The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy urges passage of A.10209-A (Lunsford) /S.9029-A (Ramos), allowing social service districts to lengthen eligibility for child care assistance up to 24 months before a family would have to reapply for benefits.

Currently, families certified to receive child care assistance are required to undergo an onerous process of recertifying for child care every twelve months. This requirement too often can lead to disruptions in eligibility, which can in turn cause families to have to leave a child care program where a child is thriving and connected to educators. This short eligibility period also results in higher administrative costs for families, and more processing delays both for families seeking recertification AND those seeking initial certification.

The unfortunate reality is that few families experience frequent and/or significant increases in family income – which would change eligibility for child care assistance. Therefore, frequent recertifications create unnecessary burdens for both families and counties. This proposal would authorize counties to reduce the burden of recertification for families and for county administrators, generating a return on investment for saved time, energy, and money for local districts. It will also afford families and children more stability and certainty.

New York State has an historic opportunity to build upon the significant expansions in child care assistance eligibility enacted in the 2022-23 state budget to continue to transform the child care system throughout the state. Passing this measure will make this year’s expansions to child care assistance more equitable, inclusive and effective, and will set New York further down the path to making high-quality child care available to all families in New York.

We urge passage of A.10209-A/S.9029-A to ensure more New York children have access to high-quality child care on a consistent schedule, without interruptions in access - a strategy proven to set up children to thrive, and to enable parents to work and achieve economic security.

The Schuyler Center is a 150-year-old statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to policy analysis and advocacy in support of public systems – like high-quality, universally-accessible child care - that meet the needs of disenfranchised populations and people living in poverty. Our work focuses on strengthening families before they experience crises or trauma and preventing families from enduring hardships like ill-health, economic insecurity, child welfare involvement, or encounters with juvenile justice.

May 25, 2022