



Statement of Empire State Campaign for Child Care and Winning Beginning NY on Governor's Release of the Child Care Availability Task Force Recommendations

Contacts: Gregory Brender, (917) 992-7372, gbrender@dccnyinc.org
Dede Hill, (518) 879-6616, dhill@scaany.org
Jenn O'Connor, (518) 817-1107, joconnor@preventchildabuseny.org

Empire State Campaign for Child Care and Winning Beginning NY applaud the Governor's Child Care Availability Task Force Recommendations released last week. The recommendations set forth a comprehensive, ambitious, and practical plan for New York to equitably expand access to high-quality child care to all New York families that need it, and to provide child care educators compensation and support reflective of the extraordinary value of their work. They present a consensus vision of the diverse government, business, child care, parent and advocacy leaders who made up the Task Force, arrived at after two years of active engagement and hard work by all.

New York now finds itself with a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We have a data-driven, fully vetted plan for transforming New York's child care system; \$2.4 billion in additional child care stimulus funds to jump-start implementation; a federal administration that is prioritizing expanding and investing in early childhood education; and a state Legislature committed to ensuring New York's recovery is just, equitable, and centers those New Yorkers most impacted by the pandemic, among them, children. At the same time, the challenges facing the child care sector and families as the impacts of the pandemic continue cannot be overstated. We must take full advantage of the opportunity presented by this moment, and with an urgency reflective of the tremendous need of both families and of child care providers for concrete support.

We call upon New York leaders to take the following next steps without delay:

- Expand the state and counties' administrative capacity immediately – transformation cannot happen without new staff and resources;
- Invest a portion of the federal child care stimulus funds in child care's most precious resource – its educators and staff – many of whom worked through the pandemic at great risk to themselves and families at wage levels that leave many living in near poverty. New York should follow the lead of many other states and provide the child care workforce stimulus payments without delay – a small but important step toward fair compensation, and essential to workforce retention at a moment when child care workers are leaving the field in great numbers; and

- Extend the term of the Task Force and give it authority to monitor and guide implementation. These recommendations mean nothing unless they are implemented swiftly, effectively, and with input from child care providers and families.

This is our moment, New York, to set our state on track to offer high-quality, affordable child care to all New York families! We cannot miss the opportunity to take full advantage of the new federal funding and transformational plan generated by the Task Force.

“New York is poised to make transformational change to child care. We have the opportunity to improve quality for children, make it more affordable for families and improve compensation for early childhood educators. The Child Care Availability Task Force report provides the blueprint and increased federal funding creates the ability for us not just to rebuild but to build back better.” **Kristen Kerr, Executive Director, NY Association for the Education of Young Children and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“I cannot wait to see what we do with this work. The Task Force has worked so hard to form it into action.” **Gladys Jones, Founder, ECE on the Move and member of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care**

“Lack of child care, a gendered wage gap and the preponderance of presence in low-pay jobs were pre-existing conditions that lead to a predictable, and wildly disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women – especially women of color. We need to use this moment – and the NYS Child Care Availability Task Force report as a blueprint, to catalyze conversations about creating work/life models that going forward, consider the needs of working women and their families. Child care is *the* essential support required to capitalize from the diversity of voice that comes from having 71% of mothers with children (under 18) working outside the home.” **Sheri L. Scavone, Executive Director, WNY Women’s Foundation and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“On the heels of historic investments in child care in the recently enacted state budget, this report makes it clear; we have work to do. We look forward to working with the Governor and State Legislature to expand licensed, quality, and affordable child care across the state.” **Pam Wells, President, CSEA/VOICE Local 100A**

“The Alliance for Quality Education is pleased that the Task Force report is finally out. The report illustrates the pathway toward a child care system that works for all families, particularly for Black, brown, immigrant and low-income families who have not only been marginalized over the years, but also were hit the hardest during the pandemic. Now, we need to make sure that we use the resources available through the state and the federal government to operationalize this roadmap, quickly and in an inclusive, collaborative way.” **Marina Marcou-O’Malley, Policy and Operations Director for the Alliance for Quality Education**

“It was an honor to be a part of the Child Care Availability Task Force and work with such inspiring colleagues from across the state. The report is a roadmap for a more equitable and effective child care system in New York. I look forward to working with our state partners to seize this moment by using the historic federal investment in child care to transform New York’s child care system.” **Jennifer Rojas, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Suffolk and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“The work of the Child Care Availability Task Force—together with the recent investment of federal funding—sets the stage for transformation of the child care system in New York State. We must seize this opportunity to support providers, programs, and parents. Child care is a concrete support for many and we must increase access to affordable, high-quality options in order to strengthen families, the backbone of our great state.” **Jenn O’Connor, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Prevent Child Abuse New York and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“This report is a call for New York State to make the bold investments towards ensuring access to child care for all New York’s families. With a historic new federal investment in child care and rising demand as more working families need to return to in-person work, the time to act is now. Day Care Council of New York looks forward to working with New York State policymakers to expand high-quality early childhood education for all New York families.” **Andrea Anthony, Executive Director of the Day Care Council of New York and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“Before COVID hit, child care was in crisis, which was why the Task Force convened in the first place. As we leave the crisis stage of the pandemic behind us, we cannot afford to miss this once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a system worthy of the central role child care plays in children’s development, in the lives of families, and in the lifeblood of our economy. Now is the time to invest, and rectify the woeful under-investments of the past.” **Larry Marx, CEO of The Children’s Agenda and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“I will always believe every challenge is an opportunity and we have the opportunity right now to do the right thing for our current workforce and for our state’s youngest citizens, our future. With the release of the Child Care Availability Task Force report coupled with this historic investment in child care, our lawmakers have invested in our children and also in the state’s economic development and infrastructure. In the 2022 budget, New York State has recognized that in order to rebuild our economy it is essential that we include a commitment to something as critical as child care. I thank the Governor and our Senate and Assembly on behalf of my colleagues and the children and families across New York State! It is imperative that this funding is released planfully and immediately because families and child care providers cannot wait any longer for help.” **Beth Starks, founder and Executive Director of Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center, Assistant Professor and Early Childhood Education Coordinator at Jamestown Community College, and member of the Child Care Availability Task Force, Winning Beginning NY & Empire State Campaign for Child Care**

“The recommendations of the Child Care Availability Task Force lay the framework for addressing the child care crisis in New York. The critical role child care providers serve in our economy was finally recognized during the pandemic. It is the Early Care & Learning Council’s hope that New York continues to invest in the future of our industry, by stabilizing the workforce through wage increases, addressing child care deserts and providing quality accessible early education for all New Yorkers.” **Meredith Chimento, Executive Director of the Early Care & Learning Council and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“As New York State recovers, quality early childhood education will play a vital role in helping parents and caregivers return to work, promoting healthy child development, and mitigating the impact of trauma on children. It was an honor to be a part of these important conversations, and I look forward to supporting the implementation of the Task Force’s recommendations to address the needs of children and families across New York State.” **Yolanda McBride, Director of Public Policy, Children’s Aid and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“New York’s Child Care Availability Task Force recommendations create a roadmap for transforming child care at a moment when transformation is both possible, and absolutely essential. For the families and child care providers still reeling from the challenges of this pandemic year, however, these recommendations will mean nothing unless New York implements them boldly and without delay. We look forward to supporting implementation and to the real moment of celebration: when all New York families can access high-quality child care, and all New York child care providers receive the compensation and resources they need and deserve.” **Dede Hill, Director of Policy, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, facilitator of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, and a member of the Child Care Availability Task Force**

“The Child Care Availability Task Force Report is a significant step into a re-imagined future for New York State child care. It provides the preliminary ingredients needed to reconstruct a child care system that meets the needs of current day children, families, and workforce in their traditional, blended, and ever-changing compositions. The Report implicitly yet factually eludes that today’s child care industry has successfully sustained the most challenging crisis of our time and therefore has outgrown the past model. Its precepts firmly establish the field of early care and education as a public good and human right for all children and families. This work must manifest now, more than ever.” **Vonetta T. Rhodes Ed.M., Western New York Child Care Action Team**

“Governor Cuomo’s release of the Child Care Availability Task Force recommendations represents a critical opportunity to expand access to affordable high-quality child care and early learning opportunities for young children. Along with the child care resources included in The American Rescue Act, the Task Force recommendations can help accelerate New York’s economic recovery and build the foundation for a new child care system in our state. One that is accessible and affordable to all families, particularly families of color and low-income families

whose inequitable access to high-quality, affordable child care was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. This is our chance to get it right for the youngest New Yorkers and their families.” **Dia N. Bryant, Ed.L.D., Interim Executive Director, The Education Trust-NY**

“All Our Kin is proud to support the Child Care Availability Task Force’s common sense recommendations to make long overdue improvements to New York’s child care system. We look forward to partnering with other stakeholders to ensure that the implementation process centers equity and responds to the needs of family child care providers and the children they serve.” **Christie Balka, Senior Policy Director, All Our Kin**