



Empire State Campaign for Child Care

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Winning Beginning NY (WBNY) and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) are thrilled that both houses of New York State's legislature stand united in investing an additional \$20 million increase to child care subsidies, along with a commitment to maintain the \$26 million proposed by the Executive to increase subsidy reimbursement rates.

According to Gregory Brender, Director of Children and Youth Services, United Neighborhood Houses and Chair of WBNY, "this new investment will enable more than 2,200 additional New York children from low-income working families to have access to quality early learning, while making it possible for their parent(s) to work and achieve economic security." Added Brender, "we are deeply grateful to the leadership of Speaker Heastie, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and our legislative champions, Assemblymembers Jaffee and Jean-Pierre, and Senator Montgomery, for putting New York children and families first in their budgets."

"If included in the final state budget agreement, the allocation of \$20 million for new subsidies would mark the first significant new state investment in child care subsidies in five years," said Dede Hill, Policy Director for the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, and a co-facilitator of ESCCC. "Fewer than 20% of low-income working families are currently able to access quality child care due to inadequate state investment."

Equally important, advocates assert, is the \$26 million proposed in the Executive, Senate and Assembly budgets, to support new subsidy reimbursement rates that more accurately reflect current costs. According to Hill, "many child care providers are shutting their doors around the state because current subsidy reimbursement rates are too low to meet rising costs. Earlier this year, ESCC and WBNY brought over 200 parents, providers and advocates to Albany to share with legislators the direct consequences of years of flat funding and cuts to child care. Their message of urgency and the dire need for increased state investment in child care is finally being heard. This year's investment will not solve the state's child care crisis, but it is a significant step in the right direction."

"Providing a family access to affordable, quality child care can be transformative," said Jessica Klos Shapiro, Director of Policy and Community Education for the Early Care and Learning Council. "For many families with young children, child care is their largest monthly bill. The average cost for full-time center-based care is \$15,000 a year for an infant. Subsidized child care allows parents to build economic security while raising young children. It also prevents working families from falling into poverty due to child care costs – a leading contributor to family poverty."

"This increased investment in subsidized child care for low-income families will help stabilize the struggling child care industry which cannot keep pace with rising costs," said Pete Nabozny, Director of Policy, The Children's Agenda. "According to research we've conducted, during the period 2014 through fall 2018, New York State lost 3,208 regulated child care slots outside New York City. As a result, many

families have trouble finding regulated child care even if they can afford the costs. The shortage is particularly severe for infants and toddlers.”

Greater investment will also help increase child care workforce wages. “Child care educators caring for New York’s youngest are paid wages that leave them living at or near poverty without benefits,” said Blue Carreker, Campaigns Manager at Citizen Action of New York, and a co-facilitator of ESCCC. “Providers trying to stay afloat are often forced to keep wages low, to trim staff numbers and increase staff workloads. But these actions result in high turnover and the loss of the most qualified teachers. Currently over half of the families of New Yorkers working in child care qualify for, and receive some form of government assistance. The inability of providers to recruit and retain staff directly impacts the quality of care provided to young children who need stability and continuity to thrive. In fact, we need an even greater level of state investment to bring the subsidy reimbursement rate to the federally recommended level so child care workers are paid a living wage, but this investment will certainly help.”