Child Care Availability Task Force Given Bold New Mandate: Rolling Out Universal Child Care in New York

Late last month, Governor Hochul signed S.7128 (Brisport)/ A.7721 (Clark) extending the term of the Child Care Availability Task Force, expanding its composition, and giving it a new, ambitious mandate: to “develop an implementation framework leading to a phased-in rollout of universal child care.” With the passage of this law, state leaders have publicly committed to implementing universal child care in New York. This is an extraordinary first step for New York children and families.

The Empire State Campaign for Child Care community, including child care providers, child advocates, and advocate members of the Task Force (first term) are thrilled this law, championed by Senator Brisport and Assemblymember Clark, will empower the Task Force to see its work through to the full implementation of universal child care; we look forward to working with New York leaders to make the next phase of the Task Force a success. Shorter term, we eagerly anticipate the 2022 State of the State and Executive Budget will feature bold proposals and big investments in child care this year. With COVID re-surging, throwing families and child care providers back into a period of uncertainty and fear, transformation of New York child care must start now.

“As a proud member of both the Task Force and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, I am truly excited about this opportunity. When I became the coordinator of Winning Beginning NY—the State’s early care and learning coalition—nearly 15 years ago, we were having these same conversations about how to support children, families, and the workforce. Today, we finally have a path forward and a group charged with developing and implementing a plan of action. At Prevent Child Abuse NY, we understand that quality child care is a concrete support that helps reduce parental stress, which in turn decreases abuse. I am thankful for Governor Hochul's commitment and to our legislative champions...and I look forward to a continued investment in child care.” Jenn O’Connor, Director of Policy and Advocacy/NYS Director of the Home Visiting Coordination Initiative, Prevent Child Abuse NY (Task Force Member)
“The NYS Child Care Availability Task Force’s initial work elevated the child care crisis and innovatively drove solutions that were ‘shovel ready’ when federal funding came down to NYS. Now, we have an opportunity to establish the most robust child care system in the nation. Gender, racial, and economic inequities within the child care industry are at the core of all systemic challenges. New York needs to boldly lead with this essential workforce infrastructure if we are to lift women into the workforce, grow child care as a predominantly women-owned small business and drive economic recovery. The continued work of the expanded Task Force will build even greater alignment and accountability for the better of NY’s families.” Sheri Scavone, CEO, WNY Women's Foundation (Task Force Member)

“New York is on the brink of transforming child care and early childhood education. But we have a lot of work to do to ensure the infrastructure is in place to bring affordable and equitable access to high quality care to all New York families. As a previous appointee to the Child Care Availability Task Force, I know it is more important now than ever before. Turning the aspirations of the Task Force’s 2021 report into reality requires sustained coordination across state agencies and between state and county governments. Impacts on providers and families must be reflected in decision making.” Larry Marx, CEO of The Children's Agenda (Task Force Member)

“As we move boldly and purposely towards great change in the child care landscape, it is an honor to be a part of these historical moments. The new mandate is indeed a humanitarian win. Extending the term of the NYS Child Care Availability Task Force, with the directive to implement a comprehensive Universal Child Care System, reflects the anticipation for equitable access to quality care and early education for families. At last there will be opportunities for an entire workforce made up of different modalities of care to rise and be supported in their essential and professional careers. We are particularly proud that Early Care Educators in Residential Settings finally have a seat and a voice at the table reshaping for all involved what a valuable child care system should look like in the State of New York. We know that with Governor Hochul's concerted efforts to support child care, New York State can lead an example to the nation and world.” Gladys Jones, CEO, ECE on the Move

“All Our Kin applauds the Governor for this early sign of commitment to address New York's long standing child care crisis. We look forward to partnering with her Administration and the Task Force to further elevate the voices of family child care educators and support high-quality family child care as an essential part of New York's child care system.” Erica Phillips, Chief Impact Officer, All Our Kin

“I was honored to be a part of the Child Care Availability Task Force and I am proud of the work that was accomplished. Our report sets forward a robust plan to provide all children with access to high-quality child care. But, there is more to be done. Continuing the Task Force will allow government and non-government stakeholders to work together towards the implementation of our recommendations and to ensure a high-quality, equitable child care system for all New York families. I am grateful to our state legislature and to Governor Hochul for enacting this legislation to ensure our work will continue.” Jennifer Rojas, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Suffolk (Task Force Member)
“With the signing of this law, Governor Hochul and the New York Legislature publicly signal a commitment to bring universal child care to New York, and to having child care providers of all modalities, parents, unions, business and advocates at the table plotting the state’s course to this goal. This is a monumental achievement that would not have been won without the persistent efforts of New York child care providers and parents who have demanded not just relief, but transformation. Based on my experience as a proud member of the Child Care Availability Task Force in its first three years, I believe continuing the Task Force will help ensure New York creates a truly equitable, high quality, child care system for all New York children without delay.” Dede Hill, Policy Director Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy; Executive Committee Member, Empire State Campaign for Child Care (Task Force Member)

"From the creation of the Task Force to providing unwavering support for an investment in our children and the connection to our State's economic development and infrastructure, Governor Hochul continues to be one of our greatest champions. She has recognized that in order to rebuild our economy it is essential that we include a commitment to something as critical as child care. I thank the Governor for her support of children, families and child care providers in NYS. I will always believe every challenge is an opportunity and I am grateful that our Governor has recognized the opportunity to do the right thing for our current workforce and for our state's youngest citizens, our future." Beth Starks, founder and Executive Director of Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center, Director at Jamestown Community College (Task Force Member)

“As a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force I look forward to continued work alongside my partners in this critical work. The Task Force has set forth bold recommendations that will create both short and long-term strategies that will create a system which supports children, families and providers throughout the State.“ Meredith Chimento, Executive Director, Early Care and Learning Council (Task Force Member)

"School closures and disruptions amid COVID-19 have highlighted the crucial role of school-age child care and present a critical time to move forward in action to ensure available, accessible, and affordable child care that leaves no child behind. The NYS Network for Youth Success thanks Governor Hochul for her leadership on the Child Care Availability Taskforce and urges her to sign bill S07128/A07721A to expand and enable the taskforce to continue doing the vital work needed to support all families in New York." Kelly Malone, Executive Director, Network for Youth Success

"We are excited that Governor Hochul has signed the Brisport/Clark bill to extend the life of the Child Care Availability Task Force. We are at a crossroads for children and families in New York State. This is a significant first step to a series of actions necessary to establish universal high quality childcare for the families of New York state. This bill also adds members, responsibilities, and the authority to the Task Force to maximize its effectiveness to support families and providers.” Marina Marcou-O'Malley, Policy and Operations Director for the Alliance for Quality Education

“Thank you to Governor Hochul for recognizing the value of the Child Care Task Force and the importance of families having access to affordable quality child care.” Hilda Escher, Former CEO Ibero American Action League (Task Force Member)
“Day Care Council of New York applauds Governor Kathy Hochul and the leaders of the State Assembly and State Senate for this commitment to developing a universal child care system in New York State. DCCNY’s member organizations work with families every day to meet their need for child care and quality early childhood education. We look forward to working with State leaders to implement a child care system that eliminates barriers that parents face accessing child care, fairly compensates and supports the early childhood workforce, and gives children the tools they need to succeed in school and beyond.” Tara N. Gardner, Executive Director of Day Care Council of New York

“As parents struggle to find child care so that they can return to the workforce, it is welcome news that Governor Hochul signed into law the extension and expansion of the successful NYS Child Care Availability Task Force. Its comprehensive recommendations are already informing how New York can build a quality, accessible and affordable child care system. As we move into the next stage of implementation, the Task Force will bring all parties to the table to address the complex challenges ahead and find feasible solutions to benefit New York’s families and our economy.” Beverly Neufeld, President, PowHer New York