



New York Children's Advocates:

"This Budget Does Not Reflect the State's Commitment to its Children!"

With the federal government poised to drastically cut programs that provide essential supports to low-income people, this year's budget carries more significance than ever and, as the Governor has said, "is a statement of [New York's] values." If that is the case, then this budget suggests that New York values its families and children very little, particularly those least able to advocate for themselves: low-income working families, and children in foster care.

The twenty-six children's advocacy organizations from across the state signed onto this letter are deeply disappointed that lawmakers passed a budget that **slashes the State's Foster Care Block Grant**, even though it serves the most vulnerable children in the State, and **sharply cuts child care subsidies** when the State is currently serving just 17% of eligible families (those with income less than 200% of the federal poverty level). With these cuts, the budget fails to fulfill the Governor's promise of providing safe haven to low-income and disenfranchised families and children who are relying on the State for support and protection, now, more than ever.

This budget does NOT reflect our State's values. To the contrary, we know that New Yorkers – including the many legislators who advocated fiercely for greater investments in children and families throughout this budget process – cherish their children and revere strong families. We vow to redouble our efforts to improve services, systems and policies that strengthen families and enable all our children to thrive – and look forward to working with State partners in those efforts.

(continued)

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“In recent months, the Governor and other State leaders have made bold promises to provide safe haven to low-income and disenfranchised New Yorkers who are likely to be harshly impacted by expected federal budget cuts and policies. Instead, New York State has passed a budget that features deep cuts in foster care and child care subsidies – two programs that provide essential protection and aid for some of the State’s most vulnerable children and families. Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, along with its many partners, will continue to fight for policies and investments that set all New York children on a path to thrive.”

—Kate Breslin, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

“While we are pleased that the State Budget includes legislation to Raise the Age of criminal responsibility and partially restores funding for child care, we are deeply disappointed that the budget drastically cuts funding for foster children by \$62 million, continues its funding reduction to child abuse prevention funding, and fails to enable counties to provide child care to more eligible children. Foster children, who by definition are abused or neglected children who are in the care and custody of the state and counties, are some of New York’s most vulnerable children. New York has an obligation to better protect and support children, youth and families and Citizens’ Committee for Children will continue to let our elected leaders know that these vulnerable New Yorkers must be a higher priority.”

—Stephanie Gendell, Associate Executive Director for Policy and Advocacy, Citizens’ Committee for Children

“We are disappointed that the final NYS budget lets down those who deserve our help the most: vulnerable kids and low income working families. With this budget, cuts will likely impact services across the foster care system and will eliminate over 900 children from child care. These kinds of cuts hurt children's well-being and life outcomes, reducing their chances for success. Here in Monroe County, we see incidents of low income parents forced to make terrible choices for child care in order to maintain their employment. These incidents will only increase in frequency and severity, given cuts like these.”

—Larry Marx, CEO, The Children's Agenda

“Families with inadequate and unstable child care (especially families that are more at-risk to begin with) experience an unnecessary level of stress – a root cause of child abuse. Child care strengthens families by providing them not only with peace of mind but with the ability to work and provide for their children. Any cut to subsidies for low income families threatens this stability.”

—Tim Hathaway, Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse New York

“Cutting child care subsidies for over 900 families is unconscionable and counter intuitive to NYS's commitment to decreasing poverty and increasing economic development. With only 17% of eligible families receiving subsidies prior to this budget season, we should be increasing the ability of low income parents to work – not decreasing it. The new child care middle tax credit does not serve the poorest families – subsidies must.”

—Kristen Kerr and Jenn O'Connor, co-chairs, *Winning Beginning NY*

“It is unconscionable that state leaders have voted to reduce funding for child care in the state budget, at a time when 83% of the eligible children are waiting for a subsidy and the cost of child care in New York is now the highest in the nation. Child care is a proven strategy for reversing income inequality, keeping parents earning and children learning – and it is in an investment that more than pays for itself in the short and long-run. National experts report an investment in child care earns taxpayers a better return than the stock market. Cutting funding for child care is both counterproductive and harmful, now and in the long-run. We join other advocates in redoubling our efforts to expand investment in quality child care and other services that put our children and families – and our state – on a path to success.”

—Betty Holcomb, Policy Director, Center for Children's Initiatives

“Access to quality, affordable childcare is a necessity for New York families. Sadly, due to cuts that resulted from Governor Cuomo's proposed budget, fewer New York families will now have childcare.”

—Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education

“Child care is an essential rung on the ladder to the middle class and we must increase access to high quality child care for all New York families. Child care subsidies provide a critical support to low income working families and access to programs that build a sound educational foundation for their children and our future workforce.”

—Kristen Kerr, Executive Director, NYS Association for the Education of Young Children

“The Early Care & Learning Council and our network of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are concerned with the outcome of a state budget that leaves vulnerable low income families behind. The cost of child care is prohibitive for the majority of families, but denying access to those who need quality early learning experiences and reliable child care arrangements the most does not set the stage for future success and economic stability.”

—Meredith Chimento, Executive Director, Early Care & Learning Council

“New York leaders, from the Governor on down, failed working families with a budget that intensifies the state's growing child care crisis. Access to affordable, quality childcare means more parents and more providers employed; and more children getting a healthy start. Yet, rather than make the smart investment in our children, the state budget cuts this life line and sacrifices the economic stability of lower income families.”

—Blue Carreker, Campaigns Manager, Citizen Action of NY

“Since April 2016, Erie County has had a waiting list for child care subsidy resulting in hundreds of families having fewer safe child care options to go to work, or not able to work at all. This budget, and a cut of \$7 million to child care subsidy across NYS, will further the already harmful effects that an unfunded system of support to working families has created.”

—Amanda Kelkenberg, CEO, Child Care Resource Network

“We are shocked to see that NYS’s 2018 budget CUTS funding for child care subsidy and foster care grants that support our youngest vulnerable children. Where will our infants and toddlers be cared for, if not in loving and safe learning environments? By leaving so many of these children behind (subtracting over 900 more children from the already abysmal 17% served) they have less of a chance at a successful school experience, let alone being able to take advantage of free college tuition.”

—Early Childhood Development Initiative Advocacy Committee