



---

Testimony before the Joint Fiscal Committees  
New York State Budget Hearing  
Labor & Workforce Development Committee  
February 25, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the FY 2027 Labor & Workforce Development Committees State Budget Hearing. All Our Kin is a national organization that provides educational mentorship, professional development, and systems-building support to family child care educators. Our mission is to ensure that family child care providers succeed as small business owners, while being able to support working families and providing an early childhood foundation that sets children up for success in school and life.

Across New York State, more than [150,000](#) children spend their days in a family child care setting. These programs are deeply rooted in their communities and provide culturally and linguistically responsive care that families deeply value. Families often prefer home-based programs because of a shared language and culture, small groups, and the mixed age settings.

We are encouraged by recent historic commitments from Governor Hochul to expand access and capacity of child care across the state, and look forward to increased opportunities for educators to provide high-quality child care via an equitable system that supports parent choice. However, amid announcements of historic levels of investment in child care and early education, the omission of increased investments in the workforce is glaring. The child care [workforce](#) is amongst the lowest paid professions, earning less than 98% of all other professions in New York State. Within a deeply underfunded field, family child care educators are paid even less. According to the [Department of Labor](#), low pay remains a major obstacle to expanding and stabilizing the child care workforce. In 2023, the median wage for those working in the sector was \$38,234 annually, more than \$20,000 less than the median wage for all New Yorkers. This amounts to \$18.38 an hour, only modestly above the minimum wage, which ranged from \$15 per hour in downstate regions to between \$14.20-\$15 elsewhere in the state.

Governor Hochul has consistently affirmed that child care is essential to New York's economic vitality and a key conduit to stable employment and educational opportunity for families. [Research](#) continues to underscore that high-quality early care settings foster healthy development with lasting benefits for children's academic and professional success. As state and city policymakers begin to design and implement expansion, New York's future depends on building an equitable, high-quality, universal system supported by a stable, well-compensated workforce. We respectfully offer the following recommendations:

**Ensure that workforce compensation reflects the true cost of care and includes benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off**

A recent [report](#) from the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School, estimates that public compensation, via child care assistance rates, underpay between 28-36% of the actual costs to run a program and provide quality care to a home-based, licensed child care program. The impact has been felt, as more than 1,400 home-based programs have closed since 2014 in New York City alone. Benefit options are limited to largely public health insurance, such as Medicaid, for which more than half of educators qualify for. Without access to comprehensive benefits, including insurance and retirement plans, the stress of meeting basic needs will continue to be too much for family child care educators and will result in continued shortage of staffing availability.

### **Implement an equitable salary scale and career ladder based on recommendations from the [Child Care Workforce Collaborative](#)**

As New York moves closer to a universal child care system, it must pair expanded parent access with a compensation system that truly values the workforce. The State should establish a comprehensive salary scale and career ladder that recognize demonstrated competency and experience, in addition to educational attainment. This is especially critical for family child care educators, who bring an average of 10 years of experience yet face significant barriers to further educational attainment due to long hours and low wages. A livable wage and defined career pathway are essential to stabilizing the current workforce and attracting the next generation of educators.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to this committee. All Our Kin urges the Legislature to meet this moment with bold, sustainable investments that reflect the indispensable role that child care, particularly family child care, plays in New York's economy and in communities across the state. Timely and sufficient investments are essential to stabilize the sector, support working families, and ensure that those who care for our youngest children earn a living wage and comprehensive benefits. We stand ready to partner with state and local leaders to advance solutions that center equity, strengthen parent choice, and build a child care system that truly delivers for families and educators alike.

Please feel free to contact Lara Kyriakou, Senior Director of Policy, at [lara@allourkin.org](mailto:lara@allourkin.org) with any questions. Thank you.