

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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March 2, 2026
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Jennifer Gutiérrez
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Simcha Felder
Rita C. Joseph
Kevin C. Riley
Kayla Santosuosso
Julie Won

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Emmy Liss
Executive Director of Mayor's Office of Child
Care and Early Childhood Education

Simone Hawkins
Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education
at New York City Public Schools

Jessica Wallenstein
New York City Public Schools Division of
Inclusion and Accessible Learning

Grace Ruah
Citizens Union

Donavan Swanson
Brooklyn Borough President's Office

Kellan Calder
New Yorkers United for Child Care

Jocelyn Mazurkiewicz
Consortium for Worker Education

Stamo Karalazarides Rosenberg
Council of Supervisors and Administrators

Peggy Lux Rodriguez
Eladia's Kids

Magin Schantz
Super Moon Day Care

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Paula Magnus
Northside Center for Child Development

Kamila Faruki
Manhattan School House

Anna Succes
Queensview Nursery School

Ramon Peguero
Community for Hispanic Children and Families

Lori Podvesker
Include NYC

Lara Kyriakou
All Our Kin

Betty Baez Melo
Advocates for Children of New York

Lauren Melodia

Debra Sue Lorenzen
St. Nicks Alliance

Sejal Kothari
Upper Manhattan Early Childhood Connect

Gregory Brender
Day Care Council of New York

Judy Blumenthal
Early Starters USA

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Latoya Simon
Simfran Academy

Paula Inhargue
United Neighborhood Houses

Yolanda Morales

Ana Fuentes

Emanuel Novy
City's First Readers

Albania Jimenez
LINC

Leonela Tutasig
Play Read VIP National Center

Meredith Ansell

Rabbi David Niederman
UJO Williamsburg

Elizabeth Ghunney
Women's Housing and Economic Development
Corporation

Amy Shea
Low Income Investment Fund

Kate Hoy
Inter Agency Council of Developmental
Disabilities Agencies

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Carolyn Cleveland
Kennedy Children's Center

Jenna Lauter
NYCLU

Ingrid Matias Chungata
Nuestros Ninos

Rebecca Schneider-Kaplan
Stepping Stones Preschool

Megan Elder

Adrienne Bond
Quick Start Day Care Center

D. Lashaun Brown

Alice Bufkin
Citizens Committee for Children

Shanita Bowen
ECE On the Move

Christopher Leon Johnson

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3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Ladies and
4 gentleman, settle down. We're about to begin. Good
5 morning. Good morning. Welcome to the New York City
6 Council hearing on the Committee of Early Childhood
7 Education. At this time, please silence all
8 electronics and do not approach the dais. Again,
9 please do not approach the dais. If you're
10 testifying today or have any other questions, please
11 reach a Sergeant at Arms. Thank you for your
12 cooperation. Chair, you may begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Good morning,
14 everyone. Welcome to the first hearing of the
15 Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education. I'm your
16 Chair, Jennifer Gutiérrez. We would like to start
17 with Speaker Menin who's joined us this morning.

18 SPEAKER MENIN: Thank you so much,
19 Chair, and good morning, and I just want to welcome
20 everyone to today's first-ever hearing of the newly
21 established subcommittee on Early Childhood
Education. I'm Julie Menin, Speaker of the New York
City Council, and I first of all want to begin by
thanking my colleague, Chair Jennifer Gutiérrez, who
is Chair of this new Subcommittee for joining me in

1 convening this incredibly important hearing on the
2 path to Universal Childcare. I was proud to not only
3 create this new subcommittee as one of my first acts
4 of Speaker, but I'm also proud to have appointed
5 Council Member Gutiérrez as the Chair. I know this
6 issue is incredibly personal to her, and that she
7 will be a strong and powerful voice in helping New
8 Yorkers with all issues related to child care in our
9 city. At today's hearing, we'll also be hearing a
10 package of eight pieces of legislation which Chair
11 Gutiérrez will outline shortly. I'm proud to be
12 sponsoring two of these pieces of legislation, Intro.
13 8 in relation to establishing a pilot program to make
14 vacant commercial premises suitable for use by child
15 care programs, and Intro. 9 in relation to a study
16 and report on expediting the child care permitting
17 process. Though this subcommittee is new to the
18 Council, the issue of universal child care is an
19 issue that has come up time and time again over the
20 last four years, and I'm thrilled that it will
21 finally be getting the attention that it deserves. As
Chair Gutiérrez will also discuss, in 2022, the
Council passed a package of legislation that was
aimed at putting the city on a path to universal

1 child care. I was proud to have been the sponsor of
2 five pieces of legislation in that package, and while
3 the Council passed those bills and Mayor Adams signed
4 the bills, unfortunately, those bills were not fully
5 implemented by the Adams administration. Now, the
6 city has an opportunity and quite frankly an
7 obligation to provide universal child care for New
8 Yorkers. Now is the right time. We have tremendous
9 alignment and consensus on this issue across the
10 political spectrum, and between branches of
11 government. In January, I stood shoulder to shoulder
12 with the Governor, the Mayor, and with Chair
13 Gutiérrez and a number of our colleagues to announce
14 the expansion of child care programs for New Yorkers.
15 Now is the time for our city to finally achieve
16 universal child care. We truly cannot afford to wait
17 any longer. When we talk about universal child care,
18 many people immediately say universal child care is
19 too expensive. That response is frankly backwards.
20 Our economy requires universal child care. Let's be
21 honest. The backbone of our economy is parents, and
really, it's mothers. Mothers are the ones that
cannot fully participate in our workforce, in our
economy, and in our society when child care remains

1 as unaffordable and inaccessible as it currently is.
2 Last year alone, approximately 300,000 parents left
3 the workforce, mainly mothers, because they could not
4 afford child care. That is not only morally wrong,
5 it is also fiscally disastrous. The loss of those
6 parents from our workforce cost the city around \$2.2
7 billion a year in lost economic output, all due to
8 unaffordable child care. We cannot afford to
9 continue with business as usual. We need child care
10 that is quality, affordable, and accessible, and we
11 need it now. I also recognize that this is not going
12 to be an easy fight. There are many barriers to
13 providing universal child care, even apart from the
14 cost. We need to build out a skilled and
15 well-compensated workforce. We need to identify safe
16 and appropriate spaces. We need to cut through
17 layers and layers of confusing license requirements
18 and bureaucracy, and importantly, we need to build
19 out a system that accounts for the many diverse
20 communities that live in the city and assure that
21 what we create works for everyone. But I'm also
confident that these challenges should not be a
reason that we do not achieve this goal. We have a
lot of existing infrastructure, for example, through

1 a UPK and U3K, through our Department of Education,
2 through our wonderful not-for-profit workforce, and
3 that we can build on to ultimately realize universal
4 child care. We at the Council are ready to roll up
5 our sleeves and do the work necessary to achieve
6 universal child care for New Yorkers. I'm looking
7 forward to hearing from the administration at this
8 hearing on where we stand today in achieving this
9 goal together as partners in government. And now,
let me turn it back to Chair Gutiérrez. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
11 Speaker Menin. Thank you for this new subcommittee
12 and empowering me and our colleagues to pursue this
13 very important priority. So, welcome everyone once
14 again to the first hearing. The topic is the path to
15 universal child care. Today, March 2nd marks exactly
16 three years ago that I stood outside the steps with
17 so many of you to rally my intro my universal child
18 care bill, and in those years, we've been able to
19 grow, join coalitions, have countless roundtables.
20 We've learned so much from one another, and we fought
together. Today, with this new subcommittee, the
21 space to emphasize the importance of Early Childhood
Education lives right here in the City Council.

1 Today's hearing will examine how the administration
2 plans to move towards a universal child care system
3 in New York City. We want to understand how it will
4 define success for its Early Childhood Education
5 programs and ensure investments translate into
6 stable, high-quality child care where everyone from
7 parents to children to providers, are taken care of.
8 And equally as important, this hearing is a space for
9 parents, for providers, for advocates and the public
10 to tell us what's not working and what would. Going
11 forward, we want this new subcommittee to truly
12 understand every facet of the multiple areas that are
13 related to Early Childhood Education. Child care in
14 New York City is complicated. There's different
15 agencies involved, different funding streams,
16 different budget cycles, different rules, different
17 workforce structures, and when everything gets lumped
18 together, it's hard to see what's really broken. So
19 instead of treating child care like one giant
20 problem, we're going to take it piece by piece. We
21 want to work together to make this work. We all know
that quality child care is important. The Speaker,
myself and so many of my colleagues understand that
intimately. The first years of a child's life

1 literally shapes the foundation for everything that
2 comes next. Investing in high-quality Early Childhood
3 Education isn't just something that's nice to have.
4 It leads to better life outcomes that save taxpayer
5 dollars money and is essential to our economy. In
6 January, I stood with the Governor, the Mayor,
7 Speaker Menin while announced plan about setting us
8 on a path to universal child care. Beyond the
9 funding level, however, few details have emerged
10 about how the city would implement the system-wide
11 expansion. So, today, we'll hear from the Mayor's
12 Office of Child Care, the Department of Education,
13 advocates, Early Childhood educators, providers,
14 parents, and other interested stakeholders, and we'll
15 ask what resources are needed to move towards
16 universal child care in New York City, how can we
17 work across agencies to rapidly prepare for system
18 expansion? How can we guarantee access to child care
19 for every child that needs it, and how can we make
20 sure the people who care for our babies, who are
21 raising our children, who we trust are paid a living
wage? The subcommittee will also consider the
following legislation: Intro. 8, sponsored by
Speaker Menin, in relation to establishing a pilot

1 program to make vacant commercial premises suitable
2 for use by child care programs; Intro. 9, also
3 sponsored by Speaker Menin in relation to a study and
4 report on expediting the child care permitting
5 process; Intro. 128, sponsored by Council Member
6 Tiffany Cabán requiring the provision of child care
7 services upon request for certain meetings open to
8 the public; Intro. 631, sponsored by Council Member
9 Lincoln Restler, in relation to requiring the
10 Department of Education to report on Early Childhood
11 Education seat availability, outreach, and staff
12 vacancies; Reso. 165, sponsored by Deputy Speaker
13 Nantasha Williams, calling on the New York State
14 Legislature to introduce and pass and the Governor to
15 sign legislation to amend the Workers Compensation
16 Law in relation to allowing unused paid family leave
17 to be transferred to grandparents and other
18 designated caregivers. And finally, two bills I'm
19 really proud to be the lead sponsor of, Intro. 579 in
20 relation to an education and outreach campaign to
21 enroll student in 3K and Pre-K. I believe Speaker
Menin, this was your bill from the last term as well.
So, it's a top priority, okay, loud and clear. And
Intro. 580 in relation to establishing an Office of

1 Child Care to oversee free child care for all city
2 residents, a bill I introduced in March of 2023 and
3 have had the honor to work on with so many of you all
4 in this room. Additionally, the subcommittee has
5 launched a form for providers to make it easier to
6 communicate with us. You can report
7 provider-specific issues like agency delays via our
8 form which can be found at bitly/ECissueform [sic].
9 We'll get it to you guys, and this will be posted on
10 my website and socials as well. I want to thank the
11 members of the Early Childhood Education Subcommittee
12 who have joined us today. We have Council Member
13 Kayla Santosuosso, who is a member, and Council
14 Member Rita Joseph. We're also joined by Education
15 Chair Council Member Eric Dinowitz and Council Member
16 Tiffany Cabán, and I don't believe anyone online.
17 No? Okay. and then I also want to thank Committee
18 Staff: Julia Goldsmith-Pinkham [sp?], Katie Salina
19 [sp?], Grace Amato [sp?], Andrew Lane-Lawless [sp?],
20 and Margaret Barnsley [sp?], as well as my own staff,
21 Anya Lehr [sp?], Frank Julca [sp?], and Elisabet Lau
[sp?] for their work on today's hearing. Okay.
Alright, sorry, we're going to move on. We were
waiting for Council Member Restler. I would like to

1 remind everyone who wishes to testify in-person
2 today, that you must fill out a witness slip which
3 you can find on the desk of the Sergeant at Arms near
4 the entrance of this room. Please fill out a slip.
5 Please fill out the slip even if you have already
6 registered in advance that you'll be testifying
7 in-person today. If you wish to testify on any of
8 the legislation, please indicate on the witness slip
9 whether you are here to testify in-favor of or in
10 opposition to the legislation. I also want to point
11 out that we will not be voting on any legislation
12 today to allow as many people as possible to testify.
13 Testimony will be limited to two minutes per person
14 whether you are testifying in-person or on Zoom. I'm
15 also going to ask my colleagues to limit their
16 questions and comments to five minutes. Please note
17 that witnesses who are here in-person will testify
18 before those who are signed into the Zoom webinar. I
19 will now turn it over to ECE Subcommittee Counsel to
20 administer the oath.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. In
19 accordance with the rules of the Council, I'll
20 administer the affirmation. I'll call on you
21 individually for a response. Please raise your right

1 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
2 truth and nothing but the truth before these
3 committees, and to respond honestly to Council Member
4 questions? Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh, and I'd like
6 to acknowledge that Council Member Won has joined us
7 on Zoom. Sorry, [inaudible].

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: You ready?
9 Good morning. Good morning to Speaker Menin, Chair
10 Gutiérrez, members of the City Council Committee on
11 Education and Subcommittee on Early Childhood
12 Education, and all Council Members joining today's
13 hearing. My name is Emmy Liss and I am the Executive
14 Director of the Mayor's Office of Child Care and
15 Early Childhood Education. I'm joined today by
16 Simone Hawkins, Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood
17 Education at New York City Public Schools. I'm
18 grateful to be here for the subcommittee's first-ever
19 hearing and for the opportunity to share more about
20 the Mamdani Administration's vision for universal
21 child care. As we begin today's hearing, I want to
recognize the incredible commitment of Chair
Gutiérrez and so many others in the Council who
pushed for child care and Early Childhood Education

1 to be a top priority for city government. Chair
2 Gutiérrez has also been a strong advocate for the
3 Mayor's Office of Child Care and Early Childhood
4 Education, and as I will outline in my testimony
5 today, we believe this office will be critical to
6 mobilizing an all of government approach to
7 implementing universal child care. I also want to
8 recognize the many decades of labor and organizing by
9 child care providers, educators, parents and
10 advocates, many of whom I know will offer testimony
11 later today. We have collectively reached a moment
12 where government is poised to act and implement an
13 expansive vision for universal child care that if
14 successful will be life-changing for parents,
15 educators and our economy and city at large. As a
16 parent to two young children who I'm raising in New
17 York City, I know just how critical universal child
18 care would be. In my testimony today, I plan to
19 outline our vision for universal child care, the role
20 that my office will play in delivering this vision,
21 and how we will work with many partners across city
and state government, and the nonprofit and business
communities to implement this vision. I will also
speak briefly to the legislative proposals being

1 considered at today's hearing. I then look forward
2 to your questions and to the testimonies that early
3 care and education providers, advocates, and
4 community members will deliver. Our vision for
5 universal child care is a system in which every
6 family has access to free, high-quality,
7 culturally-responsive care and education for all
8 children under five with care offered in a range of
9 settings and delivered by caregivers and educators
10 who are respected and fairly compensated.

11 Successfully implementing this vision will have a
12 profound impact on our city. Children who have
13 access to high-quality early care and education will
14 build developmentally-appropriate skills that put
15 them on a trajectory for stronger outcomes in
16 elementary school and beyond. Parents will save an
17 average of \$26,000 annually which is money they can
18 spend in our local economy and use to build economic
19 security for their families. Universal child care
20 will increase the share of parents in the workforce
21 with more caregivers, and in particular, more mothers
likely to seek employment opportunities. Altogether,
we expect universal child care to keep young families
in our city, reversing the high rates of migration we

1 see today for families with children under six. And
2 with universal child care, New York City businesses
3 will see lower rates of employee turnover and more
4 stability in their workforce and our overall economic
5 output will grow. This sounds like a fantastical
6 vision, but there's evidence to support all of our
7 claims. All across the country, including here in
8 New York, there's demonstrated proof that access to
9 Early Childhood and education boosts children's
10 social/emotional development, and kindergarten
11 readiness, not to mention their high school
12 graduation rates and long-term employment outcomes.
13 When New York City expanded access to 3K, maternal
14 employment rose in neighborhoods with free preschool
15 education, and mothers were more likely to stay
16 employed even after their child finished Pre-K. Many
17 New York City businesses have seen employee retention
18 rise when their workers have access to child care
19 benefits, driving down their recruitment and training
20 costs. And when Quebec first implemented universal
21 child care over 20 years ago, the increase in income
tax revenue exceeded the municipal costs to implement
the program, demonstrating the true return on
investment for early care and education. In January

1 of this year, just days after Mayor Mamdani took
2 office, the Governor and Mayor announced a commitment
3 of over \$1.2 billion state funding for New York City
4 to put us on the path to universal child care. With
5 these new resources, we will stabilize the child care
6 voucher program. We will ensure every family have
7 access to a high-quality 3K and Pre-K seat this fall
8 with expanded 3K capacity in areas of the city that
9 historically had unmet family demand. We will launch
10 2K providing high-quality early care and education to
11 approximately 2,000 two-year-olds in Fall 2026. 2K
12 will grow to serve another approximately 10,000
13 two-year-olds in fall of 2027 for a total of 12,000
14 children, and by the end of the Mayor's first term,
15 we will provide access to every two-year-old in the
16 city. We will build this program in partnership with
17 community-based child care providers and home-based
18 family child care providers, and we recognize that as
19 we expand, we also need to address critical
20 operational gaps facing our child care provider
21 community to ensure they have the resources they
need. Delivering a responsive and sustainable
universal early care and education system will take
an all of government approach. This is where the

1 Mayor's Office of Child Care and Early Childhood
2 Education comes in. My office is responsible for
3 setting the administration's child care strategy,
4 coordinating work across city agencies to deliver a
5 high-quality early care and education system that is
6 responsive to child care providers and meets family's
7 needs and collaborating with a range of partners
8 internal and external to city government as well as
9 engaging the public. We will serve as a central hub
10 for citywide policy implementation and coordination
11 across more than a dozen agencies, including New York
12 City Public Schools, the Administration of Children
13 Services, the Department of Health and Mental
14 Hygiene, and the Department of Social Services, among
15 many others. Our city agency partners will continue
16 to drive policy and implementation forward and they
17 are experts at what they do. My office will not
18 stand in the way of critical work. We are here to
19 ensure alignment across agencies and to make sure the
20 work is properly resourced and supported. We will
21 also foster strategic partnerships with all levels of
government, private entities, nonprofits and
foundations, and work closely with families and
providers to ensure their voices are represented in

1 the design and implementation of city policy and
2 programs. Across all of the city's early care and
3 education work, we will be tracking and monitoring
4 progress to ensure we are on track to meet our goals.
5 As this administration begins our critical work to
6 expand access to high-quality early care and
7 education for all families, we are able to build on a
8 foundation of existing strong programs here in the
9 city. We also recognize there's opportunity to make
10 this system work far better for families and for
11 child care providers. New York City Public Schools
12 administers the 3K and Pre-K program which I was
13 proud to help build under former Mayor de Blasio.
14 These programs which are offered inside the city's
15 public schools and with over 1,400 contracted Early
16 Childhood partners currently serve about 100,000
17 three and four-year-olds. Thousands more children in
18 the city have accessed free and subsidized care today
19 through the Child Care Assistance Program which is
20 administered by the Administration of Children
21 Services and Human Resources Administration, as well
as infant and toddler programs contracted by New York
City Public Schools. Across all of our existing
programs we have important work to do to ensure all

1 families can seamlessly access care that works for
2 them. My office will coordinate efforts across all
3 city agencies that work with families and we will
4 launch new tools to increase access to information.
5 We will continue on-the-ground outreach to ensure all
6 families enroll in the program for this fall, and
7 especially our city's most vulnerable families like
8 those living in shelter and families who may be
9 fearful to apply for services because of their
10 immigration status. We also need to ensure all
11 children, including children who face developmental
12 delays and disabilities have access to early care and
13 education programs that meet their needs. The city's
14 child care providers do essential work, but too often
15 with insufficient resources and they face a
16 complicated web of regulations and requirements to
17 operate. There is good reason for these regulations.
18 When parents entrust their children in the care of a
19 child care provider, nothing is more important than
20 their health and safety. The Department of Health
21 and Mental Hygiene works hard every day to ensure
that child care programs are physically safe and
developmentally-appropriate for young children and
staffed by caregivers who are background checked and

1 properly trained. While holding all programs to a
2 high bar for health and safety, we can and will
3 continue to take steps to support child care
4 providers to meet critical regulatory requirements
5 and to make these processes less burdensome. We must
6 have child care providers at the table with us as we
7 make policy decisions so that our policies and
8 priorities reflect the needs of the child care
9 community. In particular, under this administration,
10 we will focus on the needs of home-based family child
11 care providers who are largely women of color caring
12 for children in their communities. These caregivers
13 and educators have too often been ignored in public
14 policy. We will ensure the city's child care systems
15 and policies are designed to support family child
16 care providers so they can continue to provide
17 critical services to children and families. To
18 deliver universal child care, we will need to
19 significantly expand the number of trained
20 professionals working in child care. However, the
21 child care workforce has been underpaid and
underrespected for too long. We will invest in
building the pipeline of child care workers,
supporting and sustaining the existing workforce and

1 creating growth opportunity for child care
2 professionals. We know this work will not be easy.
3 It will take all of our partners in city government
4 and labor and in the private and civic sectors to
5 deliver on these priorities. We are grateful for the
6 role that City Council has played over the past
7 several years to elevate the importance of child
8 care, and we know your partnership with the creation
9 of this new subcommittee under Chair Gutiérrez's
10 leadership will be pivotal as we move forward
11 together. I want to speak briefly to each of the
12 proposed pieces of legislation that the subcommittee
13 will consider today. Intro. 8 would establish a
14 pilot program to make vacant commercial premises
15 suitable for use by child care programs. Our office
16 agrees we need to increase the physical space
17 capacity for child care in the city. Currently,
18 there is one licensed child care seat for every two
19 children under five, and the gaps are even more acute
20 for infants and toddlers and in parts of the city
21 that are considered child care deserts. Addressing
space needs for child care is a priority to the
administration and it will take an all-of-government
approach to ensure we are maximizing currently vacant

1 space and looking to find new spaces across both
2 private and public property. Intro. 580 calls for
3 the establishment of the Office of Child Care. As
4 the Office of Child Care, we agree that creating an
5 Office of Child Care to deliver the city's universal
6 child care system is essential. The duties laid out
7 in the bill are already functions contemplated for
8 the office. While there are some duties that will
9 require expansion of staffing capacity and resources
10 to ensure compliance, especially around reporting.
11 We look forward to discussing the details of the bill
12 with the Council as we refine the scope of the
13 office's work. Intro. 9 calls for a study and report
14 on expediting the child care permitting process. Our
15 office agrees that the process to obtain a child care
16 permit should be as expedient as possible while
17 ensuring compliance with New York City Health Code.
18 The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the
19 Office of Child Care have already been reviewing
20 current licensing processes to identify opportunities
21 to streamline and clarify the process. We look
forward to sharing the outcomes of that work with the
Council in coming weeks. Intro. 128 would require
the provision of child care services upon request for

1 certain meetings open to the public. Our office
2 understands the spirit of the bill. Families who need
3 child care should have access to care that meets
4 their needs, and child care needs should not prevent
5 New Yorkers from engaging with their local
6 government. However, we have some concerns about
7 ensuring the health and safety of children being
8 cared for in spaces that may not be safe or
9 appropriate for child care. The requirements of this
10 bill are subject to appropriation, and there is
11 currently no funding for the bill. Intro. 579 would
12 require New York City Public Schools to develop and
13 implement an education and outreach campaign to
14 enroll students in 3K and Pre-K. Currently, as part
15 of our outreach, families are contacted directly
16 through general and targeted email campaigns,
17 outbound calls to families in districts with low
18 application rates, as well as virtual information
19 sessions, street teams doing outreach in communities,
20 text messaging and robo calls. New York City Public
21 Schools also leverages and community and faith-based
organizations to conduct outreach in their
communities. We support the goals of this bill and
look forward to working with the City Council on

1 outreach broadly. Lastly, Intro. 631 would require
2 New York City Public Schools to report on Early
3 Childhood Education seat availability, outreach and
4 staff vacancies. We welcome Council's continued
5 commitment to transparency to highlight where there
6 is the most need for 3K and Pre-K seats in
7 communities that need it most. However, we would
8 like to note our concern regarding certain provisions
9 of the bill, specifically our ability to provide
10 detailed reports on staffing pertaining to charter
11 schools and community-based organizations is limited,
12 as these entities operate independently, and their
13 employees are not part of New York City Public
14 Schools. New York City Public Schools would like to
15 speak more with the Council regarding the proposed
16 reporting requirements to ensure they're consistent
17 with what is captured in current data systems. Thank
18 you for the opportunity to give testimony before the
19 subcommittee today. We are grateful for the energy
20 and attention that the Council has put towards
21 universal child care. We would not be here today
without your efforts. I look closely in partnership
with you in the months and years to come and look
forward to your questions today.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much
2 for your thoughtful testimony. I'm going to quickly
3 pass it over to Speaker Menin and then go to
4 questions.

5 SPEAKER MENIN: Thank you so much. So,
6 appreciate the testimony today. I know we have a lot
7 of different questions. so , I want to first of all
8 start with the Child Care Advisory Board. As I
9 mentioned in my opening statement, in 2022, the
10 Council passed the Universal Child Care Act. As I
11 mentioned, I had five bills in that package. One of
12 the bills created a permanent Child Care Advisory
13 Board that was charged with getting the city on a
14 path to universal child care. Can you share- is
15 there a date for the board to meet? What is now the
16 composition of the board? Has it changed at all?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: so, our office
18 has been meeting over the past couple of years with
19 groups of child care providers and advocate and had
20 formally brought those folks together as an advisory
21 board. We are planning to reconstitute this board to
make sure it reflects the path forward, and we'll be
working with your office to ensure that we are

1 meeting the requirements of the bill and I think
2 going even further in terms of how we engage.

3 SPEAKER MENIN: That would be great,
4 because the last administration was clearly, as I
5 mentioned, not in compliance at all with these bills
6 and so there were five bills in the package. It
7 wasn't just the advisory board. It was creating those
8 portals so that parents and caregivers could easily
9 access available child care, could find there was a
10 subsidy portal to find out what subsidies they were
11 entitled to. So there was really across the board a
12 lack of compliance with the bills. So, I just want
13 to get the commitment now to get those bills in
14 compliance, and we really look forward to working
15 with you all on that. Okay, a couple questions I
16 have. How is DOE going to coordinate with the early
17 intervention system to ensure that children enrolled
18 in 2K and other Early Childhood settings are
19 appropriately screened and referred for services.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, first,
21 good morning. Happy to be here.

 SPEAKER MENIN: Morning.

 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Thank you for
having me. Also seated here is my colleague, Jessica

2 Wallenstein, Dr. Jessica Wallenstein who leads the
3 Early Childhood work in the Division of Inclusive and
4 Accessible Learning at New York City Public Schools.
5 Oh, she has to be sworn in.

6 SPEAKER MENIN: Yes, thank you.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, sorry.

8 SPEAKER MENIN: No, no worries.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell
10 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
11 before these committees and respond honestly to
12 Council Member questions?

13 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: And so I'm
16 going to lead the answer, but wanting to ensure that
17 it's comprehensive, Council Member. And so what
18 we're doing specifically, and actually taking a step
19 back around 2K, we do extensive work to ensure that
20 we embed any learnings from early intervention which
21 is currently under Department of Health and Mental
Hygiene within the core work that happens across our
existing portfolio of care. And so within my
specific division, we have an early intervention
transition team that works closely with DIAL [sic],

1 works with EI at DOHMH to support families as they
2 transition from Early Intervention to CPSC. We've
3 been working closely with the Early Intervention
4 Bureau on the birth to two initiative, making sure
5 that we contact families, that they have on their
6 lists [inaudible] to make sure that they understand
7 it's a resource, and then coordinating care across
8 the different agencies. And so we anticipate
9 bringing those learnings to 2K, but also knowing that
10 we currently serve over 2,000 two-year-olds now in
11 our system. We continue- we plan to continue to
12 leverage that. Lastly, in the request for
13 information that we recently released to welcome new
14 providers and/or new sites from existing providers
15 into our portfolio, we extended that to our 4410
16 [sic] providers. Although, they're care, their
17 specialized seats are focused on three's and four's,
18 their permit allows them to serve two-year-olds, and
19 so we're hoping to leverage their expertise in that.

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SPEAKER MENIN: Since you mentioned the
RFI, how many proposals were submitted so far, and
when will a decision be made on the RFI?

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We can share
3 more details in the coming weeks. That RFI closed
4 last week, so we're still finalizing numbers.

5 SPEAKER MENIN: Got it. Okay, yes, if
6 you could please get back to the committee with all
7 of that information.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Of course.
9 Did you want to add anything?

10 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: You covered it,
11 Deputy Chancellor Hawkins. For children who are
12 two-and-a-half may be attending the 2K program, they
13 are eligible to submit referrals for preschool
14 special education in advance of their turning three.
15 And so our office, the Division of Inclusive and
16 Accessible Learning will be doing outreach and
17 coordination with the 2K providers to make sure
18 they're aware of that process and that families are
19 supported to go through the CPSC process even while
20 they're two years old. And as Deputy Chancellor
21 Hawkins explained, we will of course continue our
partnership with DOHMH in ensuring that students who
need Early Intervention evaluations and services have
access to that.

1 SPEAKER MENIN: So, to that end, what
2 recruitment strategies are currently under way to
3 increase a pool of qualified Early Intervention
4 providers, so therapists, special instructors,
5 service coordinators?

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, we can't
7 speak to that particularly, Speaker, because again,
8 Early Intervention is not within, you know, the
9 sphere of control for New York City Public Schools,
10 but I'm sure we can get back to you about Early
11 Intervention specifics at a later time.

12 SPEAKER MENIN: Okay. I think that's
13 incredibly important. I know we have a lot of
14 parents who are asking those questions, so we want to
15 make sure we get that information as soon as
16 possible. What corrective measures are underway to
17 stabilize the DOE hub and what is the timeline for
18 full functionality?

19 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Referring to
20 the DOH hub, Speaker, are we referring to the Family
21 Child Care Network Hub?

 SPEAKER MENIN: Yes, yes.

 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Okay. so, I
think we can all admit that that space is in need of

1 some love, and so we've over the past few years,
2 we've been trying to improve the functionality of the
3 hub. We've gotten to a point where our needs kind of
4 extend its functionality. And so one of the things
5 we want to thank you for is your investment in the
6 Early Childhood Management System which we plan to
7 launch at the end of the calendar year. This upcoming
8 spring we're going to do a few demos for our provider
9 and educator community and the Council so you can see
10 how it works. And then the following months, we're
11 going to do user acceptance testing so folks can play
12 in, beat it up a little bit, and so we can iterate on
13 that. And so there, what we have now around
14 operations and programmatic functionality and the
15 hubs for our family child care networks will shift to
16 ECMS, the Early Childhood Management System.

15 SPEAKER MENIN: Okay. I think that's so
16 important because the types of complaints that we
17 have received about the hub include pages taking 10
18 to 15 minutes to load or failing to load altogether,
19 affiliation processes taking seven to 12 weeks unless
20 manually expedited, and other- I mean, I could go on.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yes, we
21 agree.

1 SPEAKER MENIN: It's voluminous, the
2 issues.

3 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We agree.

4 SPEAKER MENIN: So, we just want to make
5 sure then that there's a real corrective action
6 strategy moving forward, and if you could share that
7 corrected action.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Absolutely.
9 And if I could quickly add, in addition to the
10 technology, we are improving practices within the
11 division around human capacity. And so some of the
12 issues that you just raised Speaker, you know, is
13 really an absence to having actual dedicated staff to
14 support our family child care networks and family
15 child care providers, and so we are beefing up that
16 team and with the support of the administration to
17 ensure that they have hands-on support in real-time.

18 SPEAKER MENIN: One thing that we're very
19 focused on doing is cutting down on bureaucracy,
20 because to truly get to universal child care, we're
21 never going to get there if we don't cut down on the
dysfunction and bureaucratic delays that are sort of
embedded in many city agency processes. So, we're
looking at a number of different legislative

1 strategies to- and we've already passed a couple
2 bills in this area, but we're going to pass many more
3 to try to cut through the red tape and bureaucracy.
4 So, in light of that- so to obtain or renew a
5 building permit, child care providers have to
6 coordinate with the Fire Department, Department of
7 Buildings, DOHMH, the State Office of Children and
8 Family Services, the State's Department of Education.
9 So providers are frequently reporting long wait times
10 for such a literally simple task. What are the
11 administration's plans to cut through this
12 bureaucracy and to really address these long waiting
13 times for providers?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We really
13 appreciate the attention you've put on this issue
14 including with the bills on the docket today and
15 those that you referenced that were passed last year
16 as well. We are taking a really close look at the
17 permitting process with the Department of Health and
18 Mental Hygiene as well as the other departments you
19 referenced, Department of Buildings and the Fire
20 Department. There are others who come into play
21 depending on the space. It may also involve NYCHA or
HPD depending on the type of building a provider is

1 in. So, we are working with all of those agencies to
2 implement new processes to expedite and streamline
3 both the communication and number of documents that
4 providers have to submit and the ways in which they
5 submit them. We should have an update on this in the
6 next couple of weeks and would be happy to bring that
7 back to you.

8 SPEAKER MENIN: Okay. I'm going to ask- I
9 have many more questions, but I'm going to turn them
10 over to my colleagues. But my last question is since
11 the start of the year, how many child care providers
12 have either applied to obtain or renew a building
13 permit?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We'll get that
15 number from the Department of Health and get back to
16 you with that quickly.

17 SPEAKER MENIN: Okay. I would just say,
18 I think these are very rudimentary questions. I do,
19 you know, moving forward I would like the
20 administration to come with these answers. I think is
21 very basic information that we're asking, and in that
22 vein, how many are still outstanding? So, if you
23 could provide that to the committee. Thank you. And
24 I'll turn it back over to the Chair.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
2 much, Speaker. Looking forward to asking the
3 remainder of your questions. I also want to
4 acknowledge that Council Member Brewer has joined the
5 hearing this morning. I'm going to pass it over to
6 Council Member Restler quickly for remarks.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great,
8 wonderful. Thank you so much, Chair Gutiérrez. I am
9 thrilled that you are chairing this committee and I'm
10 really grateful that in Mayor Mamdani and Speaker
11 Menin we have two just tremendous champions for
12 achieving universal child care in New York City, and
13 I think we have a dream team that is ready to
14 implement it. I just to formally congratulate you,
15 Director Liss, on the appointment. I think you are
16 the perfect person for this role, and I think you
17 have a great partners the DOE and Deputy Chancellor
18 Hawkins who, you know, since she joined the team at
19 DOE years-plus ago, it's just been a different energy
20 that we've received in the Council and I think in our
21 communities, so somebody wants to partner with us
which was a change in the earlier administration.
That was me attempting to be diplomatic. Intro 631
would require the Department of Education to report

1 comprehensive information on 3K and Pre-K
2 applications, seat availability and vacancies, as
3 well as information on staffing and outreach efforts.
4 Under the previous administration we got very, very
5 little information on 3K. Leadership repeatedly told
6 us that there was no demand for 3K resulting in
7 thousands and thousands of vacancies and that every
8 family was offered a seat, but we got hundreds of
9 calls every year who parents were only offered seats
10 an hour bus ride away were declined to offer at all
11 giving limited offerings. When we finally requested
12 th detailed data from DOE, we saw a different
13 procedure. And I just will give a second of context.
14 Every year, we would send- for the last three or for
15 years- we'd send a letter to the Department of
16 Education and somebody's who's on the dais who is in
17 a new job now might have helped us in guiding the
18 data requests that we were sending over the
19 Department of Education to a ask for a very detailed
20 breakdown of exactly where, you know, how seats were
21 benign filled, full day seats, park, you- extended
day seats, where vacancies were across the city n
morning fo the Preliminary Budget at about eight
o'clock, we would get this data sent over to us, and

1 myself and Council Member Gutiérrez, and Council
2 Member Joseph and all the other people who were
3 focused on this, we would dig in and when we finally
4 got his data, we saw that seats were empty in places
5 of highest need, parents that need help in enrolling-
6 parents clearly need help enrolling and navigating
7 the paperwork required. School day seats with no
8 income restrictions were 90 percent filled. And
9 DOH's own study showed that there is a real demand
10 for the extended day seats which were- had much
11 higher rates of vacancies. Nearly half of New York
12 City zip codes saw demand outpace supply. We are
13 excited that we really finally have a mayor and a
14 leadership team here at this dais that is committed
15 to working with us to expand and improve 3K and Pre-K
16 for all and go further. We hope that we can
17 collaboratively review the data from this report
18 together, so that we can help improve outreach to
19 low-income families, identify new sites in Pre-K
20 deserts- I can give you a couple in my district- and
21 swiftly adjust seat types where there's a mismatch
between demand and supply. It all starts with the
data, and once we have really good consistent data
that's being provided in a timely manner that's

1 available to the Council and its available to the
2 public, we can all put our best brains together to
3 make sure that every child in New York City who needs
4 an Early Childhood seat is getting it. So, thank you
5 very much for the opportunity, Council Member- Chair
6 Gutiérrez. I'm just again absolutely thrilled that
7 you're leading this effort to help us achieve
8 universal child care.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
9 Council Member. And thank you all so much. So, we're
10 going to get started with questions, and we have
11 members that are also signed up to speak, so I want
12 to be mindful, and we've got plenty of people signed
13 up to testify as well. So, my first couple of
14 questions are for Emmy, for the Office of Child Care.
15 Thank you so much for your testimony. Can you just,
16 so we can kind of just set the tone. Can you talk to
17 me a little bit about the office? And this goes a
18 little bit into my legislation, but how many people
19 work in your team? How are you looking to build it
20 out? And you mentioned it in your testimony about
21 ensuring coordination, but can you explain a little
bit more about what your office will be doing day to
day?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Absolutely.

Thanks so much for the question. So, as you know, the Office of Childcare was created under the last administration, but in a much different capacity and without sort of the full mandate to really deliver on universal child care. So we are excited to have the opportunity to really level-up what the office is doing and to build out both a broader team and a broader scope. We currently have six fulltime members of the office and are planning to add additional staff members over the course of the coming months, and we view our scope of work in a couple of sort of big areas. The first is- and as I mentioned in my testimony and you mention just now, really thinking about the interagency policy planning coordination work that is required, given how many agencies play such a big role in implementing universal child care. And so that work day-to-day includes partnering closely with the Division of Early Childhood at New York City Public Schools, as well as many other agencies I mentioned to understand the work they're doing, make sure they have the support and resources to ensure a high level coordination across those agencies and that the work they are doing day-to-day

1 is aligned to the overall vision and mission of
2 universal child care. We also recognize that there
3 are many different conflicting rules/regulations
4 between the city and state across all of the
5 different areas that impact child care, and a piece
6 of what we'll be doing as well is looking at how we
7 can think more creatively and think in greater
8 alignment to meet some of the big longer-term goals.
9 Most- in the near term, we are working closely with
10 New York City Public Schools in particular on the
11 launch of 2K and the expansion of 3K for this fall.
12 We are also thinking ahead with all of the agencies,
13 for example, who are involved in physical space in
14 the city to think differently about how we meet the
15 demands of an expanded child care system, and
16 beginning to think with anyone and everyone who
17 touches workforce development on how we support the
18 growth of child care sector. So we'll be taking on
19 some of those bigger more medium to long-term
20 projects that require interagency participation as
21 well.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I
mean, and so six fulltime and then you're looking to

1 hire- do you have a sense of how many staff you can
2 potentially hire in this year?

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We are going to
4 be working through that during the budget process,
5 but adding capacity.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Alright, we'll be
7 there. And then can you just very quickly for- you
8 mentioned working with DOE, obviously, can you just-
9 so that, you know, we all have a sense of the amount
10 of coordination that it takes, because it is more
11 than, you know, two agencies represented here. Can
12 you just name all the city agencies that you are
13 either already, you know, coordinating with or
14 looking to coordinate with, and if you can just
15 confirm if you're also doing any of that work with
16 any of the state agencies, as well, or federal?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Absolutely.
16 So, we also work closely with the Administration for
17 Children's Services, which as you know administers
18 the city's child care voucher program, and with the
19 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene which
20 oversees all of the work to make sure our child care
21 facilities are healthy, safe, permitted, as well as
the Early Intervention Program. We will be working

1 closely with the Department of Social Services, both
2 on the Department of Homeless Services side to make
3 sure that families in shelter are connected to
4 services and with the Human Resources Administration
5 which also administers child care support to its
6 clients. There are many, many others who have an
7 important role. As you heard referenced in the
8 Speaker's questions, it's critical that the
9 Department of Buildings and the Fire Department are
10 working in alignment with this- the goal of making
11 childcare permitting easier and more streamlined.
12 It's really important that we coordinate with the
13 Department of Youth and Community Development as they
14 continue to build out work to expand afterschool
15 access in the city, because many of the same
16 providers who offer child care services also offer
17 afterschool services, and we want to make sure that
18 we are growing the pie of the workforce and physical
19 space to serve both goals and not taking away one
20 from the other. There are dozens of other agencies
21 who we will work with because they are out in
communities and they have connections to New Yorkers
and an understanding of services those New Yorkers
need, whether that's the Mayor's Office of Immigrant

1 Affairs, NYCHA, and others who regularly interface
2 with large populations of folks in the city. We do
3 also coordinate very regularly with the New York
4 State Office of Children and Family Services which
5 oversees childcare regulations for the state and
6 directly licenses home-based providers. I do also
7 want to acknowledge that it's not just about working
8 within city government, it's also about being out in
9 community and making sure that we are partnering
10 closely with child care providers with families and
11 educators, because we need to know that the programs
12 we are championing and building within city
13 government will meet their needs, and particularly
14 for providers who are the backbone of this system, we
15 need their voices represented in policy. So, a big
16 piece of our office's work is around engaging with
17 those folks in many different mediums and forums as
18 well, and we're building out some of those plans as
19 we speak. And then lastly, we recognize that
20 universal child care- again, we're in this incredibly
21 pivotal moment, and all across the city in our
22 nonprofit community, in our philanthropic community,
23 in our business community, there are people and
24 organizations who are eager to be part of this, and

1 so we are also thinking about how to really leverage
2 all of those partnerships to make sure that we are
3 bringing all of the city's public and private
4 resources to bear for this mission.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. You
6 read off about 10 agencies, and I think there are
7 more still.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So, you have the
10 six full-time staff, hiring more. How- I mean, what
11 does that- how does that look? How does that
12 coordination look like? Are you meeting frequently?
13 Is there like one big joint meeting? Is it a bunch
14 of emails? I think something that we struggle with
15 here on the Council side with the last administration
16 is that it was obvious that agencies were not talking
17 to one another. And I recognize that it's
18 challenging, but these are a lot of folks, and I
19 think above all, as a parent we want to make sure
20 that we're centering like children safety, the
21 provider safety amongst all the other things we're
 trying to achieve. So, can you just tell me so that
 I understand visually what does that coordination-
 are you guys hanging out? What does it look like?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Oh, we're
3 hanging out a lot.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, we are- so
6 our office is meeting on a very regular basis with,
7 in particular, those first few agencies I listed that
8 have the largest scopes of work when it comes to
9 early care and education, and so our team is meeting
10 multiple times a week with the New York- the Early
11 Childhood team at New York City Public Schools really
12 to get into the details of policy and planning for 2K
13 and expanding 3K most immediately, but again,
14 thinking systemically about some of the other big
15 picture pieces as well. So we are very regularly
16 meeting across our teams. My team also meets-

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing] Like
18 weekly regularly.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Like multiple
20 times a week.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, great.
Okay.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes, and
coordinating across all of the many functions that
sit within Deputy Chancellor Hawkins' team to make

1 sure, again, that we're thinking coherently about all
2 of the policy work to make sure that her team has the
3 resources they need to implement the work ahead, and
4 that we are connecting the dots where there's other
5 agency participation required. We are also meeting
6 biweekly or weekly as a team with the Department of
7 Health team and with the Administration for
8 Children's Services. We have regular standing
9 meetings to make sure that we are in constant
10 communication and then coming together more
11 frequently as specific issues arise or topics that we
12 need to discuss. We are also kicking off a series of
13 interagency work groups where we are bringing that
14 much larger set of agencies together on a much more
15 regular basis to talk about things like physical
16 space for child care in the city, the child care
17 workforce. We have a number of standing interagency
18 work groups that are looking at technology and
19 systems and the ways in which we can better use data
20 and systems to streamline process for families and
21 providers. And then on a project basis we do have
different staff from agencies who we meet with. So,
it's a lot of, you know, in-person and virtual
coordination and very, very frequent communication to

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2 make sure that we are especially at this early
3 moments of implementation really aligning our policy
4 work.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sure. Yeah.

5 This- so, thank you for that. I would- can you share
6 if you are meeting regularly or as regularly with the
7 State Office of Children and Family Services as well,
8 the state agency?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We have
9 standing monthly meeting with them from our office,
10 but also all of the agencies who work with them have
11 those standing meetings as well, and then again, as
12 specific questions come up as we are getting into the
13 planning for this fall, we come together as
14 frequently as we need to, and they're wonderful
15 partners.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Excellent. So,
16 two questions that I get a lot from providers in my
17 district are, you know- I guess the first comment is
18 like this is great, this is wonderful. But what does
19 that mean for me? How is that going to look for the
20 child and the family? And I think there's kind of
21 like this overarching concern for like, well, you
22 know, we moved slow for decades, and now we're moving

1 really fast, and do we have the infrastructure for
2 that. So, my main question is how are you including
3 family voices into this like very, you know,
4 accelerated or rapid process of, you know, growing
5 out the universal child care process here in this
6 city, and how can your office ensure that we're not
7 sacrificing program and safety to be able to meet
8 those needs? I think they're very shiny, very lofty
9 goals. I'm here for it, but who can we do all of
10 those at the same time? Or how are you working to
11 achieve all of that?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Absolutely.

11 Well, first, I'll say the health and safety of
12 children when they are in early care and education is
13 the top priority and will always be. We will never
14 compromise healthy, safe, developmentally-appropriate
15 settings for children, and that will always remain at
16 the forefront no matter what we do. We recognize- and
17 as came up in responding to Speaker Menin's
18 questions, that there are ways in which we can make
19 those processes to ensure providers are running
20 healthy, safe programs faster and easier for
21 providers, but that will never be something we
compromise. In terms of family voice- and I'll let

1 Deputy Chancellor Hawkins jump in with how her team
2 is out engaging families. I'll say this is a big
3 priority for us to make sure we are putting
4 structures in place where we are getting family
5 input, not just as we start this work, but on an
6 ongoing basis. And so we'll be- we'll have more to
7 say on that in the coming weeks as we put some
8 efforts together, but we are really committed to
9 ensuring that no matter what we do, families are at
the center of it.

10 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, you know,
11 early care and education is really centered around
12 parent choice, right? We want parents to choose New
13 York City Public Schools, and so it's imperative that
14 we include them as we iterate the system. And so
15 one of the things that my team and I did when I first
16 started- it feels like just yesterday, but it was a
17 lot longer than that. We created a family engagement
18 and capacity building team, because we wanted to be
19 intentional about including parent and caregiver
20 voice in everything that we do, but also that
21 capacity building pieces around not just engaging but
empowering families to be a part of the process. And
so what we've been doing prior to Director Liss

1 joining and taking on her role which we are very
2 grateful for, is we've been engaging with families to
3 understand what are the pain points in the system,
4 right? How can we reimagine how to do this
5 differently, again as we move forward and think about
6 how to improve our operations and our program and
7 instructional quality. We've been doing the same
8 early care and educators and providers, just around
9 not just their operations. There's also independent
10 providers. Like, what will it take for you to join
11 our portfolio? How are you- how are we showing up in
12 community? And that includes not just clearly our
13 schools, but our CBOs and our family child care
14 educators. And so we've been engaging with them. We
15 are continuing to engage with them, and hopefully to
16 do that, just really deepening the way we do that now
17 that Emmy is in her role.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Can you- I don't
17 know if you can share any of that, but I'm curious
18 kind of what has some of that feedback been sounding
19 like on the pain points. You know, a few of us here
20 at the Council we've been meeting with folks, with
21 providers, with labors, with families been hearing
about that. Senator [inaudible] visited a number of

1 child care providers citywide in the fall. So, if
2 you could share a couple of those pinpoints?

3 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And I know some
5 of those folks are here, but it'd be really good to
6 hear kind of like what you are receiving on that end?

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yeah. You
8 know, when we talk about a comprehensive system we
9 can't talk about that without having special
10 education seats, right? And so what we hear from
11 families is having a seat, not just near their home
12 but for their child, and that's appropriate for the
13 way that they learn, not just differentiating the
14 instruction we have for general education, because
15 sometimes that's not appropriate. But meeting that
16 special placement that's appropriate for their
17 little, and so we've been working really closely with
18 DIAL and others to make sure that we really stand up
19 those seats. Our advocates for children, truly
20 advocates, and we meet with them frequently on how we
21 can better support special education students
specifically, also students in transitional housing.
You know, how do we go to them? And as they move
through the city, making sure that they're not

1 forgotten and that we find care for them wherever
2 they go and supporting, you know, continuity of care
3 where it's possible and then also longer days.
4 Families have shared that they, you know, need longer
5 care. It's not just conducive for a working family or
6 a family who is seeking employment or is in school,
7 and wanting that across our diverse setting. And so
8 figuring out how to supply a longer day where we have
9 care, not just, you know, our CBOs which do that
10 very, very well, but also our family child care
11 programs which is a choice for many, and in some
12 cases school which is something we're having
13 conversations about and need to have further
14 conversations about with our labor partners.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Excellent. Thank
16 you. I mean, I look forward to expanding on that a
17 little bit, and I'm really glad that you highlighted
18 the advocacy from folks on special education,
19 transient families, families in the city shelter
20 systems, and the longer day. Those are all things
21 that we've heard as well. So looking forward to
unpacking that. For- I think this is a question for
both of you, or maybe for just ACS. But in the
January 2026 announcement by the Governor and the

1 Mayor, I know that there was a proposed plan to
2 increase funding for the child care vouchers, which
3 we've, you know, not fully touched on yet. Do we
4 know at this time if the funding will be sufficient
5 to work through the wait list?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, the
7 Governor's budget included an additional \$470 million
8 for the Child Care Assistance Program, and that
9 funding will permanently go towards ensuring we can
10 continue to meet the needs of families who currently
11 receive child care vouchers. We at this time do not
12 anticipate being able to start moving families off of
13 the wait list, but are continuing to monitor that and
14 will be working closely with the state as we assess
15 family need and the extent to which those funds can
16 address the needs of families on the wait list. I do
17 want to step back to acknowledge we've seen
18 enrollment in the Child Care Assistance Program grow
19 tremendously over the last several years, and we know
20 there are many, many more families who are actively
21 vying for and need care, and to us, this is really
 just representative of the incredible need for
 affordable care in the city and why we're so
 committed to expanding access broadly.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do you have a
2 sense of- just on the families, and agree with you on
3 the incredible need for this service- do you have a
4 sense if or how ACS is communicating with families
5 that have been on that wait list for a significant
6 amount of time, maybe one to two years? Or is that
7 something that your office is going to be assiseitng
8 with? I think a lot of the feedback that we get is
9 also there's kind of this confusion about the wait
10 list. It's not like you as a parent get to see where
11 you are in the wait list or where you're going. So
12 what can you suggest, or what is your office going to
13 be doing to just offer some semblance of transparency
14 for the parents, yes. For us here at the City
15 Council I know my colleague Althea Stevens had a
16 hearing about this last year, but what can your
17 office do to promote transparency because it seems
18 like some of it might be outdated. We're not very
19 clear on like the finite numbers of that wait list.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, ACS does
21 manage directly all communication with families who
are on the wait list and we'd be happy to get some
additional information for you about what that
ongoing communication looks like. We do recognize

1
2 that many families who are on the wait list may
3 either be seeking other forms of child care while
4 they are waiting or may be open to other forms of
5 child care, so we do also try to make sure families
6 on the wait list are aware of other care options in
7 the city they may be eligible for, whether that's a
8 3K or Pre-K program or one of the infant/toddler
9 programs contracted by New York City Public Schools.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Does your office
11 have the ability to contact those folks on the
12 waiting list?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We are working
14 through sort of all of the interagency agreements
15 necessary to make sure we can, but that is a priority
16 for us to make sure that we are in touch with
17 families about all their care options. Of course, we
18 want to respect family choice, and for many families
19 their preference may be to remain on the wait list
20 and wait to see what options come up there, but we
21 want to make sure in the interim if they need support
and are eligible for other care options, that we're
making them aware of those options.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you.
Now, I just want to switch a little bit and just talk

1 a little bit about kind of what the Speaker touched
2 on. Obviously, there's an interest in wanting to
3 meet that demand that we know is there. If you can-
4 both can answer this, if the office or the Department
5 of Education, do either agencies or office track the
6 child care provider pipeline including how many
7 businesses apply each year to open up a child care
8 program? How many get to open? How many close? And
9 how many just exit during the application process?
10 How many start and just don't finish? Do you track
that?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, the
12 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene manages the
13 licensing permitting process for child care centers,
14 and they do track that information, and we'd be
15 follow up with some additional data with you all.
16 For family child care providers, the State Office of
17 Children and Family Services manages that licensing
18 process, and so we in the city do not necessarily
19 have access to all of the data you're referencing in
20 terms of folks who are in the pipeline and applying,
21 but that's an area where we want to make sure we are
looking more comprehensively at the data picture,
especially because we are aware that there are not

1 enough child care providers in certain parts of the
2 city.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And Emmy, when
4 you say that DOHMH tracks the licensing, the OFS
5 licenses the family provides, does that mean that
6 obviously they have their own kind of record-keeping
7 system, but you don't have access to it, or does the
8 DOE have- not have access to it? Just the data.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, we don't
10 own the data. We have access- limited access to the
11 New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
12 information management system for the purposes that
13 we are allowed to use it for.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sure. But if you
15 wanted to- considering we are talking about
16 potentially getting more of these sites online, I
17 would assume there needs to be communication with the
18 agency that's doing the licensing. So, how easy is
19 that- do you anticipate that process being- how quick
20 of a turnaround do you anticipate that process being?
21 You know, this is central to this administration's
22 priority as well as to this council. So, I
23 understand what you're saying. You're basically
24 saying, like, we have to ask for it, and they give it

1 to us when they want, how they want to it to look
2 like. But considering that there is this like, you
3 know, centralized priority from it, how do you
4 anticipate that looking differently than in the past?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: I think we'll
6 look into whether there are specific points of data
7 like some of the ones you're referencing where we
8 want to be proactively looking at it with our agency
9 partners on a regular basis, rather than as you said,
10 waiting for different moments and asking for it, but
11 getting into a regular process, whether it is by
12 receiving reports, if it is possible to set up
13 interagency systems access, recognizing the privacy
14 of different agency's data. But we- as we build out
15 the sort of monitoring and tracking capacity of the
16 Office of Child Care, these are among the types of
17 data points we'll be looking at regularly.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Totally, thank
19 you. So, I have a couple more questions on the 2K
20 [inaudible], and then I'm going to pass it to my
21 colleagues, because I know everyone's got a ton of
22 questions, and I know that DC Hawkins, you have to
23 dip out, right?

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I am here for
2 all of the questions.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh, excellent.
4 Okay, great. So then I'll speak slower. Okay. on
5 the 2K roll out, can you just explain to us- it's
6 exciting. But I think there's a ton of questions.
7 My own daycare provider was like what does this mean
8 for me, right? And I think we want to be able to be
9 able to unpack that here, and you all will continue
10 to unpack that. But can you just start- can we just
11 start with who in the office or the Department is
12 kind of leading this roll out of 2-Care [sic]. You
13 mentioned in your testimony an incredible goal of
14 being able to open up 2,000 seats this fall, and then
15 obviously by having 2-Care available to every child
16 by the end of this first term which seems really
17 exciting. But point us to like who is kind of
18 leading this? What authority or coordination do they
19 have across the visions and with the Office of Child
20 Care?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: I'll start and
then pass it to Deputy Chancellor Hawkins. So, my
team is taking the sort of the big picture vision,
you know, working across the administration with the

1 Mayor, with the Governor and her team to kind of set
2 the goal for what 2K will be and to think broadly
3 about all of the policy levers that we need to pull,
4 the resources we need to make this happen. The sort
5 of on-the-ground implementation working in
6 partnership with child care providers and family
7 child care providers to actually roll out the
8 capacity and the work to enroll families and make
9 sure they have access to these programs is all being
10 led by the Division of Early Childhood at New York
11 City Public Schools. So this is where, again, back
12 to the role of our office- we're playing kind of
13 administration- administration-wide quarterback to
14 make sure that all of the agencies who have a role in
15 making this successful are at the table and aligned
16 to the work we need moving forward, making sure we
17 have resources in the right places and sufficient
18 number of resources, and supporting the effort to be
19 out engaging with the community and with partners
20 about this. But the day to day implementation work
21 really lives with Deputy Chancellor Hawkins' team.

 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I think
that's precisely right, and my team has taken the
lead to kind of build the intra-agency coordination

1
2 working with DIAL and the acronym soup that is city
3 government, right, contracts and purchasing, our
4 legal colleagues across the agency to make sure that
5 no matter which lever we push or pull to make this
6 happen, that it's being done in accordance with all
7 of the requirements, both city requirements and
8 agency.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Alright.

10 I think that that's helpful, and I know it's very
11 early on, but we do- we would love to just check in
12 as often as possible, just add us to the list of
13 regular meetings. I think it's just important. Let
14 us help. Let us be the ears on the ground, as well.
15 I think we hear the most from our providers, from our
16 parents, from kids directly, and we want to be able
17 to communicate that. What benchmarks are you all
18 using to assess system readiness for 2-Care in the
19 city?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, as I noted
21 before, but I want to emphasize again, we're building
22 this program really in partnership with child care
23 providers in community. So, we are looking at across
24 the city and as we finalize where 2K will roll out
25 this fall, looking at both existing child care

1 providers who partner already with New York City
2 Public Schools as well as providers who may not yet
3 partner with us, but are already running operational
4 child care facilities in communities, looking at
5 their capacity to serve two-year-olds. As we move
6 forward, and I'll let Deputy Chancellor jump in on
7 this, but as we move forward in the process to
8 finalize partnerships with providers, this fall we'll
9 be working with them to make sure they are ready to
10 operate safe, healthy, appropriate environments for
11 two-year-olds, and then similarly we'll be putting
12 process in place to enroll families and make sure
13 that we are doing robust outreach to bring families
14 into the program. So, as we think about readiness,
15 it's really readiness in terms of the providers and
16 their ability to have those services up and running,
17 it's the number of families that we have been able to
18 engage and bring into this system, and making sure
19 that all of the, you know, associated services and
20 supports to ensure that those providers are able to
21 effectively serve families are in place.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So, on the- so
I'm encouraged by that, that you're working with
providers. A lot of them are here today. We'll be

1 hearing testimony from them today and incoming as
2 well, and a big part of the- I can't remember the
3 bill number for my bill which is really to talk about
4 the providers who as you mentioned in your testimony,
5 majority are women, women of color, really have never
6 done this for the paycheck, they just truly believe
7 in Early Childhood Education. But pausing on that
8 paycheck, I think we do need to spend a little bit of
9 time on the fact that yes, they are grossly
10 underpaid. Their benefits are lacking. I know
11 personally providers that are moonlighting, working
12 for Door Dash, have to depend on their spouses or
13 their partners health insurance, and I think that
14 they have been obviously allies and the two
15 administrations to go launch of Pre-K and 3K. I
16 heard from them extensively they were not at the
17 table. They were not looped in. They were kind of,
18 you know, tokenized [sic] in a way to say yes, this
19 is important, but they were not involved. A lot of
20 their businesses suffered and continued to struggle,
21 and now a lot of them are facing the real life
effects of this affordability crisis, have lost a ton
of staff to the DOE. so, I know this is very loaded,
but I do just want to- if you could just speak, spend

1 a minute on the fact that the compensation is
2 lacking, is lacking for so many of these providers,
3 the benefits is lacking for these providers. What
4 can you share with me about in your conversations
5 with providers about a 2-Care program, how- how are
6 you responding and how are you engaging with them on
7 the issue of their salaries, and what can we do?
8 Yeah, kind of what is the long-term like discussion
9 with them about this, because the one thing I hate is
10 us asking women to do things and not paying them for
11 it. And I just don't want us to fall into that
again.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes, really
12 appreciate this and appreciate your focus on it, and
13 appreciate the ongoing focus I know you will bring,
14 because it's a topic that is complicated. As you
15 said, it's loaded, but it is also deeply inequitable
16 and unjust, and we recognize that we're sort of
17 stepping into something that has- it has been like
18 this for many, many decades. We can unpack all of
19 the reasons why. So, as we step into what is a
20 really robust wonderful mixed-delivery Early
Childhood system in the city, we know that there is
inequity baked into that mixed-delivery system and

1 it's something that we have to address moving
2 forward. So, as an administration, we are committed
3 to addressing these issues. We know that it will-
4 you know, exactly sort of the particular solutions
5 and how we address wages is something we'll have to
6 work through as an administration with Council, with
7 our partners in Labor and others. It is the top
8 thing I hear when I talk to child care providers and
9 educators, and we know it's something we have to
10 address. I think specifics to come and would love to
continue a really open dialogue with you on this.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you.
12 And I'll just have one more question and we'll pass
13 it to some of my colleagues. Do you have a sense of
14 the average salary and/or working hours by provider
15 type? Are they a home-based provider, the
center-based provider?

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, I'll let
17 Deputy Chancellor talk about those who contract with
18 the city. I do want to acknowledge that we know not
19 every child care provider contracts with the city,
20 and there are a really, really wide range of wages
21 that child care workers earn when they are in the
broad open market. We also know that home-based

1 providers, in particular, are earning incredibly low
2 wages, and there's a wide range there. I saw some
3 folks here who have done really good research on
4 that, and I'm sure will bring it into their
5 testimony. So, we recognize there's sort of no super
6 simple answer to this question, but that broadly
7 child care workers in the city earn less than 96
8 percent of other professions, and that's something we
9 need to address. But I'll let the Deputy Chancellor
speak to those who contract with the city.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: That's right.
12 And so, to Emmy's point, it ranges. And so wanting
13 to just share this data that's really based on
14 existing CBA salary progression scales and oru
15 existing salary schedules for CBA providers, and you
16 know, to Emmy's point around family child care
17 networks and the affiliated providers significantly
18 less than the numbers I'm about to share with you.
19 And so the average work week is about 35 to 40 hours.
20 It depends what type of program they're offering. If
21 it's, you know, analogous to a school day schedule,
or if they're providing more of extended day. So it
ranges between 35 to 40 hours. For certified with

1 Master's it's around \$68,000, and then you have a
2 non-certified is around \$56,000.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Well, I
4 again, look forward to continuing this conversation.
5 I know you all know this work. You empathize with
6 this, with this sentiment about being able to raise
7 the wage, to improve their working conditions. So I
8 look forward to continuing that conversation. I'm
9 going to pass for Council Member questions first
10 Council Member Joseph.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair.
12 Happy to see you all. Of course, my question will be
13 around students with disabilities. In the Council
14 framework, are you looking at the Council's framework
15 that we put out last year? If you are- so my
16 question is- it specifically identified inadequate
17 services for preschool children with disabilities as
18 a persistent barrier to truly universal and inclusive
19 system. What is the current capacity for preschool
20 special education seats? How long are families
21 waiting? What is the plan to eliminate that wait
list?

 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: Thank you, Chair
Joseph, for all of your advocacy in this area. It

1 continues to be a major area of focus for our New
2 York City Public Schools. As far as current seat
3 capacity, I'm looking for the exact number, but it's
4 a bit over 12,000 special education seats across our
5 entire city, and that is inclusive of seats in public
6 school settings as well as our contracted programs.
7 As of today, there are many available seats across
8 the city, although we do have some pockets
9 unfortunately where there are more limited seats.
10 Children are found to be eligible for preschool
11 special education seats every single day. It's a
12 year-round process. So the numbers fluctuate every
13 single day. At this point in the year, we're seeing
14 about 100 to 200 students for whom we are in the
15 process of finding them seats. And the Committees on
16 Preschool Special Education, the CPSEs, are working
17 with those families who live in the areas where
18 there's more limited availability to offer them seats
19 maybe a little further from their home or provide
20 them with partial services. This is a much better
21 state of play than we have been in previous years,
thanks to the investments of the recent
administrations, and you know, we are exploring ways
that we can, you know, identify those surpluses in

2 other parts of the city and move seats to areas of
3 need.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. So,
5 there's about a 100 to 200- how many kids are on the
6 wait list?

7 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: So, there's not an
8 official wait list.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay.

10 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: Again, our
11 committees are every single day working with new
12 families who need special education seats and working
13 to find them with- find seats for them. As of
14 Friday, that number was 121. It could be a little
15 lower. It could be a little higher today, because
16 more students come online as needing these seats.
17 And again, we do have seats for many, many students.
18 In fact, we have successfully placed 96 percent of
19 all students who need seats, which is well over
20 10,000 students, and we're continuing to work for
21 those students who live in areas where there's more
limited availability.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And what's the
timeline for a student who is waiting for a seat?

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2 What's the timeline? How long is the wait for a
3 child?

4 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: So, we strive to
5 provide seats within 30 days of the IEP meeting where
6 they're first found eligible and we're able to do
7 that in many, many cases.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And meantime, are
9 there students also receiving their related services?

10 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: So, we've made many
11 strides in this area. You know, thanks to the
12 investment that was recently baselined of \$70
13 million. We were able to add related service
14 providers to our system. We are still hiring staff
15 with that investment. We also have an RFP out to
16 enhance our related service contracts that will
17 provide higher rates and also incentivize more
18 providers to work with preschoolers. That said, we
19 know we still have work to do. As of today, about 63
20 percent of students are receiving all of their
21 related services on their IEPs.

 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So, we have quite
 a few that are not receiving their services.

 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: That are not
 receiving all of their services.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: All of their
2 services. So, were there- and that investment we
3 made with the \$70 million, how many new seats did you
4 create and how many children was served and what are
5 the outcomes for those children?

6 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: So, to clarify, the
7 \$70 million went to evaluators.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yep.

9 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: And services and
10 IEP capacity, our CPSE administrators. Prior to the
11 \$70 million investment, there was a \$55 million
investment that enabled us to open 800 seats.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. So,
13 what interagency coordination between ACS, DOE, DOHMH
14 to ensure seamless transition for children with
15 disabilities moving from early intervention age into
16 preschool special education or universal child care
17 setting? Are there any currently gaps in the
hand-off? I know there's a huge gap in the hand-off.
How we plan on closing the gap?

18 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: So, back in 2019,
19 we started what was called the Early Intervention
20 Transition Initiative which is a deep partnership
with the Early Intervention program. It used to be

1 that we received information on students coming from
2 early intervention via faxes that came in through fax
3 machines. So, through that initiative, we got off
4 the fax. We now have a system where EI field staff
5 can go ahead and directly input student information
6 that comes into a DOE system so that no student is
7 missed. As DC Hawkins explained earlier, we have an
8 early intervention transition team that does outreach
9 to families as soon as we are- the DOE is made aware
10 of them transitioning from early intervention. It's a
11 small and mighty team of I think seven or eight staff
12 members. So, they have a big job, but it is work
13 like that that we're doing to ensure that all
14 students are supported through that transition, and
15 as the system ages down and offers 2K, we'll have
16 more opportunity to outreach to families and support
17 them.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: CHair, I just got
19 one more.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, of course.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. We're
happy to see that, and I'm just happy for the record
you're letting folks know that. Early Learn has been
around for a long time. There's 10,000 students

1 already in there perfecting the system, and the fact
2 that the Council has built on extended day, extended
3 year, I don't think we get enough credit for that,
4 and also the 2K expansion and creating the
5 infrastructure and the framework for that work to
6 happen. So the Council's framework also calls for
7 citywide multilingual outreach campaign to reach
8 families with limited English proficiency in
9 residents of shelters. What is in the current budget?
10 Which languages are prioritized, and how will the
11 administration measure whether underenrolled
12 communities are being reached? Because I know your
13 goal is 90,000 seats, but you only filled in 75. So,
14 there's still a gap. There's still work to be done.
15 Boots have to be on the ground to make sure we're
16 reaching families in underserved communities. We
17 always see where they fill up really fast, but the
18 communities that really need those seats have no clue
19 that they exist. So how do we plan on closing that?

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yeah. You
18 want me to take that? So, thank you for that,
19 Council Member. So, the Division of Early Childhood
20 Education works really closely with the Office of
21 Student Enrollment which really they lead our

1 outreach efforts, and they are the brilliant minds
2 behind My School and our admissions process through
3 and through, not just early care and education, but
4 even high school, which I am waiting for offers on
5 Thursday for my daughter. And so we do a multi-media
6 campaign. As you've even seen this year around. The
7 mayor was involved in continually doing PSAs in
8 community and doing it in a way that is
9 culturally-responsive to your point. And I know that
10 you reached out asking that we do a- you know,
11 provide targeted campaigns in a different language,
12 and so I will admit that we will do better on that
13 moving forward, but we do provide information mostly
14 in print in all of the required languages that we are
15 mandated to communicate in the communities and with
16 families, and so we've been consistently providing
17 that level of outreach. We've also been doing call
18 campaigns, going into, again, shelters around other
19 communities, providing information on how families
20 can access the admissions and applications process.
21 We had a treat truck out last week, near Tweed [sic]
where I was personally handing out flyers and some
treats. It was very fun. Encouraging, you know,
families and people who walk by. I was really clear,

1 if you even know a three-year-old or four-year-old,
2 take the flyer and encouraging them to sign up. But
3 to your point, we can always do more. And so thank
4 you for the investment and outreach, but there is a
5 lot of work happening across the agency to make sure
6 that we're doing it in a way in languages in ways and
7 in spaces that are culturally-response to
8 communities, because to your point, there's no point
9 in having these seats if they remain unfilled. And
10 so it is our commitment to make sure that we are out
in community getting the word out.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And as we expand,
12 what does student ratio look like in a classroom,
13 very important. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
15 Council Member. Next I want to call up Education
16 Chair Dinowitz for his questions.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you,
18 Chair Gutiérrez. Feels good to say that, especially
19 for such an important topic. I first need to ask
20 what kind of treats were you giving out? We were
21 just discussing.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: You know-

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Treats with a
3 T, not trees?

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Treats with a
5 T, rice krispies.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: There was
8 some hot cocoa.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay.

10 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Some good
11 stuff in there, and we let the littles pick as they
12 passed by if they were, you know, with the adults in
13 that moment.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Alright. So I
15 won't tell the Department of Health that you're
16 giving out that kind of candy instead of apples and
17 carrots.

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Oh, is this
19 recorded?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: On the record.
21 I first want to say, I appreciate a lot of the
22 conversation about the coordination with other
23 agencies and even the framing of Early Childhood
24 Education not as a program, but as something that
25 uplifts families in our cities that we expect

1 universal child care to keep more young families in
2 our city, reversing the high rates of out-migration
3 that we see today for families with children under
4 six, and Early Childhood Education is an incredibly
5 important component. And I again, appreciate your
6 vision that it is not about this particular program,
7 but it's part of a larger vision for our families.
8 And I would just implore you that as you are having
9 these interagency discussions doing this interagency
10 group work, to recognize that housing is also a
11 critical component of this. Families are leaving
12 because we as a city are not building enough
13 family-sized units, enough subsidized family-sized
14 units. This is a constant fight where our city wants
15 to build studios and maybe one-bedroom apartments,
16 not enough two- and three-bedrooms. So, as part of
17 our mission to support our families, I implore you as
18 our Early Childhood team to support that mission as
19 well. And Director Liss, I want to talk a little bit
20 more about Early Intervention and not the transition
21 of students who are receiving early intervention
services to getting IESPs [sic], but ensuring that we
are capturing all the students who need early
intervention services. Can you walk us through the

1 process of the training you provide to teachers and
2 families to recognize children who need early
3 intervention services and what supports you provide
4 to families to ensuring that they are applying for
5 those services and receiving those services.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Sure. I can
7 give a quick start, and I will say, we will make sure
8 that for future hearings with the subcommittee we
9 bring our Department of Health colleagues with us who
10 are really the experts in administering this program.
11 But we recognize that early intervention, you know,
12 the whole point of if it is the earlier you start,
13 the more support a family is able to receive and the
14 stronger the trajectory for the child. The work of
15 referring children to early intervention has to begin
16 with their pediatricians, with medical professionals,
17 with child care workers, with really any of the
18 adults who are supporting and working with young
19 children. And as we think about one of the potential
20 benefits of universal child care and bringing more
21 children into early care and education settings at an
even younger age. Part of that benefit will be that
they'll be with trained educators who can recognize

2 the additional supports they need and refer them to
3 those services.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: But I want to
5 be clear on my question. Are the early educators
6 trained by DOE or the Mayor's Office, DOHMH, to
7 recognize the need for early intervention services?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Like, our
10 educators specifically trained?

11 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: Thank you. In
12 early- in 3k and Pre-K which is our template, we do
13 provide training to providers in providing
14 assessments that are early warning signs about a need
15 for referral to special education, and in early
16 intervention there are similar assessments. It's
17 called developmental monitoring that is done and
18 we'll be working with our partners at DOHMH on the
19 potential roll out of developmental monitoring in 2K
20 programs.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Can you talk a
22 little bit more about that? That the teachers are
23 benign trained by DOHMH to identify the need for an
24 assessment.

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, the
2 teachers are not necessarily being trained by DOHMH.
3 What we have are Early Childhood educators who are
4 coaches, hired by- in our employees of DECE. We have
5 three levels of staff who support holistic coaching
6 for not just the program leader, but also the
7 classroom staff. And so we have social workers,
8 instructional coordinators, and leadership coaches.
9 They actually go into the program and provide
10 tailored supports, and then we also have a second
11 team of staff who support with- you know, that you've
12 heard the Chancellor talk about MTSS, but you know,
13 the tiered supports about how you know teachers and
14 educators need to differentiate the way that they
15 support our littles, right? And so what we do within
16 the 40- within the first 45 days of a little
17 attending is something called the ASQ. That is a
18 screener. And so programs are required to do that,
19 because it really is a snapshot into where that
20 little might need additional support, and throughout
21 their year, they also provide observations which go
into another tool, which is our assessment tool, and
our staff support again with those touch points, not
just in-person, but maybe virtual to determine how we

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2 can best support that child. But it does allow them
3 to understand how to see early signs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, if I'm a
5 parent who ends my kid to a 2K, a 2-Care program, I
6 can be rest assured- like, look, I don't know
7 anything about early intervention, but I know that my
8 child's going to be screened, and that if they need
9 early intervention services, that conversation will
10 be?

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay. That's
13 excellent. As this program builds out is critically
14 important that we are capturing those students who
15 need earlier intervention services so they either get
16 their IESP and IEP early and they maybe they don't
17 need services by the time they get to, you know, high
18 school. Right? That's the goal is to make sure kids
19 are getting the support they need as early as
20 possible. And then my second question is what work
21 are you doing I guess collaboratively to ensure that
22 there are enough teachers, and as you expand these
23 programs, you have enough early education- Early
24 Childhood educators to meet the growing demand for
25 Early Childhood Education?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Absolutely. We know this is going to be a huge area we have to focus on in terms of building out the pipeline of new people to bring them into early care and education, and then supporting our current workforce to ensure that they are able to sustain themselves and able to grow and remain in the field as professionals. So, as I referenced, we are planning to bring and we're kicking off actually this week, a group with all agencies in the city who in any way or another touch workforce development so that we can think much more comprehensively about how we do this work. We'll be partnering with institutions of higher education to understand what are some of the barriers that folks face coming into these programs and how can we take those barriers away, whether it's the time that classes are offered, the language, the cost, and address those pieces. We also want to think about earlier exposure to early care and education as a professional field, potentially working through some of our pathways programs and partnering to make sure that young people who are thinking about professions, recognize that this a real career path. Of course, in

1 all of this we recognize that if we want to bring
2 more people into the field, as Chair Gutiérrez
3 touched on, we have to address the compensation and
4 longterm career path for folks who come into this
5 work. So, while we're building out a pipeline and
6 encourage more folks to participate in making it
7 easier to participate, we also have to make this more
8 attractable, sustainable field.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, I would
10 imagine a world where high school kids have that
11 early childhood care in their schools and they become
12 inspired to go to college for it, but it also needs
13 that support. So I'm pleased to hear about what that
14 workforce- that that work is beginning. I think CUNY
15 can be a great partner. I myself was a New York City
16 teaching fellow and I got into this profession with a
17 subsidized master's degree- or that profession. I'm
18 in a different profession now, aren't I? But it was
19 that sort of, you know, support that I might- my
20 cohort got for our master's degrees that allowed us
21 to enter the profession, and I would love to see more
of that through- whether it's through our CUNY system
or the workforce development program, creating the
lowest barrier to entry. So high-quality, qualified

1 people who care about our littles, as you call them.
2 I thik it's adorable. I love it. So, can get into
3 this- the profession where we will so desperately
4 need more Early Childhood educators. Thank you so
5 much, Director and DC Hawkins, and thank you, Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
7 much, Chair Dinowitz. I want to just recognize
8 Council Member Felder is on Zoom or was on Zoom.
9 Thank you for joining us. Next we're going to have
10 Council Member Restler ask questions followed by
11 Council Member Brewer.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
13 much, Chair Gutiérrez. I really appreciate the
14 opportunity to ask a few questions, and thank you for
15 the thoughtful testimony today, Director Liss. What
16 do you think is the target 3K capacity per district?
17 We saw about a third of school districts this current
18 year had more than 90 percent of their seats field,
19 which such a tight vacancy rate makes it really hard
20 for families to find a seat locally. We know when
21 you've got a three-year-old, you're not traveling
from, you know, one side of a school district to
another or to another school district altogether. Do
you have a suggested benchmark of what we should be

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2 looking at, or for Deputy Chancellor Hawkins, as
3 well?

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I know you
5 posed this question to me before, Council Member, and
6 I-

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] I'm
8 consistent if anything.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: And I
10 appreciate that, but I'm going to unfortunately have
11 to get back to you on that. And really wanting to be
12 thoughtful on developing those metrics alongside ED
13 Liss to make sure we're being thoughtful. But I will
14 share this, just for you to know, and for others in
15 the space. For the current school year we have
16 51,924 3K seats, and capac- and utilization for the
17 year as of our last check last week is around 84
18 percent. And this is pretty much flat to where we
19 were this time last year, or rather at the end of
20 last year. And so wanting to be thoughtful about
21 that 84-85 percent utilization and making sure that
 every seat is filled, but also that communities can
 remain nimble enough to meet the growing and changing
 need in their communities as we welcome additional
 three-year-olds.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, is that-
2 just so my math is right, 42-43,000 kids in our 3K
3 schools.

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: That's right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, great. As
6 we look toward the next school year, you know, we saw
7 a significant- a healthy reduction in the number of
8 extended day 3K seats from the Adams administration.
9 The data I'm looking at is from about 5,250 down to
10 4,869. We know that low-income families need
11 extended day seats the most, and yet, we see higher
12 rates of occupancy- utilization is probably the right
13 word- of seats in our school-based system than in our
14 CBO system where we have the extended day seats
15 available. Are you looking at revisiting that
16 distribution of extended day seats? Are you hoping
17 to expand the number of extended day seats for the
18 next school year?

19 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, I think
20 2K is a step in that direction of recognizing that
21 families need extended day, but also, you know,
non-means-tested seats, and many of our extended day
seats right now- and we are very grateful for it- is
subsidized partially with CCBG funds, and so we have

1 to follow the Child Care Assistance process or
2 application process that determines eligibility based
3 on, you know, a host of criterion. And so what we
4 are looking at meeting that need based off, you know,
5 caregiver feedback, but also our providers. They are
6 saying that it's just more profitable if done right
7 for them to provide an extended day and extended year
8 model, and so we are doing that with City Tax Levy
9 and 2K is an example of us doing that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah, I
11 understand. We've seen a decline in our enrollment
12 in our Department of Education now for a number of
13 years, seven, eight-plus years, healthy and
14 significant decline that we need to reverse, and the
15 expansion of our Early Childhood Education system
16 directly connected to our DOE schools represents an
17 opportunity for us to build that pipeline back up,
18 and I- you would not be doing your jobs if you
19 weren't thinking about how to do that effectively,
20 and that is an incredibly important priority. The
21 same time, the extended day seats at our CBOs, it
think, are being underutilized and we haven't been
sending families there or guiding families there as
much as I think we could when those are the seats

1 that would be most beneficial to families. So, I do
2 feel like there is a calibration in the previous
3 administration that was not right, that we need to
4 revisit, and I hope that as you look to see
5 distribution for the next school year, that that's a
6 topic that you're going to give a hard look at.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Can I- I want
8 to jump in with one thing on this. I know we've
9 talked about this in the past which is that those
10 extended day newer seats, as Deputy Chancellor
11 Hawkins just mentioned, do all come with means
12 testing which as we continue to expand the system,
13 our goal is to create new seats and programs that are
14 universally accessible that do not require families
15 to go through that level of onerous burdensome-

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
17 Yeah.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: application
19 process. That said, while we continue to have seats
20 in our system that are funded through funding streams
21 that require that. It is really incumbent on us to
22 think about how we support families through that
23 process. I know you focus on outreach and some of
24 the prior questions, other Council Members did as

1 well. We need to rebuild the work of direct family
2 outreach and engagement-

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]

4 Yep.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: to help
6 families through that process. And as we think about
7 what it would take to fill those seats and programs,
8 we know that families need support to navigate that
9 process, because it is burdensome and requires them
to complete quite a lot of paperwork.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Totally,
11 totally-

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: [interposing]
13 All to say, I think filling those seats is quite
connected to our outreach work.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah. And in
15 two months there's only so much outreach you can do.
16 This is an effort that takes a lot more and I'm sure
17 our numbers aren't where we want them to be for this
18 coming school year, but hopefully there'll be ongoing
outreach efforts.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Absolutely.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Can I do two
21 more quick questions, is that okay? Fast. I'm on

1 it. Quick questions, mostly germane. How are you
2 making determinations on new sites? I know that I've
3 raised a couple opportunities in District 33 such as
4 northern Greenpoint, 274 Atlantic as examples that we
5 really hope to see activated for Early Childhood next
6 year. If you could keep us posted. What's the kind
7 of- how are you thinking about that? And secondly,
8 we've got a 16,000-ish wait list for our child care
9 vouchers right now for families that really need
10 these vouchers. We have enough money to keep everyone
11 who has a voucher in a voucher for next year, but we
12 have zero dollars associated with that wait list.
13 Any thoughts there. And then thirdly, which this is
14 neither of your responsibilities, but we see child
15 care centers shut down in our district all the time.
16 I assume for good reason, for the most part. The
17 Health Department is doing its best to try to ensure
18 that our kids are in safe places. There's nothing
19 more important, but then it's an entirely opaque
20 process of what happens from there. We get no
21 information from the Health Department. We- we'll
22 email the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, and
23 17 people under the Deputy Commissioner. I know all
24 of them, and they all give me very little information

1 and it's incredibly frustrating. Simone, maybe you
2 can go- Deputy Chancellor, maybe you want to go back
3 to the Health Department and help there, too. But
4 the- but in all seriousness, can you please help us
5 so that when there are corrective action plans, that
6 information is getting to our offices. We can work
7 together, inform families, try to push and support
8 providers to get the information submitted that's
9 needed so that we don't have daycares closed in our
10 communities for weeks on end? With a- so, I know
11 it's neither of your- it's not- this is not germane
12 to the hearing, but it's frustrating me to no end.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I'll go very
13 quickly. And I'll just give a shout out to our
14 Health Department partners. They work really hard,
15 and we can work together to get you that information,
16 Council Member. And so really quickly on the
17 city-owner lease, shout out to you and Council Member
18 Brewer and others for raising this issue up I think
19 at the start of my tenure. We are looking at, you
20 know, community needs, and that has since changed
21 since these buildings were put online, and so we want
to work really closely with you. W'ere looking at
independent providers in communities as well, because

1 we don't want to oversaturate neighborhoods and have
2 the unintended consequences of putting businesses out
3 of business. And so we want to look at what the
4 community needs in concert with all of you and then
5 hopefully based on those needs put those buildings
6 online at a rate that makes most sense.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: And as to your
8 question for the voucher waiting list. This is
9 something that we're continuing to look at,
10 continuing to talk with our partners in Albany about-
11 because we do recognize that there are many, many
12 families who are waiting and it impacts not only the
13 families but the providers who serve them.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Would you be
15 willing to work with us and the Health Department to
16 try to improve that process?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes, would love
18 to have a separate conversation with you and the-

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
20 Thank you.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Health
Department on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you,
Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
3 Council Member Restler. I want to acknowledge we've
4 been joined by Council Member Pierina Sanchez, and
5 next up for questions, Council Member Brewer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you, and I
7 want to thank Deputy Chancellor Hawkins for calling
8 me about these empty centers. So how many are left
9 that are vacant? I know the ones that are filled.
10 Rita's [sic] is filled. I think Rethmine [sp?].

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: 27.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 27 to be filled?

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye, aye, aye.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: And we're
16 working to create plans for all of those, and that
17 number has decreased since I started. We have
18 repurposed, and so we are working to get that number
19 down.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. The folks
21 at the School Construction Authority didn't know that
nobody knew about it, but I corrected them. The zero
to two, I have a question about that. When I talked
to Health Department, 219 72 Broadway, they actually
on the second floor I believe found opportunities for

1 three classrooms to be zero to two. So, how does-
2 can one be on the second floor? How does that work,
3 or do you need to change that? What's the status?
4 In the past, because I've been doing this daycare
5 work since 1970-something. It had to be on the first
6 floor.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, infants
8 are required to be on the first or ground floor.
9 That is codified in Article 47 of the Health Code.
10 however, preschool-aged children, so those two and
11 above can be up-

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] No,
13 I'm talking about the zero to two, the infants.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, infants
15 cannot be above the ground floor, Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Is that-
17 should that be changed? Are you going to have enough
18 first floor?

19 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, that's
20 something as we build out our infant work, which we
21 hope, you know, happens after we really, you know,
solidify our toddler, two-year-old programming. It's
something we will have to look at. Because we want-

1 you know, child safety is paramount, and the Health
2 Code-

3 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] No,
4 I know.

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: you know, has
6 that as a reason, but that's something we're going to
7 look into.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: And I would
9 just add, I know this has been a topic, a hot topic
10 for many years, and the restriction as Deputy
11 Chancellor is really to make sure that in an
12 emergency that provider could evacuate with children
13 who are not yet able to walk. There are pathways for
14 providers who are able to demonstrate safety plans
15 for them to be able to explore other spaces. And we
16 want to make sure that for providers it's clear how
17 they can do that, but the- broadly we do not- we do
18 not plan to do anything that would in any way imperil
19 health and safety.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I understand
21 that. I'm just saying I think we're on the second
22 floor, but I can double check, and it was okay. Just
23 so you know. Number two, after school, can you
24 explain- I know the nonprofit sector has more of an

1 opportunity than DOE. Can you just explain generally
2 how you're going to collaborate between the programs
3 and after school, because that's the call that I get
4 all the time. Won't go to this program because it
5 doesn't have all-day. How many have all-day? How
6 may don't? How are you looking at this, and is there
7 funding?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, for 3K and
9 Pre-K programs, we'll just note that many programs
10 that are offered in a community-based organization
11 setting, some do have extended day programs like
12 those that Council Member Restler was referencing.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: That are- you
15 know, for subsidized. Others may have programs where
16 the family can pay a fee for after school.
17 Similarly, many of our public school programs have
18 on-site after school providers. Some-

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] Will
20 those-

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: [interposing]
Some may be available to three and four-year-olds,
but not all. A number of programs are permitted just
to serve children in kindergarten and up.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's my
3 experience.

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yep.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And so are you
6 thinking, though, to try to get more funding for the
7 after school for the smaller children? Is that on
8 your radar?

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: It is on our
10 radar, yes. And 2K we are right now anticipating for
11 it to be a full-day program, and extended day
12 program. And so we are looking at additional models
13 like that, Council Member.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. The other
15 issue is the Bright Horizons, that was one that
16 closed. How many are for-profit in your portfolio?
17 I'm not decrying the fact that it closed. There were
18 a lot of issues there. But how many are for-profit?
19 How- that's what I want to know in your portfolio.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, I think
21 we'll have to get back to you on that number, Council
Member. The how many are for-profit?

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes. I'm not
always supportive of them, so I just wanted to know
what the number is. I'm not talking about ones that

1
2 are on place like at a corporation, but ones that in
3 the community for profit. This group seemed to have
4 a lot of problems.

5
6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We'll get
7 back to you on that.

8
9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And the
10 other thing is, people are asking me- I assume this
11 happens, but are there public notices at the
12 community-based organizations so that parents know
13 what their rights are for services and assessments?
14 Is that something that already exists or should it
15 exist? In other words, do parents get that
16 information? I guess it could be up on the wall or
17 other kinds of communication.

18
19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: I will say, as
20 a current Pre-K parent, I receive quite a lot of
21 information from my child's program about different
22 services that we might be eligible for. The
23 developmental screenings that were referenced, you
24 know, and any basic-

25
26 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And you were at a
27 CBO, not at a DOE?

28
29 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: I'm at a DOE
30 school.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: But the same
4 communications are shared with all families and all
5 programs.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Even at the CBOs.
7 some parents think not, I'm just telling you.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: I think we can
9 always do more to improve how information gets to
10 families, and we can keep working on that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm just telling
12 you. And then quickly, the centers that end up with,
13 you know, public health hazards from Department of
14 Health- and I really have, like you, I have a lot of
15 respect for the Department of Health and the work
16 they do. It's incredibly important. But do you know
17 how are they handled? Are they told to the parents?
18 Obviously, in the past, there have been issues around
19 these lines. How does that information get
20 transplanted to parents when there's a Department of
21 Health and how does it get reinspected?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, when there
is a closure at a child care program, if there's- so
stepping back. Child care programs may receive

1 violations that are not significant enough to merit a
2 closure-

3 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]

4 Correct.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: and the
6 provider is able to remedy that. All information
7 about past violations at child care sites is
8 available to families and we are reinstating the
9 performance summary cards that providers have to post
10 in their window that include information about their
11 inspection history. When there is a significant
12 enough violation that it leads to a closure, all
13 parents in the program are notified, and then as the
14 program is reinspected and is able to demonstrate
15 that they have corrected the issue and then are able
16 to safely reopen, that information is shared with-

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I
16 mean, I hear you. I'm just- parents are concerned,
17 and so I would think that would be the norm, but
18 obviously parents think otherwise. And just finally,
19 the CEC, I go to all the meetings. Do you think
20 there should be- obviously, we have special ed, we
21 have ELL, we have parents. Do you think there should
be a preschool parent on that CEC in addition?

1
2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I love your
3 thinking. We're in active discussions with the
4 Chancellor about that very thing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Thank you
6 very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
8 much, Council Member Brewer. I think we- there
9 [inaudible]. Okay, great. So sorry. So I'm going
10 to continue asking some questions. Great. I wanted
11 to ask on- back to 2-Care. I made a note. Okay.
12 so, in your testimony, we're anticipating 2,000
13 students ages zero to two.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Age two.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Age two, excuse
16 me.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: For the fall,
19 okay. What will that look like? I guess this is
20 considered year one. Can you just walk us through
21 what it would look like years two, three, and four,
at least through the end of the first administration
to expand the program or, yeah, continue to invest in
it. Just kind of walk us through what that means.

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Absolutely. So,
2 the Governor's funding commitment that she announced
3 earlier this year that I know many folks including
4 yourself [inaudible] referenced includes \$73 million
5 for this school year which will allow us to serve
6 about 2,000 children, and then that funding level
7 from the state increases to \$425 million in the
8 following year, and we have a target of serving about
9 12,000 children. In terms of sort of specific
10 targets for years three and four, I think we really
11 want to assess how many children actually participate
12 in the program, what does family uptake look like, as
13 we work with providers to understand their capacity
14 to offer 2K and recognize we'll need to continue
15 building out capacity. I think we want to look at
16 what that progression looks like to then determine,
17 you know, specific enrollment targets for years three
18 and four, but the goal is as I said to be serving
19 every two-year-old who wants to participate in the
20 program by the end of the first term.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. So you
19 don't have a sense of how many 2-Care seats will be
20 contracted seats since it's early.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: I think we want
3 to be- we want to be responsive to family need, and
4 to-date, no one has ever gone out and comprehensively
5 asked every family in the city would you participate
6 if this program were available to you? And so part
7 of what we have to do is over this year is really do
8 that family engagement, so we know what we're
9 building toward.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And then I know
11 the RFEI, right, that's what- just closed on Friday.
12 I just want to make sure I'm using the right term. I
13 know it just closed on Friday. Do you have any
14 preliminary numbers, at least like how many responses
15 you got?

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: None that
17 would be responsible to share those with you now, but
18 I promise to round back and give you the correct
19 numbers.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And can
21 you just confirm, the responses for the RFEI are
mandated to be all in English?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Is there-
I guess maybe depending on the feedback, and these

1 were just separate conversations that we've had
2 regarding the ongoing RFP. Have there been
3 conversations about language access for the responses
4 for the RFPs? I know- can you just confirm if the
5 language in the- any of the RFPs from the Department
6 are in any other language besides English?

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, it's my
8 understanding city at large, any form of procurement
9 process must be in English, but any additional
10 information that we give in like info sessions,
11 documents that we created for folks to understand
12 that this is an opportunity they can access was
13 translated into other languages, but the actual
14 mechanism, the RFI had to be English.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, and the
16 responses are in English. Okay. Well, I don't know-
17 I look forward to maybe having that conversation with
18 the administration that some of the feedback that we
19 have gotten in the past about the ability for some
20 providers to not really be able to either respond
21 fully or just, like, you know, just an obvious
challenge is the language barrier and then having to
kind of out-source folks to help them fill it out.
So, I understand that, but would love to kind of have

1 that conversation with you all. Can you share what
2 criteria the DOE and the office is using to determine
3 which neighborhoods to targets for seats in the first
4 year of 2-Care?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We're looking
6 at a couple of different criteria as we think about
7 which parts of the city we'll start with. Looking at
8 family need both in terms of their overall economic
9 need and a lack of availability of subsidized or
10 low-cost child care. So, looking at where we have
11 large numbers of two-year-olds who are both, you
12 know, facing high rates of child poverty and don't
13 necessarily have that access of care today. We're
14 also looking at provider capacity, recognizing the
15 quick timeline we're on for this first year. We want
16 to start in places where providers are ready and able
17 to participate. At the same time, we know that we
18 have to do work citywide to build out child care
19 capacity in communities that don't yet have that as
20 fully.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And how are you
all thinking how the application process will work?
Will it look like 3K, Pre-K, the same schools .gov
website?

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: It will look
2 similarly. We're working through with partners in
3 the Office of Student Enrollment, all the particular
4 policies to be able to share that with families in
5 coming weeks and months. But yes, it will be a
6 centralized enrollment process.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And I'm not sure
8 if My City will continue into this administration,
9 but is that something you're all thinking of working
10 the 2-Care application process into the My City app,
11 or- again, I have no idea what's going on with it,
12 but I'm just asking.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, currently
14 the My City portal is sort of the pathway for all of
15 our means-tested child care programs, and so for
16 families who are applying for vouchers and going
17 through that eligibility determination process, that
18 goes through My City. Currently, we will be looking
19 at how to, you know, make sure that families
20 understand what the right door is to go into for 2K,
21 but also making sure that families have no wrong
22 door. So, if a family logs onto My Schools or My
23 City, thinking that that might be where they find 2K,

2 making sure we have really clear hand-offs and
3 pathways for them to access 2K.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. I have my
5 own issues with My City, but I under-

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: [interposing]
7 Happy to talk more about that.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, great. I
9 think it's a little redundant in my opinion. And
10 then just for years, two, and three and four, the
11 ack- back on the applying for 2-Care, will the
12 deadline be the same?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: For families or
14 for-

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing] For
16 families, yeah. I apologize. So, I know this- I
17 mean, this year is a little different, but like
18 moving forward, yeah, will it be the same as 3K and
19 Pre-K deadline?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We have not
21 finalized what those enrollment timelines look like,
but we will give families ample notice so they know
what to expect.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay and just to
confirm, any child that turns two in that calendar

1 year theoretically should be eligible to apply once
2 we get there.

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes, with the
4 caveat that here are, based on current health code,
5 children may need to depending on the setting at the
6 time they start services. All children.--

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing]
8 Okay, yeah, because that's what I'm asking.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: But we will--

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I know it applies
11 differently if you're--

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: [interposing]
13 Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. So that's
15 what I'm asking, because I know it applies
16 differently for if you're- if at any point your child
17 is three within that year or four, they can apply.
18 So, can you just explain where you think that caveat
19 will be?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes. so, all
21 children who turn two in the calendar year will be
eligible for children who are turning two later in
the school year. So, children's whose birthdays has
fallen between, you know, the first day of school and

1 the end of the calendar year. We are looking at how
2 to make sure they can enroll on a rolling basis.

3 Again, this comes back to Health Code and

4 requirements that children need to be two to

5 participate in those classroom based on their age.

6 Similar to how, if you know,-- and you may know this

7 from your own children in daycare. You know,

8 children in infant/toddler settings tend to move

9 classrooms when they- onn their birhay, not

10 necessarily on a sort of arbitrary first day of

school. So we're looking at how to make-

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing]

12 Yeah.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: our current

14 system work for younger children recognizing the

importance of the health and safety code there.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Excellent. And

16 then is there any - I know there was a bill at this

17 seat, but is there any feedback that you are all

18 considering regarding the- two-year-olds are

19 considered infants, right? They've considered

infants until what age through?

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, based on

21 the Health Code and the permit for infants and

1 toddlers, it is birth through 24 months, and then the
2 preschool permit is two to five.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And the, I
4 guess, teacher or teacher's assistant to child ratio
5 is different for those two classifications or are
6 they the same?

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, it
8 changes. And so, younger infants, it's around eight
9 as the capacity of the classroom, still two teachers.
10 And then for toddlers which are the age range we are
11 including in 2K, it's 12 is the class capacity as
12 compared to 15 for 3K and 18 for Pre-K and still two
13 teachers.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Two teachers for
15 12 students?

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: 12 littles,
18 excuse me, okay. And I guess, is there any— and I'm
19 not saying yes or no, but potentially we don't know
20 what the demand will look like, but do you all think
21 that that shifts at all, the ratio shifts, or this is
kind of like mandated, this is the healthiest safest
thing? I'm truly asking kind of what that— what that
could look like?

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: The ratios are
2 pretty well codified in Health Code because we
3 believe that that is what is healthy and safe for
4 children. We want to make sure we're serving as many
5 families as we can who are interested in the program,
6 but it has to be in environments that are healthy and
7 safe. I do want to acknowledge as well that the
8 child to adult ratios are different in our- for our
9 home-based providers who serve a mixed age group of
10 children, and the specific ratio depends on the age
11 of the children they're serving. So, want to
12 acknowledge that that's a big part of our system, and
13 those program sizes and structures are different than
14 our centers.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So the- thank
16 you. Thank you. So, that's the home-based providers
17 may have different ratios in the same classroom
18 potentially?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yeah.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, it's a
21 home. It's not a classroom.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Well, in their
home?

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yeah, yeah,
2
3 yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, yeah, sorry.

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: And so it's
6 different because, you know, to Director Liss' point,
7 they could have a certain amount of infant as, you
8 know, compared to toddlers and older kids, because of
9 the way that the New York State Social Services Law
10 allow them to operate student capacity in their home.
11 So, yes, they can be- it's not the same as the Health
12 Code where it has like contiguous ages, but based on
13 the ages of the students participating, they have to
14 have different ratios.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And for the
16 home-based providers, I know that some of them may
17 have surely responded to the RFPI, but how are you
18 all thinking about the- I guess the cost of the
19 2-Care seats, especially for those that are private
20 versus kind of what they're charging families? And
21 it's like, as I'm saying it, I'm like oh my God this
 is so complicated. But you are- I think you are
 obviously experts in this, and I think we're going to
 be okay. But how are you all thinking about that?
 What is the feedback from the providers? Because if

1 I'm- if I'm a home-base provider, I'm also the
2 administrator. I'm also responsible for marketing my
3 own program. It's a lot. It's no longer just like
4 this seamless kind of program anymore. So, what does
5 that- what is that? What does that cost? And what
6 is the feedback you're hearing from the providers?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: The primary way
8 that New York City PUblic Schools works with family
9 child care providers and we'll continue to as we
10 expand 2K is through the family child care networks
11 which- so, the city contracts directly with the
12 networks and then providers affiliate with those
13 networks, and part of the reason for that model is
14 that we believe the networks can provide additional
15 support and infrastructure to the providers. We also
16 recognize that there's important work we need to do
17 to make sure that those networks are more responsive
18 to the needs of family child care providers. That's
19 a big piece of what we're engaging with folks on, and
20 now it will continue to in coming months to make sure
21 that providers get what they need in terms of
support, both operational, instructional, and also
making sure that families come to their programs, and
a big piece of what we really want to leverage those

1 networks to do is to help refer families to
2 individual providers. To your question about cost,
3 we're looking right now at what the specific provider
4 rates will be for 2K and we'll have more information
5 for providers on that. I'm happy to share that with
6 you as we move forward in the contracting process.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah. I'm sure
8 you've all thought about this, but I'm just- my
9 flag's about just equity, especially in those
10 communities, and you know, you can see the price
11 differentiation in working-class communities,
12 communities of colors versus wealthier neighborhoods,
13 and so I'm sure it's on your list, but I'm concerned
14 about it. I have some more questions, but I know
15 we've been joined by Council Member Santosuosso who
16 has some questions, and then Council Member Sanchez,
17 you have questions? Okay, right after Kayla.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Thank you so
19 much, Chair, and thank you so much for being here.
20 And I just want to start by saying I think the
21 outreach efforts this year have been night and day
from prior years. I have had families that said they
missed out, and we've heard from advocates that
families missed out in prior years that are now

1 getting like nightly robo calls, so it's greatly
2 appreciated. Thank you so much for your efforts.
3 And I had to step out, so I apologized if I missed
4 some of this, and my colleagues can chime in if they
5 feel that this has been a sufficiently answered. But
6 I want to talk about special- children with special
7 needs and specifically what types of training are you
8 planning for child care staff so they can
9 successfully support children receiving early
10 intervention and/or CPSE services, as new seats,
particularly the 2-Care seats start to come online.

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, we'll
12 talk about that, and just- I don't know if you were
13 here, Council Member, when we introduced Dr.
14 Wallenstein, but she works for the Division of
Inclusive and-

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: [interposing]
16 Thank you, yeah.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, we're
18 going to-

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Appreciate
20 you being here.

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: And so we
have a dynamic team that works and is employed by the

1 Division of Early Childhood Education which is my
2 division. The leadership coaches, they're directly
3 charged with providing coaching and support to the
4 program school leader, and then we have instructional
5 coordinators who work with the educators in the
6 classroom and then social workers who really work
7 with the school community and the families as well on
8 all the things, programmatic, operational. Around-
9 about your specific question, what we do all
10 year-round is observe, assist and coach, and we tell
11 our coaching based on what we need. We supplement
12 that coaching, right, based on the needs of the
13 children, the needs of the staff. Sometimes, you
14 know, there's a new teacher that comes in, they want
15 a different types of support and guidance. And so
16 what we also do is supplement with our Inclusion
17 Specialist. And so this dynamic team, small but
18 mighty, but they are growing. They actually go in
19 and provide direct ways that we can ensure inclusive
20 environments in the classroom. That is something
21 that we want. We want to improve inclusion, but we
also recognize that sometimes a child or little needs
a little more specialized setting. And so that is
where we work really closely with DIAL and the Bureua

1 of Early Intervention at the Health Department to
2 make sure that we have coordinated services across,
3 and that those coaches that I mentioned can really
4 direct and tailor- further tailor their coaching for
5 the staff based off of the learnings and expertise of
6 our colleagues across the other divisions and
7 agencies. I don't know if you wanted to add
8 anything?

8 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: I'll just add that
9 that the Committees on Preschool Special Education
10 have a number of family resources including family
11 guide about how to refer for evaluations to be
12 considered for preschool special education services,
13 and webinars including information specifically for
14 families transitioning from early intention into
15 preschool, and we'll be sure to get this messaging
16 out to all of the new 2K providers. In addition, we
17 have a new role. Each of our 11 CPSE regional
18 offices, thanks to the \$70 million investment, it's
19 called the CPSE Director of Inclusion, and these
20 directors are unlike regular CPSE administrators who
21 have student caseloads and said they are there to
support the entire CPSE office and all of the
stakeholders that impact the family's experience as

1
2 they go through our system. And so they will also be
3 doing outreach and support in partnership with the
4 inclusion specialist in Early Childhood directly to
5 the new providers.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Great. And
7 so it sounds like the approach that we're taking now
8 to 3K and beyond, we intend to continue with 2-Care
9 as the new seats come online.

10 JESSICA WALLENSTEIN: Correct.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Great. And
12 again, I apologize if I'm duplicating here. Will 2K
13 be full day, full year, as it's currently being
14 contemplated?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: In the request
16 for information that went out to providers, we asked
17 them to express their interest and capacity in both a
18 full day, full year model, and also offer them the
19 chance to express interest in a school day model. We
20 want to understand the capacity that our providers
21 have. We also want to understand family interest
which we know varies by community- from community to
community. So, we'll be looking at that. We do
anticipate many providers and families will want a
whole day, but we have left open the option for both.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Got it. Is
3 the 3K, Pre-K full day pilot getting any expansion?
4 Is there a plan for that?

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I'm so sorry,
6 I'm not aware of a 3K, Pre-K full day pilot.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: A parent-
8 this is coming from an advocate. A full day pilot
9 for existing 3K-

10 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: [interposing]
11 Oh, the SDY+.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Yes.

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: With the
15 additional funding for-

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: [interposing]
17 Yes, yes. And so- sorry about.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: No, no,
19 please.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, the SDY+
21 model is our extended day, but not extended year. We
have grown to include- and let me give you the exact
number, because I do want you to know. There's 85
programs participating in SDY+ for those additional
three hours and 40 minutes a day, and we have 2,855

1 children currently enrolled, and we're hoping to
2 increase that enrollment to 4,700. So, it is
3 growing. They're doing well, and we're continuing to
4 work with the participating programs.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: And I'll
6 just close, Chair, very quickly by just saying, you
7 know, we're appreciative of the work and if there are
8 legislative needs not contemplated by these bills
9 that help achieve our clearly shared goal of
10 expanding child care in New York City, I hope you'll
11 feel that you can work with us proactively. Thank
12 you for your work.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you,
14 Chair, and good afternoon. I also want to just thank
15 you for your patience in advance if I'm asking
16 anything that has already been answered, or even if
17 you just answered it while I was sitting here and I
18 didn't understand. So, I'm debating a third child.
19 Just kidding. That is not why I'm asking. Just
20 kidding. Listen, we have the first and the second.
21 So, in seriousness, with respect to the wait list
that we have for ACS vouchers of 16,000 interested
families/children, do you understand that to be
representative of the demand for that kind of child

1 care in the city? Can you remind me what the income
2 threshold and requirements are for these ACS-
3 existing ACS vouchers, and do we have shortfalls in
4 this budget for the ACS vouchers? That's number one.
5 And just a related question, you may have answered it
6 before, but as we do continue these conversations and
7 want to get to universal child care in our city, how
8 is the city assessing demand for 2-Care at this time?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, I can start
10 on your question about the Child Care Assistance
11 program or vouchers. So, families have to meet a
12 series of requirements to be eligible for those- for
13 that service. They have to be at 85 percent or below
14 of the state median income, have to have a reason for
15 care which can be a work activity, an education
16 activity. There's a whole slew of others. And they
17 need to- and the child has to be of legal immigration
18 status. Families are also eligible for child care
19 vouchers if they receive cash assistance, and there
20 are a few other protected populations as well.
21 So, families have to go through quite a detailed
 application process in order to be determined
 eligible for vouchers. So, we don't necessarily view
 the voucher waiting list as representative of the

1 full population of families in the city who need
2 access to care. We know the full population of
3 families who need access to care is far, far wider
4 than that, especially given the affordability
5 crisis. We know families making many multiples of
6 that still cannot afford care. Though, of course, we
7 want to really focus on our lowest income families
8 for whom the burden is greatest. At this time, the
9 funding that we have from the state to support the
10 Child Care Assistance Program is sufficient to meet
11 the needs of families who currently receive vouchers
12 and make sure they have continuity. We are
13 continuing to talk with the state as we look at what
14 it would take to serve a wider number of families who
15 are on the wait list. And to your question about 2K,
16 we are, you know, at this moment making some initial
17 estimations of what we think demand might look like
18 based on detailed population data, based on use of
19 other child care services, but we also know we really
20 need to get out into communities to ask families both
21 in the places where we start and then citywide as we
expand to really understand the full demand for 2K
which we hope through outreach will also be able to
reach a robust number of families.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. And
3 then next question- I'm fairly certain this is what
4 the Chair was asking when I walked in or shortly
5 after- is around the mix of setting anticipated in
6 this first year of 2K roll out- you know, our
7 existing programs as you've said are in district
8 schools and pre-k centers, family settings, things
9 like that. For the thinking around the 2K expansion,
10 what- do you have a sense of where you anticipate
11 what kind of settings you anticipated the care will
12 be provided at?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yeah, for 2K we
14 are looking at child care centers, community-based
15 providers and others, and home-based providers. We
16 are not looking at school-based programs at this
17 time.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Got it. And
19 then could that change in future years?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We're going to
21 continue- this is year one of the roll out, so we're
going to continue to look at how this goes and the
initial community and what we hear from families and
providers, but our focus as we expand to a younger
population is really on our partners, our child care

1 providers and home-based providers who we know serve,
2 you know, the city's infant and toddlers today, and
3 do it well and are experts in this, and we want to
4 leverage their expertise and partnership.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: And thank you.
6 Just the last follow-up. Why are not- why are
7 schools not being considered at this time for the
8 past year?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: As we think
10 about the spaces that are most developmentally
11 appropriate, healthy, safe for our youngest children,
12 we know that that is most often our child care
13 centers and our family child care providers. We also
14 recognize on this rapid timeline to expand in time
15 for the fall, we want to partner with those who are
16 already operating programs for toddlers and we know
17 can do it safely and well.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank
19 you. Thank you, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
21 much. Okay, sorry, I'm going to do rapid-fire, and
then we want to move on to public testimony.
Everyone's been so patient. I had a question- DC
Hawkins, maybe these are for you. They're just

1 related to 3K and Pre-K. In the last budget cycle, a
2 big push from the advocates and the council was
3 really to stabilize the system, and we had spent
4 every budget cycle really focusing on wanting to yes,
5 fight for investments to 3K and Pre-K, but also just
6 like understand. What- how- where are we in the
7 process? And so I wanted to ask is there a target
8 utilization rate for Pre-K and for 3K?

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: I know
10 Council Member Restler asked a similar question,
11 Chair, and so I want to work with AD Liss to make
12 sure that we are aligned in whatever figure we come
13 up with. So, we'll get back to you on that one.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And then in
15 the- I think it was last election- last election,
16 excuse me- last application process there were a
17 number of districts, school districts, one of which I
18 share District 24 where there was a huge demand. In
19 Queens there was a huge demand. What are you all
20 thinking? I know these are things that you're
21 working on, but like, how are we moving seats? I
know it's not easy, but just tell me what that looks
like, and especially in these districts where we saw
a huge increase in applications and just not enough

1 seats where they needed to be, how are we going to
2 rectify that in this administration?

3 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Yeah, I
4 appreciate that question. As part of the governor's
5 investments there were funds in there for the
6 stabilization of 3K and also to add additional seats
7 in communities that have unmet demand. And so as
8 part of that expression of interest, we also included
9 3K for new providers to come into the fold or
existing providers to add additional 3K seats-

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing] In
11 the 2-Care-

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: [interposing]
13 The RFI, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: It is also
16 inclusive of 3K. We also around the same time
17 released two surveys, one for CBOs and one for family
18 child care networks where they can express interests
19 in modifying their slot configurations to better meet
20 the needs of two-year-olds or three-year-olds for the
21 upcoming school year. So we hope to leverage all
three of those to improve the way in how we're, you

1 know, providing care for three-year-olds across
2 communities.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And do you
4 anticipate being able to make those modifications in
5 the fall? Like, how early would you be able to take
6 those responses and make those modifications?

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We're looking
8 at those now alongside the applications. That was
9 just in My Schools, the additional data that we're
10 going to get from the RFI to make determinations for
11 the fall, but hopefully again, on the rolling basis,
12 continue to look at it.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And then I
14 just have a couple of rapid-fire questions on some of
15 the data that you are able- just asking if you're
16 able to collect it. Does the DOE regularly review
17 and analyze seat placement outcomes for 3K and Pre-K?

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Seat
19 placement outcomes as in filled seats?

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Filled seats and
21 whether or not they were an applicant's first,
second, or third priority?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Oh, yes. So,
we look at that data with our Office of Student

1 Enrollment who really manages our application data.
2 They're the ones who inform us on the family's
3 preference, and then also manages the wait list which
4 a family could add themselves to even after the
5 application period closes and throughout the year to
6 maybe get a different choice based on their child
7 needs. So, yes, we do analyze that data, and we're
8 using that to inform a lot of our thinking around
9 placements in the future- placements.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: How often are you
11 reviewing this data? Because it could move around.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, the
13 application data, we usually look at it right around
14 the application cycle. So, now, right? The
15 application cycle just closed, and we were actually
16 looking at prior data to inform the application cycle
17 in our conversations. We do look at it against
18 utilization data on a monthly basis give or take,
19 because it helps us, to your point, inform if- you
20 know, why a seat might be vacant, if we need to move
21 that seat, and then maybe connecting it to the
admissions and the application data. So, I would
say- don't hold me to it, but I would say maybe a
monthly by monthly basis.

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Excellent.
3 And then if you can just say yes or no, the
4 Department. Do you track match rates for first
5 choices?

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We do. We do
7 monitor that.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And what about
9 outside- oh, I guess, they're- plus top three choices
10 at least?

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We look at
12 that as well.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, and then
14 what about outside of their ranked preferences?

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: We look at
16 that as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And would
18 the Department be able to share the most recent
19 numbers when you have it?

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, we'll
21 work with the Office of Student Enrollment to get
that data for you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And then
does the Department track wait list length and
average wait time by seat type or geography?

1 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: So, I would
2 have to confirm that with OC, but we will get back to
3 you to confirm that. And the wait list kind of time
4 you're on a wait list can vary for a host of reasons,
5 especially since you could be on multiple wait lists
6 at one time. So, I'll get a more robust answer to
7 your question.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And I just
9 had someone ask me this and I think I answered it
10 correctly. The deadline was Friday, but if you
11 missed that deadline what can you do?

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: You can add
13 yourself to a wait list.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. At a
15 family center or just on the- just on the website?

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Any of a
17 school program of your choice. If you are interested
18 in attending a pre-K/3K program and you missed the
19 application deadline, it is never too late. You could
20 still go on My Schools, do your vetting. I always say
21 pair that with New York City Child Connect which is
the Health Department's website, and then you can add
yourself to as many wait lists as you want.

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, I did
3 answer that correctly.

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: You did.
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Did not spread
7 misinformation. Okay. And then I wanted to ask,
8 regarding the 2-Care program that's currently funded
9 by- it's funded by the state, correct, per the
10 investments made by Governor Hochul? Do you- and I
11 think those seats are at 40,000 each for the 2-Care.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: That's the
13 birth to two initiative.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Birth to two.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: [inaudible]

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you for
17 correcting me, and I don't mean to interchange.

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: Of course, of
19 course.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do you anticipate
21 investments from the city moving forward to expand
the program, to stabilize the program in the future?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, as we roll
out for this first year, we'll be working with all
the agencies who have a piece to play, of course New

1
2 York City Public Schools, but the other agencies who
3 will be supporting the roll out to assess whether we
4 have what we need and we will certainly come back to
5 you, and as we go through the budget process,
6 identify where- if and where there may be other
7 resource needs.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Excellent. And
9 then just two final questions. So, regarding my
10 bill, I think that there is- there's obviously a lot
11 of interest. We spent a lot of time today on 2-Care
12 and quality education, but I think what is also kind
13 of thrown around is universal child care, and I think
14 for those folks that have been working on increasing
15 accessibility for decades, their first question is
16 like, well, who is this accessible for? Who is this
17 affordable to, and who are you talking about? So, I
18 would love to understand how the administration
19 defines universality? Who are you looking to
20 include, and is there- is there an interest right now
21 with the 2-Care program to keep moving down to
include, you know, zero to two in the same way?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: So, universal
to us means everyone. It means every child no matter
their family's income or immigration status or

1 occupation or zip code. Universal means everyone,
2 and we believe that there are so many reasons why a
3 universal system will more effectively meet the needs
4 of all of our families, but in particular we know
5 that as we expand we have to focus on families who
6 are the least likely to participate in government
7 services, because they lack the information or the
8 language access or the time to find these programs.
9 So we're focused on expanding- as we expand to make
10 sure we reach everyone, but to make sure that we are
11 also offering really targeted support to the families
12 who may have the hardest time otherwise finding these
13 services. We also recognize that meeting all
14 family's needs will require a diverse array of child
15 care options. Families have different work schedules
16 and different preferences, and we want to honor and
17 respect that. So, that's a big piece of why it's so
18 important that we continue to talk with families as
19 we go. The launch of 2K this fall is just the first
20 step and it's a really important step, but we know
21 there is a lot more work we need to do to make sure
we meet all families needs, including families with
children under two, which we will continue to make

1 sure we're paying attention to, and the goal is all
2 children.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely.

4 Well, thank you. I'm encouraged by that. It's really
5 important that when we are talking about universal
6 child care that we remind everyone that we do mean
7 everyone, regardless of your immigration status, of
8 your income, and I know that for families in
9 communities like mine, that is going to be really the
10 difference between being able to afford to stay here
11 or not. So I'm very grateful that those are kind of
12 where the conversations are. I want to ask one last
13 question, and I think you said yes, but just need the
14 specifics. Just to- would you be able to commit that
15 you could meet with the Council or brief the Council
16 monthly on just updates, specifically about this
17 expansion and this program?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: We would be
19 happy to.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, see? Okay,
21 great. Okay. The last thing I will just say before
heading into- it's not a question- to public
testimony is something that this committee is looking
forward to working with you all and having a

1 discussion is also the realities of quality of care
2 throughout the city. Council Member Sanchez was here
3 and there were- you know, four years ago there were a
4 couple- a few incidents where children were harmed
5 and died. And I think that while we're talking about
6 expansion and the acceleration of all of this, I know
7 that you all know this, but I don't ever want to skip
8 a beat when we are- you know, I wanted to give an
9 opportunity to speak about children's safety,
10 provider safety every step of the way. So, please
11 hold me accountable and I'll do the same, but I just
12 want to emphasize that, because I know- I think we
13 can all get caught up on the excitement of how great
14 this will be for the city, but we have loss children.
15 Families have been impacted, and so I want to make
16 sure that we are counting them, we are considering
17 them, and that we are being mindful of the fact that
18 it is not just a system that we can roll out from one
19 day to the other, because we have to consider all of
20 these things.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISS: Yes, could not
19 agree more. I think for us, making sure that children
20 are healthy and safe, that parents have that
21 confidence that their children are healthy safe. The

1 system does not work without it, and it is why we
2 will hold all programs to an incredibly high rigorous
3 level of health and safety, and I know that we need
4 to make- as we discussed sort of earlier in the
5 hearing, it's important that we make it easier for
6 providers to navigate those processes, but never-
7 never with any compromise to the health and safety
8 requirements they need to be.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely.

9 Thank you. Thank you both. I know you said you're
10 going to-

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: [interposing]

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh, sorry.

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR HAWKINS: No, I just
14 wanted to say thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah. I'm excited
16 and I hope it doesn't escape that it's like- it's two
17 women doing this, amongst many other, but we're all
18 very excited. I now want to open up the hearing for
19 public testimony. I remind members of the public
20 that this is a government proceeding and that decorum
21 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
the public shall remain silent at all times. The

1 witness table is reserved for people who wish to
2 testify. No video recording or photography is
3 allowed from the witness table. Further, members of
4 the public may not present audio or video recordings
5 as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such
6 recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in
7 the hearing record. If you wish to speak at today's
8 hearings, please fill out an appearance slip with the
9 Sergeant at Arms and wait to be recognized. When
10 recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on
11 today's oversight topic and/or legislation. If you
12 have written a statement or additional written
13 testimony you wish to submit for the record, please
14 provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at
15 ARMs. You may also email written testimony to
16 testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this
17 hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be
18 accepted. First up, we have Grace Rauh, Donovan
19 Swanson [sp?], Kellan Calder- my apologies- Jocelyn
20 Mazurenza [sp?]- I'm so sorry- and Stamo
21 Karalazarides Rosenberg. Please correct me. I'm so
embarrassed. Hi, anybody can start. Two minutes.

GRACE RAUH: Thank you. Thank you, Chair
Gutiérrez. Wonderful to see you and to be here. Good

1 morning to you and to members of the Subcommittee on
2 Early Childhood Education. My name is Grace Rauh,
3 and I serve as the Executive Director of Citizens
4 Union which is home to the Five Borough Institute, a
5 public policy program focused on tackling big
6 challenges facing New York City. Let me begin by
7 applauding the creation of this subcommittee.
8 Establishing a dedicated body focused on Early
9 Childhood Education sends a powerful and important
10 message, that child care is not peripheral, it is
11 foundational for the future of our city. 14 years
12 ago when my oldest daughter was born, I was stunned
13 by the cost of child care. I was working as a
14 reporter at New York One. My husband was a law firm
15 associate, and it felt like we had suddenly gone out
16 and decided to rent second Manhattan apartment. That
17 is how much money we were spending. Then, though, I
18 saw the power of government to meet the needs of
19 families. Universal Pre-K was a financial lifeline
20 for our family and for thousands of others, and it
21 showed that when New York sets big goals, we can
deliver transformative results. Child care costs
today are even higher. This is no longer just about
individual families, but about whether our city

1 remains affordable, competitive, vibrant. At the
2 Five Borough Institute, we have spent more than two
3 years researching and engaging on this issue. Our
4 major Child Care Policy Report identified structural
5 barriers to affordability, workforce stability, seat
6 expansion, and provided a policy roadmap to improve
7 child care access and affordable. In October we
8 convened more than 150 business, civic, and policy
9 leaders at the first of its kind New York City Child
10 Care Summit, and the message there was clear. The
11 current system does not work for families, providers,
12 or employers, and deeper public investments are
13 necessary. Child care fundamentally is economic
14 infrastructure. We know that this is an issue
15 affecting anyone who cares about the future of our
16 city. Fixing it requires broad coalition building,
17 and we look forward to working with you and with
18 others in the room to make universal child care a
19 reality. We offer ourselves as a resource and a
20 partner. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Grace.
19 Thank you so much.

20 DONAVAN SWANSON: Hello. Good afternoon.
21 Donavan Swanson representing the Office of the

1
2 Brooklyn Borough President. A lot was said today, so
3 I'm going to try to be as quick as possible. Thank
4 you Chair Gutiérrez and members of the Subcommittee
5 for holding this hearing today and your steadfast
6 leadership in advancing our Early Childhood
7 Education. Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso
8 remains a committed partner in prioritizing families
9 and our youngest learners, and he supports many of
10 the measures proposed here today to strengthen
11 accountability, transparency, and the expansion of
12 Early Childhood programs. The need for affordable,
13 high-quality programs for New York City families
14 continues to grow, yet we fall short in securing
15 necessary seats to meet the demand. In Brooklyn
16 alone, child care costs can represent up to 63
17 percent of families income. According to that same
18 study, more than 80 percent of New York City families
19 with children under five are unable to afford child
20 care. Brooklyn's child poverty rate is above 25
21 percent, highlighting the urgent need for accessible
support for our youngest learners and their families.
When families cannot access affordable child care,
parents, particularly single parent households and
female-led households, are forced out of the

1 workforce or into unstable employment, furthering
2 economic inequality. A 2025 New York City
3 Comptroller report notes that nearly half New York
4 City mothers reported at least one child care-related
5 work challenge, and 29 percent of New York City
6 mothers and workforce reported dropping out due to
7 child care concerns. By providing parents access to
8 child care, we increase household income, level the
9 playing field, and reduce economic inequality. This
10 is not just about economics, however. Decades of
11 research continue to support the overwhelming
12 benefits of high-quality, Early Childhood Education
13 programs and their relationship to student
14 achievement and social/emotional development. I do
15 want to also note as this Council made us very aware,
16 right, we also know that this conversation cannot
17 happen without conversations around pay parity for
18 our teachers, some of whom earn a starting wage of
19 less than \$36,000 a year. The same single woman-led
20 household that struggled to access affordable child
21 care also disproportionately represented in this same
workforce. The system is just broken. It stacks the
deck against those who need it most, our children,
their families, and the educators caring for them.

1 So we must do right by our city. Borough President
2 Reynoso stands alongside the Council and the Mayor
3 supporting many of the steps proposed, whether it's
4 increasing reporting and accountability within New
5 York City Public Schools, piloting programs that
6 expand suitable locations for child care where real
7 estate is scarce and expensive, and even expediting
8 the child care permitting process, we must act to
9 ensure that families have access to quality Early
Childhood Education. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
11 much.

12 KELLAN CALDER: Good afternoon everyone.
13 Thank you so much for having this meeting. My name
14 is Kellan Calder. I'm an organizer with New Yorkers
15 United for Child Care. We're a grassroots
16 organization of parents, would-be parents fighting
17 for free universal child care. I spend most of my
18 days talking to parents on the phone, playgrounds,
19 organizing WhatsApp, and the thing I hear most, that
20 we all love the city so much, but we don't know how
21 much longer we can stay here or afford to be here.
3K and Pre-K it's been a lifeline for these families,
and one parent even said, 3K enabled her to go back

1 to work and stay out of debt, and these have worked,
2 because they've been universal. So no means testing,
3 open to every family regardless of income or
4 immigration status. This universality makes them
5 effective and trusted. And on the subject of
6 effectiveness, I want to take a moment just to
7 commend everyone who has been involved in the
8 outreach efforts, because it's been remarkable. The
9 administration mounted the most aggressive enrollment
10 outreach campaign we've seen since the early
11 beginning of universal Pre-K. We received messages
12 showing that the linkNYC ads are very effective, and
13 it's in multiple languages, as well as the
14 personalized calls. So this sort of outreach isn't
15 just marketing, it's trust building, and it's
16 something that had to be rebuilt which is a bit of
17 why the enrollment has been an uphill climb because
18 of the previous administration's betrayal of faith
19 these families had in the process and seats being
20 cut. We know it won't disappear over night and that
21 parents need to know that there's a city that has a
promise for care, which brings me to 2-Care. So, the
launch of free child care for two-year-olds, it's a
historic first step and time in the city, and we're

1 thrilled to see it moving forward, but we encouraged
2 by the seriousness with this roll out with the RFPs
3 for new providers to focus on high-needs
4 neighborhoods, the emphasis on home-based care, but
5 we want to make sure it's done right, and that starts
6 with paying providers fairly. This is an important
7 factor on whether this program succeeds or fails, and
8 child care workers who earn poverty wages are not
9 sustainable for building a universal system. So, it
10 also means full day availability from the start,
11 investing with the same level of outreach that we've
12 seen for this 3K and Pre-K roll out, and maintaining
13 trust with parents. This would be a high-quality
14 program. We look forward to working with this
15 council and this administration to make universal
16 child care a reality for every family in the city.
17 Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

16 JOCELYN MAZURKIEWICZ: Okay. Good
17 morning, Chairwoman and members of the Committee. My
18 name is Jocelyn Mazurkiewicz. Don't worry about the
19 pronunciation of the last name. My dad joke is, how
20 do you say that? Smith. It's okay.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No, but as a
2 Gutierrez, I'm so sorry that I disappointed you and
3 your ancestors.

4 JOCELYN MAZURKIEWICZ: You did not. You
5 did not disappoint me. My last name, I always say
6 also, gives me like a leg up. Like in Kindergarten I
7 had to learn the whole alphabet by just learning to
8 spell my name.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sweet.

10 JOCELYN MAZURKIEWICZ: Don't worry about
11 it. And I serve as the Assistant Director of the
12 Facilitated Enrollment Child Care Programs at the
13 Consortium for Worker Education, the workforce
14 development arm of the New York City Central Labor
15 Council. And as part of our mandate to provide a
16 worker-centered approach to workforce development for
17 over 20 years, our child care programs have connected
18 working New Yorkers with streamlined access to
19 affordable child care. Long before child care
20 reached the national stage, we've been working to
21 bridge the gap between policy and the classical needs
of the workforce. We help families navigate the
child care voucher system, train workers, support
union child care funds like DC37 who [inaudible]

1 here. Shout out to Morgan Dolan [sp?]. Sorry- I've
2 lost my spot. And conduct research on the impact of
3 child care funding. Further, we lead the New York
4 Union Child Care Coalition, a group of unions working
5 together to address work/family balance and change
6 the workplace to better reflect the needs of
7 families. What we have learned from this work is that
8 a truly universal system is not one in which every
9 child has a seat, but one in which those seats meet
10 diverse, ever-changing needs of every family, regular
11 working hours for parents, accommodations for
12 children with special needs, and child care deserts
13 present challenges that must be addressed. Alongside
14 members of the New York Union Child Care Coalition,
15 we are actively working on solutions to close these
16 gaps. To document the diversity of experience faced
17 by working families, we have compiled stories of the
18 individuals we serve into an interactive map which we
19 would gladly share with the members of this
20 committee. We are encouraged by the legislation.
21 Basically, we're looking forward to working with you.
And we're here as a resource, so call on us. We're
so excited.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
2 much. The final-

3 STAMO KARALAZARIDES ROSENBERG: Good
4 afternoon, Chair Gutiérrez and members of the
5 subcommittee. I'm Stamo Karalazarides Rosenberg.
6 Also had to learn the alphabet when I learned my
7 name. So, I understand that. And you actually
8 pronounced it perfectly. Thank you. And I am the
9 First Vice President of CSA, the Council of
10 Supervisors and Administrators. Universal child care
11 is not a seat expansion. Sorry. Universal child
12 care is not a seat expansion challenge. It is a
13 workforce and leadership stabilization challenge.
14 CSA brings a unique vantage point to this issue. We
15 represent principals, APs, and supervisory leaders
16 across New York City, including Early Childhood
17 directors and assistant directors in both
18 DOE-operated and community-based organization. In
19 fact, in 1976, CSA negotiated the first collective
20 bargaining agreement for Early Childhood educators in
21 the nation. Because we represent leaders across both
delivery systems, DOE-operated and community-based,
we see clearly where the structural misalignment is
undermining stability. There are three issues that

1 must be addressed if universal child care is to
2 succeed. First, pay parity. It is well-documented
3 that educators and school leaders performing
4 comparable work in DOE-run programs and
5 community-based centers are paid on fundamentally
6 different scales. These programs operate under the
7 same standards. They serve the same children. They
8 are part of the same publicly-funded system. Yet,
9 one workforce is compensated far less. What does
10 that signal to families when two publicly-funded
11 programs are held to identical standards, but one
12 group is educators is valued significantly less? Pay
13 disparity creates turnover. It drives recruitment
14 challenges. It produces churn in classrooms that
15 families depend on for continuity, and directors bear
16 the brunt of that churn. Community-based directors
17 supervise staff, manage budgets, oversee compliance,
18 guide curriculum, and respond to city contracts.
19 They operate educational institutions and nonprofit
20 businesses simultaneously. And yet, a Day Care
21 Council Workforce analysis done by Director Emmy Liss
before she became Director of the Office of Child
Care shows that CBO directors can lose more than \$2.2
million over a 25-year career compared to DOE

1 counterparts, the largest pay parity penalty in the
2 system. Second, funding equity. DOE schools are
3 funded as institutions. Community-based
4 organizations are funded largely as
5 enrollment-dependent vendors. When funding is tied
6 strictly to filled seats, even modest enrollment
7 fluctuations can create significant budget caps. For
8 small nonprofit providers operating on thin margins,
9 a difference of a few students can translate into
10 tens of thousands of dollars in lost revenue. Public
11 infrastructure cannot be financed as speculative
12 business, and the DOE must improve their ability to
13 forecast how many seats are needed within a
14 particular neighborhood. Third, procurement and
15 reimbursement reform-

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing] And
15 I'm so sorry, can you wrap up a statement?

16 STAMO KARALAZARIDES ROSENBERG: I have
17 the third part and I'll be as quickly as possible.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, because
19 your time ran out. We have to be equitable with the
20 timing. I appreciate it. And you can submit your
21 testimony at any time.

1
2 STAMO KARALAZARIDES ROSENBERG: We have
3 the testimony. It is everything written out with
4 specifics. But the third is procurement and
5 reinforcement reform. And I just want to end by
6 saying we stand ready to partner with you to ensure
7 that the next phase of growth strengthens the system
8 that families depend on. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
10 you so much. Sorry, I just have like a couple of
11 questions, and again being mindful, I know we have a
12 full roster of folks signed up to testify. Ms.
13 Calder, you mentioned in your testimony the work that
14 you're doing on the ground and something that stood
15 out to me was building trust. Council Member Restler
16 had mentioned enrollment numbers have been going
17 down. Do you hear from families that you're
18 organizing with that they have- do they have any
19 reservations about enrolling their child in a public
20 school- in a system that is supported by our public
21 schools? Do you hear from parents that are
interested in like staying here and want to send
their kids to our city's public schools? What are
those- what does that sound like?

1
2 KELLAN CALDER: Thank you for bringing
3 that up. So we do have parents that want to stay,
4 that want to be in 3K seats. The issue was the loss
5 of seats in neighborhoods and it being unplanned, as
6 well as the logistics of it.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You mean not
8 enough seats of like 3K?

9 KELLAN CALDER: Yeah, not enough seats
10 for 3K.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: In the school
12 that they want.

13 KELLAN CALDER: And the wraparound
14 services not being there, because some of them- a lot
15 of our parents work and have to work so that ending
16 at 3:00 or half-day programs, or transition to
17 half-day programs was not going to work for their
18 families. And then they also had the issue of
19 providers, you know, not be- being unpaid for months.
20 So that didn't guarantee their comfort level with the
21 program, and then that- once again, that breach of
trust that they wanted to have those programs in
their neighborhoods.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah.

1 KELLAN CALDER: And not having it there.
2
3 So, they'd like, you know, to stay in their
4 communities, to remain invested, to be in the public
5 system, but having that, you know, trust part to
6 build- it's easy to break, and that's why these
7 outreach efforts we've seen have been a really good
8 step at building it out as we want to expand these
9 programs and participate.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely.
11 Thank you. Thank you for that. And then, Donovan,
12 thank you so much for testifying. I know Borough
13 President Reynoso has been such a great advocate for
14 providers, especially with regards to compensating
15 them. Of the folks- of the providers that you've
16 been engaged with, how long- how many of them do you
17 think percentage-wise have been doing this work for a
18 significant amount of time?

19 DONAVAN SWANSON: Thank you. As we both
20 know, right, they've been doing this work well before
21 the system has been flushed out to even being called
22 universal, right? Providers, the- a lot of the
23 executive directors and folks have been in the work
24 at least two decades based off of just my anecdotal
25 in conversations with folks, primarily women, women

1 of color, right? And so as we continue to see the
2 outcomes that we're seeing, that the system is
3 perpetrating, right, and especially we were just here
4 almost a year ago fighting for our four sites in
5 Brooklyn which I note in the testimony, but the
6 reality is many of these folks that are running our
7 programs are also going broke while doing so, with
8 even the delay in payment, which is something in this
9 magnitude of the conversation. We're for it, right?
10 But in the capacity building we also have to make
11 sure that our providers are getting paid on time,
12 because it's trickling not just from the staff not
13 getting paid well, right, but then also our EDs and
14 other providers not benign able to either get the
15 proper loans, right, and it almost coming from the
16 city's perspective double-dipping, right? Like, free
17 interest in the sense of we'll pay you eventually.
18 So, again, just doing the work for decades and not
19 getting compensated properly at a fair rate for
20 decades as well. So, we have to kind of walk and chew
21 gum at the same time and get it done.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And from the- if
you've engaged with staff particularly,-

DONAVAN SWANSON: [interposing] Yep.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: do you feel that
2 there are more and more scenarios where they're about
3 to go broke, but they also cannot qualify for their
4 own children to maybe attend that same provider site,
5 or even for a voucher?

6 DONAVAN SWANSON: Yeah. And you know,
7 I'll even take it a step further and saying it was
8 noted both in DOE's testimony, just- or in the
9 questions. It's just like also losing staff to the
10 same system on New York City Public School side,
11 because at least they'll get paid a fair rate, right?
12 They're not- there's not going to be a question of do
13 we have enough seats? You know, it's a model that's
14 already kind of built out. So, not being able to
15 afford the programs that they themselves are
16 staffing, but then also having to compete within the
17 system between provider and DOE-operated programs,
18 right? And there's no simple solution. Both sides
19 need the adequate high-quality staff, but the reality
20 is one side has much more resources to leverage. And
21 so we really in the parity conversation need to make
sure our CBOs have a robust model so that parents
want to enroll in those programs, right, and feel
comfortable in it, and can continue to send their

1 child the way that they themselves might have
2 attended those programs, but that also can coexist in
3 this model with DOE and all seats be filled and
4 utilized as well.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I
6 have one more question for CSA, and then I'll pass it
7 Council Member Brewer. For your members, how often
8 does it come up- does the issue of lease renewal or
9 challenges that they're having with the city kind of
10 renegotiating? Because I think it goes with the-
11 just the concept of trust, right? The same way that
12 parents what to feel trust that their program, if
13 they're signing up for 3K will be there for Pre-K,
14 but the same four-year members, right, that they
15 trust that they'll be able to count on a job
16 potentially for longer than a few minutes [sic].
17 Does that come up often, more often than-

18 STAMO KARALAZARIDES ROSENBERG:

19 [interposing] Absolutely. Very, very often. It's a
20 consistent concern that we hear from our members,
21 absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do you- and in
what ways- in what ways could they be engaged? I

1 know it changes administration to administration.
2 Who negotiates the lease is different now. It could
3 be SCA. it could be DCAS, but what is some of the
4 feedback that you've heard from your members? What
5 is the best way to include them, to communicate with
6 them? Because I dealt with that in my district for
7 some of the sites that Donovan mentioned. Where- all
8 the flashing lights, does it matter if you don't have
9 a lease to fulfil this program? Then no one has a
10 job. Then no one has care. So, what are some of the
11 ways or suggestions that you've heard from your
12 members that's the best way to engage with them, to
13 include them? What are some of the things that
14 they'd like to see?

13 STAMO KARALAZARIDES ROSENBERG: It seems
14 that the timeliness of the paperwork and the actual
15 funding and the actual agreements, there is a lag
16 there. Our members are quite concerned that with the
17 expansion of the Early Childhood programs, while
18 we're all for them and we understand the need for
19 them, if you don't fix the current structure and you
20 expand upon it, it will create even more widespread
21 inadequacies, chaos, etcetera, and that's what our
members are most concerned with. So, we believe that

1 we should fix what we have in place and then build
2 upon it. And again, we agree with the expansion. We
3 would love to see universal 2-Care for our students,
4 expand 3K and 4K, but we do have to fix these
5 existing issues that are major.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Yeah,
7 absolutely. Council Member Brewer?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you for
9 Grace Rauh and the Five Borough. Given what you
10 heard today and your excellent testimony, are there
11 places where you think we are moving in the right
12 direction? Are there places that are obviously big
13 gaps that need to be filled? Just the overall picture
14 of where we're going. [inaudible] trust you.

15 GRACE RUAH: Thank you, Council Member.
16 So, I think at a high level we are moving in the
17 right direction which is really positive. The fact
18 that this subcommittee exists, that we have the
19 highest political leadership in our city and state
20 committed to achieving universal child care for New
21 York is in and of itself really remarkable and
exciting. I think all that we have heard about the
outreach efforts that have been so robust under this
new administration has been really key. In our policy

1 report that we issued two years ago, that was failing
2 that we highlighted, and felt was responsible for
3 underenrollment in 3K in certain parts of the city
4 where we were seeing a lot of empty seats. We knew
5 from the de Blasio Administration that there needed
6 to be- we felt there needed to be very robust
7 outreach to explain to families what was available to
8 them, how do enroll the benefits, and so we've been
9 really heartened to see that kick up into high gear.
10 And I think another area that's been- where I think
11 we're moving in the right direction is around the
12 idea of extended day, full day for 2-Care. So that
13 is going to be huge for the families that are part of
14 that program. Universal Pre-K was a gift to my
15 family and to so many other New Yorkers, but of
16 course it just went for the duration of the school
17 day, and those of us who worked full-time needed to
18 find afterschool care for our children. So, if we
19 can make 2-Care or 2K full day from the start and
20 have that be baked into what we expect from this
21 program as we move to make it truly universal, I
think that's hugely important as well. Obviously,
the pay parity issue that so many people have spoken
to continues to be I think the biggest challenge that

1 the city and all of us need to collectively address
2 if we're going to make this successful and
3 sustainable.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you all so
6 much. We're going to call up the second panel. Next
7 up we have Magin Schantz, my apologies, Anna L.
8 Succes, Paula Magnus, Peggy Lux Rodriguez, and Kamila
9 Faruki. Anybody can start when they're ready. Just
make sure your mic is turned on.

10 PEGGY LUX RODRIGUEZ: Hello, good
11 afternoon. So, good afternoon. Thanks for having
12 us. My name is Peggy Lux Rodriguez. I am a proud
13 first-generation daughter of Columbian-American
14 parents born and raised in Brooklyn. I'm here today
15 to speak about my mother, Eladia, founder and CEO of
16 Eladia's Kids, a family-owned and operated day care
17 and preschool that has served Brooklyn families for
18 over 50 years. In my role as Admissions Director,
19 parents often ask what distinguishes us from other
20 schools. I tell them that what- we have witnessed
21 that Early Childhood landscape changed dramatically.
What began as community-based home-grown care like my
mother's program and many CBOs represented here today

1 has increasingly shifted to a corporate child care.
2 The New York Times has reported recently just the
3 other day, \$30 million contracts awarded to large
4 national entities. While everyone here was once two,
5 three, or four years old- I'd hope so- none of us
6 were a name on a cup. We are whole human beings and
7 children deserve care, love, and education from
8 people who see them as whole individuals, not profit
9 margins. We support universal child care. Families
10 deserve access, but free child care is not free to
11 operate. Without pay parity, cost of living
12 adjustments, and timely reimbursement,
13 community-based providers are left caring
14 unsustainable financial burdens. Small businesses
15 cannot wait months to be paid while still covering
16 payroll, rent, utilities, and supplies. Large
17 corporations can absorb these delays. Most CBOs
18 cannot. My mother, Eladia's Kids, now cares for the
19 children of the children who she once taught. That
20 full circle moment is built on trust, continuity and
21 community. That is the foundation upon which
universal child care should be built. We have
survived recessions, COVID, and expansion of Pre-K
and 3K, but the current reimbursement and pay

1 disparities are forcing strong, dedicated providers
2 to close. We must meet DOE requirements, yet our
3 teachers are paid less and our right to be recruited
4 away for better pay and benefits create a revolving
5 door of talent for our youngest learners who are the
6 ones most-impacted by instability. Expanding the
7 system to serve even younger children while the
8 current structure remains underfunded and inequitable
9 risks creating a subpar program. If you want
10 universal child care to succeed, you must invest in
11 the community-based providers who built it. Thank you
12 for having me.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
14 you, Peggy.

15 MAGIN SCHANTZ: Hi, my name is Magin
16 Schantz. I'm the owner and director of Super Moon
17 Art Space which is a small center-based day care in
18 Ridgewood, Queens, in your district. Part of my
19 testimony echoes issues that have already been raised
20 today, challenges operating or covering costs,
21 challenges paying myself and my staff a living wage,
 skepticism about being sufficiently funded in timely
 manner should we obtain a 2K contract. So, I'd like
 to focus on the second part of my testimony which

1 actually speaks to Council Member Brewer's question
2 about afterschool. So outside of our day care
3 center, Super Moon has worked over the past three
4 years to pilot and activate a series of afterschool
5 programs for 3K and Pre-K in neighboring public
6 school buildings. So, these are programs licensed by
7 OCFS. they're sack [sic] programs with a Pre-K
8 waiver. It allows us to work with the younger
9 children. We run three programs. We're setting up a
10 fourth, and each time we open a new license
11 application we start again from zero. We have to
12 re-explain what we're doing. The licensing process
13 takes months. It's administrative time we're not
14 compensated for. With one program we spent months
15 setting up the license only to learn that the DOE
16 would charge us \$20,000 to use one classroom for the
17 afterschool for the year, and we couldn't afford it
18 so we had to cancel the program and turn families
19 away. My understanding is that programs like these
20 are very rare, afterschool for 3k and Pre-K in public
21 school buildings specifically, and even though
there's a need for them, we reached out to DYCD to
see if we could get funding to offer our programs for
free, and learned that DYCD doesn't fund programs for

1 children under six. So, we imagine that filling this
2 gap and providing out-of-school care for 3K and Pre-K
3 students in public school buildings is on the city's
4 radar now with so much attention and momentum in
5 place for child care. So we really hope to be
6 involved in the process of growing programs like
7 this. Since my understanding is very few providers
8 are taking it on, and we've gained a fair amount of
9 perspective and experience in the process of making
10 them happen. So, thank you, Council Member
11 Gutiérrez. Thank you to the subcommittee, and hope
12 to work with you.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah. Thank you,
14 and I apologize Magin, I mispronounced your name.
15 Just for clarity, the afterschool program that you-
16 provider tried to provide is for three and
17 four-year-olds?

18 MAGIN SCHANTZ: Correct. It's for 3K and
19 Pre-K. We're using the Sack [sic] license with a
20 Pre-K waiver which is tricky to obtain, and the-
21 yeah, there's a lot of bureaucracy to get it done.
It takes months every single time.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah.

1
2 MAGIN SCHANTZ: We've done it three times
3 in a row.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Wow. Well, thank
5 you for testifying, and look forward to continuing to
6 work with you. Sorry. Next Speaker.

7 PAULA MAGNUS: Good afternoon,
8 Chairperson and members of the subcommittee. I'm
9 Paula Magnus. I'm the President of Northside Center
10 for Child Development. It's provided mental health
11 services for over 80 years, and it has operated a
12 Head Start and Early Head Start program in Harlem for
13 20 years and in the Bronx and Brooklyn for 15. We
14 strongly support every bill before you today, and we
15 recommend- we commend Speaker Menin for her
16 leadership on this packet as been commented by
17 several here. I want to begin with what may be the
18 most fundamental barrier you've already heard.
19 There's competition amongst programs in terms of what
20 costs and dollars we have in resources. So, with
21 that competition we cannot offer salaries comparative
to other parts of the city that have contracting
rates that are higher. Ours do not keep pace.
You've already heard much of that, but we need to
retain our qualified teachers as well as our

1 clinicians. The result is vacancies, and the limited
2 enrollment capacity and the programs quality in the
3 community that need the most care, because it's in
4 the communities where the care is needed. The
5 reporting this requirement must be used to make that
6 compensation gap and to drive the rate reforms closer
7 to what the actual cost is. On the vacancy space
8 pilot, the obstacles is not that there's not suitable
9 space, that it's scarce. As been mentioned, the cost
10 of them, as was indicated before, is too expensive.
11 The existing city property tax abatement helps with
12 the build-out cost. If you have those types of
13 agreement with the landlord, but it doesn't answer
14 the question a landlord actually asks. Is this a
15 tenant I want a long-term relationship with. So we
16 suggest there's other areas out there and other
17 states which reward landlords with a tax credit.
18 Maybe that's something that can be looked at that can
19 be helpful in reducing the cost and allowing more
20 accessibility for these programs. Thank you so much
21 for your time.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And
20 before the next panelist, I just want to acknowledge
21 that we've been joined by two supporters of universal

1 child care, Assembly Member Keith Powers and former
2 Council Member Justin Brannan. Welcome. I don't
3 know why you're here, but- you're here to spy, but
4 thank you for the support. Sorry, the next panelist?

5 KAMILA FARUKI: Good afternoon everyone
6 and thank you for the focus on Early Childhood
7 Education. We truly appreciate it. My name is Kamila
8 Faruki. I'm owner/founder of Manhattan School House.
9 We provide infant, toddler and preschool care to
10 Upper East Side and Chelsea neighborhoods, and we
11 have been operational for over a decade. I'm also a
12 mother of who- who faced challenges with child care,
13 and that's what really led me to open first program
14 with my fantastic team. And I'm also a woman of
15 color and a small business owner. We take our
16 responsibility of taking care of children very
17 seriously. This is- this is something that we
18 realize we are taking care of our children of our
19 community, and what a great responsibility it is.
20 I'm going to really focus on pay parity, cost of
21 living adjustment, and making sure the payments are
made on time. I'm going to take one example of each
one of them to share the gravity. Now pay parity
when you're talking about pay parity, it's not only

1 dollar and cents, it's also benefits, because many of
2 the teachers that we have in our program, they can't
3 afford to have health care. So, when we're talking
4 about pay parity, we're talking about full packages
5 available to our staff who do the same work for the
6 same families within the community. Cost of living
7 adjustment, I want to stress the importance of this.
8 I'll give you one example. Liability insurance, it
9 went up 50 percent last year, and that was only- and
10 not only that, there's not many companies that offer
11 insurance to us. Thirdly, timely payment. We have
12 to rent on the first of each month. You have to pay
13 teachers biweekly which is prior to when we get
14 reimbursement. That's a huge issue. We have been
15 taking line of credits and paying interest on it
16 which increases our cost. These are very important
17 issue. Timely payments really make or break us.
18 Lastly, I want to make sure that we understand when
19 you're talking about shortages of teachers and
20 staffing, also keep in mind infant/toddlers as we're
21 expanding, because what happens is, the challenges-
if all the staffing is moving towards preschools, the
infant/toddler programs suffer. So, we have to

1 really think of this in the universality of zero to
2 five, rather than individually 2K, 3K, or UPK.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

4 KAMILA FARUKI: Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
6 much.

7 ANNA SUCCES: Hi, good afternoon,
8 everybody. My name is Anna Succes. I was born and
9 bred in New York City and gifted with an excellent
10 education. I became a teacher to return the gift. I
11 am now a Pre-K teacher at Queensview Nursery School,
12 a two-room school in Astoria, Queens. It's also the
13 school I attended as a child and that my children
14 also attended. This year marks our 75 anniversary in
15 business. Although we were private for many years,
16 we are now fully public. I graduated from college 25
17 years ago, and have been teaching ever since.
18 Because I do not teach in a DOE building, I am paid
19 far less. I do not have a pension, and as I get
20 older I start to worry about that a lot more. I get
21 health care for me and my children through the
Marketplace, unlike UFT members. I am not with my
students today, because this issue is far too
important for me not to use my voice. DOE teachers

1 with a master's and 25 years of experience get paid
2 \$140,000 a year. I am paid half of that, half. CBO
3 teachers like me are not paid for their experience at
4 all. Doesn't matter how many years they've been
5 teaching. We're not paid for our experience. Brand
6 new DOE teachers with no experience at all are paid
7 more than I am. We all want to be able to live well
8 in the city that we love and take better care of our
9 families. Please do the right thing. Take care of
10 CBO teachers before expansion, and thank you for
11 listening. And I have one short message from my
12 Director. She says, if 1,400 CBOs do not renew their
13 contract in June, what will the city do with all of
14 the three and four-year-old children that we serve?

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
16 you, Anna. Thank you for sharing your story. That's
17 wonderful. It's precisely why we want to use this
18 space to elevate these stories, whether your mom was
19 a small business owner [inaudible] or your children
20 went to the same school and you're there. I think
21 it's an incredible way to highlight that this is what
New Yorkers look like. This is how we operate. And
we've operated in good faith for far too long, and
now is the time. So, I thank you all so much for

1 your testimony. We're going to take a quick five
2 minute recess so that your chair can use the
3 restroom. Feel free to network. Five minutes,
4 please. I'll be right back. Thank you.

5 [break]

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Alright. Thank
7 you all so much for patiently waiting. The next
8 panel we have Lori Podvesker, Ramon Peguero, Lara
9 Kyriakou- I apologize- Betty Baez Melo, and Lauren
10 Melodia. I hope- or Melodia, I don't know how you
pronounce it. Yeah, you want to start?

11 RAMON PEGUERO: Yeah, sure. So, good
12 afternoon, Chairwoman Gutiérrez, the perfect person
to lead this subcommittee.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
14 much.

15 RAMON PEGUERO: My name is Ramon
16 Peguero. I'm the President and CEO for the Community
17 for Hispanic Children and Families. We applaud the
18 many recent commitments to expanding access to
19 affordable child care and the path to a universal
20 system. However, we continue to hold concerns about
21 equitable incorporations of family child care
programs who are affiliated and independent of New

1 York City's child care system design. The SCC
2 workforce is made up predominantly of women, persons
3 of color and immigrants. These programs deliver
4 licensed programming unique from center-based and are
5 extremely valuable to our communities holding the
6 majority of infant enrollment, serving mixed-age
7 siblings, and often caring for children from infant
8 through school age, building immense bonds and
9 extended system to support for families. Here are a
10 few points of concern, and I will reference you to
11 our full testimony for additional details and
12 considerations. Following the city's roll out of 3K
13 and Pre-K, inadequate incorporation of this modality
14 of catering to system designs led to the loss of
15 1,300 programs. Only 20 percent of family child care
16 programs in New York City are affiliated with DOE
17 through direct contracts with networks. With 80
18 percent of the sector remaining independent and
19 largely left without support from the city. This
20 sector has also been held to some of the lowest wage
21 across all occupations with vouchers and contracted
care rates remaining at levels insufficient to cover
the true cost of care. The current median wage for
ACC [sic] provider is under \$20,000 and the median

1
2 hourly rate is under five dollars an hour. New York
3 City cannot move forward on the path to universal
4 care without caring for the workforce wellbeing and
5 stability. We cannot supplement the cost of delivery
6 and expanding programs on the backs of child care
7 professionals who do so much for our city. We believe
8 that New York City can do better, and we look forward
9 to working in partnership with the city to actualize
10 a system that works for families and the workforce
11 who remain dedicated to providing quality care and
12 Early Childhood Education for our children. Thank
13 you.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
16 much.

17
18 LORI PODVESKER: Hi, everybody. Thank
19 you, Chair Gutiérrez and members of the subcommittee
20 for proactively holding this oversight hearing on the
21 path to universal child care. My name is Lori
Podvesker, and I lead the policy work at Include NYC.
I'm also a parent of a 23-year-old with developmental
disabilities and still face the same challenges as
child care on the other end of the spectrum. Include
NYC is the leading source on training and information
for young people ages birth through 26 with known or

1 suspected disabilities, their parents and
2 professionals who support them. While we commend the
3 city for its continued efforts to provide children
4 under the age of five with disabilities with
5 equitable access to early child care and quality 3K
6 and Pre-K education services, the fact is that the
7 city has historically failed to do so despite its
8 good intentions. Year after year, thousands of
9 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities
10 are denied access to daycare, 2K and Pre-K program.
11 And thousands more each year do not receive all the
12 services mandated in their individualized education
13 programs. Many child care settings are not fully
14 equipped or trained for inclusive practices, limiting
15 participation of children with developmental or
16 behavioral needs. There's also a persistent shortage
17 of preschool special education seats. Despite recent
18 funding boosts, many preschoolers with disabilities
19 remain on wait lists or sitting home, because
20 appropriate placements in integrated or specialized
21 settings are unavailable. I'm going to stop here for
a second and just point out that this is a bad way
for families to start with a system in terms of
building trust. This is also the entry point for

1 babies and toddlers going into segregated settings
2 once they enter and remain in there throughout their
3 school-age trajectory. The system struggles to
4 retain qualified Special Ed teachers and related
5 services providers. Low wages for Early Childhood
6 educators, often near poverty levels, contribute to
7 high turnover, leaving many mandated positions vacant
8 and making it harder for the city to recruit and
9 retain personnel who can provide specialized care.
Okay, I'm just screening.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I appreciate it.
11 You can always submit it, but if you could summarize
12 and wrap up.

13 LORI PODVESKER: Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
much.

15 LORI PODVESKER: Yeah, I just wanted to
16 read the last paragraph, please. To achieve a truly
17 universal and equitable Early Childhood system in the
18 city, the city must embed disability inclusion into
19 its foundational infrastructure, and I think that's
20 really important, the lens of that, in the beginning
and up front and not as an afterthought. Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
3 much.

4 LARA KYRIAKOU: Thank you for the
5 opportunity to submit testimony today. I'm Lara
6 Kyriakou, Director of Policy at All Our Kin. We're a
7 national organization that provides educational
8 mentorship, professional development, and systems
9 building support to family child care educators. In
10 New York City we work with hundreds of educators,
11 supporting them with licensing, educational coaching,
12 leadership coaching, and businesses- regarding their
13 businesses, rather. Across New York City, almost
14 100,000 children spend their days in a family child
15 care settings. These programs are deeply rooted in
16 their communities and provide culturally and
17 linguistically-responsive care that families choose
18 and deeply value. We are encouraged by recent
19 historic commitments from Mayor Mamdani and Governor
20 Hochul to expand access and capacity child care
21 across the city. However, amid announcements of
historic levels of investments in child care and
Early Childhood, your mission of increased
investments in the workforce are deeply concerning.
According to the New York State Comptroller's Office,

1 low pay remains a major obstacle to expanding and
2 stabilizing the child care workforce, as you've heard
3 from many of us today. The child care workforce is
4 amongst the lowest paid professions in the state. In
5 2023, the median wage for those working in the sector
6 was about \$38,000. Within a deeply under funded
7 field, family child care educators are paid even
8 less. The overwhelming majority of family child care
9 programs in New York City, approximately 80 percent,
10 are small independent businesses. These providers
11 own their own businesses and do not pay themselves a
12 set wage. The monthly revenue margins are slow slim
13 that after providers pay business expenses, assistant
14 wages, insurance cost, and other operating costs,
15 they collect what's left as their own personal
16 income. Many qualify for Medicaid and SNAP, all
17 while working an average of 70 hours a week. Without
18 access to comprehensive benefits, including insurance
19 and retirement plans, the stress of meeting basic
20 needs will continue to have a direct impact on
21 staffing availability and vacant seats. I'm just
going to- if I may highlight one more thing. As
we're in a new time here as the governor and state
law makers begin their final month of budget

1 negotiations, this is a unique opportunity for the
2 city to send a message to Albany that significant
3 financial investments in the workforce are essential
4 as part of any child care plan. Long-term
5 sustainable funding is essential. And we thank you
6 so much for your ongoing advocacy.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
8 you, Lara.

9 LARA KYRIAKOU: Thank you.

10 BETTY BAEZ MELO: Thank you for the
11 chance to discuss the expansion of Early Childhood
12 Care and education programs and how the city should
13 use this opportunity to create a fully inclusive and
14 accessible system. My name is Betty Baez Melo and
15 I'm an attorney and the Director of Early Childhood
16 Education at Advocates for Children of New York.
17 We're pleased with the city's commitment to
18 strengthen 3K and Pre-K and to launch 2K. As the
19 city undertakes these expansion efforts, it must
20 ensure that Early Childhood Care and Education
21 programs serve all New York City families, including
the families who often struggle to access care, such
as families of children with disabilities, families
who speak a language other than English, and families

1 in temporary housing. In recent years, we've seen
2 families of young children with disabilities
3 experience hurdles in securing preschool placements
4 and services their child needs in violation of their
5 legal rights, families waiting weeks to hear back
6 after requesting evaluations, families desperate for
7 children's services to start so that they can benefit
8 from 3K alongside their peers, and families whose
9 children are sitting at home due to the city's
10 shortage of preschool special classes. Child care
11 can only be universal if it provides with
12 disabilities with the supports that they need to
13 fully participate. We appreciate that the Mayor
14 extended and baselined \$70 million for preschool
15 special education in the Preliminary Budget. The city
16 must invest in resources needed to meet its legal
17 obligation to preschoolers with disabilities and
18 ensure they are not left behind. As the city
19 launches 2K, it must ensure that families are not
20 turned away because their child has a disability, and
21 it must support providers to meet the needs of
toddlers with delays or disabilities in their care.
Among other things, the DOE will need to work closely
with the Early Intervention Program to develop

1 processes to help identify children in need of
2 referrals or services and to coordinate the provision
3 of EI services in all 2K settings. Because EI
4 generally provides only part-time services, the city
5 must ensure that 2K programs can fully support
6 children with disabilities during all program hours.
7 Among other steps, we encourage the city to develop a
8 plan for children to get needed accommodations to set
9 aside resources for providers, and to set aside
10 resources providers an access for things like
11 professional development, learning materials, and
12 equipment or staffing support to appropriately serve
13 children with disabilities. I just want to briefly
14 highlight that children in shelter also
15 disproportionately miss out on Early Childhood
16 Education opportunities, and so we're calling on the
17 city to convene an inter-agency initiative focused on
18 improving educational outcomes for students in
19 temporary housing, including access for Early
20 Childhood Education Services. So, with that, thank
21 you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward
to working with you to ensure that universal child
care truly meets the needs of all the city's children
and families.

1
2
3 LAUREN MELODIA: Hi. The Center for New
4 York City Affairs has conducted extensive economic
5 and quantitative analysis of the child care sector
6 and is committed to supporting the city to developing
7 an evidence-based, comprehensive, and
8 financially-feasible path to universal child care.
9 But I want to start by stating that the path of aging
10 down the system starting with expansion of DOE
11 contracted care to two-year-olds is structurally
12 unsound. It will destabilize child care programs
13 that do not receive contracts, particularly those
14 owned and operated by experienced immigrant women and
15 women of color, and put these programs at risk of
16 closing, and it could lead to the capture of the
17 city's child care sector by private equity. So,
18 there's like two points I'd really like to raise
19 right now. One, we have a ground-breaking Council
20 Member from the Governor and the Mayor, but we don't
21 have a detailed plan or path, and so we really need
to think about this year as one where we're defining
what universal actually is, what it will cost,
highlighting new ideas, and evaluating the outcomes
of current and pilot programs to define the path.

1 The city should not fully commit to contACED 2k
2 without evaluating many options, including how ACS
3 currently delivers child care. I strongly urge the
4 city to actually use a voucher rather than a contract
5 for 2K. The second thing I want ot mention is that
6 any path to universal must incorporate stabilization
7 programs, specifically fully funding the C-CAP vouch
8 program and establishing a wage subsidy. These are
9 efforts that people are advocating for at the state
10 level, and I urge the City Council and Mayor to
11 actively lobby the state to fund these stabilization
12 program this year and commit to funding the balance
13 in the city budget. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
13 much. I just have two questions. Sorry, just want
14 to make notes. For Ramon, thank you so much for your
15 testimony. Do you feel from the various members
16 citywide that the committee has- what has been some
17 of the feedback or some of the reservations about a
18 contract-based 2-Care program, because I think you
19 raised a ton of really good points, certainly folks
20 that- points that I've been speaking to locally in
21 the community. But kind of what are some of the
22 provider's responses to the investment, to the

1 announcement? Also, I know there's very limited
2 information on the investments that are, you know,
3 being made for them as home care- as family child
4 care providers, excuse me. So, what's some of the-
5 what are some of the things that you've heard from
6 your members?

7 RAMON PEGUERO: Thank you for the
8 question. One of the biggest concerns that providers
9 in residential settings are having with the
10 announcements is whether or not they're going to get
11 paid. They understand that they're a critical piece
12 of the puzzle. I think that they're the largest
13 piece of the puzzle. You're going to expand to
14 universal, but the question is the equity. Are we
15 going to be able to get the investment in us, not
16 only as far as pay is concerned, but also as far as
17 the education piece that was alluded to in earlier
18 testimony. Are we going to be developed? Are we
19 going to be given the space to be able to get similar
20 to DOE staffing and other teachers? Are we going to
21 be able to get the development that we need to
continue? And the equity is not only about fair pay,
but it's also about the other services that we don't
get. Vis a vis, we are not getting a- any type of

1 insurance. We're not getting any type of insurance
2 for long-term sustainability. So, I think that they
3 are concerned. They're very happy. I'm looking for
4 it, but like Lori stated, the devil's in the details.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely.

6 Thank you. My next question is for Lori. Thank you
7 so much for advocating for the need for the city to
8 respond to students who have disabilities. And you
9 mentioned in your testimony the disability inclusion
10 infrastructure. Now, I know that that can vary, but
11 what are some of the ways that myself through the
12 subcommittee like I can engage with families to
13 better understand what that looks like. I know DC
14 Hawkins and Executive Director Louisa are here, so
15 they're taking notes. But what is the best way to
16 gather what that looks like?

17 LORI PODVESKER: Thank you. I think it
18 starts really basic, and this I may be overshooting,
19 but even the language that we use- when we say
20 special needs, and I hear a lot of people using that,
21 it doesn't feel right. And the reason why is it's
euphemism. Everybody's needs are special, and when
we use that language it just perpetuates that kids
with disabilities need to be educated separately in

1 segregated settings. I think listening is the first
2 thing, and I say this both as a parent and
3 professional. And then you know, seeing what the
4 biggest needs are of a family. You know, for some
5 families, especially those with children with
6 developmental disabilities, not learning
7 disabilities, you know, their children have more
8 needs and often are excluded. And I'm talking about
9 mostly the student population that go to District 75
10 schools with developmental disabilities. So, I think
11 it's listening and hearing what those needs are, and
12 then going from there. So, for some families it may
13 be going to the same place or in the same
14 neighborhood where they live. For other families it
15 may be related services, because their child isn't
16 speaking yet. I think it's really starting at the
17 very basics and then just giving next steps.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
19 you so much. Betty, in your testimony, you had a
20 really great idea about some kind of like interagency
21 network to be able to focus on children in homeless
shelters. I just want to make sure I understood that
correctly.

1 BETTY BAEZ MELO: Yes, and we do
2 appreciate there is work happening, definitely with
3 the Department of Education or New York City Public
4 Schools and some collaboration with DHS, but really
5 having an agency focus on increasing educational
6 opportunities for children in shelter, an initiative
7 that will bring all those agencies together. I think
8 you've heard this morning how important that
9 oversight is in bringing all the right people to the
10 table, and this is a population of families that
11 require a lot of very involved attention and targeted
12 outreach. So, whereas promotional campaigns for 3K
13 and Pre-K more broadly may be sufficient to have, you
14 know, advertisements in the subway or buses, and some
15 form of phone calls, we've really found that for
16 families in shelter they need a lot more hands-on
17 support and continuously. So, not just through the
18 application process, but when it's time to also
19 accept applications and when it's time for
20 enrollment. I mean, there has been progress over the
21 years, but unfortunately- and new initiatives over
the years, but we think this taskforce or this new
initiative that brings all the agencies together is
really necessary so that we can start seeing a change

1 in enrollment numbers, because those remain
2 unfortunately for both enrollment and attendance have
3 remained.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Excellent. I see
5 a lot of head nodding from DC Hawkins behind you.
6 So, she's on it. But I think you're right, and I
7 think that this is really important to just emphasize
8 this point, and this is what the purpose of this
9 hearing is about. Alright. I think I'm good with
10 questions. Thank you all so much for your
11 testimonies. If you have it written, please feel
12 free to pass it over here. Next panel will be Sejal
13 Kothari, Latoya Simon, Debra Sue Lorenzen, Paula
14 Inhargue, Gregory Brender, and Judy Blumenthal.
15 Thank you. However you all want to start.

16 DEBRA SUE LORENZEN: Good morning.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Hi, Debra.

18 DEBRA SUE LORENZEN: Afternoon now.

19 Thank you, Chair Gutiérrez and members of the New
20 York City Council Subcommittee on Early Childhood
21 Education for convening of today's first hearing of
such subcommittee. Thank you so much. I'm the
Director- My name is Debra Sue Lorenzen. I'm the
Director of Youth and Education at St. Nick's

1 Alliance. As North Brooklyn's Settlement Houses civic
2 anchor, we provide diverse, multigenerational
3 services for very young children to the elderly,
4 including operating the 50-year-old Early Childhood
5 Center, Small World. St. Nick's applauds Mayor
6 Mamdani and New York City Council's commitment to
7 establish high-quality, equitable and universal child
8 care system that meets the needs of the children and
9 families and include strong supports for workers and
10 providers. As an Early Childhood provider, St.
11 Nick's testimony will focus on one really critical
12 issue. You already know about salary parity, and
13 you've been terrific in your own fight, Council
14 Member, for salary parity. On that issue, I'll just
15 say St. Nick's Alliance lost a third of its capacity
16 at Small World this year because of inadequate
17 staffing. I want to focus on paying providers the
18 real cost of operating Early Childhood centers. If
19 the city is to achieve this historic expansion of
20 Early Childhood education, it has to pay providers
21 the real cost of operating Early Childhood centers.
First, the birth to five contract must be overhauled.
The current enrollment-based model is highly
defective with no guarantee of covering the real

1 fixed cost for operating centers such as rent,
2 insurance, and article 47 safety regulations that do
3 not change based on enrollment. This funding model
4 also ignores that center-based providers have little
5 control over enrollment. As a system it's
6 centralized under DOE. Birth to five contract also
7 has no cost escalators, fully burdening CBO providers
8 with inflationary costs. As a result, once
9 financially-stable centers are rapidly accruing debt.
10 Small World accrued a \$100,000 deficit last year,
11 which will grow to nearly \$250,000 this year. It's
12 just not sustainable. As with our other DOE
13 contracts, such as community schools, DOE should
14 reimburse up to the full value of the contract
15 regardless of enrollment.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

15 DEBRA SUE LORENZEN: Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, thank you,
17 Debra Sue.

18 SEJAL KOTHARI: Hi, good afternoon,
19 Chair, members of the Subcommittee. Particular thanks
20 also to Chairs Eric Dinowitz and Jennifer Gutiérrez
21 for your incredible and tireless commitment to all
things Early Childhood. As a program director and

1 especially as a pediatrician, I appreciate the
2 opportunity to testify today. New York City's
3 investemnt in universal child care is bold and
4 necessary, but if it is truly going to change
5 outcomes for children, child care must be paired with
6 early coordinated support for families before
7 challenges become crises. Learning and literacy do
8 not start in kindergarten. They start at birth with
9 early language, communication, and social/emotional
10 development. When delays go unidentified or families
11 cannot navigate complex systems, children lose
12 critical time, and by the time they reach school, the
13 gaps are already wide. Just as kind of side point,
14 but a very important one on early intervention, even
15 that window is so fast. Earlier today I was
16 listening to the information about the training for
17 educators and professionals. Really that window is
18 birth to two. 45 days before a child's third
19 birthday, the Bureau of Early Intervention can no
20 longer accept referrals, and with the time it takes
21 to get to the appointment and actual services, we
need to keep that in mind. So, again, just really
emphasizing that it's really never too early to start
the process of understanding these resources and how

1 to navigate them. So, that said, this is where our
2 program, Upper Manhattan Early Childhood Connect, or
3 UMECC, comes in. UMECC helps families navigate early
4 intervention, CPSE, 3K and Pre-K and child care
5 systems that are essential, but also confusing,
6 fragmented, and difficult to access. Our call center
7 is staffed by local parents, our Early Childhood
8 Ambassadors who have lived through these experiences
9 themselves. They speak- families are able to speak
10 to someone who understands their languages, their
11 fears, their realities, and trust is built by our
12 ambassadors walking hand-in-hand with these community
13 caregivers to ensure their children reach their next
14 goal. I'll be able to wrap up in just like maybe 15
15 to 30 seconds.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

15 SEJAL KOTHARI: So, all of this, early
16 intervention, CPSE, 3K, Pre-K, all of this is
17 literacy work. It's all related. It all relates on a
18 continuum. When we support development during the
19 earliest years, we are building the foundation for
20 necessary for reading and school readiness early on.
21 Universal literacy is actually the necessary
22 foundation, and it's not going to be possible without

1
2 early identification of needs, warm hand-offs, and
3 also culturally responsive partnerships, especially
4 in the communities that are facing the most systemic
5 barriers. By embedding the navigation developmental
6 support and family-centered guidance into universal
7 child care, New York City can move from late
8 intervention to early prevention and make sure that
9 this historic investment is reaching the children who
10 need it the most. Thank you for your leadership-

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing]

12 Thank you.

13 SEJAL KOTHARI: and the opportunity to
14 testify today.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
16 much. Gregory?

17 GREGORY BRENDER: Good afternoon. Thank
18 you so much for convening this hearing and for the
19 opportunity to testify. I'm Gregory Brender from the
20 Day Care Council of New York, the membership
21 organization of New York City's child care provider
organizations, many of which you've visited and know
very well. We have some longer testimony that I'll
submit, but it's really based on the idea that we
really hope that this expansion and want to work with

1 both the administration and the council to ensure
2 that this expansion stabilizes and strengthens both
3 Early Childhood Education provider organizations, and
4 most importantly, the Early Childhood Education
5 workforce. At the center of our recommendations for
6 the workforce is to establish consistent expectations
7 based on parity with the public schools and including
8 experience for Early Childhood staff in every type of
9 setting. And this can include also setting a wage
10 floor more deeply in contract drive parity across
11 settings, and to establish parity across settings,
12 and to establish a wage fund. We're also working on
13 the state level to urge the state to provide a wage
14 fund. In terms of stabilizing providers we want to
15 make- we hope the city can make several actions to
16 stabilize contracts now. One is to continue the work
17 to ensure on-time payments, but also to guarantee
18 providers advances of at least 75 percent of contract
19 value which is the amount guaranteed in the birth to
20 five contracts, and to hold providers harmless from
21 enrollment based penalties, as long as NYCPS
continues to control enrollment. I thank you again
so much for the opportunity to testify, and look
forward to work together.

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Gregory, 26
3 seconds to spare?

4 GREGORY BRENDER: Oh, my God, I went too
5 fast.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

7 JUDY BLUMENTHAL: Good afternoon, Chair
8 Gutiérrrez and members of the subcommittee. My name
9 is Judy Blumenthal. Pedagogic Director of Early
10 Starters USA, and I am reading testimony on behalf of
11 Sarah Wilner [sp?] who's our executive director
12 regarding the path to Universal child care and the
13 inclusion of can living in shelters, as she begins
14 maternity leave this week. For nearly a decade,
15 Sarah has led trauma-informed Early Childhood
16 programs in crisis settings. Early starters came to
17 New York because families living in shelters and
18 newly arrived asylum-seeking families face similar
19 instability. Today, Early Starters is operating
20 Early Childhood safe spaces across Brooklyn,
21 Manhattan and the Bronx, serving children ages zero
to four whose families are frequently transferred
between shelters. Many of the children we serve have
lived in multiple shelters before their third
birthday. Each move disrupts relationships,

1 routines, and early learning. If universal child care
2 is to be truly universal, it must intentionally
3 include families experiencing housing instability.
4 These parents want to work, but frequent relocation,
5 language barriers and lack of stable childcare stand
6 in their way. And based on our experience, I offer
7 three recommendations. First, explicitly include
8 families in shelters in universal child care planning
9 and funding. Second, enable flexible community-based
10 space solutions so programs can open quickly where
11 need is the greatest. Third, embed workforce
12 development directly within community programs. We
13 cannot solve the workforce shortage without building
14 pathways from within affected communities. Our model
15 addresses both access and workforce. We provide
16 high-quality early learning while training mothers
17 through classroom mentorships and partnerships with
18 Bank Street College of Education. Universal child
19 care must reach children in the shelters and build
20 the workforce alongside them. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
19 much, and congrats to Sarah. [inaudible].

20 LATOYA SIMON: Good afternoon, Chair. My
21 name is Latoya Simon. I am the Education Director of

1 Simfran Academy, and I've been in the field of
2 education for over 25 years. We support universal
3 child care. However, expansion without structural
4 stabilization risks de-stabilizing the very providers
5 that are providing the services. To begin, I wanted
6 to note that I saw over this weekend on the city's
7 website that they're saying the total cost for child
8 care is about \$26,000. I must note that us as
9 providers, most of us receive maybe \$10,000 less than
10 that per child. For those who may not be aware,
11 contracted providers receive monthly reimbursement
12 well after services are provided. That can be two to
13 four months after we've provided services. At which
14 point, we're forced to take out loans, line of
15 credits, even take cash off of credit cards just to
16 keep programs running. Because even though we're not
17 receiving funding, this is our business, this is our
18 baby. So, we want the quality to always be there. So
19 we'll do whatever we have to. If you live in New
20 York City, you know that everything increases
21 annually, rent, payroll, insurances. However, the
current contract doesn't allow us to have a cost of
living adjustment. So, that's another reason why
things are being shifted to providers. We're bearing

2 the brunt of- wherever the shortcomings are for DOE
3 within the contract falls on us, and that is unfair.
4 Our employees that holds the same credentials as DOE
5 employees, those with a bachelor's degree and no
6 experience are now coming in with a salary of
7 \$71,314. When for our teachers with a bachelor's
8 degree and experience is capped at \$56,050. I'll
9 come to closing.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

9 LATOYA SIMON: I stand firmly in support
10 of the child care- universal child care initiative,
11 but universal systems must be built on sustainable
12 structure. We are partners in education. We are
13 committed. We are accountable, and we're asking for
14 a funding structure that reflects the true cost of
15 delivering high-quality Early Childhood education
16 without requiring personal financial sacrifices to
17 sustain a public initiative.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
17 you so much.

18 PAULA INHARGUE: Thank you, Chair
19 Gutiérrez and members of the Subcommittee on Early
20 Childhood Education for today's hearing. My name is
21 Paula Inhargue and I'm a Policy Analyst at United

1 Neighborhood Houses. UNH represents neighborhood
2 settlement houses that reach more than 800,000 New
3 Yorkers each year. Settlement houses have pioneered
4 Early Childhood Education in New York City, starting
5 some of the first kindergartens over a century ago,
6 and now operating over 80 Early Childhood Education
7 programs. We celebrate that Early Childhood
8 Education is finally getting the attention it
9 deserves, and we thank the Mamdani administration and
10 the Council for their commitment to creating a
11 universal high-quality, Early Childhood Education
12 system. Still, more must be done to stabilize the
13 existing system while expanding access to care for
14 families across the city. First, the city must
15 strengthen the workforce. Community-based providers
16 continue to struggle with hiring and retention
17 because low contract values translate into lower
18 salaries than DOE staff with similar credentials.
19 This lack of parity drives vacancies, disrupts
20 continuity of care and prevents programs from
21 operating at full capacity. As the city expands 3K
and develops programming for two-year-olds, success
will depend on addressing these long-standing
inequities. We also must fix contracting and payment

1 challenges. Delays in budget approvals, invoice
2 processing among others leave providers waiting
3 months to be paid for services already delivered.
4 Many operate on thin margins and are forced to delay
5 hiring, post vendor payments, or take on debt simply
6 to make payroll. Third, as we prepare for 2K
7 expansion, the city must also invest in new and
8 existing infrastructure and streamline coordination
9 between DOE and DOHMH so that permitting inspections
10 and clearances do not delay classrooms from opening.
11 To truly meet family's needs, the city must invest in
12 educators, stabilize providers, strengthen
13 infrastructure, and prioritize quality programming.
14 With sustained commitment, we can build a system that
15 delivers stable programs and high-quality care for
16 children and families across New York City. My
17 written testimony goes into more details about other
18 issues. Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
17 you. I have one question for anyone to answer,
18 especially the folks that are operating their own
19 business. Obviously, a theme here has been adequate
20 compensation, whether that's the city paying on time,
21 whether that's these contracts being renegotiated so

1 they can make a living wage, so that they have better
2 benefits. That plus the fact that there isn't pay
3 parity makes it really hard to retain staff. Are
4 there any other challenges to the pipeline? I think
5 another concern is that potentially could have all
6 these seats made live and we don't have the staff, we
7 don't have the humans to be able to fill these
8 spaces. Are there any other challenges that you
9 think you would have marketing your space, let's say
10 in a perfect world where, you know, you get what you
11 want as far as the payments and on-time contracts,
12 are there any other challenges that you think in
13 being able to hire more people?

14 LATOYA SIMON: I think the greatest
15 challenges right now is that DOB has become our
16 competitors. So, I think the fact that we are
17 basically grooming our staff, giving them the
18 experience and the knowledge and the classroom, but
19 then they're seeing the incentive from DOE where
20 they're getting significantly much more in salary,
21 pension, better insurance. I mean, that's something
that's a great impact in our business. That's why a
lot of our programs are forced to close.

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Yeah,
3 thank you so much. Anyone else?

4 GREGORY BRENDER: One thing we
5 continually hear from providers is that you see
6 there's a lot of people who have- they've been there
7 a very long time, and when they retire, they can only
8 be replaced by someone who maybe worked for a year or
9 two to go to the DOE. One related challenge to that
10 is around the background check process. That can be
11 very slow, and one of the things that happens is you
12 see people who'll actually be hired, and they will
13 take another job while they're waiting for their
14 background check clearance to come through. We've
15 urged working with New York State to allow
16 portability in background checks in order to make it
17 easier for folks to move between programs so that you
18 could have more rapid hiring.

19 LATOYA SIMON: Can I?

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, of course.

21 LATOYA SIMON: Kind of piggy-backing off
of what he stated. I think one of the things that I
would love to see changed that would definitely help
us- and this may fall under Department of Health
side- is allowing us to have teachers that can move

1 between programs. Right now, we have multiple
2 programs at our site where there is a preschool or an
3 infant/toddler, but the teachers from the infant
4 program can't go to the toddler program or from the
5 Pre-K classroom. So, let's say DOE has, you know,
6 many recess time when school is closed. That teacher
7 may want to make extra money, but because of the
8 guidelines we can't now say, you know what, you're
9 off during the summer, work with us in the
 infant/toddler classroom.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I see. So,
11 there- is that a license or a certification, or what
12 is the-

13 LATOYA SIMON: I think it's within- it's
 an Article 47.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Okay.
15 Thank you. Anybody else, yeah?

16 JUDY BLUMENTHAL: If I could add to that.
17 I think that Article 47 has been pretty stagnant for
 well over a decade, maybe even up to 20 years.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: This is with the
19 Department of Health?

20 JUDY BLUMENTHAL: Yes, the- the
 regulatory- it's the regulations that guide day care

1 centers. I think really needs to be reviewed in great
2 depth and updated to reflect today's Early Childhood
3 ecosystem and the demands that are placed on
4 providers. Everybody wants children to be safe.
5 Everybody wants them to be well-educated, but there
6 needs to be some updates and upgrades.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Well,
8 thank you all so much. Thank you for your testimony.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, appreciate
11 it. The next panel, we'll be joined by Emmanuel
12 Novy, Meredith Ansell, Leonela Tutasig, Albania
13 Jimenez, oh, and Albania Jimenez twice- just once.
14 She's very excited. And I'm sorry, to this panel
15 we're going to add two more speakers, Ana Fuentes and
16 Yolanda Morales. Great. Whoever wants to start.

17 YOLANDA MORALES: [speaking Spanish]

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Gracias Yolanda.
19 [speaking Spanish]

20 YOLANDA MORALES: [speaking Spanish]
21 Brooklyn.

 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: In Brooklyn 329.
 Okay. Muchas gracias, Yolanda. [speaking Spanish]
 Okay. Muchas gracias. Next person.

2 ANA FUENTES: [speaking Spanish] Ana
3 Fuentes. [speaking Spanish]

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Muchas gracias.
5 [speaking Spanish] Okay. [speaking Spanish] Muchas
6 gracias.

7 EMMANUEL NOVY: Good afternoon, Chair
8 Gutiérrrez and members of the Subcommittee. My name
9 is Emmanuel Novy and I oversee City's First Readers
10 which is a New York City Council-

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing]
12 Woo.

13 EMMANUEL NOVY: New York City Council
14 early literacy initiative consisting of 17 partners
15 all working together to surround families with
16 children birth through five with free programming and
17 early literacy support. New York City's universal
18 child care is historic and necessary. It'll open the
19 door for families all across the city, and if you
20 want this investment to truly change the lives of
21 children, child care must be more than a place to go.
It must be a place where learning begins, because
child care is not just care. It is the first chapter
in a child's education, because we all know the first
time a child learns is not in kindergarten. It's

1 from the moment they're born. It's from the words
2 they hear, the books they touch, relationships that
3 they make to ensure that learning feels safe and
4 joyful. These early learning interactions build the
5 brains architecture for language, self-regulation and
6 learning, and this is where City's First Readers
7 comes in. Universal child care is an opportunity to
8 move away from remediation to prevention, and city's
9 first readers ensures that this historic investment
10 translates into real outcomes by strengthening what
11 happens everyday in community settings, in homes, in
12 libraries, in clinics, neighborhood spaces, and of
13 course child care programs. We ground our work in
14 the science of reading, strengthening oral language,
15 vocabulary and early literacy, and we work directly
16 with families because we know that parents and
17 caregivers really are a child's first teacher. Last
18 year, City's First Readers engaged over one million
19 families. We gave out over 400,000 free books. It's
20 true.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: One million?

19 EMMANUEL NOVY: One million. Over a
20 million. And we also give out tens of thousands of
21 library cards to children five years and under. I'll

1 say this, universal child care expands access.

2 Universal literacy ensures impact. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much
4 for your testimony.

5 ALBANIA JIMENEZ: Hello, Chair Jennifer
6 Gutiérrez and all the members for this subcommittee.
7 My name is Albania Jimenez. I'm the Chief of Advocacy
8 and Community Mobilization at LINC, and LINC empowers
9 families and mobilizes communities, particularly in
10 high-need neighborhoods across New York City, to
11 equip children with essential literacy skills and
12 prepare them for academic achievement. So, I'm here
13 today as a mother of two who are now big, but when
14 they were young, I had to quit my job, because I
15 couldn't afford child care. So, that's why I want to
16 congratulate all of you for taking this critical
17 issues. So, I'm going to read my- so, as a mom, I
18 have to quit my job because I couldn't afford child
19 care as I said before, a choice nobody should have to
20 make. Today, child care is not just about having a
21 safe place for our children while we work, it's about
who is shaping our children during the most critical
years of their development. Ninety percent of brain
development happens in earliest years of life.

1
2 Nearly half of children impacted by poverty enter a
3 school already behind, and once gaps appear, they are
4 incredibly hard and costly to close. This is our
5 window to prevent inequity because it harness [sic]
6 into lifelong disadvantage. That is why universal
7 child care must also be universal literacy. So, to
8 close- this was fast this two minutes. As a leader
9 at LINC, I know we have the tools to model- the
10 models and the community trust to make this vision
11 real. Access changes opportunity, but quality
12 changes life. So, thank you for this opportunity.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
12 Albania. Thank you so much.

12 LEONELA TUTASIG: Good afternoon. I'm
13 Leonela Tutasig.

14 MEREDITH ANSELL: And I'm Meredith
15 Ansell.

16 LEONELA TUTASIG: We represent Play Read
17 VIP National Center, NYU Grossman School of Medicine,
18 a proud partner of City's First Readers, advancing
19 early literacy across New York City. We thank Chair
20 Gutiérrez and the committee for your leadership and
21 continued commitment to New York City's youngest
learners. The CFR Coalition supports children from

1 birth through age five in building the early literacy
2 and developmental foundations essential for school
3 readiness. CFR completed over one million early
4 literacy touchpoints last year, which Play Read VIP
5 is proud to have contributed to. Play Read VIP
6 respectfully urges your continued support for CFR's
7 work that will allow us to reach even more children
8 and families. CFR partners operate in every council
9 district with many programs intentionally designed to
10 reach families in high poverty neighborhoods and
11 support our most vulnerable communities.

12 MEREDITH ANSELL: Play Read VIP
13 contributes to this effort by delivering an
14 evidence-based parent/child intervention,
15 strengthening early relational health. The
16 intervention has been proven to improve literacy,
17 math, and self-regulation, all vital to school
18 success. An exciting development is a new adaption
19 of Play Read VIP in family child care setting,
20 increasing the number of children and caregivers
21 benefitting from access to high-quality literacy
support. On behalf of Play Read VIP and the families
we serve, thank you for your unwavering dedication to
the city's youngest learners. The Council's

1 investment in early literacy changes lives by
2 preparing children for school, strengthening families
3 and building a foundation for lifelong success. We
4 look forward to continuing this vital work together
5 in supporting the initiative for universal child
6 care, enabling more children to receive early
7 literacy exposure during their most formative years.
Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Wow,
9 two people testified in under two minutes? We should
10 all take notes. Well, thank you all so much for your
11 testimony. I want to make sure that I collect your
12 contact information, and thank you all so much. I
13 know DC Hawkins was here, but I want to make sure
14 that we make the connection with the many
15 participants in City's First Readers which, you know,
16 I deeply love and thank and love you what you said
17 Albania about universal child care also being about
18 universal literacy. I've seen work firsthand, and so
19 I'm just incredibly proud to continue to work with
you all and hoping that we can do more so that we can
do more. Okay. Thank you all so much.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.
21

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And then our next
3 panel, I'm so excited to hear from. We've been
4 joined by Rabbi David Niederman, and you'll be by
5 yourself. But it's- but I'm here. I'm here for you.
6 Thank you for joining us. Welcome, you can take a
7 seat and turn the mic on whenever you're ready to
8 testify. Thank you so much for joining us, Rabbi.
9 Try to bring it closer to him, I think.

10 DAVID NIEDERMAN: Honorable Chair
11 Gutierrez and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you
12 so much for giving me the opportunity to appear and
13 testify in front of you. I have- my name is Rabbi
14 David Niederman, the Executive Director of the UJO
15 Williamsburg. Let me say it's the first time that I
16 see you chairing such important committee. So may I
17 say mazel tov.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
19 much.

20 DAVID NIEDERMAN: We couldn't have prayed
21 for a better Chair for such important committee than
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

24 DAVID NIEDERMAN: Being a Council Member,
25 a fighter, a mom for two children, so you know what

1 it is, and you make it work. Let me say that why I'm
2 here, I'm here to speak about the new mandated child
3 care vouchers through the Child Care Assistance
4 Program, a lifeline that's helped working parents
5 keep their jobs and support their families. Last
6 year, when budget shortfalls threatened the entire
7 program and everybody threw up their hands, the
8 Council responded and rescued the program. Thank you
9 very much. However, we are happy that all of the
10 children at that time received the vouchers. However,
11 there's 16,000 children on the wait list because the-
12 because they closed the door for acceptance close to
13 a year ago. So, that means is that so many more
14 parents won't be able to go to work, because the
15 child won't be able to go to aftercare, and
16 therefore, bread will not be on the table for these
17 families. And also, we have to understand that if
18 there's empty seats, that also breaks the back of the
19 providers because they can't support the program, and
20 some are already quitting. So, I'll finish with one
21 thing. Just by saying we thank you. You have done
wonders before. It's wonderful that both the mayor
and the governor has committed itself to more
funding. So we hope that with the additional funding

1 and also fine-tuning the ACS numbers which is they
2 take a more cautious approach and they don't-
3 possibly don't consider attrition or children aging
4 out, so that the Council can intervene to ensure that
5 all children on the waiting list should get what they
6 deserve, an education for them, for their families,
7 and for their future. Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Rabbi.
9 Thank you so much for your testimony. Can I ask you
10 one question?

11 DAVID NIEDERMAN: Sure.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And I'm familiar
13 with UJO. They do tremendous work and kind of do all
14 the breadth of services in South Williamsburg. Are
15 you- have you been faced with more and more families
16 looking to get this voucher, or just unfamiliar with
17 how they're going to really be able to afford child
18 care more and more?

19 DAVID NIEDERMAN: Yes. We see it from
20 two ends. A, from parents who come in for services,
21 as you know. We see about 250 families a day who
come through our door, and we look at them in
holistic way, what do they need, benefits and also
the ability to become self-sufficient and going to

1 work. And we also see that from the workforce
2 development work that we do that we have parents who
3 use- who are planning to enter the workforce, hoping
4 that they'll have a slot for their child, and they're
5 hearing that it might- that might not happen. So, we
6 hear it from both ends.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Right. Well,
8 thank you so much. Thank you for testifying. We're
9 hoping that we can figure out so much of what we
10 heard today. I appreciate it.

11 DAVID NIEDERMAN: Thank you. Good luck.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, of course.
13 Thank you. Next, we're going to move to our virtual
14 panel. So, sorry. Did we miss anyone that is here
15 present with us in chambers who wants to testify?
16 Okay, wonderful. So, now we're going to move to Zoom.
17 Okay, first up is Elizabeth Ghunney.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 ELIZABETH GHUNNEY: Thank you. Good
20 afternoon, Chair Gutiérrez. My name is Elizabeth
21 Ghunney, Director of Home Base Child Care Services at
the Women's Housing and Economic Development
Corporation, WHEDCO. Thank you for the opportunity
to testify in support of the proposed Local Law

1 establishing an Office of Child Care and creating a
2 path to free child care for all city residents within
3 four years. WHEDCO strongly supports this law's
4 vision to make child care equitable and accessible
5 for every family. It will be successful if it
6 includes both informal and licensed family child care
7 providers, promoting economic opportunity and a
8 practical solution to increasing access in
9 neighborhoods that need it most. For 30 years,
10 WHEDCO has advanced this very vision. We support
11 informal and licensed family child care providers as
12 both early educators and small business owners.
13 Home-based child care is essential infrastructure for
14 working families. Providers offer trusted, flexible
15 and culturally-responsive care in neighborhoods where
16 community relationship matter deeply. They create
17 developmentally-appropriate environments for infants
18 and toddlers by offering small group sizes,
19 individualized attention and consistent caregiving
20 relationships that support early attachments,
21 social/emotional development, and responsive
learning. WHEDCO's research and direct engagement
with providers highlight several urgent needs that a
dedicated Office of Child Care could address. First,

2 family child care businesses require consistent and
3 accessible human resources support. Centralized HRA
4 assistance could help families navigate employment
5 regulations-

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
7 for your testimony. Time has expired.

8 ELIZABETH GHUNNEY: [inaudible] and
9 professionalize their operations. Second, many
10 home-based providers lack the capital needed to
11 expand capacity, improve facilities, or adopt new
12 educational resources.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Elizabeth, I'm
14 sorry. Can you wrap up in the next 10 seconds?

15 ELIZABETH GHUNNEY: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

17 ELIZABETH GHUNNEY: WHEDCO stands ready
18 to partner with the Council and this office to ensure
19 that informal and licensed family child care
20 providers are included meaningfully in the design and
21 implementation of universal care. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
23 much. Next we have Amy Shea.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

1 AMY SHEA: Good afternoon, Chair
2
3 Gutiérrez and members of the subcommittee. My name is
4 Amy Shea. ECE Program Manager for the Northeast
5 region at the Low Income Investment Fund, or LIFT.
6 LIFT is a leading national community development
7 financial institution, CDFI, with the vision that
8 everyone live in a community of equity, opportunity
9 and wellbeing, and we deploy capital to ensure this
10 reality. LIFT has invested in ECE facilities and ECE
11 providers through capital grants, technical
12 assistance and training, emergency disaster recovery,
13 and policy advocacy and research. As a long-time
14 partner to the city and to New Yorker's
15 community-based organizations, LIFT shares the Mayor
16 and Council's commitment to build an equitable city
17 where families can access high-quality child care and
18 housing that they can afford in the neighborhoods
19 they call home. As the program manager for this
20 region, I've worked with child care providers across
21 the city, supporting them to make sure that
22 facilities are safe, healthy, and climate resistant
23 through our emergency facilities grants, that they're
24 able to operate stable businesses through our
25 assessments and coaching and to access support to

1 care for children through our collaborative technical
2 assistance hub, Family Child Care NYC. Personally,
3 I'm thrilled about universal child care, as soon I
4 will be seeking care for my own child. I fully
5 intended to be there in person today, but my pelvic
6 pain had other ideas. But at any rate, I really
7 thank you fo the opportunity to share our thoughts
8 and for the virtual option to join. LIFT recognizes
9 that workers compensation and pay parity is critical
10 to making universal child care a reality, and
11 supports all efforts to increase wages for child care
12 educators. But I will focus my comments on LIFF's
13 expertise in child care facilities and capital.
14 First, we recommend that the city establish a child
15 care facility's fund to address much-needed
16 investments in the physical infrastructure of child
17 care. As the city expands access to 3K and monitors
18 2-Care, providers will require capital to ensure
19 their facilities are healthy, safe, and conducive to
20 learning. And LIFT's-

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
19 for your testimony. Time is expired.

20 AMY SHEA: [inaudible]

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Amy, you can wrap
2 up in the next 10 seconds, please.

3 AMY SHEA: Sure. Okay, so the first
4 recommendation and then I have two more after that.
5 So, first we recommend a child care facilities fund.
6 Second, we urge the city to pay our capital our
7 high-touch technical assistance, and building
8 coaching so that providers can locate, negotiation,
9 plan, finance, execute and sustain complex facilities
10 projects to maintain strong operations. Third, like
11 in Local Law Introduction 9, the city should address
12 regulatory barriers to increase in the supply of
13 child care, including zoning and fee structures and
14 integrating child care to planning and community
15 development. And finally, in agreement with Local
16 Law Introduction 8, we recommend that the city
17 examine public assets including affordable housing to
18 understand where they could be converted to child
19 care and to better serve across-

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing]
21 Thank you.

 AMY SHEA: across diverse neighborhoods
of the city. So, LIFT stands ready to partner with

1 the city in the roll out of universal child care.

2 And thank you so much for your time.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Amy.

4 Next we have Kate Hoy.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 KATE HOY: Hi there. Sorry about that.

7 Having trouble with mute. Good afternoon, Chair

8 Gutierrez and members of the Subcommittee. My name

9 is Kate Hoy. I'm Vice President of Children's

10 Services at the Inter Agency Council of Developmental

11 Disabilities Agencies. IAC is a nonprofit membership

12 organization serving the five boroughs of New York

13 City and regions throughout New York State. We

14 represent a diverse coalition of over 200 member

15 agencies including nonprofit early intervention

16 providers, 4410 Special Education preschool programs,

17 family groups, and independent practitioners

18 dedicated to supporting children and adults with

19 intellectual developmental disabilities. We support

20 the vision for universal child care. I'm here today

21 with an urgent warning. True universal child care

cannot be achieved if the path forward excludes

children with developmental disabilities. As the

city rightfully expands Early Childhood access, our

1 nonprofit intervention and 4410 providers are being
2 pushed to the brink of collapse. In just the past
3 month, two legacy early intervention providers,
4 agencies that help build the system were forced to
5 close their doors. Surviving programs are operating
6 at deficits, kept alive only by private board grants.
7 They do this because their mission is to serve these
8 children, but good will is not a sustainable business
9 model. Our reality is defined by wait lists, closed
10 classrooms and a systemic brain drain, and we advance
11 pay parity for the broader system that we, 4410 and
12 EI tether to inadequate reimbursement rates. Our
13 specialized educators are forced to leave the
14 nonprofit programs they love for higher paying
15 district jobs. Worse, our nonprofit programs are
16 routinely forced to act as a zero interest bank for
17 the city, which I know you heard about earlier,
18 draining their reserves to float the city's
19 obligations for up to 10 months of the school year
20 while battling shifting guidelines and crushing
21 bureaucracy. Furthermore, the city is currently
operating a one-way street when it comes to hiring.
Former DOE staff are not permitted to work in our
programs for up to two years. Yet, our staff are

1 frequently poached by the DOE. staff are often told
2 they must accept an offered DOE position within a day
3 or two, leaving our programs in a lurch and resulting
4 in, again, publicly-placed public school children
5 with disabilities with unfulfilled IEP mandates. Our
6 programs are publicly funded and serve public
7 students. Why are our providers paid so much less
8 and provided- and expected to do so much more. We
9 strongly support Intro 631 and ask that all reports
10 and workforce initiatives explicitly include 4410
11 Early Intervention providers who need mandated salary
12 parity and benefit parity. A system that is
13 structurally disadvantaged disabled children isn't
14 universal, it's exclusionary. We stand ready to
15 partner with you to build a system that works for
16 every child, and I will submit a much longer written
17 testimony.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
19 you, Kate.

20 KATE HOY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Next up we have
Carolyn Cleveland.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

1 CAROLYN CLEVELAND: Good afternoon, Chair
2 Gutierrez and members of the subcommittee. My name
3 is Carolyn Cleveland and I'm Chief Operating Officer
4 of the Kennedy Children's Center. We are a 4410
5 community-based organization and IAC member that
6 serves more than 400 preschoolers in Harlem and the
7 Bronx and our students have some of the most
8 significant developmental delays and disabilities in
9 the public school system. While my written testimony
10 focuses on three critical issues, I'm very grateful
11 that two have already been highlighted extensively
12 today. First, children with disabilities must be
13 explicitly included in expansion planning and the
14 city needs to partner, not compete, with early
15 intervention and 4410 programs. Second, salary
16 parity. We need to address unequal pay for Special
17 Education staff at CBOs like mine. So, I'd like to
18 focus on my last point for the speaking portion of
19 the event which is staffing. As we all know, the
20 Early Childhood field already has a severe staffing
21 shortage and this is nothing new. In fact, after
years of losing staff to the DOE and struggling to
find and retain staff, the Kennedy Children's Center
actually created our own Grow Your Own Program from

1 scratch. Nearly 10 years later, we've trained more
2 than 500 adults to become certified teacher
3 assistants and we became a registered apprenticeship
4 program with the Department of Labor in 2024, the
5 first and only registered apprenticeship program in
6 Early Childhood and Special Education. Today, we
7 train about 100 certified teams annually, and we have
8 30 registered apprentices employed between our
9 preschool, and more than 80 percent of our trainees
10 and apprentices are women of color and most are
11 working mothers. I am thrilled that the city sees
12 the power and potential of apprenticeships and
13 non-traditional teaching candidates, and I would
14 welcome the opportunity to speak with more about our
15 model. I want to thank you all for your attention to
16 this very important topic.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
16 Carolyn. The next panelist we have is Jenna Lautner
17 [sp?]- Lauter, sorry.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

18 JENNA LAUTER: Thank you so much. My
19 name is Jenna Lauter. I get Lautner all the time.
20 And I'm a Policy Counsel at the New York Civil
21 Liberties Union. Universal child care is a necessary

1 ingredient for thriving families and communities and
2 a prerequisite for reproductive and gender justice.
3 We are eager to see the city build towards a truly
4 universal system in which every family is guaranteed
5 access to child care regardless of income, geography,
6 employment, disability, or immigration status. The
7 NYCLU supports proposed investments in the Child Care
8 Assistance program, 3K expansion, and thoughtfully
9 implemented 2-Care. We also urge the City Council to
10 continue to robustly fund the Promise NYC program to
11 ensure that immigration status does not prevent
12 families from accessing the child care that they
13 need. We also join other advocate's calls for urgent
14 investment in the child care workforce. It is a
15 gender and racial injustice that we continue to
16 expect women of color, many of whom are parents
17 themselves, to perform caregiving work for poverty
18 wages, despite its importance of the backbone of our
19 communities and economy. A thriving workforce is
20 also essential to expanding child care capacity and
21 access. We cannot achieve universal child care
without ensuring that educators earn competitive
wages. Critically, and what I really wish to add to
this conversation, is that we urge the city to

1 disentangle child care administration from the family
2 regulation system, including by eliminating any role
3 for the Administration for Children's Services. ACS
4 is fundamentally an investigatory and prosecutorial
5 agency that separates thousands of children from
6 their families each year. It disproportionately
7 targets low-income communities of color, especially
8 Black mothers, for surveillance and punishment most
9 often based on their socioeconomic circumstances.
10 Parents in these communities view ACS as a threat, a
11 source of trauma and harm that they do not want
12 involved in their lives. Even ACS Commissioner
13 Dannhauser concedes that parents fear engaging in
14 services provided by an agency with the power to take
15 their children away. If we want families to fully
16 take advantage of child care support, we cannot
17 require them to seek it through or in connection with
18 ACS. Thank you.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Jenna.
19 Next we have Ingrid Matias Chungata.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

1 INGRID MATIAS CHUNGATA: Good afternoon,
2 Chair Gutiérrez. It's a pleasure being here and to
3 have you as a champion in Early Childhood and the
4 subcommittee members of the Council. I'm Ingrid
5 Matias Chungata, and I'm the Executive Director of
6 Nuestros Ninos, a community-based organization in
7 Williamsburg founded in 1973. We serve about 500
8 children across Brooklyn and Queens through
9 center-based and family child care programs. And I
10 want to say that I support universal child care. As
11 a mother of four who left the workplace working in
12 finance to take care of my children, because either I
13 was working for child care or I would stay home and
14 just raise my children. I was forced out of the
15 workforce. And found the Early Childhood field to be
16 that opportunity for me to work and take care of my
17 children, so I founded a family child care program.
18 So, with that said, the expansion of 2K recently and
19 the additional seats, extended day 3K seats, is such
20 an important progress in our city. But we cannot do
21 this- and I think everyone who has spoken today have
said- last that we stabilize the workforce and
address one issue that we at Nuestros Ninos have been
facing, and it's getting our children the

1 developmental support that they need. So,
2 organizations like Nuestros Ninos, have become the
3 training grounds for DOE. We recruit educators. We
4 mentor them. We support them through certification
5 and provide them with flexibility as they complete
6 their degrees. But once they get certified, they
7 leave for higher paying job. And we cannot blame
8 them. We work in- we live in a city that is super
9 expensive. But without real pay parity between
10 community-based programs and DOE universal child care
11 we'll continue to face staffing shortages and
12 instability. Party parity is not an option. It's
13 foundational.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your
15 testimony. Time has expired.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Ingrid, you could
17 wrap up. You need five more seconds?

18 INGRID MATIAS CHUNGATA: I was just going
19 to say that there's three serious things that we need
20 to look at. And it's we need really to invest in the
21 educators that are- are in our communities. We need
to setup clear timelines for families to wait for
evaluations that put children to wait for services
and we also need to increase these resources to

2 eliminate these backlogs, something that Greg already
3 mentioned which are the CBC clearance for our staff.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
6 much. Yes, of course. We have next up Rebecca
7 Schneider-Kaplan. Rebecca Schneider-Kaplan?

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 REBECCA SCHNEIDER-KAPLAN. Hi, good
10 afternoon. Can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, we can hear
12 you.

13 REBECCA SCHNEIDER-KAPLAN: I apologies.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No worries.

15 REBECCA SHCNEIDER-KAPLAN: thank you for
16 allowing me to speak today. My name is Rebeca
17 Schneider-Kaplan, Ms. Becky, and I'm a proud UPK 4
18 teacher at Stepping Stones Preschool in Staten
19 Island. As the city looks forward to the future on
20 their new journey of universal child care, I just
21 want to say please don't forget to look back and
remember us, your community-based UPK staff. I
support the plan for universal child care because
every family deserves access to a free quality Early
Childhood education. A positive start to a child's

1 education will help to determine future
2 social/emotional and academic success. I wish there
3 was universal child care in 2009, because I was a
4 single mother with a toddler. I struggled to find
5 full day child care as I completed student teaching.
6 It took me two semesters to finish the required field
7 work hours. I support the plan for universal child
8 care, but I beg you to please stop and look in your
9 rearview mirror first. You will see the dedicated
10 men and women responsible for educating the majority
11 of our's EBK programs. We are waving our hands and
12 begging not to be forgotten. Please don't forget our
13 assistant teachers. Please don't forget our
14 directors. They've gone seven years without
15 contracts. Please don't forget our students and
16 please don't forget our families and the implications
17 it has had on us. I would like to suggest one idea
18 to help resolve some of these issues, and that is for
19 the New York Department of Education to hire all of
20 your CBO staff members directly. We are not external
21 employees. Our credentials are the same. Our
curriculum is the same. We deserve the same
contracts to the same union which is UFT, the same
cost of living accommodations, and the same respect.

1 [inaudible] directly before you expand any further.
2 I teach NYC because I want to make profound impact-

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
4 for your testimony. Time has expired.

5 REBECCA SCHNEIDER-KAPLAN: [inaudible].
6 I-

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [interposing] You
8 can wrap up, Rebecca in the next few seconds.

9 REBECCA SCHNEIDER-KAPLAN: Sorry.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No, no, thank
11 you.

12 REBECCA SCHNEIDER-KAPLAN: Please teach
13 NYC that you will not turn your backs on us. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
16 Rebecca. Next we have Megan Elder.

17 MEGAN ELDER: Hi, good afternoon. Thank
18 you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My name
19 is Megan Elder. I'm a UPK teacher also in Staten
20 Island. I've been working the past few years after
21 school as a seat [sic] provider and a sets [sic]
provider. I'm speaking here today not only as an
early educator and provider, but as a parent. I'm
currently pregnant with my first child, and it has

1 been a real struggle working two jobs to make ends
2 meet and to prepare for the arrival of my baby. It's
3 hard to- not to compare my situation to the teachers
4 in public schools. We're required to have the same
5 degrees, the same certifications, the same work load
6 and follow the same curriculum. I urge you to
7 provide CBO workers the same benefits and salary as
8 our DOE counterparts. For years, CBO schools have
9 faced issues that have not been addressed by our
10 city, including underpaid staff, no medical coverage,
11 and lack of benefits, no cost of living adjustment
12 for the last five years, and the expectation to have
13 another two. Our directors here at my school,
14 they've been supporting our UPK program out of their
15 own pocket since the 90s. They make even less than
16 us teachers. We're responsible for the most
17 important New Yorkers, our children. Every day we
18 fuel the economy by giving parents the confidence to
19 go to work without worries. They have peace of mind
20 that their children are safe, loved, and learning in
21 expert hands. However, we cannot keep working
 tirelessly for our city under these conditions.
 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Megan,
3 and congrats. All the best. Next up we have Adrienne
4 Bond.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 ADRIENNE BOND: Hi, good afternoon.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Hello. I can
8 hear you.

9 ADRIENNE BOND: Hi, can you hear me?

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes.

11 ADRIENNE BOND: Good afternoon, of
12 course. My name is Adrienne Bond. I thank you for
13 the opportunity to speak. I speak on behalf of Quick
14 Start Day Care Center. We're located in the Saint
15 Albans, Queens, New York. I am not- I know a lot of
16 what I'm saying may have been already stated, but I
17 just want to testify firsthand on what happens when
18 you don't have pay parity, proper staffing, and money
19 budgeting. Over the past two years, we are lucky and
20 fortunate to hang in there and stay on, but we have
21 gone quite a few months with no pay, and we've still
managed to open up our doors and service as parents-
working parents of the community. We struggled. We
fought. We fought for two years in a row and we
managed to stay alive, but it has been hard. We

1 begged for pay parity. We have lost a lot of our
2 certified teachers to the DOE, because they don't
3 stay. They can't stay if they're not going to be
4 able to afford the cost of living. The children
5 start to leave if you don't have proper staffing and
6 that makes it a struggle. We just ask that they
7 revisit everything all across the board, to take care
8 of the directors, the education directors who work
9 hard, the book keepers, the certified teachers, from
10 the cooks to the janitors to everyone in the
11 building. We just ask that they revisit it. Revisit
12 the qualifications and skills that they ask of us to
13 have that we do have to our counterparts located in
14 the Department of Education. We're no different. We
15 fall under the same umbrella, servicing the children
16 that show up Monday through Friday here to learn and
17 we do our jobs with our hearts and soul. So, we just
18 ask that they revisit this, because it is a trying
19 time for everyone all across the board. And we want
20 to remain open, and we would love to expand, but we
21 need to be sure that the money is there, that they're
going to support the DOE, they're going to support us
and give us all the tools necessary to provide a

1 proper education that all the children deserve, what
2 parents deserve-

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
4 for your testimony. Time has expired.

5 ADRIENNE BOND: [inaudible] I appreciate
6 it. Thank you so much. Have a good day.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
8 Adrienne. Our next panelist is D. Lashaun Brown.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

10 D. LASHAUN BROWN: Good afternoon. I
11 would like to first thank the committee for welcoming
12 all stakeholders and creating a space dedicated for
13 this important work. I would first like to clarify
14 that there's a lot of talk about providing quality
15 services. [inaudible] that has been community
16 providing quality services for decades. So, I'd like
17 to change that narrative and say continue to provide
18 services to, again, respect to those who the system's
19 back was built on which is the community as well as
20 churches and from grassroots advocacy. The sector
21 has barely survived the first installment of
 universal child care under de Blasio, and these
 recent announcements wreak of the same challenges. It
 would stand to reason that fixing the current system

1 should be a priority for all across the city before
2 anyone speaks about expansion. Many politicians have
3 spoken about expansion in their district. However, we
4 must consider the programs who are currently
5 suffering. So, I pulled the following questions for
6 consideration and thought. How do you propose to
7 support expansion while programs within the same
8 district are struggling and contracts do not allow
9 for the flexibility of shifts and the types of
10 age-based seats that are needed? How do you propose
11 to support an expansion when you have a system that
12 is competing with its funder for staff and children?
13 I say this as I just received an email to teach for
14 the DOE. How do you propose or support expansion
15 when CBO programs must contend with the systemic
16 bottlenecks that exist within DOE, DOH, DOB, FDNY,
17 OMB, OLR, OCP, all of which directly or indirectly
18 affect my m-o-n-e-y? How do you propose and support
19 expansion for two-year-olds when the DOH contends
20 that once a child turns three in a two-year room, you
21 must have a teacher that qualifies at the same time
that we are struggling with staffing. I am
disappoint- well, how is there a voucher waiting list
when you have centers who are not fully enrolled and

2 being impacted fiscally due to the way our contract
3 is set up. I am disappointed that after all these
4 years, those who have claimed to be diehard New
5 Yorkers and-

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
7 for your testimony. Time has expired.

8 D. LASHAUN BROWN: Okay. Let me just
9 wrap up.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: If you could
11 just- yeah, yeah. Thank you.

12 D. LASHAUN BROWN: Yes. This is not a
13 one-person doom [sic]. This is a conundrum of bad
14 actors, policies, and systems. I would like for the-
15 while I don't know the role of the City Council, I'm
16 eager to see what actionable items come from them.
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
19 much for your testimony. Happy to work together so
20 that we can learn what the City Council is going to
21 be able to do here. Next we have Alice Bufkin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

19 ALICE BUFKIN: Good afternoon. My name
20 is Alice Bufkin and I'm the Associate Executive
21 Director of Data and Policy at Citizens Committee for

1 Children. Thank you, Chair Gutiérrez and Council
2 Members, for this opportunity to testify. In 2023,
3 CCC produced a report on barriers to child care
4 access. We used administrative data, citywide
5 surveys, interviews with parents and providers, and
6 many of the key findings resonate as much today as
7 they did then. Families face significant barriers to
8 access, lack of knowledge of existing programs, and
9 they find that the available options don't match
10 their needs and work schedules. So, we are really
11 grateful that this administration and City Council
12 are committed to tackling many of these challenges
13 and we urge city leaders to continue using data on
14 child and family needs to inform how the city
15 delivers and expands its EC services. In the time I
16 have today, I want to uplift a couple of key
17 priorities. First, while we were very glad to see
18 that funding for preschool special education was
19 included in the Preliminary Budget, there are other
20 areas of ECE funding that were not part of that
21 budget. We urge the City Council to championing
these priorities, including \$5 million of continued
funding for ECE outreach, as well as maintaining and
increasing investments in Promise NYC. Second, we

1 remain deeply concerned about the city's ability to
2 eliminate the child care voucher wait list. While we
3 were reassured by the Governor's investments, we know
4 this funding is inadequate, as we heard about
5 frequently today, to address the voucher crisis in
6 New York City which has left approximately 16,000
7 families on wait lists. We urge the mayor and City
8 Council to continue working with the state to meet
9 the need and prepare to address shortfalls with city
10 funding. Third, we echo what so many have emphasized
11 today, and the ECE system that is built on the deeply
12 inadequate and inequitable pay of our community-based
13 child care workforce will not be sustainable. The
14 challenges of pay equity and compensation structures
15 are even greater for preschool special educators and
16 for family child care providers. It's urgent that
17 the city thoughtfully incorporate family child care
18 providers into 2K implementation and address the
19 structural and pay inequities that have forced so
20 many providers to close. What we need now is not
21 just acknowledgement from the administration of the
need for parity, we need a concrete plan to achieve
it. And finally, we believe it is critical to

1 approach a path to universal child care with a focus
2 on those most marginalized by the existing system.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your
4 testimony. Time has expired.

5 ALICE BUFKIN: [inaudible] families and
6 students [inaudible]

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You can wrap up.

8 ALICE BUFKIN: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so
much, Alice. Next we have Shanita Bowen.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

11 SHANITA BOWEN: Thank you, Chair
12 Gutiérrez, for allowing us to testify today. My name
13 is Shanita Bowen, Chief Operating Officer for ECE On
14 the Move. I would have loved to have been there
15 in-person. ECE On the Move is a grassroots
16 organization with the voices of over 700 family child
17 care providers and their families that they're
18 serving. And we have to say that we agree with the
19 Rabbi's earlier testimony about the wait list. But
20 first, I want to say that families are placed on a
21 wait list. This is something we've experienced
before historically, and parents used to go there
where their case was never resurrected. And so

1 parents are cutting off their work hours, turning
2 down opportunities, rearranging their lives just to
3 survive. This waiting list is hurting all of our
4 lives. At this moment, parents and educators only
5 have each other. With family child care educators
6 stretching themselves to hold children, hold spots,
7 hold families together while everyone waits for help.
8 Well, where are the systems that are supposed to help
9 educators. Where is the leadership helping both
10 families and educator's lives stabilize the families-
11 I'm sorry, their financial lives. We show up for
12 families every day, and who is showing up for us.
13 And while we are showing up, we are doing it without
14 stability ourselves. Family child care educators are
15 caregivers, business owners, employers for mandating
16 staffing. We are the wraparound support for entire
17 communities, yet we cannot offer our own assistance.
18 You asked the question earlier what is stopping the
19 workforce from growing. What's stopping the
20 workforce from growing is that no one wants to enter
21 being an educator when the pay is at minimum wage or
slightly above without benefits. And we're talking
about family child care and utilizing us in a Pre-K
system, the new 2-K, right?

1 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your
2 testimony. Time has expired.

3 SHANITA BOWEN: We have to fund the
4 workforce fully, get rid of the wait list. People
5 are there now. Eradicate them, and then move on to
6 new systems, please.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank
8 you so much Shanita. And our next panelist is
9 Christopher Leon Johnson.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

11 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello.
12 My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I want to make
13 this clear that, look, the current plan for universal
14 child care, I think that it's a slow rigged process
15 just to line up these nonprofits and union's pockets.
16 The city has enough money to do universal child care.
17 The way that Mamdani pandered to the Governor to only
18 roll out a crappy phase of the universal child care
19 in the state for the city is really abysmal. This is
20 nothing but a grift by the nonprofits just to line
21 their pockets. If they- they could easy- and the
City Council could easy get the- have the budget for
universal child care, but the thing is that this is-
this is nonprofit industrial complex in a nutshell.

1 Like, we're for child care. Me and you are for child
2 care but [inaudible] who was nothing but the attack
3 dog for Justin Brannan. I'm surprised he still didn't
4 get a job in the Mayor's Office yet. But this is-
5 this is bullcrap. I mean, this is like- I think the
6 people need to start calling stuff out, and start
7 calling out these organizations like for child care
8 fraud for prolonging stuff. This is nothing but the
9 NPIC [sic] in a nutshell. Straight up NPIC crap in a
10 nutshell when it goes to child care. Just like how
11 tomorrow when Transportation Alternatives is going to
12 keep prolonging the process with street [inaudible].
13 But basically, look, this could be solved today.
14 This could be solved in this current budget. This
15 city, all they got to do is start cutting out some of
16 these non- basically the home-based nonprofits, their
17 money, and then you have enough money to give child
18 care every year for the next four, eight years, under
19 the Mamdani administration until the next mayor
20 comes. But this is my advice is that you got to
21 readjust the budget. You got to start cutting these
things, the homeless industrial complex nonprofits,
like WIN and all these non- that just take all our

1 money and does nothing with it. And I mean, that's a
2 start. I mean, take all their money-

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
4 for your testimony. Time has expired.

5 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: for the child
6 care nonprofits. So, taking child care- thank you so
7 much.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,
9 Christopher. Excellent. And now, with that, I
10 believe that is our last panelist to testify on Zoom.
11 Okay, great. I want to thank everybody who stayed,
12 everyone who is virtual. I want to thank, of course,
13 the Office of Child Care Executive Director Emmy Liss
14 for staying the whole time, DC Hawkins from DOE was
15 also here for a significant amount of time. Thank
16 you everybody for the robust testimonies,
17 conversations to our Speaker who was here in the
18 beginning. I look forward to the next hearing, and I
19 think- I want to thank my staff, too. Thank you all
20 so much. That adjourns today's hearing.

21 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 18, 2026