



*Hundreds of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs,
Prosecutors, other Law Enforcement
Leaders, and Violence Survivors
Preventing Crime and Violence*

13

Testimony

2014 Joint Legislative Hearing

Human Services Committee

**John Grebert, Chief (Ret.), Colonie Police Department, and
Executive Director, NYS Association of Chiefs of Police**

Melanie Blow, Board Member, Prevent Child Abuse New York

February 4, 2014

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Thank you, Members of the Committee, for giving us the opportunity to testify today.

I am a member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, an organization of more than 260 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and crime survivors across the state who support proven investments in children.

I am here to speak with you about how, as a leader in law enforcement, I know that investing in home visiting can not only reduce child abuse, but prevent crime in New York State.

Nothing can fully prepare a law enforcement officer to walk into a home where child abuse has taken place. The terrible experience of removing children from their homes is one reason we members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids are so committed to addressing child abuse or neglect *before* children are hurt. Over 77,000 New York children were victims of abuse or neglect in 2010, over 200 children every day, and at least 114 New York children

die as a result of that abuse or neglect. The true numbers are likely much higher because many cases of abuse and neglect are not reported.

In addition to protecting children, law enforcement leaders want to prevent abuse and neglect because it's a powerful crime prevention strategy. Researchers have found that maltreatment contributes to future crime. While most survivors of childhood abuse and neglect never become criminals, research shows that an estimated 3,000 victims of abuse and neglect in 2010 will later become violent criminals who otherwise would have avoided such crimes if not for the abuse and neglect they endured as children.

Evidence-based home visiting programs for families and infants and young children, like Healthy Families New York, can decrease abuse and neglect and reduce future crime. The research tells us this. Home visiting optimizes early development to give kids the right start in life. Investing early in a child's life is also just fiscally smart. You either pay now, or you pay a lot more later. We currently spend \$2.8 billion a year incarcerating about 66,000 people. A strong sustained investment in home visiting programs, like Healthy Families New York, could help.

We know that the most powerful weapons we have against crime, violence and abuse are the proven programs that help kids get a good start in life. Healthy Families New York is one of those high quality programs. If New York invests wisely in what works, fewer of our officers and deputies will find themselves carrying children away from abusive or neglectful homes, and fewer New Yorkers will become the victims of violence in the future.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids asks that New York State restore funding in the amount \$3.5 million this year, instead of once again flat-funding since 2008.

Melanie Blow, a board member of Prevent Child Abuse NY, will share with you what this flat-funding has meant to this program statewide.

Thank you, John, and thank you, Members of the Committee.

I want to go into a little more detail about why preventing child abuse is so important. You've already heard some numbers and statistics about how expensive child abuse is.

When I was seven years old, the thing I was most grateful for was that my father hadn't yet killed me. When I was fourteen, what I was most grateful for was that neither my father nor my uncle had impregnated me. When I was sixteen, and figured out that my mother was going to let three years of sexual abuse become five years of sexual abuse, I was grateful for very little. At seventeen, I really regretted not following through on all the times I wanted to kill myself two, three, four years ago. And at eighteen, I experienced no joy at being free. I wasn't prepared for it. I knew how to survive child abuse. That was really all I knew, and that's an absolutely useless skill.

I was born the year the first model home visitation programs, the programs upon which Healthy Families New York and Nurse Family Partnership are built, were established. If

New York had been as progressive and compassionate as we claim to be, we would have made these programs available to all qualifying families. We would have poured money into improving these programs and coming up with other primary prevention programs, which is what the Child and Family Trust Fund does. That would mean child abuse survivors younger than me would be very, very rare in this state. They're not. We've had the option of becoming a state where abuse fatalities are unheard of, not one where I have to ask people which headline they're referring to when they say, "Did you hear about the little kid who was killed?"

For the last 36 years, New York has had the option of becoming a state where child abuse, and the mental illness, crime, addiction, premature death and poverty that accompany it, is rare. We choose not to become that state, every year.

Instead we flat-fund the programs. With funds able to pay for less and less each year, it's become harder and harder to help families. Some workers were laid off, others left for better paying - or less stressful - jobs. Workers must build relationships with the parents they serve, so families tend to drop out when their assigned worker quits. New workers become harder and harder to find. Slowly but surely, the program's ability to serve children unravels.

These programs that can spare so many children so much harm - and that can spare the rest of our state so much expense - reach fewer people because of flat-funding, when they desperately need to reach more. We are asking for a \$3.5 million increase to \$26.8 million,

to restore Healthy Families New York to its 2008 functional level. This is a very humble ask indeed.

Prevent Child Abuse New York has tried to convince NY's lawmakers that preventing child abuse is important for years. Perhaps it seems to you that only the advocates are saying it. But I've done some research this year.

I've met the grandmother of a little boy, murdered by his caretaker while CPS was investigating allegations of abuse. She says preventing child abuse is important.

I've gotten to know a mother who kidnapped her daughter, because all the legal means to protect her daughter failed, resulting in the girl living with a registered sex offender. She tells me we need to prevent child abuse.

For two and a half years, I've known a mother whose son is abused on visits with his non-custodial parent, despite her doing everything imaginable to make them stop. I've watched her little boy deteriorate from a child who loves school and is loved by his teachers to a child who struggles, fails classes and has difficulties with his peers. I've listened to this mother gauge his talk of suicide, trying to figure out if she needs to bring him to the hospital. I try to reassure her that an abuse survivor can still live a good life as an adult. I don't tell her there will always be some pain there. She already knows that. You already know that. And this mother tells me we need to prevent child abuse.

These stories show us that none of the systems for stopping child abuse after it starts work as well as we want them to. We need to make them better, but no amount of improvements can be as good as preventing the abuse from starting. This is what all the experts say. This is what all the parents and grandparents I've met say. And this is what every survivor will say. There are lots of things New York must do to prevent child abuse. And growing the funding for Healthy Families New York is one of them.



From America's Front Line Against Crime: Proven investments in kids will prevent crime and violence

As an organization of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, attorneys general, other law enforcement leaders, and violence survivors, we are committed to putting dangerous criminals behind bars. But by the time law enforcement get involved, the damage is already done and lives are changed forever.

America's anti-crime arsenal contains no weapons more powerful than the effective programs that help kids get the right start in life. A number of high-quality programs are proven to prevent crime, reduce child abuse and neglect, and help troubled kids get back on track. Yet, despite decades of growing research proving what works, inadequate investments leave millions of children needlessly at risk of becoming delinquent teens and violent adults while putting every American at greater risk of becoming a victim of crime.

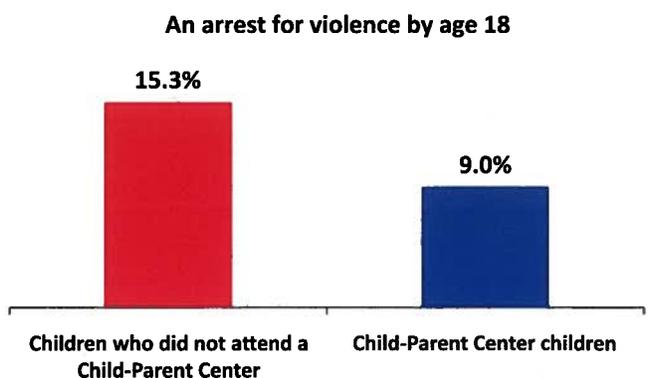
We call on all federal, state and local officials to implement this four-part plan to cut crime and violence. Doing so will help America's children learn the values and skills they'll need to become good neighbors and responsible adults. Across all ages there are effective programs. Some start before birth, others

are proven to work with older kids, even serious juvenile offenders. While no plan can prevent every violent act, this common-sense approach, based on our experience and the latest research about what really works, can make all of us safer .

Four Steps that Work

1. Provide all families access to high-quality early care and education for kids from birth to age five.
2. Offer voluntary parent coaching to at-risk parents of young children through home visiting or other options proven to prevent child abuse and neglect.
3. Ensure all school-age children and youth have access to effective programs during school hours and after school to help keep them on track.
4. Identify troubled and delinquent kids and provide them and their parents effective interventions so the children will avoid a life of crime.

At-Risk Children Without Quality Pre-Kindergarten Were 70% More Likely to Commit Violent Crimes



Reynolds, et al., 2001

1. Provide all families access to high-quality early care and education for kids from birth to age five

Law enforcement leaders have long known that giving kids the right start in life is the best way to prevent violence and crime. Rigorous social science and neuroscience research now backs that up. In the first few years of life, children's intellects and emotions, and even their ability to develop concern for others (the beginnings of conscience), are building the foundation upon which their later success or failure will greatly depend. As parents are at work trying to make ends meet, voluntary early education and care for babies, toddlers and preschoolers can begin preparing kids for a successful life rather than a life of repeated contacts with law enforcement. For example:

- Chicago's publicly-funded Child-Parent Centers have served almost 100,000 three- and four-year-olds since 1967. For 14 years, researchers tracked 989 of those children and 550 similar children not in the program. The children who did not participate were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.
- In Ypsilanti, Michigan, three- and four-year-olds from low-income families who did not participate in the Perry Preschool program were five times more likely to be chronic lawbreakers by age 27 than those who were randomly assigned to the program. The children in the preschool program were 44 percent more likely to graduate from high school.

2. Offer voluntary parent coaching to at-risk parents of young children through home visiting or other options proven to prevent child abuse and neglect

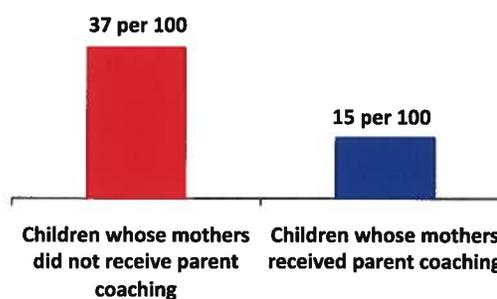
Almost 800,000 children are abused or neglected in this country each year. Studies show that being abused or neglected multiplies the risk that a child will grow up to be a violent criminal. Public safety demands that we offer at-risk parents home visiting and parent support programs that prevent children from being abused and neglected, prevent subsequent delinquency, and improve other outcomes for children. Research shows what works:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership randomly assigned half of a group of at-risk families to voluntary visits by specially-trained nurses who offered coaching in parenting skills and

other advice and support. Beginning during the mother's pregnancy and continuing until the child's second birthday, parents learned to manage stress, understand the health and nutrition needs of newborns, identify the signs of problems, make their home safe, and find resources such as doctors and child care help. Rigorous studies showed that the children served by the program were half as likely to be abused and neglected, and by age 15, they

Nurse Family Partnership Cut Arrests By More Than Half Among At-Risk Kids Served

Arrests Down 59%
Rate of arrests by age 15



Olds, et al., 1998

- Chicago's Child-Parent Centers preschool program for 3- and 4-year olds from low-income neighborhoods, already cited above, included a strong parent-coaching component with staffed parent-resource rooms in the centers. Children in the program were half as likely to experience repeated abuse or neglect and nearly half as likely to be placed in foster care as the similar children *not* in the program.
- Triple P, the Positive Parenting Program, is a system for delivering age-appropriate tools and techniques for parents to help their children behave responsibly. It lets parents pick what help they want, ranging from newsletter articles, to brief consultations, to ten weeks of parent coaching for parents with especially challenging children. The Triple P system was tested in counties throughout South Carolina with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For the thousands of children served in the counties randomly assigned to receive the efforts compared to the counties left out, Triple P counties averaged 25 percent reductions in abuse and neglect, 33 percent reductions in foster care placements,

and 35 percent reductions in emergency room visits or hospitalizations for abuse.

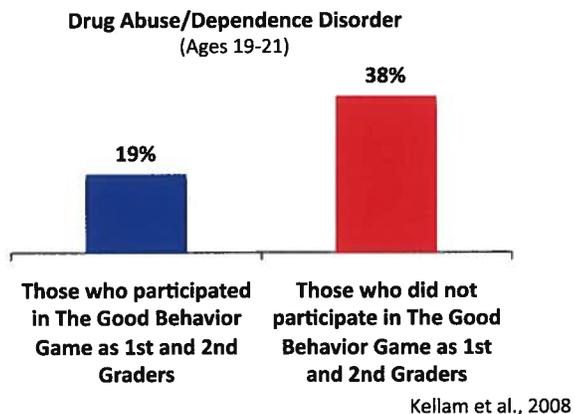
3. Ensure all school-age children and youth have access to effective programs during school hours and after school to help keep them on track

Two approaches are needed to help school-aged kids steer clear of crime: 1) effective programs during the school day, and 2) high-quality after-school programs.

- The Good Behavior Game is an example of a simple, effective school-based program for all kids. In the game, kids are divided into two teams that compete to behave well and follow class rules. The winning team receives simple rewards, such as lining up first for recess. In the process, the students acquire life-long lessons on how to effectively manage their own behaviors. In one trial, first graders were randomly assigned to participate or not in the game. By the sixth grade, non-participants were more than twice as likely as participants to suffer from clinical levels of conduct disorder – a mental health diagnosis associated with out-of-control behavior and delinquency.

In another randomized trial, by the time the male non-participants were age 19 through 21, they were twice as likely to suffer from a drug abuse/dependence disorder.

Boys in Baltimore Classrooms Not Receiving The Good Behavior Game Were Twice as Likely To Become Drug Abusers



- Studies have found that 40 percent of school bullies had three or more criminal convictions as adults, and bullies

are more likely to carry a weapon to school. Rigorously tested anti-bullying programs that enlist the whole school – everyone from bus drivers to principals – have cut bullying by as much as half.

- On school days, the after-school hours are the prime time for juvenile crime. Developing ways to attract at-risk middle- and high-school age children into after-school programs, and to effectively coach them on how to avoid troubling behaviors, can be challenging, but the Boys & Girls Clubs have shown they can deliver. For example, in a study conducted in several U.S. cities, five housing projects without Boys & Girls Clubs were compared to five projects receiving new clubs. At the beginning, drug activity and vandalism were the same. But by the time the study ended, the projects without the programs had 50 percent more vandalism and scored 37 percent worse on a combined measure of drug activity.

4. Identify troubled and delinquent kids and provide them and their parents effective interventions so the children will avoid a life of crime

Many children who are overly aggressive and at higher risk of becoming involved in violent crime later in life can be identified at an early age and helped:

- The Incredible Years provides training in problem solving and social issues for families of young children suffering from aggressive behavior problems. The researchers studying this program report that it has been able to stop the cycle of aggression for approximately two-thirds of the families served.

Many youths who are already offenders can become productive citizens with the right help:

- A few intensive family therapy programs, such as the Multisystemic Therapy or Functional Family Therapy, provide well-tested strategies to the parents or foster parents of serious juvenile offenders and work with the young offenders themselves to reduce kids' problem behaviors. Research shows that new arrests of youths in these programs have been cut by as much as half compared to similar troubled youths in families not receiving this help.

"We need to step up and invest in what works to keep America's most vulnerable children from becoming America's most-wanted adults."

– Sheriff Leroy Baca,
Los Angeles County, CA
Board Chairman,
FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

The bottom line: investing in kids saves lives and money

When our country fails to invest effectively in its children, all Americans pay the price – in taxes for criminal justice costs, costs to business, and costs to the victims. Worse, some children and adults will pay with their lives. Investing now in what works not only saves lives and protects Americans, it saves money:

- Researcher Mark Cohen found that the average value of preventing a baby from growing up to become a youth who drops out of school, uses drugs and goes on to become a career criminal is at least \$2.5 million per individual.
- Economist Steven Barnett found that the Perry Preschool program produced a net savings of \$16 for every dollar invested. Total savings averaged \$245,000 per child and more than two-thirds of the savings came from reduced crime costs.
- The Washington State Institute for Public Policy concluded

that the Nurse Family Partnership saved, on average, over \$12,000 per family served; and, for troubled youth already in the juvenile justice system, three effective family therapy programs cut future crimes so much their average savings ranged from \$18,000 to \$89,000 per child. States have immediately cut the costs of housing juvenile delinquents by shifting eligible youth from expensive facilities to those more effective family therapy programs.

Law Enforcement is united in calling for crime-prevention investments in kids

Who says these four steps are among our most powerful weapons to fight crime?

- The more than 5,000 law enforcement leaders and crime survivors who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS.
- Major law enforcement and crime survivor organizations who have endorsed our call to fight crime by investing in kids: The International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Association of Attorneys General, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, and dozens of other national and state law enforcement organizations across America.

The prestigious National Academy of Sciences has further confirmed that the research on what works to keep kids out of trouble is solid.

Helping kids get the right start in life will save money, build a stronger America, and protect our communities. It is time to invest in what works.

For an electronic version of this brief with endnotes, see:
<http://www.fightcrime.org/page/fcik-plan-reduce-crime-and-violence-with-endnotes>

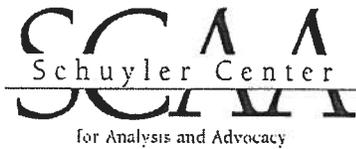
FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is supported by tax-deductible contributions from foundations, individuals and corporations. FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS accepts no funds from federal, state or local governments.

Major funding for FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is provided by: The Atlantic Philanthropies · The Birth to Five Policy Alliance · The California Wellness Foundation · The Annie E. Casey Foundation · The Chicago Community Trust · Robert Sterling Clark Foundation · Dr. Scholl Foundation · East Bay Community Foundation · The First Five Years Fund · Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation · The Grable Foundation · Grand Victoria Foundation · The George Gund Foundation · Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund · The Horace Hagedorn Foundation · The Irving Harris Foundation · The Heinz Endowments · The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation · The James Irvine Foundation · The Walter S. Johnson Foundation · W.K. Kellogg Foundation · The Marks Family Foundation · The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation · McCormick Foundation · The Morris Family Foundation · The New York Community Trust · Ohio Children's Foundation · The David and Lucile Packard Foundation · William Penn Foundation · The Pew Charitable Trusts · Advancing Quality Pre-K for All · Rauch Foundation · W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation.

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Helping Vulnerable Families Gets Harder for Healthy Families NY

Increase funding for Healthy Families New York 15% to \$26.8 million.

In fiscal year 2007-08, New York State's budget included \$25.2 million for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Home Visiting. In 2008-09, the financial crisis led to an 8% cut for HFNY to \$23.3 million. Funding has been held at \$23.3 million for six years. Adjusting for inflation, "flat funding" means funds have effectively been reduced by 15% since FY 2007-2008.

In July 2013, HFNY sites were asked to complete an online survey regarding the impact of funding reductions on their services. The results of that survey provided the information below.

LOSS OF CRITICAL SERVICES (79% of respondents) — As a result of funding changes, some programs have reduced the areas where they provide services. In addition, many programs can no longer:

- ▶ Provide outreach to ensure fathers' involvement.
- ▶ Engage families through community outreach.
- ▶ Conduct family support groups that augment home visits.
- ▶ Provide support—such as training—to expand staff skills.
- ▶ Organize group activities that create personal supports.

DECREASE IN LENGTH OF STAY IN PROGRAM (58% of respondents) — Families are involved for shorter lengths of time. Positive outcomes are directly related to length and level of participation.

CUTBACKS IN SUPPLIES FOR FAMILIES (60% of respondents) — Families go without critical supplies crucial to maintaining healthy, safe environments. Many programs no longer provide:

- ▶ Infant care kits (including essential supplies such as thermometers, nail clippers).
- ▶ Transportation vouchers.
- ▶ Diapers, clothing, cribs, safety kits, toothbrushes.
- ▶ Books and educational toys.

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STAFF (95% of respondents) — Cutbacks have led to reductions in staff resulting in turnover of remaining staff because of increased stress level (due to caseload size) and reduced wages. This means less consistency for families. Staff retention directly impacts family retention. In addition, fewer training opportunities now exist which compromises quality.

Survey conducted by Prevent Child Abuse New York, July 2013. Just over half of all HFNY sites, and two-thirds of those that were fully operational in 2007, responded.

“We no longer are able to provide HFNY services to the entire county.”

“We used to have fathering support groups and met with fathers about their special needs.”

“We struggle to continue activities that we know are important to keep our families engaged.”

“Our families have missed out on socialization opportunities we used to provide to assist them with being less isolated.”

For more information, contact:

Chris Deyss, Executive Director, PCANY, 518/445-1273 or
Bridget Walsh, Senior Policy Associate, SCAA, 518/463-1896



Prevent Child Abuse
New York

2014 Legislative Issue

RECOMMEND \$26.8 million for Healthy Families New York Home Visiting - \$3.5 million above the executive budget - to restore the service level in high-need communities across the state.

Babies don't come with instructions. HFNY nurtures strong, positive parent-child relationships - the foundation for health and well-being across the entire lifespan.

Infants' health at birth and the care they receive during the first three years has a profound impact that lasts throughout their lives. Regular visits by trained professionals during this time can shift the trajectory of families' lives and children's future. By reaching at-risk children and families at the earliest possible time, home visiting prevents problems that require expensive intervention and remediation.

Research proves Healthy Families New York (HFNY) works for a diverse array of families, from first-time teen parents to those who have had experience with the child welfare system.

- Improves birth outcomes, reducing low birth weight deliveries.
- Prevents child abuse and neglect, and increases positive, non-violent parenting.
- Promotes success in school, with higher scores and less need for special education.

HFNY services have been reduced since 2008 because of the effective 15% cut in funds with six years of flat funding.

- Programs have had to limit father involvement services, the communities and neighborhoods they serve, and outreach to vulnerable families.
- Reductions in staff due to layoffs, increased stress and lower wages directly impacts both the number of families served and how long families stay with the program.
- Families are involved for shorter lengths of time, but infants' and families' successful outcomes are directly related to length and level of participation.

We strongly urge restoring Healthy Families New York Home Visiting services to the level that had been achieved in 2008 by allocating \$26.8 million for the program.



healthy families new york

A home visiting program that works!

HFNY is an evidence-based home visiting program offering services to expecting parents and new families, beginning weekly and decreasing over time, until the child starts school or Head Start.

Research demonstrates the critical importance of early life experiences on children's health and development.

HFNY focuses on the safety of children by supporting families in targeted high risk communities.

Services include educating families on parenting and child development; connecting families with medical providers for prenatal/well-baby visits and immunizations; assessing children for development delays; and helping families access community referral resources and services.

HFNY is open to first-time parents as well as parents with multiple children, who are pregnant and/or have at least one child less than three months of age.

Goals

- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Promote positive parenting skills and parent-child interaction
- Ensure optimal prenatal care and child health and development
- Enhance family self-sufficiency

Research proves HFNY works for a diverse array of families from first-time teen parents... to those who have had experience with the child welfare system.

Improves birth outcomes

■ 48% reduction in low birth weight (LBW) deliveries among women who enrolled before the 31st week of pregnancy.

Prevents child abuse and neglect

■ 50% reduction in subsequent confirmed child protective (CPS) reports after 7 years for mothers with a confirmed report prior to program entry.

■ 49% reduction in the rate at which children of young, first time moms who enrolled early in pregnancy were confirmed as victims in CPS reports between ages 5 to 7.

Promotes success in school

■ 50% less likely to repeat first grade.

■ 70% more likely to score above grade level in first grade on three specific behaviors that promote learning.

■ 2.7 times more likely to be participating in a gifted program by age 7.

■ 26% reduction in receipt of special education services by age 7.

■ 23% reduction in below average scores for receptive vocabulary for children of young, first-time mothers who enrolled in the program early in pregnancy.

Supports positive parenting

■ At age 2, home visited mothers were more likely to endorse appropriate limit setting strategies.

■ At age 3, home visited mothers were more likely to be observed using parenting strategies that stimulated the child's cognitive skills and were sensitive to the child's needs and cues.

■ At age 7, home visited mothers used non-violent discipline strategies more often.

Saves money

■ \$1,000 to serve a family during pregnancy is totally recovered before a child's birth -- due to reductions in low birth weight births.

■ For mothers with histories of CPS reports, a return of over \$3 for every \$1 invested by child's 7th birthday.

For more information and research results,
<http://www.healthyfamiliesnewyork.org>

Believe in Children Campaign

A Call for Universal Child Care, Pre-Kindergarten, and Afterschool

"...we believe in children, we believe in Pre-K, we believe in education, let's put our money where our mouth is and let's make it a reality." –Governor Andrew Cuomo

Providing equal opportunity for all New York's children requires ensuring that they have access to a continuum of high-quality services that support their learning and development and meet the needs of diverse families. Building a comprehensive system, of which these investments are a critical part, will better serve children and families, streamline regulations, reduce costs, and result in a significant economic return on investment.

The achievement gap starts with differences in the quality of affordable child care, grows depending on access to Pre-Kindergarten, and continues to grow through a lack of access to afterschool enrichment and summer learning opportunities. Research has found that high-quality programs can significantly narrow the gap at each stage of a child's life, and that children need consistent access to such programs to continue making these gains. Establishing universal access, from birth through high school, to places where children can be safe and learn will put all our children on the right track for success in college, career, and life.

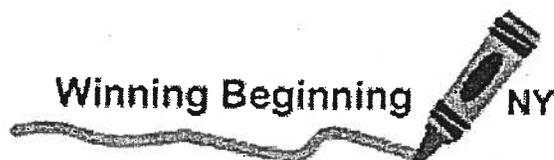
Governor Cuomo has called for five years of sustained investment in Pre-Kindergarten and afterschool. Building on his proposal, and the work of the Assembly and Senate on child care, we propose:

Universal Child Care: Invest \$182 million in child care subsidies in 2014-15, serving more than 25,000 additional children. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach \$2.2 billion annually, providing universal access to the estimated 305,000 children of working parents who are currently in need of high-quality early care and learning.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten: Invest at least \$225 Million from the State, for new high quality, full-day Pre-K opportunities statewide and fully support any localities' efforts to expand high-quality full-day Pre-K to all children.

Universal Afterschool: Invest \$9 million in quality infrastructure in 2014-15, in preparation for five years of investment beginning with \$160 million in 2015-16. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach \$825 million annually, providing access to half of the estimated 1.1 million children in need of programs.

For questions on: child care, contact Carolyn Lee-Davis at Carolyn@TheChildrensAgenda.org; pre-kindergarten, contact Betty Holcomb at bholcomb@centerforchildrensinitiatives.org; afterschool, contact Nora Niedzielski-Eichner at neichner@nysan.org.



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