

2019-2020 Child Care Legislative Budget Request

Reforming New York's child care system to ensure access to high quality child care to all families is essential to the well-being of New York families, children, and the State's economy.

We are working with the new Child Care Availability Task Force to develop a bold, comprehensive plan to expand equitable access to high-quality child care for all families that need it, and ensure a family sustaining wage for all child care educators. While we work with the Task Force to develop a long-term plan, **the State must increase investment now to restore short term stability to both the child care provider and subsidy systems, and to expand access to subsidies for low-income working families whose ability to participate in the work force depends on securing quality care for their children.**

We welcome the modest new funding for child care contained in the Executive Budget, along with the Governor's proposal in the State of the State Book to require the state's Regional Economic Development Councils to prioritize child care in their 2019 plans and to launch a child care worker scholarship. However, these investments and policy proposals do nothing to expand access to quality care to the thousands of families currently unable to access child care assistance.

We strongly urge a total of at least \$100 million in new investment in child care subsidies and workforce this year. Specifically, we ask the Legislature to:

- 1. Increase State funding to counties for child care subsidies and program operation to expand equitable access to quality child care to more working families.**
 - a. ADD \$51 million to restore the child care subsidy program to the level attained in 2016 – the highest in recent years – adjusting for four years of inflation;
 - b. MAINTAIN the more than \$2 million Quality Set Aside included in the Executive Budget to expand the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network; ADD \$2.5 million to train and recruit new infant and toddler providers to the field, and ADD \$15 million to create 1,000 new child care slots for infants and toddlers;
 - c. ADD \$20.6 million to revise the copayment formula so that no family receiving a child care subsidy contributes more than 20% of its gross income exceeding the poverty level as the parent share while maintaining the number of families receiving subsidies; and
 - d. ADD necessary funds to enable all counties to maintain updated subsidy waitlists.

- 2. Increase the subsidy reimbursement rate to the 75th percentile formula.** The Executive Budget proposes \$20.6 million to hold the reimbursement rate to the 69th percentile outside of New York City. This is a positive step, but not enough to keep struggling providers across the state in business, nor to allow them to pay their workforce a living wage.

3. **Increase State funding for the Child Care Facilitated Enrollment Projects** in order to expand access to subsidies available to working families at higher income eligibility levels.
4. **Ensure immigrant families have access to quality child care.** Implement comprehensive, culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and education to immigrant communities to ensure that immigrant families understand their rights with respect to public benefits and to mitigate barriers to accessing those benefits, including to quality child care. Public education surrounding rights and access to public supports and benefits are essential to ensuring that families are aware that children continue to have the right to access programs and supports, regardless of parent immigration status.
5. We support continuing investment in SUNY/CUNY Campus Child Care, the New York State Agri-Business Child Development Program, and QUALITYstarsNY.

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