



# Making Child Care More Affordable, Accessible and Equitable for New Yorkers

Child Care Availability Task Force Report • *April 2024*



Office of Children  
and Family Services

Department  
of Labor

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**D**ear Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie:

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for affordable, accessible and equitable child care services was a necessity for New York's hardworking families. The pandemic elevated the importance of this vital service to help grow the State's economy. Both on the federal and state level, significant efforts have been made to provide additional funding and incentives to give families the resources to pay for child care, along with encouraging the expansion of early childhood care and education programs. Still, it is clear that more work is needed to meet the growing demand.

We are so grateful to Governor Hochul for understanding the importance of reconvening the Child Care Availability Task Force, and to our legislative leaders who will consider our comprehensive and innovative proposals. We also sincerely appreciate each Task Force member, both returning and new members, who have invested their time and energy to develop both near- and long-term recommendations to improve the quality and affordability of child care in New York State. We are especially proud to have had many more child care providers, across all modalities of care, participate in the Task Force, providing valuable insights into how we can partner with them on exciting initiatives to accomplish this mission.

Since the last Task Force report and convening, there has been a tremendous effort to improve access to child care, as well as to strengthen and support our child care providers. Over \$2.3 billion in COVID-19 related pandemic funds were directed to New York State; the State committed to a historic expansion of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP); distributed over \$1 billion to child care providers; and made significant investments to increase the supply of child care by providing grants to open new programs and expand capacity for existing providers to address "child care deserts" in NYS.

Overall, NYS will allocate record-setting funding for child care. In the most recent Enacted State Budget, you have committed more than \$7 billion over the course of four years to support the child care needs of our families and communities.

The Task Force recognizes the incredible progress that has been made over the last three years thanks to your unwavering support. The Task Force is dedicated to assisting our State leaders in driving the development of even more ground-breaking enhancements to our child care system with a focus on addressing the child care workforce crisis and the sustainability of child care programs post COVID-19 pandemic, and developing a framework leading to a phased-in rollout of universal child care.

This report aspires to build on the first incarnation of the Task Force and the successes since the first report and chart a course for New York State to continue be a national leader on child care. Finally, Governor Hochul — we strive to complement your deeply personal commitment to reforming our child care system as the first governor of this State who knows firsthand what it is like to be a working mother who needs affordable, accessible and equitable child care. With our own passion and dedication, we are proud to present the findings and recommendations of the Task Force for your review.

Sincerely,

**DaMia Harris Madden, Ed.D., MBA, M.S.**  
Acting Commissioner  
NYS Office of Children and Family Services

**Roberta Reardon**  
Commissioner  
NYS Department of Labor



# INTRODUCTION

Since the release of the Child Care Availability Task Force’s original report in May 2021, New York State has made strong progress in increasing equitable access to affordable child care by raising the child care eligibility limit to the federal maximum as well as investing \$7 billion into supporting children and families. However, the work is far from over. If New York State is to move toward the North Star of universal child care, a strong framework and short term changes are needed to develop and implement a statewide, universal system.

The Task Force reconvened in March 2023 and was charged with:

- Evaluating the need for and availability of child care throughout the State.
- Examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child care.
- Advising the State in developing a framework leading to a phased-in rollout of universal child care.
- Recommending ways to address the child care workforce crisis.
- Assessing the implementation of policies supported by federally funded programs through various stimulus packages.

Under the historic leadership of Governor Hochul, and with the guidance of the Task Force, New York has made tremendous expansions in supporting eligible families through the Child Care Assistance Program, making about 100,000 families newly income eligible for child care assistance since July 2022. Yet, many families are unable to make use of the assistance because they cannot find a child care program that meets their needs with the capacity to care for their child. The main driver of the state’s capacity crisis is the workforce shortage. Child care providers have repeatedly raised at Task Force meetings that the top concern is their inability to recruit and retain child care educators because they cannot afford to compensate them adequately.

Accordingly, while the cost and the availability of high-quality care remain significant concerns, the Task Force has made the child care workforce a priority. Early childhood educators and child care providers are essential to the learning and develop-

ment of our children. They provide the foundational intellectual, emotional and social development that is necessary for future success, and yet, workforce shortages threaten to undermine other gains such as the expansion of access to child care assistance. Throughout this report, this critical workforce is referred to as child care providers, early childhood educators, and child care staff. These terms are used interchangeably to reflect the multiple roles these individuals play in the child care ecosystem.

New York State has taken several steps using federal pandemic relief funding to help stabilize the workforce. The large number of child care programs that applied for both stabilization and workforce retention grants demonstrates the need for additional support – and it further shows that there is a need for a longer-term solution. Due to the high cost of operating a quality child care program and the current limited funding from families and state or local governments, child care programs – the majority of whom are small businesses - need to be able to rely on ongoing compensation supplements or grants to support their workforce and stabilize their operations for the long term.

The workforce concerns are interconnected to cost, access, availability, and quality child care. Employees in this industry have historically been financially undervalued and underpaid in the state. The Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020: New York reports that 19.3% of child care providers currently live below the federal poverty level, versus 8.6% of workers in other occupations and 2.5% of K-8 teachers.<sup>1</sup> It also states that there are currently 86,180 members of the early childhood teaching workforce with a bachelor’s degree, but they are paid 32.6% less than their colleagues in the K-8 school system.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and The Education Trust February 2022 report, *Equity in Child Care is Everyone’s Business*, notes that 94% of child care workers are female, and 40% are people of color, and looks at how these child care workers are heavily impacted by racial inequalities and sexism.<sup>3</sup> Investment in and support of early childhood educators are vital to the development of children and families, and NYS must also ensure equity for this workforce. If there is no significant improvement in wages and opportunities for career advancement, there is a risk of losing more

valuable members of the workforce which impacts access to and availability of quality child care.

The cost of child care continues to be a challenge for many New York families. The NYS Department of Labor reported that center-based infant care, at \$21,826 annually, is 155% higher than the annual in-state tuition in New York's public four-year universities.<sup>4</sup> This equates to an average of 18% of a married couple's household income and an average of 63% of a single-parent family's household income to pay for child care.<sup>5</sup> Access to affordable, equitable, and high-quality child care is critical for parental participation in the labor force.<sup>6</sup>

Specifically, the Task Force recommends New York State act with urgency to take the following actions for the child care workforce (along with the more detailed recommendations contained in the body of this report):

- Implement a permanent line of funding for the child care workforce. To curtail the flight of educators from the field and encourage others to enter the field, this workforce investment must be permanent – offering the promise of ongoing investments in this critical workforce. Only with permanent funding will child care programs be able to recruit and retain educators.
- Allow providers/educators some flexibility to use workforce stabilization funding to support program operations, so long as the vast majority of the funds are directed toward increasing the wages of all members of the licensed, registered child care workforce.
- Legally exempt providers/educators should also be eligible to receive increased compensation and other workforce supports that are allowed for members of the licensed, registered workforce – either through the stabilization funding described above, or by means of another mechanism – to be determined in consultation with legally exempt providers/educators.

An additional barrier to accessing child care is finding an early childhood educator/provider with available slots. There are 3.4 children under 6 years old for every child care slot available in New York State.<sup>7</sup> Supporting current early childhood educators/providers and encouraging the development of new programs is vital to building a comprehensive child care ecosystem that is high quality and available for

families. In addition, child care providers/educators who are business owners need business support to continue to provide access to high-quality child care for all New Yorkers. Providers are tasked with developing programs, building leadership skills, and completing administrative responsibilities, and they need training in human resources to effectively lead their employees. Therefore, ongoing mentorship and support are needed.

In 2021, the Child Care Availability Task Force identified a vision for a universal child care system, stating that, “All New York families will have equitable access to affordable, high-quality child care from birth through school age regardless of income, race, ethnicity, immigration status, geographic location, or ability.”<sup>8</sup> The Task Force has updated this vision to parallel New York State Human Rights Law,<sup>9</sup> which is more inclusive and reads “regardless of age, race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, military status, sex, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, familial status, marital status.”

Looking ahead, the Task Force is eager to continue its work in 2024, with a focus on its charge to advise the State in developing a framework leading to a phased-in rollout of universal child care. New York is poised and ready to lead the nation in rolling out universal child care - a strategy that will help support and nurture New York families, and ensure New York remains one of the best places in the nation to raise children.

# SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Child Care Workforce Stabilization

**1.1** Implement a permanent line of funding to support the child care workforce. This funding should allow providers some flexibility in how they are supporting their employees, as long as the vast majority of the funds are directed toward increasing the wages of all members of the licensed, registered child care workforce.

**1.2** Ensure support for legally exempt providers. Legally exempt providers should also be eligible to receive an increase in the supports that are allowed for members of the licensed, registered workforce either through the stabilization funding described above, or by means of another mechanism, to be determined in consultation with legally exempt providers.

**1.3** Expand efforts to increase awareness of eligibility of current health insurance plans and develop opportunities to ensure individuals do not lose eligibility as salaries increase. Consideration should be given to models, such as an insurance pool, that assist the child care workforce with co-pays and deductibles.

## 2. Workforce Development and Resources

**2.1** Encourage educators in all licensed programs and settings to enroll in the Aspire Registry, New York's workforce registry for early childhood and school-age professionals.

**2.2** Fully fund existing workforce supports for career and academic advising programs and organizations that provide field-specific career and academic advising services for the early childhood, child care, and school-age workforce.

**2.3** Increase scholarship support funding for existing scholarship programs that support the current workforce to obtain the higher education degrees, credentials, and certifications needed to advance within the field.

**2.4** Identify and eliminate regulatory and policy barriers to the establishment of shared substitute educator pools to support programs being able to remain open, as well as provide time for educators pursuing additional education.

**2.5** Support innovation in the development of training programs, including State-approved and recognized micro-credentials, to foster career community pipelines to grow the early childhood workforce.

## 3. Child Care Affordability

**3.1** Publicly commit to multi-year funding for the Child Care Assistance Program by leveraging federal funds to support the children currently served by the \$7 billion pandemic-driven expansion.

**3.2** Continue to expand eligibility for child care assistance and make the system more user-friendly by eliminating barriers for families to encourage participation in the program.

**3.3** Eliminate barriers for providers to participate in the child care assistance program.

**3.4** Increase the amount of reimbursement for the Child Care Assistance Program.

## 4. Child Care Availability

**4.1** Increase the availability of quality child care providers who meet the needs of New York's diverse communities.

**4.2** Launch a new cost-of-care model of payment in the Child Care Assistance Program statewide that is based on the true cost of care.

## 5. Incentivizing Corporate Support for Employees' Child Care Needs

**5.1** Implement and expand upon Governor Hochul's Business Navigator program to include qualified and skilled business coaching models designed to meet the unique needs of owners, boards, and directors.

**5.2** Develop a suite of corporate programs and tax credits to meet corporations' and employers' needs.

## 6. Business Supports for Child Care Providers and Systems

**6.1** Strengthen partnerships between child care agencies and regulatory systems to better support child care providers, children, and families.

**6.2** Provide enhanced business start-up and in-service training and technical assistance opportunities, including business practice, employment law, workplace environment, benefits management, tax planning, regulatory compliance, marketing, governance, and community engagement.

**6.3** The Department of Financial Services (DFS) and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) should work to analyze the availability and affordability of liability insurance and po-

tential actions such as the possibility of amending New York law to allow for the establishment of a pooled fund for child care providers.

## 7. Universal Child Care

**7.1** Create an implementation plan and timeline to transition to a new system of universal child care.

**7.2** Launch and evaluate a state-run child care assistance pilot program.

**7.3** Create an integrated child care data system with the capability to connect various NYS/ NYC child care data systems and platforms.

**7.4** Improve coordination with New York State Education Department (NYSED) pre-kindergarten programs within existing resources.

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**N**ew York State needs a universal child care system that is affordable, accessible, high-quality, and coordinated in order to serve families and communities and promote the health, safety, and early education of children in care. The Task Force's findings and specific recommendations for achieving that goal are outlined below and are aimed at stabilizing and building the early education workforce, as well as improving the systems that serve families.

### 1. Child Care Workforce Stabilization

The recommendations in this section focus on developing a sustained solution to New York's persistent child care workforce shortage. Child care workforce challenges threaten to undermine the tremendous gains New York has made in expanding access to child care assistance because these challenges can directly cause a decline in child care capacity.

Investment in the child care workforce is also an investment in quality. According to a 2022 report from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, "the quality of child-teacher interactions and relationships is the most important factor in achieving positive developmental outcomes for children. Supporting these relationships requires attracting and retaining talented teachers with sufficient wages and benefits (or revenue, in the case of home-based providers) and supporting teacher interactions with children through education and professional development."<sup>10</sup>

### Key Findings:

- New York's child care educators, 94% of whom are women and 40% of whom identify as people of color, are paid such low wages that 12% live below the federal poverty level, more than twice the rate of New York workers in general (5%).<sup>11</sup> Many cannot afford to remain in the field.<sup>12</sup> The average wage for a child care worker in New York in May 2022 was \$35,190 annually or \$16.92 an hour.<sup>13</sup>
- According to data collected in March 2023 from over 1,660 programs by the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, all programs were operating below their licensed capacity due to workforce shortages: serving 28,462 fewer children than capacity.<sup>14</sup> Programs reported 3,800 staff positions unfilled and over 750 classrooms in child care centers and after-school programs unused due to insufficient staffing levels.
- During the pandemic, New York received more than \$2.3 billion in federal stimulus funds under the Coronavirus Response and Reinvestment Act (CRRSA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to stabilize the child care industry over the course of approximately three years.<sup>15,16</sup>
- In total, New York has invested approximately \$2.3 billion of pandemic stimulus funds toward child care workforce supports and child care provider stabilization:



- ◇ In 2022, approximately \$900 million was awarded to 15,000 eligible child care providers through the Child Care Stabilization Grant 1.0, and \$208 million was awarded to 12,578 child care providers through the Stabilization 2.0. As expected, NYS saw spending in the most needed area – personnel – from both rounds of the Child Care Stabilization Grant. This funding kept many child care businesses afloat, but it was a short-term investment in workforce supports and wage increases.
- ◇ In 2023, New York provided workforce retention grants to child care workers. As of January 2024, \$330 million has been distributed to child care providers. The retention program provided one-time payments ranging from \$2,300 to \$3,000 for retention and referral bonuses for existing staff and sign-on bonuses for new workers.
- A recent survey of the early childhood and child care workforce in New York found that only one-third (33%) have health insurance provided by their employer. Of the remaining two-thirds, most (92%) had some other form of health insurance. For those that had some other form of health insurance, 38% had health insurance through Medicaid.

## **We Recommend:**

**1.1 Implementing a permanent line of funding to support the child care workforce.** To curtail the flight of educators from the field and encourage others to enter the field, the pandemic-era workforce investments must be made permanent – offering the promise of ongoing wage supplements. Ongoing funding will allow child care programs to recruit and retain educators. These funds should allow child care providers flexibility in utilization of funds toward workforce needs as long as the vast majority of the funds are directed toward increasing the wages of all members of the licensed, registered child care workforce. Providers should be able to use a portion of this funding for, but not limited to, bonuses or increases in wages, contributions towards health insurance costs, contributions to staff retirement plans that supplement any employer contribution, supplemental educational advancement or tuition reimbursement, and mental health supports and services for staff.

- Funds could be distributed as periodic allocations, which will enable child care providers to budget accordingly for salaries, benefits, and other operational expenses year to year.

**1.2 Ensuring support for legally exempt providers/educators.** Legally exempt providers should also be eligible to receive an increase in the workforce supports allowed for members of the licensed, registered

workforce, either through the stabilization funding described above, or by means of another mechanism to be determined in consultation with legally exempt providers/educators. Legally exempt providers/educators offer families care and learning experiences that include a safe environment and foster the development of their children. Legally exempt providers/educators represent a large population of women and multilingual persons who provide a personalized level of care with consideration to familial cultures. Legally exempt providers/educators also offer families the flexibility they need for care by accommodating work schedules and life events. These providers/educators should not be forgotten and need to be supported with state investments.

**1.3 Expanding efforts to increase awareness of eligibility of current health insurance plans and develop opportunities to ensure individuals do not lose eligibility as salaries increase.** Consideration should be given to models, such as an insurance pool, that assist the child care workforce with co-pays and deductibles. New York should develop a plan so that as salaries for the workforce increase, individuals will not lose their eligibility for low- or no-cost insurance plans offered through the marketplace. This plan could include expanding efforts to increase awareness of eligibility for current health insurance plans, for example, through the expansion of health insurance navigators.



## 2. Workforce Development and Resources

New York's early childhood and child care workforce is the key component to program quality. High-quality early care and education depends on early childhood educators who engage children using developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and linguistically sustaining practices. It is therefore essential that state policy explicitly support a diverse, skilled, and equitably compensated early care and education workforce as the bedrock of its quality strategy. In addition to compensation, other supports are needed to ensure that programs and other stakeholders have the resources and data that they need to be able to operate a high-quality system.

### Key Findings:

- There are multiple data sources for estimates on the current size of the child care and early childhood education workforce, and there are gaps in data across those sources. According to data from the NYS Department of Labor, approximately 72,000 people were employed in the child care industry in New York in 2022. This data primarily captures workers employed in center-based programs but excludes self-employed workers including owners of home-based child care businesses.<sup>17</sup> Based on current in-house data on child care staff eligible to work in licensed/registered programs, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services estimates the overall size of the workforce, including home-based providers and school-age child care program staff, at closer to 125,000 people. Demographic data and data on educational attainment and compensation are available, but only for a subset of the population.
- All staff in early childhood, child care, and school-age programs are required to have ongoing professional development to continue to develop their skills and knowledge about child development and health and safety requirements.
  - ◊ The Aspire Registry is an online system that supports early childhood professionals in New York State by storing verified information about their education, professional development, and experience in the field. The Aspire Registry currently serves over 36,000 individuals and 4,700 organizations in NYS, including home-based child care providers, trainers, center-based programs, school-based programs, after-school programs, and training organizations. Aspire users provide data on their employment (job title, dates, salary, etc.), education (certificates, credentials, degrees), and professional development (trainings, workshops, and coaching). Which is entered into the Registry and verified. Therefore reducing the administrative burden on programs and educators. OCFS and its training vendor, the Professional Development Program's (PDP) Early Childhood Education and Training Program (ECETP), launched a new registration process for all child care programs in February 2023. The new process includes the ability for OCFS and PDP to automatically exchange training records for OCFS licensed and registered child care programs, along with capturing more specific demographic information of providers. Within the ECETP system, there are over 168,992 active user accounts; many of which overlap with the Aspire Registry.
- Career mobility and advancement in early childhood and school-age child care is driven by advancement in educational attainment. Standard campus-based career centers are not prepared to offer early childhood-specific career advising that leads to the degrees, credentials, and certifications that the workforce needs and that satisfy licensing and teacher certification requirements.
- The workforce needs clear pathways within higher education, with coursework and degrees that easily accumulate so that educators can advance within the field. There are regions in New York where the workforce does not have access to any higher education teacher preparation degree programs because none are offered or are only offered during traditional hours when most educators are working.
- Current early childhood scholarship resources, including the Education Incentive Program (EIP), the CUNY/SUNY Early Childhood Workforce Scholarship, Quality Scholars, and the QUALITYstarsNY scholarship, have served thousands of educators, but data indicates

that the need is far from being fully met. Staff in school-age (SACC) licensed programs can utilize EIP, but are not eligible for any of the available scholarship resources

- ◊ Scholarship amounts vary by program: up to \$2,500 per individual per year for EIP, \$2,000 per individual per year for the CUNY/SUNY Early Childhood Workforce Scholarship, and \$2,500 each for the Quality Scholars and QUALITYstarsNY scholarships. Full-time tuition at a CUNY community college is \$4,800 per year and at a SUNY community college it is \$6,332. The EIP scholarship funds both professional development and college coursework, and the other scholarships cover degrees, credentials, and certifications in early childhood.
- ◊ When provided access through tailored and specific academic advising and with scholarship supports, students earning degrees in early childhood education have demonstrated remarkable success. According to the CUNY Professional Development Institute (PDI), which operates career advising programming, the vast majority earn grades of B+ or higher and have high semester-to-semester persistence rates. CUNY PDI's current workforce scholarship recipients are primarily women of color (67%) and over the age of 30 (66%), a population that has not traditionally had sufficient access to higher education opportunities. These scholarship supports are addressing historic inequities that women and people of color in the childhood and early childhood education sector have experienced.
- ◊ A newly offered scholarship program through QUALITYstarsNY allocated \$1.5 million in scholarship funds in the first half of FY24 when eligibility was expanded to cover additional courses and other fees including textbooks, transcript evaluation, and translation services.
- Access to higher education also requires release time from employment and coursework available at non-traditional times (mornings, evenings, weekends), as well as online. Substitute staff are needed so that programs can remain open and serve children while staff are pursuing the coursework needed to obtain degrees, credentials, and certifications.

- The NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council is focused on early childhood teacher preparation, examining the current program landscape, reviewing innovative practices, and recommending strategies to increase equitable access to higher education opportunities (including credit-bearing coursework in languages other than English, online degree programs, coursework offered during non-traditional hours, and micro-credentialing opportunities that are compatible with licensing and teacher certification).

### We Recommend:

Additional resources to strengthen the current systems that support early childhood, child care, and school-age professionals and address the challenges described above.

**2.1 Encourage educators in all licensed programs and settings to enroll in the Aspire Registry, New York's workforce registry for early childhood and school-age professionals.** Aspire data compiles workforce data across licensing agencies and funding sources, so thereby has the potential to offer the most complete and comprehensive data set about the workforce in New York.

**2.2 Fully fund existing workforce supports for career and academic advising existing programs and organizations that provide field-specific career and academic advising services for the early childhood, child care, and school-age workforce.** NYS has invested federal funding to create and expand services that provide one-on-one career and academic advising services to providers across the state to access the higher education opportunities and scholarship resources available to them to achieve the degrees, credentials, and certifications needed to advance within the sector. The State should continue to fund these services and expand them to include the school-age workforce.

**2.3 Increase funding for existing scholarship programs that support the current workforce to obtain the higher education degrees, credentials, and certifications needed to advance within the field.**

Expand eligibility for scholarships to fund higher education degrees, credentials, certifications, and professional development for the school-age workforce. Career advising and scholarship supports will galvanize progress along teacher pathways by supporting educators to earn credentials faster.

**2.4 Identify and eliminate regulatory and policy barriers to the establishment of shared substitute pools to support programs being able to remain open, as well as provide time for educators pursuing additional education.**

NYS should engage with federal partners around the issue of portable background checks for substitute teachers. Solutions will also need to be developed to address issues around liability and worker's compensation insurance. Licensing agencies will also need to amend requirements to ensure that substitute teachers have the same qualifications and training requirements as regular staff.

**2.5 Support innovation in the development of training programs, including State-approved and recognized micro-credentials, to foster career community pipelines to grow the early childhood workforce.**

Small workforce development pilot projects are essential for developing and implementing community-level transformative solutions. Support for local pilot projects that have the potential to be scaled across the state will help to transform early childhood care and learning by recruiting and developing teachers trusted by the community. Local initiatives should include child care employers, institutions of higher education,

training and technical assistance services and supports for early childhood educator/providers, workforce boards, school districts, licensing and regulatory agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

Working with colleges across the state, especially in areas with a lack of higher education programs for early childhood providers, is vital to creating innovative recruitment opportunities for the child care and early childhood workforce. Partnerships between child care employers, higher education programs, and the Office of Children and Family Services and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will help to ensure that new programs, including new micro-credential and certificate programs, will serve the needs of children, families, and employers, while maintaining high levels of quality for both the higher education and child care sectors.

### 3. Child Care Affordability

The goal of the Task Force remains the same as the original 2021 recommendations: New York State should enact a comprehensive strategy to ensure that high-quality child care is affordable for every family with young children. This strategy should prioritize families that are low-income, communities of color and other historically underserved groups. Over the past three years, New York has dramatically expanded access to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) or child care subsidy, making around 100,000 of New York families newly eligible for funding to support their child care needs. And yet, barriers still keep many families from accessing this assistance, leaving families to face these high costs on their own.

#### Key Findings:

- Without assistance, child care is unaffordable for many New York families. In 2022, the average annual price of full-time center-based child care in New York for an infant was \$21,826.<sup>18</sup> Annual cost of full-time care for one infant in a family-based program in 2022 was \$18,200.<sup>19</sup> And costs in many communities are much higher than these average prices.
- Though child care expenses were a large part of a family's budget even before the pandemic, since 2020, the affordability crisis has worsened and in many parts of the state has become untenable.<sup>20</sup>
- When costs of safe, quality child care become unreachable for families, their options are severely limited and many turn to illegal care arrangements that may not be safe for children.<sup>21</sup>

#### We recommend:

##### **3.1 Publicly committing to multi-year funding for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).**

NYS should commit multi-year funding and leverage federal funds to support the children who are currently being served by the \$7 billion pandemic-driven expansion of the Child Care Assistance Program. A multi-year funding commitment would encourage counties to commit to child care assistance that crosses budget cycles, thereby discouraging the creation of unnecessary waitlists and the perception of scarcity.

Committing to a multi-year fund allows child care providers to create consistent investments into personnel costs, safety procedures, high-quality options, and other services necessary to maintain child care services to all families. Many child care providers were only able to survive through the pandemic and in the years afterwards because of the federal pandemic funding. Without this additional commitment, the child care system will suffer and regress on progress made in recent years. Finally, a commitment to multi-year funding would give providers contemplating expanding their capacity confidence that their subsidy levels will remain steady. This could help expand the supply of child care seats around the state.

##### **3.2 Continuing to expand eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and make the system more user-friendly by eliminating barriers for families to participate in the program by:**

- Identifying funding to allow immigrant children and children of asylum seekers, who might be ineligible for assistance under federal rules, access to child care assistance and creating an infrastructure that will meet the needs of this sensitive population.



- Limiting the restrictions to child care assistance based on parents' employment status, hours worked, and minimum compensation.
- Implementing presumptive eligibility and presumptive enrollment for child care assistance statewide. Hold counties harmless for serving children who are later deemed ineligible.
- Continuing to develop and implement a centralized online application to determine eligibility and develop and implement a centralized online application to apply for assistance.
- Creating a transparent and independent statewide data system to track the eligibility and enrollment process so that barriers and delays can be quickly addressed.
- Creating a seamless, transparent "bridge" to connect providers, parents, and enrollment agencies so that child care is obtained and maintained without ever losing service.
- Require parent and provider participation, input, and decision-making in the development of new systems and processes.

### **3.3 Eliminating barriers for providers to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program by:**

- Incentivizing providers, raising rates, and offering contracted care to expand capacity for underserved families needing non-traditional hours care, care for children with special needs, culturally diverse relevance and home language care, and care for children in areas not designated as a "child care desert" but still short of slots.
- New York State should engage with federal partners to explore the possibility of moving to an enrollment-based system that relies on contracts with high-quality providers,

instead of vouchers based on day-to-day attendance, to increase stability in the system and simplify access for families, beginning with underserved communities in child care deserts.

- Establishing a uniform, simple, and centralized process for child care providers to enroll to accept child care assistance.
- Fixing and simplifying the payment process for providers, including paying prospectively and making it easier to submit claims as well as create transparent data tracking to identify delays and problems.
- Expediting the process of approving and enrolling children so providers can be paid in a timely manner.
- Automatically implementing market rate increases and eliminating the requirement for providers to apply or produce proof or an attestation of what they charge private-pay parents.

### **3.4 Increasing the amount of reimbursement for the Child Care Assistance Program by:**

- Increasing the market rate to reflect the increase in minimum wage.
- Increasing the reimbursement rate for programs, including legally-exempt providers that offer non-traditional hours of care.

## 4. Child Care Availability

Finding a provider continues to be the primary hurdle for families needing child care in NYS. Though the number of providers continues to recover from the losses during the pandemic, the lack of an available workforce is restricting the full recovery of the system. Without emphasis on supporting and expanding the workforce, the barrier to access cannot be addressed.

### Key Findings:

- Today the child care sector is experiencing a massive labor shortage, as child care workers have left the profession in record numbers. At the same time, lack of affordable child care is hindering the economic recovery, as roughly 14 million working parents who left their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic still lack the child care they need to return to work.<sup>22</sup>
- Licensed child care capacity in New York State has still not recovered to its pre-pandemic levels, with 2,159 fewer seats in 2022 than in 2019.<sup>23,24</sup> At the height of the pandemic (Jan 2020-Jan 2022), there was a net loss of 1,351 regulated child care programs and nearly 15,000 seats.<sup>25,26</sup> However, between 2022 and 2023, there was a gain of 4,933 seats, and an increase of 183 programs.<sup>27,28</sup>
- In the case of home-based child care, capacity is slowly returning to pre-pandemic numbers. In family and group family child care providers, there were 7,266 fewer seats in 2023 than in 2019, but an increase of 3,073 seats in 2022.<sup>29,30,31</sup> Notably, the home-base sector serves a disproportionately high percentage of families receiving child care assistance and is far more likely to serve families needing care during early mornings, nights, and weekends.<sup>32,33</sup>
- Nationally, during the past two years, 16,000 child care programs have closed, and the industry experienced a 9% decline in the number of licensed providers. From February 2020 through July 2022, nearly 90,000 providers left the child care industry, and another 2,000 left from August to September 2022. In September, child care employment dropped to 9.7% below what it was in February 2020, with 102,400 jobs lost.<sup>34</sup>

### We recommend:

#### **4.1 Increasing the availability of quality child care providers that meet the needs of New York's diverse communities.**

- Expand recruitment efforts for new child care providers through local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies, QUALITYstarsNY, and other stakeholder partners that focus on engaging potential child care providers from diverse communities, including multilingual individuals and Native American communities. Special attention should be given to program modalities that are most likely to reach families of diverse populations, such as family and group family child care providers.

#### **4.2 Launching a new cost-of-care model for payment in the Child Care Assistance Program that is based on the true cost of care.**

- Significant work has been done in the area of the child care assistance program. This should be expanded upon and should include the creation of a new cost-of-care model that is effective and useful. This model should also reflect the true cost of care of all age groups, be based on the most current approved quality standards, not rely on providing care to four-year-olds to create a sustainable business model, and not be based solely on parent fees. This model should include increases in minimum wage that are being implemented across NYS.

## 5. Incentivizing Corporate Support for Employees' Child Care Needs

### Key Findings:

The Task Force identified a significant need to build support among corporate employers in NYS for expanding child care access as one strategy to address lack of capacity in many parts of the state. In a 2022 U.S. Census Bureau survey of households, more than 365,000 adults reported losing a job in the four weeks preceding the survey because they needed to take time off to care for children under the age of 5.<sup>35</sup> More than 1.3 million survey respondents reported that an adult in their household had in the past two weeks left a job to care for children, and more than 1.6 million parents reported supervising one or more children while working.<sup>36</sup> NYS has engaged in numerous programs to build corporate support for supporting their employees' child care needs, including working with the federal government on the implementation of the CHIPS Act and the development of Micron semiconductor facility in Central NY. As one example of an employer supporting their employees' child care needs, Micron is addressing the issue with multiple strategies, including building on-site child care and helping develop off-site programs in various communities.

### We recommend:

#### **5.1 Implementing and expanding upon Governor Hochul's Business Navigator program to include qualified and skilled business coaching models designed to meet the unique needs of owners, boards, and directors.**

In 2023, Governor Hochul announced a \$1 million commitment to create a Business Navigator program to support corporations that are interested in supporting their employees' child care needs. This program will focus on locally and regionally available resources and connecting those employers to technical assistance to design a program to meet their needs.

#### **5.2 Developing a suite of corporate programs and tax credits to meet corporations' and employers' needs.**

Tax credits cannot be a substitute for direct public investment, but they should be used to supplement other programs and initiatives as a way of partnering with corporations to support their employees' child care needs. Tax credits could help support the child care workforce, support high-quality child care facilities, and offset the direct cost to employers associated with providing child care for their employees. Currently, state and federal tax credits that are available to corporations are underutilized. As the Task Force's 2021 report stated, child care is integral to economic development and providing a suite of tax credit options could build on these efforts.<sup>37</sup> Possible models could include:

- Continuing investments in business partnership models, including workplace-based care as well as business contracted/supplemented slots.
- Expanding tax credits to employers that are willing to establish and operate programs or pay providers directly as a benefit.
- Providing incentives at the community level to support new child care provider businesses, including supporting local Chambers of Commerce to develop programs and/or offer local incentives.

## 6. Business Supports for Child Care Providers and Systems

These recommendations focus on providing essential business support to child care providers. This support encompasses various aspects, including financial assistance to cover startup costs, employment law compliance, and regulatory guidance. It also emphasizes professional empowerment by offering guidance on business planning and marketing. Providers are encouraged to develop program administration and leadership skills, maintain accurate business records, and receive training in human resources for effective employee management. Additionally, fostering strong relationships with parents and families is a key element. To address these needs, a tiered business training model is proposed to help providers choose the training that best suits their requirements.

### Key Findings:

- According to Child Care Aware of America, providers – particularly in home-based settings – often perform all the additional tasks associated with operating their program outside of the normal hours of operation, sacrificing precious personal and family time.<sup>38</sup>
- The results of these multiple roles are long hours and a high degree of burnout. Specifically, home-based providers can be isolated from other child care professionals, with few opportunities to connect with their peers. These factors, combined with low pay, have been cited as reasons for child care providers leaving the field.<sup>39</sup>
- Child care and multi-service providers are also challenged with accessing liability insurance needed to maintain contracts. According to personal experiences detailed by members of the Task Force, access to affordable insurance impacts the ability of providers to maintain and/or grow their business. Several factors including serving a “risky” or vulnerable population, employee retention, labor shortage issues, regulations governing the sector and general inflation heavily influence the kinds of policies and premiums that might be available to providers.

### We recommend:

#### **6.1 Strengthening partnerships between child care agencies and regulatory systems to better support child care providers, children, and families.**

- Create consistency and transparency with licensing/registration/permitting procedures, by aligning monitoring and inspection procedures.
- Create ongoing mentoring and support for prospective child care providers and newly opened programs to ensure their success.
- Expand work to create supportive partnerships between regulators and child care providers to include all modalities in all parts of the state, including NYC.

#### **6.2 Providing enhanced business start-up and in-service training and technical assistance opportunities, including business practice, employment law, workplace environment, benefits management, tax planning, regulatory compliance, marketing, governance, and community engagement.**

#### **6.3 The Department of Financial Services (DFS) and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) should work to analyze the availability and affordability of liability insurance and potential actions such as the possibility of amending New York law to allow for the establishment of a pooled fund for child care providers.**

In conducting their analysis, the agencies should also consider the special circumstances faced by multi-service providers as these organizations sometimes offer child care services and typically purchase insurance for the scope of their portfolio. The State of Illinois established a “Religious and Charitable Risk Pooling Trust” in 2015 that could potentially serve as a model.



## 7. Universal Child Care

In 2021, the Child Care Availability Task Force identified a vision for universal child care stating that “All New York families will have equitable access to affordable, high-quality child care from birth through school age regardless of income, race, ethnicity, immigration status, geographic location, or ability.” The Task Force has updated this vision in accordance with Chapter 682, section 296 of the 2023 New York State Human Rights Law, which is more inclusive and reads, “...regardless of an individual’s age, race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, familial status, marital status, or status as a victim of domestic violence...”<sup>40</sup> Now, a strong framework is needed in order to move toward a universal child care system that is truly accessible to all New York families.

### Key Findings:

Over the past three years, New York State has made strides toward this goal by dramatically expanding access to child care assistance (“CCAP”) by:

- Expanding income eligibility for child care assistance to 85% of the state median income (SMI) of \$67,490 for a family of two; \$99,250 for a family of four; and \$131,010 for a family of six.
- Lowering the parent share of payment to 1% of income over the federal poverty level.
- Providing stabilization grants to support child care programs and retention and recruitment grants for the workforce (see Recommendation 1).

New York has also taken significant strides to reduce administrative barriers that can prevent otherwise eligible families from accessing child care, including: implementing adjunctive income-eligibility for families enrolled in other assistance programs; requiring local social service districts establish interim eligibility periods of child care assistance to families experiencing homelessness, to the extent funds are available; and requiring counties to reimburse providers for up to 80 absences per child, per provider. And yet, as noted above (see Affordability section), families in need of child care assistance still face many barriers to access, including com-

plicated and cumbersome applications; varied rules by county; processing delays; minimum work hour and wage requirements; and immigration status requirements.

### We recommend:

#### **7.1 Creating an implementation plan and timeline to transition to a new system of universal child care.**

According to statute, the Task Force must “advise the state in developing an implementation framework leading to a phased-in rollout of universal child care.” While this report lays the foundation for such a framework, there is still work to be done. And while the implementation of a new system is ultimately the responsibility of the state government, there must be meaningful input and support from all stakeholders.

Therefore, the State should continue the work of the Task Force by focusing on creating an implementation plan that will:

- Establish timeframes for both incremental steps and system transformation; short- and long-term goals and outcomes; and accountability measures, including the collection of disaggregated data across agencies.
- Include state and local government partners.
- Include representatives from business communities, including but not limited to, the NYS Business Council, the Regional Economic Development Councils, and local Chambers of Commerce.
- Include representatives from all stakeholder groups who are appointees in the Child Care Availability Task Force, including parents with lived experience.

The Task Force is required to report annually on its progress, and this will include details on the plan developed as well as the implementation status of existing recommendations.

### **7.2 Launching and evaluating state-run child care assistance pilot programs.**

A year-long pilot in diverse areas of the state (urban, rural, upstate, downstate) would demonstrate feasibility.

**7.3 Creating an integrated child care data system with the capability to connect all the various NYS/NYC child care data systems and platforms,** building on the connections between systems that have already been made. The collection and integration of data about capacity would assist statewide and local efforts to maximize enrollment and optimize child care services and systems for both early childhood educator/provider and families.

### **7.4 Improving coordination with State Education Department (NYSED) Pre-Kindergarten programs.**

While the creation of free pre-K programs for three- and four-year-olds was well-intentioned, it has had unintentional consequences for many child care programs. The Task Force recommends that OCFS and NYSED work together to strengthen school district partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) and improve coordination through a process that will allow NYSED and OCFS to connect with CBOs and districts to identify the challenges, study the trends, and come up with solutions together.

# SUCCESSES AND HIGHLIGHTS

Since the inception of the Child Care Availability Task Force in December 2018 and the publishing of the first Task Force recommendations in 2021, there have been a number of successes in moving New York's child care system forward. Below outlines several updates on existing recommendations from the 2021 report.

## Section 1: Child Care Affordability

The Task Force recommended in Section 1, that NYS set a statewide standard for affordability for child care (recommendation 1.1). This included setting a sliding scale on parent copays for the child care assistance program as well as expanding eligibility up to 85% of the state median income (SMI). In 2023, NYS adopted regulations to formally raise eligibility to 85% SMI as well as lower parent copays to just 1% of the family's income above the federal poverty level. These additions are part of a \$7 billion child care investment over the next four years and raises the income limit from 300% of the federal poverty level, or \$83,250 for a family of four, to 85% of the state median income, or \$99,250 for a family of four, assisting over 100,000 additional New York families.

Recommendation 1.2 focused on shifting how NYS sets payment rates for the Child Care Assistance Program, which currently uses a market rate survey of child care providers' prices. NYS increased the reimbursement rate from the 69<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile. The Task Force recommended that NYS focus instead on paying the cost of providing child care rather than price-based data. In 2023, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) amended the required market rate survey to include questions that address the true cost of child care to ensure that the rates provide equal access for eligible children to comparable services in the state. OCFS also participated in a multi-year project with The Education Trust - New York and Raising New York to conduct a cost-of-care study in NYS, the data from which was released in late 2023.

In Recommendation 1.4, the Task Force also encouraged NYS to expand efforts to braid and blend funding sources to better support the child care ecosystem. NYS has multiple programs that support providers and families, including the Child Care As-

sistance Program, Head Start, and state-funded pre-kindergarten grants as well as specific state-funded programs like the Child Care Facilitated Enrollment Project.

In 2023, OCFS worked with the U.S. Department of Defense to bring the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) program to NYS to assist military families with child care costs. After careful review, the U.S. Department of Defense determined that NYS's licensing system met their definition of "high quality care," and now more than 48,000 New York State military families will be able to receive child care fee assistance statewide. The military fee assistance will offset the cost of child care not covered by the parent fee as calculated by their total family income up to a maximum child care rate of \$1,800 per month per child. New York State was selected as the first state approved to qualify licensed/registered child care providers for participation in this federal military fee assistance program.

## Section 2: Equitable Access to Child Care

In 2021, section 2 of the Child Care Availability Task Force's report focused on improving access to child care to ensure it is equitable. These recommendations included improvements to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to ensure that all eligible families had access to the support if they needed it. Recommendation 2.1 specifically encouraged eliminating disparities across counties in Child Care Assistance Program policies. NYS has made tremendous gains in standardizing the CCAP program across the state, including in 2023, when New York State increased the number of allowable annual absences from 24 to 80 days and capped family co-pays at 1% of a family's annual income above the federal poverty level.

Section 2, Recommendation 2.2, also highlighted the limited access to child care in some parts of the state, called "child care deserts." To address the issue of child care deserts, in 2022, New York State identified \$100 million to build and expand child care capacity in areas with the least supply. NYS issued two grants to over 500 providers to create or expand their programs.

In 2023, the Early Care and Learning Council con-

vened the “It Takes a Village” summit aimed at reducing/eliminating the expulsion and suspension of Black and brown boys from early care and education. The summit brought together parents, providers, owners, directors, and teachers with ongoing workgroups and a second convening of experts focused on public health and systems change. The partnership will continue into 2024 with stakeholders initiating intentional and actionable steps to prevent expulsion and suspension of Black and brown boys in early care.

As part of a historic investment in families and child care, the 2024 Budget provides \$4.8 million allocated to the New York State employer-supported child care pilot program. Participating employers, the State, and employees will split the cost of child care. Eligible families must be between 85-100% of the state median income (\$116,765 SMI for a family of four). The pilot will operate in three areas of the state (urban, rural and suburban).

Also included in the 2024 Executive Budget is \$1 million to create a statewide Business Navigator Program with the intent to assist businesses that are interested in supporting the child care needs of their employees. The Business Navigator Program will operate in each of the ten Regional Economic Development Council regions, with \$100,000 allocated to each region.

NYS, with the Child Care Creation and Expansion Tax Credit, is going even further to help businesses extend a lifeline to their workers and treat child care like any other employee benefit. Under the initiative, businesses that create new child-care seats or expand existing child care to add new infant or toddler seats will be eligible for a state tax credit. That could mean building new child care facilities near offices or job sites, working with existing child-care providers to add capacity at an affordable cost for workers, direct assistance to subsidize workers’ child care costs or other measures to put this crucial benefit within reach for New Yorkers.

### **Section 3: High-Quality Child Care**

In 2020, the Child Care Task force recognized that any improvements in the child care system must

include investments in programs and the early childhood workforce to drive high-quality care in order to best serve children and families. In light of these recommendations, New York State invested \$35 million in QUALITYstarsNY, delivering resources to improve early childhood care, including staff training. QUALITYstarsNY is New York’s quality rating and improvement system, based on five stars, with five being the highest. QUALITYstarsNY is a statewide initiative led by the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute at the City University of New York, under the guidance of the Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council.

The federal pandemic funds directed to child care focused on stabilizing programs while also supporting the workforce. Through multiple rounds of funding, over \$1.5 billion has been invested in child care programs and the child care workforce since 2021. This funding supported over 15,000 child care providers and over 100,000 child care staff who work directly with children and families.

### **Section 4: Coordinated Systems**

The Task Force vision for coordinated systems included an “integrated early care and learning system with consistent and coordinated standards oversight and monitoring.” This vision resulted in the 2021 Task Force report’s recommendations on how regulations, policies, and procedures will support all other facets of child care. Since the report, New York has made several improvements to system coordination and data transparency, including publishing multiple dashboards and data sets to bring visibility to child care programs and deliverables. These improvements include the OCFS federal pandemic funds, the Department of Labor Child Care in New York State dashboard, and the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)’s New York State Early Childhood Data Dashboard. The ECAC’s dashboard provides data and demographics by county on the number of children, child care slots, and workforce for early child care (children 0 to 5 years), along with programs participating in QUALITYStarsNY, market rates used for child care assistance payments, and health and wellness indicators.



## CONCLUSION:

**F**rom the conception of the Task Force in 2018 and the publishing of the Task Force recommendations in 2021, the momentum has continued to build to make child care a priority. The Task Force developed a comprehensive plan to make quality child care affordable and accessible for all New Yorkers. New York State has a tremendous responsibility to invest in the child care workforce to continue the gains we have made in expanding access. New York State took a monumental step in 2018 when it convened the Child Care Availability Task Force. The first Task Force emerged with a visionary report in 2021, calling not just for an expansion of the current system, but for New York to transform its system and move toward one that is sustainable, equitable, and universal. It was understood at the time the first report was released that there remained much more work to be done. The Task Force members understood that to move New York toward its goals would require a carefully crafted, strategically developed plan to phase-in universal child care. Without such a plan, ill-timed or inappropriately sequenced expansion could actually cause inadvertent harms to the fragile system and to the families that rely on child care.

This broad understanding led New York leaders to quickly pass a law to reconvene the Task Force and to include among its responsibilities the development of a phased-in rollout of universal child care. It is this charge that remains to be met.

It is therefore with great excitement, and a strong sense of determination, that the Task Force will devote 2024 to carrying out this charge.

# APPENDIX A: Child Care Availability Task Force Enabling Legislation

## Social Services Law § 390-k<sup>41</sup>

1. There shall be established within the office of children and family services a child care task force for the purpose of evaluating the need for and availability of child care throughout the state.

2. The task force shall be chaired by a representative of the executive chamber and the commissioners of the office of children and family services and the department of labor, or their designees. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation for three-year terms but may be reimbursed for actual costs incurred for participation on such task force. Ensuring adequate geographic, racial and ethnic representation, members of the task force shall be appointed by the governor and comprised as follows:

- (a) four individuals shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the speaker of the assembly, at least one of whom shall be a parent who has utilized subsidized child care and at least one of whom shall be a parent who has utilized unsubsidized child care, from different regions of the state;
- (b) four individuals shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the temporary president of the senate, at least one of whom shall be a parent who has utilized subsidized child care and at least one of whom shall be a parent who has utilized unsubsidized child care, from different regions of the state;
- (c) one individual shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the minority leader of the assembly;
- (d) one individual shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the minority leader of the senate;
- (e) two representatives of a child care resource and referral agency;
- (f) a minimum of three and a maximum of four representatives of home-based child care providers;
- (g) a minimum of three and a maximum of four representatives of center-based child care providers;
- (h) two representatives from the business community;
- (i) two representatives from unions that represent child care providers; and
- (j) at least one representative from each of the following entities:

- (i) the office of temporary and disability assistance;
- (ii) the council on children and families;
- (iii) the department of taxation and finance;
- (iv) a regional economic development council;
- (v) the state university of New York or the city university of New York;
- (vi) the state education department;
- (vii) the early childhood advisory council;
- (viii) a social service district or county government or an entity that advocates on behalf of social services or county governments; and
- (ix) a non-profit child care advocacy organization.

3. The task force shall:

- (a) examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child care in New York state;
- (b) advise the state in developing an implementation framework leading to a phased-in roll-out of universal child care using existing state and federal resources;
- (c) recommend potential solutions, partnerships, or other ways to address chronic child care workforce issues and other concerns identified in the course of the examination required by this subdivision;
- (d) assess the implementation of policies supported by federally funded programs through various stimulus packages; and
- (e) anything else the task force deems necessary.

4. (a) The task force shall report its interim findings and recommendations in accordance with subdivision three of this section to the governor, the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate no later than November first, two thousand twenty-two and its final findings and recommendations no later than December thirty-first, two thousand twenty-three.

(b) The taskforce shall also report on the implementation of any recommendations that resulted from the initial report required to be produced by the task force pursuant to subdivision four of chapter four hundred ninety-three of the laws of two thousand seventeen. Such additional report shall be provided annually, beginning July first two thousand twenty-two.

# APPENDIX B: Members of the New York State Child Care Availability Task Force

## **SUZANNE MILES-GUSTAVE**

*Task Force Co-Chair*  
*Former Acting Commissioner*  
NYS Office of Children and Family Services

## **ROBERTA REARDON**

*Task Force Co-Chair*  
*Commissioner*  
New York State Department of Labor

## **EMILY MEYER**

*Assistant Secretary to the Governor for*  
*Human Services & Mental Hygiene*  
Executive Chamber Representative

## **FRED ACURI**

*Manager of Community Development*  
Corning, Incorporated Community  
Engagement Office

## **DONA ANDERSON**

*Executive Director*  
New York Early Childhood Professional  
Development Institute

## **HEIDI BRANDT**

*Chapter Representative*  
CSEA/VOICE LOCAL 100A Ulster

## **DIA BRYANT**

*Executive Director*  
The Education Trust – New York

## **LAURA CATANO**

*Parent*

## **JESS DANNHAUSER**

*Commissioner*  
Administration for Children's Services

## **KATIE DOBIES**

*Regional Director*  
Maple Leaf Childcare

## **JAMIE FRANK**

*Associate Vice Chancellor for Policy Implementation*  
State University of New York

## **VALERIE FIGUEROA**

*Deputy Commissioner*  
NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance

## **TARA GARDNER**

*Executive Director*  
Day Care Council of New York

## **MATT GOKEY**

*Policy Analyst*  
NYS Department of Taxation and Finance

## **REBECCA GONZALEZ**

*Owner*  
Time to Learn Daycare

## **TENIELLE GONZALEZ**

*Owner*  
Little Peeps Childcare, LLC

## **KATHY HALAS**

*Executive Director*  
Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.

## **TIM HATHAWAY**

*Executive Director*  
Prevent Child Abuse New York

## **DOROTHY (DEDE) HILL**

*Director of Policy*  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

## **GLADYS JONES**

*Founder and CEO*  
ECE on the Move

## **PAMELA KARLIN**

*Director of Early Childhood Education*  
Brooklyn Heights Synagogue

## **KRISTEN KERR**

*Executive Director*  
National Association of the Education of  
Young Children

## **GERALDINE LAYBOURNE**

*Co-Founder*  
DAY ONE Early Learning Community

## **SOFIA MADAO**

*Owner*  
Main Street Children's Academy

## **TIFFANY MALONE**

*Owner/Operator*  
ABC Learn and Play

**ALICIA MARKS***Owner*

Marks of Excellence Childcare, Learning &amp; Nurturing

**LARRY MARX***CEO*

The Children's Agenda

**YOLANDA MCBRIDE***Director of Public Policy*

Children's Aid

**LINIQUE MCCOY***Director*

Discovery Pitstop Daycare

**KELLY MCMAHON***CEO*

Network for Youth Success

**MEREDITH MENZIES-CHIMENTO***Executive Director*

Early Care And Learning Council

**SARAH G. MERRICK***Commissioner*Department of Social Services – Economic Security,  
County of Onondaga**HEATHER MULLIGAN***President and CEO*

Business Council of the State of New York

**VONETTA RHODES***Program Director*Niagara County Community College –  
Child Development Center**JENNIFER ROJAS***Executive Director*

Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.

**ELIZABETH ROSA***Commissioner of Education*

President, University of the State of New York

**SHERI L. SCAVONE***Executive Director*

Western New York Women's Foundation

**ELIZABETH (BETH) STARKS***Founder and Executive Director*

Chautauqua Lake Child Care Center

**VANESSA THREATTE***Executive Director*

NYS Council on Children and Families

**KELLY TOBIN***Executive Director*

YWCA of Cortland County

**CAROLYN WIGGINS***Executive Director*

Fort George Community Services, Inc.

**The work of the Task Force greatly benefited from the support of:****SARAH BERGER**, NYS Department of Labor**ERIN CASSIDY**, Office of Children and Family Services**JOY CONNOLLY**, Office of Children and Family Services**CRYSTAL GRIFFITH**, Business Council of the State of New York**EMILY KADAR**, Executive Chamber**JENN O'CONNOR**, The Education Trust - New York**YVONNE MARTINEZ**, NYS Department of Labor**REBECCA STAHL**, Office of Children and Family Services**ERIK SWEET**, NYS Education Department**SHAKERA TEMS**, Executive Chamber**ELIZABETH WOLKOMIR**, NYC Administration for Children Services**NORA YATES**, Office of Children and Family Services



# APPENDIX C: Task Force Process and Meetings

The Child Care Availability Task Force was first convened in December 2018. The New York State Social Services Law was amended in 2021 to reconvene the task force. The new task force relaunched in March 2023 to continue the work to make quality child care affordable and accessible for all New Yorkers. This report outlines the Task Force’s recommendations to achieve those goals.

The new task force was chaired by Suzanne Miles-Gustave, former Acting Commissioner of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and Roberta Reardon, Commissioner of the Department of Labor. Pursuant to Social Services Law § 390-k, the task force is charged with examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the child care workforce crisis, and providing a framework to lead New York State to a universal child care system.

Beginning in March 2023, the Task Force held full task force meetings and worked in smaller workgroups to brainstorm solutions for New York State. The three workgroups focused on creating recommendations that centered on the 1) child care workforce, 2) sustainability planning, and 3) universal child care. The recommendations were constructed by the Task Force using a general consensus model.

The three workgroups were co-chaired by members of the Task Force.

- Meredith Menzies Chimento and Elizabeth (Liz) Wolkomir for the Sustainability Planning workgroup
- Tara Gardner and Elizabeth (Beth) Starks for the Workforce workgroup
- Jennifer Rojas and Dia Bryant for the Universal Child Care workgroup

## Meeting Date

## Location

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| March 12, 2023 Full Task Force                                | Albany, NY     |
| May 2, 2023 Workforce Workgroup                               | Virtual        |
| May 3, 2023 Sustainability Planning Workgroup                 | Virtual        |
| May 4, 2023 Universal Child Care Workgroup                    | Virtual        |
| June 6, 2023 Workforce Workgroup                              | Virtual        |
| June 12, 2023 Sustainability Planning and Universal Workgroup | Virtual        |
| July 7, 2023 Workforce Workgroup                              | Virtual        |
| July 18, 2023 Universal Child Care Workgroup                  | Virtual        |
| July 21, 2023 Sustainability Planning Workgroup               | Virtual        |
| July 24, 2023 Full Task Force                                 | Rensselaer, NY |
| August 17, 2023 Workforce Workgroup                           | Virtual        |
| August 18, 2023 Universal Child Care Workgroup                | Virtual        |
| August 22, 2023 Sustainability Planning Workgroup             | Virtual        |
| September 5, 2023 Sustainability Planning Workgroup           | Virtual        |
| September 12, 2023 Workforce Workgroup                        | Virtual        |
| September 22, 2023 Universal Child Care Workgroup             | Virtual        |
| October 4, 2023 Sustainability Planning Workgroup             | Virtual        |
| October 5, 2023 Workforce Workgroup                           | Virtual        |
| October 11, 2023 Universal Child Care Workgroup               | Virtual        |
| October 16, 2023 Full Task Force                              | Rensselaer, NY |
| November 2, 2023 Full Task Force                              | Virtual        |
| December 11, 2023 Full Task Force                             | Rensselaer, NY |

Deadline for Writing Team’s Report: January 8, 2024

The NYS Child Care Availability Task Force was supported by a team of facilitators from The McLean Group, which included Kathleen McLean, Khamali Brown, Rosalind Harris, Zoe O’Brey, and Chrissy Smith.

# ENDNOTES

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