

Believe in Children Campaign

A Call for Universal Child Care, Pre-Kindergarten, and Afterschool

“...we believe in children, we believe in Pre-K, we believe in education, let's put our money where our mouth is and let's make it a reality.” – Governor Andrew Cuomo

Providing equal opportunity for all New York's children requires ensuring that they have access to a continuum of high-quality services that support their learning and development and meet the needs of diverse families. Building a comprehensive system, of which these investments are a critical part, will better serve children and families, streamline regulations, reduce costs, and result in a significant economic return on investment.

Research has found that high-quality programs can significantly narrow the achievement gap at each stage of a child's life, and that children need consistent access to such programs to continue making these gains. Establishing universal access, from birth through high school, to places where children can be safe and learn will put all our children on the right track for success in college, career, and life.

Governor Cuomo has called for five years of sustained investment in Pre-Kindergarten and afterschool. Building on his proposal, and the work of the Assembly and Senate on child care and Pre-K, we propose:

Universal Child Care: Invest an additional \$182 million in child care subsidies in 2014–15, serving more than 25,000 additional children. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach \$2.2 billion annually, providing universal access to the estimated 305,000 children of working parents who are currently in need of high-quality early care and learning.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten: Invest at least \$225 million for new, high-quality full-day Pre-K opportunities as an important step toward providing **universal access** to all four-year-olds and fully support any localities' efforts to expand high-quality full-day Pre-K for all children.

Universal Afterschool: Invest \$8.8 million in quality infrastructure in 2014-15, in preparation for five years of investment beginning with \$160 million in 2015–16. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach \$825 million annually, providing access to half of the estimated \$1.1 million children in need of programs.

For questions on: child care, contact Carolyn Lee-Davis at Carolyn@TheChildrensAgenda.org; pre-kindergarten, contact Betty Holcomb at bholcomb@centerforchildrensinitiatives.org; afterschool, contact Nora Niedzielski-Eichner at neichner@nysan.org.



March 3, 2014

Dear NYS Legislator:

The undersigned wish to express our support for *Winning Beginning NY's* Believe in Children Campaign. *Winning Beginning NY* is the State's early care and education coalition. This year, the coalition was proud to present a unified budget recommendation that ties together funding for high-quality child care, Pre-K, and afterschool programs along the education continuum.

Research has found that high-quality programs can significantly narrow the gap at each stage of a child's life, and that children need consistent access to such programs to continue making these gains. Establishing universal access, from birth through high school, to places where children can be safe and learn will put all our children on the right track for success in college, career, and life.

The Believe in Children Campaign budget request is attached, with details on each proposal. The accompanying signatures illustrate the broad, statewide support for building a comprehensive system.

We urge you to fund these initiatives at a level that will substantially increase the number of children served this year. We further ask that you commit to expanding funding consistently going forward until all children and families have affordable options for child care, Pre-K, and afterschool and all our children, especially those at risk, have access to the proven short- and long-term benefits of these programs.

New York State's children are dramatically underserved. It is time to put our children first, and stop our cost cutting at their expense.

Please address any questions on: child care to Carolyn Lee-Davis at Carolyn@TheChildrensAgenda.org; pre-kindergarten to Betty Holcomb at bholcomb@centerforchildrensinitiatives.org; afterschool to Nora Niedzielski-Eichner at neichner@nysan.org.

Thank you.

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