



**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Children and Youth
Honorable Althea Stevens, Chair
At the FY 2026 Executive Budget Hearing**

**Prepared by Gregory Brender, Chief Policy and Innovation Officer and
Shelby Lohr Ph.D., Senior Policy Analyst**

May 19th, 2025

Thank you Chair Stevens and members of the City Council Committee on Children and Youth for the opportunity to testify. This month, between 4,000 and 6,000 families in New York City are being put on waitlists for Child Care Assistance. We appreciate the Committee's urgent attention to this crisis and your engagement with providers and families.

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 at large through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, professional development and training for the early childhood workforce, 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 child care vouchers issued by ACS and HRA, 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.

Child Care Vouchers

On May 5th, the Administration for Children's Services closed new applications for families with low incomes seeking vouchers for child care assistance. ACS estimates that between 4,000 and 6,000 families each month will not have access to child care assistance due to this action.

This will have a devastating impact on parents, children, child care providers, and communities. The families losing access are families who do not qualify for public assistance and have at least one parent working. Many cannot afford child care on their own and will be unable to keep working without access to child care.

And child care providers are rightly concerned about their ability to keep their doors open and continue serving families.

In February, DCCNY and other advocates were informed that the NYC ACS Child Care voucher program faced a nearly \$1 billion funding shortfall. DCCNY and our advocacy colleagues immediately engaged countless state legislators to encourage state investments to make up this funding gap. The City Council also sprang into action with 47 of the 49 sitting City Councilmembers signing a letter to State leaders to invest in the Child Care Assistance Program in order to close this gap.

This led to the State including an additional \$400 million for the Child Care Assistance Program in its FY 2026 budget. Of this \$400 million, \$350 million is designated specifically for New York City. The State has also required that New York match these funds and invest at least \$328 million of its own funds into the Child Care Assistance Program.

While the Mayor's Executive Budget makes several important investments in early childhood education, including baselining funding for 3-K and Preschool Special Education, it does not include any additional investment in the Child Care Assistance Program.

Without an increased City investment, ACS will continue to turn eligible families away from child care at the same time that the City is not drawing down State funds allocated expressly for this purpose.

DCCNY calls on the city to invest \$350 million into the child care assistance program. Through the matching funds structure, the New York City voucher program could potentially obtain \$700 million in aid. While this still falls short of the \$900+ million in projected need for the next fiscal year, this contribution would contribute greatly toward resolving the issue and ensuring families have access to affordable care.

Promise NYC

DCCNY supports the City Council's proposal to expand and re-envision Promise NYC to serve 3,500 infants and toddlers as part of a path to a universal child care system in

New York City.

New York City is facing a shortage of affordable early childhood education services for infants and toddlers and many New York families are excluded from the current services available for the youngest children. Under the City Council's plan, Promise NYC vouchers would become available without eligibility requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions and can be reached at gbrender@dccnyinc.org