



LAST LOOK



Schuyler Center’s *Last Look* at the NYS 2024-25 Budget as It Intersects with Our Policy Priorities

On April 22, 2024, the New York State Legislature and Governor reached an agreement on the 2024-25 New York State Budget. Schuyler Center’s *Last Look* is our initial assessment of the enacted State budget and how it advances priorities that improve the health and well-being of all New Yorkers, especially children and families living in poverty. The dollar amounts included in this document—and all of Schuyler Center “Looks”—reflect budget appropriations, or “spending authority.” Appropriations tell us the maximum spending authority permitted by the State, which is often much greater than what the State actually intends to spend. We will have a fuller understanding of what funds will actually be invested in New Yorkers in the coming year when the final budget financial plan is released in a few weeks.

This year’s budget is a story of partial solutions at a time when thoughtful and systemic investment is needed. With a few notable exceptions, the handful of new investments to support children and families experiencing poverty are time-limited and not designed to build toward a significant, sustained investment in child and family well-being. Among the exceptions: the budget’s inclusion of legislative language to provide continuous Medicaid and Child Health Plus eligibility to young children from birth to age 6. This is a transformative, cost-effective public policy that will make New York more welcoming and affordable for families over the long term. Medicaid coverage has been proven to improve young children’s health and development largely through prevention: by catching potential problems early, and treating them before they become severe—and costly. It is a policy that is expansive yet targeted, benefiting more than 40% of children in the state, all of them low-to-middle income. And, this policy by definition shields families from the jarring impact of benefits cliffs while reducing administrative burdens on families and on New York State. Fewer resources devoted to paperwork, more to health care for children and families. Looking ahead, Schuyler Center will continue efforts to advance more policies like continuous Medicaid eligibility: cost-effective, impactful, and proven to set up children and families to thrive.

CHILD WELFARE

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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | No increase of the State share from 62% to 65%—as set in statute—for preventive, protective, independent living, adoption, aftercare services, despite its inclusion in both one-house budgets. |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | \$900 million for preventive, protective, independent living, adoption, aftercare services at 62% State share (balance paid by county) |
| Background | <p>New York State invests State dollars in services that aim to keep families together, minimize/expedite their involvement in the child welfare system, and support youth in State placements and the caregivers who support youth and families. This is paired with a county funding match (62% state/38% county). This open-ended funding has contributed to a significant reduction of children in foster care over the last 20 years through supports that include housing assistance, clinical services, home visiting, transportation, job training, education, and emergency cash grants. Many of these services are not eligible for federal reimbursement, making it a crucial State budget issue.</p> <p>Although New York law sets the State’s share at 65%, every Budget since 2008 (including this one) has reduced the State’s share to 62%, leaving 38% to be covered by counties, many of which are under-resourced. When this fund was established in 1980, the State’s share was set at 75%.</p> |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | No change to the Preventive Services housing subsidy, which provides a maximum of \$725/month and ends at age 21 for transition-age youth |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | Increased the maximum monthly housing subsidy to \$725—the first increase to the monthly amount since the subsidy was established in 1988 |
| Background | <p>The child welfare Preventive Services housing subsidy is currently funded at 62% State share, as described above. This service allows counties to offer up to \$725 a month in housing assistance to families involved in the child welfare system and youth currently in the system who are aging out. The monthly amount was raised for the first time in the 2023-24 Enacted Budget, but was not indexed to inflation to ensure the subsidy keeps pace with rising costs. Before the increase, the subsidy had been \$300 a month since 1988. The subsidy is available to young people aged 18-21 who have exited foster care into independent living; it is not available to young people after the age of 21, and therefore not available to assist with the transition to independent living for those who age out at age 21.</p> |

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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Provides a 2.84% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to state reimbursement rates for agencies carrying out human services work for New York; requires agencies to provide a minimum 1.7% salary increase for the workforce from these funds |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | Provided a 4% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to state reimbursement rates for agencies carrying out human services work |
| Background | The cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) aims to provide the immediate fiscal relief needed to prevent program reductions in human services. Since 2007, the Consumer Price Index has risen 44.3%. The Human Services COLA has increased by 10.6% resulting in a COLA deficit over the past 16 years of 33.7%. When compared to inflation, the COLA deficit exceeds 34%. Human services providers report that a history of nearly flat funding has been the primary driver of persistent staffing shortages, program reductions, and burdensome debt. Like the 2023-24 Enacted Budget's COLA, this year's leaves out Preventive Services providers and children's health home care managers. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | <p>\$338,750 for Permanency Resource Centers (PRCs)</p> <p>\$1.9 million for kinship caregiver support programs</p> <p>\$320,500 for the statewide Kinship Navigator</p> |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | <p>\$338,750 for Permanency Resource Centers (PRCs)</p> <p>\$1.9 million for kinship caregiver support programs</p> <p>\$320,500 for the statewide Kinship Navigator</p> |
| Background | <p>Regional PRCs support adoption and kinship families by providing services and connecting families to resources such as peer support, mentoring, navigation for cross-system needs, therapeutic services, counseling, or respite care. PRCs also work to avoid foster care or out-of-home placements.</p> <p>Local kinship caregiver programs offer support and services for people who care for children with whom they have a preexisting positive relationship, outside of formal foster care. Kinship caregiver programs provide information about caregivers' rights, support to meet children's education and health care needs, and assistance with obtaining benefits.</p> <p>The Kinship Navigator is a statewide resource and referral network for kinship families, providing information and connections to important resources.</p> |

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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | \$8.3 million for the Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI) |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | \$8.2 million for the Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI) |
| Background | FYCSI was created in 2015 and supports costs for young people who have experienced foster care and are attending college, including by covering costs such as tuition and fees, books, transportation, housing, medical and personal expenses. FYCSI also supports young people with advisement and tutoring. With program participation expected to increase in the coming year, this year’s funding will mean there will be fewer resources for each participant. |
| CHILD POVERTY REDUCTION AND AFFORDABILITY FOR FAMILIES | |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Provides for a one-time supplement to the Empire State Child Credit. Families will receive a payment that is a percentage of their 2023 ESCC credit: for families with incomes under \$10,000 this will be 100% of the credit they received for 2023; families with incomes between \$10,000 - \$24,999 will receive 75% of their 2023 credit; decreasing to 50% of the credit for families between \$25,000 - \$49,999 and 25% for families with incomes of \$50,000 and above. |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | \$179 million addition to expand the Empire State Child Credit (ESCC) to include children under age four |
| Background | <p>New York’s Empire State Child Credit provides eligible taxpayers a credit equal to 33% of the federal child tax credit at the levels that existed prior to the passage of the 2018 federal tax overhaul, or \$100 per qualifying child, whichever is greater, for children 17 and younger, including those filing taxes using a Tax Identification Numbers (ITIN). The 2023-24 enacted Budget strengthened the credit by eliminating a long-standing, harmful provision that excluded young children under age four from receiving the credit.</p> <p>Income transfers to families—even modest ones—can improve outcomes for children in all areas of well-being, from health to educational achievement and future earnings. Tax credits that are structured to be fully refundable and direct the largest credits to the lowest income tax-filers, and are available to those who file taxes with ITINs have greater poverty-reduction impacts.</p> |

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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | No change to the policy excluding taxpayers filing with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), rather than Social Security Number, from receiving the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No change to the policy excluding taxpayers filing with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), rather than Social Security Number, from receiving the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) |
| Background | <p>The EITC is one of the best ways to “make work pay” for low-income families and individuals, and research shows that children of EITC recipients are healthier and do better in school. The State’s EITC provides eligible taxpayers a refundable credit equal to 30% of the federal EITC. Non-custodial parents are also eligible for a credit.</p> <p>A number of groups that would benefit from the credit are completely excluded from the State EITC. Among them: young childless adults ages 18 to 25 at exactly the period in their lives when they are struggling to gain their footing in the workforce and are more likely to live in poverty, and some tax-paying immigrant New Yorkers who file using an ITIN.</p> |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | <p>\$50 million in unspent TANF funds allocated to reduce child poverty in three upstate cities: Rochester - \$25 million; Syracuse - \$12.25 million; Buffalo - \$12.25 million</p> <p>\$500,000 to the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to evaluate the implementation and outcomes. The program details are to be determined by the local communities; the budget specifies that assistance received through this initiative “shall not be considered income or resources for purposes of eligibility for public benefits or other public assistance.”</p> |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No comparable investment |
| Background | <p>In 2021, the New York State Legislature passed, and Governor Hochul signed into law, the Child Poverty Reduction Act. The Act committed the State to reducing child poverty by half over the following decade, with attention to racial equity, and established the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council (CPRAC). CPRAC is tasked with monitoring the State’s progress and making policy recommendations to move the state toward its goal. CPRAC is examining and advancing evidence-based policy to address child poverty. This year’s one-time allocation of funds to three cities was not a CPRAC recommendation. Progress toward a statewide reduction in child poverty will require intentional, sustained, and systemic approaches.</p> |

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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Does not include Housing Access Voucher Program, despite its inclusion in both one-house bills |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | Housing Access Voucher Program not included |
| Background | Housing in New York costs more than twice the national average and nearly one-third of households with children were behind on rent in November 2022. Voucher programs have been shown to lower rent burdens, prevent eviction, and reduce the risk of homelessness. Notably, children who grow up in households with vouchers have increased earnings in their 20s and lower incarceration rates. Stable housing is foundational to children’s well-being. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Does not include an expansion of the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program to more adequately cover paid sick or medical leave for working New Yorkers |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No measure to strengthen TDI |
| Background | Paid medical leave is critical to the health and well-being of New York families. Working New Yorkers need to be able to take time off during illness, or for medical reasons, without worrying about lost wages or job loss. Under the current State-administered programs, workers can receive better paid time off to care for a sick family member than they can to recover from their own illness. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | No funding included for a pilot program to provide targeted guaranteed income to low-income parents who are pregnant or parenting infants, despite being included in both one-house bills |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No proposal regarding cash allowance program for low-income parents who are pregnant or parenting infants |

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| Background | Direct cash transfers to families experiencing poverty, through refundable tax credits or guaranteed income projects, are among the most powerful poverty-fighting tools. Research conducted in Canada found that unconditional cash transfer programs targeting the prenatal period and infancy lead to higher birth weights, increased educational attainment, and increased food security among participants. Pilots currently underway in New York State have found similar results; increased financial support to parents of infants provides robust support to families during a critical period in their lives. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Does not include an increase to the public assistance cash assistance grant |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No funding to support supplemental public assistance |
| Background | Public Assistance cash assistance grants have not increased in 12 years, despite skyrocketing costs of living, set so low recipients must survive on about \$6 a day. Families that use public and/or cash assistance are often earning no income because the adults have a disability that prevents them from working. These families are stuck with cash assistance as their sole source of income because it can often take years to prove eligibility for Supplemental Security Income. Moreover, disabilities can make it even harder to survive on \$6 a day, given the increased transportation costs, dietary needs, and over-the-counter medication expenses many families face. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Does not include funding for Healthy School Meals for All, which would ensure all students in New York State have access to free universal school meals |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | \$134.6 million to expand access to free school meals to high poverty school districts, leaving many children in mixed income districts without access to school meals |
| Background | Healthy School Meals for All is a proven strategy that reduces food insecurity and helps lift families out of poverty. In the FY 2024 State Budget, lawmakers took a critical step in this direction, investing in the expansion of an existing federal provision—the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)—that allows high-poverty schools to provide free meals at no cost to all students. However, CEP does not reach all children. CEP eligibility is tied to participation in means-tested programs such as SNAP and Medicaid, presenting barriers for many families, including immigrant families. Schools in rural and suburban communities and areas with stark economic inequalities also struggle to qualify for CEP. Providing universal free school meals is the best way to ensure equitable access without stigma for all students. |

CHILD CARE

2024-2025 Enacted Budget

Appropriates approximately \$2.036 billion for child care assistance (subsidies, or CCAP). CCAP funds are derived from a number of funding lines: \$997.17 million appropriated from the State General Fund; up to \$576 million drawn from the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF); and \$463.63 million drawn from federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funds.

Other child care investments of note: level funding of \$1 million for a business navigator program to help businesses identify child care supports for their employees; level funding of \$4.8 million for an employer-supported child care pilot program to serve families between 85 and 100% of SMI in three regions of the state (pilot was first funded last year; has yet to be launched); \$5 million to maintain and expand a NYC pilot program begun last year to provide child care assistance to children ineligible for CCAP due to immigration status or because their parents engage in episodic work and earn less than 400% of FPL; \$5 million to maintain and expand an identical pilot to serve communities outside of NYC; \$5 million for a pilot of staffed family child care networks to support and grow the capacity of family child care providers; increased funding for the Infant-Toddler Resource Network of up to \$10.7 million, which provides critical training and supports to providers serving our youngest New Yorkers; level funding of \$5 million for QUALITYstarsNY, the state’s quality rating and improvement system.

Finally, the budget reprograms unspent federal pandemic funds to allow another round of recruitment and retention grants to child care providers of close to \$300 million. (See appended chart for more details).

2023-2024 Enacted Budget

Appropriated approximately \$1.245 billion for CCAP, with the cash amount at \$1.032 billion. CCAP funds are derived from a number of funding lines: \$459 appropriation (\$446 million cash amount) from the State General Fund; up to \$550 million appropriated from federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) (with cash amount at \$350 million); and \$236 million appropriated from federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funds.

Other child care investments of note: \$1 million for a new business navigator program to help businesses identify child care supports for their employees; \$4.8 million for a new employer-supported child care pilot program which will serve families between 85 and 100% of SMI in three regions of the state; \$1.5 million for a new pilot program to expand access to children regardless of immigration status and episodic workers with income of less than 400% of FPL in NYC and \$4 million for an identical pilot to serve communities outside of NYC; level funding for the Infant-Toddler Resource Network of up to \$7 million, which provides critical training and supports to providers serving our youngest New Yorkers; and \$5 million for QUALITYstarsNY, the state’s quality rating and improvement system, along with \$24 million in reprogrammed funds to be used for QUALITYstarsNY and technology improvements to child care systems. The final budget also includes \$500 million of reprogrammed federal pandemic funds to provide recruitment and retention grants for the child care workforce; and \$50 million in reprogrammed funds for child care capital projects.

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| Background | Due to historic expansions in CCAP since July 2022, child care is financially within reach for the first time for many New York families. However, many families are unable to use the assistance because they cannot find a child care program that meets their needs with capacity to care for their child. This is due in large part to a child care workforce shortage caused by low wages. Child care educators , with an average annual salary of \$35,000, earn less than 96% of occupations in New York State. A March 2023 survey of child care providers found that staffing shortages greatly diminished programs’ ability to operate at full licensed capacity. Insufficient staffing due to uncompetitive wages left 28,462 licensed or registered slots empty statewide, as reported by 1,600 survey respondents. Other families still struggle to qualify for child care assistance due to inequitable rules that make access difficult for some immigrant families and families where parents work in the gig economy or non-traditional hours. |
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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND WELL-BEING

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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Adds \$100 million in funding to expand pre-K slots throughout the state. Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to conduct a study on the consolidation of all pre-kindergarten funding for the purpose of streamlining the funding process and program implementation. The study findings are due December 1, 2024. |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | <p>Increased funding by \$150 million for the expansion of Pre-K slots and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • required school districts that are eligible for universal prekindergarten aid but have not utilized it to provide information on the barriers in utilizing funding in the universal prekindergarten enrollment reporting proposal and create a three-year implementation plan • included building aid eligibility to school districts for universal prekindergarten classrooms and requires SED to release guidance to all school districts |
| Background | In 2013, then-Governor Cuomo promised full-day pre-K for all 4-year-olds. Yet, tens of thousands of 4-year-olds outside of New York City—more than 50%—are still waiting to attend full-day pre-K. New York has continued a slow but steady expansion of pre-K outside of New York City, with new investments in the prior two school years: \$125 million in the 2022-2023 school year and \$150 million in the 2023-2024 school year. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Adds more than \$15 million, for a total investment of \$103.3 million, to the combined Advantage After-School and Empire State After-School programs to extend or expand current contracts, and to award new contracts through a competitive bidding process. Directs the Office of Child and Family Services to complete a feasibility study for providing universal afterschool to all school-aged children in New York State. |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | Maintained level funding at \$33 million for Advantage Afterschool Program, maintained the original rate of \$1,600 per student, and \$55 million for Empire State Afterschool Program. Consolidated afterschool funding streams, moving Advantage After School funding from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and funding for Empire State After-School from State Education Department to the Office of Children and Family Services. |

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| Background | High-quality after school programs have been shown to help close the achievement gap for low-income children and enable families to achieve economic stability. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | Includes level funding of \$37 million for Healthy Families NY, \$4.2 million for Nurse-Family Partnership, and \$200,000 for Parent Child Plus, Inc. |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | Included \$37 million for Healthy Families NY, \$4.2 million for Nurse-Family Partnership and \$200,000 for Parent Child Plus, Inc. |
| Background | Maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting, a proven strategy for improving maternal and child outcomes, is available to less than five percent of families with young children in New York State and is entirely unavailable in some areas. A significantly higher investment is needed if New York aims to serve all communities with families in need and endeavors to ensure the best health and developmental outcomes for mothers, infants, and families. |
| Enacted Budget 2024-2025 | \$250 million for community schools, funded as a “set-aside” within education Foundation Aid \$1.2 million for Community Schools Regional Technical Assistance Centers |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | \$250 million for community schools and \$1.2 million for Community Schools Regional Technical Assistance Centers |
| Background | Community Schools are public schools that emphasize family engagement, community partnerships, and connecting students and families to community-based resources. |
| Enacted Budget 2024-2025 | Provides \$6.1 million for a 5% Early Intervention rate increase and commits to a future 4% rate modifier for rural and underserved areas. In addition, the Medicaid Scorecard shows the Department of Health plans to reduce the reimbursement rate for teletherapy with an expected savings of \$6.5 million and reduce the allowable group size for group sessions for savings of \$4.7 million. |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | Did not include an Early Intervention provider rate increase. Continued \$205 million for the Early Intervention program. Included \$2.5 million for a study of a new methodology for funding preschool special education programs. |

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| Background | Early Intervention provides therapeutic and support services to eligible infants and toddlers under the age of three who qualify due to disabilities or developmental delays. Access to timely services is critical, yet many children do not receive timely services as required by law. One reason for the dearth of services: the reimbursement rates the State pays providers and evaluators are so low, providers have left the field, unable to afford to provide these services. |
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PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH COVERAGE, ACCESS AND CARE

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| Enacted Budget 2024-2025 | \$7.6 million in the budget year for continuous Medicaid and Child Health Plus eligibility for children from birth to age six (1/1/25 implementation) |
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| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No progress toward continuous Medicaid and CHP eligibility |
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| Background | Data has shown children who churn in and out of public health insurance coverage frequently lose coverage due to administrative barriers, like burdensome paperwork. Other states have been approved or applied to the federal government to keep children enrolled in Medicaid and the child health insurance program until they reach age six. Having stable health insurance coverage helps ensure young children have comprehensive, affordable care. Access to health care in the earliest years also helps identify developmental delays that are best addressed as early in a child’s life as possible. This all contributes to better outcomes outside children’s health, including kindergarten readiness and success in later years. |
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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | \$1.5 million for school-based health services to increase access to dental care |
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| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No proposal |
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| Background | Dental caries remains the most common chronic disease of childhood and the highest unmet health need of children. Oral health problems disproportionately impact young children, uninsured children, children living in poverty, non-Hispanic Black children, children from non-English-speaking households including immigrants and refugees, and children with special health care needs—all of whom are less likely to receive needed preventive oral health care. |
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| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | \$4 million for the Office of Mental Health to support recruitment and retention of licensed mental health clinicians |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | No proposal |
| Background | Mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes in young people. Recent years have brought a significant increase in certain mental health disorders among youth, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Mental health needs often go unmet due to the lack of access to providers. |
| 2024-2025 Enacted Budget | \$6.5 million included for the EQUAL program for adult homes |
| 2023-2024 Enacted Budget | \$6.5 million included for the EQUAL program for adult homes |
| Background | Adult home residents are low-income adults, many of whom struggle with mental and other health concerns that can make it difficult for them to live on their own without supports. This leaves these individuals particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. EQUAL enables adult home residents to identify specific needs, such as clothing, coats, air conditioners for resident rooms, better food, and other items. Core to EQUAL funding is a requirement that adult home residents have a voice in how adult home operators spend the funds. |

APPENDIX: Child Care

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| Child care assistance (subsidy) funding | Approx. \$1.245 billion appropriated (\$1.045 billion cash amount) plus \$376 million to expand subsidy eligibility to 85% of SMI; maintain subsidy rate at the 80 th percentile of the market rate; cap co-pays at 1% of income over FPL; continue 12-month eligibility for subsidies; cover 80 absences per child per year | Approx. \$2.036 billion appropriated |
| Subsidy expansion | 85% of State Median Income (SMI) beginning October 1, 2023 | No change except funding source shifted from Federal resources to State |
| Co-pays | Limits family co-pays to 1% of income over FPL beginning October 1, 2023 | No change except funding source shifted from Federal resources to State |
| Decoupling child care assistance from exact hours of work | Not in the budget; passed by Legislature post-budget; vetoed by the Governor | Proposed in both one-house budgets; excluded from the final budget |
| Immigration status/ work requirements | Small pilot program through Facilitated Enrollment will expand access to children regardless of immigration status and episodic workers. \$1.5 million for NYC; \$4 million for outside of NYC. | Expanded investment in the Facilitated Enrollment pilot project. \$5 million for NYC; \$5 million for outside of NYC. |
| Payment for absences | Covers costs for up to 80 absences per year per child beginning October 1, 2023 | No change except funding source shifted from Federal resources to State |
| Subsidy reimbursement rates | 80 th percentile of the market rate | No change to overall rate except funding source shifted from Federal resources to State. Requires counties to establish a differential payment rate for providing care during non-traditional hours and for children experiencing homelessness of no less than 10% (up from the current minimum of 5%), and no greater than 15%. |
| Stabilization grants/ workforce supplements | \$500M - reprogrammed funds available for “a third round of stabilization grants for workforce retention initiatives” | Nearly \$300 million—reprogrammed funds—leftover from last year’s workforce retention and renewal grants for another round of grants |