



**Testimony of Tamaé Memole
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Prevent Child Abuse New York
Submitted to the New York State
Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services
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Prevent Child Abuse New York's (PCA-NY) is a statewide non-profit whose mission is to prevent child abuse in all forms. We promote awareness of child abuse prevention and provide parents and caregivers the tools and resources they need to build protective factors to make communities safer and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Each year, New York State spends millions of dollars on interventions and remediation for child abuse and neglect. These are **secondary and tertiary interventions, implemented after abuse and neglect have been identified**. We believe that additional investments must be made in **Primary Prevention**, interventions that prevent abuse from occurring in the first place. Primary prevention aims to address the root causes of abuse and neglect – those factors that increase stress and pressure on families. Research demonstrates that family stress is the predominant risk factor for child abuse and neglect. Policies that foster economic stability, family supports, maternal health, childcare, nutrition, and other concrete resources can significantly alleviate these stressors and help prevent child abuse and other adverse childhood experiences.

Providing concrete supports to families minimizes stress and increases positive outcomes for children and families. We advocate for evidence-based policies and practices that address the root causes of child abuse and neglect, promoting family and child wellbeing through economic security, stable housing, universal home visiting, quality childcare, and youth programs. We strongly urge investment to strengthen families and the communities in which they live.

PCA-NY FY2027 Recommended Budget Priorities

HOME VISITING

We request funding to continue to continue and/or expand the evidence-informed programs already serving families across New York State:

- \$500,000 for ParentChild+ to restore prior year funding and to expand its support to more families in underserved communities across New York State.
- \$4.5 million for Nurse-Family Partnership. This amount would include the \$3 million proposed in the Executive Budget and add \$1.5 million to expand service to more families.

- We are pleased that the FY 2027 Executive Budget proposes \$26.3 million for Healthy Families NY base funding, which is supplemented with \$11M of adoption 'de-linking' funds, for a total of \$37 million in available funding. **We ask that no cuts are made to the FY2027 Executive Budget funding level.**

CHILD CARE

We strongly support the Executive Budget proposals to increase funding for child care for children under five, including funding for pilots for universal child care, by \$1.7 billion. We urge that these proposals are further strengthened by ensuring that sufficient funding is provided for families eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and investing in the child care workforce to alleviate chronic staffing shortages and ensure a well-trained is available to care for the children. We support the Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) proposal to create a \$1.2 billion permanent fund to support the child care work force. More information on ESCCC's proposals is submitted with my testimony.

FAMILY OPPORTUNITY CENTERS AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

We ask that you invest in primary prevention efforts by increasing funding for Family Opportunity Centers (FOCs) and Family Resource Centers (FRCs) through a \$5 million increase in the William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund ("Trust Fund"). The Trust Fund reaches thousands of children and families annually through FRCs and FOCs home visiting programs, parenting education programs, and other clinical and family strengthening programs. According to the 2023 OCFS Trust Fund Report, 86% of parents agreed that participating in Trust Fund programs helped them make their homes safer for their children.¹ A \$5 million increase for the Trust Fund to support FOCs and FOCs would expand the reach of the centers which help families enhance protective factors, build social capital, increase stability, improve functioning and self-reliance, and reduce the risk of child abuse.²

Thank you for consideration of our FY2027 NYS Budget Requests. We strongly urge you to invest in primary prevention to strengthen families and help ensure all children are nurtured and protected.

¹ 2023 NYS OCFS Trust Fund Report <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/2023-Trust-Fund-Annual-Infographic.pdf>

² National Family Support Network
https://www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org/_files/ugd/ec0538_3879587b4f994b16a627bc0da43852e4.pdf