



Main Office
2082 Lexington Avenue, Suite 204
New York, NY 10035

t: 212.206.7818
f: 212.206.7836

info@dccnyinc.org
www.dccnyinc.org

Queens Office
James C. Hall, Jr.
Family Child Care Network
York College
94-20 Guy Brewer Boulevard, Room 2F01E
Jamaica, NY 11451

t: 718.262.2247

TESTIMONY
FY 2019 PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
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Good morning. My name is Lisa Caswell, and I am the Senior Policy Analyst for the Day Care Council of New York. For more than 70 years, the Day Care Council has successfully served the needs of nonprofit organizations that sponsor child care programs across the five boroughs of New York City. Currently, we have 91 members who operate more than 200 early childhood education programs under contract with the Administration for Children's Services. We are also responsible for negotiating collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) on behalf of our member agencies with the two unions, District Council 1707 and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, who represent the child care workforce in their programs.

First, we would like to say how much we appreciate the City Council's steadfast support of our members, and would like to acknowledge the individual commitment of Chair Treyger, Council Member Stephen Levin, and Council Member Laurie Cumbo. We would also like to acknowledge the work of Deputy Chancellor Josh Wallack and his team. The recent release of the Department of Education's Birth to Five Request for Proposals (RFP) will have long ranging repercussions. Our members' concerns fall into three categories; salary parity, program vacancies, and the overall physical infrastructure of the system.

Salary Parity. Our members continue to struggle with the hiring and retention of qualified teaching staff in the face of ongoing professional staffing competition with the DOE. Entry level early childhood education teachers who have their Master's degrees and are state certified continue to be paid \$16,000 less than their entry level counterparts at the DOE. For more than a year, the Day Care Council has been engaged in complex research on salary parity to determine the fiscal impact. Our goal is salary parity for all staff. However, we are starting the analysis by focusing on CBO directors, and Master's and Bachelor's level certified teachers for two reasons. Our members have repeatedly discussed the difficulty in hiring management and state certified teaching staff for their agencies, and Article 47 of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's regulations requires this staffing for all early childhood programs.

Our calculations are based on the UFT's collective bargaining agreement salary scales, with specific attention to cost-of-living adjustments and longevity increases. In

calculating the funding amount, consideration has been given to the current employee benefits structure which includes salary, FICA, a pension and health insurance. We are currently engaged in consultation with a range of parties critical to the task and hope to be able to share our work with you soon. Salary parity is the only path forward for an integrated early education system and we are committed to laying a proper foundation for long term stability. We are prepared to make a group presentation later this month for those of you who are interested and will be following up with your offices.

Program Vacancies. Our second area of concern is focused on the DOE RFP policy of linking funding to enrollment. At this time, the average enrollment rate for EarlyLearn is 78%, with child care programs at 74.25%, dual enrollment programs at 80.76%, and Head Start programs at 83.85%. The RFP states that programs with enrollment rates at 58% or less will receive 65% of the monthly contract value, programs with an enrollment rate between 58% and 93% will receive funding for their monthly enrollment rate plus 7%, and programs enrolled at 93% or higher will receive 100% of their monthly contract value. The DOE has made significant adjustments to its centralized enrollment system that have benefitted non-profit Pre-K For All settings. We have also witnessed the success of recent efforts to boost Head Start enrollment levels. Despite this, we are extremely concerned about the immediate and long term repercussions of this fiscal policy.

Physical Infrastructure. Finally, while the RFP includes infrastructure funding for start-up and renovation, programs located in NYCHA facilities continue to face complex obstacles when trying to maintain, or upgrade their facilities. Following is a quote from a parent who chose a school based Pre-K setting over the non-profit where their child had been in attendance. “We would like to come back, but the facilities need improvement. Also, emergency closings because of various issues with the building have caused us to miss work.” While we acknowledge the administration’s recent establishment of new protocols that are expediting repairs, there is still so much that needs to be done. NYCHA’s 2017 Physical Needs Assessment (PNA) projected \$31.8 billion in capital repair needs across their portfolio over the next five years to keep the authority’s decades-old buildings in good condition. We have recently joined in coalition with United Neighborhood Houses and LiveOn NY to advocate for additional infrastructure funding at both the state and city levels.

Ultimately, this administration must give the DOE the tools and funding CBOs need to effectively serve their staff, children, and parents. Together we can make it happen. The Day Care Council stands ready, wherever we are needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.