



Empire State Campaign Calls For Permanent Investment In Child Care Workforce and Increased Funding For Child Care Assistance Program

Child Care Workforce

We commend the Senate for recognizing the urgent need to invest in the child care workforce. The Senate's decision to include \$500 million for a Workforce Retention Grant program is an important step toward raising compensation for New York State's child care workforce. Child care educators provide an essential service to families, communities, and our state's economy. Yet for too long, child care educators — the vast majority of them women and predominantly women of color — have been among the lowest paid professions in the state. The Senate's proposed investment is an acknowledgment of early childhood educators' invaluable contribution, and will increase the wages of the existing workforce, help to retain staff, and allow providers to expand availability and support for families who depend on child care. As the final terms of the state budget are negotiated, we urge New York leaders to include at least \$500 million in the final budget, along with language that makes this fund permanent and the compensation supplements ongoing. This is a necessary provision if New York is to tackle the field's persistent workforce shortages - which worsens the state's capacity shortfall - and achieve the goal of universal child care across the state.

Child Care Assistance Program

We commend the Assembly for including an additional \$200 million in funds for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Counties across New York State, and especially in New York City, are facing dwindling funding resources as the number of families receiving child care assistance grows - a positive testament to the state's efforts to expand child care access. Increasing state funding for CCAP is needed to help prevent thousands of families from losing access to this necessary resource. We urge New York leaders to include at least \$500 million in the final budget, to minimize disruptions to families and programs and to provide New York City and New York State additional time to figure out a longer-term strategy.

Eliminating Minimum Earnings Legislation

Both the Senate and Assembly propose to eliminate the minimum earnings requirement for families to qualify for child care subsidies. This long-overdue change would put an end to a nonsensical and inhumane rule that unfairly shuts some families out of accessing child care simply because they earn too little. This bill passed both houses unanimously last year but was

vetoed by Governor Hochul. Its inclusion in both one house proposals highlights its importance and we urge state leaders to ensure it is included in this year's enacted budget.

Decoupling Legislation

The Senate budget includes separating parents' working hours from their eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program and increasing provider rates for providing child care during non-traditional hours. This "decoupling bill" has passed the legislature three times, and has been vetoed by Governor Hochul twice. Including this in the final budget will end an unnecessary and burdensome practice that is currently a barrier to access for thousands of New York families.

Cost-Estimation Model for Care

The Assembly budget also includes a proposal to implement an equitable, fair method of determining child care assistance reimbursement rates. Creating and implementing a "cost estimation model" is an essential component to achieving a transformed, sustainable, equitable child care system in New York.

Five years ago, as the world shut down due to the Covid pandemic, it became very clear that child care was an essential service for families and for our society. This has not changed, and our state must prioritize investing in the sector that cares for and educates our youngest New Yorkers.

About the Empire State Campaign for Child Care

[The Empire State Campaign for Child Care](#) is a statewide coalition of parents, child care educators, and advocates who believe that every family in New York State deserves high quality, [universal child care](#) and that every child care educator deserves to earn a thriving wage.

The campaign was founded in 2017, and advocates at the state and federal levels for investment in child care that best serves the needs of all of New York's families and child care educators.