



SUPPORTING NEW YORK CITY'S UNSUNG HEROES

How the Next Mayor Can Prime the
Early Childhood Workforce for Success

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Introduction

In March of 2020, when New York City abruptly shuttered its schools and child care centers in an attempt to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, teachers at the City's subsidized centers began hearing from homebound parents that their children did not have enough to eat. They packed bags of groceries from their centers' leftover snack and lunch supplies and distributed them to families directly, sometimes driving across boroughs. Staff at some centers with commercial-size kitchens cooked full meals to feed families, and a few partnered with other organizations to provide cash assistance and groceries, which quickly attracted long lines filled with faces both familiar and new.¹



Though centers were ordered shut, local officials encouraged family child care programs operated out of providers' own homes to remain open for essential workers. Many home-based providers do not have sick pay or health insurance, but still kept their doors open to local families, buying safety supplies at their own expense and implementing new health and safety protocols on the fly.²

The City asked a number of child care center teachers and directors to return to work to open emergency child care programs that would provide free child care for the children of essential workers. As the rest of the city remained in lockdown, these teachers and other staff cared for the children of hospital staff, MTA workers, and others whose work was too critical for them to stay home. As the city began preparing to open the largest school district in the nation, the hard-earned lessons learned from these emergency child care centers helped to shape the city's reopening plans.³

Later that fall, when New York City closed schools once again, this time they knew that the City needed child care programs to reopen. ⁴ Nine months into a pandemic that had led to a mass exodus of women from the workforce, the state, City, and local businesses now recognized child care for what it has always been, but is too rarely acknowledged: a crucial support not only for New York City's families, but its entire economy; the industry that supports all other industries.

The women and men comprising New York City’s early education workforce are among the unsung heroes of the pandemic, keeping families and our youngest residents safe and cared for during one of the City’s most desperate and prolonged crises. And yet many of the problems that dogged this vital workforce before the pandemic—including low pay and scant benefits, few opportunities for advancement, and the resulting high turnover—have only been heightened over the last year.

Much of the City’s child care sector is emerging from the pandemic deeply damaged, with many of the private programs suffering from months of lost tuition as a result of parents keeping children home for reasons including safety and unemployment. An analysis of data provided to the Day Care Council of New York by New York City’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene showed that twice as many child care centers closed this year than were newly permitted. Layoffs have permeated the sector: nationwide, employment in child care was down by 16 percent in February compared with a year ago. In comparison, overall employment fell by 6 percent in that same time period, according to *The New York Times*.⁵

With many experienced early education teachers and staff forced to seek work outside of the child care sector, experts say it may be difficult for the child care programs to ramp up operations as the demand for their services returns in full. This, in turn, can slow parents’ full return to the workforce and hamper the City’s economic recovery. The time to invest in a robust early childhood workforce for New York City has never been more urgent, and the moral imperative of doing so has never been more clear.

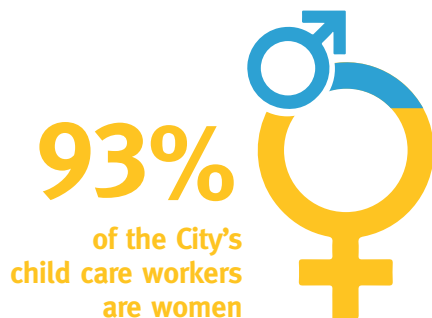
In this report we describe this workforce, including who they are and the key challenges they face. We look at recent successes for this workforce, and we provide recommendations for how to build it back better.

Who Is NYC's Early Childhood Workforce?



Similar to New York City's K-12 teachers in public schools, the City's early childhood workforce is largely comprised of women: 93% of the City's employed child care workers are women.⁶ But whereas many K-12 teachers are white women teaching in a school district that is predominantly comprised of Black and Brown children,⁷ the vast majority of the early childhood workforce are women of color.⁸ For the families and children they serve, the value of this cannot be overstated.

The most impactful part of a quality early learning experience is a child's interaction with the adults who care for and teach them. Numerous studies have pointed to the sizable benefits that result when students of color have access to teachers of color, including more trusting student-child relations—something which is likely to be even more pronounced in early education, where teachers work not only with children, but parents, as well.⁹



Research suggests that teachers of color tend to have more positive perceptions of students of color, both academically and behaviorally, than other teachers do, and that may help to fuel academic gains for children. One study estimates that instruction from one Black teacher in elementary school cuts high school dropout rates

among Black boys from low-income backgrounds by 39 percent. It is also associated with an increased interest in pursuing a four-year college degree compared to peers who were never taught by a Black teacher.¹⁰ Among the small family child care programs based out of providers' homes, many immigrant families actively choose those providers who speak the same language they speak at home and serve similar foods.¹¹

Lea Austin, executive director of UC Berkeley's Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), is one of many child care advocates who says this strength of the field is also one of the reasons why the sector has been dogged with low wages and a dearth of opportunities and incentives for advancement. As Austin recently explained to VOX, "Work performed by women and performed by women of color is historically undervalued. We have a convergence of those two categories in the early childhood education workforce."¹²

The Challenge of Low Pay in Child Care

Austin’s Center for the Study of Child Care Employment found that nationally early educators make on average \$11.65 an hour,¹³ meaning that about half must supplement their wages with public benefits. They also found that racial disparities in how much early educators are paid exist even within the early education system itself. Among educators working in center-based settings nationwide, African-American educators are less likely than other early educators to earn more than \$15 per hour. Racial disparities existed even after controlling for a teacher’s educational attainment and the ages of children served.¹⁴ Though New York City has a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, some home based child care providers who receive rate based payments based on attendance earn far less.

The women and men who make up New York City’s early childhood workforce are among the City’s lowest paid workers. Median hourly wages of women working in child care in the private sector are about one-third below those of women in the private sector overall. While wages in the public, directly-subsidized child care system are somewhat higher, one in four New York City child care workers lived in poverty before the pandemic, while more than half had incomes low enough to qualify for a child care subsidy, according to a recent report from the New York City Comptroller’s office.¹⁵ The pandemic may have exacerbated these disparities.

Home-based child care providers—who provide child care in their homes—are not salaried workers and have some of the lowest earnings of employed New Yorkers. One recent analysis found that the median annual earnings for these self-employed child care providers was

only \$12,390.¹⁶ As one national child care expert told the Day Care Council of New York, all child care in the United States is subsidized—just not by the government— rather, it’s subsidized by the low pay of the early education workforce, the vast majority in New York City who are women of color.

Child care has not always been considered an education setting, and the salary changes that occurred as a result of the expansion of Pre-K for All exacerbated that difference.

This low compensation presents two key challenges for the child care sector: it makes it difficult for teachers to advance their careers and it feeds teacher turnover.¹⁷ Each of these challenges, in turn, can adversely impact the quality of child care that New York City families depend on.

The Link Between Teacher Compensation and Program Quality

Decades worth of research have demonstrated the importance of quality early childhood education, especially for children from low-income and historically disadvantaged backgrounds.¹⁸ Quality early education has been linked to a wide range of benefits, from bridging the classroom achievement gap, to improving the life prospects of children born into poverty, and even producing long-term economic savings for society. Research also suggests that high quality child care makes it easier for low-income mothers to work longer hours and hold onto their jobs—a finding that will not surprise any working parent who has relied on child care.¹⁹

A child’s routine and daily interactions with consistent caregivers is the magic ingredient that makes high quality early education so effective. This is why so many quality improvement efforts over the last decade, including New York City’s 2012 EarlyLearn reform, have focused on raising expectations for early education teachers, even as in many cases reimbursement rates for teachers have remained stubbornly low.²⁰ (See Appendix “How NYC’s Child Care and Early Education Landscape Has shifted Over the Past Decade,” p. 18.)

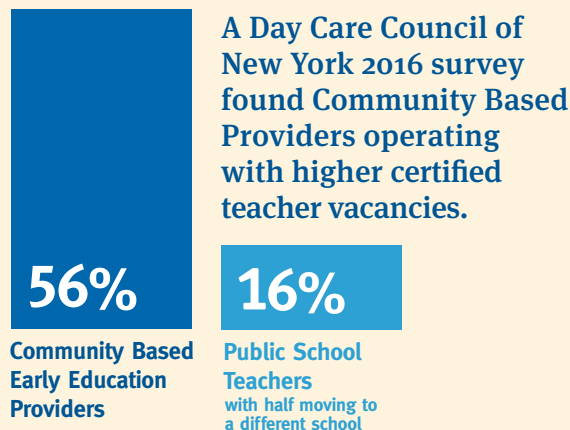


Early childhood educators rally for salary parity at City Hall in 2017

But the formula of high expectations and low pay simply does not work. When teachers are not adequately compensated for their work, the quality of a program can suffer.²¹ This, in turn, can impact children’s learning and development during the very time of life when their brains are developing most rapidly, and when quality care is potentially more important than ever.

It can also impact parents’ and particularly mothers’ ability to be effective at work and to remain stably employed.

The Impact of Teacher Turnover on Programs and Children



Perhaps the most obvious way that low teacher compensation impacts the quality of child care is when teachers themselves are struggling: as many mothers and fathers have learned over this last year of parenting during a global pandemic, it can be hard to be attentive to the physically and mentally-taxing needs of young children when you yourself are struggling.

The low pay of our early education workforce also leads to challenges with teacher recruitment and retention. A study that utilized pre-pandemic turnover data found that in one state nearly half of teachers were leaving every single year, and even publicly-funded community based programs suffered from high turnover.²² (By comparison, public school teachers have an average turnover rate of only 16%, with about half of those simply moving to a different school.²³) Similarly, in a 2016 survey, the Day Care Council of New York found that 56% of community based early education providers in New York City were operating with certified teacher vacancies.²⁴

The turnover crisis is even worse for infant and toddler teachers, who national studies demonstrate earn less than their equally qualified counterparts teaching older children. Low pay in the baby room of a center creates disincentive(s) for teachers to work with the youngest children and causes teachers to leave that position quickly.²⁵

High teacher turnover creates big problems for programs and the child care sector. As explained in a recent article in Early Learning Nation, when one in two lead teachers walk out the door every year, that leads to the “attendant problems of needing to recruit and train a replacement —when you can find one — recreate a staff culture and address the disruption to young children who thrive on consistent, reliable relationships. Half of a state’s professional development dollars, poof.”²⁶

How Low Pay Prevents Opportunities for Career Advancement



Inadequate compensation makes it a heroic task for even the most motivated staff to find the time and money to invest in advancing their careers or deepen their knowledge base, which is important to quality child care. “Training and workshops, coaching and mentoring, and credential or degree programs in which providers can develop foundational and specialized knowledge in early childhood development are critical to gaining the most out of children’s earliest years but can cost thousands of dollars,” a May 2019 report by the New York City Comptroller’s office explained. Meanwhile, that report also expressed that, “low compensation among the workforce generally means that opportunities for professional development—those that would improve the quality of care but might also offer a path for career advancement—are unworkable for many child care providers without significant financial assistance.”²⁷

Take teacher certification. Lead teachers in 3K- and Pre-K for All programs are expected to be certified, but New York State law and local City regulations allow non-certified teachers to be employed as lead teachers in these programs so long as they are enrolled in college courses to fulfill State certification requirements, also known as a “study plan.” In a 2019 report, the Day Care Council of New York found that about half of the lead teachers in Pre-K programs in community based child care centers were on study plans.

But as Mai Miksic explained in a *New York Daily News* op-ed, returning to school to obtain state certification is difficult for the early childhood workforce. It involves obtaining a bachelor’s degree, then eventually earning a Master’s degree, as well as passing three State exams, all which have fees attached. Since teachers on study plans work full-time and generally cannot afford to take time off for school, they must attend school in the evenings or on weekends. This can be difficult as they juggle work and personal and family obligations. Meanwhile, some early education teacher programs, especially undergraduate programs, do not offer evening or weekend classes.

Paying for classes is also an issue for underpaid early childhood educators. While early childhood teachers’ low salaries would qualify them for some needs-based scholarships, their part-time student status often limits the amount of funding they can receive. Some teachers take out student loans to pay for their education, saddling themselves with education debt. Despite these barriers, most early childhood teachers want to be recognized as professionals and earn a more respectable salary by obtaining their State certification, but they need help—namely time and money—to get there.²⁸

The Historic Salary Parity Victory for New York City’s Community based Certified Teachers

In 2019, an historic salary parity agreement was reached that is anticipated to help retain many certified teachers in the community based child care centers, while providing a powerful financial incentive for “study plan” teachers to become certified.

When Mayor Bill de Blasio launched his acclaimed Pre-K for All expansion, over half of the Pre-K classes were in community based programs, and the Pre-K teachers in these programs made tens of thousands of dollars less than equally qualified Pre-K teachers in DOE schools or stand-alone Pre-K programs. (As of 2019, more than 54% of Pre-K seats were still in community based programs.) Adding to the concern of the pay inequity, the lower-paid teachers in the community based organizations were almost all women of color, working year-round in the child care centers, whereas the ones in the school-based programs earning more money and working during the 10 month school year were more likely to be white.²⁹

After years of this troubling inequity coupled with intensive advocacy efforts, in 2019 an agreement involving two labor deals was struck between the Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) and District Council (DC) 37 Local 205, and the Head Start Sponsoring Board and DC 37 Local 95. The agreement awarded substantial raises to certified teachers in community based Pre-K for All programs and throughout the city’s contracted child care centers. These raises will reach parity for starting salaries between community based and public school teachers in October 2021, meaning that regardless of their longevity, by this fall community based teachers will begin to receive pay at levels of first-year public school teachers.

Though the unique circumstances of the pandemic year have made it impossible to quantify the impact this is having on the workforce, the assumption is that it will ultimately drive down turnover among certified teachers in

This is an important first step toward addressing the many challenges and inequities facing the city’s early childhood workforce. But the significant challenges of low pay and barriers to career advancement for the early childhood workforce as a whole remain.

the child care centers and encourage other teachers in those organizations to pursue certification. It is also expected that New York City community based Pre-K programs will have an easier time attracting highly qualified teachers.

The Pandemic's Impact

The pandemic and resulting economic downturn have added new difficulties for the child care sector and its workforce. When child care centers closed to curb the spread of COVID-19, many programs lost their paying customers, and even family child care programs that stayed open faced low enrollment as parents kept their children home for safety reasons as well as under- and unemployment. As *The Hechinger Report* summarized the problem facing child care programs nationwide: “Too few tuition-paying children to support the needed staff. Too many new expenses required to keep the doors open safely. Too few loans and grants available to help bridge the gap for the mostly female small business owners who provide the bulk of the nation’s child care.”³⁰

At least 109 New York City group child care centers (not including emergency child care sites) went out of business during the Pandemic in 2020.

Programs that depend on parent tuition to survive have been particularly impacted. Data provided to the Day Care Council of the New York by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) shows that at least 109 New York City group child care centers (not including emergency child care sites) went out of business in 2020, though staff at DOHMH suggest that

that number may be higher as some inactive sites may continue to hold licenses from DOHMH. Meanwhile, the number of new group child care sites permitted in 2020 was down 67% from 2019. Nationwide, there is growing evidence that the child care sector has been hit harder than similarly low-wage industries, and also that it will recover more slowly.³¹ A statewide survey conducted in November 2020 of both center-based and family child care providers still operating in New York State shows the more granular impact on the workforce. Sixty-two percent of respondents were currently losing money even as they were “desperately trying to stay open for the children and families they serve.” Sixty percent reported putting supplies or other items on their personal credit cards or dipping into their personal accounts, including over 80 percent of the state’s family child care providers. Forty-one percent said they were confronting so much uncertainty they did not know how much longer they could remain open.³² While some of these financial hardships may be addressed by the New York State Child Care Stabilization Grants, the long-term financial impact may be too much for some of the providers who may not be able to reopen their doors.

Even during the best of times, finding affordable child care has long been a challenge for parents. The damage the pandemic has inflicted on the child care sector is likely to make it even more difficult for parents trying to return to work to find child care they can afford and feel good about in the location of their choice, especially, especially for those families who cannot afford private care in their own homes. If New York City does not act fast and resolutely, it may further hinder women’s employment and the city’s economic recovery.

Challenges to Building Back Better

Following are the key, specific challenges facing the early childhood workforce which need to be addressed in order to stabilize the child care sector and build it back stronger:

- Directors and other staff in child care programs continue to be underpaid with many directors earning less than they could as a teacher.
- Despite the 2019 parity agreement, certified teachers in Pre-K and 3-K programs continue to work longer days than their counterparts in public schools, in most cases for less pay, fewer benefits, and smaller financial rewards for longevity—a pay disparity that compounds over time.
- The low rates paid for infant and toddler care discourage teachers from working with the youngest children despite the fact that ages 0-3 are when a child’s brain is developing most rapidly and quality care is paramount.
- All early education workers, including teachers on study plans who would like to be certified, continue to face financial and time barriers to career advancement.
- Many home-based providers make poverty-level wages and have few financial incentives to invest in increasing quality. This is because unlike in many states, New York does not offer a tiered payment system where reimbursement rates increase for hitting quality benchmarks.
- The Department of Education has enlisted home-based family child care programs to operate 3-K programs, and yet their pay remains vastly below that of teachers in child care centers or schools, threatening to create another tier in the 3-K system. The contracts which started in 2021 under the Birth-to-Five RFP resulted in many more 10 month center-based programs than 12-month extended day programs. Working families often need the extended day /extended year programs.





Recommendations

The following recommendations combine some of the best thinking in the field around how New York City can build a strong early education workforce that provides quality care to all children. We drew from research and writings from the Day Care Council of New York, Inc., Campaign for Children, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, the New York City Comptroller's office, Teacher's College, The Empire State Campaign for Child Care, the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School, United Neighborhood Houses, Advocates for Children and the member organizations of the Day Care Council of New York.

Our recommendations are guided by the basic premise that increasing the pay teachers, staff and directors receive and rewarding them for meeting professional benchmarks is both the right thing to do and will also lead to stronger teachers and programs. Studies of child care quality in numerous states have all found positive correlations between increasing teacher and caregiver pay and the long-term positive impacts of the early learning experience on a child's outcomes.³³ Paying our early education workforce a wage that offers them economic stability, and that is on par with what they would receive teaching in public schools, is a quality issue, an investment in our city's future, and an important step toward racial justice. It is a win for everyone it will reach—child care programs, teachers, children, parents, and the businesses who employ them.

Recommendations

Address the pay and benefit disparities still existing between Community Based Organizations and Public Schools

The salary parity agreement for certified teachers was an immensely important first step. Now it is time to address pay equity issues for directors, and other staff in community based Pre-K programs who did not receive meaningful raises in their base pay as part of the 2019 agreement.

In fact, many directors now earn less than they would make as a teacher in a public school and by one estimate, the pay gap between an assistant teacher with a bachelor's degree and a certified teacher with a bachelor's will be over \$24,000 by 2022, which is close to three times the difference that existed prior to 2014.³⁴

Meanwhile, certified teachers in Extended Day / Extended Year programs continue to work more hours and days than their counterparts in public schools, while receiving fewer benefits and far more modest pay increases, which widens pay disparities with their public school counterparts over time. These pay and benefit disparities must be addressed.

Fund Longevity Increases at Parity with DOE Teachers

The historic salary parity agreement only gets teachers in community based organizations up to the level of the *starting* salary of teachers in public schools. For experienced teachers, the differences remain stark. An early childhood educator with 30 years experience could earn only 53% of what her colleague in a public school with the same level of experience would. The city should fund community based organizations to provide increased salaries for longevity on par with salary increases in public schools.

Support uncertified lead teachers in obtaining certification

The city should develop a comprehensive scholarship program to support all early education teachers in community based organizations working toward certification. Half of the lead teachers in CBO pre-K programs are not certified, or are “study plan” teachers. The salary parity agreement provides a powerful financial incentive for these teachers to obtain certification. Scholarships like the Early Childhood Career Ladder program, which the Day Care Council of New York and DC 37 jointly manage for unionized teachers, are an important start in assisting teachers in reaching their certification. But funding is not enough to meet demand and many teachers looking for scholarships are turned away. Efforts like this should be expanded, and should cover not just tuition, but transportation, books and state exam fees, which add up to a hardship for students who make near-minimum wage.

Recommendations

The city should also find creative ways to acknowledge and award the years of experience that teachers on study plans have by translating those years into college credits for life experience. This type of arrangement has precedence: The College Board’s College-Level Examination Program, which is accepted at thousands of colleges and universities across the country, including some CUNY schools, awards college credits to students who can demonstrate their work experience knowledge through taking an exam. New York State’s Education Department should work with local universities to develop a similar program that allows early childhood teachers to convert their experience into credits.

Support the career advancement of assistant teachers

To support assistant teachers in career advancement, the pay steps between assistant teacher and certified lead teacher should be raised. This will provide financial incentives for assistant teachers to reach professional benchmarks, ultimately creating a pipeline of lead teachers from within the existing early childhood workforce.

Increase the rate paid to providers caring for babies and toddlers receiving subsidized care and provide financial incentives for professional advancement

The rates paid to infant and toddler teachers are among the lowest in the early childhood workforce, making it difficult for programs to recruit and retain teachers for our city’s youngest residents. High-quality care for infants and toddlers depends on nurturing and responsive interactions with a consistent caregiver. That, in turn, requires low child-to-caregiver ratios, low turnover among providers and their assistants, and ample time and resources for caregivers to focus on children. None of this can be accomplished cheaply. Yet for the very reason that infants require high levels of staffing, as specified by State guidelines, providers who specialize in infants make less overall income.

Raising the rate for programs that focus on the city’s youngest children and offering bonus pay for home-based programs caring for infants, as is being piloted in some states, would help to offset this financial penalty and preserve the city’s dwindling supply of affordable infant and toddler care.

To strengthen the quality of infant and toddler care, the city must support and incentivize the professional development of infant and toddler teachers, including coaching. To attach pay to professional benchmarks—such as attaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential—the city could look to models such as the Child Care WAGE\$ Initiative (WAGE\$) in North Carolina, which offers salary supplements to child care providers based on the provider’s level of education.

Recommendations

For the longer term, like many others in the field, we recommend conducting a cost estimation study, which would calculate reimbursement rates for child care that would both support quality and provide a viable wage for the early childhood workforce. Such a study would determine wage standards for teachers and providers that link attainment of credentials or quality benchmarks to pay increases. Federal law allows states to use this alternative to the currently used market-based formula to determine reimbursement for subsidized child care, and several states are using this new approach. New York State has laid the groundwork to do so as well.³⁵

Achieve Salary Parity for Teachers, Directors and Staff Working in Preschool Special Education Classes

Children with disabilities have a right to Preschool Special Education classes which offer smaller class sizes and services to specifically address their needs. Teachers working in these programs, most of which are operated by community based organizations, were not part of the 2019 salary parity agreement which improved salaries for teachers in most other contracted early childhood programs in the City. New York City must include teachers in Preschool Special Education programs in its path to parity for early childhood educators.³⁶

Assist home-based providers in accessing professional development, and raise the reimbursement rate paid to family child care providers that meet quality benchmarks

Home-based child care programs are, on average, the lowest paid component of the early education system, and until recently have been almost entirely overlooked by professional development efforts. Unlike many other states, in New York these programs do not receive financial incentives for quality improvement. And yet, New York City is leaning more heavily on home-based child care programs than ever before. These small programs are where most licensed capacity for infants and toddlers is expected to grow in the next few years, and they are also being enlisted to operate 3-K programs.

But salary parity did not apply to these home-based programs, not even those offering 3-K. This threatens to perpetuate a multi-tiered 3-K system, whereby children in home-based 3-K programs will be taught in programs that are far less resourced than those in centers or schools.

New York City must move to fully fund home based child care programs and eliminate the disparities threatening to perpetuate a multi-tiered 3-K system.

Conclusion

For New York City to reopen, and recover from the health and economic devastation of COVID-19, the City must act boldly and swiftly to support the unsung heroes teaching and caring for the youngest New Yorkers. For too long, this mostly female workforce has faced low wages and inadequate support due to longstanding racial and gender injustices. But the pandemic has laid bare that early childhood workers—teachers, staff and directors— are all essential workers, and are irreplaceable.

As a new administration works to lead New York City out of the devastation of COVID-19, investing deeply and boldly in the early childhood workforce will jumpstart the City’s economic growth by securing the stability of the industry that supports all other industries. It will be an investment in many of the communities hardest hit by the pandemic and show that New York City can recover from a crisis while addressing long standing injustices at the same time. Investing in the early childhood workforce will send a powerful message to those who cared for New York City’s children while their parents cared for other New Yorkers during the pandemic- you are seen, valued, and are indeed essential.

Most importantly, investing in the early childhood workforce will be an investment in New York City’s children, where such an investment has the largest and most powerful impact. It will set up a generation of children, some born during the pandemic or experienced their first years in isolation due to social distancing requirements, to gain the socialization and skills they need to succeed when they enter school and throughout their lives.

Appendix

New York City’s early education landscape and workforce have experienced major shifts over the last decade. Below we explain the major transitions that have recently shaped the landscape.

The 2012 EarlyLearn Reform: In 2012, the City undertook a comprehensive new procurement of its child care system with the goal of aligning standards between Head Start and child care with the goal of offering the family support services required under Federal Head Start contracts with the longer day of services offered in centers which used Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds (CCDBG).

However, despite the exciting vision, EarlyLearn was consistently underfunded and salaries in particular did not rise to meet the growing expectations of teachers, staff and directors. Many leading community based organizations came to view EarlyLearn as a series of unfunded mandates. Many EarlyLearn programs struggled to retain staff, particularly before the 2019 Salary Parity agreement. In family child care, evidence suggests that these mandates led to attrition among many providers who spoke English as a second language, and who struggled with the new documentation requirements.

The 2014 Expansion of Pre-K for All: Mayor Bill de Blasio’s free universal preschool program is the most significant accomplishment during his time as mayor, saving families tens of thousands of dollars and providing quality programs to over 60,000 four-year olds each year.

However, the rapid expansion of Pre-K for All highlighted the disparities between Pre-K teachers in public schools and those in the community based child care programs, who had lower starting salaries, did not receive pay increases for seniority and were awarded fewer benefits, despite typically working a longer day and year. Moreover, the teachers in these programs were more likely to be women of color than those in the higher-paid school-based Pre-K programs, raising troubling issues of racial inequities.

Community based programs reported that the pay disparity was leading to a mass exodus of their certified teachers from their programs to school-based programs. Despite these challenges, DOE evaluations found quality in the community based programs—which provided over 50% of the Pre-K capacity—was, on average, stronger than that in the school settings.

Similarly, Pre-K for All’s growth destabilized the business model of many family child care providers. With more preschoolers in school or center-based settings, family child care providers were forced to restructure to primarily serve infants and toddlers—a precarious business model due to the high, costly staffing requirements for this age group.

The Launch of 3-K for All in 2018, as DOE Prepares to Assume Responsibility for the City’s Subsidized Early Education System: In 2018 Mayor de Blasio announced a restructuring of the early childhood education system which moved contracted child care centers and family child care networks from the Administration for Children’s Services to the Department of Education. At the same time, he an-

Appendix

nounced the launch of 3-K for All which offered school day and school year child care to any 3-year-old child in New York City. 3-K for All began in two school districts and expanded to be in every school district in the city by September 2021, although only a few districts have expanded towards universal access. 3-K for All is offered in community based-organizations, public schools and in family child care homes.

Additionally, the DOE released requests for proposals to re-procure all center-based child care, Pre-K for All, 3-K for All and Head Start programs as well as contracted Family Child Care Networks. New contracts for Family Child Care Networks started in July 2020 and new contracts for center-based programs instarted in July 2021. DOE has also released two additioinal requestes for proposals to expand 3-K for All programs in select school districts starting September 2022.

2019 Salary Parity Victory: After years of advocacy from the Campaign for Children and leaders in the field, the city agreed to fund two collective bargaining agreements between the Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) and District Council (DC) 37 Local 205, and the Head Start Sponsoring Board and DC37 Local 95. Under these agreements, the city agreed to fund community based organizations to pay teachers a substantial pay raise that builds towards parity with the starting salaries of public school teachers. This was an enormous first step toward addressing the many challenges facing one portion of the city’s early childhood workforce, and provides a financial incentive for other teachers to achieve certification. Still, the significant challenges of low pay and barriers to career advancement for the early childhood workforce as a whole remain.

The 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic: When child care centers were closed to curb the spread of COVID-19 last spring, many private programs lost their paying families. When the NYC Board of Health permitted centers to reopen in July 2020 almost all faced low enrollment as parents kept their children home for reasons of safety, as well as unemployment. Compounded with added costs to meet new safety requirements, many programs in New York and across the nation have found themselves pushed into financial crisis. As previously stated, analysis of data provided to the Day Care Council of New York from the City’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found that twice as many child care centers closed this year than were newly permitted. There have also been layoffs reported throughout the sector: nationwide, employment in child care was down by 16 percent in February compared with a year ago. By comparison, overall employment fell by 6 percent in that same time, according to *The New York Times*.

With many experienced teachers now seeking work outside of the child care sector, experts say it may be difficult for the child care programs to ramp up operations when the demand for their services returns in full. This, in turn, can slow parents’ full return to the workforce and the city’s economic recovery.

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Open Door Associates, Inc.
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Police Athletic League
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DAY CARE COUNCIL OF NEW YORK was founded in 1948 to advocate for the continuation of child care programs that had enabled mothers to enter the workforce during World War II. The Day Care Council of New York continues to advocate for its membership of organizations that operate approximately 200 child care programs in New York City. Many of these private nonprofit organizations are under contract with the New York City Department of Education to provide education and care to infants, toddlers, and young children aged 2.6 to 4 years old. The Council and its members are committed to programs and services that promote the sound growth and development of children and their families necessary for a healthy society.

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