



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

Victory! Contracts restored at Rainbow Child Development Center in Queens as parents flock to re-enroll

JOHN C. LIU July 7, 2023



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VICTORY! CONTRACTS RESTORED AT RAINBOW CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN QUEENS AS PARENTS FLOCK TO RE-ENROLL

Flushing, NY – State Senator John Liu today proclaimed victory in the battle over the future of the Rainbow Child Development Center in Queens after it was threatened with closure by the Department of Education. The reversal follows weeks of discussions with the DOE and advocacy from families, educators and elected officials who held that the DOE was wrong to close the school and reassign families to other schools they never applied to, often to schools outside the borough.

After meeting with the DOE this week, Rainbow informed parents that enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year at the Rainbow Child Development Center has been restored. Parents are now beginning the enrollment process.

Rainbow has had its Pre-K and 3-K contracts with the Department of Education since 2010 and has rapidly become an early childhood learning center of choice serving bilingual and low-income Chinese/English-speaking families through its four schools in Flushing, Little Neck, Fresh Meadows and Long Island City.

After a payment dispute between a handful of parents and Rainbow at the start of the pandemic, the Special Commissioner of Investigation opened an investigation into Rainbow that concluded in May 2023. For the last three years, Rainbow continued operations as usual without updates or the \$2 million in reimbursements it was owed by the DOE for those operations. Instead, Rainbow's operators were forced to use personal funds to stay afloat. It was only when Rainbow approached the City Comptroller to inquire about its lack of payments that the school suddenly learned it would be shut down for the next school year and parents were promptly reassigned to other schools.

When approached by Rainbow in early June, Senator Liu rallied with Rainbow families and sent a letter (attached) to Chancellor Banks rebuking the DOE for false public statements regarding outstanding payments and demanding the DOE not close this desperately needed community school that serves about 400 children throughout Queens.

This week, Rainbow at long last received an update from the DOE on enrollment indicating that it may continue to offer free Pre-K and 3-K for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year.

State Senator John Liu stated, "The DOE has made the right decision and we thank the Chancellor for recognizing the importance of this early childhood learning center that serves hundreds of families throughout Queens with bilingual English/Chinese competency. The battle to keep the school open is won, but we will stay vigilant to make sure all reimbursements are forthcoming and that any future actions are conducted with fairness and transparency and in a manner that will not adversely impact the livelihoods of this important community school or the hundreds of families who are part of the Rainbow family."

Christine Ye, Owner of Rainbow Child Development Center stated, "We have always maintained that the accusations against our school were false and unfair and that we never even had a chance to respond before the DOE notified parents that our programs were closed. Rainbow has been long renowned for our commitment to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for our youngest learners in the communities where they live. Today, we are so happy to say we are able to continue

providing Pre-K and 3-K services to our families for the next school year, and I am eternally grateful to all of Rainbow's families, educators and our community elected officials who spoke up on our behalf and never gave up on us!"

Vanessa Dai, parent, stated, "As a bilingual Chinese and English school, Rainbow has been instrumental in the language development of my children. I have personally seen how the teachers and staff are able to bring out the best in all the kids in the school no matter their background or ability. My family has been extremely happy here, and we are so excited that we will be able to re-enroll for the next year."

Michael Perlmutter, parent, stated, "We are overjoyed that we will be able to send our daughter Savannah to her 3K program at Rainbow Child Development Center for the upcoming school year and are looking forward to enrolling immediately. This school means so much to our daughter, her friends and the community and it is so important that this caring, child-centered community school remains open and available to all."

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