

Brandon Scott

Regarding the Joint Legislative Hearing on Human Services / Child Care Funding

My name is Brandon Scott. I live in New York City with my wife, and we are parents of two young children. I am also a Parent Leader and Policy Fellow with the Early Childhood Policy & Advocacy Lab at EdTrust-New York. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about how child care policy affects my family's daily life.

I work full-time, and on paper, our family can look stable. In reality, child care gaps and eligibility rules create strain that isn't visible from the outside.

My wife is a stay-at-home parent, a disabled military veteran, and currently working toward her master's degree. Under current child care guidelines, families may qualify for assistance, including child care vouchers, when a parent is enrolled in an undergraduate program. Those same supports do not apply to graduate study. Because my wife is pursuing a master's degree, we do not qualify, despite her full-time caregiving and disability.

Our older child attends a 3K program we value, but after-school care doesn't begin until kindergarten, leaving a real gap. Our younger child is in a local daycare that is costly and offers basic care at market rate. We are paying for access, not extras.

We are also navigating the reality that one or both of our children may be neuro-divergent, which makes stability and consistency in care especially important.

Each of these realities on its own may seem manageable. Taken together, they show how child care policy often looks at families in pieces rather than as a whole. Families like mine are working, caregiving, and planning carefully for our children, yet the supports meant to help us move forward remain out of reach.

Expanding child care access, including the free two-year-old pilot and increased subsidies, would help close some of these gaps. At the same time, eligibility rules and service limitations remain real roadblocks for families like mine.

Support should help families move forward, not leave them managing the same gaps year after year. Policies that reflect shared responsibility, disability, veteran status, continued education, and developmental needs would better support families who are doing what policy encourages but are still constrained by how systems are designed.

I urge the State to invest in child care systems that allow families not just to get by, but to plan and build toward long-term stability for themselves and for families across New York.

Thank you for considering my family's experience as you finalize the state budget.  
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