



April 2024: Top Child Care Legislative Priorities

The 2024-25 New York State Budget falls far short of providing the investments needed in the child care workforce and insufficiently addresses eliminating inequitable barriers to access. These budget decisions will have far-reaching consequences that will be felt deeply by child care educators and the families they serve.

Thankfully the legislative session is not over, and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care will continue to work tirelessly towards achieving a truly supportive system of universal child care that meets the needs of all families and child care educators by seeking passage of the following legislation this year:

Create a Permanent Child Care Fund to Increase Child Care Worker Compensation – (No Bill Number)

One-time “bonuses” or “retention grants” do not create a landscape where professionals can feel confident in the stability of this line of work. This fund should be sufficient to offer all child care workers who work in licensed, regulated programs compensation parity with similar positions in the public school system.

End New York’s Rule of Tying Child Care Assistance to Parents’ Exact Hours of Work – A.8878 (Hevesi)/S.8152 (Brisport)

The current rule makes it difficult for many working parents – including parents working in the gig economy or in retail with fluctuating schedules – to access child care. This “**decoupling**” law was passed overwhelmingly by the Legislature in 2023, then vetoed by the Governor with a message that it would be “more appropriately considered in the context of the budget process.” The Legislature included this proposal in both of their one-house budgets this year, however it was excluded from the final budget.

Enact Statewide Presumptive Eligibility – A.4099 (Clark)/S.4667 (Brouk)

This legislation would allow families quick access to child care assistance while waiting for application processing to be completed so parents do not lose job opportunities and children experience more continuity of care. A recently enacted federal rule (Improving Child Care Access, Affordability, and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)), clarifies that federal funds can be used to cover the presumptive eligibility period and encourages states to implement this and other policies that will ease enrollment burdens on families.

Implement a “Cost Estimation” Method of Setting Child Care Assistance Reimbursement Rates – A.1885 (Clark)/S.3355 (Kennedy)

A cost estimation model is designed to better reflect the *true* cost of providing high-quality child care - including paying the child care workforce a thriving wage.

Establish Automatic Rate Increase to Child Care Providers – A.2019 (Clark)/S.3070 (Ramos)

Pay all child care programs providing care to children receiving child care assistance at the established market rate, even when that rate exceeds their private tuition price.

Eliminate Minimum Earnings and Minimum Work Requirements for CCAP Eligibility – A.1303 (Clark)/S.4924 (Ramos)

Currently, parents and caretakers can be ineligible for child care assistance if they earn too little or work too few hours, leaving some families that need child care assistance most unable to access it.

Additional Child Care Priorities

Engage the Legislature in ensuring the Child Care Availability Task Force fulfills its statutory obligation to complete its important work of developing a plan to implement a phased-in rollout of universal child care.

Advise the Legislature on the recently enacted federal child care rule (Improving Child Care Access, Affordability, and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)) and encourage New York State to implement these rules without delay. Many of these rules take aim at inequitable barriers that keep eligible families from accessing child care assistance.

Work with state partners to ensure New York is taking all possible steps to afford New York immigrant families - including those newly arrived in our state - access to high quality child care so lack of child care does not prevent them from gaining employment and economic independence.

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