Empire State
CAMPAIGN FOR CHILD CARE

Empire State Campaign for Child Care 2027 Top Budget Priorities

Our goal for the 2027-2028 NYS Budget is to sustain and build upon New York's historic $1.7B investment in early childhood education in the 2026-27 NYS budget to achieve a just, equitable, and swift rollout of statewide universal child care and pre-K, and a thriving wage for all members of the early childhood workforce.

In New York's 2027-2028 Budget, We Call on New York Leaders to Make the Following Investments in Child Care and Pre-K:

Raise workforce compensation for all members of the child care workforce according to a wage scale developed by the NYS Early Childhood Education Workforce Compensation Collaborative, led by CUNY-PDI, by directing public funds to participating child care programs to enable them to pay their workforce according to this scale. ($1.8 billion, fully implemented)

- All members of the child care workforce would be eligible to be paid according to the wage scale so long as the program for which they work is a public contracted pre-K or child care program, Head Start, or accepts families that use child care subsidies to cover tuition, and agrees to abide by other terms of the child care compensation program. The wage scale was developed based on factors like position, experience, credentials, and competencies.
- All licensed, registered child care and Head Start programs may participate in this program if they meet the program requirements, regardless of how a program is funded. For programs that contract directly with NYC, another county, or NYS, the public funds could flow to members of the workforce by raising contract rates; to programs that serve a mix of private-pay families and families who receive CCAP subsidies or are funded by means of pre-K or Head Start, the public funds to raise compensation could take the form of a grant to the program.
- Key principles: the compensation increases must be available to all, must not drive up tuition costs for private pay families, and must not interfere with collective bargaining.
- **Increase rates for family, friend and neighbor (legally-exempt) child care providers to 75% of the family child care rate, and to 85% of the family child care rate for providers who are eligible for the enhanced rate** as a means of raising compensation for these providers. Require that the enhanced rate is made readily available to interested legally exempt providers in all Local Social Services Districts **(additional $50 million)**.

Increase recurring investment in New York's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to ensure no eligible families are turned away or placed on waitlists and children with disabilities can access care, and shift administration of CCAP from 57 counties outside of NYC to NYS. ($400 million ROS; $740 million NYC – some of which could be derived from existing supplemental funds)

- To end the enrollment closures and waitlists for CCAP that have plagued dozens of counties around the state, more recurring funding is needed to keep up with demand, and to account for the expected 2027 increase in child care market rates throughout New York.

- Increase enhanced rates paid to providers caring for children with disabilities from 15% above the market rate to 30% above the market rate and streamline processes to access the enhanced rate (**additional $11.2 million to CCAP**); and create a fund to support children with disabilities participating in licensed or registered child care programs to cover the costs of needed equipment, materials, supplies, training, consultation and other resources.
- Reform CCAP to shift from a program that block grants funds to counties, to one that is centrally administered for the 57 counties outside of NYC. This will end funding inequities that leave many small, rural communities with less funding per capita; streamline administration; and establish the infrastructure needed to implement the goal of statewide universal child care.

Sustain and grow the New York's investment in three universal child care pilots outside of NYC to ensure their success, and to begin to build out to reach additional communities. Sustain and fulfill New York's commitment to continue to expand 2-K in NYC.

- The pilots must be available to all without means or immigration status testing or work reporting requirements.
- All modalities of care—including center and home-based child care providers—must be able to participate in these models.
- Increase funding on a per contracted seat basis to account for expected market rate changes and to allow the workforce participating in these pilots to be paid a thriving wage.
- Add four additional communities, including at least two rural communities.
- Fund all pilots at $37 million (up $15 million) per community. (**Additional $193M** to cover costs of four new pilots plus increase to the existing three pilots currently funded at $22M each).

Require school districts to direct 25% of pre-K funds to community-based organizations (CBOs) to ensure full integration of community-based centers and home-based programs into the State's expanding pre-K program.

The expansions of pre-K and 3K (and 2-K in NYC) that New York has committed to undertake must be implemented in a manner that fully integrates center and home-based child care programs. This is necessary to ensure expansions do not unintentionally destabilize child care programs and lead to a greater shortage of infant and toddler seats. Requiring 25% of pre-K and 3-K seats to be located in CBOs also will help to ensure that families have a choice of setting for the education of their young children, with many preferring smaller, less institutional settings. Finally, many families need care beyond school days and operating hours. Community-based programs are able to meet those care needs in a way that school-based programs are not.

- Apply the new 4-year-old pre-K funding formula ($10,000 or the current foundation aid amount, whichever is greater) to 3 year-old pre-K programs operating outside of New York City.

The Empire State Campaign for Child Care is 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 member of the child care workforce deserves to earn a thriving wage. Learn more about the Campaign and our NYS Child Care for All plan to achieve statewide universal child care at https://empirestatechildcare.org.