



New York State: Failing to Invest in Children, Youth and Families Again

The final budget misses landmark opportunities to correct past defunding, continues to place burden on counties and diminishes overall resources for children and families

April 10, 2022. Faced with an opportunity to meet the State's statutory obligation to fund services critical to strengthening families and reducing the number of children placed in foster care, the final budget leaves communities without needed resources at a moment when children, families, and the provider community require so much more. We are profoundly disappointed with the Governor for her failure to act at this critical moment.

Despite the Senate and Assembly One House Budget bills that would have built on the Executive Budget proposal in several long-overdue and important ways, the final budget:

- **FAILS** to restore the State match for child welfare prevention services and therefore impedes efforts to continue to reduce the number of children who are placed in foster care;
- **FAILS** to pull the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) out of the foster care block grant and therefore impedes the ability to give more children and youth an opportunity to permanently live with kin;
- **FAILS** to increase State funding required to implement a State settlement agreement to raise foster parent rates, shifting the burden of the State's obligation to address increased foster care costs on to counties; and
- **FAILS** to include prevention workers in the Human Services Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). We appreciate the 5.4% commitment to the other human services workers; however, prevention workers will now not receive the same treatment as their fellow human services workers.

At a time when New York children and families, particularly those who are low-income, or face the obstacles of structural, historic and ongoing racism, are still reeling from a period of sustained crisis - needing everything from cash aid to diapers and groceries, internet connectivity, educational supports, connections to behavioral health, as well as legal and housing supports, this budget ignores reality. Make no mistake, the failure to include the child welfare priorities embraced by the Legislature in the final budget will have a detrimental impact on children, families and communities most impacted by the pandemic.

In the remaining weeks of the legislative session, the Coalition urges the State to enact **A.1777-B (Hevesi)/S.5419-B (Brisport)**, which would modernize the child welfare preventive services housing subsidy. This legislation would increase the subsidy from \$300 a month, which it has stagnated at since 1988, to \$725 a month, including yearly automatic updates to ensure it meaningfully supports youth and families as cost of living rises.