



Testimony of Day Care Council of New York

At the New York State FY 2027 Joint Budget Hearing on Human Services

Honorable J. Gary Pretlow, Chair, Assembly Committee on Ways & Means

Honorable Liz Krueger, Chair, Senate Committee on Finance

Honorable Andrew Hevesi, Chair, Assembly Committee on Children and Families

Honorable Jabari Brisport, Chair, Senate Committee on Children and Families

Honorable Maritza Davila, Chair, Assembly Committee on Social Services

Honorable Roxanne Persaud, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Services

Honorable Rebecca Seawright, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging

Honorable Cordell Cleare, Chair, Senate Committee on Aging

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for the legislature's work to expand access to early care and education. In FY 2026, the legislature played a crucial role in bringing desperately-needed state funds into the Child Care Assistance Program. We are grateful for the legislature's leadership, which saved child care for thousands of families. In FY 2027, Governor Hochul has proposed a budget that includes historic new investments in early childhood education. We are looking to her administration and to the legislature to ensure that the FY 2027 budget also contains funds to support the early childhood workforce. Early childhood educators remain underpaid and underappreciated, and are absent in the significant investments in the early childhood sector this budget season.

The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early care and education providers across New York City. DCCNY envisions a future in which all children have access to high-quality early childhood education and providers and their workforce have the tools and resources needed to deliver it.

DCCNY supports its members and the broader early childhood field through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, workforce training and professional development, and referral services for families seeking child care. Our member organizations operate nearly 300 sites across all five boroughs.

Most DCCNY member organizations contract with the New York City Public Schools, while others rely on child care vouchers issued by ACS and HRA, federally funded Head Start contracts, or private funding. Collectively, DCCNY member organizations employ over 4,000 New Yorkers – predominantly Black and Brown women - and serve children and families citywide.

DCCNY is a leading member of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care and we support the coalition's agenda.

In New York's FY 2027 Budget, we call on New York leaders to make the following investments in child care:

- Create a permanent state fund to increase child care worker compensation - S.5533(Brisport)/A.492(Hevesi). This fund should be robustly resourced and sufficient to offer all members of the child care workforce a significant boost in income.
- Develop a plan for subsequent years to establish a minimum pay scale and career ladder based on agreed-upon criteria to inform compensation supplement levels after the base pay scale for all has been increased.
- Adequately resource New York's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to ensure no eligible families are turned away or placed on waitlists. (\$2.3B)

Early Childhood Expansion and the FY 2026 Budget

Governor Houchul's FY 2027 Executive Budget Proposal contains several crucial and historic investments in early childhood education. These investments put New York on a path towards universal child care and are an important recognition of the intense demand for affordable child care in every part of New York State.

These investments include:

- A \$1.2 billion investment in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Tens of thousands of New York families are on wait lists for CCAP-funded programs which

include child care vouchers and Extended Day/ Extended Year child care programs in community-based organizations in New York City.

- The launch of 2-Care in New York City, which will provide free child care to 2-year-old children this year.
- Funding to complete the expansion of 3-K in New York City so that the City can guarantee a seat for every 3-year old child.
- The expansion of Pre-K programs for 4-year-old children statewide.
- The launch of child care pilot programs in New York City.

The success of all of these needed investments depends on the health of child care provider organizations and the workforce that sustains them. DCCNY supports these investments and calls on the State to include additional funding for the child care workforce.

The Child Care Workforce Crisis

New York's child care workforce is in crisis. The early childhood workforce earns less than 96 percent of all professions. Child care workers are twice as likely to live in poverty as other employed New Yorkers, with more than half of child care workers living at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty line. Further, a survey conducted by DCCNY in 2023 revealed that 51.9% of centers in New York City report losing their newly-recruited teachers within five years. Finally, while at work, child care workers are likely to spend more time than they are compensated for. [Research from Cornell University](#) on child care in upstate New York found that child care workers put in an average of 1200 unpaid hours annually in prep time and other uncompensated activities.

Between 2020 and 2024, New York State used federal stimulus funds to support Child Care Workforce Retention Grants. These grants were available to child care workers, including teachers, staff, and directors in both home-based and center-based programs and in both publicly and privately funded programs.

DCCNY, as part of the New York City Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium, supported providers in New York City in accessing these grants. In 2023 and 2024, over 80,000 providers statewide accessed the grants, providing staff with needed bonuses.

The FY 2026 Budget did not include funds to support the workforce. With the proposed expansions of early childhood education, it is more crucial than ever that the State supports attracting and retaining its child care workforce. Therefore, **DCCNY urges New**

York State to invest \$1.2 billion in a permanent child care workforce fund that will provide ongoing support to early childhood education staff, teachers, directors and providers.

Additionally, DCCNY calls on New York State to **develop a plan for subsequent years to establish a minimum pay scale and career ladder based on agreed-upon criteria to inform compensation supplement levels after the base pay scale for all has been increased.**

Adequately resource New York's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to ensure no eligible families are turned away or placed on waitlists. (\$2.3B)

Child Care Assistance Program

DCCNY applauds Governor Hochul for including new, sustained investments in the Child Care Assistance program. Secure additional, sustained funding for child care assistance (CCAP) to end the enrollment closures and waitlists.

However, New York City's Administration for Children's Services has shared a \$1.8 billion increased budget need to serve existing and anticipated enrollees. Furthermore, trends in enrollment and the closure status of nearly 30 counties outside New York City suggest that counties outside New York City need \$500 million to meet growing demand for child care.

DCCNY urges New York State to adequately **resource New York's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to ensure no eligible families are turned away or placed on waitlists. (\$2.3B)**,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We are happy to answer any questions and can be reached at gbrender@dccnyinc.org and slohr@dccnyinc.org.