

**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 Yadira Jimenez, and I am a parent residing in New York, NY. I am writing to strongly urge your full support and funding to deliver Universal Child Care to New York State.

When my son was born in December 2020, I made the difficult decision to stay home and care for him. I felt fortunate to have that option, because my fear of anything happening to him was overwhelming. My husband is a firefighter, and due to his unpredictable schedule, we had no other viable childcare options - it all fell on me.

That choice came at a steep cost. Overnight, we became a one-income household supporting three people in New York City. Like so many families, we did what was necessary to keep our child safe, even though it set us back financially and professionally.

When my son was about two years old, I was offered a job doing what I truly love. I knew I could not pass up the opportunity - if I did, my career might never take off. I accepted the position, but the reality was sobering; my entire monthly income went directly to childcare. While I was proud to reenter the workforce, our financial situation did not improve. In practice, we were still living off one income.

Even more difficult was the fact that I had to settle for the best childcare I could afford, not the care I wanted for my son. That decision came with significant stress and many tears. The center was unorganized and did not provide the quality, consistency, or support that families expect but it was the only option within reach. No parent should be forced to choose between financial survival and their child's well-being.

This is why childcare policy must go beyond access alone. While free or affordable childcare is absolutely necessary, it is not sufficient. Families should not be pushed into lower-quality settings simply because those are the only options available. Free childcare must also be safe, high quality, and reliably monitored.

I urge the Legislature to take the following actions:

**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**

1. Fully fund universal, free childcare - so families are not forced to choose between working and affording care.
2. Invest in the childcare workforce - through living wages, benefits, and professional development, recognizing that quality care depends on stable, well-supported educators.
3. Strengthen oversight and accountability - to ensure all childcare programs, especially publicly funded ones, meet consistent health, safety, and quality standards.
4. Expand capacity and hours - to reflect the realities of working families, including parents with nontraditional or emergency-response schedules.

My son is now in elementary school, but I will never leave other families behind. Childcare is not a luxury; it is critical infrastructure. When families thrive, our workforce is stronger, our economy grows, and our children are safer and better prepared for the future. I will continue to advocate for childcare that is free, safe, and high quality - for every family, without exception.

Sincerely,

Yadira Jimenez

New York, NY

Submitted via New Yorkers United for Child Care (united4childcare.org)