

Testimony submitted to the Joint Fiscal Committees
on the SFY 2024-25 Executive Budget
Human Services Budget Hearing
January 31, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on the 2024-25 New York State Executive Budget.

ECE On The Move is a grassroots organization serving 600 family child care providers in NYC. Provide a sustained increase in compensation for New York's child care workforce by:

- o creating a permanent state fund to provide compensation supplements for all members of the child care workforce who work in licensed, regulated programs; and
- o increasing rates for legally-exempt child care providers as a means of raising compensation for these providers.

End New York's rule of providing child care assistance only during the exact hours of parents or caretakers work (S.5327A (Brisport)/ A.4986A (Hevesi), which makes it difficult for those in the gig economy, or in retail with fluctuating schedules. A bill was passed by the Legislature in 2023, then vetoed by the Governor for fiscal reasons.

End New York's rule requiring parents to or caretakers to meet a minimum earnings requirement to be eligible for child care assistance. (A.1303(Clark)/S.4924(Ramos)).

End the practice of denying New York children child care assistance due to immigration status by offering state-funded child care assistance to immigrant children barred by federal law from participating in the New York's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
Increase Compensation for All Members of the Child Care Workforce

Support the Executive's proposal to distribute underutilized pandemic funds to members of the child care workforce as soon as possible.

Create a permanent state child care fund to increase child care worker compensation. This fund should be robustly resourced and sufficient to offer all child care workers compensation parity with similar positions in the public school system. All members of the child care workforce who work in licensed, regulated programs should be eligible to receive compensation supplements from this fund (\$1.2 billion);

Increase rates for legally-exempt child care providers to 75% of the family child care rate and to 85% for providers who are eligible for the enhanced rate as a means of raising compensation for these providers, and require that the enhanced rate is made readily available to interested legally-exempt providers in all Local Social Services Districts (\$50 million).

Commit New York State to using a cost estimation model to determine state child care reimbursement rates by 2025 with meaningful input from child care providers and parents (\$250,000).

Help Ensure ALL New Yorkers can Access Child Care

While New York's expansions to child care assistance in the last two years have been historic, there are still many New York families who face unscalable barriers to accessing child care assistance, among them, families where parents or caretakers work unpredictable or fluctuating work hours. New York currently allows parents child care assistance only for the exact hours they work or attend school or training. 1 This practice effectively makes child care assistance unavailable to the many New York parents who work jobs with inconsistent or rotating schedules, offer only part-time hours, or are part of the growing gig economy.

A recent report by the Bipartisan Policy Institute reports that nationally, a third of parents don't know their work schedule more than two weeks in advance. This practice is also detrimental to children's wellbeing, denying them the consistent early childhood education and predictable schedules that allow them to thrive. The families facing these and other challenges that come with employment that pays inadequate income and offers unpredictable hours are disproportionately Black, brown and immigrant. Another barrier that impacts many of these same families: a New York rule that requires working parents/ caretakers to earn at least minimum wage to be eligible for child care assistance. 2

A bill to decouple child care assistance from hours of work, was passed overwhelmingly by the Legislature in 2023, then vetoed by the Governor for fiscal reasons. This bill has been reintroduced this session: S.5327A (Brisport)/ A.4986A (Hevesi). In addition, A.1303 (Clark)/S.4924(Ramos) would prohibit requiring parents or caretakers to meet a minimum earnings requirement or work a minimum number of hours to be eligible for child care assistance. The Executive Budget contains no language nor allocates any funds to end these practices.

Another barrier to child care assistance: immigration status bars some otherwise eligible children from CCAP. The need to end this exclusion has become more urgent with more than 150,000 asylum seekers newly arriving in New York this past year. Data indicate that in FY 2023, about 22,000 of the new arrivals are children under age 12. 3 While New York leaders have been working hard to pave the way for asylum-seekers to be able to work, those who have children cannot work without child care. In last year's Enacted Budget, New York for the first time funded a small pilot program to help the families of children who are currently excluded due to their immigration status to access child care. The number of families needing assistance has grown exponentially since last year. The Executive Budget allocates no funds to expand assistance for these excluded families.

About ECE On The Move

ECE On The Move is a member of Empire State Campaign for Child Care. Founder, Gladys Jones serves on the Governor's Child Care Availability Task Force. We work to address family child care grievance issues around pay and parent enrollment throughout NYC.

Thank you so much,

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I am a Public Voices Fellow with the OpEd Project in partnership with the National Black Child Development Institute