



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

New York State Makes Significant Investment in Child Care in the 2022-23 New York State Budget

This budget will lay a strong foundation for Universal Child Care in New York if the expansions to NYS child care are rolled out swiftly and with stakeholder input.

The final bills of the 2022-23 New York State Budget were released in the early hours of Saturday, April 9, 2022. Due to the tireless efforts of a broad-based and inclusive advocacy coalition – including the WNY Women's Foundation in a leadership role – the final budget includes significant new funds for child care, although not the \$5 billion our coalition had pushed for.

The budget takes steps towards a system that provides sustainable compensation to child care providers and affordable, quality child care for more working families by:

- Expanding eligibility for child care subsidies to 300% of the federal poverty level, meaning an eligible family of four earning up to \$83,250 (\$54,930 for a family of 2) will be eligible for assistance to pay for child care. This increase stands to make tens of thousands of New York families newly eligible for child care assistance.
- Capping copays for families with income less than 300% of the federal poverty level at 10% of income over the federal poverty level. This means a family of 4 with income at 300% of the federal poverty level would pay no more than \$5,550 annually for child care; a family of 2 no more than \$3,662).
- Increasing the market rate, used as a basis for provider reimbursement, from the 69th to the 80th percentile.
- Investing \$343 million to continue stabilization funds for child care providers, with 75% of the funds to be used for "workforce initiatives."
- Making modifications to requirements that often are used to exclude family child care providers and some center-based programs from participating in universal pre-k. These small changes are crucial as we continue to push for a holistic, equitable birth-through-school-age early care and education system.

WNY Women's Foundation with our WNY elected officials, led by Senator Tim Kennedy, once again secured \$2M for the Erie County facilitated enrollment child care subsidy program. It is anticipated that this program will serve as a bridge to sustained higher eligibility levels this year.

There are shortcomings in this budget, and in the coming days, we will also turn our attention to working closely with our legislative champions and with the Governor, to pass legislation this session to address some of them. The Empire State Campaign for Child Care's top priorities for the rest of the legislative session include:



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- Ensuring access to child care subsidies to all otherwise eligible children.
- Decoupling child care subsidies from hours of work (as found in A.7661 (Hevesi)/S.6655 (Brisport)) and make that rule mandatory (not up to the discretion of each county). This will make subsidies accessible for the many parents who work variable and non-traditional hours.
- Requiring automatic hikes to reimbursement rates to all providers when the market rate percentile is increased.
- Paying child care subsidies based on enrollment, not based on attendance.

There is much more work to be done to achieve a more equitable expansion, and sustained support for child care providers (90+% women), women-owned child care businesses, and the workforce, especially women who assume a disproportionate share of child care responsibilities.