

Opportunities Foreclosed Equity Denied

New York's Youngest Learners Still Left Out!



Make Quality Early Learning Top Priority In 2018 Budget



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OPPORTUNITIES DENIED

Working Families And The State's Youngest Learners Left Out

HIGHLIGHTS

- Last year's meager investment in pre-K — the smallest since 2014 — added just 476 new full-day seats for 4-year-olds in 14 districts. **Continuing that strategy, it will take state leaders 163 years — eight generations — to meet their commitment to offer every 4-year-old quality full-day pre-K.**
- Governor Cuomo indicated he plans to add \$15 million for pre-K expansion in the 2018 budget. If he makes good on that promise, New York will still leave behind three generations of 4-year-olds. It would take nearly 57 years to make pre-K truly universal.
- **More than 81,000 4-year-olds — 79 percent of those expected to enroll outside New York City still have no full-day pre-K, despite growing demand from parents and school districts.¹**
- Only New York City now offers Pre-K for All and is now rolling out pre-K for all its 3-year-olds. The City's progress is appropriately recognized as path breaking. **State leaders should keep their commitment to all of New York's children and add funding for the rest of the state.**
- The failure to expand pre-K **also shortchanges dual language learners and those with special needs who greatly benefit from a full day pre-K and integrated classrooms.**
- The state still lacks a sustainable and predictable funding and financing strategy, putting many districts and programs at risk for the future.
- The cost of child care in New York remains the highest in the nation. Yet, **80 percent of families eligible for child care assistance are denied support.²** State leaders made the crisis worse last year by cutting \$7 million from the state subsidy program. Again, young learners miss the opportunity to be ready for kindergarten.
- **Rates for child care and pre-K still fail to reflect the true cost of providing services, threatening the stability of programs and their ability to appropriately compensate teachers and staff.**

Investments in quality child care and full-day pre-K more than pay for themselves, especially in tough economic times. They are proven strategies for reversing the growing income inequality in New York State, the most extreme in the nation by giving every child the resources to become successful wage earners.

New York State leaders must build opportunity and stem inequality by expanding investments in quality child care and full-day pre-K.

OPPORTUNITIES FORECLOSED, EQUITY DENIED NEW YORK'S YOUNGEST LEARNERS STILL LEFT OUT!

Make Quality Early Learning Top Priority In 2018 Budget

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ENSURE EVERY CHILD IS READY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND LIFE MAKE QUALITY EARLY LEARNING TOP PRIORITY IN 2018 BUDGET

Recommendations for the 2018 Executive Budget

EXPAND ACCESS TO FULL-DAY QUALITY PRE-K

- **\$150 million to continue to add full-day high-quality pre-K seats outside of New York City, including:**
 - **\$125 million to expand early learning opportunities for 15,000 3- and 4-year-olds**, with funding levels sufficient to assure quality in all settings, appropriating at a minimum of \$10,000 per child for classroom serving 4-year-olds and \$12,000 for 3-year-olds.
 - **\$25 million in supplemental funding to enhance quality and eliminate barriers to expand pre-K**, including an investment in regional technical assistance centers to support districts to meet the highest quality standards.
- **Ensure the \$340 million grant, which supports New York City's Pre-K for All program and programs in 52 districts outside New York City is secured.**

REFORM PRE-K FINANCING

- **Continue to consolidate the pre-K funding and move toward a single pre-K program, with funding for additional slots distributed by allocation**, like other education funding, with funding levels sufficient to assure quality in all settings.
- **Conduct a cost-study of quality pre-K as recommended by the Board of Regents Blue Ribbon Committee to establish an aid formula for pre-K with funding levels that support the true costs of quality, including an appropriate compensation and support for qualified and effective teachers** in both community programs and public schools.

EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE

- **Invest \$100 million to expand access to child care for working families, and stabilize the child care workforce and infrastructure.** Part of the investment could be met by directing a portion of economic development dollars, a strategy that recognizes the critical role of child care in boosting workforce participation, improving productivity and the need to bolster the local child care industry. The investment should:
 - Expand access to child care assistance to serve more children.
 - Restore the reimbursement rate for child care services to the 75th percentile, to stabilize child care capacity.
 - Support programs to meet the increased costs of new minimum wage standards without increasing costs to low-income families in need of child care.

GOVERNOR CUOMO AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE: KEEP THE PROMISE TO NEW YORK'S YOUNGEST LEARNERS



“We’re going to have a statewide prekindergarten program funded by the state. That’s what we said we are going to do and that’s what we’re going to do. I said all along that we’ll fund the need... And as quickly as cities can bring it online, we will fund it.”
— Governor Cuomo, 2014

“Every child deserves a fair shot at a high-quality education... (pre-K) funding will help level the academic playing field.”
— Governor Cuomo, 2016, 2017

For two years running, Governor Cuomo touted the power of quality early childhood education to boost children’s life chances. Using the exact same statement, word for word.

The sentiment is bipartisan.

“What is more important than making sure youngsters get the best foundation possible?
I will fight this year to get money put in the budget for UPK.”
— Senator Carl Marcellino, Chair, New York State Senate Education Committee, 2017

We agree: Each young learner deserves a fair shot.

And there is no time to waste: Income inequality is on the rise in New York, with “too many still left in the shadow of opportunity,” as the Governor has observed. Nearly a quarter of all children under 5 in New York now live in poverty, a reality that is especially harmful to young children and their families. **Early childhood education is a proven strategy for moving both children and families ahead, preparing children for success in school and life and ensuring family economic security.**

It’s now time to put New York’s budget where the rhetoric is.

At the pace of last year’s investment of only \$5 million in new funds IT WOULD TAKE 163 YEARS to keep the promise for every 4-year-old to have full-day pre-K. Governor Cuomo has promised to add \$15 million in 2018. Even if he makes good on that plan, it would take nearly 6 decades to meet the goal.

NEW YORK CAN’T AFFORD TO LEAVE GENERATIONS OF CHILDREN BEHIND. STATE LEADERS MUST KEEP THE PROMISE OF PRE-K FOR ALL AND INCREASE THE INVESTMENT IN CHILD CARE.



KEEP THE PROMISE FOR FULL-DAY PRE-K

Every 4-Year-Old Deserves the Opportunity to Succeed in School

In 2014, Governor Cuomo made a bold pledge to make high-quality full-day pre-K available to every 4-year-old in New York State within five years and an investment of \$1.5 billion. There was bipartisan support and the legislature agreed, making a down payment toward meeting that goal of \$340 million with \$300 million earmarked for New York City's groundbreaking Pre-K for All programs. The national media and policymakers recognized New York's leadership for setting that goal.

But **with each passing year, the promise rings more hollow**, with state policymakers scaling back expansion plans to nearly a halt. **Last year's meager investment of \$5 million resulted in just 479 new full-day seats for 4s, leaving more than 81,000 4-year-olds outside New York City without access to full-day pre-K.**³

Continuing that strategy, it would take state leaders 163 years to meet the goal. The Governor proposed adding \$15 million in 2018. At that rate, it would still take nearly 57 years to meet the goal.

INVEST AT LEAST \$125 MILLION IN THE 2018 BUDGET TO EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY PRE-K OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK CITY

Long Island's 4-year-olds are the least likely in the state to have full-day pre-K; with a seat for just one in 10 of those expected to enroll. This fact is a source of growing frustration, even outrage, to families educators increasingly, the region's elected officials. "We are here today to declare we want pre-K for all our students on Long Island," Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages declared last month, at a bipartisan press conference, aimed at highlighting the inequity.⁴ Need is also growing among the Island's preschoolers, with a 9 percent rise in poverty among children under the age of six in the last decade, adding urgency to call for new state investment in pre-K outside the City.⁵

"I will fight this year to get money put in the budget for UPK," declared state senator Carl Marcellino added, on December 11. "What could be more important than making sure youngsters get the best foundation possible?"

Long Island parents live within New York City media markets and are keenly aware of the City's annual recruitment campaigns to fill every seat in the City's Pre-K for All program. "When people move to Long Island, they expect those programs for their 4-year-olds," Solages added.

There is similar frustration upstate, especially in smaller districts, many in rural areas that are still shut out of pre-K expansion. "Chautauqua County is a small, extraordinarily rural county, and we are often neglected in terms of services needed and not provided by New York State. Unfortunately, pre-K is no exception," says Beth Starks, Early Childhood Education Coordinator at Jamestown Community College and Director of Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center. One third of Chautauqua's young children live in poverty, the very children that research shows can most benefit from quality early education. Chautauqua county has 18 different school districts and fairly inadequate UPK offerings across the county. There are only 3 districts out of the 18 who qualified for the last 2 rounds of expansion. "We know the value of early childhood education and are eager to add pre-K, but without the state investment, our pre-K is inadequate to support our children.



Rising Poverty, Rising Diversity Adds to Urgent Unmet Need

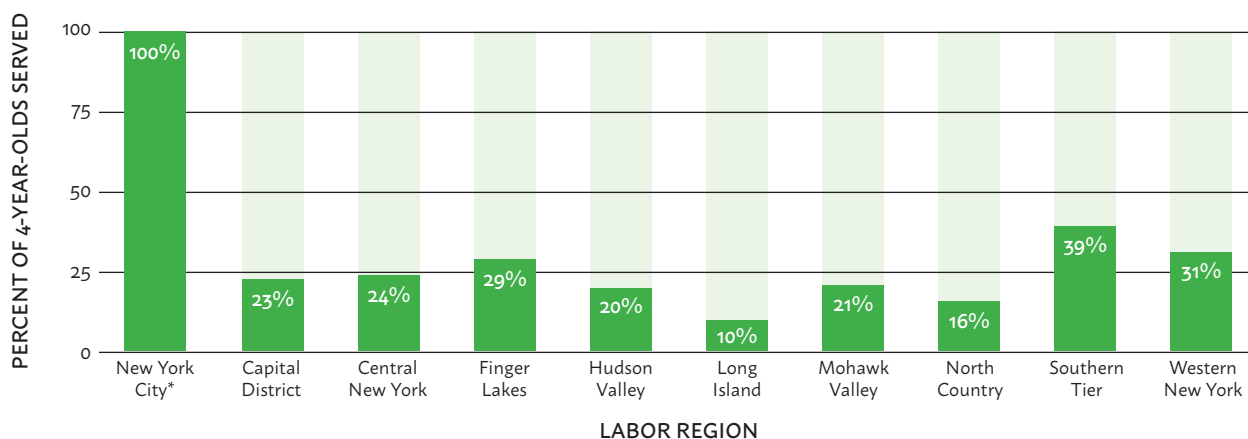
Changing demographics across the state, especially rising poverty and growing numbers of immigrant families with children who are dual language learners (DLLs) make this investment an imperative, if state leaders are serious about putting New York’s rising generations on a path to success in school and life.

New York State now ranks third in the nation in the pace of welcoming immigrant families, with 43 percent of children birth to eight now DLLs, that is, living in a home where they are exposed to a language other than English.⁶ Governor Cuomo and other state leaders have celebrated the state’s new diversity, creating a state office for New Americans in 2013, and proclaiming New York a “state of immigrants” in 2017.⁷ In one 2017 statement, Governor Cuomo declared all are welcome, deserve respect and equal opportunity “whether you are Muslim or Christian, rich or poor, black or white or brown, we respect all people in the state of New York. It’s the very core of what we believe and who we are.”⁸

Suburbs adjacent to New York City — especially the Hudson Valley and Long Island — now rival the City in their diversity; with 43 percent of 4-year-olds in the Hudson Valley are now DLLs, and 38 percent of those on Long Island.

163 YEARS TO FULL-DAY PRE-K FOR EVERY 4-YEAR-OLD?

Current Access to Full-Day Pre-K by Community



Pre-K enrollment data provided by New York State Education Department (NYSED). The number of 4-year-olds expected to enroll in full-day kindergarten is based on the following assumptions: 85 percent of children attending kindergarten, minus children enrolled in 4410 special education schools.

*NYSED estimates that New York City currently serves about 92 percent of all 4-year-olds expected to enroll. The City has adopted an official policy of universal access, however, with the promise of a full-day seat to every 4-year-old who seeks to enroll.

See Appendix A for more detail on number of children currently enrolled and those expected to enroll, by community.

“Currently only a third of Westchester school districts are funded by New York State to offer pre-K to their students. Westchester’s reputation as a beautiful area of large homes and country clubs doesn’t tell the whole story. Many working families struggle mightily to bring home an income and get their children off to the best possible start in school and life. It should not be this difficult. New York needs more investment in high quality early learning and we need it now,” says Kathy Halas, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Westchester.

Without an investment in quality, full-day pre-K, inequity rises, and grows for children right through high school. **“Reducing disparate outcomes for our children is a heavy lift without equitable access to high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences for all students,” Constance D. Evelyn, Superintendent Valley Stream 13.**

This is especially true for the state’s growing number of dual language learners.

With quality pre-K, which includes appropriate supports for DLLs, and respect for their home language, this gap can be reduced or even erased. In fact, the latest research shows that DLLs bring special strengths to learning, and are even more creative problem-solvers, when they are supported and welcomed into high-quality early education.⁹

New York’s bedrock vision for pre-K explicitly recognizes early childhood education as foundational to success in today’s global economy.¹⁰ Recently, state education officials have called for more support for dual language learners and a long-term vision for multi-lingual public education, starting in pre-K program.¹¹ This new attention is critical given New York has been slow to appropriately support dual language learners, even as the number of immigrant families and cultural diversity surged across the state. There is also increasing demand from families of all backgrounds to ensure their children speak a second language, and an increasing demand for such opportunity to begin in the early years. Languages are most easily acquired in the early years, and research shows that waiting until kindergarten or later can be counterproductive, even harmful, to children’s success, undermining their confidence and language skills later on.¹²

STATES GROWING DIVERSITY OUTSIDE NEW YORK CITY

Labor Region	Percentage of 4-year-olds of DLLs* in each region
Capital District	13%
Central New York	15%
Finger Lakes	18%
Hudson Valley	38%
Long Island	43%
Mohawk Valley	13%
North Country	10%
Southern Tier	7%
Western New York	15%

Data on Dual Language Learners by age and economic region provided by Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census pooled 2011-2015 American Community Service Data.

*Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are young children, birth to school-age, who live in a home where they are exposed to a language other than English.

See Appendix B for more details.

“As we think about universal access to pre-kindergarten, we have to be thinking about the demographics of the preschool population — who our children really are. There is increasing linguistic diversity among young children requiring approaches in pre-K that reflect our understanding of the relationship between language and learning. Linguistic diversity signals a moral imperative to support and protect children’s eventual academic achievement by integrating their home languages in all aspects of instruction and programming in pre-K,” says Zoila Morrell, Deeper Learning Equity Fellow at Mercy College and member of the Blue Ribbon Committee of the Board of Regents. “Today, we need to plan for both bilingual education and *bilingualism in education* where all teachers, bilingual or monolingual themselves, welcome, invite, and use children’s home languages in the teaching-learning process.”

No Pre-K Expansion = Harsh Consequences for Children with Special Needs

Expanding pre-K also meets the urgent need to expand opportunity for children with disabilities, whose options are rapidly shrinking. From its inception, top policymakers have seen the state's Universal Prekindergarten program as a critical pathway to better serve the 10 to 15 percent of children with disabilities.¹³ Research shows that diagnosing and offering appropriate support to children with special needs in the early years can improve their educational success — and reduce the need for more expensive remedial education later on. Research also shows, and state and federal laws require, that children with disabilities have access to early education, and be served in the “least restrictive environment,” one which allows them to learn with other children of all abilities. Without universal prekindergarten classes, such opportunities simply don't exist for most children. Special education funding is declining, limiting any option for the support that could put them on a path to success.

“The consequences are visible across the state, with preschools closing their integrated classes at an alarming rate and the opportunity for preschool students with disabilities to be educated with their typically-developing peers diminishing by the day, says Chris Treiber, from the InterAgency Council for Developmental Disabilities. “Keeping the promise to make pre-K truly universal with a full-day service for all preschoolers is essential, if New York State is to ensure that preschool students with disabilities have opportunity to attend high-quality inclusive early childhood programs.”

The Board of Regents recognizes this urgent need, calling for funding to support new models for integrated classes in as full-day pre-K expands.¹⁴ Without new investment in 2018, such opportunities will be foreclosed.

Meeting the Promise for All Children

Studies show all children can benefit from the diversity that free quality universal prekindergarten offers.¹⁵ “Young children learn from their peers and every child brings something unique to share, whether it be resilience or a great vocabulary,” says Marsha Dumka, from SUNY Empire State College, based in Rochester, where 97 percent of the city's 4-year-olds are now enrolled in pre-K.”¹⁶ “Truly universal pre-K creates the chance to make friends: learning from and with peers from diverse backgrounds, with a range of abilities and traditions enriches learning, social skills and understanding of our world.”

Yet only New York City and Rochester have met the promise of universal pre-K, while 81,000 other 4-year-olds are still shut out.



REFORM PRE-K FINANCING TO SUSTAIN QUALITY PRE-K NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Last year, state leaders took the critical first step to consolidate the state’s multiple pre-K funding streams, secure them and move toward a single state pre-K program in 2020. But the state still lacks a sustainable financing strategy to sustain existing programs and establish appropriate funding levels for new seats.

The plan for consolidation offers the promise to secure all existing pre-K funding, one year at a time, as competitive grants expire. That approach essentially freezes districts in place with disparate funding levels and with partial implementation of full-day pre-K for 4-year-olds. Some are frozen at funding levels as low as \$2700 per child and have been shut out of the expansion of full-day pre-K, even as parents and educators clamor for it.¹⁷

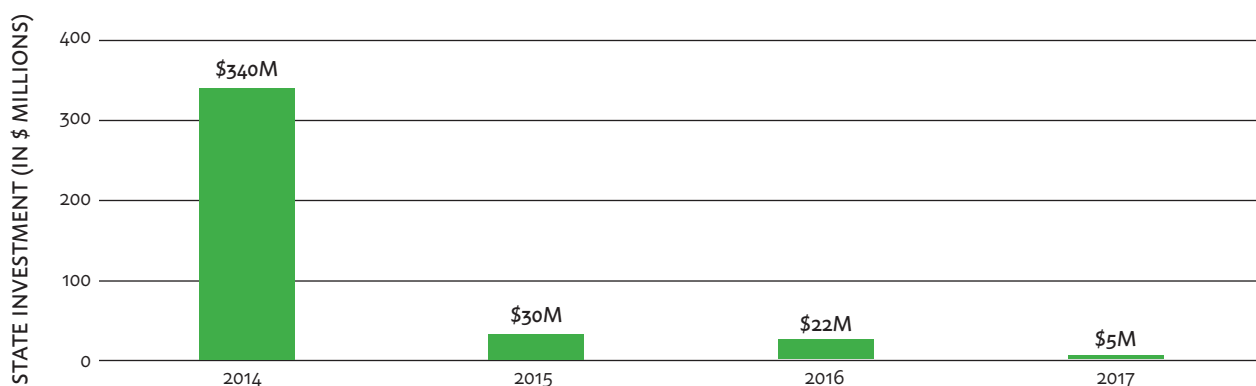
The state should establish an aid formula for pre-K, distributed via annual allocation like other education funding. The aid formula should set funding levels based on the true cost of meeting quality standards, including sufficient funding to recruit and retain qualified and appropriately-compensated teachers in all settings, both in public schools and in community-based early childhood programs. The state should undertake a cost-study, as recommended by the Board of Regents in its Blue Ribbon Committee to establish the actual costs of quality pre-K in New York.

But children can’t wait another year for new investment at funding levels necessary for a quality program. They will be kindergartners.

In 2018, the state should add \$125 million to add new seats outside New York City, funded at \$10,000 per child or double the districts half-day Universal Prekindergarten allocation, whichever is greater, until an aid formula is established, based on the study of actual costs.¹⁸

SHRINKING COMMITMENT TO PRE-K EXPANSION SINCE GOVERNOR’S PROMISE

Year-by-Year Increase in State Pre-K Funding in Budget, 2014-2017



Data on state’s pre-K investment since 2014 from New York State Education department. For more on the state’s total investment in prekindergarten, see Appendix. For more detail, see Historical Trends in New York State Pre-K Funding p. 24.

The precedent and promise for this funding strategy is already established through several expansions of pre-K, including the \$340 million grant in 2014 and the state's implementation of the federally-funded \$25 million Preschool Development grant that same year. The state's focus on high-need school districts also offered many participating districts at least \$10,000 per child.

The results of such a strategy are also well established, with universal access now achieved in New York City and *nearly universal enrollment in Rochester*, where 97 percent of that city's 4-year-olds now in full-day seats.

In 2018, the state should also set a separate rate for pre-K for 3-year-olds of at least \$12,000 per child to address the specific needs of 3-year-olds as set forth in the state's Early Learning Guidelines. That includes smaller class sizes as well as teacher preparation and additional social supports necessary for serving younger children. The state's current pre-K rates, based on the needs of 4-year-olds, simply don't recognize those costs.

Strong research documents the value of starting early with children especially those considered high-risk because of family circumstances. Offering two years of preschool can lead to larger gains for children.¹⁹ States can produce even better outcomes when the services start even earlier and are aligned from birth to school-age.²⁰

Additional investment in 3-year-olds at appropriate rates also offers the opportunity for the state to enhance resources for the many community-based programs that partner in delivery of pre-K in New York, such as Head Start and child care programs that serve younger children as well. Pre-K funding can add new resources to add children and augment resources, especially for programs dependent on parent fees or shrinking public investments in child care.



INVEST \$25 MILLION TO SUPPORT QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION — AND ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO EXPANSION

The state has established high regulatory standards, but failed to invest sufficiently in the necessary infrastructure and quality strategies as pre-K expands. *The Governor’s Statewide Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten program, up for renewal this year, established an important strategy of addressing this need, with the inclusion of supplemental funding for expansion.*

The 2018 investment should include an investment to fund regional technical assistance centers to support this expansion, modeled after those created to support the expansion of community schools and for special education. In addition, funds should be used to provide supplemental funding for two critical purposes: (1) Evidence-based strategies to attract, retain and support qualified teachers in all settings, including improved compensation as well as professional development, coaching and mentoring; and (2) Funding for other essentials of implementation, including technical assistance and start-up funding to equip classrooms and cover transportation costs.

“Syracuse has one of the highest urban poverty rates in the country let alone the state. We know that pre-K is one of those things that works against poverty,” says Kelly Ward, member of the Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse. Syracuse did receive some funding to expand pre-K in recent years, but not the full amount requested. “We need more of our half-day seats for 4-year-olds to change for full-day, and we need more seats for 3-year-olds.” Syracuse also failed to receive supplemental funding to support quality improvement, start-up or other infrastructure. The lack of funding for transportation is an especially acute problem. “Harsh winters and parents’ job schedules prevent our youngest learners from getting to pre-K. With no transportation, they can’t get to school. Pre-K busing needs to be reimbursed in the same manner as K-12 busing.”

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE PRE-K SERVICES

The State has wisely chosen to deliver pre-K services through a mixed delivery system that includes child care and Head Start programs in the community. Today, more than half of all pre-K services are offered in early childhood programs outside the public schools. This is an essential strategy that leverages existing resources and better serves the State’s working families who often need extended hours and year-round care. Some of these programs offer the expertise and capacity to create integrated settings, so children with disabilities and typically developing children can learn together and from each other. Other community-based programs have experience and expertise supporting children and families whose primary language is a language other than English.



The State should offer more support to community partners with the capacity to offer integrated classrooms, support for multi-lingual learners, and developmentally-appropriate programs for 3-year-olds. Many also serve infants and toddlers, creating capacity for stable, continuous care and learning experiences that experts say can most benefit young children, improve educational outcomes and support the State’s goal to create a continuum of early childhood education, birth to third grade.

However, the funding levels often do not reflect the value of these settings and the disparities in funding levels between schools and community based programs destabilizes a critical part of the delivery system.

Our 2018 agenda for prekindergarten includes several key recommendations to address these disparities, including the establishment of per-child rates for 3- and 4-year-old pre-K to support quality standards. Meeting this goal offers a strategy and pathway to enhance resources for many community partners and a starting point for equity across settings. **The establishment of a regional technical assistance centers also offers a venue to strengthen collaboration between public schools and their community partners,** supporting joint learning and leadership in pre-K implementation.



EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE *Another Key Investment in School Readiness and Economic Opportunity*

Quality child care and pre-K are companion and complementary investments. Child care programs offer year-round-services for the hours that working families need. Many serve infants and toddlers and provide appropriate settings for these younger learners. As an additional investment, child care funding offers another critical strategy to boost school readiness and expand economic opportunities across New York, by keeping children learning and parents earning.

“Research shows that two or more years of high quality early care and education improve children’s lifelong success, and low-income children derive the biggest gains. That means child care is the vital bridge linking New York State’s two recent, momentous achievements for kids: our Paid Family Leave law and Pre-K expansion for 3- and 4-year-olds,” says Larry Marx, Chief Executive Officer, The Children’s Agenda. “But due to years of under-investment in child care assistance for low-income working families, that bridge is at risk of collapse, with a particularly acute care shortage for babies and toddlers. This early care continuum urgently needs reinforcement to ensure a better future for all our children.”

INVEST \$100 MILLION TO EXPAND ACCESS TO CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES, AND STABILIZE THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality child care is often called the new essential for today's families, and with good reason. Two-thirds of New York's increasingly diverse families are in the workforce, and most work full-time by the time their children are three.²¹ Nearly that many are in the workforce even before their children's first birthday.²² The cost of child care in New York is among the highest in the nation, with the average cost of care for a 4-year-old in a center-based program now averaging more than \$12,000 a year. For babies and toddlers, the cost is \$15,000 in a center, or \$11,000 in other licensed settings.²³

These costs fall especially hard on women, who still earn less than men and are more likely overall to be in low-wage jobs.²⁴ Child care now takes half the income of low-income working parents.²⁵ The cost of child care also produces financial challenges for middle-class and professional families as well, with the cost of infant care now double the cost of tuition at New York's public colleges and a cost that comes at a time when many parents are still paying off their own college loans.²⁶

On paper, New York's official policy is to offer a subsidy to working parents earning up to 200 percent of poverty and to ensure that all families on public assistance have the child care they need to achieve economic independence. In real-life terms, that means a family of three earning up to \$40,840 is eligible for subsidized care.

For years, New York's investment in child care has been woefully inadequate, falling far short of the goal of serving all eligible families. Counties simply run out of money and freeze subsidies, or even stop accepting applications because of the shortfall in state funding to meet that goal. **Yet last year, state leaders cut \$7 million from the state's subsidy program.**

The result: Approximately 80 percent of eligible families are denied child care assistance.²⁷

In addition, the state reduced its reimbursement rate for child care services, even as operating costs rise. The state's new minimum wages standards create particular challenges for the field. A growing number of programs are finding it hard to even keep their doors open and to retain existing staff. "Turnover is now running at about 30 percent in our programs, the worse we've ever seen," says Treiber who represents more than 800 programs serving children with disabilities at the IAC.²⁸ For the staff who remain, declining resources translate into low compensation, even poverty-level wages and no benefits.

On average, the annual income of child care workers across New York is \$27,580. Few work in settings with any health or retirement benefits.²⁹

This is a disturbing trend given the evidence that teacher compensation is one of the best barometers of quality in early childhood programs.³⁰ Children thrive in the care of responsive stable positive relationships with adults who have the knowledge and skills to nurture their development and learning. Most program directors are well aware of this research, but lack the resources to lift salaries. “Quality of care is the ability to maintain highly-qualified personnel,” says one program director in New York City. “I would say (low) salaries and lack of health benefits are driving potential hires away from our program.”³¹

The challenge is especially acute in programs serving babies and toddlers, who need more attention — and thus more staff — to care for them than older children. They also need stable, consistent care from adults who understand their needs and the importance of positive relationships. (See *Getting It Right From the Start*, p. 19) Such care can’t be provided on the cheap, making quality infant care the most expensive of all.

Experts estimate the average cost of infant care in New York to range from \$11,000 to \$27,000 a year.³² “Our working parents face some of the highest child care costs in the nation, with a center-based infant slot running over \$20,000 annually,” says Kathy Halas, executive director of the Child Care Council in Westchester. Infant care is also in short supply across the state.

There is just one regulated slot for every ten in New York City. Statewide, only 3 percent of licensed programs are reserved for babies less than a year old.³³

“Parents across New York State continue to struggle to find quality child care that they can afford,” says Meredith Chimento, executive director of the Early Care and Learning Council. “They may have a program in mind, but often they find there are long waiting lists or the high cost of the program is simply unaffordable. This is true for both low and middle-income families.”

The very few lucky families who do get a subsidy find the assistance is all too temporary. Even a small raise at work can turn into a family penalty, with local counties keeping eligibility tight. “We had a parent who lost her subsidy because of a 25 cent an hour raise at work, which put her over the eligibility level allowed for a subsidy. It was a case of a hard-working parent trying to make ends meet and relying on high-quality child care so she can go to work each day, says Dawn Meyerski, executive director of the Mt. Kisco Child Care Center. “She was so upset, but we couldn’t have her take her child out of child care.” Her center provided a scholarship so that child could stay in place. But Meyerski has a waiting list, especially for babies and toddlers, with new parents calling every week.

“Parents can feel backed into a corner, and even consider options that don’t appear to be entirely safe,” says Chimento from the Early Care and Learning Council. And many are forced to settle for options that are not entirely reliable or consistent, a challenge to children’s development.

It is clear that New York has now reached the “perfect storm” for child care, one foreseen by the Empire Justice Center, which tracks trends across the state, as the public investment declines and need increases, reaching a “breaking point” for the state’s children and families.³⁴

It is time for state leaders to step up and increase the investment in early care and education. **“Our funding is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of all children. We are losing generations of children because we are woefully neglecting their first five years, when the brain develops to its greatest capacity,”** says Jane Brown, Executive Director of Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. who manages pre-K for seven school districts in Rockland county and also runs a child care resource and referral agency seeking to expand and improve child care options in the region. “Our policies are inconsistent across departments,” she adds. “It is time that we build a comprehensive system of quality, affordable, accessible early learning for all children prenatal – age 5.”

GETTING IT RIGHT FROM THE START: NEW YORK NEEDS BETTER CARE FOR BABIES



The first three years of life are fundamentally different from all others. By the age of three, 85 percent of the brain’s capacity is in place, creating the ability to speak, learn and reason.³⁵

Early experiences greatly influence the way those skills develop, setting the stage for lifelong emotional, physical, social and intellectual growth. With child care now a critical source of early experiences for a growing number of children, it is critical that New York State invest in programs and practitioners with the knowledge and skills necessary to get babies off to a good start.³⁶ More than half of all one and two year olds now have at least one regular child care arrangement and nearly 40 percent spend more than 35 weeks in non-parental care.³⁷

Evidence shows that high-quality infant care, based on positive, caring and stable relationships can enhance all aspects of development, from language development and social skills to confidence and emotional well-being.³⁸ But surveys show that much of today’s care for very young children is often so poor that it can compromise early development, even jeopardize language development and social skills.

Yet New York ‘still invests too little in infant and toddler care, with licensed and regulated slots for only a tiny fraction of families who desperately need it. The Governor and legislature created paid leave that starts this year. In his State of the State address, Governor Cuomo recognized the First 1000 Days of a child’s life as a crucial time of development. Now it’s time to invest in the care so desperately needed when that leave ends and parents return to work.

WHY INVEST IN EARLY LEARNING?

The News Just Keeps Getting Better

The evidence for state investment in early learning is clear and compelling: Nobel laureate economist James Heckman continues to make headlines with his breakthrough research showing a remarkable return on investment — 13 percent a year — over the course of a child’s life cycle.³⁹

And a little over a month ago, a review of 22 “well-constructed” research studies, led by a researcher at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education, concluded the benefits of early education persist for years, boosting graduation rates and reducing the need for special education placements.⁴⁰

It also beats the return on most other public investments in economic development, from convention centers to stadiums to casinos.

These latest findings add new momentum to the already-significant body of research which documents the benefits of investing in quality early learning programs — for children, families, schools, communities and taxpayers:⁴¹

- Children who attend high-quality early learning programs are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to succeed, be reading on grade level by third grade, graduate high school, go on to college and have higher earnings as adults.
- Parents can be more productive workers and increase their earnings.
- Employers can attract and retain employees, with affordable child care and pre-K the new “must-haves” for middle class families.
- Communities have more economic activity, less crime, more successful schools and stable families.
- Taxpayers see a return of at least \$7-10 on every dollar invested. Federal Reserve economists — as well as Nobel-Laureate economist James Heckman — say there is simply no better public investment to be made — it even beats the stock market. The return on the typical economic development projects — from sports stadiums to convention centers — simply can’t match the benefits that accrue from one that supports children’s early learning and development. The savings to the school system are particularly notable and supported by education leaders.⁴²

No wonder that pediatricians, business leaders, law enforcement and clergy are all speaking up, along with parents, early childhood and public school educators and advocates, in favor of new state investment in quality early learning opportunities. “The state must step up and invest state dollars to assure all child care and early education programs are high-quality and accessible,” says Warren Siegel, chair of the New York State chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT INVESTING: RISING INEQUALITY ACROSS THE STATE

The consequences of NOT investing in early education — in both the short- and long-term are also well-documented.⁴³ Children without access to quality early learning opportunities are more likely to start out kindergarten behind their more affluent peers, up to two years behind. They are also likely to stay behind right through their elementary and secondary years. The costs to them — and all New Yorkers — are also notable. High school drop-outs are likely to have few job opportunities, low earnings and nearly twice as likely to be arrested. Research shows that at-risk children left out of quality pre-kindergarten are five times more likely to engage in criminal activity by age 27 than children attending quality pre-kindergarten.

Those consequences are felt acutely in communities around the state, especially those once seen as a refuge from urban poverty. Long Island is a perfect example of these trends, as detailed in this report, with a rise in poverty among children under the age of 6. This is now reflected in the growing number of children showing up for kindergarten unprepared to succeed and the launch of a bipartisan coalition calling for new investment in early learning in December on the eve of the release of the Governor's 2018 budget.

Research documents that children living in poverty are far more likely to grow up to be adults in poverty. They are shut out from social networks and enrichment opportunities available to more affluent families.⁴⁴

It is an even more serious concern, given that New York now leads the nation in income inequality. The divide is simply the most extreme in the nation, and is growing more so, each year.⁴⁵ Many experts expect the trend to accelerate, if New York does not take action. They also assert that while it's an unequal world now, it doesn't have to be. Smart investments like child care and other supports for working families can turn the tide.⁴⁶

That leaves it up to our state leaders, especially Governor Cuomo, to take the lead in protecting the youngest and most vulnerable New Yorkers. Too many New Yorkers are “left out and left behind,” as the Governor stated. He has taken several important steps to support young children and their families, including paid family leave and initial investments to expand full-day pre-K. But it is time to do more.



Endnotes

- 1 Data on new pre-K seats expected, as a result of the \$5 million in state's 2017 budget provided on request, by Office of Early Learning, New York State Department of Education, December, 2017
- 2 See Stephanie Schmit and Christina Walker, Center for Law and Social Policy, for their close look at the number of children receiving subsidies in New York State in 2016. That year, they estimated 122,233 children were served, about 80% of those eligible. Appendix IV, Low-Income Children Ages 0-13 Served by CCDBG. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Disparate-Access.pdf> New York State's Office of Children and Family Services estimated that 126,000 children received subsidies each month during 2015-16 (power point presentation, ("Child Care Subsidy Program Overview," presented at Child Care Roundtable, August 17, 2017).
- 3 Data on pre-K seats added in 2017 provided by Office of Early Learning, New York State Education Department.
- 4 A bipartisan group of state legislators on Long Island held a press conference in December, urging state leaders to add new funding for full-day pre-K in the 2018 budget. In a statement issues in collaboration with the Long Island Pre-K Initiative, they underscored "they pointed out how underfunded our region is and how critical it is to invest in early education." See Lawmakers, Advocates Call for Publicly-Funded Pre-K for long Island, *Newsday*, December 11, 2017. CBS 2 also provided in-depth coverage here.
- 5 Memo on Long Island Pre-K funding from Nassau and Suffolk Councils of School Superintendents, shared with Governor and NYS legislative leaders, 2016.
- 6 See "Dual Language Learners: A Demographic and Policy Profile for New York State, Migration Policy Institute, "Maki Park, Amna O'Toole and Caitline Katsiafcas, November, 2017, available at migrationpolicy.org.
- 7 "Governor Cuomo, Born in New York, Says He is an Immigrant," Harriet Sinclair, Washington Post, September 28, 2017.
- 8 "Governor Andrew Cuomo: New York A refuge for minorities, immigrants," Kristine Phillips, Newsweek, November 13, 2016.
- 9 See "Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English, Promising Futures" National Academies of Sciences, 2017.
- 10 See Regents policy statement on early childhood education, "Early Education for Student Achievement in a Global Economy," 2006.
- 11 See recent policy statements and guidance from education officials in NYS to encourage multilingualism for all children in recent years: Blueprint for English Language Learner Success: <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/bilingualed/nysblueprintforellsuccess.2016.pdf>. English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs): <https://www.nysed.gov/bilingualed/regulations-concerning-english-language-learners>. April 3, 2017 Board of Regents item on Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs) in Prekindergarten Programs: <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/417/p12d1.pdf>. New York's new direction aligns with evidence in national research, see for example, Espinosa, Linda, PreK-3rd: Challenging Common Myths about Dual Language Learners, An Update to the Seminal 2008 Report, p. 4-7, provides summary of latest research on the advantages of children learning more than one language in their early years, including improved executive function and problem solving skills, along with recommendations for policymakers seeking to support the growing number of dual language learners in early education programs. <https://www.fcd-us.org/prek-3rd-challenging-common-myths-about-dual-language-learners-an-update-to-the-seminal-2008-report/> Similarly, see National Academies of Sciences, Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures (2017) <https://www.nap.edu/resource/24677/DLL.pdf>
- 12 See National Academies of Sciences, 2017, as cited above. Also Child Trends, report on Dual Language Learners, at www.childtrends.org/indicators/dual-language-learners/ which provides quick overview of key policy issues and trends.
- 13 See for example, guidance from the New York State Education Department in 2001, which identified Universal Prekindergarten as the "ideal" setting to meet the needs of children with special needs. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/preschool/upk.htm>. Also see component six of the Board of Regents' most recent statement on early childhood education, "Integrated programs and Services, at www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/policypaperjanuary2006.htm. These strategies promoted in New York State are aligned with guidance from federal education officials on how best to meet the needs of children with disabilities, see <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf>. and <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/inclusion/index.html>. In 2015, the Regents release their most recent guidance, "Promoting Inclusion of Students with Disabilities, on how best to support children with disabilities including more than 80,000 preschoolers in New York. <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P12-Inclusion%20.pdf>.
- 14 See Regents' recommendations for state aid in the 2018-19 state budget, adopted December 12, 2017. Also, draft recommendations from the Regents Blue Ribbon Committee, which recognized the urgent need to include funding for new models for integrated programs as state pre-K expands.
- 15 See report from Poverty and Race Relations Action Council, "A Better Start: Why Classroom Diversity Matters in Early Education," Jeanne Reid and Sharon Lynn Kagan at the National Center on Children and Families, Teachers College, Columbia University, with Michael Hilton and Halley Potter, April 2015. www.prrac.org/pdf/A_Better-Start.pdf.
- 16 See ROC the Future: Annual Report Card, state of the children in Rochester, 2017, page 4. <http://www.actrochester.org/sites/default/files/2017-ROC-the-Future-ReportCard.pdf>
- 17 See guidance on consolidation from Office of Early Learning in May, 2017. The UPK allocations from 2017, also available from Office of Early Learning, provides information on per-child rates now frozen in place.
- 18 See Regents' state aid proposal for 2018-19, which includes this language.
- 19 See Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES) at www.nieer.org for benefits of offering pre-K to 3- and 4-year-olds
- 20 For the latest research, see the Education Commission on the States at www.ecs.org. Also see the Foundation for Child Development's research on P-3 early learning, at www.fcd-us.org.

- 21 See 2017 State Child Care Facts in the State of New York, usachildcareaware.org
- 22 Working Mother Issue Brief, Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor, 2015.
- 23 See 2017 State Child Care Facts in State of New York, usachildcareaware.org
- 24 See National Women's Law Center's new and growing resources on gender equity and child care policy at www.nwlc.org. The figures cited here can be found in their latest studies, "Undervalued: A Brief History of Women's Care Work and Child Care Policy in the United States," 2017 and Blank, Schulman and Frohlich, study working mothers in low-wage jobs, 2014..
- 25 See "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care" the 11th annual state by state report on child care costs across the nation, at usachildcareaware.org.
- 26 See Jessica Troe, "Early Learning in New York," Center for American Progress, July 2016.
- 27 See Stephanie Schmit and Christina Walker, Center for Law and Social Policy, for their close look at the number of children receiving subsidies in New York State in 2016. That year, they estimated 122,233 children were served, about 80% of those eligible. Appendix IV, Low-Income Children Ages 0-13 Served by CCDBG. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Disparate-Access.pdf> New York State's Office of Children and Family Services estimated that 126,000 children received subsidies each month during 2015-16 (power point presentation, ("Child Care Subsidy Program Overview," presented at Child Care Roundtable, August 17, 2017).
- 28 See "High Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High Quality Workforce: Low Compensation Undermines Quality," jointly published by the federal Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, June 2016., <https://www2.ed.gov/about/initiatives/earlylearning/files/ece-low-compensation-undermines-quality-report-2016.pdf>. For more in-depth information on the early childhood workforce, see the Early Childhood Workforce Index created by the Center for the Early Childhood Workforce, at cscce.berkeley.edu, which includes a profile of New York State. See also IAC Teacher and Teacher Assistant Turnover Data, October 18, 2017, for data on how the trend in child care is now matched in programs serving children with disabilities.
- 29 Child Care Aware 2017 profile of New York State at usachildcareaware.org.
- 30 See <http://nieer.org/policy-issue/policy-brief-low-wages-low-quality-solving-the-real-preschool-teacher-crisis>, in addition to resources in note 28 above.
- 31 Campaign for Children Survey, 2015.
- 32 Estimates for the cost of infant care vary widely across New York State. Child Care Aware estimates that care for babies in licensed family child care is \$11,000 a year and \$15,000 in a center, 2017, usachildcareaware.org. New York State sets market rates for infants in centers in New York City at more than \$19,300 a year, 2016. The Center for American Progress puts the cost at \$27,000 a year, 2016.
- 33 *CCI Primer 2011: Key Facts About Early Care and Education in New York City* at ccipolicy.org, offers the most comprehensive and recent look at regulated and licensed capacity and funded slots supported by public funding, including child care (and public assistance vouchers) and Early Head Start. Statewide data from "2017 State Child Care Facts in the State of New York," usachildcareaware.org.
- 34 See "Still Mending the Patchwork," Empire Justice Center at www.empirejustice.org.
- 35 See the landmark study, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, published by the National Academy of Science, at www.nas.edu. Also "Supporting Growth and Development of Babies in Child Care: What Does the Research Say," by Annie Goldstein, Katie Hamm and Rachel Schumacher. A joint project of CLASP and Zero to Three, 2016. at zerotothree.org.
- 36 See Matthew Melmed, "A Strong Start Matters: Quality Child Care for Babies Must be a Priority for Babies in America," May 2016 at zerotothree.org. See landmark study, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, cited above (note 35.) Data from the women's bureau, 2015, indicate that labor participation rates for mothers of infants and toddlers are rising, and even more families may need access to quality options for children under three. Working Mother Issue Brief, Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor, 2015.
- 37 See landmark study, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, cited above (note 35.) Data from the women's bureau, 2015, indicate that labor participation rates for mothers of infants and toddlers are rising, and even more families may need access to quality options for children under three. Working Mother Issue Brief, Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor, 2015.
- 38 Current research estimates that 75% of care in centers and 93% of care in homebased care is low or mediocre and can be detrimental to development. See Infant-Toddler Child Care Fact Sheet, 2017, available at zerotothree.org
- 39 James Heckman continues to update his research on the return of investment in early care and education. His research showing a 13% return is available at www.heckmanequation.org.
- 40 See the "Lasting Payoff of Early Ed." By Bari Walsh, November 16, 2017. <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/11/lasting-payoff-early-ed>.
- 41 *The Economics of Early Childhood Investments*, White House Council of Economic Advisors, January 2015.
- 42 See Clive Belfield's study specific to New York State, "Early Childhood Education: How Important Are the Cost-Savings to the School System." and has since found similar results in studies of other states.
- 43 See the Council for a Strong America's website, www.strongnation.org.
- 44 Davis, Elizabeth E, Grobe, Deana, and Weber, Roberta B. cited in Whitehouse summary above. See also Research Report from Children's Defense Fund, 2015, Ending Child Poverty Now. www.childrensdefense.org
- 45 Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) analysis, released June 2016, as part of the Economic Analysis and Research Network., based on report, Income Inequality in the US by state, metropolitan area and county. Available at www.scalpolicy.org
- 46 See "It's An Unequal world. It Doesn't Have to be," by Eduardo Porter and Karl Russell, New York Times, December 14, 2017. Also, "Our Broken Economy, in One Simple Chart," by David Leonhardt, August 7, 2017.

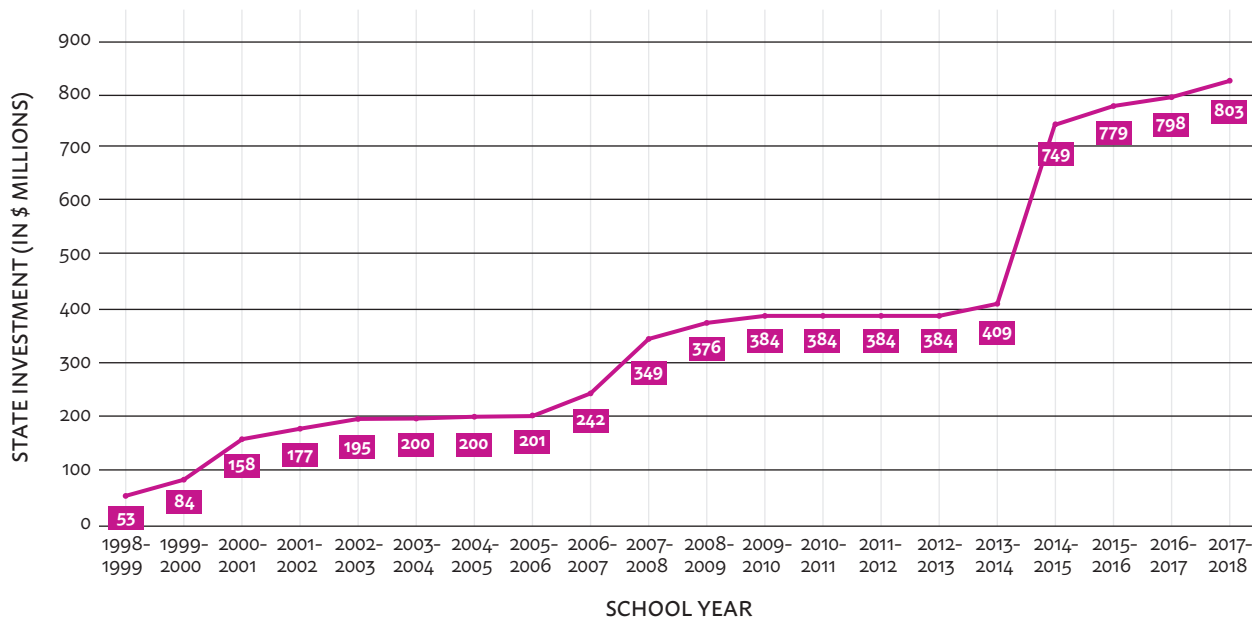
Appendix A: Pre-K Funding and Enrollment

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: 4-YEAR-OLDS WITHOUT FULL-DAY PRE-K BY COMMUNITY

Labor Region	Percent of 4-year-olds denied access to full day pre-K	Number of 4-year-olds denied access to full day pre-K	Total number of 4-year-olds
Capital District	77%	6,918	8,997
Central New York	76%	5,411	7,143
Finger Lakes	71%	7,547	10,623
Hudson Valley	80%	19,423	24,389
Long Island	90%	23,698	26,365
Mohawk Valley	79%	3,496	4,432
North Country	84%	3,310	3,959
Southern Tier	61%	3,391	5,597
Western New York	69%	8,361	12,174
OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK CITY	79%	81,555	181,503

Pre-K enrollment data provided by New York State Education Department. The number of 4-year-olds expected to enroll in full-day kindergarten is based on the following assumptions: 85% of children attending kindergarten, minus children enrolled in 4410 special education schools.

HISTORICAL TRENDS IN NEW YORK STATE PRE-K FUNDING



Data on historical trends in state pre-K funding drawn from state aid proposals from Board of Regents, 2009 to present and from the Office of Early Learning, New York State Education Department reports, 2013 to present. In 2014, New York State secured \$25 million federally-funded Preschool Development grant, which is not included in this chart. That grant expires in 2018-19 school year. State leaders have promised to use state funds to keep pre-K services in place in five districts for 2500 full-day seats in the 2018-19 school year. That commitment brings the total state pre-K budget to approximately \$822 million.

Appendix B: Dual Language Learners

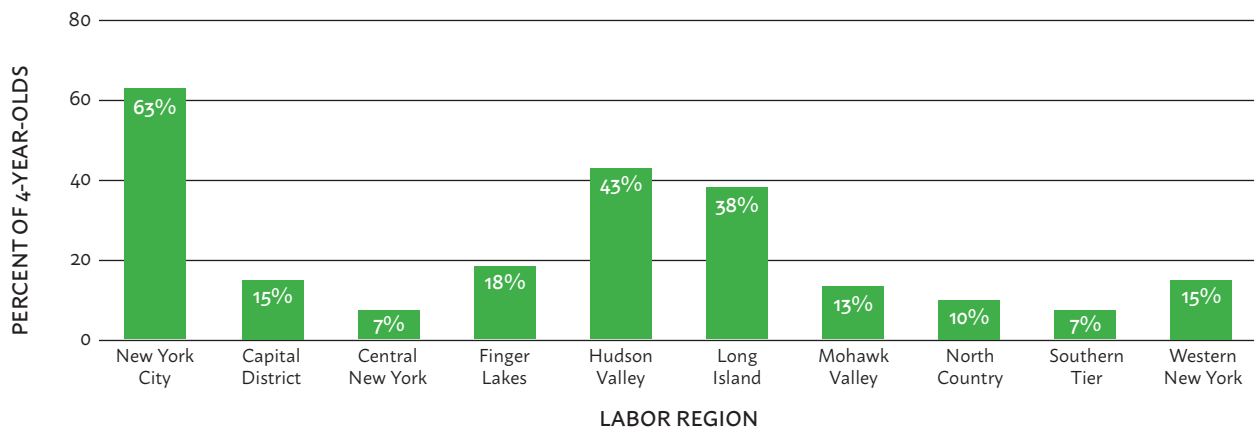
4-YEAR-OLD DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS BY COMMUNITY

Labor Region	Total number of 4-year-olds	Number of DLLs*	Percent of DLLs
Capital District	12,349	1,644	15%
Central New York	17,466	1,297	7%
Finger Lakes	13,839	2,491	18%
Hudson Valley	29,392	12,776	43%
Long Island	33,594	12,793	38%
Mohawk Valley	6,599	868	13%
North Country	4,927	507	10%
Southern Tier	6,773	448	7%
Western New York	14,639	2,218	15%
New York City	110,794	70,143	63%

Data on Dual Language Learners by age and economic region provided by Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census pooled 2011-2015 American Community Service Data.

*Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are young children, birth to school-age, who live in a home where they are exposed to a language other than English.

PERCENTAGE OF 4-YEAR-OLD DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS BY COMMUNITY



Data on Dual Language Learners by age and economic region provided by Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census pooled 2011-2015 American Community Service Data.

*Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are young children, birth to school-age, who live in a home where they are exposed to a language other than English.

READY FOR KINDERGARTEN, READY FOR COLLEGE CAMPAIGN

The Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College Campaign (Ready for K) seeks to mobilize public and policymaker support for strategic investments and policies in pre-K and child care in New York. The campaign works with a full range of early childhood and public education advocates across the state and also seeks to engage parents as well as new partners and champions emerging in the women's, civil rights, family leave, labor and community organizing campaigns. The Campaign is led by a partnership of the Center for Children's Initiatives, the Alliance for Quality Education, Citizen Action of New York and the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy. The campaign seeks to align our agenda with key coalitions, including Winning Beginning New York, as well the Empire State Child Care Campaign and the Campaign for Children in New York City. Ready for K's sponsoring organizations meld expertise in effective policy analysis, advocacy and mobilization to win support for campaign priorities.

*For more information on this report,
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