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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** January 6, 2023

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## **Governor Hochul Signs Legislation That Will Allow Local Social Service Districts to Provide Families with Up To 24 Months of Eligibility for Child Care Assistance**

ALBANY, NY - On December 31st, Governor Kathy Hochul signed a bill that will allow local social service districts the option to provide families with up to 24 months of eligibility for child care assistance, beyond the current 12 month requirement (A.10209-A (Lunsford)/S.9029 (Ramos)).

Current administrative parameters require that families receiving child care assistance recertify their eligibility every 12 months, a time-intensive process that results in delayed payments to child care providers and interruptions in child care. The bill was backed by the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, a statewide campaign of more than 100 organizations, parents, and child care providers.

“Burdensome paperwork or slow processing times should not be a barrier to accessing and keeping the child care assistance that families rely on, nor should it disrupt the consistent, trusting relationships with child care providers that promote children’s wellbeing,” said **Dede Hill, Policy Director for the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, and Executive Committee member of ESCCC**. “Extending the duration of eligibility will prevent interruptions in payment for child care providers, which is critical for the financial stability of these small businesses.”

The Empire State Campaign for Child Care thanks **Senator Jessica Ramos** and **Assemblymember Jen Lunsford**, as well as **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** and **Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie** for their leadership in the passage of this legislation.

“During my statewide child care tour last session, I heard from many providers that the sheer amount of paperwork required to keep children in their seats created immense stress for both the child care centers and the families who rely on subsidized care. Young children need

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consistency to aid their cognitive and emotional development, and simple bureaucracy should not be the reason that care is interrupted,” said **State Senator Jessica Ramos (D - SD13)**. “This bill, along with the historic levels of child care funding we secured in the enacted budget are bringing New York closer to achieving our ultimate goal: child care infrastructure that guarantees a safe, accessible, and enriching space for every child in our state.”

“Our families are hurting and our economy is reeling from a lack of affordable, quality childcare. When our families have reliable and consistent childcare, parents can stay in the workforce and afford to provide for their families, while kids benefit socially and emotionally,” said **Assemblymember Jen Lunsford (AD 135)**. “I’m proud to sponsor this legislation that will ease the burden on parents and providers, and improve the lives of our children.”

Effective immediately, the Office of Children and Family Services may promulgate necessary rules and regulations to implement the law, and may do so before the effective date, which is 180 days after the bill becomes law. Advocates, parents and providers are urging OCFS to exercise its authority to swiftly implement the bill and approve requests to extend eligibility to 24 month periods without delay.

“We look forward to continuing the fight for universal child care in the upcoming legislative session. By paying child care providers what they deserve and continuing to break down unnecessary barriers that prevent eligible families from accessing the care they need, New York can lead the way in building the best child care system in the nation,” said **Shanita Bowen, Director of Operations for ECE on the Move, Steering Committee Co-Chair, ESCCC**.

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