

CHILD CARE IN CRISIS:

A report from the Assembly Child Care Workgroup



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Child Care in Crisis: A Report of the New York State Assembly Child Care Workgroup

Introduction

New York State is in the throes of a child care crisis. In every region, working parents are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to locate and/or afford child care in which they can feel secure. This crisis not only weakens our economy today, it hinders the development of our children, who are the workforce of tomorrow. Study after study has shown that the earlier children begin to learn, the better their academic performance will be in the long run.

Recognizing this challenge, and in keeping with the New York State Assembly's long history of supporting affordable child care, Speaker Sheldon Silver formed the New York State Child Care Workgroup on May 6th of 2013, and appointed six Committee and Task Force Chairs to guide its work: Assembly Member Cathy Nolan, Chair of the Committee on Education; Assembly Member Carl Heastie, Chair of the Committee on Labor; Assembly Member Michele Titus, Chair of the Committee on Social Services; Assembly Member Aileen Gunther, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health; Assembly Member Donna Lupardo, Chair of the Committee on Children and Families; and Assembly Member Addie Russell, Chair of the Task Force on Women's Issues. The Workgroup held a series of roundtables with child care and social welfare advocacy groups, representatives of child care programs, and representatives of the business community to discuss the causes and effects of the crisis which included an examination of the challenges working families face in finding child care, the adequacy of child care subsidies, and regional and socio-economic variables, as well as ideas for developing, expanding and enhancing child care services.

The following report of the Child Care Workgroup combines extensive research and analysis with the input obtained during roundtable discussions. The report offers a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening and expanding child care in New York State and making these critically essential services more affordable and accessible. It is a blueprint for action to protect and nurture New York's most precious asset, our children, while providing parents with the tools they need to obtain and retain employment.

Recommendations of the Assembly Child Care Workgroup

I. Increase Access to Subsidized Child Care

New York State Law authorizes local social services districts to offer financial assistance to pay for child care to families with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$39,060 for a family of 3)¹. Generally, families are eligible for financial assistance if they meet the state's low income guidelines and need child care to work, look for work, or attend employment training. Child care is mandated if a family is receiving Public Assistance and needs child care in order to meet any work participation requirements. Transitional benefits are used to assist in paying for child care for one year after leaving Public Assistance if the participant left Public Assistance for a job and needs child care to remain working. Women and families depend heavily on transitional child care while entering gainful employment and continuing their path off of Public Assistance. They would be devastated by a loss of this subsidy.

A. Enhance Child Care Subsidy Program

The availability of state and federal subsidies that help manage the cost of child care for low-income families has decreased or stayed flat while the need has risen. Over 234,000 children received child care subsidies in New York in 2012², but this number does not reflect the need for these subsidies.

Despite State and Federal authorization to use child care funds to serve families up to 200% of the Federal poverty level, few if any local social services districts do so, sometimes only serving families up to 150% or even 100% of the Federal poverty level (FPL). Many of the counties that have remained at 200% FPL eligibility have stopped taking child care subsidy applications altogether. As a result, many low-income families are denied child care assistance each year. Low-income women are forced into the least expensive child care of last resort in order to maintain gainful employment. These child care arrangements are often unregulated and unstable. For other women, any child care would be cost-prohibitive and so they are forced to leave the workforce in order to care for their child(ren).

¹ New York State Social Services Law §332-a

² New York State. Office of Children and Family Services. *Child Care Facts and Figures*. Web. <<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/assets/child%20care%20data%2004-2013%20FactSheet.pdf>>.

New York State Child Care Subsidy Eligibility Levels by County³

<i>County</i>	<i>Eligibility Level</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Eligibility Level</i>
Allegany, Broome, Chautauqua, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Erie, Franklin, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Nassau, New York City, Onondaga, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rockland, Schoharie, Schuyler, St. Lawrence, Steuben, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Warren, Wayne, Westchester, Wyoming	200%	Fulton, Oneida, Ontario, Orange, Saratoga, Schenectady	150%
Washington	185%	Albany, Dutchess, Essex, Rensselaer	125%
Cattaraugus	175%	Niagara	120%
Monroe	165%	Seneca, Suffolk	100%
Cayuga, Livingston	160%	Chemung	Serving public assistance caseload cases only
		Ulster, Yates	No information available

Local social services districts calculate and distribute subsidies throughout a locality. They are able to determine, based on need, the income qualifications as well as changes to eligibility, and can amend such eligibility as the availability of funds decreases⁴. Amendments to the county's eligibility have an even greater detrimental affect due to the fact that such changes can be made without adjusting their consolidated service plan, or any real notice to parents or providers. Currently, many counties do not count the earned income of a teenager in the household for the purposes of eligibility, parallel to the calculation of eligibility for Public Assistance. In counties that do count such income, teenagers are deterred from engaging in work because doing so penalizes the family and disqualifies them from receiving child care assistance.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Increase state funding for child care subsidies.
- Enact A.6839 (Titus) to allow increased access to subsidized child care for low-income working families by exempting single-parent temporary assistance households with infants under the age of one year from certain work requirements for 12 months, as authorized by federal law. By exempting single-parents from participating in unpaid work requirements, previously dedicated funds would be available to provide subsidized child care to low-

³ "Child Care in Crisis." EmpireJustice.org. Empire Justice Center, 03/15/13. Web. 16 Dec 2013. <<http://www.empirejustice.org/assets/pdf/policy-advocacy/memos/child-care-in-crisis.pdf>>.

⁴ New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 18, Section 415.2

income families who receive a working wage, allowing them to maintain their employment while their children are properly cared for.

- Enact A.1077-A (Jaffee) to require counties to disregard the earned income of teenagers younger than 18 years of age for the purposes of calculating eligibility for child care subsidies. The income of teenagers ages 18 and older would be disregarded unless including such income would make the family eligible or lower the family share. This bill would align the treatment of teen income with what is currently being utilized by counties when determining eligibility for Public Assistance.

B. Rationalize Family Co-payments

Families receiving child care subsidies must contribute to the cost of child care, calculated as a percentage of the family’s income above the Federal poverty level. This percentage varies from 10% in some counties to 35% in others, and creates a barrier to accessing child care for families that live in counties charging the higher end of the scale. To put this in perspective, in 2013, a family of three who earns \$39,060 annually (200% of the Federal Poverty level) can pay anywhere between \$1,953 (10% copayment) to \$6,835.50 (35% copayment) per year. Currently, there are at least 25 counties that employ the 35% multiplier when calculating a family’s copayment. The cost-sharing requirement can be the deciding factor for whether a family will be able to afford child care, even when provided a subsidy.

Co-payment Disparities By County⁵
(Family of 3 at 200% of Federal Poverty Level or \$39,060/year)

County	Family Co-Pay	Cost to Family
Cattaraugus, Livingston, Oswego and Steuben	10%	\$1,953 /year or \$37.56/week (5% of income)
Otsego	15%	\$2,929/year or \$56.34 /week (7.5% of their income)
Allegany, Cayuga, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Nassau, Niagara, Ontario, Putnam, Saratoga, and Tompkins	20%	\$3,906 /year or \$75.12/week (10% of income)
Albany, Delaware, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Oneida, Rockland, Schuyler, St. Lawrence, Ulster, Warren, Washington, and Wayne	25%	\$4,883/year or \$93.90/week (12.5% of income)
Westchester	27%	\$5,273/year or \$101.41/week (13.5% of their income)
Chautauqua, Dutchess, and Suffolk	30%	\$5,859/year or \$112.67/week (13.5% of income)
Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Erie, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Herkimer, Lewis, Monroe, Montgomery, New York City, Onondaga, Orange, Orleans, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie, Seneca, Sullivan, Tioga, Wyoming, Yates	35%	\$6,836/year or \$131.45/week (17.5% of income)

⁵ Antos, Susan. "Copayment Disparities By County For A Family of Three With An Income of \$39,060/year." Empire Justice Center, 31 Oct 2013.

Other opportunities exist for low-income working families whose income places them slightly above the Federal poverty level. Child Care Demonstration Projects, also known as Facilitated Enrollment, provide child care subsidies for families up to 275% of the Federal poverty level. Facilitated Enrollment is administered by the Consortium for Worker Education, Inc. in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and by the Workforce Development Institute in Monroe County, Oneida County and the Capital Region. By assisting working families to gain access to essential subsidies, Facilitated Enrollment is an important part of the state-funded child care system. However, the stability of any childcare subsidy is critical to supporting our workforce. A small well-deserved increase in salary should not strip a family of child care assistance, particularly if adding in the cost of out-of-pocket day care into a family's budget means less actual take-home pay. Expanding Facilitated Enrollment projects across the state will support the New York economy. Parents who participate in Facilitated Enrollment projects experience decreased tardiness and absenteeism, thereby enabling them to work more productively and concentrate at work because they know their children are well cared for.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Standardize the family co-payment across all counties at up to 20% of a family's income above the Federal Poverty level.
- Enhance Facilitated Enrollment by:
 - Increasing funding to existing projects as well as expanding Facilitated Enrollment to other New York State counties.
 - Providing transitional assistance to families in lieu of terminating a Facilitated Enrollment benefit when a small increase in salary would make the family ineligible, similar to transitional child care benefits provided to previous Public Assistance recipients.

II. Enhance Access to Child Care for Working Families

Middle-class families often struggle with the cost of child care as well. According to a CNNMoney article from November of 2013, the average cost of center-based child care in New York is now said to average nearly \$15,000, a cost greater than some college tuitions⁶. This struggle is often severely exacerbated when situations lead to a family member losing gainful employment, forcing some to seek unemployment insurance benefits, if available.

A. Paid Family Leave

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows eligible employees to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Eligible employees may take up to twelve workweeks of leave in a twelve-month period for: the birth of a child or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or

⁶ Hicken, Melanie. "Child care more expensive than college in many states." CNNMoney [New York] 04 11 2013, n. pag. Web. 16 Dec 2013. <<http://money.cnn.com/2013/11/04/pf/child-care-costs/>>.

parent who has a serious health condition; for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job; or for any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status. An eligible employee may also take up to twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single twelve-month period to care for a service member with a serious injury or illness, when the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

The FMLA only applies to employers that meet certain guidelines and their employees that are deemed eligible. Private-sector employers are required to provide this benefit if they employ fifty or more employees in twenty or more workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year. Public agencies, public and private elementary or secondary schools are required to provide this benefit regardless of the number of employees they employ. An employee is deemed eligible when they have worked for the employer for at least twelve-months, have at least 1,250 hours of service during the twelve-month period immediately preceding the leave, and work at a location where the employer has at least fifty employees within seventy-five miles.

New York State's temporary disability insurance program provides temporary cash payments for an employee's own off-the-job injury or illness, including disability caused by pregnancy, but does not cover leave for the care of family members. Private employers are required to provide disability benefits coverage and are permitted to collect contributions from employees at no more than sixty cents a week to offset the cost of providing benefits. The law provides for cash payments only (medical care is not included), up to fifty percent of a claimant's average weekly wage but no more than \$170 per week. Benefits are paid for a maximum of twenty-six weeks of disability during fifty-two consecutive weeks.

While the FMLA of 1993 was an important step in improving the lives of working families, it has not done enough to assist our state's hard working men and women. Perhaps most significantly, the FMLA only covers businesses with fifty or more employees, thereby depriving employees of smaller businesses of its vital protections. Additionally, even if an employee works for a large business, the FMLA's eligibility requirements foreclose eligibility for newly-hired employees as well as part-time workers. Moreover, since the FMLA only provides unpaid leave, many eligible employees simply cannot afford to access the benefits provided by the federal law. New York State's temporary disability insurance program also does not do enough to assist our citizens. First, temporary disability benefits only apply to an employee's own injury or illness – the benefits cannot be used to care for a family member. Furthermore, at a maximum benefit of \$170 a week for a maximum of twenty-six weeks, the benefits do not do enough to replace lost salary, thereby discouraging use by employees.

In light of the fundamental problems associated with both the federal and state law, the time has come for New York to provide paid family leave. Other states, such as California, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington have already approved legislation that offers paid family leave.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Expand New York’s temporary disability benefits program so that all workers can receive paid family leave when family care responsibilities arise. Critically, it is also recommended that the current maximum weekly benefit of \$170 be increased. Our state’s families should not have to choose between the health of their family and a job. Paid family leave will benefit both working families and businesses and is long overdue.

B. Unemployment and Child Care

Unemployment insurance claimants who voluntarily separate from employment without good cause are ineligible for benefits. The labor law specifies that a "compelling family reason" constitutes good cause⁷. Currently, a "compelling family reason" includes things like domestic violence or an illness or disability of a family member. The unemployment insurance appeal board and the courts have interpreted whether the need to provide child care constitutes good cause with some decisions denying benefits and others ruling in favor of the claimant. A claimant that makes diligent efforts to protect employment by requesting leave and makes diligent efforts to obtain child care has been awarded benefits.

In addition, when a worker loses a job through no fault of their own, they often lose their child care as well. In order to maintain unemployment benefits, most claimants must actively seek work by engaging in systematic and sustained efforts to find work. The Commissioner of Labor is charged with promulgating regulations defining systematic and sustained efforts to find work and also setting standards for the proof of work search efforts. When a claimant seeking work also has child care responsibilities, it may be extremely difficult for them to meet the requirements of systematic and sustained work search efforts. It is important that the implementation of the work search requirements not ignore the fact that claimants seeking work must often also care for their children. The work search requirements must allow claimants the ability to care for their children and search for employment. Claimants should not fear losing their benefits because they are caring for their children.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Include child care as a “compelling family reason” so that individuals separating from employment to care for their children know under what terms and conditions they may be eligible for unemployment benefits.
- Ensure that the unemployment insurance work search requirements take into account child care needs, thereby allowing claimants to meet the work search requirements while caring for their children.

⁷ New York State Labor Law §593

III. Enhance Quality in New York's Child Care System

According to the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 85% of a child's brain development, which includes the child's intellect as well as social skills, develops before the age of five⁸. As a result of such studies and research, many child care providers ensure that young children receive a rewarding, educational component while in their program. Participating in these high-quality, early learning programs has been shown to provide children with better math skills⁹ and fewer behavioral issues prior to entering school¹⁰. Furthermore, according to America's Edge, children who participate in a quality early learning program are 31% more likely to maintain gainful employment, 36% earn more in their professions, and they are four times more likely to obtain a four-year degree as an adult¹¹.

Professional development through trainings, credentialing programs, and higher educational opportunities strengthen the quality of providers. This can be especially beneficial to legally-exempt providers who enroll with Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to provide full-time care for up to 2 children. If a legally-exempt provider participates in additional training, they may qualify for an enhanced reimbursement rate¹².

Creating more access to and awareness of training programs, professional development activities, and other higher educational opportunities is beneficial for providers and children alike. After participating in educational opportunities, providers are more effective and efficient when caring for children. Providers become more knowledgeable about how to maintain a safe child care setting, and are equipped to provide more enriching programming to the children in their care.

While child care providers are eager to take advantage of professional development programs, they are often deterred by a lack of information on available training opportunities or the costs related to obtaining advanced certifications and credentialing.

A. Promote Professional Development Programs

Legally exempt providers are required to register with CCR&Rs on an annual basis¹³, a process that is similar to the licensing/registration process required of centers and home based providers. These providers can take advantage of additional training or certification opportunities where available. However, many providers are unaware of these opportunities.

⁸ "Quality: What it Is and Why it Matters in Early Childhood Education." scaany.org. Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, September 2012. Web. 16 Dec 2013.

<http://www.scaany.org/documents/quality_earlyed_scaapolicybrief_sept2012.pdf>.

⁹ Lowe Vandell, Deborah and Wolfe, Barbara, "Child Care Quality: Does it matter and Does It Need to be Improved?" Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

¹⁰ Stein, Rob, "Study finds that effects of low-quality care last into adolescence." Washington Post, 14 May 2010.

¹¹ "Boosting New York's Economy: Short- and Long-Term Economic Gains through Quality Early Learning."

America's Edge, February 2013. Web. 16 Dec 2013

¹² New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 18, Section 415.9

¹³ New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 18, Section 415.4

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Require CCR&Rs to provide information regarding trainings to legally-exempt providers during their yearly re-enrollment process.

B. Quality Improvement Infrastructure

A Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) has emerged as a central strategy in states' efforts to improve the quality of child care and educational programs thereby promoting positive outcomes for young children¹⁴. The first statewide QRIS was created in 1998 and since then, there has been growing momentum for states to use QRIS as a systematic approach for benchmarking quality, as well as identifying and rewarding early childhood programs that provide high quality services. The child's overall school readiness is the focus of QRIS, where requirements concerning practices that can promote children's learning and development are the main goal. QRIS is also a comprehensive system that includes supports that help programs move from one rating level to the next. These supports can include free technical assistance and training, mentoring to help programs reach the next level of the quality rating, enhancement grants to programs, and tuition assistance to providers¹⁵. Quality Stars NY is a QRIS program operating in 13 communities in New York. Most recently in 2012, 457 providers were selected to participate in Quality Stars¹⁶.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Invest in programs that provide quality improvement assistance for existing child care programs.

C. Online Publication of Provider Qualifications

Currently, parents can view basic and limited information about a child care provider on the OCFS website. This information includes contact information, program type and capacity, whether the facility can administer medications, whether non-traditional hours are offered, and if there are uncorrected violations and enforcement actions that were taken. Parents are encouraged to follow up with the provider for any relevant updated information. Selecting a child care provider is one of the most important decisions that working parents face. In order to make this decision, parents should be equipped with a comprehensive overview of the providers' qualifications.

¹⁴ "NAEYC Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) Toolkit." . National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2010. Web. 17 Dec 2013.

<<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QRSToolkit2010.pdf>>.

¹⁵ QRIS National Learning Network, Web. 17 Dec 2013. <<http://qrisnetwork.org/>>.

¹⁶ "QUALITYstarsNY: Getting New York State's Children Ready for Kindergarten and College ." Winning Beginning NY, Web. 17 Dec 2013. <http://www.winningbeginningny.org/documents/QSNY_description_may2011_000.pdf>.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Publicize a provider’s qualifications on the OCFS website, such as the level of education achieved, certifications, completed trainings, and any state or national credentials.

IV. Improve Child Care Administration in New York

A. Child Care Waiting List

Each year, the Assembly strives to secure adequate funding for child care assistance, but the effort is hindered due to a lack of information about current needs. An accurate estimate of the unmet need for subsidized child care in local social services districts is therefore critical. By establishing mandatory waiting lists, the number of families and the length of time they must wait for child care assistance can be determined. In addition, the income level of families receiving child care assistance must be determined so lawmakers can understand the population being served by child care funds and whether current income eligibility requirements are appropriate.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Enact A.2581 (Scarborough)/S.1424 (Montgomery) which would require local social services districts to maintain waiting lists for child care assistance as well as data pertaining to the income level of the families receiving assistance.

B. Parental Notification of Changes to Eligibility

Currently, parents are only guaranteed 10 days advance notice prior to a local social services district terminating their child care eligibility¹⁷. Such short notice does not provide the parent with time to look for alternative child care, and many parents are forced to quit working or use unsafe care for their children.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Enact A.3498-A (Peoples-Stokes) to require local social services districts to provide 60 days advance notice prior to lowering the eligibility or raising the co-payment for parents receiving child care assistance. This will provide more support and stability to working families.

C. Online Access to Child Care

Applying for child care benefits can be a daunting and complicated process. Low-income families are typically not in employment situations that allow parents to take time off from work. The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) website, mybenefits.ny.gov, provides a quick and easy way for individuals and families who live in New York State to find out

¹⁷ New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 18, Section 358-2.2(i)

if they are eligible to receive a number of services. The website provides a single site for New York State’s families and community partners to connect with benefits, services and work supports – a single portal for human services. A few of the benefits currently available online for pre-screening are HEAP, SNAP, Temporary Assistance, Special tax credits, WIC, and various health insurance programs.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Provide for online application for child care assistance through MyBenefits.ny.gov so parents are not forced to miss days of work and lose much needed earnings.

D. Subsidy Reimbursement to Providers

Local social services districts can opt to withhold a portion of subsidy reimbursement from a provider for days in which a child is absent from care. While state regulations allow up to 12 days in absences for each child in any one calendar month¹⁸, most if not all of these counties choose not to pay providers when children do not attend. This creates fiscal uncertainty for many providers, leading to difficulty with staff retention and optimal quality care.

Further, licensing regulations require a certain staff to child ratio depending on the age and number of children receiving care with additional staff being required for any increases in infant care. As a result, the subsidy reimbursement amount for infant care is higher than what would be provided for older children. Subsidy regulations define an infant as a child from 0-18 months¹⁹, however staffing ratios set forth by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) considers an infant to be 0-24 months²⁰. This creates a 6-month financial shortfall for providers who do not receive the higher reimbursement amount, but are still required to operate under the standards of the licensing requirements such as a higher level of staff to child ratio. Aligning the definition of infant in subsidy regulation and licensing regulations will ensure that providers receive an adequate subsidy to compensate for the level of care that is being provided.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Require districts to authorize a certain number of absences per child that would be reimbursed through a subsidy.
- Align licensing and subsidy regulations so that the infant subsidy is provided until a child reaches 2 years of age.

E. Streamline Child Care Regulations

Child care providers experience administrative burdens as they work to maintain compliance with the various federal and state regulatory, licensing, and quality enhancement program requirements. Sometimes a provider may have to submit duplicative or very similar paperwork

¹⁸ New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 18, Section 415.6

¹⁹ New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations Title 18, Section 413.2

²⁰ New York State Social Services Law §390

to multiple agencies. This can be time consuming and costly especially for small providers without the financial or personnel resources to dedicate to administrative activities. Depending on the circumstance, these obstacles may impose an unnecessary deterrent to maintaining a child care business.

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Require state and local agencies to review various child care programs to reduce duplicative and unnecessary requirements. A task force of relevant agencies, such as the Office of Children and Families (OCFS), the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the Department of Health (DOH), the State Education Department (SED), and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH), would be charged with developing ways to synchronize and streamline administrative requirements.

V. Child Care as an Economic Development Tool

Decades of research have demonstrated the social, academic, and economic gains that result from increased investment in high quality early childhood education programs. Children who participate in quality early learning programs have higher rates of high school graduation and college enrollment and decreased rates of incarceration and reliance on public assistance. Early childhood programs produce a rate of return of 7-10%²¹, mostly due to the societal savings resulting from decreased reliance on criminal justice and safety net programs. In addition, increased investment in early learning has been shown to increase the productivity of the current workforce and provides an economic boost for local economies. It is estimated that for every dollar spent on early learning in New York State, a \$1.86 return on investment is generated within the state²².

In New York State, several tax credits are currently offered to businesses that commit to the creation and retention of jobs through New York State's Empire State Development Corporation. Furthermore, certain state grants, state licenses, or funding for projects have elaborate weighting factors that are used to evaluate the entities bidding for the grant, project or license. Over the past couple of years, the State has shifted to a regional economic development focus. Plans submitted for competitive funding have included higher education, construction development, technology infrastructure, and resource marketing projects. Child care needs should not be overlooked in such plans due to its important linkage between quality child care programs and a robust economy with full participation by all.

There are also models across the country of public-private partnerships that have formed to leverage assets to promote early learning initiatives. For example, Pennsylvania created an

²¹ Heckman, James J., Seong Hyeok Moon, Rodrigo Pinto, Peter A. Savelyev, and Adam Yavitz. "The Rate of Return to the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program." NBER Working Paper Series. 15471. November (2009). Web. 19 Dec. 2013.

²² "Boosting New York's Economy: Short- and Long-Term Economic Gains through Quality Early Learning." America's Edge, February 2013. Web. 16 Dec 2013

Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC) through an executive order in 2008²³. The Commission has built a network of civic and business leaders who understand the importance of making economic investments in early childhood education. .

The Assembly Child Care Workgroup recommends the following:

- Require that a commitment to quality child care be a consideration when providing state investments in economic development. For example, a feature of the weighting criteria for bidding entities in the Upstate Gaming Development Act of 2013 is the provision of on-site child care facilities for employees. This demonstrated commitment to the child care system will ensure that New York State’s economic development policy moving forward includes a return on investment in the form of quality child care programs.
- Create a coalition of business and civic leaders whose focus is to secure public and private support for increased investment in high quality early learning initiatives. This coalition would operate as both advocates and educators, using their social and political influence to increase support and awareness for early learning among colleagues and public officials.

Conclusion

The need for adjustments to the child care system is evident. Prioritizing the needs for child care will have a rippling beneficial effect on the state. The Assembly’s Child Care Workgroup is advancing a series of recommendations that will increase access to child care for low-income and middle-class families; promote quality in New York’s child care system; and improve the administration of child care in New York for children, families, and providers. Enacting these cost-saving, efficient, and effective measures will undoubtedly lead to a more economically stable and healthy state, as well as provide for a population better equipped for the future.

²³ Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission, 2013. Web. 19 Dec 2013. <http://www.pa-elic.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=53>.

Appendix A

Roundtables

Early Learning in Child Care as an Economic Development Tool

The first roundtable was conducted on September 18, 2013. At this roundtable, Workgroup members and participants explored the link between the prevalence of quality child care and the economic health of our communities.

Accessibility and Affordability in Child Care

The second roundtable was conducted on October 3, 2013. At this roundtable, Workgroup members and participants examined the cost of child care, child care subsidies, barriers to accessing child care programs, and the burdens that child care providers face.

Quality in Child Care

The final roundtable was conducted on October 17, 2013. At this roundtable, Workgroup members and participants examined the ways in which quality, in terms of safety and child development can be implemented in the various child care settings.

To ensure a comprehensive discussion, stakeholders throughout New York State were invited to provide the Workgroup with information on the current and growing child care crisis. Below are the names of participants:

Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee	Kristen Kerr, NYS Association for the Education of Young Children
Commissioner Kenneth Adams	Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN)
Emily Miles, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA)	Susan Antos, Empire Justice Center
Lauren Tobias, Director of Policy, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy	Denise Dowell, Early Learning and Care Programs, CSEA
Kate Breslin, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy	Jeremy Hoffman, United Federation of Teachers (UFT)
Susan Hains, Health and Human Services, Workforce Development Institute (WDI), Accompanied by Sarah Sevrin-Ashton	Kimberly Finnigan, Center for Economic Growth (CEG)
Deborah King, New York Union Child Care Coalition	Mike Neidl, AFL-CIO
Kyle Stewart, Alliance of New York State YMCAs	Kathleen Halas, David Voegelé, and Jessica Klos-Shapiro, Early Care and Learning Council
Gregory Brender, United Neighborhood Houses	Jasmine Gripper, Alliance for Quality Education
Jenn O’Conner, Council for a Strong America	Joshua Wallack and Moria Cappio, Children’s Aid Society