

Believe in Children Campaign

A Call for Universal Child Care, Pre-Kindergarten, and Afterschool

"...we believe in children, we believe in Pre-K, we believe in education, let's put our money where our mouth is and let's make it a reality." –Governor Andrew Cuomo

Providing equal opportunity for all New York's children requires ensuring that they have access to a continuum of high-quality services that support their learning and development and meet the needs of diverse families. Building a comprehensive system, of which these investments are a critical part, will better serve children and families, streamline regulations, reduce costs, and result in a significant economic return on investment.

The achievement gap starts with differences in the quality of affordable child care, grows depending on access to Pre-Kindergarten, and continues to grow through a lack of access to afterschool enrichment and summer learning opportunities. Research has found that high-quality programs can significantly narrow the gap at each stage of a child's life, and that children need consistent access to such programs to continue making these gains. Establishing universal access, from birth through high school, to places where children can be safe and learn will put all our children on the right track for success in college, career, and life.

Governor Cuomo has called for five years of sustained investment in Pre-Kindergarten and afterschool. Building on his proposal, and the work of the Assembly and Senate on child care, we propose:

Universal Child Care: Invest \$182 million in child care subsidies in 2014-15, serving more than 25,000 additional children. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach \$2.2 billion annually, providing universal access to the estimated 305,000 children of working parents who are currently in need of high-quality early care and learning.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten: Invest at least \$225 Million from the State, for new high quality, full-day Pre-K opportunities statewide and fully support any localities' efforts to expand high-quality full-day Pre-K to all children.

Universal Afterschool: Invest \$9 million in quality infrastructure in 2014-15, in preparation for five years of investment beginning with \$160 million in 2015-16. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach \$825 million annually, providing access to half of the estimated 1.1 million children in need of programs.

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