

Testimony before the Joint Fiscal Committees

SFY 2021-22 Executive Budget
Human Services Budget Hearing
February 2, 2022

Testimony from: Gladys Jones, Co-Founder & Executive Director, ECE on the Move

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the 2022-23 New York State Executive Budget.

My name is Gladys Jones and along with my fellow providers, I started ECE on the Move 3 years ago to address the system and policy needs of in-home child care providers in New York City. I am an early childhood educator in a residential setting in Staten Island and have worked in this capacity on behalf of low-income children and their families for 17 years.

ECE on the Move is a provider-led and serving organization that seeks to address the systematic barriers and challenges facing home-based child care providers. We have over 600 child care provider members throughout the five boroughs of New York City. These care providers are the essential workers who support all other essential workers and put their own lives at risk to ensure that medical, food service, delivery and other sector employees can show up on the job every day. Because of our love, our teaching and our overall support to families, children learn, grow and thrive. When we are strong, families are strong and supported.

In addition to organizing providers via text and in-person, ECE on the Move supports providers in understanding system requirements and interacting with 12 City and State child care-related agencies. In our role, we are able to monitor concerns and grievances providers and the families they serve have in interacting with agencies and regulators. My testimony is informed by the voices and experiences of our members and the families who they serve. And the realities we face are dire, providers who are largely living in poverty put their lives at risk to care for parents who cannot afford care or access subsidies. Even when subsidies are used they fall far short of the actual cost of care and providers, with their labor and because of their commitment to children and families, subsidize the financial gap for families and as a result their employers too. It's time we are recognized, valued and compensated for this labor and role in securing a strong economy.

The priority of ECE on the Move is to ensure that in-home child care providers and the families who rely on their services are well-served by public systems, earn living wages

and are prioritized in business and social support services. We are in a crisis and without immediate and bold action, many child care providers will cease to operate eliminating services that working families rely on. These services under-pin an economy where working parents can fully participate. We are far from that today and face a future with even less child care availability.

The task ahead of New York is to stabilize this shaky sector while reducing child care cost burdens on families, increasing compensation for educators and improving overall systems coherence. That task cannot be accomplished without major investments. ECE on the Move joins with statewide partners to request the following:

- **\$5 billion total investment** in child care in the final Enacted Budget, drawing from remaining federal child care and unrestricted stimulus funds, existing federal CCDBG funds (including the significant rollover funds), and state tax revenues to enable New York to take large steps this year toward achieving universal access to child care this year
- Of this amount, we request an approximately **\$2.8 billion to expand access to families for child care subsidies; \$1.3 billion for workforce supports; and \$600 million to increase child care provider reimbursement rates** to come closer to reflecting the true costs of child care. The investments must be directed to each of these three pillars of the system to guard against destabilizing the child care sector or inadvertently harming New York families as we transition to universal.

We are at a critical juncture where with new federal resources and bold state action we can rebuild a strong, high quality child care system that values in-home care and the families that rely on it. We urge the Legislature and the Governor to pass a 2022-2023 Budget that centers our children, families and child care providers who are essential to a thriving economy and happy, growing children.

Thank you. We appreciate the opportunity to present testimony and look forward to continuing to work with you to build a strong New York.

Gladys Jones
ECE on the Move
Staten Island, NY
eceanthemove@gmail.com

