



The Children's Community Head Start & Early Head Start

2210 Smithtown Avenue, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
(631) 585-2020

400 Sheep Pasture Road, Port Jefferson, NY 11777
(631) 476-9698

425 North Country Road, Miller Place, NY 11764
(631) 509-1979

www.cpclongisland.org

Community Assessment Highlights: 2010

Following is a summary of some of the findings in the 2010 Community Assessment that are relevant to future program planning:

- The Hispanic/Latino population is significantly growing, both in the county and even more so in the Head Start program. Many parents indicate a need for assistance in learning English.
- Immigrant families report experiencing discrimination in their local communities.
- The recent recession has created a spike in welfare recipients and a dramatic increase in foreclosures of houses in Suffolk County leading to increased homelessness and even greater gaps in affordable housing for low-income families.
- Despite a significant need for high quality early care and education services, the availability of affordable programs is decreasing. Parents are increasingly using “underground” child care as opposed to state licensed or registered care because they cannot afford the cost, contributing to the closure of child care centers.
- Asthma and obesity are increasing in young children.
- The continuously updated Community Resource Database of Long Island previously available only online is now also available as of January 2010 through a free telephone helpline.
- Parents report they are enthusiastic about the Head Start program and in particular with the family advocates and teachers.
- The Head Start program has undertaken several successful initiatives to better meet the needs of families including the following: implementation in the spring of 2010 of an Early Head Start Program serving infants, toddlers and pregnant women and their families; expansion to offer a new full day/full year, extended day Head Start classroom serving 16 preschool children and their families; hiring of more bilingual staff; opening a new site in Miller Place with offices, a parent room and a socialization room; and collaborative agreements with three school districts to provide Universal Pre-Kindergarten classes along with the Head Start program.

Additional Important Statistics Related to CCHS Service Area: 13 School Districts in Suffolk County

- 1,000+ children under age five live in poverty
- 52% increase in immigrant population in Suffolk County; 2nd largest increase in NYS
- 22% increase in poverty between 2003 – 2007
- 33% increase in foodstamps between 2002 – 2007
- 37% increase in WIC between 2002 – 2007
- 20% spike in welfare—higher than any increase since 1999 and higher than other NY counties and USA
- More homes in foreclosure than any other county in Metropolitan region
- 30% increase in homelessness compared to 2008
- 5.4% increase in Child Abuse reports between 2008 – 2009
- 76% of Long Island families pay more than 10% of their income on childcare
- There is a decrease in the number of licensed childcare providers in all categories (center-based, family, group family)
- “Higher Income” school districts are experiencing an increase in the number of children qualifying for “Free/Reduced Meals”; Three Village School District had a 39% increase.
- In 2006, Suffolk County had 258 births to teens, aged 15 – 17. Excluding NYC, this is the 3rd highest number in NYS.
- In 2009, 488 children (Birth to 2 years, 11 months) received Early Intervention in CCHS service area. In 2009, 1,624 children (3 – 5 years) in CCHS

The Community Assessment was conducted throughout the Spring 2010. Data was gathered from a variety of sources including from enrolled families at The Children's Community Head Start. The full report can be obtained by contacting Elizabeth A. Geary, Director of CPC, at (631) 585-2020.



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Community Assessment Update 2011

In March and April 2011, families and staff at The Children's Community Head Start and Early Head Start reflected back on the year and the real challenges faced by our local communities. The consensus is that many of the challenges, especially homelessness and increasing poverty, have intensified.

However, The Children's Community Head Start and Early Head Start programs were perceived as a light in the darkness. Here are some highlights:

- The dedication of staff, including Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Home Visitors and Family Advocates was commended. Overall, parents felt that Head Start and Early Head Start had enabled them to learn more about their child's development, become more involved in their child's education, and learn how to be an advocate for their child. Many expressed that HS/EHS had helped them finish school and find employment.
- Parents felt that their children's academic needs were being met and they were pleased with the utilization of the curriculum in both center-based and home-based options.
- Parents in the Early Head Start Home-based option indicated a need for center-based opportunities so that they could continue to pursue school and/or employment opportunities. Other parents also indicated that access to extended program hours would help them better coordinate with work schedules.
- Health and Dental Homes for children are consistently available; however, affordable dental care for adults is lacking.
- Transportation issues ranked high on the "most challenging" list. The high cost of fuel and the lack of reliable vehicles impacted children's attendance and parent participation.