

Affordable child care a growing problem

Gary McLendon, Staff writer 4 p.m. EST November 14, 2014



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According to a report by the Center for Governmental Research, affordable child care and the need for child care subsidies is a growing problem in Rochester's suburbs, and allocating more funds to help families across Monroe County is a growing need.

A discussion on the findings of the report *Child Care Subsidies in Monroe County, An Analysis of Need, Availability and Trends*, sponsored by the League of Women Voters Rochester Metro Area, focused on a problem that is great in the city but also growing in the suburbs.



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According to the report the number of potentially eligible children for childcare subsidies "fell 9 percent in the City of Rochester from 2000 to 2008-12 and grew 52 percent in Irondequoit, 31 percent in Henrietta and 17 percent in Greece."

"The report shows its the same issue for families no matter where they live in our county," Katherine Smith, first vice president, and director for advocacy of the LWV-RMA. "I think our county legislators were a little surprised at some of the numbers in their towns."

Aspects of the problems of childcare subsidy shortages were discussed during the panel discussion at Asbury First United Methodist Church by parent Sarah Davis; Carolyn Lee-Davis, senior policy planner of The Children's Agenda & Early Childhood Development Initiative; Nancy Kaplan, coordinator of Rochester's Child & Community Foundation; Michele Terrell, executive director of the Community Child Care Center; and author of the CGR report Erika Rosenberg.



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The amounts needed to provide adequate child care subsidies for working families is in flux depending on the level of county funds on top of a \$4 million in mandated local spending.

Monroe County budget projections released recently indicate the level of local dollars will shrink about \$600,000, Rosenberg said, adding: "We had a huge gap before. Any cut in funding is disastrous."

Some families are already coping with the current situation of unaffordable child care by making the best risky decision possible, such as deciding to leave their children with neighbors, said Davis: "It's sad that parents are being pushed to that limit."

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