



Statement of Empire State Campaign for Child Care
New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Caban, Chair
Hearing on Universal Child Care in New York City
September 21, 2023

Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) is a statewide campaign advocating 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.

Empire State Campaign for Child Care is excited to see the New York City Council considering universal child care. We applaud the City Council for its role in creating Promise NYC which now serves as a model for how access to child care can serve children without regard to their immigration status.

ESCCC has adopted the following principles to guide New York State in moving towards universal access to child care.

1. All children are universally covered.

There is no means testing or income eligibility cutoff and every child is guaranteed access to an accessible, quality child care program in the type of child care setting that their family chooses.

2. Funding for child care is ample, predictable, consistent, and sustained long term.

The NYS government demonstrates its commitment to a universal system by filling any gaps in federal child care funding and supporting identified improvements and enhancements.

3. The system supports and properly funds, at true cost of care, a choice of modalities (center-based, family child care, and legally exempt).

Funding levels are based on licensed capacity and enrollment, and quality and licensing standards. Methods for determining funding will be transparent and funds will be provided directly to providers on a schedule that reflects provider budgetary needs. Training and assistance ensures all providers can successfully utilize required systems, maintain quality standards, and promote their services to local families.

4. The system promotes respect and just compensation for the child care workforce.

Compensation is at parity with K-12, based on comparable experience and responsibilities, across age groups and settings. All providers can access professional pathways with value placed on hands-on experience and years in the field, and more traditional education criteria. Media campaigns consistently promote the workforce as professionals serving a critical health and education function; and the child care sector as key to the overall economy, the economic stability of families, and to the overall well-being and growth of children.

5. Child care is available and accessible in all communities.

Expansion plans continue to address specific community needs and preferences, facilitate participation of family child care, prioritize racial equity, and address previously marginalized regions and communities. Innovative approaches are encouraged.

6. All children, regardless of age or type of setting, have access to quality care.

Quality standards and funding mechanisms address, and actively work to reduce, discrimination based on race, gender, sexual preference, marital status, faith, geography, language and ability, and citizenship status; and encourage responsiveness to different languages, cultures, and values. New resources and training for providers makes expulsion of children from the system rare or non-existent.

7. System evaluation and reform is continuous and centered in quality and equity.

The system of evaluation ensures participation of providers and workforce representatives from different geographies and modalities; parents representing diverse races, genders, and geographies as well as modality preference; those who have faced past barriers to access; policy experts, and legislators.