



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Delivers \$50,000 to Build Nature-Based Playground at YWCA of Ulster County

MICHELLE HINCHEY September 14, 2022



**KINGSTON, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey today announced a \$50,000 grant awarded by her office to the YWCA of Ulster County to fund the construction of the Magic Circle School Nature-Based Playground, which will serve students and be open to all Kingston families on weekends. The funding, which Hinchey secured through the State and Municipal Facilities Capital (SAM) grant program, will be used to build custom nature-based equipment for two separate playgrounds at the YWCA’s Clinton Avenue Campus; one playground will be created for pre-K and kindergarteners and the other for infants and toddlers.

“Every child deserves to have equitable access to the outdoors, and I am so proud to deliver this state grant to the YWCA for a new, 100% nature-based playground in Kingston that will give children and all young families in our community a healthy, safe, and environmentally-sustainable place to play, learn, explore, and grow,” **Senator Michelle Hinchey said.** “Strengthening our children’s connection to the outdoors goes hand in hand with strengthening their mental, social and physical health, and the Magic Circle School Nature-Based Playground will be a haven for their development.”

**YWCA of Ulster County CEO Athena Filakos said,** “We are so grateful to Senator Hinchey for recognizing the benefits of play-spaces that are worthy of our children’s potential to create and innovate. There is no more obvious way to capture and grow a young person’s imagination than the natural world, and even in urban play-spaces, the elements of nature can be honored in order to bring forth a child’s lifelong love of the outdoors.”

A champion of early childhood education, Senator Hinchey fought for and secured a historic \$7 billion through the FY’23 State Budget to boost support for childcare providers, like the YWCA, make childcare more affordable for working families, and close existing childcare deserts. Specific actions taken through that budget investment included increasing the income threshold for childcare assistance to \$80,000 for a family of four so that more families can qualify for support, expanding employer childcare tax credits to incentivize employers to provide childcare for employees, and delivering direct support to childcare providers through business expansion grants, salary increases, and benefits.

###