

Recommendations of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy for the  
NYS Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus  
2024 People's Budget

Priority #1

**Child Poverty Reduction: reduce child poverty and racial inequity, starting by ensuring tax credits, housing and nutritional supports reach all families, no matter where they were born.** All children, and particularly children residing across the great state of New York, should grow up free from the stress and strains of poverty. The State should take decisive action to improve the State child tax credit so it reaches the poorest New Yorkers, currently excluded from the full credit, and provide an increased credit amount that would have a meaningful impact on a family's budget; expand availability of affordable housing to stabilize [hundreds of thousands of families](#); and increase nutrition supports, such as SNAP for all, regardless of immigration status, and universal school meals.

New York State entered the pandemic with more than [700,000 children living in poverty](#) – 18% of all New York children. Black children live in poverty at twice the rate of white peers, and, in New York State, children in immigrant families are more [likely \(33%\) to live in low-income, working households than their non-immigrant peers \(21%\)](#). Compared to the rest of the nation, New York's children are more likely to live in poverty than children in [31 other states](#). Nearly half (46%) of Rochester's children and 42% of Buffalo's [children live in poverty](#). In [New York City](#), 22.2% of children live in poverty, with Bronx child poverty at 37%. For our children experiencing poverty, every day New York fails to prioritize ending child poverty matters. The experience of poverty and trauma in childhood can have long-lasting impacts on development. The stress of poverty can alter the brain development of young children – causing permanent changes in the structure and functioning of the brain. As a result, many children who experience poverty face significant challenges – in the form of poor health, academic obstacles, lower earnings – for the rest of their lives.

Testimonials and more relevant information can be found with the materials from recent Child Poverty Advisory Council meetings: <https://otda.ny.gov/news/meetings/>, including testimonial on [tax credits](#) and on [public benefits](#).

Priority #2

**Child Care: create a permanent, robustly-funded program to pay wage supplements to the child care workforce that continues at least until the NYS Child Care Availability Task Force develops and the State implements a permanent, fully-funded, equitable compensation program; and create a state-financed fund to provide child care subsidies to immigrant families whose children are currently barred from accessing child care assistance due to immigration status - building from the small state pilot included in last year's budget and the Promise NYC program.**

Thanks in large part to the support of members of the NYS BPHA Legislative Caucus, New York State continued to take historic steps forward in achieving universal child care in its 2023-2024 Legislative Session. **However, the promise of increased access to high-quality child care will only be realized if New York makes a substantial and sustained investment in its child care workforce and extends the promise of care to *all* children in our state.**

***Unfortunately, severe and persistent child care workforce challenges threaten to undermine the tremendous gains New York has made in expanding access in child care assistance. This assistance is meaningless if families cannot find high-quality, affordable child care in their communities that meets their needs, operating during the hours they need care, with space for their children.***

To begin to address the child care workforce crisis, New York should provide wage supplements to this essential workforce in a sustained and ongoing way while, at the same time, the NYS Child Care Availability Task Force develops a permanent compensation scale and structure, a plan for retirement and health benefits, and a pipeline of early childhood educators to ensure the growing workforce needs can be met. The average wage for child care workers in New York State – made up almost entirely of women and predominantly people of color – is [\\$35,190](#), one of the lowest among all professions. There can be no delay raising the sector’s wages.

Another top Schuyler Center priority: **New York must ensure immigrant families whose children are currently barred from accessing child care assistance due to immigration status can access child care assistance on the same terms as all other families.** This can be accomplished by creating a state-funded program that does not include federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds (which cannot be used for subsidies for some immigrant children), building on the small state-funded pilot program created in last year’s budget, and the Promise NYC program. With more than [100,000 asylum seekers](#) coming to New York in the last year, with as many as [30% of them children](#), the need for ensuring all immigrant families can access high-quality, culturally-responsive child care has never been greater. *All* New York families need and deserve child care.

### Priority #3

**Children’s Health: provide authority in the 2024-25 NYS Budget for New York to ensure eligible children remain enrolled from birth to age 6 in Medicaid and Child Health Plus (CHP) health coverage – programs which provide no-cost or low-cost health coverage for eligible children. As the State returns to pre-COVID Medicaid rules, children are [urgently at risk](#) of being disenrolled and losing coverage. New York can – and should - commit to multi-year continuous coverage as have [several other states](#), including Washington, Oregon, California, Ohio, Minnesota, and Colorado.**

Children risk moving in and out of coverage (“churning”) if their family’s income fluctuates or if their family struggles to renew their coverage. Once children are school-aged, often over the age of six, they are more likely to have access to school-based outreach programs that help ensure eligible children are covered.

Having uninterrupted health care coverage from birth to age six allows children to have consistent access to well-child visits, vaccinations, and specialty care. During these first five years, children need regular, routine checkups. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests such visits occur at birth, three-to-five days after birth, at 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30 months and that they continue once a year until adulthood. Young children need these visits to ensure any social, emotional, or developmental delays are detected early and before beginning school. Without these checks and referrals, care may be delayed until it is too late, and children may suffer unnecessary, long-term harm.

When children get the health care they need, they are more likely to succeed in school, graduate from high school and attend college, earn higher wages, and grow up into healthy adults. By investing in children's continuous eligibility now, government will reap the financial benefits in later years.

*The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy is a 151-year-old statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to policy analysis and advocacy in support of public systems that meet the needs of disenfranchised populations and people living in poverty.*