

2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

GOAL: EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE TO ALL FAMILIES THAT NEED IT, AND ACHIEVE A FAMILY-SUSTAINING WAGE FOR CHILD CARE EDUCATORS



Why: High-quality child care, pre-K and other early learning opportunities can significantly improve educational outcomes for the long-term, and reduce disparities. Research shows that the achievement gap appears long before children reach Kindergarten, and can be evident as early as nine months.¹

Access to quality child care also enables parents to work and achieve economic stability. Yet, due to underinvestment in child care for low-income families, it is estimated that fewer than 20% of eligible low-income families who could benefit from receiving subsidy assistance from New York State receive it.² Child care educators caring for New York's youngest are paid wages that leave them living at or near poverty without benefits, and can undermine quality due to high turnover and the stress of economic insecurity.³

Supporting Policies & Initiatives:

- **Work with the newly created Child Care Availability Task Force toward advancing a comprehensive plan** to restructure and equitably expand access to quality child care to all NY families that need it; support and fairly pay child care educators; serve all children, including children with special needs, children of all cultures, and infants and toddlers.
- **Increase State funding to counties for child care subsidies and program operation** to expand equitable access to quality child care to more working families.
 - \$51 million would restore the child care subsidy program to the level attained in 2016 – the highest in recent years – adjusting for four years of inflation;
 - \$20 million to improve quality and increase slots dedicated to serving infants and toddlers by at least 1,000, with \$2.5 million directed to the expansion of the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network, and \$2.5 million to train and recruit new providers to the field;
 - \$26 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
 - Funds to enable all counties to maintain updated subsidy waitlists.
- **Increase State funding to stabilize the child care workforce and infrastructure** by reinstating the 75th percentile formula for setting reimbursement rates, and increasing funding to cover those costs.
- **Strengthen the child and dependent care tax credit** to better reflect the true cost of care.
- **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.

¹ QUALITYstarsNY brochure, Early Childhood Advisory Council, New York State Council on Children and Families. http://ccf.ny.gov/ECAC/WG/Quality/Resources/ECAC_BrochureLowRes.pdf

² See Schmit, Stephanie and Walker, Christina. (2016, Feb.) Disparate Access: Head Start and CCDBG Data by Race and Ethnicity; Appendix IV. Low-Income Children Ages 0-13 Served by CCDBG by Race and Ethnicity. CLASP. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Disparate-Access.pdf> (reporting that 122,233 children were served, or about 80% of those eligible); New York State's Office of Children and Family Services estimated that 126,000 children received subsidies each month during 2015-16 (power point presentation, ("Child Care Subsidy Program Overview," presented at Child Care Roundtable, August 17, 2017).

³ Maria Korjenevitch and Rachel Dunifon. *Child Care Center Quality and Child Development*. Cornell University, College of Human Ecology. 2010. https://www.human.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/PAM/Parenting/Child-20Care-20Center-20Quality-20-20Development-20Brief_FINAL.pdf See also *New York Times Magazine*, "Why Are Our Most Important Teachers Paid the Least? Would improving their training – and their pay – improve outcomes for their students?" (January 9, 2018). <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/magazine/why-are-our-most-important-teachers-paid-the-least.html>
