

**Testimony in Support of Full Funding of Universal Child Care Programs  
in New York State**

**For the hearing of the  
Joint Budget and Legislative Committees**

**Submitted to the  
Human Services Committee**

**February 03, 2026**

Dear Chairwoman Senator Liz Krueger, Chairwoman Assemblymember Helene E. Weinstein, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Sandra Itainen, and I am a parent residing in Brooklyn, NY. I am writing to strongly urge your full support and funding to deliver Universal Child Care to New York State.

From the day our daughter was born, we could feel the financial hit. As freelancing/sole proprietor parents we didn't have any paid parental leave, and we had to depend solely on my spouse's income for the first few months of her life, which wasn't enough to sustain us. So I dipped into my retirement account and we both dipped into our credit cards.

When our daughter was 6 months, I went back to work and we hired a nanny 4 days/week so we could juggle work and childcare. When our daughter turned 1, we enrolled her at a daycare at \$2,500/month, which is a massive amount for a lower-middle income household like ours. We were making just enough not to qualify for government help, but not nearly enough to cover our monthly expenses. Our daughter is now 2, and we're both heavily in credit card debt (approx. \$15,000 each) due to childcare costs — with daycare being the single most expensive monthly cost. We live frugally and responsibly, and still, as two working parents, we can't make a comfortable living. We can't wait for her to start 3K next fall and hopefully start catching up on some of these credit card payments.

I urge legislators to expand universal childcare for all, and also implement paid parental leave for all parents for at least the first few months of a child's life. Parents shouldn't be forced into poverty just because they want a child. For us the cost of having a child is the reason we've decided not to have another. It's an embarrassment that a city like New York and a country like the US doesn't have paid parental leave or free universal childcare — like all other Western democracies do. I urge the full funding of a statewide 3K and Pre-K Guarantee, and 2- Care in New York City to tackle the issue of Child Care Affordability.

Sincerely,

Sandra Itainen  
Brooklyn, NY  
Submitted via New Yorkers United for Child Care ([united4childcare.org](http://united4childcare.org))