

Access to Child Care: The Key to Economic Recovery in the Mid-Hudson Region

We have a unique opportunity this year to move NYS forward toward a high-quality, culturally responsive, universal child care system within the next 4 years by: expanding access to child care subsidies regardless of employment or immigration status; by raising child care workforce compensation; and increasing provider reimbursement rates. Funding would come from remaining CRSSA/ARPA child care COVID relief funds, unrestricted ARPA funds, existing CCDBG funds, and state tax revenues. The Executive Budget is likely to expand access to about 21,000 children – falling far short of what NY families need.

Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) ask is **\$5 billion**:

- \$3 billion for subsidies
- \$1 billion for a workforce stabilization fund
- \$400 million for a 2nd round of stabilization grants
- \$1.6 billion for a reimbursement rate structure set at 90th percentile of market rates

Child Care is Difficult to Afford for Nearly Every Parent/Family

The US Dept of Health and Human Services says family payments for child care **should not exceed 7% of income**.

- Child care is often the biggest bill a family faces - more than rent or mortgage.
- A Westchester family of 4 with an infant and a preschooler – with 2 parents working 40 hours a week for minimum wage (\$15/hour) – is over-income for subsidy. Center-based care exceeds **half their income**.
- The child care “system” has been propped up by a workforce that makes less than 98% of all occupations!

Child Care Supply is Inadequate

64% of NYS’s census tracts are “child care deserts”- at least 50 children in those areas had either no child care available or there were 3 plus children for every available slot. COVID hit the child care industry hard, with nearly 50 programs closing in Westchester alone. Infant/toddler slots and non-traditional hours are hard to find.

Our child care industry is at its breaking point. Pre-pandemic, most child care businesses struggled to make ends meet due to low subsidy reimbursement rates and high operating costs. Now, some are turning children away because they are unable to hire and retain staff.

If we make our child care more affordable for more families AND help child care programs cover the real operating costs of safe, quality child care, then we will see healthier children, a larger and more productive workforce, and an energized economy.

#FundChildCare in this year’s budget to make a two-generation impact. Let’s get parents, especially women, back in the workforce, and support the healthy development of *all* children.

#NYSUniversalchildcare

