



Child Care for All NY: Families and Child Care Providers Need NY to Lead in 2022 Fast Facts

The challenges facing New York families as we enter 2022 cannot be overstated.

- High-quality child care is the largest monthly bill for families with children, costing on average \$2,047 per month ([\\$24,564 per year](#)) for two children in a child care center in 2019.
- According to federal guidance pegging affordability at no more than 7% of family income, a family of two would need an annual income of \$350,914 to “afford” the annual cost of center-based care. With state median income for a family of four being \$100,377, child care is unaffordable for nearly all NY families, yet nearly all must cover the costs entirely on their own. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- Currently, only families of 4 with income less than \$53,000 per year are eligible for child care subsidies in NY, assuming they meet all other eligibility requirements (including immigration status, work requirements) and bureaucratic hurdles.
- The Executive Budget’s proposal to expand child care subsidy eligibility to 225% of FPL (to \$59,625 for family of 4); likely to expand access to about 21,000 children – falling far short of what NY families need.

New York child care must leave no children behind.

- Huge barriers exist to accessing care beyond income levels that are too low. Simply expanding income eligibility for subsidies is not enough; it is still just a bandaid on a profoundly broken, and unsustainable system. Parents need a system that is easy to navigate, without innumerable obstacles to access.
- New York’s subsidy system denies child care assistance to whole groups of parents—those going to school or seeking work; immigrant families who are filling essential service jobs; those who work at night and need to sleep in the day. The Governor’s proposal will not address these inequitable exclusions, nor will it fix the many hurdles to access parents face.

The New York child care sector entered the pandemic fragile due to decades of underinvestment; two year of pandemic challenges have left it on the verge of collapse.

- United States Treasury Secretary [Janet Yellen](#) recently referred to child care as “a textbook example of a broken market. . . the price does not account for all the positive things it confers on our society.” She pointed out that families spend, on average, 13

percent of their income on child care for young kids, yet child care workers earn so little they rank in the bottom 2 percent of all professions.

- Labor Department statistics showed in the fall of 2021, that the child-care services industry is still down 126,700 workers — more than a 10 percent decline from pre-pandemic levels. The hiring situation is [more dire in child care](#) than in restaurants right now. What is happening in the nation is happening in New York State, often on a greater scale given how severely New York has been affected by the pandemic.
- New York lost more than [9,500 licensed child care slots](#) from December 2019 to December 2020. Between April 2020 and Feb 2021, 1,500 child care providers in NY closed. Notably, New York entered the pandemic with 64% of New Yorkers living in child care deserts.

The child care workforce is long overdue to be paid a thriving wage reflective of the tremendous value of the work.

- The average median child care wage is [less than \\$30,000 a year](#).
- New York’s early childhood educators, nearly all women, largely women of color, live in poverty at [more than twice the rate](#) of New York workers in general.
- There are about 70,000 members of NY’s child care workforce; the Governor’s proposed \$75 million in workforce stabilization (which is a re-investment of last year’s unspent COVID relief dollars) will allow an average grant of only \$1,000 per member of that workforce. This is important, short-term relief, but it must be followed immediately with ongoing wage supports. *Without the promise of competitive salaries, people cannot afford to work in child care.*

Transformation must begin this year; New York has the funds, it just needs the will.

- This is the year NY must take large steps toward phasing-in Universal Child Care. To be clear, what is needed are not bandaids applied to the current broken system, but swift transformation to universal. As Treasury Secretary [Janet Yellen](#) recently recommended: “It’s past time that we treat child care as what it is – an element whose contribution to economic growth is as essential as infrastructure or energy.”
- \$5 billion is what New York families and the child care sector need. \$5 billion is only slightly more than 2% of the proposed [\\$216 billion Executive Budget proposal](#). New York received \$18 billion in federal stimulus funds last year, and has, to date, only spent one-quarter of those funds. New York has the means to take significant steps this year toward achieving universal child care. New York is intent on filling its “rainy day” fund, but if ever there was a rainy day, three years into this pandemic, it is raining hard on New York families, children and child care providers.