



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Announces State Investment in Putnam County Child Care

PETE HARCKHAM June 10, 2022

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*Brewster, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham, joined by a number of child care advocates, daycare providers and parents, announced today an increase of state funding and support for child care and working families in Putnam County.

New York State is investing \$7 billion over four years, reflecting that access to quality child care is critical to children, families and a statewide economic recovery. This increase makes New York State a national leader regarding payment rates.

Harckham said, “Child care is essential for many reasons. Studies show that the sooner you start children with education and socialization, the better their outcomes—and the less money is spent on special services to help them later in life. Also, there is an economic benefit for families, as parents can go to work knowing their children are in a safe place that is affordable. With the investment we have made in the State Budget for child care, more parents will be able to send their children to daycare and then get back to work.”

The announcement took place at a special press conference held at the Over the Rainbow Learning Center. Among those attending the event were Jeanne Wagner, executive director of the Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam Counties; Bonnie Fogarty and Kayla Hendrickson from the YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester, which operates three daycare programs in Mahopac; and Kathleen Murphy, the day care registrar for Putnam County.

To see a video of the announcement, click [here](#).

This spring, the New York State Senate approved the largest investment in child care subsidies in New York State history. It included \$2 billion to increase the number of families receiving child care financial assistance and the amount child care providers are paid for their essential services. This \$2 billion in childcare subsidies includes \$894 million in New York State Child Care Block Grant new funding passed in the recent State Budget. Altogether, this is part of the New York Senate’s unprecedented commitment of \$7 billion to child care over the next four years.

“We appreciate the increased investment in child care in the New York State budget,” said Wagner. “This funding will allow greater access to quality, affordable care and will support parents who can go to work with peace of mind.”

Child care is an essential service, Harckham noted, and in New York working families need access to it. With this in mind, the initial eligibility levels for families will be increased in August 2022 to up to 300% of the federal poverty level (\$83,250 for a family of four), up from 200%, extending eligibility to hundreds of thousands of young children in New York.

In Putnam County, 57 child care providers will share \$4 million in stabilization grants being awarded for the first time ever. New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) manages the child care funding.

Rita Acerno, program director of Over the Rainbow Learning Center, said, “The child care industry continues to struggle, and parents are still having a tough time paying for daycare programs. But we know that with continued support from the state, we will be able to maintain our services for local families and

their children.”

Erin Felice, a single-mother from Putnam Lake and one of three parents to speak at the press conference, said, “It has been hard to find a safe place for my son to grow, and funding for day care allows me to keep working and building our future.”