



**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York
At the Joint Legislative Hearing on Human Services
Honorable Helene Weinstein, Chair, Assembly Committee on Ways & Means
Honorable Liz Krueger, Chair, Senate Committee on Finance
Honorable Andrew Hevesi, Chair Assembly Committee on Children and Families
Honorable Jabari Brisport, Chair, Senate Committee on Children and Families
Honorable Maritza Davila, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services
Honorable Roxanne J. Persaud, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Services
Honorable Harry Bronson, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging
Honorable Rachel May, Chair, Senate Committee on Aging**

On Early Care and Education in the FY 2023-2024 New York State Budget

Prepared by Gregory Brender, Chief Policy & Innovation Officer

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The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early childhood provider organizations in New York City. DCCNY supports its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field at large through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, professional development and training for early childhood educators, directors, and staff, and referral services for parents looking to find child care. DCCNY member organizations provide early care and education at over 200 sites in neighborhoods across all five boroughs.

DCCNY envisions a future where all children, regardless of their family's wealth or the zip code in which they are born, have access to high-quality early care and education that meets their family's needs and always offers fair and equitable compensation to the hardworking teachers, staff, and directors who provide early childhood education.

We are at an inflection point for New York's early childhood education system. The actions that State and local governments take this year may determine whether New York moves forward towards universal access to child care or whether we see the closure of child care programs and a deepening crisis for parents needing child care.

Last year, the State made historic investments in early care and education, which increased eligibility, funded stabilization grants which supported providers recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and provided funding to seed new child care programs

in child care deserts.

More recently, Governor Hochul made child care a priority of her State of the State address in which she proposed:

- Streamlining and centralizing child care enrollment.
- Increasing eligibility for child care assistance from 300% of Federal Poverty Guidelines to 85% of median income. This would increase eligibility for a family of four from \$83,250 to \$93,200.
- Capping co-pays at 1% of family income above Federal Poverty
- Guidelines Removing requirements that families seeking child care assistance must prove their income if they are enrolled in specific other means-tested programs.
- Piloting new initiatives such as business navigators and supports to develop employer-supported child care programs.

While last year's investments and this year's proposals are crucial, they do not go far enough. New York's recovery from the pandemic and its continued growth depends upon the strength of its early care and education systems to both support parents going to work and to educate children. Far too many providers continue to struggle to recover from the pandemic, and too many New York families cannot afford a child care program that meets their needs.

Now is the time for state and local governments to invest boldly to develop universal child care in New York so that all families can access high-quality education for their young children!

In alignment with our partners in the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, DCCNY urges the State to adopt the following measures in its FY 2024 budget.

Invest in the early childhood workforce and providers so they have the resources they need to serve the state's diverse families and communities

- Establish a short-term workforce compensation fund to raise median child care worker pay by at least \$12,500 per year.
- Establish health insurance premium support programs for child care workers as their income rises above Medicaid eligibility levels.
- Enact legislation that would commit New York State to transition to a new provider reimbursement methodology and pay scale by 2025.
- Provide a monthly per-child supplement for non-traditional hour care and a start-up grant program for providers seeking to offer non-traditional hour care.
- Increase rates for legally-exempt child care providers to 80% of the family child care rate and to 90% for providers who are eligible for the enhanced

rate.

Help more New Yorkers access child care

- Extend child care assistance program eligibility to undocumented children statewide. New York City has recently launched Promise NYC which provides funding for undocumented children to receive child care.
- Adopt categorical child care assistance eligibility for families enrolled in other public assistance programs (SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, etc.) and for children with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or in families receiving preventive services.

Break down unnecessary barriers preventing the child care system from working for families and providers

- Enact presumptive eligibility so families do not need to wait for paperwork processing to begin receiving assistance.
- Develop an online application, eligibility determination and recertification, and provider payment processes.
- Implement automatic market rate increases and decouple subsidy payment rates from private pay fees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with the State Legislature to achieve a budget that puts New York on the path toward Universal Child Care!