

Submitting Testimony

Winning Beginning NY

an early care and learning coalition

**Testimony
2015 Joint Legislative Hearing
Elementary and Secondary Education Committee**

**Jenn O'Connor and Kristen Kerr
Co-chairs of Winning Beginning NY
February 3, 2015**

- Support the Executive Budget and invest at least another \$150 million in Universal Full-day Prekindergarten for rest of state, and at least \$70 million to support New York City's plan to reach universal service in the 2015-16 school year. We urge you to remember that about one-half of all Pre-K eligible four-year-olds live outside of New York City and currently receive less than 12 percent of the program funding. We also request that you ensure all districts awarded full-day Pre-K grants receive the state funding on a predictable payment schedule, in the year services are provided.
- Support the Executive Budget and invest at least \$3 million in QUALITYstarsNY, the State's quality rating and improvement system. We cannot make an assumption of program quality. This investment will allow us to continue implementation of QUALITYstarsNY, which evaluates, rates, and provides technical assistance and professional development opportunities to programs to help ensure that quality standards are upheld and children receive the best education possible. We will be scheduling visits from QUALITYstarsNY programs with members of this committee in the next few weeks, so that they can tell you exactly how important this funding is.

We are also supporting the Governor's new Pre-K proposal for high-need three-year-olds but urge that this \$25 million investment is made *in addition to, not as a substitute for*, continued expansion of full-day for four-year-olds. The plan should build on the expertise of community-based organizations already serving young children, and support quality standards and practices appropriate for three-year-olds.

Finally, we know that many children need a place to continue to learn and be cared for after school, whether Pre-K or K-12. Therefore, we ask that you invest at least \$178.5 million in new funds for afterschool across the entire State, which would serve 110,000 children.