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Child Care Advocates, Providers, Parents Speak Out on the Solutions Missing from the State Budget

*Governor's Universal Child Care Plan is Only Possible With Adequate
Workforce Compensation and Funding for the Child Care Assistance Program*

Earlier today, child care providers, parents, and advocates spoke out on the challenges facing New York State's child care system, proposed budget investments, and the solutions that must be included in the final state budget. [\[View the event recording.\]](#)

The briefing was organized by the [Empire State Campaign for Child Care](#) (ESCCC), a statewide coalition of parents, child care educators, and advocates who believe that every family in New York State deserves high quality, universal child care and that every child care educator deserves to earn a thriving wage. The Campaign was founded in 2017 and has played a key role in advancing the state's child care investments ever since.

The press briefing included child care providers and parents from across the state telling their stories – including providers from Erie County, The Bronx, Essex County, and Long Island. The challenges they face are similar in every region, and statewide solutions are crucial.

Advocates are [urging state leaders](#) to pass a budget that addresses these challenges by:

- **Immediately and permanently raises the compensation of the child care workforce and;**
- **Adequately funds the Child Care Assistance Program.**

The Governor's historic universal child care plan will only be successful if it is built on this strong foundation.

This year brings energy and excitement as the Campaign's [New York Child Care for All plan](#) informed key aspects of Governor Hochul's universal child care proposal, including bolstering and expanding the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and implementing universal child care bridge projects around the state. However, without the other pillars of the plan – workforce compensation and full CCAP funding - true universal child care cannot be achieved in New York State.

View the event recording on YouTube [here](#).

Quotes

"Nearly 20,000 children are still stuck on child care waitlists statewide, with 17,000 in New York City alone. Programs are struggling to keep their doors open, and families are left without reliable care. If State leaders are serious about standing up for working families, they must tax the ultra-wealthy and fully fund child care. This year's budget must include investments in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and no less than \$500 million for the workforce," **said Marina Marcou-O'Malley, Co-Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education.**

"Families across the North Country are quietly struggling to afford something as essential as child care. As New York State subsidies have stalled due to funding shortages, costs have become overwhelming, forcing parents into impossible choices between work, care, and stability. This is not just a logistical challenge—it is an emotional and financial strain that touches every part of family life," **said Ellie Goff, Director of Development and Outreach at Lakeside School at Black Kettle Farm.** "Childcare isn't just a private matter; it's a cornerstone of a healthy, thriving community. When families can't access reliable care, it doesn't just affect one family; it affects everyone, from the workforce to local businesses to the overall strength and resilience of our community."

"New York State is closer than ever to delivering on the promise of universal child care, but getting there requires building on the right foundation. That means clearing the waitlists that are keeping thousands of low-income families from the care they've already qualified for, and making sure the educators who make this system work are compensated fairly for the essential work they do. The Governor's universal child care vision is bold and achievable, and this budget is the moment to prove we're serious about it. With full funding for CCAP and no less than \$500 million for the workforce, New York can lead the nation and show what it looks like when a state truly invests in its children and families," **said Dede Hill, Director of Policy, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.**

“What we need elected officials in Albany to understand is that child care providers are essential infrastructure. We need reimbursement rates that match the cost of delivering high-quality care plus the additional administrative burden associated with processing CCAP claims, and a streamlined, efficient CCAP system that works for families and providers. When child care works, New York’s workforce works,” **said Kristina Kleeh, Executive Director, Just for Kids.**

"Many child care centers, including mine, operate BELOW capacity due to difficulties in attracting qualified staff. The high cost of living and affordability issues significantly affect teacher and assistant morale and turnover, reducing retention rates, and **lowering the** quality of staff who are applying for positions.

Long term teachers who love their profession are having to leave the child care industry in order to pay their bills.

These issues directly impact the quality of care we can offer, the daily lived experience for children, the working families who need care, and the essential workforce infrastructure that supports our state economy!” **said Dr. K.T. Korngold, Montessori Children's Center Director.**

“We cannot deliver universal child care in New York State without clearing the Child Care Assistance Program waitlist keeping thousands of low income families from accessing the services they qualify for. We must provide just compensation for the child care workforce that educates our youngest New Yorkers. Our path to delivering universal child care in our state must include these key steps to succeed,” said **Shoshana Hershkowitz, Campaign Manager for the Empire State Campaign for Child Care.**