



# Empire State

## CAMPAIGN FOR CHILD CARE

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

The [Empire State Campaign for Child Care](#) offers the following response to the New York State Senate and Assembly Budget proposals:

#### **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 for the child care workforce, 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**

34 counties across New York State, in addition to New York City, have closed enrollment or have waitlists for access to the Child Care Assistance Program. We celebrate the Governor's proposal as a historic investment in the program, increasing funding by \$1.2 billion from the previous year. We believe this new funding will be sufficient to reopen enrollment and meet projected demand in most of these counties. However, in New York City, there are over 16,000 children and families who qualify for child care assistance, but remain on the waitlist, with that number growing each month. Without increased funding for New York City, the voucher waitlist will continue to grow, leaving

tens of thousands of New York's lowest-income families scrambling to afford high quality child care so parents' can work or pursue education or training.

If CCAP/voucher enrollment closures and waitlists are allowed to persist, the success of New York State and New York City's plans to expand pre-K, 3-K and 2-K will be undermined—and could result in the exclusion of low-income families. Pre-K expansions alone will not ensure low-income parents can work and achieve economic stability because without CCAP, many families will be unable to afford child care for younger children not yet eligible for pre-K, 3-K or 2-K, and/or for before and afterschool care for their pre-K, 3-K, 2-K and school-aged children. As the state expands universal child care, the CCAP program can be scaled down.

We commend the Assembly for making supplemental CCAP earmarked for counties outside of New York City that are low on funds more readily available to them by allowing for the additional funds to be utilized immediately, and rolled over, if necessary, into the next federal fiscal year. ***We urge adoption of the Assembly's proposal in the final enacted budget with adjustments, as necessary, to ensure these supplemental funds flow to counties that have closed enrollment immediately upon passage of the budget.***

***We also urge inclusion of additional CCAP funding in the final enacted budget to both clear the waiting list and meet demand across the state.***

### **Minimum Earnings Requirement**

We commend the Assembly for including statutory language along with \$18.7 million to end the deeply inequitable rule that makes parents who are paid less than the minimum wage ineligible for child care assistance for their children. ***We urge adoption of this proposal in the final enacted budget which would be an important step to reducing barriers to access to child care assistance for low income families.***

### **Child Care Pilot Programs**

***We commend the Senate for including an additional \$34 million to fund additional universal child care pilot programs throughout New York State, and urge inclusion of these additional funds in the final enacted budget.*** All of the pilot programs must be available to all with minimal enrollment requirements, and all modalities of care—including center and home-based child care providers—must be able to participate in these models. We look forward to continuing to expand these programs across the state as a bridge to the universal child care system that all New Yorkers need.

## **Afterschool**

Truly universal child care includes before and afterschool care for pre-K and school-aged children because most parents' work days are not limited to school hours. We commend the Senate and Assembly for their proposed investments in afterschool of \$30 million and \$100 million, respectively. Over the last few years, 48,000 children lost LEAPS slots. ***We urge additional investment in afterschool to help restore those seats, and build toward universal child care.***

## **Pre-K**

We commend the Senate for their support of expanding Pre-K statewide. ***We also applaud the Senate for including transportation for Pre-K in their budget, and urge adoption of this proposal in the final enacted budget to reduce barriers to access in early learning.***

***We commend the Assembly for extending the Governor's rate increase proposal to existing 3-K programs across the state and urge adoption of this proposal in the final enacted budget to ensure that school districts outside New York City that offer 3-K will have the resources to provide high quality early care and education.***

## **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.*