



**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Education  
Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair  
On Early Childhood Education of the NYC FY 2025 Budget**

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Thank you, Councilmember Joseph and members of the Committee on Education for the opportunity to testify. The Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early childhood provider organizations in New York City. DCCNY supports its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field at large through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, professional development and training for early childhood educators, directors, and staff, and referral services for parents looking to find child care. DCCNY member organizations provide early care and education at over 200 sites in neighborhoods across all five boroughs.

Most DCCNY member organizations work with contracts with the New York City Public Schools. DCCNY member organizations also provide early childhood education through privately-funded programs and the Federal Office of Head Start. DCCNY member organizations operate in all five boroughs and employ over 4,000 New Yorkers, most of whom are black and brown women. DCCNY is proud to be a member of the Emergency Coalition to Save Education Programs and Campaign for Children, and our recommendations are aligned with those coalitions.

DCCNY is excited to work with the City Council and other policymakers to achieve a budget that invests in the early childhood workforce and puts New York City closer to the promise that all children have access to high-quality early childhood education. In September of 2023, DCCNY and the City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus co-

released a report: “[The Enduring Value of the Early Childhood Workforce](#),”<sup>1</sup> which showed the steps the City must take to achieve salary parity for the teachers, directors and staff in community based early childhood education programs. We continue to stand by those recommendations.

## **Early Childhood Education and the FY 2025 Budget**

The FY 2025 Budget is a perilous moment for New York City’s early childhood system. It includes the most drastic cuts to early childhood education in the City’s history and it fails to take action on the workforce crisis impacting early childhood education. Without major changes, this budget will leave many New York City families with access to child care and contribute to an exodus of working families out of New York City.

### **Cuts to Early Childhood Education**

In the announcement of his Executive Budget, Mayor Adams repeated that every child who wants a seat in an early childhood education program will get one. We acknowledge and appreciate the \$92 million restoration of sunseting Federal funds for 3-K expansion and \$56 million in Preschool Special Education funding. However, these restorations exist within a larger context of immense scale-backs of Pre-K For All programs, including a three-year succession of \$170 million PEGS to Pre-K and 3-K programs, which are slated to take effect in the upcoming fiscal year.

Without further investments in the child care system, the City will not be able to fulfill the Mayor’s crucial promise. Notably, while Mayor Adams baselined a number of critical education programs, he implemented single-year funding in his proposed \$92 million for Pre-K restoration. One year of funding—particularly in the context of continued \$170 million cuts year after year—places early care and education providers in a precarious financial position. Families need stable early childhood education programs, and this one-year investment falls short of the needs of providers and families alike.

The City must act NOW to make the investments and reform its current 3-K system so that all children in New York City have the opportunity to access early childhood education, not only a select few.

DCCNY urges the City to immediately enact the following recommendations:

- Commit to fund current 3-K program levels and restoring the timeline for the 3-K expansion.
- Implement the conversion of 3-K school day / school year seats, to extended

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus and the Day Care Council of New York. *The Enduring Value of the Early Childhood Workforce: Why New York City Must Complete the Path to Parity for the Community-Based Child Care Workforce* September 2023 <https://www.dccnyinc.org/our-work/public-policy/publications/>

- day, year round seats which the City Council funded in its FY 2024 budget;
- Invest a robust level of resources in linguistically and culturally appropriate on the ground and multimedia marketing, community engagement and enrollment efforts for 3-K.
- Reform enrollment procedures so that community based organizations have the option of directly enrolling children whose families apply for 3-K, Pre-K or child care.

## **PAY PARITY**

As the representative of New York City's early care and education provider organizations, DCCNY works with the City and our partners in organized labor to come to a labor agreement that reflects the skills and hard work of the teachers, staff and directors who work every day to make high-quality education available to the youngest New Yorkers.

The early childhood workforce is drastically underpaid and the gap between their salaries and those of their counterparts in public schools remains stark. In our report with the City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus, we found that directors at CBOs lose more than \$2.2 million over the course of a 25-year career by remaining at a CBO. Further, certified teachers lose out on \$1.7 million over a 25-year career, and assistant teachers sacrifice over \$235,000 across a 25-year career.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, many of the teachers, staff, and directors in community-based organizations work for longer hours and a greater number of days than their counterparts in public schools.

In the FY 2025, Budget, the City must act to ensure that these essential but underappreciated workers receive salary and benefits on par with their counterparts in public schools.

DCCNY urges the City to fund a new labor contract that advances childhood education parity between center and school based services by including:

1. Baseline salary increases for the workforce with a \$25/hour base hourly wage for support staff
2. Restoration of longevity differentials
3. Per diems for Extended Day/Extended Year Programs

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<sup>2</sup> New York City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus and the Day Care Council of New York. *The Enduring Value of the Early Childhood Workforce: Why New York City Must Complete the PAth to PArity for the Community-Based Child Care Workforce* September 2023 <https://www.dccnyinc.org/our-work/public-policy/publications/>

Thank you for the opportunity testify. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Gregory Brender [gbrender@dccnyinc.org](mailto:gbrender@dccnyinc.org) or Shelby Lohr [slohr@dccnyinc.org](mailto:slohr@dccnyinc.org).