



March 27, 2024

Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

**Re: Child Care Budget Priorities**

Dear Governor Hochul:

Thank you for prioritizing child care as Governor, and throughout your career as an elected official. Under your leadership as Governor, we've achieved historic expansions to child care assistance, making tens of thousands more New York families able to access high-quality child care compared to when you became Governor. In this year's Executive Budget, we applaud the inclusion of significant new state funds to sustain those expansions to child care assistance. Yet, families continue to leave our state, in large part because they cannot afford to live and work here, with child care among those costs driving them away.

There are still many New York families – disproportionately low-income, Black, brown and immigrant families – who face unscalable barriers to accessing child care assistance; among them, families where parents work unpredictable or fluctuating work hours and families whose children are denied care due solely to their immigration status. Another barrier: the severe and growing child care workforce shortage due to low wages is leading to reduced capacity, just as more families are able to afford care.

To ensure the promise of the State's historic expansions to child care assistance is realized, *New York leaders must create a permanent, substantial compensation supplement for the child care workforce in this year's state budget and take aim at barriers that have disproportionately kept low-income, immigrant, and Black and brown New York families from accessing child care assistance* including the state's long-standing and inequitable rule of tying child care assistance to caretakers' exact hours of work.

The undersigned New York parents, child care providers, child and family advocates, and provider networks – all members of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care – call on you to adopt and expand upon the following proposals included in the 2024-25 legislative one-house budget proposals. *Without the inclusion of these proposals, the final budget will perpetuate inequitable barriers that keep too many of the families who need child care assistance most from accessing it, and will cause many members of the state's desperately underpaid child care workforce to experience a pay cut in the coming year.*

- **Adopt the Senate and the Assembly one-house budget proposals to include \$220 million in additional funds for the child care workforce** bringing the total investment in the workforce to \$500 million. This falls short of what the sector needs, but is an important investment.

- **Add language making the workforce compensation support permanent.** The Senate resolution indicates an intention to make the investment in the workforce ongoing. Providers cannot recruit or retain educators with one-time bonuses, and the field cannot begin to create a pipeline of new members to the workforce without the promise of ongoing supplements.
- **Adopt the proposal included in both houses' budgets (but not the Executive) to ensure that the many parents who work variable hours in retail, the trades, the gig economy and restaurants can access child care by ending the state's practice of tying child care assistance to caretakers' exact hours of work (decoupling).** Legislation to end this practice has been passed by the Legislature twice, most recently in December 2023, when it was vetoed with the message that it was an issue that needed to be addressed by the Legislature in the budget. We urge and expect that the final budget will once and for all end this inequitable practice that leaves many of the State's essential workers from being able to access child care assistance.
- **Adopt the proposal included in both houses' budgets (but not the Executive) to increase the rate paid to child care providers for serving families experiencing homelessness, and families that need care during non-traditional hours,** with a preference for the **Assembly budget proposal** requiring all counties to set the rate at a 15% differential.
- **Adopt the Senate's proposal to expand the pilot projects commenced last year to provide scholarships to families needing child care who are ineligible for the statewide child care assistance program due to the child's immigration status, or the episodic nature of the parents' work schedule.**

The passage of a budget that includes these one-house proposals will move New York decisively down the path to creating a strong and sustainable child care system, and a New York that is truly affordable for all the State's families.

Respectfully yours,

**Empire State Campaign for Child Care**

Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.  
 Adirondack Foundation - Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance  
 All Aboard Child Care  
 All Our Kin  
 Alliance for Quality Education  
 Alphabet Kids Playhouse, Inc.  
 B' Above Head Start Peekskill  
 Bright Beginnings  
 Brightside Up, Inc.  
 Child and Family Resources, Inc.  
 Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country  
 Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.  
 Child Care Council of Nassau, Inc.  
 Child Care Council of St. Lawrence  
 Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.  
 Child Care Resource Network  
 Child Care Solutions, Inc.

Child Development Council  
Church in the Highlands Early Childhood Center  
Citizen Action of New York  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF)  
Community Action Planning Council  
Day Care Council of New York  
Doris M Group Family Day Care, Inc.  
EAD Childcare Services  
Early Care & Learning Council  
Early Childhood Alliance Onondaga  
ECE on the Move  
Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center  
Empire Justice Center  
Families Together in New York State  
Family Enrichment Network  
Family of Woodstock, Inc.  
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA)  
First Learning  
Foundry Montessori School  
Gummy Bear Daycare  
Harrison Childrens Center  
Inspire Childcare  
Inspiring Minds Day Care  
Kids B.A.S.E. and the Little School  
League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County  
Little Kings & Queens Daycare, Inc.  
Low Income Investment Fund  
Marks of Excellence  
Moms Rising  
Montessori Children's Center  
Mount Kisco Child Care Center  
Mt. Tremper Outdoor Ministries at Camp Herrlich  
Multicultural Kids Daycare  
My First Step Enrichment Program 2, Inc.  
NY Association for the Education of Young Children  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York State Network for Youth Success  
New York Union Child Care Coalition  
New Yorkers United for Child Care  
Noah's Ark Nursery School  
Oak Lane Child Care Center  
Ossining Children's Center  
Over The Rainbow Learning Center  
Paper Planes Early Learning Center  
Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts  
Play and Grow Daycare, LLC.  
PowHer New York

Prevent Child Abuse New York  
 Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.  
 Purchase Children's Center  
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York  
 Robin Hood  
 Scarborough Presbyterian Children's Center  
 Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy  
 Small World Daycare  
 Southern Adirondack Child Care Network  
 St. Ann's Peas and Karrots Child Care Center  
 Stages Childcare  
 Strawberry Early Childhood Development Center  
 The Children's Agenda  
 The Children's Playhouse  
 The Country Children's Center  
 The Education Trust - New York  
 The Seed Day Care Center  
 ThistleWaithe Learning Center  
 United Neighborhood Houses  
 Unity House of Troy  
 Victorian Teddy Bears  
 Westchester Early Childhood Directors' Association  
 Western New York Child Care Action Team  
 Wiggle Room  
 WNY Women's Foundation  
 World Cup Child Development Center  
 Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)  
 YMCA of Central Northern Westchester  
 YMCA of Rye  
 YWCA Cortland  
 YWCA White Plains and Central Westchester

cc: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senate Majority Leader  
 Assemblymember Carl Heastie, Speaker of the Assembly  
 Senator Jabari Brisport, Chair Senate Children and Families Committee  
 Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi, Chair Assembly Committee for Children and Families  
 Elizabeth Fine, Counsel to the Governor  
 Karen Persichilli Keogh, Secretary to the Governor  
 Lisa Vasnani, Assistant Counsel to the Governor  
 Emily Badalamente, Assistant Secretary to the Governor for Human Services & Mental Hygiene  
 Alyson Grant Tarek, Assistant Secretary for Human Services & Mental Hygiene