PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

400 Rally at New York State Capitol For Urgently-Needed Investment in the Child Care Workforce

Albany, NY (January 28, 2025) – More than 300 child care educators, parents, union members, and advocates took part in the Empire State Campaign for Child Care's annual Child Care Advocacy Day at the New York State Capitol on January 28. They were joined by New York State lawmakers for a rally where speakers called for urgent investment in the state's child care system in this year's budget.

The event featured passionate remarks from parents, child care workers, employers, and elected leaders from across New York State. Both parents and child care providers shared the burden of not being able to provide for their families because chronic underinvestment in the child care system means care costs too much for families, while child care providers themselves earn too little to pay their bills and keep their doors open.

Their stories emphasized the need to fund policies that will build towards the creation of universal child care in New York, which advocates say will provide high quality child care with flexibility for families and good wages for the child care workforce.

The top priority for the Empire State Campaign for Care this session is the creation of a permanent $1.2 billion fund for child care workforce and operations to raise the wages of this essential workforce without raising the child care tuition paid by families. In addition to this compensation fund, advocates called for supportive policy changes to meet the needs of more families, among them some of the lowest-income families, and families caring for children with disabilities. These changes include more funding to raise rates for the care of children with disabilities and developmental needs; providing child care assistance to all children regardless of their immigration status; and eliminating the requirement for families to earn the equivalent of the minimum wage to receive child care assistance.

Photos and B-Roll here.

For our full policy priorities, click here.

Quotes

“Despite all the excellent work we have done to expand child care eligibility to more families across the state, there is an outdated rule on the books barring the poorest New Yorkers from this vital support. Families earning less than the minimum wage will have their lives completely transformed by child care support. It’s a proven measure to reduce child poverty and invest in the long term economic stability of a working family. We have to get it done this year.”- **Senator Jessica Ramos, Chair of Senate Labor Committee.**

"Unless we invest in the child care workforce and pay these professionals what they deserve, any attempt to expand child care will be irrelevant. We need a permanent state child care fund to increase child care worker compensation and we need it now," said **Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Chair of the Children and Families Committee.**

“Through passing the Universal Child Care Act and raising child care worker wages, we have a golden opportunity to dramatically reduce the cost of living for families, stabilize our economy, and invest in the development of this new generation. New Yorkers overwhelmingly want to see New York take this step and it is time for bold action,” **said Senator Jabari Brisport, Chair Senate Children and Families Committee.**

“We know childcare costs are astronomical for New York families, but there are also strains on the childcare workforce. I strongly support the Empire State Campaign for Childcare in their ask to include $1.2 billion for workforce compensation for the child care workforce in this year’s budget. Without investments in our workforce, childcare facilities will not be equipped to deliver the high quality care that New Yorkers deserve,” said **Senator Samra G. Brouk.**

“Parents across New York are increasingly being faced with an impossible decision: To stay home from work to care for their children or to pay rising childcare costs despite the financial toll it takes on their family. There has never been a more urgent need to pass universal childcare and provide families with this critical support system. As a mother, I will continue to fight for a truly universal child care program in New York State**,” said Assemblymember Michaelle C. Solages, Chair, Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, & Asian Legislative Caucus.**

“We are pleased to hear Governor Hochul verbally affirm her commitment to universal child care in New York State, but we cannot make progress toward that goal without the commitment to increase child care workforce compensation in this year’s budget. The Governor and Legislature must make that fiscal commitment this year with a permanent state fund to increase compensation for early childhood educators,” said **Shoshana Hershkowitz, campaign manager for the Empire State Campaign for Child Care.**

“Universal Child Care means two things: all kids are cared for by well compensated professionals. The governor likes to talk about universal child care, but not to invest in the workforce so we have functional programs and care for our children. This workforce is largely made up of lower-income women of color, who make so little that are 98% of all professions make more than them. The Assembly and Senate must create a permanent workforce compensation fund for child care workers in their budget proposals. Our children need a well compensated workforce, our state and our economy cannot afford not to have that,” said **Marina Marcou-O’Malley, Co-Executive director of the Alliance for Quality Education.**

"EdTrust-New York and the Raising New York Coalition were pleased to hear the Governor mention "universal child care" at several public events recently, including in the State of the State address. However, the Governor’s remarks and Executive Budget failed to include an overdue and critically necessary increase in workforce compensation. We also need a long-term plan to professionalize, recruit, and retain this workforce. We urge the Governor and SUNY/CUNY to add early childhood educators to their list of high-demand jobs and support these institutions with free tuition. Additionally, we ask them to collaborate with us in implementing a career lattice and salary scale that values both education and experience. Many individuals in this essential workforce are women and people of color, and they deserve the State’s support," said **Jenn O'Connor, Director of Partnerships and Early Childhood Policy at EdTrust-New York.**

"It's long past time for New York State to establish a child care wage fund so that educators can get paid what they rightfully deserve. Family child care educators have traveled to Albany to make their case loud and clear and we call on the Legislature and the Governor to hear their voices by investing in their well-being and sustainability," **said Steven Morales, Policy Director, All Our Kin.**

"New York State's workforce can only continue to grow and succeed if New York supports its early childhood education workforce." said **Gregory Brender, Chief Policy and Innovation Officer at the Day Care Council of New York** "Staff members, board members and parents from the child care provider organizations who make up DCCNY's membership are thrilled to join in solidarity with families, child care providers and hundreds of New Yorkers throughout the State to call on the State to invest in the early childhood education workforce. In this budget, New York's leaders must act to ensure that early childhood education teachers, staff, directors and providers receive the respect and compensation that they need and deserve."

"The Care Economy–the vast network of private and public providers who care for our youngest children and our most dependent adults–faces a crisis that can be avoided by providing secure, professional wages and benefits to the women who labor day and night," said **Beverly Neufeld, President of PowHer New York.** "Our child care and elder care systems are on the edge of collapse threatening the economic security of families, communities and many businesses. We cannot wait. This year New York must establish a continuing wage fund to supplement the pay of the child care workforce, and commit to a short term plan for universal child care."

Access to child care is critical for the financial wellbeing of families across the state. We applaud the Governor for taking a first step toward increasing access by proposing to create the New York Coalition for Child Care. Right now, New York families need more than a study on universal child care options, however. We urge the Governor and Legislature to go further and remove barriers to affordable, high quality child care and to ensure that the dedicated child care workforce who care for New York's children can afford to stay in their profession, said **Tamaé Memole, Managing Director, Primary Prevention, Prevent Child Abuse New York.**

"Today, more than ever, providers, parents, advocates, and everyone find themselves living in fear. The uncertainty surrounding child care and the challenges we face daily are overwhelming. We must amplify the voices of those who are suffering, stand united, and demand meaningful action. Together, we can create a future where fear no longer holds us back, where support and compassion pave the way for a brighter tomorrow. Let's move forward together, transforming fear into the fuel for a better tomorrow. And let us not forget

the urgent need for universal child care—because every family deserves security, and every child deserves a chance.", said **Gladys Jones, founder of ECE on the Move.**