



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

December 14, 2012

Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

In these times of lean budgets and increasing levels of poverty, it is important to support programs that have evidence-based, positive outcomes for the working poor.

Providing quality child care is such a program that has proven, positive outcomes for children and the larger community. When young children spend their first years with nurturing adults in a high-quality, developmentally-appropriate setting, they accomplish more in school, parents perform better at work and our State saves money. Every dollar invested in high-quality child care returns at least \$7 in tax savings due to the need for fewer services, such as special education.

The Public Policy Committee of the Diocese asks all parishes to participate in the *Public Policy Weekend ~ February 9-10, 2013* which focuses on the need for increased funding for quality child care subsidies.

This packet includes the follow materials for use in your parish/school:

1. The petition
2. Instructions on where to send the completed petitions.
3. Bulletin announcements, starting Dec 30 through Feb. 9-10
4. Fact Sheet—can be copied and inserted in the bulletin
5. Prayers of the Faithful
6. Homily Helps
7. Pulpit Announcements for Feb 3 and Feb 10

Pope John Paul II wrote: "In the Christian view, our treatment of children becomes the measure of our fidelity to the Lord himself" (*Familiaris Consortio*).

May we be faithful to God and to our children,

Rev. Brian Cool
Chairperson
Public Policy Committee, Diocese of Rochester

Name of Parish: _____ Count of signatures from all pages: _____

2013 Public Policy Weekend—Diocese of Rochester

Petition supporting quality child care for low income families

- The first years of a child's life are crucial to healthy development of intellect, personality, and social skills.
- Investment in quality child care leads to proven benefits for the child, the family and the community.
- It will save our State money: every dollar invested in high-quality child care returns at least \$7 in tax savings due to the need for fewer services, such as special education.

Therefore, we urge the New York State Assembly, Senate, and Governor Cuomo to invest \$300 million in child care subsidies for low income working families.

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Public Policy Weekend (February 9/10) Instructions

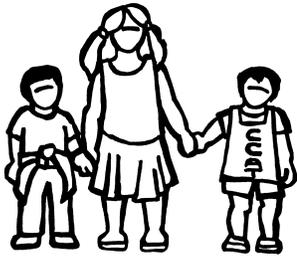
What Do We Do With Petitions?

Send all signed petition forms to your regional Catholic Charities Justice & Peace staff by February 28th. Petitions will be photocopied and delivered to our state representatives.

What if we have questions?

Contact regional Justice and Peace staff for assistance.

Counties of the Diocese	Justice and Peace Staff—Contact Information
<i>Chemung/Schuylar/Tioga</i>	Kathy Dubel Catholic Charities 215 E. Church St. Suite 101 Elmira, NY 14901 607-734-9784; kdubel@dor.org
<i>Livingston County</i>	Jack Balinsky Catholic Charities 1150 Buffalo Road Rochester, NY 14624 585-328-3228 ext 1323; balinsky@dor.org
<i>Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, Tompkins and Yates</i>	Laurie Konwinski Catholic Charities- 324 West Buffalo St. Ithaca, NY 14850 607-272-5062 ext. 12; lkonwinski@dor.org
<i>Monroe County</i>	Marvin Mich or Ruth Marchetti Catholic Family Center 87 N. Clinton Ave. Rochester, NY 14604 585-546-7220 ext. 7021; mmich@cfcrochester.org 585-546-7220 ext. 7099; rmarchetti@cfcrochester.org
<i>Steuben County</i>	Lynda Lowin Catholic Charities 23 Liberty St. Bath, NY 14810 607-776-8085 ext. 217; llowin@dor.org
<i>Wayne County</i>	Deacon Jim Nail St Mary of the Lake 5823 Walworth Rd. Ontario, NY 14519 315-524-2611 ext 18; jnail@dor.org



Parish Education Resource: Bulletin Articles
December 30, 2012 through February 10, 2013

Week #1 December 30, 2012

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children.

This weekend the Catholic community celebrates the *Feast of the Holy Family*. Our love for Jesus leads us to speak up for children and families in our community who may need our help, especially working families in poverty. The Diocese of Rochester Public Policy Committee invites us to advocate for increased state funding for high-quality child care, so that working parents have help paying for safe, quality care for their children while they are at work.

Week #2 January 6, 2013

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children. In New York State, 18.9% of children under age 18 are growing up in families with annual incomes *under* the federal poverty level (\$23,050). A parent working full-time at minimum wage (\$7.25) earns \$15,080 annually. This makes it very difficult for many working parents to afford high-quality child care. For example, the average monthly cost of high-quality child care for a pre-schooler is \$688 (\$8,256 annually for one child) in Seneca, Chemung, Schuyler and Tioga Counties; infant childcare in Monroe County is \$1,000 (\$12,000 annually).

Week #3 January 13, 2013

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children.

Many working parents need help paying for high-quality child care which can cost more than \$8,000 annually for a pre-schooler in our region of the state. 75% of a child's brain growth and 85% of intellect and social skills develop before age 5. These first years are critically important for children and it is important that we help parents afford high-quality child care. Our parish will join with the Diocese of Rochester Public Policy Committee and other parishes on the weekend of February 9-10, 2013 to *ask Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to invest \$300 million to provide subsidies for high-quality child care for children in low-income families in New York State.*

Week #4 January 20, 2013

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children. Funding for high-quality child care in New York State has declined in recent years. In 2002, there were 12,261 children in Monroe County receiving childcare subsidies, by 2012 that had dropped to 7,493; Steuben County 660 in 2002 and only 250 in 2012; Chemung County 1,335 children in 2002 and 607 in 2012. When child care assistance is cut, low-income working parents are often forced to choose between quitting their job or placing their children in less-than-desirable child care situations. Parents without after-school care miss, on average, 8 days of work per year because of the unpredictability of their child care arrangements.

Parish Education Resource: Bulletin Articles (cont.)

Week #5 January 27, 2013

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children.

Government funding for high-quality child care has been cut by about 45% during the past ten years. Investing in high-quality child care benefits the economy - each new dollar spent in the child care sector generates \$2 in other economic activity immediately; and, every dollar invested returns long-term \$7-\$17 in tax savings due to the need for fewer services, such as special education. Research demonstrates that children in low-income families who participate in high-quality child care accomplish more in school.

Week #6 February 3, 2013

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children.

"Childhood should be a happy, secure, and safe time of growth and development. Parents need support and help in meeting the challenges of raising children in the face of the cultural, economic, and moral pressures of our day." (~U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Putting Children and Families First*).

Next weekend we will have an opportunity to help parents provide high-quality child care for their children. Please plan to sign the Diocese of Rochester Public Policy petition *calling on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to invest \$300 million to provide subsidies for high-quality child care for children in low-income working families in our community.*

Week #7 February 10, 2013 Public Policy Weekend

Children are our present and our future. They are a sign of God's continual gift to the world. Let's make good choices for children.

Thank you for signing the Diocese of Rochester Public Policy petition today. We are calling on *Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to invest \$300 million to provide subsidies for high-quality child care for children in low-income working families in our community.* Petitions signed in parishes across our Diocese will be presented to our New York State leaders in Albany.

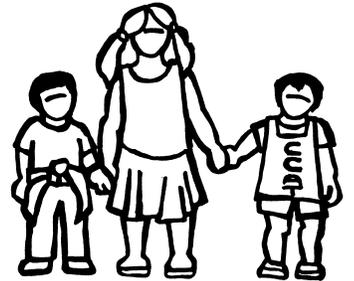
Investing in Our Future: Supporting Quality Child Care

Diocese of Rochester Public Policy Weekend, February 9-10, 2013

Research has long shown that young children do best in school and life when they spend their first years with nurturing adults in a high-quality, developmentally-appropriate setting. Yet without government subsidies, this kind of quality child care is far too expensive for many working families.

Are we making sure that all children have access to safe, quality child care?

- Last year's New York State budget included \$92 million in state funds to offset federal cuts in child care subsidies. However, even with this critical investment, child care funding in New York is lower than in the past.
- Because of inadequate funding, fewer than 38% of working families in **Steuben County** who are seeking child care subsidies will receive this assistance in 2013. In 2002, there were 660 children receiving subsidies; by 2013, that number will drop to approximately 250.
- 2002 in **Chemung County** 1,335 children received subsidies; in 2012 only 607; currently there are 672 children on a waiting list for child care subsidies.
- Because of inadequate funding, fewer than 40% of working families in **Monroe County** who are eligible for child care subsidies receive this assistance. In 2002, there were 12,261 children receiving subsidies; by 2012, that number had dropped 7,493.
- New York State was named the least affordable state for Center-Based Infant Care in August 2012. The average cost of one year of high quality infant care in New York is \$14,009.



Are we making sure that kids get what they need early in life to grow up healthy and successful?

- 75% of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop before age 5 - before a child ever steps foot in Kindergarten. Those first 2000 days of a child's life - from birth to Kindergarten entry - are critically important and impact their success in school and in life.

Are we strengthening our workforce and economy?

- When child care assistance is cut, low income working parents are forced to choose between two undesirable options - either quit their job or place their children in substandard care.
- State investment in quality child care pays significant dividends in the well being of children, families, communities, and the economy.

Prayers of the Faithful

(Feel free to use one or more of these...)

For the children of our parish, our community, and our land who are at risk because of their poverty, that they become a renewed concern for our community and for our political leaders, we pray to the Lord.

For children in our diocese who lack of proper health care, education, shelter, and love; that our faith might move us and our leaders to respond quickly to their most basic needs, we pray to the Lord.

For those of members of our society who have the resources to help our children who are at risk from the burden of poverty: that they respond with justice and charity, we pray to the Lord.

For the success of our diocesan Public Policy campaign: that our civic leaders recognize their responsibility and respond to the need for quality child care and early education programs for all children, and especially for those who are poor, we pray to the Lord.

Homily Helps

February 3, 2013-- 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Our responsorial today psalm proclaims:

"On you I depend from birth; from my mother's womb you are my strength."

All life, from the womb to the end of life is a gift of God and depends on human nurturing. Our Catholic tradition calls upon us to support the gift of life before and after birth if we are to be consistently pro-life. Our focus on caring for children with quality child care shows that we will not abandon children, but will nurture them to reach their full human potential.

Research has long shown that young children do best in school and life when they spend their first years with nurturing adults in a high-quality, developmentally-appropriate setting.

75% of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop before age 5 - before a child ever steps foot in Kindergarten. Those first 2000 days of a child's life - from birth to Kindergarten entry - are critically important and impact their success in school and in life.

Yet without government subsidies, this kind of quality child care is far too expensive for many working families, as high quality child care can cost up to \$14,000 per year.

Our State benefits as well. Every dollar invested in high-quality child care returns at least \$7 in tax savings due to the need for fewer services, such as special education.

As Marian Wright Edelman, from *The Children's Defense Fund*, says: "The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to."

There is information in today's bulletin about a petition on supporting funding for child care as part of the NY State 2013 budget. Please reflect this information in preparation for the opportunity to sign the petition next week.

February 10, 2013-- 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Our responsorial today psalm proclaims: "forsake not the work of your hands."

The gift of a child is one of God's "works" which he will not forsake. Yet too often in our world children are aborted, forsaken, and abused. We know that it takes many resources and much love to raise and educate a child from infancy to young adulthood. Some families have fewer resources and therefore need help from others to pay for quality child care so the parents can continue working. Kashina is one of those parents.

Kashina Amons is a child care provider who can't afford to send her infant son to the center where she works - even with an employee discount. The full price of infant care at Jefferson Avenue Child Development Center where Amons works full-time, is \$1,000 a month. Employees are charged half price. But that's still out of reach for Amons, whose take-home pay is only \$800 a month.

Kashina Amons has taken a second job to earn more, hoping to be able to enroll her son in the center. "He needs to have the interaction with children so he could understand how to share," she says. But working more hours gives her less time with her son.

You can help parents like Kashina by signing the petition from the Diocesan Public Policy Committee after Mass. This petition asks our elected leaders in Albany to invest in our children by funding quality child care for the working poor.