



THE LEGISLATURE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

April 18, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Thank you for your smart, steady leadership during this tremendously challenging crisis. We appreciate your attention to ensuring the safety of your constituents while also weighing the impact that business closures will have on the economy and taking a measured stance on re-opening New York State in the most safe, effective manner possible.

We are writing on behalf of the thousands of essential workers who need safe, quality child care to keep performing their essential functions as well as on behalf of the child care workforce which is itself designated as essential. **We respectfully request that you act without delay to invest the \$163.4 million in CARES Act funds designated for child care.** Without child care, the State's essential workers cannot continue their selfless work of caring for the many New Yorkers who have been stricken by COVID-19, and keeping essential state services operating. At the same time, New York's economy cannot restart and rebuild without a vibrant child care industry, one poised and ready to phase up to full capacity as the recovery begins.

These funds should be invested to achieve the following three goals:

- 1. Provide free/low-cost, safe, child care to the children of essential workers for the duration of the public health crisis, along with children experiencing homelessness and families involved in the child welfare system. This care should be provided immediately, and with as little red tape as possible.** With essential workers putting their very lives on the line, and being asked to work long hours while their school age children are out of school, at a time when they cannot rely on older relatives and neighbors to assist with care, many are struggling to find and afford care for their young and school-aged children. New York is overdue to join many of our sister states in providing our essential workers safe, quality, affordable child care.
- 2. Provide premium pay, health care, access to testing and PPEs to child care providers that choose to remain open - at great personal risk - during this crisis.** Connect providers to public

health consultants so they can provide care in as safe a manner as possible given that young children do not “social distance.”

3. Direct ALL local department of social services across the State to pay providers participating in the child care subsidy program for March, April and May 2020 based on the number of children enrolled on March 1, regardless of attendance, and develop a fund to enable providers to apply for grants to cover lost private-pay tuition as our neighbor Vermont has done. If these steps are not taken, there may not be a viable industry on the other side of this crisis.

While these three actions will not be enough to stabilize child care in New York for the long term, they will create a bridge to help our State move from crisis to recovery, buying us time to develop a longer term plan for recovery – one that recognizes the critical importance child care will have to play for that recovery to be successful.

Respectfully,



Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi
Chair, Social Services



Senator Roxanne J. Persaud
Chair, Social Services



Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee
Chair, Children and Families



Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Chair, Children and Families