

2020-2021 Child Care Budget Request

The cost of child care in New York (and around the country), is unaffordable for nearly all low and middle-income families, and due to inadequate funding, fewer than 20% of low-income New York families eligible for child care subsidies are receiving them. At the same time, child care educator salaries are so low that many live in or near poverty. The median wage for a child care educator in New York is \$12.38 an hour or \$25,760 per year. **And, child care providers, unable to meet rising costs, are closing their doors in rising numbers.**

This year, New York— with its Child Care Availability Task Force leading the way— has the opportunity to set our state on a path toward universal high-quality, affordable child care.

The Empire State Campaign for Child Care and Winning Beginning NY are deeply concerned that Governor Cuomo included no new state investments in child care in his Executive Budget. We urge the Legislature to include these investments in your one-house bills and work with the Executive to ensure the following commitments and investments are included in New York's 2020-2021 final enacted budget.

1. **New York commits to achieving universal access to quality, affordable child care by 2025;**
and
2. To set New York on a path to meeting the goal of universal access, and to curb the loss of providers and the exodus of educators from the field while working toward this goal, **New York makes significant building block investments in child care this year**, including:
 - a. **Investing at least \$40M to create a fund to increase workforce compensation and improve child care quality.** Low compensation for child care educators leaves many educators living in or near poverty. It also leads to high workforce turnover rates, causing instability for infants and young children who need consistency in caregivers in order to establish healthy and secure attachments. Priority should be given to programs that serve low-income families and care for infants and toddlers; and
 - b. **At least \$60 million in the state's child care subsidy program to expand access to more working families by making eligibility levels and co-pays more fair and uniform across the state.** At present, because there are not enough resources to serve all working families eligible for child care assistance, some counties cut off eligibility to families earning as little as \$27,729 (130% of poverty, family of 3). At the same time, some counties, again because of inadequate funding, must set co-pays that are so high (exceeding \$600 per month in numerous counties) that many families cannot afford to accept a subsidy. This investment would enable more working families to access quality child care this year, and lay the groundwork for the state to develop a model child care system that provides all New York families access to quality, affordable child care.