



Michelle Paige
Executive Director

Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity

September 21, 2023 at 10:00AM

Int 0941-2023

Good morning, I am Michelle Paige, Executive Director for the Mayor's Office of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Thank you to Chair Cabán, Council Member Gutierrez, other members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity and all Council members joining today's hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to share the important work this office is doing in support of New York City's early childhood education system and to testify about Int. 941. I am joined by the other two members of the Office, Tovah Gottesman, Deputy Director and Aaron Yarbrough, Senior Project Manager for Data Management.

We appreciate the Council's continued commitment to ensuring New York City has a high-quality birth to 5 early education system.

The Mayor's Office of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

In June 2022, Mayor Adams released the Blueprint for Child Care and Early Childhood Education - a plan for creating accessible, equitable, high-quality and affordable child care and education in New York City. The Blueprint has five ambitious goals:

1. Offer an accessible child care experience rooted in equity to New York City families
2. Make child care affordable for families
3. Increase child care enrollment across the city
4. Ensure child care programs are high-quality and establish systems of support for the early childhood workforce
5. Create oversight and accountability structures for child care and early childhood education

Achieving a high quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood system requires collaboration and partnership across more than a dozen city agencies, as well as our partners at the State, early childhood stakeholders, educators, and parents. We are pleased to share that of the 21 strategies laid out in the blueprint,

three-quarters are complete or are on track to meet their goal. Some highlights include: the number of children enrolled in care with an ACS-issued low-income voucher has increased nearly 230% compared to June 2022; we reduced the average yearly co-payment amount families must pay per child from \$1,300 in May 2022 to \$170; ACS cleared the voucher waitlist, offering the families of 35,000 children the opportunity to apply for child care assistance; in the first six months of the MyCity portal, the first online application for child care assistance, over 16,700 families have applied for child care; we launched a new child care center property tax abatement and business income tax credit; and launched the \$100m Child Care Quality and Innovation Initiative with Robin Hood aimed at improving access to high-quality, affordable child care.

One of the strategies in the Blueprint calls for the establishment of the Office of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Officially launched in February 2023, the mission of this Office is to ensure New York City children and their families have equitable access to high-quality, affordable child care and early childhood education. The Office will lead strategy and coordinate planning among City agencies; foster innovation in partnership with families, providers, experts, and the private sector; and promote effective communication, policy advocacy, and public engagement. We are excited to continue to build on the work that is already underway and chart the course to provide equitable and affordable child care. One of the top priorities for this office is to engage with families and providers so that their voices, feedback, and recommendations are part of the solution to strengthening supporting our city's early education system.

To that end, in April, our Office held the first-ever summit focused on reimagining the Child Care and Early Childhood Education system. The conference included Councilmember Menin, parents, child care providers,

advocates, the private sector, and government agencies to discuss how we can strengthen our early education system. The ideas and feedback generated at the summit will inform the next phase of strategic planning that our office will lead.

Before diving into the details of Int. 941, I wanted to provide you with a brief overview of the City's child care and early childhood options for families to set the context for the discussion of the bill. There are over 130,000 children birth to five years old enrolled in publicly funded care. New York City is proud to offer free and affordable child care through New York City Public Schools, Head Start and Early Head Start, and vouchers that help parents cover the cost of child care.

New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) offers infant, toddler, 3-K and Pre-K services in a variety of settings including community-based organizations, public schools, home-based settings and Pre-K centers. NYCPS serves over 100,000 children birth to 5. Programs such as 3-K and Pre-K School Day and Year are free, regardless of income or immigration status, while other types of care including infant, toddler, and 3-K and Pre-K Extended Day require the family to have an approved reason for care and be income eligible. The child must have a qualified immigration status, as defined by federal rules.

Early Head Start and Head Start programs are available free for families with low incomes. In addition to low-income eligibility, Early Head Start and Head Start programs, whether facilitated by community-based organization with direct federal contracts or through NYCPS delegate contracts, supports children in foster care and our newest New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status.

Earlier this year, ACS launched Promise NYC, a child care assistance program for children whose immigration status disqualifies them from federally or state funded child care assistance. Currently, there are approximately 630 children enrolled in child care with the support of a Promise NYC subsidy.

New York City also provides vouchers to eligible families to help cover the cost of child care. Families can use their voucher at an approved provider of their choice. To qualify for a voucher, the family must have an approved reason for care and be income eligible. The child must have a qualified immigration status, as defined by federal rules. Currently, there are over 21, 000 children under the age of 5 receiving child care vouchers. Approximately, 9,000 vouchers are for children with a public assistance case and over 12,000 are served through an ACS Low-Income voucher.

Collectively, New York City relies on billions of dollars to fund and maximize capacity of our early childhood system. Those funding streams, many of which are federal and state, require recipients like New York City to comply with regulations to receive the funding.

It is also important that we spend the funding we have and fill our vacant seats. In May, we held briefings for several members of Council, including Chair Gutierrez, on the current state of the City's early childhood system and ways Council can help ensure seats are filled. We appreciate the Council's continued partnership on this.

Our office will continue to advocate with our city agency partners and early childhood stakeholders to make child care as affordable and available as we can.

Int 941-2023

We are pleased to share that many of the provisions within Int. 941 are already underway or will launch later this fall by our office and in partnership with city agencies.

NYC agrees that every child under the age of 5 in need of early child care should have access to a seat. The city has made enormous investments in our Birth to 5 system. There are approximately 500,000 children under the age of five in

New York City and of those, over 130,000 are enrolled in a publicly funded child care program. New York City relies on a mix of City, State, and Federal funding to administer and operate our early childhood system. Offering a seat to every child under the age of 5 requires significant state and federal funding. For universal child care to work, we must also consider the feasibility of space for more child care programs and do more to stabilize and build a sustainable early childhood workforce.

One of the Bills signed into law last Fall, Local Law 102, establishes a Child Care Advisory Board which includes an annual assessment of our progress towards universal child care, including the cost to do so. As the Chair of that Board, I look forward to meeting with the Executive Committee and starting this work on October 5th. The Advisory Board will include a broader coalition of early childhood advocates, policy experts, teachers, and families. In addition, Local Law 100 established a Child Care Task Force focused on making recommendations and the associated costs to make child care more affordable, ways to support the workforce, and increase the supply of child care programs. Our office will also lead this task force and we await a final appointee by Council.

Int. 941 also seeks to make it easier for families to know about the availability of child care options in the language of their choice. We agree and are pleased to share that the child care application is available in the 11 designated languages, including in the MyCity portal. Earlier this spring, the city launched a campaign called “It Takes a City” which used a multi-media approach to market the availability of free and affordable child care and early education throughout the city. Social media platforms, print advertisements, and television and radio commercials connected families in multiple languages to information on how and where to apply for early childhood care by directing them to MyCity to learn more and apply. As required by Local Law 101, the New York City Department of

Health updated their Child Care Connect website to include a new map feature with the goal of making it easier for families to locate a child care program in the area of their choosing.

We must also ensure there are enough child care programs to support the unique needs of New York City families; especially those working non-traditional hours. This office agrees that we must do more to support these families and to grow the number of providers offering care during non-traditional hours and look forward to incorporating this work into our office. Earlier this month, as part of the Child Care Quality and Innovation Fund, Robin Hood announced it will issue three grants totaling \$3 million to ACS to help expand access to vouchers, help families navigate the City's early childhood system, and fund research to discover the barriers families face to accessing care. New York City is also implementing a 15% differential payment to providers serving children during non-traditional hours. To drive supply, New York City launched the child care center property tax abatement earlier this year and nearly 2,000 seats have been created. In support of this work and Local Law 105, the NYC Department of Health also launched an FAQ for property owners regarding the facility requirements for a child care program.

The Administration agrees that continuity of child care is important for both the child and family's well-being. Last year, we successfully advocated to the State to increase the authorization for child care assistance from 12 months to 24 months. We are in the process of working with ACS, NYCPS, the Department of Social Services, and OTI to implement this change later this year. In addition, we are also in the process of adding the recertification application for assistance to the MyCity portal. This will make it easier for families to submit their recertification packet by reducing the administrative burden of a paper application.

We recognize the incredible dedication and work of our child care and early childhood workforce. They have educated hundreds of thousands of children and are the backbone of our city's education system and economy. They kept their doors open during the pandemic serving first responders while being a first responder. Families rely on them every day, every hour to not just keep their child safe and healthy, but to promote their social and emotional development and help them prepare for kindergarten and beyond.

As stated in the Blueprint, this Administration will continue to focus on both strengthening the business and administrative needs of providers, but also their professional goals. We are excited to begin the work on the three-year child care grant pilot program in accordance with Local Law 104 and look forward to giving the Council an update in the coming weeks. This office is also a member of the Marshall Plan for Moms Task Force focused on the early childhood ecosystem and the intersection of the caregiver and provider.

There is still work to be done as the work for children and families is constant. The Office of Child Care will soon "go live" with its own website. This will be a user-friendly platform for families, community-based organizations, and anyone who is interested in finding or sharing information for the early childhood sector. The goal of this platform is to provide timely, transparent, and relevant information to the public. We look forward to continuing to discuss the bill with Council.

Conclusion

The Blueprint celebrated its one-year anniversary in June, and for this office, it is an opportunity to continue engaging our stakeholders. We will continue to assess the progress of the goals of the current Blueprint and advance the goals that need further development.

All this work sits firmly on the foundation of collaboration and partnership throughout the city. In addition to convening city agencies like NYCPS, ACS, DSS, DOHMH and more, it is imperative that the Office of Child Care continues to approach this work in collaboration with families, educators, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and early childhood networks, and the private sector throughout the city. Our office looks forward to continued collaboration with City Council. Thank you for your time this morning.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

**City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Testimony on Intro 0941 – Establishing an Office of Child Care to oversee free childcare for
all City residents
9.21.23**

Good afternoon Chair Cabán and thank you for holding this hearing today. My name is Hannah May-Powers and I am the Health and Safety Policy Analyst for the Office of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso. I'm here today because this issue is very important to the Borough President, as it is for the thousands of families with children in our borough.

One of Borough President Reynoso's highest priorities for his time in office is to improve maternal health in Brooklyn. Today, Black mothers are 9.4 times more likely to die during or in the year after childbirth than their white counterparts. A major contributor to this unacceptable statistic is a lack of access to affordable pre- and post-partum health care and mental health care.

What does this have to do with childcare? Multiple studies have shown that pregnant and postpartum mothers in America are experiencing financial stress. This is in part due to the costs associated with prenatal care, delivery, and post-natal care. Pregnant women are also at a higher risk of experiencing domestic violence and homelessness, which can leave them with few resources following childbirth. Without adequate childcare support, they are unable to secure work that would help bring financial stability and the appropriate perinatal resources. In [a study from the University of Michigan](#) in 2021, more than half new mothers studied reported experiencing financial stress and having difficulty affording needed health care. These challenges lead to an unending cycle between financial stress and postpartum mental and physical health issues such as substance use disorders, depression, and hypertension.

Mothers' financial stress affects children as well, and can contribute to malnutrition, poor academic performance, increased anxiety, and behavioral issues. For unborn babies, it may even mean additional health complications - [a study from BMC public health](#) earlier this year showed a direct correlation between financial stress of the mother and adverse birth outcomes such as earlier gestational age and low birth weight. Between 2015-2019 in the US, at least one-third of mothers had a second birth within 36 months of the first birth. Without adequate childcare during the pivotal moment between the first and second births, many of these families would be left in a more distressed financial state, which in turn affects the health of both children.

There is no question that the cost of childcare contributes to financial stress, especially in New York City, where the cost of good quality childcare for infants can exceed \$25,000/year. This is

particularly acute for new mothers – according to the [Center for American Progress](#), the average cost of center-based childcare in New York is approximately 80% higher for infants than it is for 4-year-old preschoolers.

It is no wonder that, [according to The City](#) (the publication), in 2021, 41% of 25-54-year-old women living with children in NYC were not working, compared with just 24% of men, and of course these numbers were even higher for Black and brown women. Again, the correlation between lack of income, financial stress, and poor health outcomes becomes a vicious cycle that we must break.

I want to acknowledge that we are facing difficult financial times, and this will obviously be a costly program. However, our City's own [Economic Development Corporation](#) estimated in 2021 that, "NYC parents leaving the private workforce or shifting from full time to part time would result in a loss of 250,000 person years of employment, \$60 billion in real output, and \$18.5 billion in disposable personal income over the next five years." Essentially, we can't afford *not* to do it.

Thank you to Council Member Gutierrez for putting forward this bold legislation that would bring universal childcare to our city, and for also ensuring that fair wages for the city's childcare workforce are part of this effort. Both policies are long overdue and will be transformative for New Yorkers. Borough President Reynoso is looking forward to continuing to work with the Council on behalf of NYC's families and childcare workers to move this proposal forward. Thank you.



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

Testimony of Win (formerly Women In Need, Inc.) for the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity

September 21, 2023

Introduction

Thank you to Chair Cabán and to the esteemed members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Hannah Tager, and I am a Policy Analyst at Win. Win is the City's and the nation's largest provider of shelter and services to families with children experiencing homelessness. We operate 14 shelters and nearly 500 supportive housing units across the five boroughs. Each night, more than 6,500 people call Win "home", including 3,600 children. Win's on-site Children's Services provides high quality, developmentally appropriate childcare care and programming that responds to the immense stress and trauma of youth living in shelter. Childcare is not considered a bonus or secondary service at Win shelters, since we understand that subsidized childcare is an indispensable resource for families in shelter. Nearly half of all Win households include an infant under the age of three, and bridging the gap for these children through quality childcare options is an essential part of our social services and our agenda to break the cycle of homelessness.

Childcare for Families in Shelter

In the past year, Win is proud to have provided childcare for more than 200 children under the age of five at six of our sites, and our holistic model was recently awarded a citywide distinction from the [NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#). However, this childcare we administer on-site only accounts for a fraction of the need for the over 1000 eligible children we served across our 14 transitional housing sites. The Department of Homeless Services does not fund childcare in shelters as it would case management and other essential services, and Win must rely solely on privately fundraised dollars for our childcare programming. For families who do get a spot at Win childcare, they receive barrier-free and trauma-informed programming from a qualified teacher. We accept all children for whom we have spots, regardless of income, vouchers, and immigration status.

For the remaining families whose sites do not offer childcare, early childhood education can present as a huge roadblock on their path to permanent housing. To qualify for housing vouchers, parents must work; however, our Income Building Staff report that "still, the number one barrier for why families don't engage with employment services is [the lack of] childcare." While subsidized childcare is exceedingly important for families experiencing homelessness—vouchers lead to more stable employment and allow families to make the income necessary to pay for other basic needs and future rent— children experiencing homelessness are less likely to participate in early childhood programs than children who are permanently housed.ⁱⁱⁱ



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

Childcare Vouchers and Pain Points

The majority of our shelters rely on community childcare for their families, and Win has built strong and productive relationships with quality providers that understand the needs of our households. However, securing a spot at these centers can be difficult for families since the application process for city-issued subsidies is prolonged and difficult to navigate. Win families often arrive eligible for some form of a childcare voucher, either through HRA, ACS, or PromiseNYC. Yet, the multi-agency effort to issue childcare vouchers results in a huge administrative burden on our staff, with each agency requiring a different application process either through app, emails, or calls to contracted community-based organizations.

For HRA vouchers, families often must prove their employment or school enrollment to even qualify. However, the processing time for an HRA voucher is so long that our clients cannot realistically apply with an offer letter and still secure childcare before their start date.

Additionally, this work requirement means that families are unable to utilize childcare during the demanding interviewing and application process for their work or school. For a long time, our shelter staff turned instead to ACS childcare vouchers as a resource, because these subsidies lack the work requirement for families in transitional housing thanks to CD #22-04 issued in February, 2022. However, in the past six months, we have faced extremely long wait times for ACS vouchers. As of September 13th, a family who was determined eligible in July is still waiting for their ACS voucher. In our experience, it appears that there is one staff member overseeing the voucher issuance for **all** families in transitional housing across the **entire city**. While we appreciate her devotion to this work, this understaffing results in prolonged delays for families. In theory, Promise NYC would also provide a huge benefit for Win clients, over a third of whom are immigrants. In practice, however, this program is too limited-the 600 spots for which the City has budget is not enough for the tens of thousands of migrant children living in its care. A Win family referred to the program at the start of July is still awaiting a spot.

Childcare Solutions

In response to these issues, Win recommends the following solutions:

Investment in childcare providers and subsidies. All childcare subsidies, including Promise NYC, should be an entitlement for eligible families. Additionally, employers who provide day care for employees should receive a business tax credit, as outlined in Res. 561 sponsored by Councilmember Julie Menin.

Centralization of childcare services as outlined in Intro 941 sponsored by Councilmember Jennifer Gutiérrez. The proposed Office of Childcare would consolidate the current multi-agency approach to childcare and streamline the application process for families.



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

Automatic screening and qualification for vouchers when homeless families arrive at PATH for intake. Win recommends that the City and the proposed Office of Childcare work to initiate a program to automatically determine eligibility and issue a childcare voucher for families at PATH. Childcare is key to moving out and should be an agenda item for all families' independent living plans.

Implementation of universal childcare as outlined in Intro 941. In addition to the immense social benefit this would provide for our city, – childcare improves young children's development and has a positive impact on parenting – universal childcare would also be an excellent investment.ⁱⁱⁱ For low-income families, research shows that every dollar invested in childcare yields a thirteen percent return.^{iv}

Elimination of wage and hours requirements for applicants of childcare assistance. Win supports Res. 560 sponsored by Councilmember Julie Menin, since our experience working with families in shelter has greatly underlined the fact that employment eligibility requirements can prevent families experiencing homelessness from seeking and qualifying for vouchers.^v

Conclusion

Win has always welcomed all children into our shelters, and we strive to provide high-quality programming for kids of all ages. However, while subsidized childcare is a proven catalyst for the economic advancement of parents and the enrichment of their children, the City does not facilitate enrollment in public and community-based programs. Win has to privately fund its own convenient on-site childcare, and families who chose to enroll in community childcare must first endure a lengthy eligibility and application process.

To rectify these issues, we stand in support of the proposed bills and recommend additional changes to improve childcare access for families experiencing homelessness. For all the families, the short- and long-term impacts of childcare are innumerable. However, especially for families in shelter, subsidized childcare can be the difference between homelessness and housing, and, for our city, can be the difference between contending with this current crisis and ending the generational cycle of homelessness in New York City.

ⁱ Douglas Rice, Stephanie Schmit, And Hannah Matthews, "Child Care and Housing: Big Expenses with Too Little help Available," *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, April 26, 2019.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/child-care-and-housing-big-expenses-with-too-little-help-available>

ⁱⁱ "Early Care and Education Services in New York State for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness," *NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)*, February 2019.

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/NYS-Services-for-Young-Children-Experiencing-Homelessness.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ "Meeting the Child Care Needs of Homeless Families: How Do States Stack Up?" *Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness*, July 2014. https://www.icphusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ICPH_policyreport_MeetingtheChildCareNeedsofHomelessFamilies.pdf



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

iv “Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy,” *The Heckman Equation*, May 2014. <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/invest-in-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-the-economy/#:~:text=Professor%20Heckman's%20most%20recent%20research,%2C%20health%2C%20and%20social%20outcomes>.

v“Meeting the Child Care Needs of Homeless Families: How Do States Stack Up?” *Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness*, July 2014. https://www.icphusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ICPH_policyreport_MeetingtheChildCareNeedsofHomelessFamilies.pdf



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Testimony to be Delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Re: Int. No. 941-2023

September 21, 2023

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Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Intro. 941 and the importance of early childhood education and care in New York City. My name is Betty Baez Melo, and I am an attorney and Director of the Early Childhood Education Project at Advocates for Children of New York (AFC). For more than 50 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. Every year, we help thousands of families navigate the education system, starting from the time children are born.

We believe that every child should have access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs. As such, we support the vision of this bill. In order to create a truly universal child care system, we want to stress the importance of ensuring that any child care plan give significant attention to marginalized populations that are often overlooked, including children with disabilities, children from immigrant families, and children in temporary housing.

Every year, we hear from families who are turned away from early childhood programs who say they cannot serve children with disabilities. In fact, an August 2021 poll found that 1 in 3 parents indicated their child had been turned away from a center- or home-based program because the provider could not offer enough support for a child with a learning or physical disability.¹ The City has a legal obligation to ensure children with developmental delays and disabilities have access to early childhood programs, including providing them with services and placements that will allow them to make educational progress. Similarly, while we are pleased that the City has funded Promise NYC for one more year, the City must ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet the growing demand for child care and education programs for children who are undocumented. As another example, while the majority of children in shelter already

¹ Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, CUNY's New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, and the Education Trust-New York, *Investing in Our Future*, August 2021, <https://newyork.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Investing-in-our-Future.pdf>



Advocates for Children of New York

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qualify for existing early childhood care and education programs, including subsidized child care programs, they are some of the children most likely to be left out of these programs.

We appreciate that the bill includes several provisions for addressing the disparities faced by these populations. At the same time, given the extent of the barriers, we encourage you to strengthen the bill so that the responsibilities of the office of child care include:

- Ensuring that children with developmental delays or disabilities have access to their mandated Early Intervention and preschool special education services at their child care programs, so that they can participate in inclusive programs with their peers;
- Coordinating with the department of education to ensure that there is a preschool special education classroom seat available for every child who needs one so that children with significant disabilities can receive the intensive special education services they need;
- Ensure that children have access to early childhood care and education programs regardless of their immigration status, including all department of education infant and toddler programs, and extended day and year 3-K and Pre-K programs;
- Ensuring that the proposed education and outreach campaign informing city residents about the availability of child care is conducted in multiple languages and across various platforms so that families who speak a language other than English, families who have low literacy, and families who do not have access to online resources can all access information on child care options;
- Conducting an education and outreach campaign specifically targeted at families with young children living in shelters and assisting families living in shelters with the application and enrollment processes;
- Facilitating interagency collaboration and convenings with relevant agencies, including the department of education, the department of homeless services, the human resources administration, and the administration for children services to increase enrollment of children in shelter in child care programs; and
- Providing additional support and funding to child care programs as needed to support children with disabilities and children who speak languages other than English.

Based on our experience working directly with families, we believe that these recommendations would help ensure that the expansion of early childhood care and education is more equitable and inclusive of the populations we serve.

We are also deeply concerned that the City is currently using hundreds of millions of dollars in temporary federal COVID-19 relief funds to support 3-K and preschool special education—key components of the City's child care infrastructure. This funding will be expiring next year and there is not yet a plan for sustaining these programs. The City Council must ensure continued funding for 3-K, preschool special education, and the wide range of other important education programs funded with temporary federal dollars that will be running dry in June.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.



**The New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Cabán, Chair of Women and Gender Equity**

**City Council Hearing:
September 21st, 2023**

Testimony of the New York Immigration Coalition

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity. The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 groups serving immigrants and refugees across New York State. The NYIC wishes to thank you for your leadership and concern for immigrant families, and for your leadership on Promise NYC.

We are here to request that the City make access equitable and boost enrollment by:

- **Committing \$4 million to expand the NYIC's LIFE Project - a proven, piloted program - to assist limited English proficient, technologically disconnected immigrant families with applying to and enrolling in Pre-K/3-K programs**
- **Committing \$20 million to the Promise NY program in FY24, which would allow for continued support for undocumented immigrants to receive subsidized child care**
- **Protecting existing 3-K seats and restoring a timeline for 3-K expansion**
- **Converting existing 3-K school day / school year seats to extended day, year round seats and working with the state to use the Public Education exemption to federal CCDBG funding to allow more immigrant families to access early education and care**
- **Pass Intro 941 to establish an Office of Child Care that is charged with establishing free child care for all city residents no later than four years after the effective date of the law, regardless of immigration status**



LIFE Project: For the last five years, the NYIC has led the Linking Immigrant Families to Early Childhood Education (LIFE) Project, alongside its partners LSA Family Health Service, Masa, and Fifth Avenue Committee. Officially launched in December 2017, the LIFE Project focuses on assisting immigrant families in enrolling in Pre-K and 3-K in communities where the Department of Education identified lagging or under-enrollment in these programs. The Project also makes referrals and provides Early Intervention support.

New York City is home to around 165,000 parents of children ages 0-4 who are limited English proficient. Among all parents of children ages 0-4, a staggering 100,000 lack access to a computer, with around 61,000 lacking access to the internet. The increase in asylum seeker families, with an additional 21,000 currently estimated to be enrolling in child care, early childhood, and K-12 education, has further increased the need for English Language Learner enrollment and registration supports. As New York offers increasingly complex educational choices and moves information and access to those choices further online, the language and digital barriers have become nearly insurmountable without adequate support.

To address these barriers, the LIFE Project encompasses extensive culturally and linguistically responsive outreach to inform families about Pre-K and 3K programs. Project partners then provide families with one-on-one, comprehensive support. This support begins with creating an email address and account and learning to navigate MySchools, and accompanies the family through identifying school options, filling out the application, and accepting offers to programs.



Our LIFE partners have given more than 650 immigrant families the tools to navigate the school system and enroll their children in pre-K and 3-K programs. Over the last six years, our pioneering model has proven to be incredibly successful and effective: 4 out of 5 families assisted by the LIFE project stated they could not have applied to these programs without LIFE assistance. Significantly, despite a large drop in enrollment in 2020, when New York City's preliminary data reported that enrollment in 3-K programs fell by 8% and pre-K programs fell by 13%, LIFE project partners saw no drop in enrollment within the families we assisted.

In order to continue and expand this successful model citywide, we are asking for \$4 million to fund 20 CBOs across the five boroughs to provide culturally responsive and linguistically diverse outreach, application and enrollment support, referral services, and early intervention support to immigrant families of 3- and 4-year olds.

3K Expansion: It is through the LIFE project that we have seen the extent to which families have struggled to apply for and enroll in Pre-K and 3-K programs. Without support, the barriers facing families are immense and absolutely prevent many of our families from applying, in spite of their strong interest in providing their children with this educational opportunity. It is absolutely wrong for the City to abdicate its commitment to making 3-K accessible to all families on the basis of enrollment levels when it is so obvious that these barriers prevent many families from enrolling. Despite the high enrollment rates reported by the DOE for Pre-K/3-K seats, there are still many immigrant and LEP families with children who have not been reached by these programs. Though we agree that the DOE should be



strategic about the locations of these programs, this should not mean a stop to the planned expansion. New York City must continue to invest in our children's education to ensure a vibrant future for our City and economic mobility for all our families.

Renew and Expand Promise NYC at \$20M: The NYIC has worked on the Promise NYC campaign since its inception last year. We recognize ACS for its commitment to ensuring undocumented families feel as safe as possible in applying for this child care subsidy. In particular, the program's use of trusted community based organizations to do intake and enrollment directly, allowance of self-attestations around eligibility and income, and clarity on data privacy for families are commendable and follow the recommendations of the immigrant community. However, the \$10M Promise NYC program will only cover an estimated 600 families for the 6 months left in this fiscal year. In order to provide at least the same level of coverage and ensure that undocumented children have safe, affordable child care, the City must renew the Promise NYC program and double funding to \$20M.

Expand Extended-Day/Year Programs: Pre-K/3-K for All has been a massively successful program for New York families. Unfortunately, for many families, the hours available do not cover the full need for early childhood education and care because they only provide services for 6 hours and 20 minutes each day. These shortened days end early in the afternoon and often let out while parents are still mid-workday. In order to ensure that children have child care coverage for a full workday, the City should expand all Pre-K/3-K to include extended day/year hours.



Extended day/year programs, which current reports have set at only 50% filled, are supported in part by federal CCDBG funding. This funding has restrictions on citizenship, which blocks non-citizen children from accessing additional care. There is, however, a major exception to these requirements – the “Public Education Exemption.” Immigrant restrictions do not apply to children receiving CCDBG-funded services in settings that are subject to public educational standards, including public and private pre-kindergarten settings (including pre-kindergarten delivered in private child care settings) and settings subject to educational standards used for care during out-of-school time. California has been utilizing this exemption for its extended day/year programs for years, including during the Trump administration, with no pushback from the federal government. The City must work with its partners at OCFS to push New York State to utilize this exemption and expand access to extended day/year programs.

Pass Intro 941 to establish an Office of Child Care that is charged with establishing free child care for all city residents no later than four years after the effective date of the law, regardless of immigration status: For many NYC families, child care is the single most expensive cost families must shoulder, outpacing even rent and utilities. The United Way of NYC found that, when including child care costs, 50% of families with children do not make the true cost of living; for single parents, that number is a staggering 80%. In a city with increasingly high rent, utilities, food costs, and very little direct assistance to families, having children has become an unaffordable dream for many, and a struggle for those who do. The city can address this growing issue by recognizing a commitment to establish free child care for all NYC residents. According to the Mayor’s Child Care Blueprint, NYC loses \$5.9 billion



reduction in disposable income, \$23 billion less in economic output, and \$2.2 billion in tax revenue – roughly 3.7 percent of its total 2022 city tax revenue – for lack of free or affordable child care. As the cost of living in NYC remains high and families are leaving the city in droves, NYC must address the child care crisis, or risk losing the diverse, vibrant communities that make it great.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Submitted by:
Liza Schwartzwald
Director of Economic Justice and Family Empowerment
New York Immigration Coalition



United Federation of Teachers Testimony before the New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity Hearing on Establishing an office of
child care to oversee free child care for all city residents.

September 21, 2023

My name is Karen Alford and I'm the Vice President for Elementary Schools of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). On behalf of the union's more than 190,000 members, I would like to thank Committee on Women and Gender Equity Chair Tiffany Cabán for holding today's public hearing on establishing an office of child care to oversee free child care for all city residents.

As we noted in our testimony on prekindergarten services earlier last year, our union has long been a strong supporter of efforts to establish high-quality universal early childhood services for our city's families, and the UFT is eager to be a partner with the Council, the DOE, and the state in improving the state of childcare in our city. Providing families with access to high quality early childhood learning experiences is among the most important things we can do to help prepare young children for school and beyond. As President Mulgrew said during the launch of the city's Universal Pre-K (UPK) program in 2014, in order for early childhood education, including child care, to fully serve the needs of New York City families, it must have three essential components:

1. High-quality staff with the training to provide children with the right mix of activities for their developmental levels;
2. A substantive curriculum and child care guidelines written expressly to provide what the best research and experience tells us young children need;
3. Long-term financial support, since the unfortunate history is that for too many programs, funding is provided, then political priorities change and the money dries up. Providers and districts cannot create quality programs if next year's funding is always in doubt.

The UFT is eager to work in partnership with the City Council, the DOE and the state to resolve these issues in the area of child care. The range of professional development and credentialing services that the union has provided to thousands of family child care providers is one example of our ongoing commitment. We've partnered with curriculum development teams from public television, our parent union the American Federation of Teachers and the UFT Teacher Center to deliver age-appropriate instructional support for our members in home-based child care settings. Most notably, the UFT Teacher Center created curriculum for two- to three-year-old children centered around social-emotional learning with an additional component on autism. Additionally, we've introduced the Successful Beginnings for Early Literacy Development (SBELD) — a Teacher Center-developed curriculum geared to preparing three-year-olds for

kindergarten with supports and resources for our child care providers. Further, we are particularly proud of our embedded coaching program. Teacher Center instructional coaches demonstrate how to use the curricula and show providers how to adopt and sustain evidence-based best practices in their homes.

The UFT's annual Early Childhood Conference held each March also offers workshops for early childhood education providers. Examples include using building blocks to solve problems, employing storytelling as an instructional technique, new strategies to engage English language learners and demonstrating how geometry can be used to aid language development. Plus, we have assisted members in their pursuit of national accreditation with the National Association for Family Child Care. Supporting ongoing professional learning is not just a feel-good notion. It gets results. Our providers are on the front line for identifying children with developmental delays. We train our providers to observe development benchmarks and notice when children are not thriving.

We believe the proposed bill being considered at this hearing provides a number of strong benefits which would continue to bring the city closer to providing high quality childcare for our local families. The provisions for training programs for childcare providers and the creation of a workforce development program to enhance the quality of care provided are well-aligned with our long-standing efforts to improve access to quality professional learning opportunities for our childcare providers, and we look forward to collaborating with you to build capacity in this area. In addition, the promotion and expansion of childcare services that operate during nights and weekends would significantly benefit working parents or those with nontraditional working hours. The proposal for increased guidance and support for childcare providers on opening and operating a service would be particularly beneficial for home-based providers who might lack previous experience or knowledge of the regulatory landscape. We also agree with the bill's goals to provide wages and benefits that lead to greater financial stability and overall well-being of childcare providers.

In terms of concerns about the bill, the recommendation to establish an office of childcare to collaborate with relevant agencies and stakeholders has promise. However, as we have noted before, we generally oppose creating additional duplicative layers of city bureaucracy and administrative positions rather than focusing funding on the provision of direct services to families. For this reason, it might be more efficient to create a new individual role to serve this purpose of coordinating multi-agency efforts rather than staffing a full new office. It is also essential to ensure that we and other unions which represent child care providers are included in these stakeholder discussions.

The Council should also consider the unintended consequences of the bill's age limit on funding to only programs serving children under five. This provision could leave many families without access to affordable care for children aged 6 to 12, as programs may elect to eliminate open seats for these older children. Families may then need to seek private, potentially more expensive programs, and those with children of diverse ages could be forced to utilize multiple care settings and care options. Providers which shift to providing services only for younger children may also need funding to cover the costs

of new equipment and materials and retraining of staff to effectively transition to their new model.

In addition, while we continue to support efforts to make high-quality child care available and affordable for New York City parents, we believe it should not be presented as an alternative to the equally needed expansion of citywide programs for our 3K students or the continued support of universal pre-kindergarten programs, and funding for these programs should be cut in order to fund universal child care. In particular, it is especially urgent that we direct more funding and effort towards ensuring that preschool-age children with disabilities and English language learners receive the services they need to be prepared for kindergarten. With the recent increase in multilingual children in our communities due to increased migration to our city from around the world, bilingual and dual-language opportunities for pre-K students must be expanded to meet the needs of our families.

Given this range of needs, we believe there needs to be both a substantial increase in city funding for its early childhood programs and improvements to its payment process to providers before a mandate for universal child care can be implemented. The lack of a consistent funding stream for UPK and existing child care programs, which we have highlighted in union testimony since 2014, has still not been addressed. The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on many of our providers' financial stability. One recent study estimated that between 2019 and 2021, New York City lost 22% of its family day care programs, and multiple reports have noted the challenges of community-based child care and pre-K providers in retaining qualified staff and directors in a context where multiple other jobs now offer better pay and benefits. As we noted in union testimony in December 2020 and again in 2022, another factor is the pay-for-enrollment model used in the city, which creates a disincentive to allocate adequate resources to successfully operate these programs. When enrollment drops due to external factors such as COVID-19, the payment model's flaws are even more glaring. Lack of consistent and reliable funding makes it impossible for child care providers to provide the high-quality support and services needed to properly run these programs.

The impact of these broader trends has been intensified by the city's inexcusable delays in payments to child care agencies for services they have already provided. In September 2022, the heads of these agencies warned that they might have to close their centers if the city does not pay them the millions of dollars they are owed. In a joint letter, they warned that the "fiscal stability of the entire sector is at grave risk" and that "without immediate action, the city's child care plan will not only be left unrealized but more importantly, the early care and education sector, its work force and the children and families that depend upon it will be irreparably harmed." While we welcome the efforts in this bill to address these concerns through changes to the invoicing process, more work is needed to ensure that these improvements are effective..

Early childhood programs, including quality child care, can play a pivotal role in laying the foundation for a child's social, emotional and intellectual development. We look forward to working with the City Council to ensure that all our city's children have

access to high quality care throughout their lives and come to our schools ready to learn.



ALL OUR KIN INC

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**Testimony Submitted by Steven Morales, NY Policy Director of All Our Kin
for the Women and Gender Equity Committee Hearing on Int 941
New York City Council
September 21, 2023**

Honorable Chair Cabán and Members of the Committee,

My name is Steven Morales and I'm the New York Policy Director at All Our Kin. All Our Kin is a nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains home-based family child care educators in New York City. We are based in the Bronx and we work with nearly 300 family child care educators with the capacity to care for over 4,000 children citywide.

I want to start by extending my appreciation to Council Members Gutierrez and Riley for introducing this legislation and to all of the co-sponsors, to this Committee and this Council for your consideration of this bold step for children and families across our city. We are also excited that the Administration has taken the first step called for in this legislation by creating and hiring a director for the new Mayor's Office of Child Care and Early Education. We know that there's much to do to make child care access a reality and we look forward to doing that work together.

Along those lines, I also want to share the troubling reality of child care challenges facing children, families, and providers. As part of my job, I spend time talking with family child care educators who work with All Our Kin. And consistently I hear stories from them about families in their programs and communities who are unable to afford child care out of pocket and who cannot access the child care assistance that they need. I hear about providers who help families in their programs apply for child care vouchers who then wait months before hearing back from the City about their eligibility. I hear stories about parents who meet every eligibility criteria to receive a voucher that are denied for unclear reasons, or are told that they applied to the wrong program and need to start again with a different agency. When our subsidized child care system serves less than 20% of eligible children in our city while parents continue to struggle, we must understand that the system is fundamentally broken. And that's not to mention the thousands of families outside of the subsidy system who struggle to pay for child care. At the end of the day, this leaves children without access to the high quality care they need, leaves providers without the essential revenue they need to maintain their businesses, and leaves our City's economic future in doubt.

Again, that is why this bill and this conversation today are so important. There are several elements of this bill, Int. 941, that we are particularly enthusiastic about and I want to highlight them because they acknowledge the full scope of our city's child care needs:

- First and foremost, we celebrate the bill's call for child care access for all families with



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children aged 6 weeks through 5 years, including specifically those who are undocumented. Child care is necessary for people who work 9-5 jobs and for the people who work day and night to keep our 24 hour city running.

- We also celebrate this bill's thoughtful inclusion of family child care in building a better system that meets the needs of all families – both in policy and in practice.
- Critically important is the acknowledgement in this bill that care work is offered by people, people who need to be compensated, healthy, and able to work each day (or night).
 - We applaud this bill's requirement to pay child care providers based on real operating costs, not arbitrary grant amounts or market-rate reimbursements.
 - We also applaud this bill's call for health care and retirement benefits for educators and importantly, this includes those who lead and teach in child care centers AND those who lead and teach in home-based family child care.
- Finally, this bill also requires the City to evaluate our child care system, learn from what is working and what is not working, and keep continuously building and improving together

What we also know is that if we want to make sure that all children have access to care and all educators are well-compensated, we will need public funding to make it happen. Let's build that together, too.

Once again, I thank you for this important hearing today – the team at All Our Kin is always here to work through the critical details of this bill and our child care system as a whole and we are happy to answer any questions or share ideas together so that we can make it happen.

Thank you.



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TESTIMONY OF:

Laura Gomez, Associate Director of Social Work

Family Defense Practice

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

**The New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity**

Oversight Hearing on Free Child Care

September 21, 2023

My name is Laura Gomez, and I am the Associate Director of Social Work in the Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. For over 25 years, BDS has worked in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. We thank the Committee on Women and Gender Equity and Chair Caban for the opportunity to address the Council about access to affordable childcare and its impact on the families we serve.

We represent approximately 22,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing loss of liberty, their home, their children, or deportation. Our staff consists of specialized attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals, and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields. BDS also provides a wide range of additional services for our clients, including civil legal advocacy, assistance with educational needs of our clients or their children, housing, and benefits advocacy, as well as immigration advice and representation.

BDS' Family Defense Practice is the primary provider of representation to parents charged with abuse or neglect in Brooklyn's family court. We use a multidisciplinary approach that offers our clients access to social workers, advocates and civil and immigration attorneys who work to

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minimize any collateral impact of our clients' court cases. Our Family Defense Practice represents about 2,300 parents and caretakers each year. We have represented over 14,000 parents and caretakers in Brooklyn's family court and have helped more than 30,000 children remain safely at home or leave foster care and reunite with their families.

A lack of affordable, accessible, and flexible childcare for low-income parents in New York is a prominent driver of families into the family policing system¹. In 2019, nine percent of reports made against New York City families involved allegations of "lack of supervision."² When parents and caretakers do not have the resources to pay for needed childcare, are not able to access available childcare, or cannot find childcare for night and weekend times, they face the possibility not only of losing employment and the ability to provide for their children, but also face the very real possibility of experiencing a traumatic investigations by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), prosecution in family court, and even the removal of their children into the foster system.

These investigations subject families to invasive, stressful, and traumatic treatment. Similar to the ways in which the criminal legal system was exposed for using pretext to "stop-and-frisk" a person based on their race or the neighborhood they live in, an initial investigation can leave to further invasive involvement by the family policing system, including surveillance of a family, and even the removal of children from their home.³ This type of pretextual surveillance and punishment within the family policing system may apply to a range of behaviors or indicators of poverty that are stigmatized and "othered."⁴ Families living in homeless shelters, under incredible economic stress, are living under the fear that one argument between parents or one moment of impatience with a child may lead to a knock on their door from an ACS worker. School attendance interrupted by homelessness, or an angry landlord seeking to evict a family illegally can result in a call to the family policing authorities and begin an investigation into a family.

Given the persistence and trauma of the family policing system, it is vital that any provision of childcare be made easily accessible to families who may be struggling and juggling many other bureaucratic systems to access housing, schooling, insurance, and other benefits. Currently, poor and marginalized families are often forced to access childcare through ACS. Families should be able to access this vital resource without fear or interacting with a system that may cause them

¹ Many, including scholar Professor Dorothy Roberts, refer to the so-called "child welfare" system as the family regulation system, given the harms historically and currently perpetuated by the system. *See, e.g.*, Dorothy Roberts, *Abolishing Policing Also Means Abolishing Family Regulation*, The Imprint (June 16, 2020), available at <https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/abolishing-policing-also-means-abolishing-family-regulation/44480>

² Data retrieved from the NYC Family Policy Project, Data Brief on Hotline Calls (2019), provided by the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

³ Burrell, Michelle. "Child Welfare Needs to Have It's 'Stop-And-Frisk Moment.'" *The New School Center for New York City Affairs*. <http://www.centernyc.org/child-welfare-needs-to-have-its>. June 27, 2018.

⁴<https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/time-for-child-welfare-system-to-stop-confusing-poverty-with-neglect/40222>



harm. As such, any expansion of free and affordable childcare should be made available in a safe and accessible manner.

Impact on Families

Based on our experience working with thousands of parents and families facing investigation and prosecution by ACS, we share the below experiences to highlight the need for affordable, accessible, and meaningful childcare.

When BDS first began to work with Ms. C, she was facing the removal of her son to the foster system. In spite of ACS' efforts to remove her son from her custody, Ms. C persisted and fought to keep her son in her care. After many months of complying with ACS supervision and engaging in court ordered classes, Ms. C was able to secure a conditional dismissal of the family court case. Despite ACS's involvement with Ms. C's family for months, Ms. C struggled to secure the affordable and flexible childcare she needed for her family. As a single working mother with a limited support network, ACS sought to remove her son a second time based on concerns that she was leaving her son with allegedly inappropriate or "unapproved" caregivers. While Ms. C and her legal team were again able to keep her son in her care, ACS continued to delay providing her with a childcare voucher. After advocacy by Ms. C and her legal team, she finally received a childcare voucher but has struggled to find an eligible provider.

Ms. C's case illustrates that even with ACS and family court involvement, families struggle to access the childcare they need, which might have prevented their ACS case in the first place. Low-income families should not have to be under ACS supervision and surveillance to access necessary childcare. Currently, low-income, and marginalized families are often forced to access childcare through the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

Conclusion

BDS supports efforts to make childcare free for low-income New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status. Any program to expand childcare access must include outreach strategies to under-resourced communities to ensure they can access high-quality free childcare. It is critical that provision of childcare be available in the neighborhoods where low-income people live and work and be accessible to families who may be juggling many other bureaucratic systems to access housing, schooling, insurance, and other benefits.

We are grateful to the City Council for highlighting concerns about access to childcare for all New Yorkers. We see every day how families struggle to find adequate care for their children. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to find ways to invest in strengthening access to childcare and keeping families together. If you have any questions, please contact Nila Natarajan, Associate Director of Policy and Family Defense, at nnatarajan@bds.org.



ADVANCING OUR
COMMUNITY

**Chinese-American Planning Council
Testimony at the New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Chair Tiffany Cabán
September 21st, 2023**

Good morning. Thank you so much to Chair Cabán and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Mary Cheng and I'm the Director of Childhood Development Services. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community based- organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded since our founding to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 280,000 people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities. To that end, we are grateful to testify about the issues that impact the individuals and families we serve, and we are grateful to the Council for their leadership on these issues.

CPC serves over 1,000 children and their families through our six day care centers, Child Care Resources and Referrals programs, and Promise NYC. In addition to providing childcare for low-income families, CPC's Childhood Development Services (CDS) staff are instrumental in supporting the growth of children of color with disabilities. CPC strongly supports the passage and adoption of Intro 0941, which would establish quality and free universal child care for all city residents including undocumented children under the age of five. This would fundamentally transform our child care system for the better in which uplifts our working families and childcare providers and ensures quality care for all of our children. According to a [report](#) released by the Mayor in 2022, across the city, "126,500 children under the age five rely on city-contracted early childhood programs or use vouchers for subsidized care." It is evident that child care services are high in demand yet providers like CPC are unable to actively respond to this without the proper support from the government. In fact, the City has historically failed to provide reimbursements to child care centers, forcing many early childhood education programs to close.

CPC is one of many organizations across the city that has not received their reimbursements, yet we have continued to provide services five days per week, 280 days a year to children and to support their working

families. We want to underscore that staffing shortages and lack of adequate funding to our programs makes it difficult to provide these direct services.

In addition, subsidized care is hard to access and apply for, creating an additional barrier for low income and immigrant families. In fact, the MyCITY portal is not as clear and easy as a one stop shop. It creates confusion in terms of vouchers versus subsidy care. Vouchers are not applicable to DOE Birth-5 contracts, which families are unaware we cannot accept. These vouchers are good for the entire family up to 18 years of age where subsidized care is only acceptable annually and only while they are in a B-5 EDY contracted seat. These are few and dependent on availability. Furthermore, subsidized care requires a lot of employer documentation. Many families we have encountered have noted that there is simply not enough time to gather the necessary information within the 24 hour submission. And unfortunately, once they miss a submission, they must start the application all over again.

For undocumented immigrants and recent asylum seekers, we consistently hear about the difficulties and hesitations especially when accessing care for their children. More specifically, they have expressed fears and challenges in putting a home address on the application. It is already unacceptable that the city creates frustration for families to get much needed childcare, but for families who fit the need for care because they are lower income, the additional hardships the process currently creates adds to them being discouraged by the city. A universal child care program would eliminate barriers, frustrations, and fears around accessing care and instead create an equitable system that allows all children regardless of immigration status to get the support they deserve.

Community-based organizations are funded disproportionately to their counterparts in the DOE. We are contracted to serve NYC children under the same capacity; to educate with the same curriculum, credentials, assessments and requirements. It is wrong that we are still not equitable in pay parity compared to the DOE. According to a [2023 report](#) from the NYC Comptroller's Office, "Preschool and kindergarten teachers' median wage grew by 35 percent, from \$20.39 to \$27.47, while childcare workers' median wage grew by 26 percent, from \$12.74 to \$16.00" from 2019 to 2021. We are seeing an exodus of staff from the child care system, due to the disparity as many have left for substitute positions or higher paying jobs in the DOE.

As a result of this, a [survey](#) conducted by the Empire State Campaign for Child Care found that 28,462 children cannot receive care in their programs due to the workforce shortage and 25,022 children are known to be on their waiting lists. Our fellow New Yorkers cannot live a dignified and empowering life if they are constantly worried between making enough to support their families and hoping their children are safe, nurtured, and receiving a quality education. The magnitude of these statistics indicate not only the gaps in our social safety net but the urgency in addressing them.

We also want to thank Council Member Gutiérrez and Council Member Riley for their leadership on this issue. In order for any transition of our early childhood programs to successfully create a seamless education system for our youngest New Yorkers, we must establish a universal child care program that prioritizes contracts for community based organizations that achieve salary parity for the workforce and full costs for providing high quality programs are included, with yearly cost escalators. This is an urgent issue that needs immediate attention. We thank you for your time and consideration.

If there are any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Ashley Chen at achen9@cpc-nyc.org.



**Testimony of Rebecca Charles
Policy and Advocacy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
September 21, 2023**

Since 1944, CCC has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce. We document the facts, engage, mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for New York City's children and their families. Our mission is to ensure that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

We would like to thank Chair Caban and all the members of the New York City Council Women & Gender Equity Committee for holding today's important hearing on improving our city's childcare system. CCC's testimony below addresses current issues within the ECE system and recommended solutions, as well as commentary on bills Int 0941-2023 and Res 0560-2023.

New York City has long been a leader in early care and education, and city leaders have recognized how essential these resources are for supporting young children's social emotional development and school readiness, as well as the critical supports they offer working parents. Unfortunately, the past few years have revealed serious and long-standing problems within the system that have led to service instability and inaccessibility.

CCC's [Early Care and Education report](#) released last spring highlighted an array of barriers families face when trying to access care, including a complicated centralized enrollment process, unaffordable care, and a lack of options that fit the schedules of working families. The report also drew attention to the perspectives of providers, who cite contract inflexibility, the current enrollment structure, and financial instability exacerbated by lack of timely payment as the biggest hurdles impacting service delivery.ⁱ

As a result of this report and close work with C4C coalition partners, CCC put forth the following policy [recommendations](#) to move our city toward system stabilization:

- Advance the next stage of salary parity for the center-based workforce and ensure family-based providers receive the increased market rate.
- Support decentralized enrollment options so early care and education providers can enroll children of families applying for care directly and on site.
- Build a robust, culturally and linguistically supportive education and outreach effort at the community level to increase public knowledge and utilization of all public ECE programs.

- Offer greater flexibility in center-based and home-based providers' contracts to increase their ability to respond to emerging community needs.
- Convert school-day, school-year seats to extended-day, year-round options across age ranges to ensure maximum utilization of seats.

We applaud City leaders for taking a step in the right direction in the most recent budget by baselining \$15 million for Extended Early Childhood Education to convert 3 K school-day, school-year seats to extended-day, extended-year seats, as well as providing \$16 million to continue providing childcare services to undocumented families through Promise NYC. However, the other recommendations outlined above remain critical if we hope to address the challenges within our ECE system, and we are eager to continue working with the City Council and the Administration to advance these priorities.

Int 0941-2023

CCC has long been a champion of childcare access for all New York children and families regardless of employment, income, or immigration status, and we look forward to partnering with Councilwoman Gutierrez and other city leaders to achieve this goal of universal access.

CCC's more recent [analysis on the affordability of childcare](#) utilizes data to highlight the affordability crisis that families across New York City are facing. Among all families in need of care for an infant or toddler, just 15 percent can afford home-based care and only 11 percent can afford the cost of center-based care. Of families with children ages 3-5, 19 percent can afford home-based care and 14 percent can afford center-based care. These analyses are based on the federal government's benchmark that family copayments should not exceed 7% of a family's annual income.ⁱⁱ This crisis of unaffordability is untenable in New York City, and we commend Councilmember Gutierrez for fighting to address this grave issue.

The path to universal childcare must include an operational approach that will address the many issues that currently exist within the City's ECE system. CCC and our C4C partners on the Campaign for Children have heard countless accounts from staff and leadership at contracted early care and education programs about the challenges experienced. Like many nonprofit social services programs, the contracted early care and education community experienced significant disruptions throughout the pandemic. Both family child care and center-based providers experienced a shuttering of their doors in the initial days, followed by hybrid and then in-person services. Adding to an already challenging situation, as new contracts came online, the DOE prioritized school-day and school-year services over extended-day, year-round services. From our discussions with providers and partners, we know that the confluence of these factors has had a significant impact on enrolling and retaining families.

Furthermore, the transition to new leadership in the DOE and considerable loss of staffing within city agencies led to unacceptably long payment delays. In September of 2022, Seachange reported \$464 million owed to childcare providers for the FY'22 fiscal year (a fiscal year that

concluded in June 2022).ⁱⁱⁱ And while the DOE committed to meet the center-based contract payment floor of 75% of the full contract value and has employed rapid response teams to work with providers and permitted the batching of multiple months of invoices to help expedite catching up on FY'22, we continue to hear distress from providers about payments that remain owed for FY'23.

Sadly, at a time when early childhood education providers in contract with the City's Department of Education continue to recover from severe financial hardships due to delayed payments for FY'22 and FY'23, the FY 2024 Budget moved New York City away from the path to universal child care by cutting \$568 million from 3-K for All. The Budget also failed to take action on other investments and operational reforms needed to stabilize and strengthen the early childhood education system and meet the needs of children, families, and the workforce.

Bringing stability to the system by completing a catch-up on back payments owed timely and providing robust advance payments; implementing flexible contracts; conducting multilingual outreach; expanding service options that fit the schedules of families; and addressing other long-standing operational issues are the first steps to building a truly universal system.

To move these operational issues forward and to ensure we can expand system capacity, it is crucial to secure sustainable funding through a combination of City, State, and Federal resources. Today, of \$1.7 billion spent on Universal Pre-K at DOE \$576.3 million comes from the state, \$503.4 comes from the federal government, and \$574.5 is city tax levy. When we look at the \$498 million spent on early childhood programs, \$10.4 million comes from the state, \$198.7 million is from the federal government, and \$288.9 million is city tax levy.^{iv} We recommend that this legislation acknowledge the City, State, and Federal funding partnership required to achieve universal care. CCC stands ready to partner with Councilmember Gutierrez in advocating for greater State and Federal investments and city tax levy funding for Early Care and Education to make universal care a reality.

Res 0560-2023

CCC supports Councilmember Menin's resolution to pass state legislation S.4924/A.1303, which would prohibit the requirement for parents to earn at least a minimum wage and work a certain number of hours in order to be eligible for subsidized child care. This legislation would remove yet another bureaucratic hurdle that families face when trying to access care and would provide for more flexibility for parents to pursue educational or professional goals that would advance their careers and all-around well-being. CCC looks forward to partnering with Councilmember Menin in taking the necessary advocacy steps to pass this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

ⁱ Citizens' Committee for Children. *Early Care and Education Report*. May 2023. <https://cccnyc.org/data-publications/early-care-and-education-in-nyc/>

ⁱⁱ Citizens' Committee for Children. *NYC'S Child Care Affordability Crisis: An Analysis of Recent Data*. June 2023. <https://cccnyc.org/data-publications/nycs-child-care-affordability-crisis-an-analysis-of-the-most-recent-data/>

ⁱⁱⁱ SeaChange. *Early Childhood Education: How Much More Can Nonprofits Endure?* September 2022.
<https://seachangecap.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SeaChange-Research-Note-Early-Childhood-Education.pdf>

^{iv} The City of New York OMB. *Supporting Schedules 2023*. June 2023.
<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/ss6-23.pdf>



NYC Council Committee on Women & Gender Equity
Hearing on Universal Child Care in NYC

Testimony Submitted by the Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF)
September 21, 2023

Thank you to Hon. Chair Cabán, and the members of the Committee on Women & Gender Equity for the opportunity to offer testimony on universal childcare in New York City. The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families, better known by its acronym, CHCF, is a non-profit organization with a 41-year history of combining education, capacity-building, and advocacy to strengthen the support system and continuum of learning for children and youth from birth through school-age.

CHCF delivers wrap around services through and beyond our state and city contracted birth through school-age programs and services. We know that access to high quality, equitably resourced, and culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining learning spaces is critical from birth through school-age; and that access to high-quality, responsive early learning spaces have particularly significant impacts on a child's development, long-term academic growth, and life outcomes. CHCF further recognizes the importance of responsive and holistic supports and services that not only meet the needs of the child, but of their family and the many intersecting circumstances that go beyond what occurs in care and educational spaces to impact their well-being and development.

As one of the four NYC Childcare Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), CHCF supports childcare and early learning programs, and family access to childcare (birth through school-age). The strong majority of early care educators served through CHCF are licensed early care educators in residential settings (Group Family and Family Day Care) who speak Spanish as their primary language. These providers are integral to their communities and offer safe, high-quality, culturally and linguistically response care and early learning for children and families in their programs. **Family Childcare programs are often more flexible to the varying needs of their families, holding most infant and toddler seats across the city to accommodating families with mixed-age children; and they are more likely to offer non-traditional hours of care for families that do not work Monday through Friday, 9 to 5.** Home-based programs play such an integral role in their communities, serving 67% of children with subsidies (this includes family child care and legally exempt programs)¹, yet they are often the most marginalized within larger child care advocacy efforts around cost of care and pay equity, and as a result these early care educators—most of whom are women of color and immigrant women—and the children and families that they serve are consistently underfunded and under resourced, which not only holds many in this workforce in poverty, but begins systemic educational inequities at an early age.

Through our interactions with parents, communities, and early childhood educators we are acutely aware of the vast and ongoing barriers in access to affordable childcare and early learning programs for New York's families, and the detrimental impact of not having consistent, safe spaces to leave our precious children on family livelihood and stability. New York City systems are additionally

¹ Child Care Facts and Figures 2022 (January 2023). NYS Office of Children and Family Services.
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2022-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>





malfunctioning in their ability to stabilize existing early care and education programs and grow capacity to truly meet the varying care needs of families, and to ensure the system is prepared for a move towards universal access to Birth-to-Five care.

We have been engaged in many conversations with the incoming administration and leaders at those city agencies which oversee parts of the child care sector, alongside many of our advocacy and stakeholder partners in the sector, to elevate the pressing issues that must be addressed in order to stabilize our existing child care programs and workforce, while we look forward to re-building capacity and better streamlining access for families.

We are in support of the bill and resolutions being considered today— Int 0941, Res 0560, and Res 0561—and feel that they would establish stronger practices that lend towards a more stable and accessible child care system for NYC families; one that could prepare NYC for a universal system of child care, which is so imperative to the over stability of families, as well as the city-wide economy. In particular, Int 0941 would ensure continued existence of an office of child care and continue to grow its reach and impact in supporting this important sector. We thank Council Member Gutierrez and the many Council champions of this important issue and need in New York. ***With an eye towards building a sustained, thriving, and equitably supported child care system that could ultimately withstand universal family access, and that is inclusive of all program settings that parents and families are choosing for the care and early development of their children, we wish to elevate some of the ongoing top concerns that need to be addressed by city leaders, particularly those tasked with overseeing the child care system—many of which are touched upon in Int 0941.*** Of concern are:

⇒ **Longstanding inequities in contracting for FCC as compared to their center-based counterparts.**

Neither affiliated FCC providers nor the CBO Network organizations were given the same contractual securities as center birth-to-Five contracts were provided. While centers were offered a guaranteed minimum pay out of 68% of their contract, up to 100%, based on enrollment, FCC Networks were denied any base guarantee to ensure overhead and constant costs, regardless of enrollment, would be supported – while enrollment was ultimately centralized and out of their control. We continue to support not only equity in contracting practices, but the inclusion of community-based enrollment, alongside the central process, to best match families to the care option that meets their needs.

We must strengthen and elevate all modalities of care that serve NYC families through city contracting and enrollment practices.

⇒ **Reimbursement of services based on attendance rather than based on enrollment.**

Reimbursement by attendance is not conducive to maintaining high-quality programming and the associated costs, regardless of day-to-day attendance shifts that are outside of the provider's control.

We must ensure stable funding of programming costs based on the number of children enrolled, which more accurately reflects the true cost of running a program.





⇒ **Lack of rate differentials to support care for children with special needs and to deliver extended and non-traditional hours of care.**

While the Federal Government recommends use of a rate differential of 15% for delivering services for children with special needs, the city does not offer this rate differential in its contracted services, or through vouchers. As NYC moves towards expanding access to affordable care that meets family needs, we must go beyond merely naming the need for expanding access to seats for children with special needs.

Further, providers offering extended hours of care and non-traditional hours of care require an additional pay differential to reflect the added costs of running a program, including staffing and health and safety costs, associated with offering non-traditional program hours to meet family needs.

We must ensure that providers are given appropriate funding, resources, and system support to meet the individual developmental and physical needs of the children enrolled in their program, and to offer hours of care reflective of varying family schedules.

⇒ **Lack of pay parity for *all* early care educators, and specific marginalization of FCC educators.**

We know that pay parity is an issue across child care modalities, and while there have been some important gains in ensuring parity between CBO center educators and administrators and their DOE counterparts through union negotiations, these wins *are not* a catch-all for ensuring equity in pay parity practices across the sector. For example, DOE-affiliated FCC providers are being held at rates that are barely in line with the state market rates for care, which do not reflect the additional costs associated with NYC/DOE-specific requirements that are set for affiliated program. We wish to reiterate that this particular workforce is overwhelmingly made up of women, women of color, and immigrant women. We must really reflect on funding practices that are strongly linked to false narratives of deficits in quality and hold these women in poverty.

We must ensure a base, fair wage for all early care educators – including benefits equity – and ensure that every program where families choose to place their children is honored, invested in, and truly supported in constantly improving upon quality.

⇒ **Consistent lack of linguistically responsive support for providers, across all agencies.**

The licensing package as well as background check materials are still only in English. While city agencies offer written guidance, one-on-one support, and webinars, at best there is inconsistency in translating and offering interpretation. Often, providers are met with staff who do not speak their language, and the materials they have access to are only in English. CHCF works with hundreds of FCC providers each year, again, the majority of whom speak Spanish as their primary language, and who often serve families whose primary language is Spanish. City leaders need to match their policies and actions with their messaging and professed values. If we truly value a multicultural city and multilingual communities, we must invest in the development of systems and workforces that are responsive to and sustain cultures and languages.





We must recognize the tremendous skillset and value of providers who speak languages other than English and invest in those skillsets to expand recognized availability of culturally and linguistically responsive ECE program options. We must ensure equitable access to resources and support for these providers and by extension, the families and children in their programs.

⇒ **Ongoing system barriers in timely access to available affordable care options for families.**

We are excited that there has been movement towards a streamlined system of access to childcare and early learning through MyCity but continue to experience challenges in access for families through the system. We know that NYC is braiding together several funding streams and program models to meet the needs of NYC families, but this complexity and confusion should not fall on the families trying to access the most affordable and comprehensive care options to meet their family's unique needs. We continue to call upon city leaders to directly engage impacted community stakeholders, as well as organizations that support families in navigating systems, as thought partners in system design and subsequent feedback loops to ensure family are not ultimately discouraged from accessing resources that are meant to ease stress in their lives.

We understand that the cost of delivering universal care would be significant and it does include increased investments from the federal, state, and city. As we hold that as the ultimate goal, let's be more effective at ensuring that families who are currently eligible for subsidy are getting access and filling any funding gaps to ensure 100% uptake for all families who need care.

We must ensure that city systems billboarded as a tool to streamline access for all families truly meet that mark—especially as we move to expand eligibility of families towards universal access.

Ultimately, we want to ensure that all city leaders who are championing childcare and a move towards universal access do so in a way that will truly sustain, equitably invest in, and grow *all* modalities and programs, which are all such an important part of our communities and the NYC childcare sector. As blueprints are being developed for NYC's childcare system, we need FCC, as well as Legally Exempt programs, to be thought of front and center, along with center-based care. We need our city leaders to learn more about home-based programs and make visits to those in their districts, so that we can collectively champion all modalities of care and family choice in setting, push against stigmatization and marginalization of this largely women-of-color-led field, and ensure developmental and educational equity begin at birth.

We thank you for consideration of our testimony. If there are any questions about what is presented in our testimony, please reach out to Danielle Demeuse, Director of Policy for the Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF) at ddemeuse@chcfinc.org or 212-206-1090, ext. 359.





**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York
Before the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Caban, Chair
On Universal Child Care in New York City**

**Prepared by Gregory Brender, Chief Policy and Innovation Officer and
Shelby Lohr, Policy Analyst**

September 21st, 2023

Thank you Chairs Caban and members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for the opportunity to testify and for holding a hearing on this important topic.

The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early care and education providers across New York City. DCCNY supports its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field at large through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, professional development and training for early childhood educators, directors and staff, and referral services for parents looking to find child care. DCCNY member organizations provide early care and education at over 200 sites in neighborhoods across all five boroughs. Most DCCNY member organizations operate with contracts with the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), while a smaller portion work with federally-funded Head Start contracts or through private funding. DCCNY member organizations seek to provide quality early care and education services to New York's children and families across all five boroughs. DCCNY member organizations employ over 4,000 New Yorkers, the majority of whom are Black and Brown women. Day Care Council of New York is an active member of Campaign for Children and the Empire State Campaign for Child Care. We have attached a statement from Empire State Campaign for Child Care to this testimony.

DCCNY sees a future where all children have access to quality early childhood education and where early childhood providers—and all those working in early care and education programs—have the tools and resources necessary to offer the highest quality early childhood education. This includes a fair and thriving wage for early care and education providers, directors, teachers, and support staff. The early childhood field is underpaid, and this underpayment represents a legacy of discrimination against work that has been classified as women's work. We consistently call for salary parity

between early childhood providers, directors, teachers, and support staff and their counterparts in New York City Public Schools.

As providers of early childhood education, DCCNY's member organizations know that all children benefit from the education and socialization that quality early care and education programs provide. Yet, too many families are struggling to access affordable child care, and far too many providers are struggling to keep their doors open.

To move toward a system of quality and universal access, DCCNY makes the following recommendations:

Complete the Unfinished Work of Salary Parity

This week, the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus and the Day Care Council of New York released a report about the state of the early childhood education workforce and the need to achieve salary parity for community-based educators and staff. That report is attached to this testimony. This research pointed to the very real need to fix the systemic inequality existing within the current childcare framework in New York.

In achieving universal child care, our first step must involve addressing the pay gaps which are forcing providers, teachers, staff, and directors out of the early childhood field. Quality child care requires excellent staff in child care programs at all levels, from teachers to support staff and directors.

However, right now, individuals who make the commitment to care for and educate the youngest New Yorkers in their community remain underpaid and underappreciated. If we prioritize universal childcare, we need to focus on creating a system where educators and children can both thrive. Without parity, this cannot happen.

A 2023 survey from Empire State Campaign for Child Care revealed that, in New York State,

- 90% of child care centers are short-staffed, and
- 776 classrooms closed because centers could not find staff.

A survey conducted by DCCNY this summer revealed that 51.9% of centers in New York City report losing their newly-recruited teachers within five years.

And it isn't hard to see why:

- A certified teacher with a Master's Degree will lose over \$1.7 million in lifetime earnings over a 25-year career.
- A certified director with ten years' experience in a community-based organization earns \$90k less than her or his counterpart working for NYCPS.

The pay differences between comparable roles in community-based programs and those in New York City Public Schools is staggering. Centers regularly lose experienced and gifted early childhood professionals who usually transition to higher-paying jobs in New York City Public Schools or leave the field for other work that allows them to feed their families and afford basic necessities. To achieve universal child care, we need to first take steps to support working families through support of early childhood education professionals at community-based organizations. DCCNY makes the following recommendations to complete the unfinished work of salary parity:

- Funding new labor contracts that keep pace with NYCPS wages, ensuring equality in wages between the teachers, directors, and staff at community-based organizations and the teachers, directors, and staff at New York City Public Schools. This includes COLA adjustments and bonuses included in the 2023 UFT Contract.
- Including summer Per Diem rates for year-round programs (The 2024 UFT negotiated rates: \$211.41 for a teacher; \$176.82 for a paraprofessional; \$157.72 for a school secretary).
- Including staff excluded from the first phase of parity (this includes early childhood directors, support staff in community-based organizations, and preschool special education teachers and support staff).
- Factoring longevity differentials into salary increases.
- Establishing a \$25 minimum wage floor for all support staff. (For educational support staff, this would include a wage floor of \$45,500 per year for a 35-hour per week schedule. For janitors and cooks, this would include a salary floor of \$50,000 for a 40-hour per week schedule.)

Implement Community Based Enrollment

The launch of the DOE Centralized Enrollment System in 2019 stripped community-based organizations of the power to process their own enrollment. This change required all families to go through DOE's Centralized Enrollment System.

Under the NYCPS Centralized Enrollment System, there have been significant wait times for families' applications for child care subsidies to be approved, leaving vacant seats in child care centers and family child care homes. This adds stress to parents attempting to access affordable child care. Moreover, many families—including many immigrant essential workers—are wary of engaging with a government agency. Instead,

many feel safer enrolling their children in a community-based organization where they've already established a trusting relationship.

Local community-based early childhood providers have strong connections to the neighborhoods they serve. The City should leverage these strong relationships to ensure that families are able to quickly access the child care programs they select for their children.

DCCNY urges the City to allow community-based enrollment in contracted early childhood education programs.

Stabilize Providers by Ensuring Full and On-Time Payments

Many providers continue to struggle financially due to late payments from NYCPS leading to:

- Centers missing payroll, forcing their committed staff members to need to look for new jobs or struggle to make ends meet
- Missed payments to vendors
- Missed payments for employee benefits.

The City must act immediately to fix this broken system. DCCNY makes the following recommendations:

- Increase advances to 75% of contract value—the value already guaranteed in contracts;
- Migrate invoicing and payment processes from NYCPS PreKids system to MOCS (Mayor's Office of Contract Services) Passport system, in line with other human services contracts. This would simplify the process for providers;
- Pay FY24 invoices promptly, enabling providers to bill for more than one month at time. The city must ensure that the lag between invoicing and reimbursement never exceeds 30 days; and
- Hold providers harmless from enrollment penalties as long as NYCPS controls enrollment.

Thank you for holding this hearing and for your work to expand access to child care in New York City!

**Statement of Empire State Campaign for Child Care
At the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Caban, Chair
Hearing on Universal Child Care in New York City**

September 21, 2023

The Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) is a Statewide Campaign fighting for a high quality, free, equitable and universal child care system that meets the needs of all children and families and pays child care programs the true cost of care with a thriving wage and benefits.

Empire State Campaign for Child Care is excited to see the New York City Council considering universal child care. We also applaud the City Council for its role in creating Promise NYC which now serves as a model for how access to child care can serve children without regard to their immigration status.

ESCCC has adopted the following principles to guide New York State in moving towards universal access to child care.

1. All children are universally covered.

There is no means testing or income eligibility cutoff and every child is guaranteed access to an accessible, quality child care program in the type of child care setting that their family chooses.

2. Funding for child care is ample, predictable, consistent, and sustained long term.

The NYS government demonstrates its commitment to a universal system by filling any gaps in federal child care funding, and supporting identified improvements and enhancements.

3. The system supports and properly funds, at true cost of care, a choice of modalities (center-based, family child care, and legally exempt). Funding levels are based on licensed capacity and enrollment, as well as quality and licensing

standards. Methods for determining funding will be transparent and funds will be provided directly to providers on a schedule that reflects provider budgetary needs. Training and assistance ensures all providers are able to successfully utilize required systems, maintain quality standards, and promote their services to local families.

4. The system promotes respect and just compensation for the child care workforce.

Compensation is at parity with K-12, based on comparable experience and responsibilities, across age groups and settings. All providers are able to access professional pathways with value placed on hands-on experience and years in the field, as well as more traditional education criteria. Media campaigns consistently promote the workforce as professionals serving a critical health and education function; and the child care sector as key to the overall economy, the economic stability of families, and to the overall well-being and growth of children.

5. Child care is available and accessible in all communities. Expansion plans continue to address specific community needs and preferences, facilitate participation of family child care, prioritize racial equity, and address previously marginalized regions and communities. Innovative approaches are encouraged.

6. All children, regardless of age or type of setting, have access to quality care.

Quality standards and funding mechanisms address, and actively work to reduce, discrimination based on race, gender, sexual preference, marital status, faith, geography, language and ability, and citizenship status; and encourage responsiveness to different languages, cultures and values. New resources and training for providers makes expulsion of children from the system rare or non-existent.

7. System evaluation and reform is continuous and centered in quality and equity.

The system of evaluation ensures participation of providers and workforce representatives from different geographies and modalities; parents representing diverse races, genders and geographies as well as modality preference; those who have faced past barriers to access; policy experts, and legislators.

**THE ENDURING VALUE OF THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE**

Why New York City Must Complete the Path to Parity for the Community-Based Early Childhood Education Workforce

**By New York City Council Black, Latino and
Asian Caucus and the Day Care Council of
New York**

September 2023

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
I. Child Care After COVID.....	2
II. Child Care Staffing Crisis.....	3
III. Opportunity in Renegotiation.....	4
About Us.....	5
Part I: BLAC Advocacy.....	6
I. BLAC Calls for Salary Parity	7
II. New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus Early Childhood Policy Proposals.....	8
Part II: Recommendation and Data.....	10
I. Recommendations	11
II. Community-Based Organizations and New York City's Early Care and Education Landscape	13
III. New York City's Early Childhood Workforce	15
IV. The Staffing Crisis in Childcare Programs	16
V. The 2019 "Path to Parity" and Next Steps	19
VI. Salary Disparity by the Numbers	22
Directors	23
Teachers	25
Assistant Teachers	27
Part III: Appendix	28
References	29



Executive Summary

I. Child Care After COVID

In 2019, the Day Care Council of New York published its first report on salary parity for New York City’s early education workforce. This report, “The Value of Early Childhood Educators,” cites decades of existing research on the impact of high-quality early childhood education.¹ Early learners who spend their days in caring and intellectually-stimulating environments benefit from life-long positive outcomes in school readiness and later professional opportunities. Such gains are particularly strong among historically under-represented communities and low-income families.² Investing in children and their early education offers economic advantages which continue through the duration of students’ lives.

Executive Summary

In the wake of COVID-19, such findings remain valid. Another DCCNY report, “Supporting New York City’s Unsung Heroes,” cataloged the lessons learned through the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the report detailed the economic ramifications of this years-long cultural shift.³

Ultimately, the pandemic demonstrated the economic imperative to support child care services and early learning providers. The financial strain of COVID-19 shutdowns induced many women to leave the workforce in order to care for their children. At the same time, centers lost tuition from families amid safety concerns and widespread unemployment. In the midst of the pandemic, more New York City early child care sites closed than opened.⁴

Throughout COVID, young learners spent their formative years adjusting to the often-distanced pandemic setting. To make up for these social and emotional setbacks, children require connection with peers and meaningful engagement with talented and experienced caregivers. New York’s economic recovery depends on parents returning to work, which cannot happen unless parents feel confident that their children will spend their day in a safe, nurturing, and educational space.

II. Child Care Staffing Crisis

Against that backdrop, New York City’s early childhood education system remains in the throes of a staffing crisis. This crisis is driven by the inadequate wages of the early care workforce, which in turn produces staff burnout and employee turnover.⁵



Executive Summary

Some Federal policies that aimed to mitigate COVID fallout at child care centers, such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, supplied bonuses to early care and education providers. Such funding was a short-term, unsustainable solution to addressing long-standing funding shortfalls, whereas the City's "Path to Parity" agreement in 2019 enabled certified teachers to earn starting salaries on par with peers in NYCPS.⁶

For its success, the "Path to Parity" agreement failed to factor in longevity increases. Long-serving teachers, staff, and directors at CBOs stand to lose millions of dollars over the course of their career by remaining at their sites instead of working at New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). In order to provide incentives for continuity and community development, true parity must include longevity increases. The new United Federation of Teachers (UFT) agreement includes a series of COLA increases through 2026 and includes salary increases based on teachers' years of service. These COLA increases, coupled with existing longevity increases at NYCPS, create an ever-widening chasm between NYCPS salaries and those of the early childhood professionals working for CBOs.

III. Opportunity in Renegotiation

This year's collective bargaining negotiation offers the opportunity to address true parity and ensure that CBO workers obtain salaries, bonuses, and benefits commensurate with their training and years of experience.



Executive Summary

The path to parity, we argue, involves achieving a fair wage through factoring in NYCPS longevity increases and including dedicated professionals in non-teaching roles.

This report begins by discussing a letter presented to Mayor Eric Adams by the New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus. In this letter—and through subsequent actions from City Council members and Speaker Adrienne Adams—the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus and allies in the City Council called upon City officials to achieve racial equity through pay parity for teachers, staff, and directors at CBOs.

Our report then cites a body of evidence demonstrating the measurably-high quality of education offered at community-based organizations. We explain the current state of the system and close with a case-by-case demonstration of the stark salary differences between CBOs and NYCPS over the duration of employees' careers.

About Us

The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early childhood provider organizations in New York City.

DCCNY's mission is to support its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field at-large through policy research and advocacy; labor relations and mediation; professional development and training for early childhood educators, directors, and staff; and referral services for parents looking to find child care. DCCNY member organizations provide early care and education at more than 200 sites in neighborhoods across all five boroughs.

New York City Black, Latino and Asian Caucus

The mission of the New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus (BLAC) is to protect, empower and advocate for the City's over five million New Yorkers of color through its utilization of the legislative, oversight, and budgetary powers of the Council.

PART I

BLAC

Advocacy

I. BLAC Calls for Salary Parity

Recognizing the need for salary parity across the early childhood workforce, the New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus (BLAC, referred to hereafter as the Caucus) recommended seven immediate actions to address pressing issues in New York City’s early childhood education sector. The Caucus recognized the need for salary parity across the early childhood workforce in its February 28, 2023, letter to Mayor Eric Adams.

Salary parity remains essential to prevent the loss of qualified staff from child care programs and to create a sustainable early childhood system.⁷

The Caucus recognized the inherent inequality in the CBO-NYCPS salary disparity: women and women of color constitute the majority of the community-based early education workforce. It is essential that the City close salary gaps facing the early childhood workforce in order to fulfill its commitment to racial and gender equality.

In the letter, the Caucus called upon the City to “[b]uild upon salary parity for the early childhood education workforce by funding a new labor contract that advances parity between the workforce in community-based organization (CBO) settings and their counterparts in DOE 3-K and Universal Pre-K (UPK) settings.”



II. New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus Early Childhood Policy Proposals

Twenty-nine members of the New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus called upon Mayor Eric Adams to take seven crucial actions to protect and strengthen early childhood education in New York City. This report examines the disparities behind the third recommendation. The full list includes:

- 01** **Immediately address the crisis of late payments** to DOE-contracted child care providers, ensuring that all providers are reimbursed for the services that they provided in FY'22 and FY'23, and that operational systems are put in place to support on-time payments moving forward.
- 02** **Release a new Request for Proposals for the expansion of 3-K for All** that emphasizes access to Extended Day / Extended Year slots, which better match the needs of working parents who cannot afford to pick up their children in the middle of the work day.
- 03** **Build upon salary parity for the early childhood education workforce** by funding a new labor contract that advances parity between the workforce in community-based organization (CBO) settings and their counterparts in DOE 3-K and Universal Pre-K (UPK) settings.

II. New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus Early Childhood Policy Proposals

- 04** **Develop a two-pronged enrollment system** that allows parents the option of enrolling directly through CBOs or through the DOE, giving more agency to families and entrusting them to make the best decision for their children.
- 05** **Ensure that the distribution of early childhood care and education seats** (for infants and toddlers, 3-K, and UPK) addresses high-need communities, service deserts, and prioritizes meeting the full-day, year-round needs of working families.
- 06** **Make it easier for families to access care** by investing in an extensive multi-lingual and culturally competent outreach campaign to inform New York families about their options and improve enrollment in services.
- 07** **Ensure home-based family child care providers benefit** from the increased rate of reimbursement, which has increased to 80 percent from 65 percent.

PART II

Recommendations & Data

I. Recommendations

Focusing on the Caucus's third recommendation, this report compares CBO salaries with the salaries of their NYCPS counterparts. The data shows the ever-widening chasm between salaries over the course of educators' careers. The data also demonstrates the compounding losses of the directors, teachers, and staff who choose to devote their careers to serving young children and their families at community-based organizations.

The City must address the disparities identified in this report by making new investments in the early childhood workforce, including:

- **Funding new labor contracts that keep pace with NYCPS wages**, ensuring equality in wages between the teachers, directors, and staff at community-based organizations and the teachers, directors, and staff at New York City Public Schools. This includes COLA adjustments and bonuses included in the 2023 UFT Contract.
- **Including summer Per Diem rates for year-round programs** (The 2024 UFT negotiated rates: \$211.41 for a teacher; \$176.82 for a paraprofessional; \$157.72 for a school secretary).⁸
- **Including staff excluded from the first phase of parity** (this includes early childhood directors, support staff in community-based organizations, and preschool special education teachers and support staff).
- **Factoring longevity** differentials into salary increases.
- **Establishing a \$25 minimum wage** floor for all support staff. (For educational support staff, this would include a wage floor of \$45,500 per year for a 35 hour per week schedule. For janitors and cooks, this would include a salary floor of \$50,000 for a 40 hour per week schedule.)

II. Community-Based Organizations and New York City's Early Care and Education Landscape

New York City's early care and education system is complex and reflects the size and diversity of the City. Public funding from the City, State, and Federal governments support young children receiving early care and education in a variety of settings. This includes:

- **Child care centers**, many of which operate with contracts with NYC Public Schools, and
- **Home-based programs**, where providers care for small groups of children in their own homes.

Community-based child care centers and home-based family child care programs are the only publicly-funded, affordable options offering:

- **Year-round child care** that includes the summer,
- **Care for children under three years old,**
- **Extended-day programs** based on the workday instead of the school day, and
- **Wraparound services**, including connections with social services and family support.

A 2016 study by United Neighborhood Houses and Campaign for Children compared the average ratings of Department of Education-contracted community-based organizations with the average ratings of Department of Education public schools.

The assessment relied on two nationally-recognized metrics: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which examines children’s interactions with adults, and the Early Childhood Rating Scale (ECERS), which assesses classroom environments.

This study concluded that community-based organizations out-performed public schools in nine of the ten metrics. These results are displayed in the two following figures.⁹

Fig. 1: The Early Childhood Rating Scale Study (ECRSS) Results

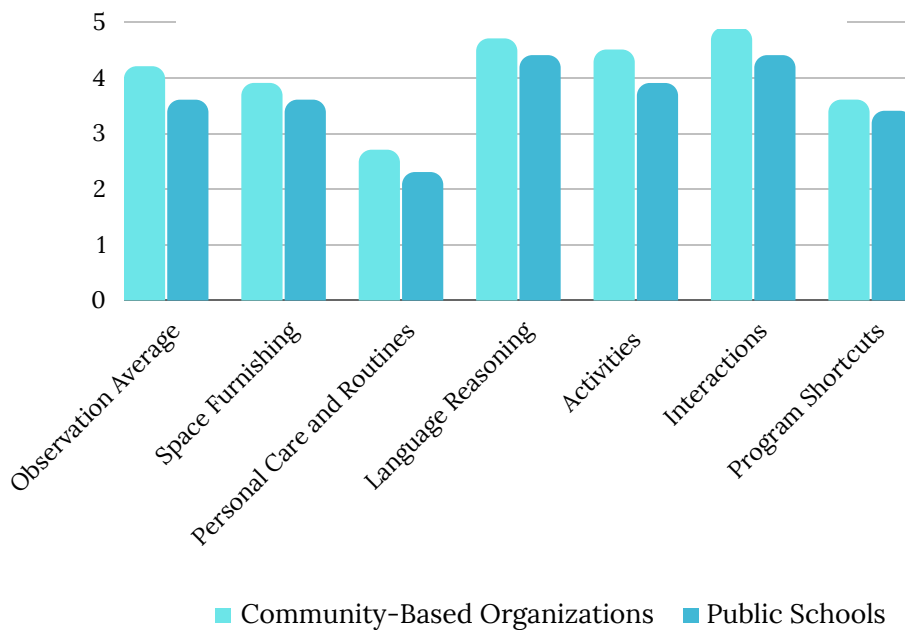
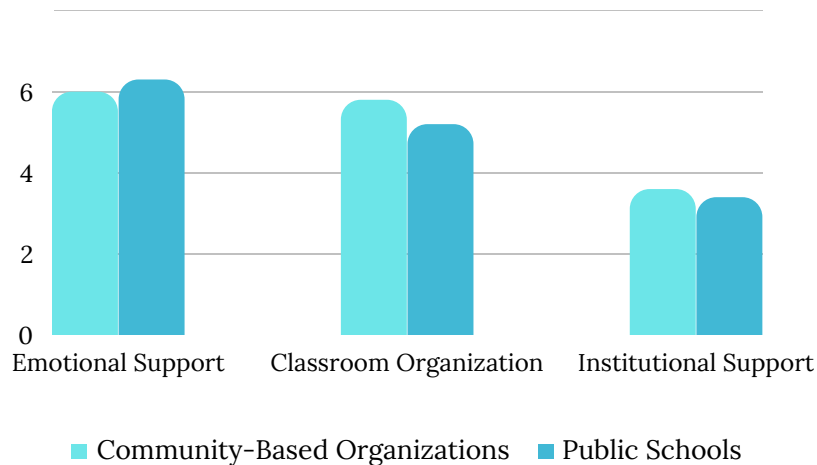


Fig. 2: Classroom Assessment Scoring Scale (CASS) Results



CBOs are more likely to serve Black families and dual-language families, and the quality of care at CBOs demonstrably surpasses that of public schools.¹⁰ Despite the myriad of advantages available to early learners at CBOs, the staff, teachers, and directors at these sites do not receive compensation commensurate with their public school peers.

Similarly, a 2020 report from the University of California, Berkeley, maintained that community-based programs delivered higher-quality education than their counterparts at city public schools. This study, published in *Early Education & Development*, also found CBO advantages across multiple metrics.¹¹

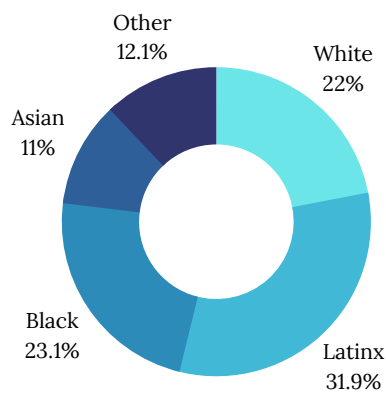
III. New York City's Early Childhood Workforce

In New York City, women of color comprise the overwhelming majority of the early care and education workforce. In fact, women of color are more heavily represented in the workforce of community-based early care and education programs than they are in the K-12 workforce.¹²

The teachers, staff, and directors at community-based early childhood centers remain underpaid through a legacy of discriminatory policies that devalue the work of women, particularly women of color. Every member of the early care and education workforce—whether they be teachers, directors, custodians, cooks, or support staff—takes responsibility for the safety and growth of New York City's most precious asset: its children. Yet, many of the lowest-paid child care staff earn wages less than they would if they transitioned to working in the fast food or retail industries.

In fact, many leave their roles because they can no longer afford to work within the early childhood field.

Fig. 3: Racial Composition of the Early Childhood Workforce in NYC

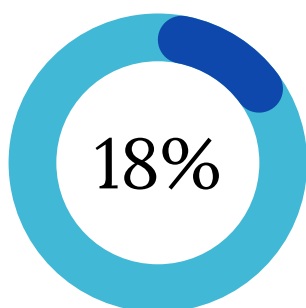


The majority of early childhood education workers in New York City are women of color.

Source: Raising New York: New York State's Infant Toddler Workforce. https://raisingnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/State-of-the-Childcare-Report_F_3.17.2021.pdf March, 2021

IV. The Staffing Crisis in Child Care Programs

Intense staffing shortages at early care centers lead to an over-extended workforce. Directors and teachers often wear multiple hats, filling in as cooks, substitutes, and janitors in order to keep centers afloat amid such vacancies. To better understand staffing challenges, the Day Care Council of New York and allied organizations track shortages and measure the impact of this operational hurdle.¹³



In a 2021 DCCNY survey about Center Directors, 18% of centers with DOE contracts reported that they used outside funds to enhance their directors' salaries.

Caring adults play a critical role in supporting children's social, emotional, and intellectual development. Child care centers want to retain staff committed to the children, families, and communities they serve. Still, much of the early childhood workforce at CBOs remain transient. In NYC, staff often depart for similar positions with NYCPS, or pivot to higher-paying opportunities in other industries, often taking on entry-level roles.

In 2023, DCCNY surveyed its members and found that 83% of DCCNY centers dealt with staff vacancies in the past year. Among that 83%, nearly a quarter of respondents experienced seven or more vacancies in a single year.

A March 2023 study by Empire State Campaign for Child Care and Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy that surveyed child care programs across New York State indicated that staffing challenges prompted a state-wide child care crisis. Of the 1,660 respondents:

- 90% of child care centers are short-staffed,
- 766 classrooms closed in community-based child care centers and after-school programs because centers could not find staff,
- 3,857 contended with unfilled staff positions, and
- 28,462 children could not receive care because of the workforce shortage.¹⁴

90%

of child care centers are short-staffed

776

CBO classrooms closed because centers could not find staff

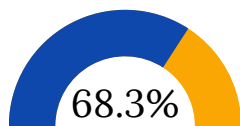
With 98% of occupations paying more than child care in New York City, workers at all levels in the CBO system struggle with the decision to stay in their jobs.

Region	Child Care Median Annual Wage	Overall Median Annual Wage	% of Occupations that Pay More than Child Care	Difference in Salary
New York State	\$31,885	\$50,850	97%	\$18,965
Capital Region	\$30,680	\$49,681	97%	\$19,001
Central New York	\$30,036	\$48,818	99%	\$18,782
Finger Lakes	\$30,529	\$48,132	96%	\$17,603
Hudson Valley	\$35,788	\$49,910	94%	\$14,122
Long Island	\$32,752	\$50,269	97%	\$17,517
Mohawk Valley	\$30,971	\$40,450	92%	\$9,479
New York City	\$35,491	\$62,820	98%	\$27,329
North Country	\$29,889	\$46,211	99%	\$16,322
Southern Tier	\$31,181	\$48,426	93%	\$17,245
Western New York	\$30,326	\$47,764	97%	\$17,432

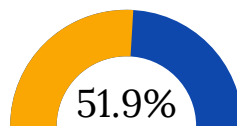
Fig. 4: Child care wages in New York by Region¹⁵

Despite the recruitment and retention challenges, most child care centers have at least one long-standing employee. A 2023 DCCNY survey indicated that 43.1% of sites include a staff member serving at the same location for over 20 years. Further, at a significant proportion of sites, 25.2% of the staff, teachers, and directors stay at the same center between ten and twenty years.

Still, there is a trend toward early-career attrition. 51.9% of centers report that their newly-recruited CBO teachers, on average, leave their teaching roles at a site within five years.¹⁶



68.3% of child care centers include a staff member serving ten or more years working at the site



51.9% of centers report that, on average, their newly-recruited child care teachers leave within five years

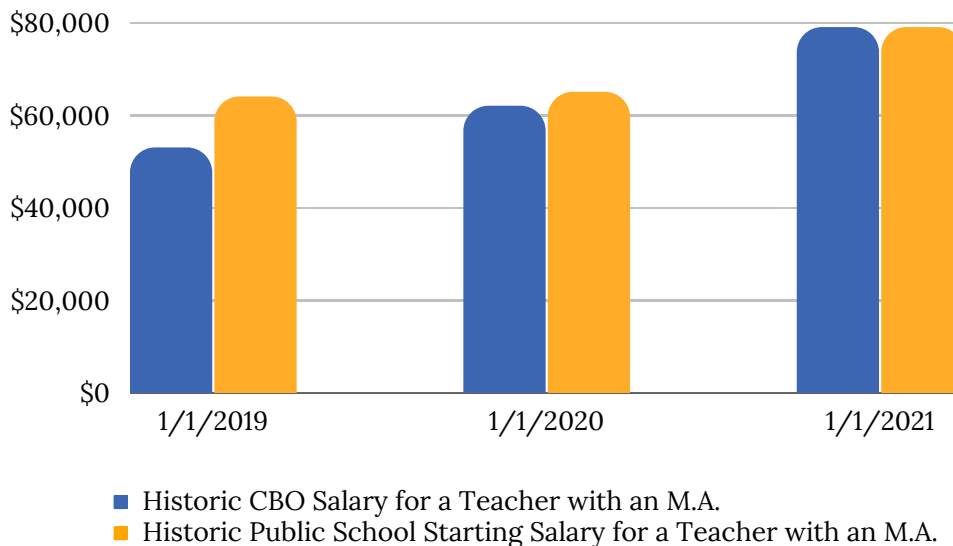
In a system where many centers face retirement cliffs, the inability to retain newly recruited staff presents a significant operational challenge.

V. The 2019 "Path to Parity" and Next Steps

In 2019, the City made an historic commitment toward a path to salary parity for educators at community-based organizations. While this agreement represented a significant first step, the work remains unfinished. With the 2019 labor agreements now expired, the City must act in the FY 2024 Budget Year to truly achieve salary parity for the early childhood workforce.

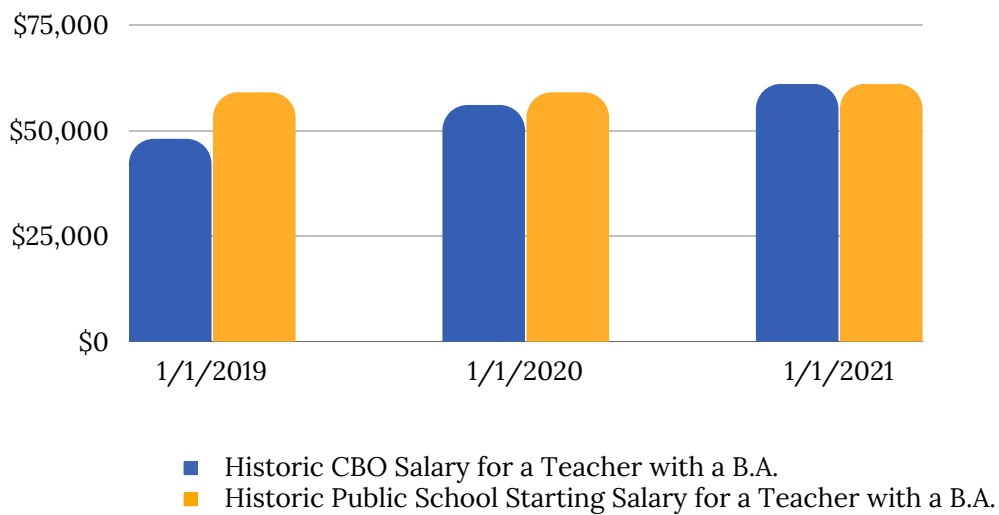
As of September 2020, certified teachers in community-based organizations earn salaries on-par with the starting salaries of teachers in the public schools. Community-based organizations do not receive the longevity increases available to public school teachers, nor do their salaries increase annually; automatic COLAs were excluded from the 2019 agreement.

Fig. 5: Result of "Path to Parity" on CBO Teachers' Starting Salaries



V. The 2019 "Path to Parity" and Next Steps

Fig. 6: Result of "Path to Parity" on CBO Teachers' Starting Salaries



A certified early childhood educator in a community-based organization may earn only 53% of what a similarly-experienced certified teacher earns in a public school.

Over a 25-year career, a certified teacher at a CBO will sacrifice more than \$700,000 in earning power by staying in the center-based system. This stark disparity presents a constant challenge to organizations looking to retain teachers with years of developed expertise.

The unfinished work of salary parity also includes supplementing the salaries of directors and support staff in community-based early childhood programs. Directors continue to receive significantly lower salaries than their counterparts working in public schools. Many centers struggle to retain directors, since directors could earn more as a DOE ECE teacher than as a community-based center director.

V. The 2019 "Path to Parity" and Next Steps

The time to act is now.

New York City must fund new collective bargaining agreements that bring the workforce in community-based organizations to true parity with their counterparts in public schools.



VI. Salary Disparity By the Numbers

The City's 2019 "Path to Parity" agreement brought CBO teacher salaries to par with the *starting salaries* at public schools. Without longevity and COLA included, this pay chasm remains wide.

\$2.2M

Directors at CBOs stand to lose more than \$2.2 million over the course of a 25-year career by remaining at a CBO.

\$1.7M

Certified Teachers with a Master's Degree at CBOs stand to lose more than \$1.7 million over the course of a 25-year career by remaining at a CBO.

\$235K

Assistant Teachers at CBOs stand to lose more than \$235,000 over the course of a 25-year career by remaining at a CBO.

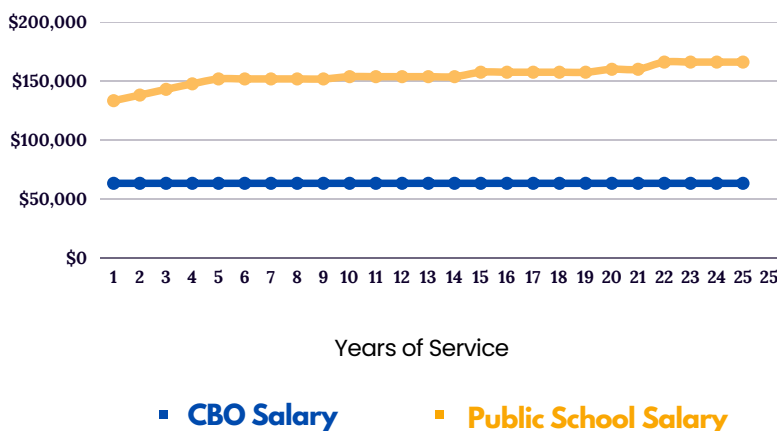
Directors

Child care directors are responsible for the oversight and management of every aspect of a child care program. In addition to their administrative functions, directors often perform other duties, including managing finances and subbing in classrooms. Their range of responsibilities and required expertise is extensive and includes:

- Supporting teachers and other classroom staff in implementing developmentally-appropriate and educational classroom activities;
- Ensuring compliance with health codes and other performance standards;
- Liaising with other NYC agencies, such as the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Fire Department, and building inspectors;
- Communicating with parents and leading strategies for recruiting families; and
- Managing expenses and cash flow to maintain the fiscal health of the organization.

Most early childhood directors work in community-based organizations that have contracts with NYC Public Schools Division of Early Childhood Education. A smaller number of directors work for NYC Public Schools in sites that NYCPS itself manages. Those directors whose sites are operated by NYC Public Schools are paid significantly more than directors performing the same job in sites where NYCPS contracts with a community-based organization.

Fig. 7: Salary Disparities Over Time for a Director



\$2.2m

CBO directors lose out on more than \$2.2 million of income over a 25-year career by staying with a CBO.

\$90k

After 10 years, Public School Directors make \$90,000 a year more than CBO directors.

Directors

Unequal from the Start:

For a CBO Director, the starting salary is just \$62,090. NYCPS Directors who manage standalone child care programs operated by NYC Public Schools receive salaries starting at \$133,375.

Disparities Increase Over Time:

These already-stark disparities increase over time. After ten years, the disparity for directors with a Master's Degree rises from \$71,825 to \$91,648.

A lifetime of lost earning:

A CBO Director with a 25-year career will lose \$2,279,802 over the course of their career by working in a community based organization instead of NYCPS.



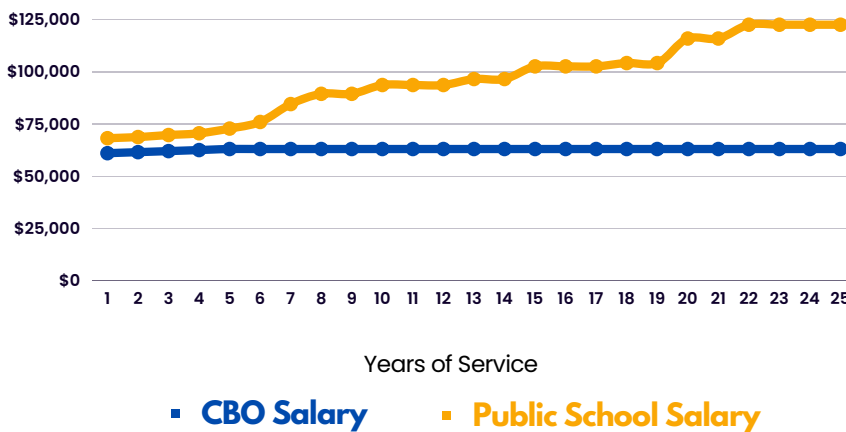
Teachers

Successful early childhood programs depend on the caring and educational interactions between children and teachers. In community-based child care programs, New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene regulations require a certified teacher or a teacher working toward certification to be on site at all times when children are present.

Teachers' responsibilities include:

- Developing lesson plans and classroom activities;
- Supervising assistant teachers, Teacher's Aides, and other support staff;
- Evaluating the developmental needs of each child and ensuring that educational activities meet their needs.

Fig. 8: Salary Disparities Over Time for a Teacher with a Bachelor's Degree



\$692k

A certified teacher with a Bachelor's Degree will lose \$692,475 over the course of a 25-year career by working in a community-based organization instead of a public school.

\$30k

After 10 years, certified teachers with a Bachelor's Degree at CBOs make \$30,000 less per year than public school teachers with similar qualifications.

In both public schools and community-based organizations, certified teachers with Master's Degrees are paid higher salaries than teachers with Bachelor's Degrees. However, due to longevity increases for teachers in public schools, a teacher with a Bachelor's Degree and four years of experience in a NYCPS-based program will earn \$12,370 more in just one year than a Teacher with a Master's Degree in a community-based organization.

The 2019 Path to Parity Agreement brought the annual starting salaries of teachers in community-based organizations to parity with the annual **starting salaries** of teachers in public schools. The agreements did not account for:

- A longer work year in many community-based programs that do not have summers off, requiring 12 months of work rather than the NYCPS standard of 10 working months per year;
- Benefits including health insurance, dental, and pension, which remain unequal; or
- Longevity increases which account for 43.3% of the most veteran teacher’s salaries.

When the City agreed to fund the 2019 Path to Parity Agreement, the starting salary for a certified teacher with a Master’s Degree was \$17,168 less than the starting salary of a teacher in a public school. For a teacher with a Bachelor’s Degree, there was a \$17,435 gap in annual starting salaries. These gaps closed through a series of salary adjustments occurring in October 2019, 2020, and 2021. This brought the starting salaries to \$68,652 for a teacher with a Master’s Degree and \$61,070 for a teacher with a Bachelor’s degree.

While an important step toward parity, the 2019 agreement did not complete the task. Now is the time for the city to fulfill its commitment to those who educate and care for the youngest New Yorkers.

Disparities Increase Over Time:

Over time, these disparities widen significantly. After ten years, a certified teacher with a Bachelor's Degree in a CBO will earn \$23,210 less than her or his counterpart in a public school.

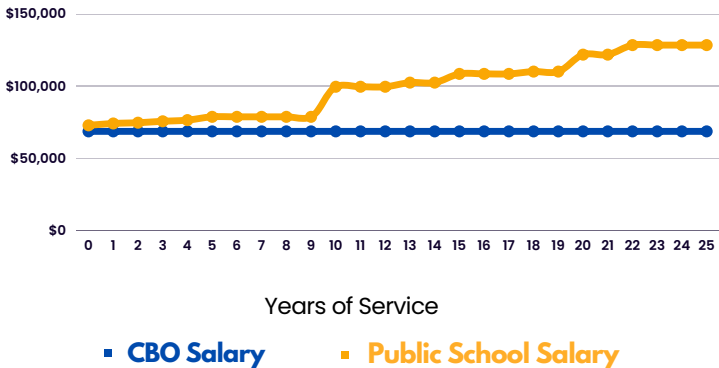
\$1.7m

A certified teacher with a Master’s Degree will lose \$1,716,300 over the course of a 25-year career by working in a community-based organization instead of a public school.

\$30k

After 10 years, certified teachers with a Master's degree at CBOs make \$30,000 less per year than public school teachers with similar qualifications.

Fig. 9: Salary Disparities Over Time for a Certified Teacher with a Master's Degree

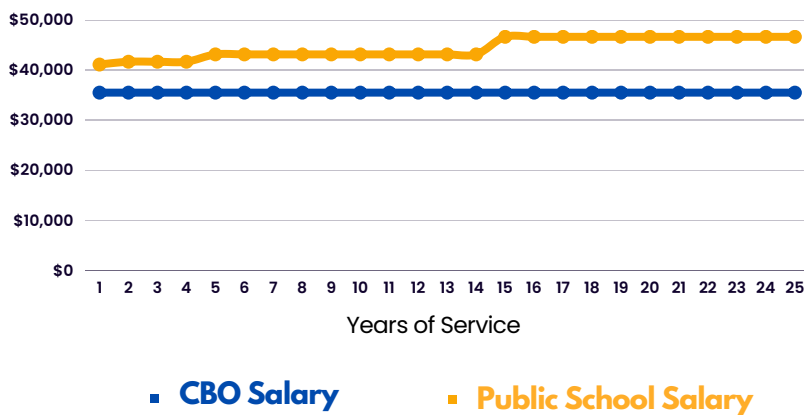


Assistant Teachers

Assistant Teachers are essential for providing the individual attention young children need. Typical job duties of an assistant teacher job duties include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting a head teacher or education director in the planning and implementation of developmentally appropriate curricula;
- Inspecting children for signs of injury or illness;
- Ensuring compliance with children’s Individualized Education Program (IEP); and
- Supervising the classroom when the teachers is engaged in other activities.

Fig. 10: Salary Disparities Over Time for Assistant Teachers



\$235k

An assistant teacher at a CBO will lose \$235,622 over the course of a 25-year career by working in a community-based organization instead of a public school.

\$7k

After 10 years, assistant teachers with a Bachelor’s degree at CBOs make \$7,632 less per year than public school teachers with similar qualifications.

Assistant Teachers in community-based organizations perform comparable work and have similar qualifications to the Assistant Teachers in public schools. In public schools, Assistant Teachers must have a Level 1 New York State Education Department Certificate, which requires a high school degree or equivalent, but not college credits.¹⁷

In community-based organizations, assistant teachers are required to have a high school degree or equivalent and pass background checks through both the Department of Health and the Department of Education.

PART III

Appendix

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<https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/547-19/mayor-de-blasio-speaker-johnson-city-has-achieved-pathway-pay-parity-early>.
7. This article argues that children's relationship with caregivers promotes "healthy brain development" and produces the "buffering protection needed to prevent [children's] very challenging experiences from producing a toxic stress response." In order to encourage responsive relationships, the article recommends that care workers receive "adequate compensation and benefits" as a means to "reduce the high turnover in these positions that disrupts relationships[.]" The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2017). *Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families*. Retrieved from: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/#responsive-relationships>.
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12. Raising New York: New York State's Infant Toddler Workforce. March, 2021
13. These results are from a recently-conducted survey in throughout July of 2023. The survey included both DCCNY members and external childcare providers, with over 240 responses altogether. We will publish these results in a formal report this fall. DCCNY also surveyed its members in 2016 and found that 56% of its centers dealt with staffing vacancies. *Failing Our Children: Certified Teachers Disappearing from CBO Child Care*. 2016. New York: Day Care Council of New York. http://www.dccnyinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DCCNY_PolicyReport2016sm.pdf.
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16. These results are from a recently-conducted survey in throughout July of 2023. The survey included both DCCNY members and external childcare providers, with over 240 responses altogether. We will publish these results in a formal report this fall.
17. <https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/certification/teaching-assistants/certification-requirements-for-teaching-assistants>

A note on salary data used for charts and graphs: The charts in this report compare salaries from several collective bargaining agreements:

- The NYC Department of Education's Agreement with United Federation of Teachers ratified July 10th, 2023 <https://www.uft.org/your-rights/contracts/contract-2023/contract-2023-salary-schedules>. This agreement covers teachers and staff in public schools
- The Day Care Council of New York and District Council 37 Local 205 Agreement signed on July 3rd, 2019. This agreement covers teachers and staff working in community-based child care programs operating under contracts with New York City Department of Education.
- The New York City Department of Education Contract with the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators salary schedule for early childhood directors. This agreement covers directors working for the Department of Education leading DOE-operated child care centers.
- The Day Care Council of New York Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators signed February 13th, 2017.



Statement of Empire State Campaign for Child Care
New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Caban, Chair
Hearing on Universal Child Care in New York City
September 21, 2023

Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) is a statewide campaign advocating for a high quality, free, equitable and universal child care system that meets the needs of all children and families, and pays child care programs the true cost of care with a thriving wage and benefits.

Empire State Campaign for Child Care is excited to see the New York City Council considering universal child care. We applaud the City Council for its role in creating Promise NYC which now serves as a model for how access to child care can serve children without regard to their immigration status.

ESCCC has adopted the following principles to guide New York State in moving towards universal access to child care.

1. All children are universally covered.

There is no means testing or income eligibility cutoff and every child is guaranteed access to an accessible, quality child care program in the type of child care setting that their family chooses.

2. Funding for child care is ample, predictable, consistent, and sustained long term.

The NYS government demonstrates its commitment to a universal system by filling any gaps in federal child care funding and supporting identified improvements and enhancements.

3. The system supports and properly funds, at true cost of care, a choice of modalities (center-based, family child care, and legally exempt).

Funding levels are based on licensed capacity and enrollment, and quality and licensing standards. Methods for determining funding will be transparent and funds will be provided directly to providers on a schedule that reflects provider budgetary needs. Training and assistance ensures all providers can successfully utilize required systems, maintain quality standards, and promote their services to local families.

4. The system promotes respect and just compensation for the child care workforce.

Compensation is at parity with K-12, based on comparable experience and responsibilities, across age groups and settings. All providers can access professional pathways with value placed on hands-on experience and years in the field, and more traditional education criteria. Media campaigns consistently promote the workforce as professionals serving a critical health and education function; and the child care sector as key to the overall economy, the economic stability of families, and to the overall well-being and growth of children.

5. Child care is available and accessible in all communities.

Expansion plans continue to address specific community needs and preferences, facilitate participation of family child care, prioritize racial equity, and address previously marginalized regions and communities. Innovative approaches are encouraged.

6. All children, regardless of age or type of setting, have access to quality care.

Quality standards and funding mechanisms address, and actively work to reduce, discrimination based on race, gender, sexual preference, marital status, faith, geography, language and ability, and citizenship status; and encourage responsiveness to different languages, cultures, and values. New resources and training for providers makes expulsion of children from the system rare or non-existent.

7. System evaluation and reform is continuous and centered in quality and equity.

The system of evaluation ensures participation of providers and workforce representatives from different geographies and modalities; parents representing diverse races, genders, and geographies as well as modality preference; those who have faced past barriers to access; policy experts, and legislators.



New York City Council Committee on Women & Gender Equity
RE: Universal Childcare Access for New Yorkers
September 21, 2023

Thank you to Committee Chair Cabán, members of the Committee on Women & Gender Equity, and the New York City Council for holding this hearing and for your work to ensure equal opportunity for New Yorkers. Thank you also to Council Member Gutiérrez for advancing this important bill to provide universal childcare access in New York City.

I am testifying on behalf of Hot Bread Kitchen, an organization that promotes economic mobility for immigrant women and people of color through job training and placement, food entrepreneurship programs, and an ecosystem of support in New York City, using our city's vibrant food industry as a catalyst for career growth. Our community, which includes residents of 50 City Council districts, consists primarily of women of color (98%), immigrants (76%), and parents with children under the age of 18 (63%). More than 89% of our members were unemployed and below the poverty threshold before enrolling in our program. For a majority of these members who were not working at the time of enrollment, the reason for opting out of the workforce was quite simple: they could not afford childcare, and were therefore left with no other option but to stay home with their kids.

Our members are dedicated, hard-working New Yorkers seeking opportunities for meaningful careers, sustainable income, and long-term wealth generation for their families. New York City's lack of affordable childcare is one of the greatest impediments to their ability to achieve this goal and has been since before we knew of COVID-19. With childcare access even further reduced since the onset of the pandemic, this challenge has grown more dire for the communities we support. In 2019, 70% of members in our Culinary Fundamentals program, which provides entry-level job skills training for women and gender-expansive people, were parents; last year, that number had declined to 48%, indicating that those with childcare needs have been self-selecting out of our programming and, ultimately, out of the workforce, due to childcare barriers. After housing assistance, the leading support service our members seek at Hot Bread Kitchen is support finding and securing quality childcare.

Research and our own anecdotal evidence have shown that when mothers, in particular, have access to childcare, they are better positioned to progress in their careers, increase their earnings, apply for promotions, or hold a job, period. Lack of childcare access has a direct impact on women's lifetime earnings, which has repercussions for the very children for whom they are forced to sacrifice their livelihoods. Without access to childcare, families stay trapped in a cycle of generational poverty that will be inescapable until our city recognizes childcare as the critical piece of social infrastructure it is. Hot Bread Kitchen has done everything in our power to provide assistance for members with childcare needs, but we cannot do this work alone. We need the City's support to support our community.

Hot Bread Kitchen commends the City Council for its efforts to provide universal childcare access for all New Yorkers. We know it is a critical component of driving our economy and our communities forward, and that it is the only way to ensure an equitable future for New York City. We look forward to partnering with the Council however possible to advance this vital legislation.

Cathy Kim, Chief Program Officer
Hot Bread Kitchen



Testimony for the Women & Gender Equity Committee
New York City Council
Public Hearing on Intro. 941 & Reso 560,561
September 21, 2023

I am Eliana Godoy, Deputy Director of Literacy, INC. or LINC, an acronym that also describes what we do - we link the families of young children to literacy resources in their own community. We also facilitate the Council's only early literacy initiative, [City's First Readers](#).

Pay parity, increased access, affordability, high quality - these are all important aspects of childcare. Childcare is clearly an economic issue that affects the self sufficiency of individual families and impacts society overall. A fact that early childhood advocates have understood for years, but the pandemic has driven home.

All too often the issue of childcare is framed purely in terms of the consequences for adults, rather than the opportunity it can be: a chance to create a healthy, secure environment that provides stimulation to support a child's growth and curiosity. A setting that readies a child for the formal instruction that they will receive in the classroom. 90% of brain development takes place during a child's first five years. Seize the day!

We applaud the comprehensive approach of this legislation which acknowledges the multiplicity of city agencies and private organizations that are involved in shaping and implementing early childhood policies. We advocate for a Council structure to mirror the creation of the Mayor's Office of Childcare and Early Childhood Education, an entity within the legislative branch of city government with a holistic approach to early childhood well-being. Right now the Education, Health, General Welfare, Youth Services committees as well as this committee each have some aspects of Early Childhood in their portfolios; unlike our counterparts in other developed countries, there is no unified focus on early childhood programming.

Yet study after study emphasizes that the experiences of early childhood shape a person's trajectory in so many ways - both positive and negative. Additional studies demonstrate that investing in quality, comprehensive early childhood programming is socially and fiscally sound.

Thank you also for considering resolutions to urge the state to take action on this issue. While the Council is empowered to take local action, it is clear that the task must be supported well beyond the boundaries of New York City.

There is no question that our children, and their families, deserve access to high quality, reliable care. Their future and our future depend on making this a shared responsibility and public priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this important legislation and to advocate for further action to make the goal of universal, high-quality early childhood programming a reality.

Eliana Godoy
Deputy Director, Literacy, INC (LINC)
egodogy@lincnyc.org.
646-240-5986

Testimony- City Council Hearing (9/21/23)

Good afternoon Honorable Chairwoman Tiffany Caban, all councilmembers, and everyone present, thank you for the opportunity to testify on such an important issue.

My name is Musfika Moshahid, my pronouns are she/her and I am the Muslim Womens Program Coordinator at the Muslim Community Network (MCN), a nonprofit organization here in NYC working to empower the Muslim community through civic education, women+youth empowerment, and community service.

Having access to childcare can be an incredibly empowering experience for women and individuals with children, and we have seen that firsthand at MCN, through our Muslim Womens Program and other programming. Our Muslim Womens Program serves older Muslim women (usually mothers), and so we knew it was important for us to provide childcare during our programs so our women with children would be able to participate.

By providing childcare we have not only supported our program participants, but we are also providing work opportunities to undocumented and immigrant women that we have hired to conduct childcare. Many women said it was the first time they saw an organization that provided childcare; it made them feel included and cared for. We need to create a world where women and parents can feel included and cared for within our society instead of being an afterthought. Thanks to the childcare that was available to them, our participants were able to engage in the program and participate in educational workshops ranging from intro to civic engagement, voting, how to write to and reach out to their councilmembers and representatives, learning about their rights when it comes to hate crime prevention, self-defense and more. Women were able to simply enjoy being in community with other Muslim women, forge friendships with other women, and explore their identities outside of being a mother and caretaker, all while having the ease and comfort of knowing that their kids were safe and taken care of. Our participants have expressed to us that without the childcare provided, they otherwise would not have been able to participate in our program.

We have now made it a priority for us as an organization to provide childcare wherever possible throughout our events and programming because we have witnessed firsthand the doors that can open for families. We see there is a strong need for funding for this work. Having access to childcare allows women, especially undocumented women, to focus on fueling their studies, finding employment to support their children, or taking part in opportunities that further their personal development. Many of our program participants are low income, immigrant women who are interested in finding employment but struggle due to a lack of childcare access. Our participants already come from historically underserved communities, they are Black women and women of color, they are undocumented; and this lack of childcare access is just one more obstacle in a constantly changing job market, that makes it hard for them to find employment and support their families and themselves. Every woman and parent deserves the space to explore their potential, their interests, and develop themselves while knowing that their children are cared for. Not only do parents deserve this relief, but children deserve this care too.

We must ensure that every child, regardless of their own or their parents' immigration status, is given the same care, priority and opportunities as anyone else. We must support our

undocumented community members, and our immigrant communities especially now when more and more migrants are coming to NYC in hopes for a better future.

In general, childcare, caretaking, homemaking and other forms of domestic labor have long been underappreciated and undervalued within our society. It's time we also prioritize this work and move towards a future where we can live in a society where, childcare, and other forms of domestic labor are seen as just as important, necessary, and deserving of as much compensation, investment, and respect as any other average 9-5 job. My hope is that we can one day come to a place where childcare access, childcare centers exist in all parts of society are the norm, standard, and commonplace and we can eliminate the existence of childcare desert. The legislation proposed today would be the start of that. Free childcare would be a lifesaver for so many families and by providing a business tax credit for employer provided childcare would further incentivize and encourage more employers to take part in creating more accessible workplaces.

I urge the City Council and the Mayor to help us build towards this future. Thank you.

Musfika Moshahid



The Education Trust—New York

**Submitted to the New York City Council
Committee on Women & Gender Equity Re: Child Care
September 21, 2023**

The Education Trust—New York (Ed Trust—NY) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to educational equity. We work to attain educational justice through research, policy, and advocacy that results in all students – especially those who are from low-income backgrounds or students of color – achieving at high levels from early childhood through college completion. ED Trust—NY leads the statewide Raising NY coalition, a cross-sector, statewide coalition of parent, early childhood, education, civil rights, business, and health organizations dedicated to advocating for policies and system changes that will benefit families of infants and toddlers, with a focus on improving long-term outcomes for low-income households, children of color, and those in other underserved groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for this hearing.

Research tells us that the first few years of life are a time of tremendous growth and brain development when high-quality early learning environments are essential to support healthy development and nurture the foundation of a child’s learning potential, with benefits extending well into the school-aged years.¹

We applaud the Council’s ongoing commitment to creating a comprehensive early care and learning system that supports all New Yorkers. In order to address long-standing racial and economic inequities in the child care system, efforts to expand access and capacity must go hand in hand with expansion of a culturally-responsive, quality rating and improvement system that provides the workforce and families with the tools to identify and cultivate programs that meet specific needs and priorities of families. In an October 2022 Raising NY parent poll, nearly half (49%) of all parents across New York State said that their child care situation was not very workable, with higher rates reported among Black and Latinx parents, as well as those in low-income households.² In the same poll, only half (50%) of all parents felt that their child was in a high-quality child care setting and learning daily.²

The success of New York’s youngest children rests upon our ability to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to early childhood education that provides high-quality care to *all* children, especially those who are facing significant barriers to access. We respectfully submit the following recommendations that are key to making this aspirational goal a reality:

- **Adapt a culturally responsive quality rating system for all child care programs.** A universal, transparent quality rating and improvement system is needed to ensure that all families, especially families with disabilities, families of color, immigrant families, and others who have been historically marginalized, have the tools to locate and access child care programs that are inclusive of their needs and values.

- **Increase access to and capacity of high-quality child care programs that offer infant and toddler slots and offer non-traditional hours of care.** New York City is home to 100,000 infants and toddlers who are living in poverty. Almost 60% of New York City is considered a child care desert, with even less availability for the youngest children, with only 1 available child care slot for every 5 infants.³
- **Support child care access for vulnerable families.** Expand access to child care subsidies, with additional support for families involved in the child welfare system, families experiencing homelessness, parents/children with disabilities and learning differences, and *all* immigrant families.
- **Ensure providers are compensated consistently and equitably.** Decades of under-investment in the child care sector has led to inequities that must be remedied. Child care educators must be paid a sustainable wage that reflects the true cost of care, including parity for all early childhood educators, directors, and staff across the full spectrum of programs.
- **Invest in coordinated, streamlined data systems that enable greater cross-sector coordination among programs and sectors serving infants and toddlers.** Current data infrastructure is insufficient for assessing and addressing the complex needs and outcomes of families, particularly those with infants and toddlers. A comprehensive, disaggregated data system will support families and inform policymakers to design data-informed policies to support all New Yorkers.

The research is clear: decades of chronic under-investment in child care have resulted in a crisis that is impeding economic success of the city and state. The lack of child care has cost \$122 billion nationally in lost revenue and \$23 billion in New York City in 2022 alone⁴. Coupled with ongoing lack of affordable housing, New York City is facing an affordability crisis that has resulted in an exodus of families with young children⁴. The economic success of New York City is inextricably linked to a comprehensive, high-quality, fully accessible early care and learning system.

Ed Trust—NY is committed to the success of all children and families in New York, especially the most vulnerable, and we look forward to continuing to work with Council Members and other key stakeholders to build a streamlined, transparent cross-agency child care system that offers equitable access to child care that works for families, supports the early childhood workforce with livable wages and professional development opportunities, and supports the economic security of families; the future of New York City depends on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please feel free to contact Lara Kyriakou, Associate Director of Early Childhood Advocacy and Policy at the Education Trust—NY, at Lkyriakou@edtrustny.org with any questions regarding this testimony. Thank you.

1 <https://hechingerreport.org/infants-and-toddlers-in-high-quality-child-care-seem-to-reap-the-benefits-longer-research-says/>

2 <https://raisingnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/10/Raising-NY-Child-Care-Poll-October-2022.pdf>

3 <https://www.robinhood.org/child-care-quality-and-innovation-initiative/>

4 <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/11/nyregion/child-care-nyc.html#:~:text=The%20long-term%20consequences%20for,the%20city's%20Economic%20Development%20Corporation>



**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Council Member Tiffany Cabán, Chair**

Introduction 941: Establishing Free Child Care for All City Residents

**Submitted by Paula Inhargue, Policy Analyst
September 21, 2023**

Thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity for the opportunity to testify on the child care crisis in New York City, the need for universal child care, and the steps New York City must take to stabilize its early childhood education system. My name is Paula Inhargue, and I am a Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH is a policy and social change organization representing neighborhood settlement houses that reach 770,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life.

A progressive leader for more than 100 years, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a broad range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide customized professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

Settlement houses began some of the first kindergarten programs in New York State in the early 20th century, and early childhood education programs remain an important component of serving their communities. Settlement Houses run approximately 75 child care programs of all modalities (contracted center based programs, contracted Family Child Care networks, Direct Headstart programs, and private pay), serving their communities with dedication and quality care. UNH represents its members interests and needs across several platforms, including through its active membership in the Empire State Campaign for Child Care. In addition, UNH runs the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Collaborative in partnership with the New York Center for Child Development (NYCCD) to provide professional development and consultation for our members' early childhood education professionals. This work includes identifying the mental health needs of young children and giving staff resources to help them address the children experiencing behavioral or emotional challenges.

Our testimony at today's hearing will focus on Intro 941-2023, as well as other more immediate recommendations to support and stabilize the early childhood education workforce and preserve access to care for families across the city. Recommendations beyond Intro 941-2023 include:

- Ensure that the Department of Education contracts with and pays its early childhood providers in a timely manner;
- Complete the path to salary parity for the early childhood education workforce;
- Continue and expand the Promise NYC program;
- Expand access to extended day/year programming; and
- Ensure 3-K for All continuity amid federal fiscal cliffs.

Intro 941-2023: Creating a Universal Child Care System in New York City

Now is the time for New York to commit to creating a high-quality, free, equitable, and universal child care system that both meets the needs of all children and families and offers strong support for providers. UNH supports the goals of Int 0941-2023. It recognizes the importance and value of early childhood education for both young children and their caregivers. We thank Council Member Gutierrez for her leadership in developing this legislation in partnership with community stakeholders. In particular, we appreciate the following components of the bill:

- Intro 941 requires that the City create child care options for all city residents, regardless of immigration status. This is important, as immigration status should not be a barrier to accessing care.
- The bill calls for the Office of Child Care to coordinate with the many City agencies responsible for making the City's child care system work (such as the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department of New York, etc). This is crucial and something that is often overlooked now. The City's child care system is complex and many City agencies play a role in its oversight and regulation. These agencies currently often do not coordinate well with each other, causing headaches for families and providers. Intro 941 seeks to remedy that.
- The bill encourages the provision of night/weekend child care, something that is extremely important to working families and is often very difficult to find. Not all parents/caregivers have a Monday-Friday 9am-5pm job, and so having care options for their schedules is important.
- The bill calls for the continuity of care for a child from ages 0-5, which is important for their continued development and for stability for families.
- The bill calls for a living wage for child care workers, and that these wages be in line with Department of Education employees. This is discussed later in this testimony.

We hope that Intro 941 is the start of a process and conversation for New York City to achieve a universal child care system for children ages 0-5. A recent *New York Times* article found that families in New York City had to earn more than \$300,000 a year to meet the federal standard of child care affordability (that child care takes up no more than 7% of total household income) for just one child. Based on this threshold, more than 90 percent of New York City families could not afford center-based care for one infant or toddler. Child care is often the biggest financial burden that families have after their housing costs. Furthermore, according to a second wave of surveys of more than 1,000 families with the UNH network conducted by UNH and UNH member Educational Alliance during the winter of 2022-23, 18 percent of parent respondents with children under the age of five reported that they experienced difficulties with paying for child care in the past month. A lack of affordable child care drives parents out of the workforce, and families out of New York City seeking more affordable places to live. The City must address this issue urgently.

At the same time, we know that the system needs significant support before expansion can be successfully advanced. If we do not attend to the underlying issues facing the sector, the system's foundation will not be stable enough to continue moving forward. Therefore, in addition to Int 0941-2023, UNH has identified a number of actions the City can take to help reach the shared goal of universal child care.

Ensure DOE contracts with and pays early childhood providers in a timely manner

Early childhood education providers who contract with the DOE have experienced significantly delayed contract reimbursements for the last two fiscal years. Despite the persistent attention to this issue over the last year, meaningful progress has not been made across the board for CBOs, and providers still report challenges with prompt payment from the DOE. As a result of delayed payments for FY 2022 and FY 2023, providers in the UNH network experienced cash flow issues that led to financial hardships like scrambling to make their payroll, or drawing down on their lines of credit. We are now in the start of FY24, with all early childhood programs (school-day and extended-day) programs underway, and some providers report still not having budgets for this year or registered contracts. This is unacceptable, and is a cycle we must get out of if we are going to stabilize the system.

SeaChange Capital Partners conducted an analysis of how much the contracted early childhood system was owed and found that as of January 19, 2023—over halfway through the City's fiscal year—the DOE still owed providers \$399 million for FY 2022 contracts. These delays in payment make it extremely challenging for providers to operate, when their finances are so precarious. The FY24 Adopted Budget contained terms and conditions that will require the DOE to report quarterly on the process of contract registration versus payment. This will be a crucial step to understanding this issue across the sector, and once the first reporting starts, we are ready to work with all partners in City government to address this issue going forward.

Complete the path to salary parity for the early childhood education workforce

UNH settlement house members report that the main obstacle for hiring and retaining staff in early childhood education programs is low salaries, which are required due to low contract values. For New York City providers, there is an added challenge because those low salaries are not at parity with salaries for similar positions working at the NYC Department of Education (DOE). On average, a head teacher with a master's degree working for a settlement house-run early childhood education program earned \$63,507 a year in 2021, 24 percent below the annual salary earned by their DOE counterparts. Lack of parity between the DOE and the CBOs is leading to higher vacancy rates and making it difficult for CBOs to fill and retain critical positions. Center-based programs are left with staff shortages, preventing them from running at full capacity due to required children-adult ratios. One settlement house reported that their enrollment is impacted by staffing issues, noting that "one of our enrollment challenges continues to be competition with the DOE for certified teachers and other staff so we can't enroll more children beyond who we can safely serve." Another reported that it has received requests for child care support from asylum-seeking families but are unable to serve them due to staff shortages: "We have a waiting list of about 65 kids and a bunch of empty classrooms, but we don't have the staff." Furthermore, high turnover rates threaten the stability and continuity of care that is necessary for young children's behavioral and cognitive development.

Labor negotiations between the City, DC37 and the Day Care Council of New York are underway, and we are hopeful they will result in a contract that compensates CBO staff—including teachers

and support staff—in the same way as their DOE counterparts. To expand the early childhood education services that New Yorkers need, we need to ensure that all providers are able to offer competitive salaries and wages to their staff, as staff are the underpinning of programs. For the City to offer quality education of families’ choice that is safe, accessible, and affordable, first and foremost, we need to support the workforce.

Continue and expand the Promise NYC program

Under Promise NYC, four providers, including three settlement houses, have contracted with the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) to implement a child care voucher program in each of their respective boroughs (NMIC in the Bronx and Manhattan, Center for Family Life in Brooklyn, Chinese-American Planning Council in Queens, and La Colmena in Staten Island). The 6-month program launched in January 2023, and after a six-week period of administrative preparation, providers were able to begin outreach to families in February. Providers were contracted to serve a total of 600 children citywide for the remainder of the fiscal year through June, and the program was renewed for FY24.

The Promise NYC program has emerged as a beacon of support for families grappling with child care challenges across New York City. While it has received widespread acclaim from the families it was able to serve, it quickly became evident that the need exceeded the number of contracted slots, especially considering the number of new asylum seekers in New York who need safe and affordable child care. For those families that were able to participate in Promise NYC, they have shared that access to child care has allowed them to seek out work opportunities, to pursue ESOL classes, and to participate in workforce training programs.

For NMIC (Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation), this venture into child care services was new for the organization, yet they were chosen due to their presence in both Manhattan and the Bronx and the strong relationships they hold with the community they serve. Remarkably, they did not need extensive outreach efforts; the program’s popularity was swift and substantial, emphasizing the pressing need for child care services, particularly among undocumented community members. However, the budget allocation still falls short of addressing the demand, with NMIC only being able to serve 110 children in Manhattan and 125 in the Bronx, while having over 400 children waitlisted. While the program received an extension for another year, the approved budget of \$16 million doesn’t allow providers to expand the program to include more families.

Providers have shared that the Promise NYC program is not just about child care; it is a pathway to educational opportunities for children. Participation in Promise NYC has allowed providers to help families connect with child care and then ensure that these children move on to the public school system. With an expanded budget, the hope is to further facilitate families’ access to care and serve as a pipeline into the K-12 school system, solidifying its status as a crucial community resource. In sum, Promise NYC has emerged as a lifeline for families facing childcare challenges, illustrating the positive impact that accessible child care can have on individuals, families, and communities.

Expand access to extended day/year programming

3-K for All and Pre-K for all are two important programs that make up the City’s early childhood education continuum, providing care for nearly 100,000 3 and 4 year olds across the city. Though these programs are essential, they often do not provide the hours of care that this

population needs. 3-K for All and Pre-K for all only provide school day/school year (SDY) programming, with daily hours from roughly 8 am to 3 pm from September to June. Extended day/year (EDY) programs offer care from 8am-6pm year round, and these slots typically have been funded through the federal Child Care Development Block Grant or the DOE's federal Head Start grant. These slots are also means tested, with children qualifying if their family earns less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.¹ 3-K for All and Pre-K for All are typically funded with city tax levy funding (though there is currently a large amount of federal stimulus funding supporting 3-K programs).

There are not enough EDY slots to meet the demand; in 2020, only 36% of 3 year olds were in EDY programs, but approximately 70% are income eligible (from CCC's Keeping Track). The de Blasio Administration prioritized building an early childhood education system that provided school day/year care but failed to invest in boosting capacity for extended-day/year seats. Capacity for school day seats increased 8% between the 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 school year, but extended day, year-round capacity decreased by 20% over the same time period.² Settlement houses envision a system modeled after federal Head Start, with extended day/year hours and wrap-around supports that focus on the whole family and prioritize kindergarten readiness.

UNH hears consistently from settlement houses about the lack of extended day/year programs, especially for 3 year olds. These are the type of slots that working families often want and need, as they may not be able to afford paying for wrap around hours. There also has been attention on under-enrollment in the 3-K for All system; we hear anecdotally from settlement houses that parents express that these programs do not always work for their schedules and do not provide enough hours of care. The City Council took an important step this year by funding a \$15 million pilot to convert 1,800 school-day/year 3-K for All seats to extended-day/year seats. We urge the DOE to allocate these slots as quickly as possible so that 3-K providers can work to get families connected to this care. We look forward to hearing the results of this pilot, and hope that the DOE and City Council will monitor closely so that we can develop a greater understanding of family needs and choices when it comes to child care.

Ensure 3-K for All continuity amid federal fiscal cliffs

The City's expansion of 3-K for three-year-olds has largely been fueled by federal COVID-19 relief funding that will expire by the 2024-2025 school year. Yet, the expansion of 3-K is at risk. After COVID-19 relief funds expire, the IBO projects that the 3-K program will be faced with a shortfall of \$92 million for the 2025-2026 school year. This is a national crisis; the Century Foundation estimates that 3.2 million children will lose access to child care across the country when COVID relief dollars expire.³ We strongly support the federal Child Care Stabilization Act, which would provide \$16 billion in mandatory funding over the next five years to avoid a child care fiscal cliff. But absent federal or state action, New York City must lead to ensure that children do not lose access to care once COVID funds expire. We urge the City to backfill any gaps in funding to

¹ New York State is expected to increase the income threshold even further, expanding eligibility up to 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI), which will take effect in the second quarter of FY 2024. City of New York. September 2023. Mayor's Management Report.
https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2023/2023_mmr.pdf

² From the Citizen's Committee for Children's *The Youngest New Yorkers*:
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cccnewyork.org/2023/04/CCC-2023-The-Youngest-New-Yorkers-Full-Publication.pdf>

³ <https://tcf.org/content/report/child-care-cliff/>

guarantee continuity of care for families and to keep the child care system stable in New York City.

Thank you for your time. To follow up, you can contact me at pinhargue@unhny.org.

September 22, 2023

Members of the City Council:

As a working parent of two young daughters here in New York City, I know that our current childcare is not sustainable for parents or childcare providers. Childcare costs are continuing to skyrocket while provider wages stagnate and federal support dries up. Furthermore, our family's wages have stagnated for the past several years, between budget cuts and work drying up due to COVID-19. The struggle to care for children inside and outside the home becomes more difficult each day. The system is clearly broken.

Intro 941 creates the opportunity to set the City on a better path. Universal childcare will ensure that children as young as 6 weeks old receive the care they need, so that their parents can remain in the workforce. It will expand the hours of childcare, so that parents with nontraditional jobs can get the care they need for their children, and it will cover undocumented families, so that all residents of our City can participate. The legislation will support providers by establishing a living wage on par with DOE teachers, and creating paid training opportunities so that more people have the opportunity to join this crucial workforce.

I know from my own experience how essential universal childcare is for New York City. I was thrilled when my older daughter was offered a seat in DOE U3K and thought that we finally might have a more affordable year of childcare. Instead, my family had to pay for private after school care, which cost even more than my younger daughter's year-round group family daycare. The only plus side was that this after school program was in-house at her school, so it saved us from having to transport her elsewhere. Summertime proved to be even more challenging, as we cobbled together various camps, sitters, and daycare scenarios to cover our working hours. My older daughter is now attending UPK at our local zoned elementary school. She loves her school and teachers, and is thriving in the environment! However, there is no after school option and we must send her to a private childcare center. In addition to paying for private after school childcare, I now must also pay for a trusted adult to safely walk my child from her school to the childcare center, because there is no on-site after school care (public or private) at her current school. We are hemorrhaging money to pay for childcare, while our own wages remain stagnated.

The childcare workforce, which is mostly Black and brown women, many of whom are immigrants, has long been underpaid and forced to go without benefits and a living wage. It's time to care for the people who care for our children by passing universal childcare in New York City. In addition, parents should not be forced to choose between working and caring for their children. We need universal childcare to make NYC livable for working parents. Investing in universal childcare is investing in New York City. Universal childcare will create new financial opportunities for providers and revitalize neighborhood economies.

In solidarity with working families,

Alexis Kaloyanides,
Jackson Heights, Queens, NY

**The New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Cabán, Chair of Women and Gender Equity**

**City Council Hearing:
September 21st, 2023**

Testimony of Daniel Wall

Thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity. I am writing in support of Intro 941 to provide free child care for all city residents and establish an Office of Child Care. I'm also calling on the City to follow through on the commitment to roll out 3-K for all.

My name is Daniel Wall and I live in Kensington and have one 18-month-old son (with another one on the way). The lack of availability and or affordability of child care services in NYC has impacted my ability to stay in the city I love.

I have had to consider the really difficult decision to move somewhere with better access to childcare and affordable education. New York City's reluctance to expand this powerful engine for economic growth and opportunity is a failure for everyone who lives here, regardless of whether or not they have children. It makes the city a more unequal and desperate place to live, decreasing quality of life for everyone.

I urge you to support Intro 941 to provide free child care for all city residents and establish an Office of Child Care.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

I'm a working mother in Queens, and I know that our current childcare is not sustainable for parents or childcare providers.

Universal childcare is essential for New York City. I was fortunate to find an in home daycare for my son but when the provider needed to retire for health reasons, our family had to scramble. We were then paying very expensive costs until our son started PreK.

My mother was employed in a before and after school program on Long Island for many years. I respect and admire childcare workers and know how hard they work and how much of themselves they put into their jobs every day caring for children. They are essential to the wellbeing of children and families and to our economy. Therefore they should be paid fairly and well. We need to support families by providing universal childcare and protect childcare workers by giving them the compensation they deserve.

Elizabeth L Gonzalez

As a working parent in New York City, I know that our current childcare system is not sustainable for parents or childcare providers. Childcare costs are continuing to skyrocket while provider wages stagnate and federal support dries up. The struggle to care for children inside and outside the home becomes more difficult each day. The system is broken.

Intro 941 creates the opportunity to set the City on a better path. Universal childcare will ensure that children as young as 6 weeks old receive the care they need, so that their parents can remain in the workforce. It will expand the hours of childcare, so that parents with nontraditional jobs can get the care they need for their children, and it will cover undocumented families, so that all residents of our City can participate. The legislation will support providers by establishing a living wage on par with DOE teachers, and creating paid training opportunities so that more people have the opportunity to join this crucial workforce.

I know from my own experience how essential universal childcare is for New York City. I spent an already stressful pregnancy working diligently to find childcare for my daughter. Many of the local daycare providers I contacted had waitlists as long as one year. I was very lucky to find a provider that I liked and whose cost is manageable for my family, but the cost is still significant, and continues to rise. With rents also rising and the student loan pause ending, daycare costs may not continue to be sustainable for us, especially if we want to have another child. And my family is lucky: my husband and I both have well-paying union jobs. It is unimaginable to me how parents with fewer resources than we have are able to navigate this system.

We need a childcare system in which being a childcare provider – one of the most important jobs in the world – is a sustainable job in which people can flourish, and where affordable childcare is easily accessible. Int. 941 provides a clear pathway to making this system a reality, and I strongly urge the City Council to pass it promptly.

Thank you,
Emily Hoffman

Ethan Heitner Testimony

(###) ###-####

eheitner@gmail.com

Park Ter E ###

NYC, NY 10034

Intro 941 - Women and Gender Equity Committee on Thurs., Sept 21, 2023

My name is Ethan Heitner. My wife and I both work full time. My son, Ozzie, was born in March of 2018. When March of 2020 started, I was the office manager of a community center in my neighborhood, and she was an immigration attorney representing low-income New Yorkers facing deportation. We brought Ozzie daily to a lovely family-run daycare in our neighborhood, where he was taken care of with love and attention, and felt grateful we could afford to pay what we needed to.

In March of 2020, of course, his daycare had to close. We tried, as long as possible, to continue to pay them, because we felt how unjust it was that they would lose their entire income. I stopped going to work even virtually, because there is not much an office manager can do over Zoom, and took care of my son full time while my wife continued her work.

In April, my employer became an emergency childcare center (ECC) for essential workers. They called to ask me if I could return to work, so that I could be an onsite staffer to help manage the daily needs of the ECC. I told them I couldn't, because I had to take care of my son. Fortunately, they told me that as staff at an ECC, I would qualify as an essential worker, and could in fact bring my son to the ECC.

This opportunity transformed my family's experience of the pandemic profoundly, and we are all to this day grateful for what we had. A free, professional daycare, run by qualified staff, with all the COVID precautions possible, that I could drop off to and pick up my son from, whenever I needed to be there for work, no questions asked, with a hot lunch provided every day.

I know how lucky we were, compared to the experience of so many other families. But if the city can do this for me, it can do it for everyone.

Why can't New York City, the richest city in the world, provide this for every family? If we could do this during the worst of the pandemic, with precious little time to organize the logistics, paying the workers fairly and promptly, while letting the families attend for free, why can't we do it now?

We saw what was possible. The current state of affairs, with families and daycare providers both crushed by cost and unable to make ends meet, is not necessary. And if it is not necessary, we continue it only by choice.

We are begging our legislators, our leaders, those who have the power to change things, to choose differently. Thank you.

**The New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Cabán, Chair of Women and Gender Equity**

**City Council Hearing:
September 21st, 2023**

Testimony of Karolina Kumiega

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity. I am speaking today with New Yorkers United for Child Care in support of Intro 941 to provide free child care for all city residents and establish an Office of Child Care. I'm also calling on the City to follow through on the commitment to roll out 3-K to for all.

My name is Karolina Kumiega and I live in Kensington and I have a two year old and am pregnant with my second son right now.

The lack of availability and or affordability of child care services in NYC has impacted my work and life balance. My partner and I cannot afford to pay for childcare so my mom, who lives in the Rockaways, commutes over an hour every day to care for our son. Next year we will pay for a pre-school for him, to socialize him with other kids. I'm terrified not having a social setting has already set him back. I'm even more terrified he won't be able to get into a city funded 3k the following year. I don't know how we'll pay for our second son's schooling. Altogether it will cost us over 50k a year to pay for daycare and pre-school. My mom is older and cannot care for my boys forever.

I have had to consider or make really challenging decisions based on child care affordability. If 3k is not funded in 2025 when my son is eligible, we will leave NYC. It's sad for me, because I've lived here since I was 6. I grew up in the Rockaways. I attended a high school in Queens, I got my undergrad at NYU. I love this city and

it's my home. But Philadelphia has free 3k and the housing is much more affordable. I wouldn't leave otherwise. I'm sure the city won't miss my tax income but I will definitely miss this city.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

As a working parent in New York City, I am writing to urge you to pass Intro 941, which will create a universal, publicly funded childcare system for the city. Our current system, in which most parents receive no support in securing and paying for childcare for their children, is not sustainable. Childcare costs are continuing to skyrocket while provider wages continue to stagnate. This forces families to make painful choices that are economically damaging to them and to the city, and it leaves the essential workers who provide childcare struggling to survive and remain in the city.

I know from my own experience how essential universal childcare is for New York City. I am in the in-some-ways privileged situation of being self-employed, which means the hours when I work and when I need childcare are flexible. However, I have never felt that I could afford full-time care. Because I could not find part-time daycare options, our solution until my son was two was to hire a part-time nanny. I was determined to pay her a fair wage and pay her on the books, but I had to significantly reduce the amount of work I was doing. I made only about half the amount of money I did before I had a child, and almost all of it went to childcare. I questioned whether I should stop working but worried this would hurt my long-term career prospects. My son is now seven, and my income has still not recovered to the level of what I made before he was born—in 2016.

When my husband and I looked at our budget, we decided we could not afford childcare for two children at once, so we put aside the idea of having a second child for the four-and-a-half years until our son was eligible for public pre-K. At just about that time, the pandemic broke out, and childcare became unreliable. Three years later, our budget is strained, and we still feel we cannot have another child primarily because of the cost of childcare. We will stop at one, but if a universal, publicly funded childcare system had existed during the last seven years, we likely would have had a second child.

Intro 941 creates such a system. Universal childcare will ensure that children as young as 6 weeks old receive the care they need, so that their parents can remain in the workforce and not be forced to cut hours. It will expand the hours of childcare, so that parents with nontraditional jobs can get the care they need for their children, and it will cover undocumented families, so that all residents of our city can participate. The legislation will support providers by establishing a living wage on par with DOE teachers, and creating paid training opportunities so that more people have the opportunity to join this crucial workforce. I urge you to pass this bill.

Katherine Herman
Beverley Road, ###. ##
Brooklyn, NY

Testimony: Intro 941, Universal Child Care

Lauren Phillips, parent to 1.5 year-old son
Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY

As a working parent in New York City, I know that our current childcare is not sustainable for parents or childcare providers. Childcare costs are continuing to skyrocket while provider wages stagnate and federal support dries up. The struggle to care for children inside and outside the home becomes more difficult each day. The system is broken.

I know from my own experience how essential universal childcare is for New York City. Having heard horror stories about daycare shortages from other parents, my husband (and co-parent) and I scoured our neighborhood for a daycare spot when I was only 12 weeks pregnant-- before I told many of my family and friends that I was expecting. And, now that we have our son in daycare, we are paying an exorbitant cost to keep him there. Last year, it cost us \$22,000 to have our son in daycare. We are fortunate, because as two working professionals, we can pay this cost. But, daycare is so expensive that we have put off having another child until our son can go to the city's universal 3K program, because we wouldn't be able to afford having two kids in daycare at once (and we don't have any other option for childcare). The high cost of childcare is robbing us of time with our future child.

Our daycare is wonderful, and the workers there deserve to be paid like the teachers they are. All day, my son plays, learns, and explores with his friends. He is happy every day at drop-off and every day at pickup we hear from his teachers what a wonderful day he had. I only wish every child in the City (and indeed, everywhere) had the opportunity to learn and grow with their toddler-friends, like my son. But I know that the daycare teachers make very little money, though they work so hard. Their work is shaping future generations and they should be paid accordingly.

Daycares also need more stability in their funding from the City. Our daycare was nearly evicted from its location this spring after the City fell so far behind on providing 3K and 4K payments that the landlord threatened the daycare with eviction. For all the families that rely on our daycare, and of course, for the staff, this was an incredibly stressful time. In fact, the parents fundraised out-of-pocket to cover the daycare's rent, while we all called the City to get them paid. The system should not be so dysfunctional that it lands families and daycare workers in these precarious situations, but I know that other daycares and families have faced the same challenges. What a shame.

In one of the richest cities in the world, we can do so much better. Intro 941 creates the opportunity to set the City on a better path. Universal childcare will ensure that children as young as 6 weeks old receive the care they need, so that their parents can remain in the workforce. It will expand the hours of childcare, so that parents with nontraditional jobs can get the care they need for their children, and it will cover undocumented families, so that all residents of our City can participate. The legislation will support providers by establishing a

living wage on par with DOE teachers, and creating paid training opportunities so that more people have the opportunity to join this crucial workforce.

For the sake of New York City's families, daycare workers, and most of all, for its children, please pass this critical law. The littlest New Yorkers, and the grownups who love them, will thank you.

Leigh Fox

Webster Ave

Brooklyn, NY 11230

September 20, 2023

Attn: NYC City Council--Committee on Women and Gender Equity

I am writing to testify in support for passing the Universal Childcare Bill for the good of all NYC families and children. In my professional life, I have worked as a children's librarian for the Brooklyn Public Library for the past sixteen years. The Brooklyn community has shown a demonstrated need for affordable daycare and education for children during their first five years of life. Many working families, mine included, are struggling to find affordable childcare while dealing with the high cost of living in New York City. I am a new mother and am currently paying for childcare for both my infant and toddler while my partner and I are at work. While I love working as a public employee, the salary is barely enough for us to afford the rising cost of food, housing, healthcare, and daycare costs. Please consider passing this bill so that working families can provide a better quality of life for our children and working parents are able to maintain a healthy work/life relationship.

Sincerely,

Leigh Fox

Dear NYC Council,

I am writing to beg you to endorse the universal childcare bill. I have a 10-month-old daughter and have had to withdraw my entire retirement savings in order to pay for childcare this year and am unsure what I am going to do next year when that money has run out.

One of the benefits of living in this city is the incredible community you can find. I have found a community of parents, specifically other single parents by choice and we are constantly talking about how we cannot afford childcare and the sacrifices we are making. I am sure that it is going to force some of us to leave the city. Right now it is preventing me from doing things like saving to buy an apartment or having another child.

Universal childcare would benefit children. Studies have shown that children who attend high-quality childcare are more likely to succeed in school and in life. They are also more likely to have good social and emotional skills.

Third, universal childcare would boost the economy. When parents are able to work, they can spend more money on goods and services. This helps to create jobs and grow the economy.

In addition to these benefits, universal childcare is also the right thing to do. All children deserve access to high-quality care, regardless of their parents' income or employment status.

I urge you to support universal childcare. It is a policy that would benefit our families, our children, and our economy.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Lee, mother to Luca Jo Lee (10 months)

P.S. Here are some additional statistics that support the case for universal childcare:

- According to the Center for American Progress, 66% of mothers with children under the age of 18 are in the workforce.
- The average cost of childcare in the United States is \$11,666 per year, which is more than the cost of in-state tuition at a public four-year college.
- Studies have shown that high-quality childcare can boost a child's lifetime earnings by up to \$1 million.
- A study by the National Women's Law Center found that universal childcare would create over 2 million jobs.

I hope this information is helpful.

September 12, 2023

As a working parent in New York City, I know that our current childcare is not sustainable for parents or childcare providers. Childcare costs are continuing to skyrocket while provider wages stagnate and federal support dries up. The struggle to care for children inside and outside the home becomes more difficult each day. The system is broken.

Intro 941 creates the opportunity to set the City on a better path. Universal childcare will ensure that children as young as 6 weeks old receive the care they need, so that their parents can remain in the workforce. It will expand the hours of childcare, so that parents with nontraditional jobs can get the care they need for their children, and it will cover undocumented families, so that all residents of our City can participate. The legislation will support providers by establishing a living wage on par with DOE teachers, and creating paid training opportunities so that more people have the opportunity to join this crucial workforce.

I know from my own experience how essential universal childcare is for all New Yorkers. My entire career has been working at education-focused non-profit organizations in New York City. Not only have I supported numerous clients torn between going to work and taking care of their child, but I have also been in that position myself. My son was born in May 2022, and my husband (a city employee) and I were fortunate to both have paid family leave to care for our son for the first six months of his life. Despite beginning our search for adequate childcare before he was born, we struggled to find affordable care for him when needed. We were faced with the decision of losing my income, which would have made paying our bills nearly impossible. Luckily, a fellow member of a parent group connected us with their daycare provider, and we were able to find a safe, affordable spot to send our son to daycare. Not everyone in New York City has this experience, especially parents who work nontraditional hours, undocumented families, low-income families, and families who are otherwise marginalized. The best way to support all New Yorkers is to support universal childcare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Macy S" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Macy Stockton

macystockton@gmail.com

###-###-####

E 18th Street, ###.

Brooklyn, NY 11226

Child care costs in New York City are incredibly high. While I feel grateful that I am able to afford part-time childcare for my year-old son, I am not able to save money because whatever would have gone into savings gets spent on childcare.

I know that some corporations provide childcare vouchers as a benefit. I wish I also had access to this resource. As a freelancer, I do not. Likewise, I think it's a great idea that NY provides low income families with child care vouchers. I support expanding this program so that all New Yorkers can access child care without financial burden. The demand and interest for Universal Child Care is real, and I hope New York gets on board with providing free child care from 6 weeks of age and older.

Sincerely,
Meghan Bernhardt

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity. I am speaking today with New Yorkers United for Child Care in support of Intro 941 to provide free child care for all city residents and establish an Office of Child Care. I'm also calling on the City to follow through on the commitment to roll out 3-K to for all.

My name is Michelle Argan and i live in Fort Greene and I have a 1 year old.

The lack of availability and or affordability of child care services in NYC has impacted my work and life balance as my husband and I both have to work full time jobs to afford care.

I have had to consider or make really challenging decisions based on child care affordability in these ways: going back to work earlier than I wanted to after my daughter was born and cut back on all spending in order to pay rent and childcare costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Testimony for the Committee on Women and Gender Equality

On Universal Childcare Funding

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the creation of a dedicated office of childcare to oversee the administration of free childcare to all city residents. Childcare is a massive expense impacting the affordability crisis for New York City's young families. I spend 50% of my salary after taxes each month to send my 15-month-old to daycare. My job provides our insurance coverage, staying home with my child is not an option for us.

My family and members of our community are extremely concerned that when our children age into 3k, there will not be adequate funding for universal 3k and that families will face undue financial hardship. I also believe that our childcare workers deserve better compensation and benefits for their tireless work and dedication to this city's children. They are the backbone of our economy and keep New Yorkers working!

Safe, supportive, and affordable childcare should be accessible to all families in New York City. In this economic climate and after the recent tragedy in the Bronx at that daycare center, please resource and fund a dedicated team to support and protect the children and families of New York City.

Sincerely,
Michelle Berninger, resident of Kensington, BK and mom to Johanna

**The New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Cabán, Chair of Women and Gender Equity**

**City Council Hearing:
September 21st, 2023**

Testimony of Rishan Ghebreigziabher-Hess

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity. I am speaking today with New Yorkers United for Child Care in support of Intro 941 to provide free child care for all city residents and establish an Office of Child Care. I'm also calling on the City to follow through on the commitment to roll out 3-K for all.

My name is Rishan Ghebreigziabher-Hess and I live in Bedford-Stuyvesant and I have two kids, one of 25 years old and another 17 months old and I am planning to have one more child. The lack of child care services in NYC has impacted my work and life balance. When my daughter was born I had to take a long time out of work to look after her and I ended up having lots of debts. While fortunately, I had a lean on my job, many of my moms peers are not having the same opportunity. This situation is impacting families economically and mentally and children are missing out on cognitive gains.

I truly hope that Intro 941 will be adopted, it will benefit not only low-income families but all creating a new environment where (1)parents will be able to be part of the workforce again; (2)children will have access to high quality education and diverse classrooms, and (3)the city and society in general will yield returns on this investment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

**The New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Cabán,
Chair of Women and Gender Equity**

**City Council Hearing:
September 21st, 2023**

Testimony of Sarah Schulman

Good afternoon and thank you Chair Cabán and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity. I am speaking today with New Yorkers United for Child Care in support of Intro 941 to provide free child care for all city residents and establish an Office of Child Care. I'm also calling on the City to follow through on the commitment to roll out 3-K to for all.

My name is Sarah Schulman and I live in Flatbush and I have a one year old son, and hope to have one more if we can afford to.

The lack of availability and or affordability of child care services in NYC has impacted my work and life balance.

I have had to consider or make really challenging decisions based on child care affordability in these ways

- The monthly cost of childcare exceeds that of our rent
- After paying rent and childcare, I am unable to afford groceries until the next pay period
- I am having to make difficult decisions such as forgoing medical care so we can afford childcare
- We desperately want to have a second child, but it looks like we will not be able to afford it. This is heartbreaking and makes me very angry that such an important decision is out of my hands.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

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Testimony: Seth Mills

As a working parent in New York City, I know that our current childcare is not sustainable for parents or childcare providers. Childcare costs are continuing to skyrocket while provider wages stagnate and federal support dries up. The struggle to care for children inside and outside the home becomes more difficult each day. The system is broken.

Intro 941 creates the opportunity to set the City on a better path. Universal childcare will ensure that children as young as 6 weeks old receive the care they need, so that their parents can remain in the workforce. It will expand the hours of childcare, so that parents with nontraditional jobs can get the care they need for their children, and it will cover undocumented families, so that all residents of our City can participate. The legislation will support providers by establishing a living wage on par with DOE teachers, and creating paid training opportunities so that more people have the opportunity to join this crucial workforce.

I know from my own experience how essential universal childcare is for New York City. Since my children were born 5 years ago they have been cared for by a frequently rotating group of family and child care workers, all of whom have been wonderful, loving, and underpaid. At the same time, childcare has been at times more than rent. My co-parent and I have taken on debt to cover the costs of care that is still crushing years later. We have taken days off work, have worked while caring for our children and given neither our full attention; and we have worried and we have worried and we have worried. Although our children are now in school trying to arrange after care and summer care and emergency care is nearly impossible and completely unaffordable. This is an untenable situation for both working families and caregivers.

The childcare workforce, which is mostly Black and brown women and immigrants, has long been underpaid and forced to go without benefits and a living wage. It's time to care for the people who care for our children by passing universal childcare.

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



TESTIMONY

HEARING: 9/21/23 AT 10 AM

FIRST AND LAST NAME

MICHAEL CAMPBELL

ADDRESS:

BURKE AVENUE
BRONX NY 10469

E-MAIL:

mecity4u@gmail.com

INT 941- ESTABLISHING AN
OFFICE OF CHILD CARE TO
OVERSEE FREE CHILD CARE
FOR ALL CITY RESIDENTS.

#UCCINNYC

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



TESTIMONY

HEARING: 9/21/23 AT 10 AM

GREETINGS TO THE COMMITTEE
ON WOMEN AND GENDER
EQUITY. MY NAME IS MICHAEL
CAMPBELL AND I

LIVE

WORK

MY CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL

IN DISTRICT 12.

INTRODUCTION 0941-2023, THE
UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE BILL IS
IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE

MY CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT
TO ME ALSO. IT IS COSTING
TO MY FAMILY EACH MONTH'S
PASSING, THIS WOULD HELP
OFFSET OUR MONTHLY EXPENSES

PASSING THIS BILL WOULD HAVE
A POSITIVE BENEFIT FOR MY
COMMUNITY.

#UCCINNYC

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



TESTIMONY

HEARING: 9/21/23 AT 10 AM

GREETINGS TO THE COMMITTEE
ON WOMEN AND GENDER
EQUITY. MY NAME IS Cheryl
Dewitt AND I

LIVE

WORK

MY CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL
IN DISTRICT 12.

INTRODUCTION 0941-2023, THE
UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE BILL IS
IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE

I am a child care
provider-center
based exec Director
Universal Child Care
will provide access to All
children.

PASSING THIS BILL WOULD HAVE
A POSITIVE BENEFIT FOR MY
COMMUNITY.

#UCCINNYC

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



TESTIMONY

HEARING: 9/21/23 AT 10 AM

FIRST AND LAST NAME
Cheryl Dewitt

ADDRESS:

Edson Ave
Bx NY 10469

E-MAIL:

deenooktab@gmail.com

INT 941- ESTABLISHING AN
OFFICE OF CHILD CARE TO
OVERSEE FREE CHILD CARE
FOR ALL CITY RESIDENTS.

#UCCINNYC

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



TESTIMONY

HEARING: 9/21/23 AT 10 AM

GREETINGS TO THE COMMITTEE
ON WOMEN AND GENDER
EQUITY. MY NAME IS Karrée Gordon

AND I

LIVE

WORK

MY CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL

IN DISTRICT 12. *and grew up in this district.*

INTRODUCTION 0941-2023, THE
UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE BILL IS
IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE
*this is an important stage
of child development and
socialization. Furthermore, we
are a working community and
childcare will allow parents to flourish.*

PASSING THIS BILL WOULD HAVE
A POSITIVE BENEFIT FOR MY
COMMUNITY.

#UCCINNYC

UNIVERSAL
CHILD
CARE



TESTIMONY

HEARING: 9/21/23 AT 10 AM

FIRST AND LAST NAME

KARRÉE-LYN GORDON

ADDRESS:

Holland Ave
BRONX, NY 10467

E-MAIL:

urwize@gmail.com

INT 94I- ESTABLISHING AN
OFFICE OF CHILD CARE TO
OVERSEE FREE CHILD CARE
FOR ALL CITY RESIDENTS.

#UCCINNYC

Dear New York City Council Members:

I'm writing in support of Intro 941, the proposed law to establish universal child care in New York City. I strongly urge you to pass this bill.

When my son was born, I was fortunate to find a day care in our neighborhood that I could afford, and an understanding employer who allowed me to work on a flexible schedule to fill in the gaps as needed. However, millions of New Yorkers don't have those same privileges. The ability of working families to have and care for children shouldn't depend on luck, privilege, or on the good will of an employer.

However many children they choose to have, every family deserves to be supported. Forcing parents, mostly women, to drop out of the workforce to care for young children is a sexist expectation that creates an economic drag on society. It's a recipe for neglect and abuse in families that truly can't afford to have a stay-at-home caregiver.

Ensuring access to affordable, high-quality care will be a massive boon for parents, for children, and even for employers, who'll benefit from increased availability of workers and predictability of schedules. It's a win-win for everyone and a wise investment in the future.

Please pass Intro 941 and see that it's implemented comprehensively and effectively.

Thank you.

The lack of adequate affordable childcare in NYC has put incredible pressure on my family. We cannot afford full-time care for our two young boys. I work in publishing and only make 45,000 a year. If I placed either one of my children into full-time care, it would cost so much more than my salary. I work full-time from home while caring for my 9 month old. It is extraordinarily stressful to have two full-time jobs, and I might be forced, like many women, to leave the work force because it feels unsustainable. My 2.5 year old just started 3K, which was a relief, because before September we also had to care for him on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The balancing act is exhausting and unfair. New York City has the funds to care for its children. It is immoral how much money we waste on the NYPD when our children need money for care and education. It feels impossible to have a family in this city without, honestly, losing your sense of self and living with a cruel amount of anxiety and depression. We need help. Do your job. This is shameful.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gregory Brender

Address: _____

I represent: Day Care Council of New York

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rebecca Charles

Address: 14 Wall Street

I represent: Citizens' Committee Affiliates
for Children

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 941 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAUL J. HARBUE

Address: UNH

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 941 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/21/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steven Morales

Address: Win

I represent: All Our Kin

Address: 2929 3rd Ave Bx, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hannah Tager

Address: _____

I represent: Win

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 941 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HANNAH MAY-POWERS

Address: _____

I represent: BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 94 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TOVAH GOTTESMAN

Address: 253 Broadway

I represent: Mayor's office of Child Care

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/21/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Michelle Frazier

Address: 253 Broadway

I represent: Mayor's Office of Child Care

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aaron Yarbrough

Address: _____

I represent: OCC ECE

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Gionno?

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Defender Services

Address: 177 Livingston St Brooklyn

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 941 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/21/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARIA VERA

Address: 145th Street

I represent: Bus Riders Union Leadership

Address: 565 Bushwick Ave
Brooklyn, 11206

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms