



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
FISCAL YEAR 2015 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARINGS

JUNE 6, 2014

The Day Care Council of New York would like to thank the New York City Council for their vigilance in maintaining access to quality early childhood education for New York City's children. In particular, we would like to acknowledge your decision to maintain funding for those programs who until recently were only able to continue operations through access to Discretionary funding. We would also like to acknowledge the tremendous achievements of our Mayor in securing \$300 million dollars in State funding to make Universal Pre-Kindergarten accessible to all of our City's four year olds. We applaud his commitment to Pre-K teacher salary parity which guarantees the same starting pay for certified UPK teachers in non-profit settings as their DOE counterparts.

For more than 65 years, our 106 non-profit sponsoring board members have operated more than 200 early childhood education centers under contract with ACS. The Day Care Council of New York is also charged with the responsibility of negotiating the labor contracts with the unions that represent the publicly funded child care workforce on behalf of the City. We are encouraged by recent negotiations with the UFT and hope that the pending contract with DC1707 is a reflection of the tireless dedication of their members.

Our concerns at this time are focused in three areas. The Mayor's commitment to equal starting salaries for certified UPK teachers in both DOE and non-profit settings does not ensure equal benefits packages or incremental increases based on years of service. We also now face possible shortages of qualified teachers for two and three-year-old classrooms, as those teaching four-year-olds look forward to a higher rate of pay for a shorter work day, in addition to having their summers off. We need to find the funds to bring lead teachers of two and three year olds up to the same pay level of \$44-50,000 based on their certification status. We also need to find a way to compensate certified Directors who administer the child care programs and raise the salaries of assistant teachers, custodians, and cooks who are in desperate need of proper compensation.

Our second major priority is the lack of funding for wrap-around hours for new UPK seats. While our members will continue to receive full day (8 am to 6 pm) funding for their existing four year old classrooms, any new UPK seats they might be awarded will only be funded for 6 hours and 20 minutes (generally ending at 2:20 pm) with no coverage in July or August. This is

a serious problem for providers who serve low-income working parents, many of whom are female heads of household.

Thirdly, we face ongoing challenges from an inadequate Early Learn program rate. With the transfer of general liability and workforce compensation insurance costs into the rate, many providers are now facing an ongoing funding gap of at least 10% of their overall budget. This is in addition to the challenges presented by the transfer of health insurance costs into the rate two years ago, resulting in a loss of coverage for more than 50% of the child care workforce, based on their inability to make a mandatory contribution of 15% of the cost of their monthly premium. They simply cannot afford it on their low salaries. We must also note that the Day Care Council / DC 1707 Welfare Fund which is contributing 5% towards these same monthly premium payments will eventually be completely diminished without additional public funding.

We are truly inspired by the vast array of progressive initiatives underway at this time in our City after several years of system destabilization. We appreciate the opportunity to bring these issues to your attention, and are prepared to work diligently with you to resolve them.

Lisa Caswell LCSW  
Senior Policy Analyst