



One-House Budget Bills Hold Promise for NYS Children and Families

Schuyler Center Statement in Response to One-House Budget Bills

As New York families struggle to afford the cost of living and Federal programs are threatened, state leaders have an opportunity to leverage this year's budget to bolster family economic security statewide.

Schuyler Center is encouraged to see many proposals in the Senate and Assembly budget bills that will support children and families, especially those with the lowest incomes. We appreciate both houses' willingness to put forth [solutions necessary](#) to ensure that every family in New York State is welcome and supported here, secure in knowing that this is a safe place where they can afford to work, play, learn, grow, and put down roots.

Child Poverty Reduction

One-House Proposals that Prioritize Child Poverty Reduction and Family Economic Security:

In 2021, the New York State Legislature passed, and Governor Hochul signed, **the Child Poverty Reduction Act** (CPRA), committing the State to take action to reduce child poverty by 50 percent. Schuyler Center spearheaded passage of this law and continues to hold New York State accountable for upholding that commitment.

Through the CPRA, New York's leaders have committed to prioritizing budget investments that will do the most for those with the fewest resources. At the end of 2024, the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council put forth its recommendations for reaching the goal set by CPRA. To uphold the state's child poverty reduction commitment, these recommendations must be implemented in this year's state budget.

We are encouraged by several items across the three budget proposals, including:

- **Robust and inclusive child tax credits** - Both the Senate and Assembly budget proposals include the Working Families Tax Credit, a robust, refundable tax credit that will provide direct economic relief to families across New York. This measure aligns with the [Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council's \(CPRAC\)](#)

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[recommendations](#) for meeting New York’s child poverty reduction goals and goes even further in addressing economic hardship for families.

This proposal builds on Governor Hochul’s expansion of New York’s Child Tax Credit and will help children and families across New York State in the face of rising costs and increasing uncertainty.

- **Expanded access to food and nutritional supports:** The inclusion of universal school meals ensures that no child has to learn on an empty stomach, giving them the resources they need to focus and succeed.
- **Income support for new parents:** The inclusion of a version of the Baby Bucks program in each one-house bill is a recognition of the unique financial challenges families face in a child’s earliest years. As we move toward a final budget, we hope to see this as a foundation for further investment in meaningful, long-term support for families with young children.

[Full statement from the New York Can End Child Poverty coalition.](#)

Child Care

One-House Budget Proposals that Address the Child Care Crisis and Bring NYS Closer to a Universal Child Care System:

Over the past several years, historic investments have been made in New York State that have increased eligibility for and access to child care assistance for families, including retention grants for the child care workforce.

These investments helped to stabilize families and the child care sector during and in the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic. During that time, it became clear that child care is essential work and must be justly compensated and affordable for families. We are encouraged by the following in the legislature’s one house budgets:

- **\$500M in workforce retention grants for the child care workforce in the Senate proposal:** this guarantees there will not be a pay cut for early childhood educators. We urge language in the final budget that makes this funding permanent.
- **The Assembly proposal includes an additional \$200M in funding for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).** We are pleased to see this included in the Assembly’s proposal, but call for at least \$500M in funding, so families do not have a disruption in assistance.

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“The [Empire State Campaign for Child Care](#) calls for the inclusion of at least \$500 million in funds for the child care workforce and including language that makes this provision permanent. We support the addition of at least \$500 million in additional funds to the Child Care Assistance Program to stave off disruption for New York families who receive assistance. Additionally, we call for the inclusion of ending the minimum earnings requirement, and for separating parents’ working hours from eligibility in child care assistance.” [Read the full statement from the Empire State Campaign for Child Care.](#)

Child and Family Health

One-House Budget Proposals that Expand and Increase Investments in Child and Family Health:

Early Intervention

Both the Assembly and the Senate added money for a rate increase for Early Intervention (EI) providers. This is a welcome and overdue development. The final budget must include a rate increase of 5%. The Senate also included language directing the Department of Health to conduct a study of the EI program which should be included in the final budget. EI provides therapeutic and support services to eligible infants and toddlers under the age of three who qualify due to disabilities or developmental delays. For more on EI services in New York State, see the [Kids Can’t Wait](#) campaign.

Oral Health

The Executive Budget included language to expand the settings where **dental hygienists** can practice under a collaborative agreement with a dentist. The provision was struck out of both the Senate and Assembly one-house bills. We urge all parties to restore this provision in the final budget because it would increase access to essential dental care by allowing dental hygienists to provide care in settings accessible to New Yorkers who often face barriers to oral health services.

Adult Homes

The Assembly bill includes a restoration of the funding for **the EQUAL program** that was eliminated in the Executive Budget; the Senate did not include that restoration. 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. The Assembly also restored funding to the **Coalition for Institutionalized,**

Aged and Disabled (CIAD), the only organization providing advocacy for residents of adult homes; the Senate failed to restore that funding.

Child Welfare

One-House Budget Proposals that Invest in Policies to Prevent Unnecessary Separations, Foster Transparency and Accountability Within the Child Welfare System, and Support Child, Family, and Community Wellbeing:

This year, we are excited to see the **Assembly propose the Communities Helping Improve Lives Daily (CHILD) program**, funded at \$80 million, which is structured to reflect the vision of the proposed [Child and Family Wellbeing Fund](#).

The Child and Family Wellbeing Fund would invest in community-based programs and services that contribute to child and family wellbeing. The Fund would support children's growth and development by investing resources in communities that have been historically disenfranchised and overrepresented in government intervention through the child welfare system. The Assembly's Communities Helping Improve Lives Daily (CHILD) program is structured similarly.

The Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI) is in its tenth year and has been found to facilitate better graduation rates for students in associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. **While both the Senate and Assembly have proposed additional funds for the program, the Senate has proposed full funding at \$10 million.**

About the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

For more than 150 years, Schuyler Center has led advocacy rooted in compassion, evidence, and belief that government should work for the greater good. Schuyler Center's work acknowledges the historic racism woven throughout shared systems, and advocates for public policies that seek to address inequities while improving health, welfare, and human services for all New Yorkers, with a focus on children and families experiencing poverty.

Schuyler Center achieves its goals through creative and detailed policy analysis, coalition-building, and advocacy with elected officials, agency executives, policymakers, and stakeholders. Schuyler Center's policy initiatives are determined by its Board of Trustees in collaboration with senior policy staff, with priority given to combating poverty and helping New York's children and families thrive. Learn more at scaany.org.

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