



THE LEGISLATURE  
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**New York State Legislators call on Governor Cuomo to  
Effectively Allocate Funds from the  
Consolidated Appropriations Act**

**\*\*\*Press Release\*\*\***

**ALBANY, NY** - New York State legislators from across the state joined childcare advocates this Tuesday, 2/23/2021, to call on Governor Cuomo to effectively and expeditiously release \$469 million in childcare funding, which the state received from the federal government after the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) on December 27, 2020.

The topic of childcare has been a point of focus for legislators since New York implemented its lockdown measures on March 22, 2020. In this time, 25% of childcare programs and 70% of centers for school-aged children have closed their doors, and many more are currently facing financial strain.

The first form of relief New York received with regards to childcare came from the federal CARES Act, which allocated \$169 million to New York to bolster the state's childcare system. After direct correspondence with the Governor's office and a series of press events that offered recommendations for this funding, \$128 million of New York's CARES appropriation for childcare remains unspent.

New York State is now required to submit the official plan for its CAA childcare funding to the federal government by this Thursday, February 25, 2021. Drawing on past inefficiencies, advocates and legislators urged Governor Cuomo to implement recommendations crafted by childcare providers in order to ensure a swift and effective rollout of the funding.

Attendees at the press conference requested that New York State:

1. support families receiving childcare subsidies and stabilize providers through the existing subsidy system.
2. offer stabilization grants and other relief to keep childcare providers operational.

3. grant the majority of funds to the state's 58 social services districts, relying upon the existing childcare subsidy structure to administer funds.
4. provide financial support for the hiring of employees and acquisition of resources to ensure a smooth release of this funding.
5. gather input from a group of representative stakeholders, including CCR&R providers, providers representing all childcare modalities, union representatives, and parent representatives, **prior** to the rollout of programs, in order to provide problem-solving opportunities and ensure programs run as intended.

**Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Assembly Committee on Children & Families**

**(D - District 28) said,** “The funds coming from the Consolidated Appropriations Act present us with a once in a generation opportunity to fix fundamental flaws in our childcare system. If used correctly, families and providers will receive immediate assistance in the short-term, and in the long-term we will expand access to childcare and give providers a chance to better utilize our resources. I am incredibly grateful for the show of support from my colleagues, but more importantly, I am thankful to the advocates and providers who brought these recommendations to the forefront, and who have given their absolute all to supporting children and families throughout New York.”

**Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services**

**(D - District 67) said,** “Ensuring that New Yorkers have access to safe and affordable childcare will enable families and our economy to more quickly achieve a post-COVID recovery. New York’s childcare providers have been starved of desperately needed capital, and as a result, families are struggling to cobble together care. The State must use federal funds available through the CAA to stabilize childcare providers by offering emergency grants and other relief and utilizing the social services districts to quickly administer the funding. I thank Assemblymember Hevesi for raising these important issues, and will continue to work with him to ensure that available federal funding is dispersed quickly and efficiently.”

**Assemblymember Jennifer Lunsford (D - District 135) said,** “We had a childcare crisis before this pandemic, but COVID-19 has cast those issue into sharp relief. We have a unique opportunity to meet this moment by using these federal dollars to address long standing inequities and to make quality childcare affordable and accessible for our hardworking families. The time to act is now.”

**Assemblymember Sarah Clark (D - District 136) said,** “The childcare ecosystem was facing many challenges before COVID-19 hit. We can no longer ignore the crisis anymore, we must act now. These federal relief dollars available through the Consolidated Appropriations Act give New York the chance to really transform our system into a model for the country. We have a real opportunity to build a childcare system that is just, accessible, and affordable for all. If invested

properly this funding can ensure our families, providers and childcare workers have what they need. It is time to save NY childcare.”

**Assemblymember John T. McDonald III (D - District 108) said,** "Funding for childcare is vital to help address the disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on working women and to assist childcare providers who were already struggling before the pandemic to retain staff and have adequate funding to continue to provide these important services. I join with my colleagues in calling for these funds to be distributed as efficiently and as expeditiously as possible."

**Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, Chair, Legislative Commission on Skills Development and Career Education (D - District 113), said:** “Childcare is infrastructure for our economy. With so many childcare centers closing through the pandemic, parents have turned to informal childcare networks which grow increasingly strained as businesses bring workers back. New York State must invest in building out affordable childcare resources if we are to build our economy back better. The Federal dollars that have been received through the CARES Act need to be released. A plan must be established, with the input of industry stakeholders and policy experts, that invests these and future dollars to have the maximum impact and benefit.”

**Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr. (D - District 1) said,** “New York families and the child care sector are facing unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care is crucial for the well-being of parents, children and our economy especially amid the current public health crisis. The lack of child care affects all of us. Our kids deserve better. The time to act is now. Families need our help and the funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act are necessary to help strengthen the child care sector and to ensure access to this essential service.”

**Assemblyman Steven Otis (D - District 91) said,** "The pandemic has revealed how important childcare is to New York families. Many of the childcare providers are struggling with the financial pressures felt by many not-for-profits. We need to move funds dedicated to these child care programs so they can survive the pandemic and be there for families."

**Assemblyman Bill Conrad (D - District 140) said,** "The equitable availability of skilled childcare is a building block of a strong economy. If we are to welcome parents back to the workforce, a necessary step in the rebuilding of a post-pandemic New York, they must have access to childcare. I applaud my Assembly colleagues for approaching this junction as an opportunity to fix the system on which so many of us rely. This advocacy doesn't stop at the release of federal dollars - it also includes a plan for proper administration of the funding, to ensure long-term maintenance of a childcare system that will better serve the families that need it the most."

**Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre (D - District 11) said,** "The flaws in our child care system are among the many societal inequities which have been brought to light during the COVID-19 pandemic, but with these federal stimulus funds we have a tremendous opportunity to enlist the input of families and providers to enact long-lasting remedies that will ensure child care is truly accessible to all communities throughout New York State. New York's economy will only move forward to the extent that we strengthen our ability to deliver child care services to children and families across our state, and I am proud to stand with my colleagues and all of the advocates who have continued to fight tooth and nail to ensure that federal and state child care funding is earmarked appropriately and expeditiously to help meet this challenge."

**Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D - District 106) said,** "New York State's critical caregiving needs have only been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic -- whether childcare, long term care or eldercare. I stand with my colleagues and our constituents in urging the Governor to release the approximately \$469 million dollars in federally-allocated funding to hardworking childcare providers across the State. It is time for New York State to recognize and address the statewide crisis across the caregiving continuum."

**Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas (D - District 34) said,** "The funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act are an opportunity to truly invest in a sector that families and children depend on as a lifeline. We need the Office of Children and Family Services to utilize these funds and funds that may come later in the Spring to support long-term strategies to improve childcare and the workforce of women and women of color that support it. The lives of children have been disrupted as programs have shut down and one in four women have left the workforce as a result of not having childcare. No more short-term fixes. We can get this right and support our communities if we listen to service providers and advocates. Let's do that and bring stability back to households."

**Assemblymember Chris Burdick (D - District 93) said,** "Safe and high-quality child care is essential to pulling the economy out of the pandemic-induced recession. It must be available to families regardless of income especially those who have the greatest difficulty affording it. Let's get New York back to work; let's invest the \$485 million of NYS childcare funding, implement the Governor's Child Care Task Force recommendations and promptly put the stimulus package child care funds into the economy."

**Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes (D - District 51) said,** "Government can only serve the people when people can easily access its services. Now that \$469m in new Federal funding is available to support childcare, the Governor must ensure that the plan for administering this funding is put together in conjunction with childcare providers, policy experts and community members. As we have already seen with Federal funding, our state operations lack the capacity to administer this funding to all who need it. We must intentionally prioritize simplicity,

universality, accessibility and outreach in the plan for this funding. Anything short of this fails to deliver for our communities.”

**Assemblymember Amy Paulin (D - District 88) said,** “Child care is one of the top household expenses. Parents shouldn’t have to choose between quality child care, or paying rent and putting food on their table. Federal funds have been granted to New York State for the purpose of helping our families. These funds must be allocated swiftly. Our economy, parents’ employment stability and children’s well-being depends on it.”

**Assemblywoman Judy Griffin (D - District 21) said,** "Child Care is essential to a thriving economy so today I join with my colleagues in imploring Governor Cuomo to prioritize these funds to help the millions of families with young children and providers in need. This is a key way to kick-start our economy."

**Assemblyman Billy D. Jones (D - District 115) said,** "COVID-19 has forced some child care providers to close their doors permanently, while other facilities remain open but under immense financial strain. Supporting these services is critical to our economic recovery, as limited access to child care has forced, and will continue to force, many parents to temporarily or permanently leave the workforce. Frustratingly, the \$128 million in federal CARES Act funds allocated for child care has gone unspent. I'm joining my colleagues to call on the Executive to implement the recommendations of child care providers quickly and efficiently to ensure these essential facilities can remain open."

**Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon (D - District 52) said,** “Access to affordable child care is critical not only to New York’s economic recovery, but essential for the future of our families, children, and caregivers. New York currently has a unique opportunity to utilize federal funds to create a transformative child care plan that is more equitable and comprehensive and meets the needs of working families. I’m thankful to the New York’s child care providers and policy experts for their recommendations and I join Assemblymember Hevesi and Senator Brisport in the call to swiftly implement these bold initiatives.”

**Assemblyman Joe DeStefano (R - District 3) said,** “Funds allocated for childcare must be spent efficiently and expeditiously; many families depend on it. By demonstrating that these monies are used as intended, we let Congress know that the investment in New York is worthy and sets the stage for us to receive additional stimulus funding.”

**Senator Dan Stec, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Children & Families (R - District 45) said,** “The social and emotional impact of the COVID crisis has been significant for all children but very dramatic for some, especially those in challenging home

situations. The sooner this money reaches our communities and can be put to work for our children, as intended, the better.”

**Senator George Borrello (R - District 57) said,** “The challenges of the pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of our existing childcare system. Even as many working parents found themselves desperate for quality care due to school closures, they were confronted with a shortage of options as many under-resourced providers had to close their doors at the beginning of the crisis. The federal funds allocated to New York State are critically needed, not only for short-term relief, but as a long-term investment towards expanding the reach and resiliency of our childcare system. This is a goal that will benefit both our families and our economy.”

**Senator Sue Serino (R - District 41) said,** “As a former childcare provider myself, and as someone who spent a portion of my life as a working, single mom, I understand first-hand how challenging it can be to access and afford quality childcare. We have a major opportunity before us to utilize these funds to fix critical flaws, greatly expand access to childcare and ensure providers have an opportunity to better utilize our resources. In order to get parents back into the workforce, we have to act swiftly to make this a top priority. I thank Assemblyman Hevesi for putting a spotlight on this important issue and for bringing this bipartisan coalition together to help give childcare access the attention it deserves.”

**Tim Hathaway, Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse NY, said,** “With \$469 million in child care stimulus funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, NYS has an unprecedented opportunity to not only help shore up child care programs and support essential providers in the short-term, but to also invest in a sustainable and long-term plan to greatly increase access to child care. This time of isolation, stress, economic instability, and competing professional and personal priorities has demonstrated just how important it is that NYS create affordable pathways to care that connect children to nurturing adults.”

**Beth Starks, founder and Executive Director of Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center, Assistant Professor and Early Childhood Education Coordinator at Jamestown Community College, and member of the Governor’s Child Care Availability Task Force said,** “We cannot look at supporting childcare as a ‘subsidy’. It is truly an investment in economic development and infrastructure. We cannot rebuild our economy without an investment in something as critical as child care. Child care is one of the indicators of a robust economy. NYS has an opportunity to leverage federal funding to become a leader in Early Childhood Education. It is imperative that this funding be used swiftly and strategically.”

**Andrea Anthony, Executive Director, Day Care Council of New York, Inc, said,** “New York cannot recover from this pandemic without stabilizing and strengthening child care. The Day Care Council of New York looks forward to working in concert with our State policymakers to ensure federal funding is distributed urgently to child care providers and to the hundreds of families who want to return to the workforce.”

**Pam Wells, President, CSEA/VOICE Local 100A, said,** "There will not be a fair and equal economic recovery unless New Yorkers have access to quality child care programs. Our proposals will assist the child care sector to reopen, stabilize, and stay open."

**Marina Marcou-O'Malley, Policy and Operations Director for the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE), said,** "We really need the governor and the legislative leaders to take bold action in the final budget and include the Empire campaign's plan to spend the federal child care funding. Child care is both essential and the foundation of support for families and in turn, the economy. The plan for the more that \$450 million is sound and it should be part of the budget. Parents, providers, community members, and our legislative champions are standing shoulder to shoulder on child care. The plan must be enacted in the budget."

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