



New Mexico is guaranteeing universal child care. New York should follow its lead!

ALBANY, N.Y. (September 9, 2025) — The Empire State Campaign for Child Care is inspired by the [historic announcement](#) from New Mexico's governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham, that beginning in November, the state will deliver universal child care to all of New Mexico's families. The state's commitment to removing income eligibility requirements from the state's child care assistance program is a laudable achievement that improves the economic conditions for families and improves the learning outcomes for children. Also noteworthy is the state's commitment to investing in compensation for the early childhood workforce. New Mexico's governor and legislature have recognized that a universal system that serves families cannot be achieved without a robust investment in early childhood educators. We call upon our own Governor, Kathy Hochul, and the state legislature to follow the [recommendations](#) of the Governor's Child Care Availability Task Force, and swiftly implement the Task Force's [road map for universal child care](#) in New York. We also urge the Governor to seat and convene the coalition of business and labor leaders charged in the 2025 Enacted Budget with recommending revenue streams to cover the costs of implementation.

"This is the moment where New York's elected leaders can deliver on their promise of enacting universal child care in the Empire State and enact a measure of affordability for families in these challenging economic times.", said **Shoshana Hershkowitz, Campaign Manager for the Empire State Campaign for Child Care.**

"New Mexico has set a bold new standard for the nation by guaranteeing universal, no-cost child care for all families, by removing income eligibility requirements for child care assistance, eliminating family copayments, raising reimbursement rates to the true cost of care for providers, and investing in expanded access for infants, toddlers, lower-income families, and children with special needs. If New York is serious about being a leader in education and economic opportunity, this is the kind of action we must take. Early care and education is a public good, essential to thriving communities and a stronger economy. Governor Hochul and state leaders have a responsibility to meet this moment and make sure that every family in New

York has access to affordable, high-quality child care,” said **Marina Marcou-O'Malley and Zakiyah Shaakir-Ansari, Co-Executive Directors of the Alliance for Quality Education.**

“New York is primed and ready to be the next state to achieve universal child care. New York has a Roadmap to Universal Child Care – released by Governor Hochul’s Child Care Availability Task Force in January 2025. We have a Governor who has publicly committed to achieving universal child care, and legislative champions, including the Senate Chair of Children and Families, Jabari Brisport, and Assembly Children and Families Chair, Andrew Hevesi, who are sponsors of the Universal Child Care Act. While we know New York State is facing significant uncertainty and budget challenges given cuts in federal funding, New York families are facing far more uncertainty and challenges. They are relying on Governor Hochul and state leaders to deliver on their pledge to achieve universal child care in New York – this year.”, said **Dede Hill, Vice President of Policy, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.**

“When a state removes barriers for families and honors the worth of early childhood educators, it creates a future where every child can flourish. New York has the blueprint in hand—now it must find the courage to build a universal child care system worthy of our children and families. By removing income limits and investing in early childhood educators, New Mexico has proven that universal child care can be achieved. New York has its own road map—Governor Hochul and the legislature must act now to deliver the same promise to our families, children, and workforce.”, said **Gladys Jones, Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Early Childhood Educators on the Move.**

“New Mexico’s universal childcare guarantee is a major win for children and families for many reasons - including the prevention of child abuse. Lack of access to affordable childcare increases families stress, destabilizes families and jeopardizes children’s well-being. These conditions increase the risk of abuse. Protective factors, like guaranteeing access to childcare, help mitigate stress, foster stability, and enhance well-being. In doing so, they also strengthen families and reduce the risk of child abuse and maltreatment. New York has stood as a leader among states in the nation in the past. We urge New York’s elected leaders to stand up and enact universal childcare now.”, said **Tamaé Memole, Co-Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse New York**

“Universal child care lays a strong foundation for children and families—but the child care burden doesn’t end when children enter school,” said **Alli Lidie, CEO of the NYS Network for Youth Success.** “The Child Care Availability Task Force’s recommendations explicitly include school-age programs and the workforce that powers them. We urge Governor Hochul to ensure that afterschool and summer programs, along with the professionals who deliver them, are part of the equation in New York State. By doing so, New York has the opportunity to build on New Mexico’s success and create an even more expansive system that supports children and families from birth through the school years.”

“What New Mexico has shown is that universal child care *is* possible—that when we lead with progressive and compassionate values, we create a system that helps every family and every

child. New York deserves that same commitment. If Governor Hochul won't prioritize expanding universal child care, then we need new leaders who will.", said **Eduardo Hernandez, Capital District Lead Organizer at Citizen Action of New York.**

"As a proud New Yorker and early childhood educator, I am deeply inspired by the leadership in New Mexico that made universal child care a reality. This historic step is more than just a policy win — it's a bold declaration that our youngest children deserve equitable access to quality care, no matter their background. I especially want to uplift the powerful role of women in government whose vision and tenacity are reshaping what's possible. Their commitment reminds us all that child care is not a luxury — it's a necessity for working families and the foundation for lifelong learning and thriving communities.", said **Janna Rodriguez, Founder & Owner, The Innovative Daycare Corp.**

"The Children's Agenda applauds New Mexico for ensuring that child care is available to every family in their state who needs it. New York must take inspiration from New Mexico's bold plan and commit to achieving universal child care within the state over the next several years. Universal child care will grow New York's economy, improve the well-being of children throughout the state, and make New York an affordable place to raise a family. We hope that New York's leaders will build on New Mexico's example and guarantee care to families throughout New York State in next year's budget process." said **Pete Nabozny, Policy Director, The Children's Agenda.**