



**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York  
Before the New York City Council  
Committee on Women and Gender Equity  
Honorable Tiffany Caban, Chair  
And the Committee on Immigration  
Honorable Shahana Hanif, Chair  
At the Oversight Hearing on Promise NYC  
And Immigrants' Access to Child Care**

**June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Presented by Gregory Brender, Chief Policy and Innovation Officer**

Thank you Chairs Caban and Hanif and the members of the Committees on Women and Gender Equity and Immigration for the opportunity to testify.

The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early care and education providers across New York City. DCCNY sees a future where all children have access to quality early childhood education and where early childhood providers and their workforce have the tools and resources necessary to offer the highest quality early childhood education.

DCCNY supports its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field a 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.

Most DCCNY member organizations operate with contracts with the New York City Department of Education (DOE), while a smaller portion work with federally funded Head Start contracts or through private funding. DCCNY member organizations seek to provide quality early care and education services to New York's children and families across all five boroughs. DCCNY member organizations employ over 4,000 New Yorkers— the majority of whom are Black and Brown women.

Day Care Council of New York is an active member of Campaign for and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care.

As providers of early childhood education DCCNY's member organizations know that all children benefit from the education and socialization that quality early care and education programs provide. Yet, too many young children are unable to access these crucial services because of either their immigration status or their family's financial situation.

We make the following recommendations to ensure more immigrant families can access high-quality early care and education.

### **1. Restore Promise NYC at \$20 million**

Promise NYC was one among the most important new investments that the City made in its FY 2023 Budget. Promise NYC expands access to Child Care Assistance to families who continue to be denied access due to discriminatory requirements.

Promise NYC funded child care for families who otherwise would have been denied and partnered with community based organizations to ensure that families could access the funding. It is not just an important investment but also a statement of the City's values showing a commitment to ending discrimination and expanding access to education.

As Mayor Adams said,

Navigating obstacles in a new city and a new country are tough, and coupling those issues with a lack of childcare can prevent parents and families from achieving the dream they so desperately set out to achieve. By launching Promise NYC, we are alleviating the stress from those concerns, supporting children and families, and creating a fairer city for all New Yorkers.”<sup>1</sup>

DCCNY was disappointed that this important program was eliminated in the Mayor's Executive Budget. We urge Promise NYC to be restored and baselined at \$20 million.

### **2. Allow DOE-Contracted Community- Based Organizations to directly enroll families.**

Many immigrant families, including mixed-status families where parents are undocumented but their children are United States Citizens by virtue of having been born in the United States, are eligible for child care assistance. Many may be concerned about interacting with a government agency including DOE and ACS.

However, local community based early childhood providers have strong connections to the neighborhoods they serve. The City should leverage these strong relationships to ensure that families are able to quickly access the child care programs in which they

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/909-22/mayor-adams-rolls-out-promise-nyc-provide-childcare-assistance-low-income-families-with>

want to enroll their children.

By allowing community based organizations to directly enroll eligible families, the City can alleviate the concerns of parents who may have fears of interacting with government agencies.

### **3. Take Immediate Action to Stabilize New York City's early childhood education providers**

New York City's Early Care and Education Providers are struggling to keep their doors open due to a crisis of late payments from DOE. The City must in this budget take immediate steps to ensure

- Ensuring all contracted CBO providers are made whole for their FY 2022 and FY 2023 payments
- Full funding of the 3-K program and restoration to the timeline expansion to universality.
- Converting open 3-K school-day/year seats to extended-day/year seats, beginning by investing \$15 million in a pilot program to convert 1,000 seats.
- Funding a new labor contract that puts community based organization (CBO) early care and education teachers, directors and support staff at parity with their DOE counterparts. This includes factoring in longevity when determining salary increases and setting a wage floor of \$25/hour for all support staff.

We are also including in our testimony a statement from Empire State Campaign for Child Care which includes actions that New York State must take to expand access to child care for immigrant families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions and can be reached at [gbrender@dccnyinc.org](mailto:gbrender@dccnyinc.org).



**Testimony of Empire State Campaign for Child Care  
Before the New York City Council  
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The Empire State Campaign for Child Care is a Statewide Campaign fighting for a high-quality, free, equitable and universal child care system that meets the needs of all children and families and pays child care programs the true cost of care with a thriving wage and benefits.

With the creation of Promise NYC, New York City acted where New York State failed to. Promise NYC provides child care assistance to eligible families without discriminating on the basis of the child's documentation status. All New York's children should have access to high-quality early care and education. Promise NYC is an important step in that direction and a meaningful recognition that children should not be excluded from early care and education because of their immigration status.

**Empire State Campaign for Child Care urges New York City to restore and baseline Promise NYC at \$20 million.**

In the FY 2023 budget, the Mayor and City Council allocated \$10 million to allow for child care assistance to immigrant families, including those whose children are without immigration status. The vouchers were distributed by community-based organizations to safeguard against any immigration issues and reached 600. The program was successful enough that 730 families applied between the program's January launch and March 24<sup>th</sup>. The need and demand are clearly there, and if we are serious about ensuring the health and safety of our children and our economy, we must provide access to child care to all children, regardless of immigration status.

New York State must also take action to end the exclusion of children from child care assistance due solely to their immigration status. Among those families left without access to assistance are families lawfully present, along with many of the state's essential workers upon whom New York relied so heavily during the pandemic. Crucially, the recently enacted 2023-24 New York State budget contains a small pilot program to help the families of children who are currently excluded due to their immigration status access child care using state-only funds. These measures will make a tangible difference in the lives of children and families but will reach very few children.

Looking ahead, New York State and New York City should be acting without delay to ensure that immigration status is not a factor in determining eligibility for child care assistance for any New York child. There are a number of ways New York leaders could ensure equitable access for all. Restrictions on the use of federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds for undocumented families do not apply to child care programs that are subject to educational standards, including settings in community-based child care and Pre-kindergarten programs. This exemption has already been broadly applied by at least one other state to ensure broad access to pre-K and child care for that state's children.

New York State and local governments throughout the State should also work to expand state and locally-funded programs like Promise NYC and New York State's pilot programs to ensure no otherwise eligible child is excluded from child care solely due to immigration status.

**The Empire State Campaign for Child Care urges New York leaders to act swiftly and boldly to ensure that all the state's children have equitable access to high-quality child care without regard to immigration status.**