



**Testimony before the Joint Fiscal Committees  
on the SFY 2026-27 Executive Budget  
Labor/Workforce Development Budget Hearing  
February 25, 2026**

The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families, better known by its acronym, CHCF, joins our statewide advocacy partners, and the child care providers that we support, in calling on the New York State Legislature to champion the invaluable professionals who deliver care for young New Yorkers, and who support New York families in being able to engage in the larger state workforce. As Governor Hochul has announced historic childcare funding proposals and a commitment to establishing universal childcare in New York State, we continue to stress that *none of this can be done without a thriving childcare workforce*. We must build upon these historic investments by establishing a reliable compensation fund to supplement and stabilize the wages of all members of the childcare workforce. The continuing lack of priority given to the struggling childcare sector, who we lean on to meet family and child needs, has been disheartening despite so many gains made in expanding eligibility for free or reduced-cost care for families. State leaders are letting down a workforce that has done, and continues to do, so much for New York, and leaving the childcare system open to further destabilization just as we are seeing a shift in support for a universal system.

As we continue on the path to universal childcare, establishing rates that incorporate a thriving wage for the workforce *must* be centered in our planning and implementation. To begin moving us in the right direction, New York State can create a \$1.2B permanent state fund to increase child care worker compensation sufficient to offer all members of the child care workforce a significant boost in income (Child Care Workforce Pay Equity Fund S.5533 (Brisport)/A.492 (Hevesi)). Challenges with finding and retaining childcare educators and those in supporting roles continues to be a top issue raised from the field and ultimately makes any investments to expand eligibility for affordable care less meaningful as families struggle to find care. These staffing difficulties are directly connected to the historically low wages and disinterest of city and state leaders to take meaningful steps to recognize the value of these professionals. It cannot be overstated that promising investments in expanded access to childcare for New York families without explicitly and deliberately supporting the childcare workforce will make truly achieving universal childcare unattainable.





The average wage for the childcare workforce – which is 94% female<sup>1</sup>, more than 53% people of color, and roughly 40% immigrant<sup>2</sup> – is approximately \$38,000, with family-based providers (licensed programs in residential settings) making even less. In contrast, the median annual salary for full-time New York workers is approximately \$67,000 per year.<sup>3</sup> In fact, child care educators earn less than 96% of all other occupations in New York State.<sup>4</sup> Further, 12% of child care workers live below the federal poverty level, compared to 5% of all workers statewide.<sup>5</sup>

The \$1.2B state fund would boost wages by approximately \$12,000 – similar to the \$14,000 supplement (on average) that Washington D.C. implemented in 2022. Washington D.C.'s increased compensation has significantly reduced turnover in the field, boosting child care educator employment, and expanding capacity. Looking ahead, New York must establish a minimum pay scale and career ladder based upon agreed upon criteria across all stakeholder groups. This pay scale will inform compensation supplement levels after the base pay scale for all has been increased.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the unprecedented investments in the Child Care Assistance Program, the expansion of PreK statewide, and 3K expansion and the launch of 2-Care in New York City – which we applaud – the Executive Budget allocates no funds for the child care workforce. And, although the state was able to distribute bonuses to the workforce as a result of limited federal stabilization funding from the pandemic, if no funds are allocated by the state in the final FY27 budget, this will be the second year in a row since federal pandemic funds ended that the child care workforce will receive zero direct support.

**We join our allies in collectively urging the NYS Legislature to adopt and build from the Governor's proposed investments in expanding access to childcare across New York State by creating a \$1.2B permanent state fund to increase child care worker compensation sufficient**

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<sup>1</sup> Raising New York (March 2023). New York State's Infant and Toddler Workforce. Retrieved from:

[https://raisingnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/State-of-the-Childcare-Report\\_F\\_3.17.2021.pdf](https://raisingnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/State-of-the-Childcare-Report_F_3.17.2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Migration Policy Institute (2015). New York: Quick Stats on Young Children and Workers Providing Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ECEC-Workforce-NewYork-FactSheet.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Schuyler Center (Feb 2026). Schuyler Center's First Look at the NYS 2026-27 Executive Budget as It Intersects with Our Policy Priorities. Retrieved from: <https://scaany.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Schuyler-Center-First-Look-at-the-Executive-Budget-26-27.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Schuyler Center (January 2025) Bolstering Availability of High-Quality Child Care By Paying the Workforce a Thriving Wage. Retrieved from: <https://scaany.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Child-Care-Workforce-2025-Schuyler-Center-One-Page.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Rock, J. (October 2024). New York Child Care Providers are Bleeding Workers as Federal Money Dries Up. New York Focus. Retrieved from: <https://nysfocus.com/2024/10/01/child-care-funding-century-foundation>

<sup>6</sup> Doromal, J.B., Lamb, R., Greenberg, E., Sandstrom, H., and Jimenez Parra, L. (Mat 2025). Wage Enhancements Reduce Educator Turnover in DC's Child Care Centers: Findings from Staff Records and Interviews with Center Directors. The Urban Institute. Retrieved from: [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/Wage\\_Enhancements\\_Reduce\\_Educator\\_Turnover\\_in%20DC's\\_Child\\_Care\\_Centers.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/Wage_Enhancements_Reduce_Educator_Turnover_in%20DC's_Child_Care_Centers.pdf)





**to offer all members of the child care workforce a significant boost in income. This is a non-negotiable, necessary component to deliver on the shared goal and state leader promises to establish universal child care in New York State.**

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*CHCF is a non-profit organization with a 44-year history of combining education, capacity-building, and advocacy to strengthen the support system and continuum of learning for children and youth from birth through school-age. To find out more about our organizational work or to ask questions of the provided testimony, please reach out to Danielle Demeuse, Director of Policy for CHCF, at [ddemeuse@chcfinc.org](mailto:ddemeuse@chcfinc.org).*



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