



**ParentChild+ Testimony
New York State Legislative Committee on Human Services**

**Submitted by ParentChild+
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ParentChild+'s unique focus is on providing parents and other primary caregivers with the skills, knowledge, and materials they need to support school readiness in the home and build home learning environments that support children's language, literacy, numeracy, cognitive, and social-emotional skills. In doing this work, we are also helping parents learn what to look for in a childcare and education setting, how to identify and access their children's next educational steps, and how to support their children's continued academic progress. Our partners in this work in New York State include school districts, BOCES, social service agencies, literacy programs, community health centers, immigrant aid organizations, and community-based organizations. Focusing on school readiness and early literacy support for families living in communities challenged by poverty, isolation, limited educational resources, and language and literacy barriers, ParentChild+ provided over 46,000 home visits and distributed over 23,000 books & educational toys statewide last year.

Prior to entering pre-k or kindergarten, many of the children living furthest from opportunity and children from families with home languages other than English are being cared for by family members or in informal home-based childcare settings. These caregivers are the least likely to have access to information, materials, and activities to build their children's school readiness skills and ensure they have the language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that they need to enter a classroom ready to be successful students. ParentChild+ provides critical learning tools, books, and other educational, interaction-stimulating materials, to families with two- and three-year-olds. We reach families in their homes, where children spend the vast majority of their time even after they enter school, and if the children are not home but are with a neighbor or a family member, we also support home-based childcare providers in providing school readiness rich environments for all the children in their care.

The program helps families and caregivers build literacy and learning-rich environments in their homes. They engage in two visits a week in their homes with a community-based, linguistically matched early learning specialist, or home visitor, who introduces the materials to the family, and coaches parents in reading, conversation, and play activities that support language, social-emotional, and early literacy skills. ParentChild+ staff also connect families to social service, educational, and basic needs support when necessary and assist parents in planning for their children's next educational step, including registering their children for a pre-k or Head Start program.



We so appreciate the commitment by Governor Hochul and the legislature to ensure that children are reading on grade level. We at ParentChild+ are grateful for the investment in reading skills and increasing access to books for all children, and believe these are key to children's educational success and future achievement.

The investment in training teachers in the scientific methodology of phonics is critical to achieving this goal, but at ParentChild+ we know that the development of early literacy skills, a love of learning, and the social-emotional skills to navigate a classroom, and in fact to learn to read, begins long before a child enters a classroom, in the earliest years of their lives. That is why it is also so important to invest in early childhood programming that reaches and supports families before their children start school and will ensure that children arrive in their classrooms prepared to take advantage of trained teachers and high-quality curricula.

For 61 years ParentChild+ has collaborated with parents, caregivers, and children in their safest space, their homes. Our model provides 92 home visits and 46 books and education toys that support parents in developing children's early literacy and social-emotional skills and provides tools for parents or other caring adults to use in their homes when children are in their care.

While we applaud and appreciate the governor's ongoing commitment to childcare and early childhood education, it is our hope that increased investments will be made in programs like ParentChild+, programs that focus on the first and most important teachers of young children, their parents and primary caregivers.

ParentChild+ collaborates with families and home-based childcare providers throughout New York State, partnering with 15 programs across seven major counties—Onondaga, Erie, Westchester, Rockland, Nassau, Suffolk, and the Capital Region—as well as four boroughs of New York City. ParentChild+ looks forward to collaborating with Governor Hochul, the legislature, and all the state agencies committed to seeing that all New York children have an opportunity for success.

The support provided by New York State is critical to preparing children to enter school ready to be in a classroom and to ensuring that they move through school successfully. ParentChild+ appreciates the state funding of \$200,000, which supports work in three of our communities, but we humbly request a \$300,00 increase for a total of \$500,000 to expand our reach even further throughout the state supporting young children by support both parents with children and home based childcare providers.

Thank you,

Andre D. Eaton, ParentChild+
New York State Director