



March 3, 2023

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Senate Majority Leader  
907 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12247

Assemblymember Carl Heastie  
Speaker of the Assembly  
932 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie:

On behalf of the undersigned child care, economic justice, and child advocacy organizations, child care providers, and parents from around New York State – all members and supporters of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care – we respectfully urge you to include **\$5 billion** for child care expansion, reform and workforce support as set forth in [ESCCC's 2023-24 Policy Priorities](#) in the Senate and Assembly 2023-24 one-house budgets, and in the final enacted budget.

Highlighted below are the Campaign's top priorities, all of which build from last year's historic wins and take New York further down the path to universal child care by investing in the essential child care workforce, removing unnecessary access barriers, and ensuring all New York State's children can access child care, regardless of immigration status.

- ▶ **Child Care Workforce Compensation Fund — \$1.2B**
  - New York's historic expansions to access child care assistance will mean nothing to families if they cannot find available child care in their community. That is a reality in many communities due in large part to New York's severe and growing child care workforce shortage. This proposal would give all members of child care workforce an average compensation increase of \$12,500 per year until the State has transitioned to a new reimbursement methodology and pay scale.
  - The Executive Budget proposed an investment of \$389M which is insufficient to bring the workforce even close to the level of compensation needed to turn the tide on the workforce crisis.
- ▶ **Extend child care assistance to children currently ineligible due to immigration status — Bill # Pending (Cruz)/S.4522 (Brisport) — \$60M**
  - The Executive Budget persists in excluding tens of thousands of income-eligible children from child care assistance due solely to their immigration status. Among those left out are children with pending asylum cases and many others lawfully present in the United States.

- ▶ The ESCCC is also calling upon New York lawmakers to make other, critical investments [in 2023](#) to address the child care workforce crisis and ensure families can truly benefit from last year's historic child care assistance expansions, including by providing health insurance premium support to the child care workforce (\$200M); adopting true categorical eligibility for families eligible for other forms of assistance (\$1B); providing a monthly per child stipend to providers offering non-traditional hour care (\$100M), among other essential investments.

We also request the inclusion of the following legislation in the one-house budgets and advocate for their inclusion in the final 2023-2024 New York State Budget. Each bill would break down some of the formidable, persistent administrative and structural barriers that keep many otherwise eligible families from accessing child care assistance, and child care providers from receiving the:

**Presumptive eligibility to eliminate long wait times for gaining access to assistance—A.4099 (Clark)/S.4667 (Brouk) — \$5M**

Families who qualify for assistance cannot afford to wait up to 30 days for their application to be processed, especially if they have a job opportunity for which child care is needed. Presumptive eligibility would allow families to begin receiving assistance immediately, removing barriers that keep families from becoming economically secure.

**Automatic market rate increases—A.2019 (Clark)/S.3070 (Ramos)**

Child care providers who serve families and children that receive child care assistance should not have to apply for rate increases when the Office of Children and Family Services issues new market rates. This unnecessary administrative requirement burdens providers, particularly those that serve only low-income families receiving subsidies, the very providers to whom New York should be giving the most support. Instead, all providers serving families receiving assistance should receive the new market rate when it is set.

**Decouple hours of care from parents' hours working—A.4986 (Hevesi)/S.5327 (Brisport)**

This bill would end New York's long-standing rule of tying child care access to parents' exact hours of work, which makes it difficult for many working parents, including parents in a gig economy with fluctuating schedules. A bill passed last session that was intended to address this issue did not; this bill will correct the omissions in last year's bill, and finally resolve this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,