



**Statement of Tara N. Gardner, Executive Director of Day Care Council of New York
On Mayor Adams' FY 2025 Executive Budget Proposal**

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At today's announcement of his Executive Budget, Mayor Adams repeated that every child who wants a seat in an early childhood education program will get one. We acknowledge and appreciate the \$92 million restoration of sunseting Federal funds for 3-K expansion and \$56 million in Preschool Special Education funding. However, these restorations exist within a larger context of immense scale-backs of Pre-K For All programs, including a three-year succession of \$170 million PEGS to Pre-K and 3-K programs, which are slated to take effect in the upcoming fiscal year. Today's budget announcement represents continued inaction to address the workforce shortage caused by the low wages of teachers, directors, and staff in child care programs.

Without further investments in the child care system, the City will not be able to fulfill the Mayor's crucial promise. Notably, while Mayor Adams baselined a number of critical education programs, he implemented single-year funding in his proposed \$92 million for Pre-K restoration. One year of funding—particularly in the context of continued \$170 million cuts year after year—places early care and education providers in a precarious financial position. Families need stable early childhood education programs, and this one-year investment falls short of the needs of providers and families alike.

The Executive Budget remains a perilous proposal for New York City's early childhood education system. It does not take action to address the workforce crisis that early childhood programs face. Teachers, staff, and directors in community-based child care programs are paid significantly less than their counterparts in public schools. The City must use this budget to fund a labor agreement that closes that gap.

It is also imperative that the Mayor hold to the \$5 million investment in enrollment marketing he announced in his press conference on April 19, 2024. The Mayor down-graded this announced investment to \$3.5 million in his FY25 budget announcement on April 24, 2024. DCCNY firmly

believes that increasing accessibility must involve a significant investment in multilingual marketing to increase awareness of available child care programs. Families cannot obtain early childhood education seats if they do not know they exist.

Early childhood educators at community-based organizations continue to struggle to provide for their own families. Many subsist on poverty-level wages. If we care about outcomes for children and families, we must invest in our early childhood education workforce. The budget must take into account the need for true salary parity as one of the driving factors necessary to provide high-quality, accessible education for our city's children.

DCCNY looks forward to continuing our work with City leaders, including the Mayor and City Council, to realize an enacted budget that makes needed investments in early childhood education and NYC's early childhood education workforce.

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