE HAPPY FAMILIES DIAPER BANK WAS BORN!

In partnership with Joi's Angels, Programs for Parents, Inc. officially launched the **Happy Families Mini Diaper Bank** on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at our 50 South Clinton Avenue location in East Orange, NJ. In November 2023, our 570 Broad Street location in Newark, NJ, was approved to be a **Diaper Bank and Period Partner** with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey to give Essex County families access to these resources monthly.



EXPANDING ACCESS TO WIC

In partnership with the Greater Newark Health Coalition, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School's WIC Program partnered with Programs for Parents to launch the WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project (WIC CIAO). Supported by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, this initiative aims to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative outreach strategies to increase awareness, participation, and benefit redemption in the WIC program while reducing disparities in service delivery.

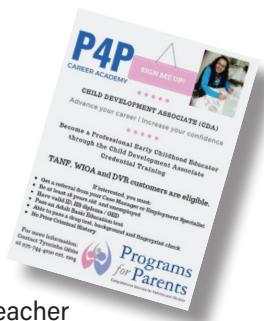
Programs for Parents is supporting WIC prescreening and referrals. The goal is to increase WIC enrollment and awareness, particularly among underserved and immigrant families in Newark. WIC benefits include longer and safer pregnancies, fewer premature births, improved dietary outcomes for children, better maternal health, and enhanced school performance. Additionally, WIC participants have shown significant healthcare cost savings compared to non-participants.

"We are excited to partner with the Rutgers NJMS WIC, Programs for Parents, and South Ward Promise Neighborhood to increase awareness and education about WIC in our neighborhoods and to ensure that eligible families are able to fully participate in all the services WIC offers." said Andrea Martinez-Mejia, Executive Director of the Greater Newark Health Care Coalition.

REBUILDING THE WORKFORCE

Our P4P Academy made a comeback!

Through generous funding from the New Jersey Department of Labor Opportunity Partnership Grant, we successfully recruited, trained, and placed displaced workers into roles as credentialed teacher assistants or childcare workers in Essex County. These efforts focused on ECE programs, including preschools, childcare centers, and Head Start centers. Through P4P Private Career School (PCS), candidates received intensive support to obtain the CDA credential and secure sustainable employment with a self-sufficient wage. Developed with local childcare centers and schools, this model included practicum placements, on-site program visits, and expectations of permanent hires upon certification. Employer partners actively supported the implementation to ensure successful program completion and job placement.



A premier space for training and Professional Development—

Programs for Parents opened the Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver Legacy Training Room and the Dr. Beverly Lynn Room of Excellence in November 2023. We have provided

professional development sessions to 111 early childhood professionals pursuing the Child Development Associate Credential there.

Moreover, we have offered an extensive array of over 150 virtual and in-person professional development opportunities. These sessions have been attended by a staggering 1,809 child care center staff, family/friends/neighbors, and family child care providers. The training has covered a wide range of topics, including child development, business practices, social-emotional skills, staff engagement, professionalism, health and safety, and developmentally appropriate practices, ensuring a comprehensive learning experience for all.

In addition to the professional development offered to childcare center staff and providers, 350 families received specialized parent education training opportunities. Topics included information and resources to support parents in engaging and interacting with their children using developmentally appropriate strategies.

LISC DIGITAL GROWTH ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

In 2023, the Family Child Care Department of Programs for Parents launched an innovative partnership with the LISC Digital Accelerator Program. The Digital Growth Accelerator Program was a free, virtual five-week program specifically for family childcare educators of color. The Women of Color Program, supported by Procter & Gamble and LISC, was designed to elevate women of color in the child care sector across Boston, Newark, Houston, and Kalamazoo. Twenty registered family child care providers from Newark were selected to participate in the 2023 cohort.

The program focused on addressing local needs and included:

- **Support and Resources:** Technical assistance, capacity building, and flexible grants were provided to stabilize operations, improve facilities, and expand the impact of child care providers.
- **Community Collaboration:** Partnerships with community-based organizations aimed to create a more equitable child care system

The program provided the following:

Consulting and Action Plans: Personalized consulting teams helped participants navigate business growth and implement strategic action plans.

Grant Funding: Financial support accelerated the implementation of action plans.

Digital Tools and Resources: Access to specialized digital tools simplified operations and enhanced efficiency.

Networking and Collaboration: Opportunities to expand networks and collaborate with other providers.

Time Management: Tools and strategies to reclaim time and improve self-care.

The Digital Growth Accelerator Program was a free, virtual five-week program specifically for family childcare educators of color. The *Women of Color Program*, supported by Procter & Gamble and LISC, was designed to elevate women of color in the child care sector across Boston, Newark, Houston, and Kalamazoo.

Benefits to Providers:

- **Business Growth:** Personalized consulting and strategic planning helped providers grow their businesses.
- **Financial Support:** Grants funded the implementation of action plans, reducing financial barriers.
- **Efficiency and Tools:** Access to digital tools improved operational efficiency.
- **Community and Support:** Networking opportunities and collaboration with other providers fostered a supportive community.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Enhanced time management strategies enabled providers to spend more time with family and engage in self-care.

The Women of Color Program and Digital Growth Accelerator Program made significant strides in supporting women of color in the child care sector. These initiatives provided essential resources, personalized consulting, financial support, and access to digital tools. By addressing local needs and fostering community collaboration, these programs not only enhanced the sustainability and impact of child care providers but also promoted a more equitable and efficient child care system.

FAMILY CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

Programs for Parents' Family Child Care Department hosted a Home-based Providers Conference at Metropolitan Baptist Church in September. Themed *Shaping the Future—Trends and Insights for Tomorrow*, nearly one hundred family childcare and approved home providers received professional development training. Key topics included Best Practices for Partnering with Families, Marketing for Family Child Care Providers, and Using High-Quality Literature.

The keynote speaker delivered an inspiring message on the importance of self-care. Attendees received children's books for their libraries and other exciting giveaways, enhancing their professional and personal development.

SURVEY RESULTS

The conference received overwhelmingly positive feedback:

- 100% of attendees strongly agreed or agreed that the instructors were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that the instructors engaged them.
- 96% strongly agreed or agreed that they acquired new information.
- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that they would implement at least one idea from the sessions in their programs.
- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the sessions.

OTHER NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As of December 31, 2023, Programs for Parents achieved several significant milestones:

- There are 190 Registered family childcare(FCC) providers and 94 Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers serving children in Essex County. The number of FCC inspections increased 36% to 242. We also increased our FCC provider participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) from 28 to 45.

- These accomplishments highlight the ongoing commitment of Programs for Parents to support and enhance the quality of childcare services, ensuring that providers and families receive the resources and support they need to thrive.

Nearly one hundred family childcare and approved home providers received professional development training. Key topics included Best Practices for Partnering with Families, Marketing for Family Child Care Providers, and Using High-Quality Literature.





Financial Report

Effective 2023 Programs for Parents implemented Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2016-02 Leases (Topic 842), operating leases. Operating lease assets represent the Organization's right to use an underlying asset for the lease term (Right Use of Asset) of one year or more, the lease asset and liability have been onboarded to the Statement of Financial position effective 2023.

PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS, INC. STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION SEPTEMBER 30, 2023 AND 2022

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,956,423	1,491,315
Grants receivable	350,448	607,245
Prepaid expenses and other assets	4,789	167,295
Total current assets	2,311,660	2,265,855
Fixed assets, net	168,370	122,243
Right-of-use asset—operating leases	4,290,328	
Rent security deposits	46,719	73,187
Total Assets	6,817,077	2,461,285
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	371,514	218,425
Refundable advances	109,962	103,235
PPP Loan Program	91,571	90,679
Lease Liability—Operating Leases	319,427	
Total Current Liabilities	892,474	412,339
PPP loan Long Term	142,941	234,292
Lease Liability Operating Leases, Net Current Portion	3,969,932	
Total Liabilities	5,005,347	646,631
Net Assets		
Without donor restriction	1,265,749	1,153,217
Board Designated for Endowment	264,854	366,620
With Donor Restriction	281,127	294,817
Total Net Assets	1,811,730	1,814,654
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	6,817,077	2,461,285



Essex County's Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

Programs for Parents is designated as the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for Essex County by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development. The major funder of Programs for Parents is the State of New Jersey. Programs for Parents is accredited through Child Care Aware of America, which works with more than 600 state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies nationwide so that all families have access to high-quality affordable child care.



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