



Dear Business Leaders:

Have your employees ever experienced work disruptions because of child care issues? Has the loss of child care subsidy ever caused a good employee to have to leave the job? Have you ever struggled to find workers possessing basic work readiness skills? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you'll want to make time to attend the ***Business Champions for Early Learning* event upstairs at Tony R's on Market Street in Corning on June 17, 2010 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.** This event is sponsored by the Committee for Economic Development, United Way of New York State and Steuben Child Care Project. It is designed to educate business leaders about how early childhood issues affect them and their employees.

Early care and education includes: center-based and home-based child care programs, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and public Universal Prekindergarten programs. More and more studies are finding that, in addition to being a key work support for parent employees, high quality early care and education programs set the stage for success in school, which in turn leads to workforce readiness. Conversely, children without strong early learning experiences are more likely to start kindergarten behind their peers in language skills. Sadly, despite strong effort and costly interventions in our schools, these children often do not catch up, and become adults who lack basic work readiness skills. Nobel-prize winning University of Chicago economist James Heckman has shown that investments in early education provide higher returns than those made in the training and retraining of low-skill adults.

So what can business leaders do to strengthen school and workforce readiness? They can help influence the creation of a high quality early care and education system that is accessible and affordable for families with young children. The speakers at the *Business Champions for Early Learning* event on June 17<sup>th</sup> will provide more background on the importance of early care and education for businesses, and give examples of how business leaders have become involved. Speakers include: Mary Shaheen of United Way of New York State, Mike Petro of the Committee for Economic Development, and Tom Blumer, a retired Corning Incorporated executive. In addition, we'll have a small panel and group dialogue on the topic.

We believe that the existence of a high quality early care and education system is important to businesses of all sizes and the overall well-being of our community. The *Business Champions* event is a great opportunity for you to learn more about this topic. We encourage you to be there on June 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 at Tony R's.

Refreshments will be served and all attendees are invited to attend the Corning Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours\* immediately following this meeting, also to be held upstairs at Tony R's. This after-event is also hosted by Steuben Child Care Project and underwritten by the Committee for Economic Development. **Please register for the Business Champions event by calling Jerine Faber at Steuben Child Care Project at 776-2126, x245.** A separate communication will come to Chamber members regarding the Business After Hours. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla Hibbard".

Carla Hibbard, Director

***\*Please note that the Chamber of Commerce admission fee for the Business After Hours is \$8 for non-members and \$5 for members. Light fare will be served and a cash bar will be available.***