



**Testimony of Winning Beginning NY**

**New York State Assembly Committee on Ways & Means, Honorable Helene Weinstein,  
Chair**

**New York State Senate Committee on Finance, Honorable Liz Krueger, Chair**

**New York State Assembly Committee of Social Services, Honorable Andrew Hevesi,  
Chair**

**New York State Senate Committee on Social Services, Honorable Roxanne J. Persaud,  
Chair**

**New York State Assembly Committee on Children and Families, Honorable Ellen Jaffee,  
Chair**

**New York State Senate Committee on Children and Families, Honorable Velmanette  
Montgomery, Chair**

**New York State Assembly Committee on Aging, Honorable Harry Bronson, Chair**

**New York State Senate Committee on Aging, Honorable Rachel May, Chair**

**Presented by Gregory Brender, Director of Children and Youth Services at United  
Neighborhood Houses**

**January 30, 2020**

**Winning Beginning NY is New York's statewide coalition working to inform policymakers and the public about the many benefits of early care and learning for children from the prenatal period through age eight. Our priorities include high-quality after-school, child**

care, early intervention, home visiting, and pre-K. The coalition aims to build a broad-based constituency to make investments in quality early care and learning a top public priority.

## **Child Care**

The cost of child care in New York (and around the country), is unaffordable for nearly all low and middle-income families, and due to inadequate funding, fewer than 20% of low-income New York families eligible for child care subsidies are receiving them. At the same time, child care educator salaries are so low that many live in or near poverty. The average median wage for a child care educator in New York is \$12.38 an hour or \$25,760 per year. And, child care providers, unable to meet rising costs, are closing their doors in rising numbers.

This year, New York— with its Child Care Availability Task Force leading the way— has the opportunity to set our state on a path toward universal high-quality, affordable child care.

Winning Beginning NY and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care are deeply concerned that Governor Cuomo included no new state investments in child care in his Executive Budget. We urge the Legislature to include these investments in your one-house bills and work with the Executive to ensure the following commitments and investments are included in New York's 2020-2021 final enacted budget.

1. New York commits to achieving universal access to quality, affordable child care by 2025; and
2. To set New York on a path to meeting the goal of universal access, and to curb the loss of providers and the exodus of educators from the field while working toward this goal, New York makes significant building block investments in child care this year, including:
  - a. Investing at least \$40M to create a fund to increase workforce compensation and improve child care quality. Low compensation for child care educators leaves many educators living in or near poverty. It also leads to high workforce turnover rates, causing instability for infants and young children who need consistency in caregivers in order to establish healthy and secure attachments. Priority should be given to programs that serve low-income families and care for infants and toddlers; and
  - b. At least \$60 million in the state's child care subsidy program to expand access to more working families by making eligibility levels and co-pays more fair and uniform across the state. At present, because there are not enough resources to serve all working families eligible for child care

assistance, some counties cut off eligibility to families earning as little as \$27,729 (130% of poverty, family of 3). At the same time, some counties, again because of inadequate funding, must set co-pays that are so high (exceeding \$600 per month in numerous counties) that many families cannot afford to accept a subsidy. This investment would enable more working families to access quality child care this year, and lay the groundwork for the state to develop a model child care system that provides all New York families access to quality, affordable child care.

## **After-School**

Winning Beginning NY along with our partner, the Network for Youth Success proposes a holistic agenda to strengthen the afterschool system towards universal access by

- 1) Increasing investments in expanded learning opportunities
- 2) Safeguarding current funds for afterschool programs
- 3) Providing equitable support for professional development and quality standards for all state-funded grantees.

In order to achieve these goals, WBNY urges New York State to:

### Restore \$5 million in funding for Advantage After-School Program

For the ninth year in the row, the Executive Budget eliminates \$5 million in funding for the Advantage After-School Program. The loss of this funding will impact 2,500 children and their families who depend on after-school programs.

### Increase investments in expanded learning opportunities

Invest an additional \$15.2 million in the Empire State After-School Program and an additional \$5.12 million in the Advantage After School Program. This would increase the per student rate to \$2,320 while continuing to serve the same number of students. Serving the same number of students is critical. This would also account for the minimum wage increase while holding everything else constant. \

Program costs ranges from just under \$3,000 in Buffalo to \$6,000 in NYC. Most of that amount already goes to paying salaries, before the upcoming increase in minimum wage. Programs continue to have a difficult time both increasing salaries and paying for supplies/activities that not only support programs, but make those programs high quality.

### Increase investments in expanded learning opportunities

Dedicate at least 25% of revenue gained from legalization of adult use cannabis to afterschool and summer programs, if legalization occurs. Legalization of adult use cannabis must include strategies to prevent children and youth from partaking in marijuana use. Research shows that afterschool programs decrease drug abuse and misuse: They are the ideal venue to not only educate children and youth about the dangers of drug abuse, but (perhaps more importantly) to provide and strengthen the Protective Factors that have been shown to decrease drug use. Other states have

dedicated revenue to afterschool programs, including Alaska, which dedicated 12.5% of revenue. No program would be required to accept funding from this funding stream should it be included in the final budget.

Safeguard funding for existing state grantees

Baseline \$22.3 million for Advantage, and extend funding for the \$10.7 million minimum wage increase through FY23-24. Support the \$10 million addition proposed to the Empire State After-School Program.

Funding for the Advantage program has been cut and restored annually for the last 9 years. ESD/SVP funds many Extended School Day programs that keep youth safe and provide enrichment outside of the traditional school day. YDP allows counties to determine what types of programming will best meet their local needs, and many fund afterschool and summer programs.

The \$10 million proposed addition for the Empire State After-School Program in the Executive Budget will support additional students.

Ensure equitable support for professional development and quality standards for all state-funded grantees:

Invest an additional \$1.8 million in the Educational Incentive Program (EIP) for total funding of \$7 million, and direct \$5 million in new funding towards three new Technical Assistance Centers to support all state-funded afterschool and summer grantees.

EIP provides scholarships to assist with credentialing activities, college credit-bearing coursework, and non-credit bearing trainings. EIP funds were depleted at the end of September, leading to a waitlist of applications totaling \$250,000 that would have been eligible to receive a scholarship if additional funding was available.

TACs could organize convenings for networking and professional development, provide resources, phone and on-site technical assistance, and help state funded grantees with compliance.

## **Home Visiting**

Unfortunately, while existing home visiting programs are proven to decrease child abuse, increase school readiness, and improve health outcomes, research-based programs in our State still only serve 5% of eligible children. Winning Beginning NY urges New York State to:

- Increase investment in all four research-based home visiting programs:
  - Parents as Teachers: \$3 million
  - Parent-Child Home Program: \$2 million
  - Healthy Families New York: \$2.5 million
  - Nurse-Family Partnership: \$6 million

- Support Executive Budget investment of \$4M (over two years) for the First 1,000 Days on Medicaid Initiative-- three sites in high-need areas.
- Invest \$200,000 in the NYS Home Visiting Coordination Initiative, which aims to provide cutting-edge information, build cross-program relationships, and offer additional opportunities for cross-systems operations. Ultimately, it will help programs increase staff retention and serve more families.





## Empire State Campaign for Child Care

### 2020-2021 Child Care Budget Request

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(January 2020)

