



# Prevent Child Abuse New York™

**Testimony at the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Human Services  
Thursday, January 23, 2019  
Provided by: Tim Hathaway, Executive Director**

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Tim Hathaway, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse New York.

Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) provides three primary services both locally and across the state of New York. Our **community awareness** efforts connect with over 600,000 New Yorkers and are aimed at increasing understanding of how individuals can use the Five Protective Factors to help prevent child maltreatment. Specific programs include the Parent Helpline and the Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign.

Our **training and technical assistance** efforts are geared to providing professionals and communities knowledge, tools and resources to make great environments for families and children. We provide Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Certification, and run the New York State Parenting Education Partnership, Enough Abuse Sexual Abuse Prevention, Community-based Strengthening Families and Child Abuse Prevention courses. In addition, we provide direct staff consulting and mini grants to organization that are implementing prevention strategies. **This year, through our newly created Building Resilient Communities efforts, we have shared prevention resources and training with over 4,000 child care providers, teachers, law enforcement, social services staff, and others in communities across New York State. We hope that you will support our efforts to make New York a trauma-informed state.**

Finally, our **policy and advocacy** work drives initiatives both at a state and local level designed to change systems that impact child maltreatment issues. We advocate for evidence-based policy solutions that target root causes of child maltreatment including increases for early childhood home visiting, early care and education system development, reduction of unplanned pregnancies, and family stability/ economic issues. **Again this year, we will push for legislative support of a tax check-off box with revenue going to the Children's Trust Fund. And we are supporting**

legislation to mandate trauma training for domestic violence shelter staff, as well as working on policies that would see more child care providers and pediatricians trauma-informed.

Unfortunately, the Executive Budget does very little in terms of prevention. If New York State does not start investing in programs that strengthen families, we will continue to see abuse and neglect, children removed from their homes, parental incarceration, and other direct effects of a lack of commitment from the State.

### **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting**

These voluntary programs are research-based and proven to decrease abuse, improve health outcomes, and increase school readiness. **All of the programs we support were either not funded or flat-funded in the Executive Budget, save for Healthy Families New York, which saw a long overdue and much-needed COLA proposed.** Although we know these programs garner great benefits for families and communities, only 5% of eligible children currently receive home visiting services. According to a report from the New York State Citizen Review Panels, more than 250,000 children in our State could benefit from home visiting.

**We ask that you invest the following:**

- **Parents as Teachers: \$3 million**
- **Parent-Child Home Program: \$2 million**
- **Healthy Families New York: \$2.5 million**
- **Nurse-Family Partnership: \$6 million**

**We also ask the you continue to support the home visiting pilots include in the 1,000 Days initiative.**

In addition, we know that the home visiting workforce is hard working and stressed. In order to retain staff, increase capacity, and better connect programs to each other, **we ask that you continue to support the New York State Home Visiting Coordination Initiative.** Last year, PCANY received a generous legislative award to launch the Initiative. Since October, we have offered monthly webinars to home visitors, program administrators, and others. The most recent webinar shared information on the Paid Family Leave Program and how home visiting programs can help get the families they work with enrolled. Upcoming topics including: working with immigrants, infant mental health, and cultural competency. We hope to expand the Initiative in 2019 but cannot do that without your help.

### **Child Care**

**The Executive Budget does not include an increase in subsidy dollars.** It does include some funding for the market rate and allows child care providers to receive scholarship benefits even if they attend school on a part-time basis. It also tasks the

Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) with including child care as a priority in their 2019 Strategic Plans. We wholeheartedly support this proposal.

However, it also includes a new employer-based child care tax credit. This proposed credit may be helpful for families who work for large corporations but, for the parents cobbling together minimum wage jobs it is useless. **NYS needs to focus its efforts on the subsidy population—those families that could pull themselves out of poverty if they had essential child care.**

The Legislature last year created the Child Care Availability Task Force and PCANY is grateful to have representation in that group. The charge to the Task Force is to find creative ways to strengthen the child care system. We ask children to use their creativity all the time; we should not be asking the same when it comes to funding this system. It is already on shaky ground. Programs—the majority administered and staffed by women and minorities—are closing across the State. Owners and operators of programs are struggling to meet new minimum wage requirements. The workforce is leaving the field for easier jobs at big box stores. NYS must use the Task Force to come up with serious and implementable reforms. But first, **NYS must make a large investment in the subsidy system—just as we did in Pre-K many years ago. We support the Empire State Child Care Campaign and *Winning Beginning NY's* request of \$51M.**

### **Housing**

Inadequate or unpredictable housing causes unnecessary stress for families, which can sometimes lead to abuse. And let's face it—no child should have to worry about having a roof over their head.

Again this year, **we urge you to invest \$40 million for each of five years (total \$200 million) in the Home Stability Support program.** This initiative creates a statewide rent supplement for families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance benefits and who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. The supplements will be a bridge between the current shelter allowance and 85% of the fair market rent determined by HUD.

### **Closing**

Thank you for considering our budget requests. We know that funding is tight and that your ability to augment the Executive Budget proposal will be difficult. We also know that child abuse is preventable if we invest in programs that support and strengthen families. We think that's money well spent.

\*Note: PCANY supports the full *Winning Beginning NY* legislative agenda.

