



Working Toward Better Supports for Children and Families

In this year's budget, New York State takes small steps to better support the children, young people, and families involved in the child welfare system

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Albany, NY (May 29, 2026) - This year's state budget inches closer toward strengthening supports for the children, young people, and families involved in New York's child welfare system, but doesn't reach the investment levels needed for transformational change. Every year of underinvestment means thousands of New York's young people going without the support they need to thrive in college; New York families facing Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations without the timely guidance of a lawyer; and New York communities going without the resources they need to rebuild, heal, and thrive in the wake of decades of CPS interventions.

- **The Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI) is funded with an additional \$126,000 at a total \$8.5 million this year, which is still significantly below the \$10 million needed to fully fund the over 10-year running, proven successful program.** Funding FYCSI at \$10 million would help ensure the program can fully support all young people with foster care experience who are navigating college, including a new class of first-year students, and additional students as outreach expands.
- **Funding for legal services in Family Court increased by an additional \$5 million at a total \$30 million this year, which is just over halfway towards the \$50 million needed to ensure the state can provide timely defense for families involved in CPS statewide.** Timely access to high-quality legal representation is critical for ensuring families can stay together and gain access to supportive resources.
- **The Child and Family Wellbeing Fund was not established in this year's state budget.** A starting investment of just \$30 million would ensure New York invests in trusted supports provided by and for community members in neighborhoods highly impacted by CPS investigations.

There's still time for New York's leaders to protect new and growing families from unwarranted reports to CPS, by:

Passing the Maternal Health, Dignity, and Consent Act: A.860-A (Rosenthal)/S.845-A (Salazar).

This bill is designed to improve care and outcomes for moms and babies, with special attention to disproportionately severe outcomes for Black families, by ensuring health care providers engage clearly and directly with maternity patients to build trust and encourage early and regular access to care. It requires medical providers to seek the informed consent of pregnant people and new mothers before they or their babies are drug tested.

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The [Child and Family Wellbeing Action Network](#) (CFWAN) is a group of nearly 400 advocates, providers, and people impacted by New York's child welfare system. We are working towards a vision of New York where the state prioritizes investing in and implementing policies that strengthen and support children, young people, and families.