



**Testimony of Day Care Council of New York
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Honorable Tiffany Caban, Chair
On Legislation to Strengthen Child Care in New York City**

Presented by Gregory Brender, Director of Public Policy

June 29th, 2022

Thank you Chair Caban and members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for the opportunity to testify. Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) is the membership organization of early childhood provider organizations in New York City. DCCNY supports its member organizations and New York City's early childhood field at-large through policy research and advocacy, labor relations and mediation, professional development and training for early childhood educators, directors and staff, and referral services for parents looking to find child care. DCCNY member organizations provide early care and education at over 200 sites in neighborhoods across all five boroughs. Most DCCNY member organizations work with contracts with New York City Department of Education.

DCCNY and its members recognize that access to child care is an equity issue and when families cannot find child care the burden falls disproportionately on women. The services that DCCNY member organizations provide support women in working and advancing their careers and education.

We also recognize that our workforce, which is made up primarily of women of color, is underpaid and underappreciated due to the discrimination against work that has traditionally been performed by women. For this reason, achieving salary parity between the early childhood workforce and their counterparts in public schools has consistently been DCCNY's highest priority.

Legislation

This hearing is considering eight pieces of legislation and one resolution to reform and strengthen child care. DCCNY is pleased to see the council working to address the challenges families are facing in accessing child care.

Our comments on the legislation and resolution are below.

[Int 0242-2022](#)

A Local Law in relation to the establishment of a Marshall plan for moms task force to develop and issue recommendations on how to support working mothers and caregivers, particularly in light of the issues that have become more acute due to the COVID-19 pandemic

DCCNY supports efforts to increase and coordinate services that support mothers and other caregivers and recognize that child care is for many families the most needed service. DCCNY urges that the plan to come out of this include steps to stabilize the existing child care system through investments in salary parity for the early childhood workforce, and ensures that child care providers are paid in full and on-time.

[Int 0477-2022](#)

A Local Law in relation to establishing a child care task force

DCCNY supports the creation of the Child Care Task Force and notes that Mayor Adams' *Blueprint for Child Care and Early Childhood Education in New York City* also calls for the establishment of a child care task force.

DCCNY urges that any task force include representation of child care providers recognizing the diverse modalities of care including center based programs, home-based programs including family child care and both school day/ school year and extended day/ extended year programs. We also urge the inclusion of different sized community-based organizations to ensure that the task force represents the different types of organizations that make up the child care system.

[Int 0485-2022](#)

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to an electronic child care directory

We appreciate the need for more accessible information about the availability of child care. DCCNY, along with our partners in the New York City Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium (Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Chinese-American Planning Council, Child Support Development Corporation) provide resources for parents looking for child care including individual counseling.

Given the importance of selecting a child care program that meets families' needs, DCCNY urges the City to work with NYC's Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium

(NYC CCR&R Consortium) to ensure that parents can access electronic information with guidance from staff members with a deep understanding of what services are available.

Int 0486-2022

A Local Law to amend the New York City charter, in relation to establishing a child care advisory board

DCCNY has been an active participant in several child care Advisory Boards including the New York State Early Care Advisory Council, New York State Child Care Availability Task Force and the 3-K for All and EarlyLearn Transition Advisory Council.

As with the Task Force, DCCNY urges that any Advisory Council include provider representation that reflects the diversity of organizations and modalities in the early childhood sector.

Int 0487-2022

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a child care subsidy information portal

We appreciate the need for more accessible information about the availability of child care subsidy. As mentioned in the section on Intro 0477-2022, DCCNY, the NYC CCR&R Consortium provides resources for parents.

DCCNY urges the City to work with the NYC CCR&R Consortium in both the development and ongoing use of the subsidy information portal to ensure that parents can access and receive the individual counseling and support they need.

Int 0488-2022

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a child care program fund

This legislation would provide grants of up to \$1,000 per employee (up to 20 employees) to child care programs at risk of closure. Many providers are facing instability including missed payrolls and threat of closure.

DCCNY supports this investment and also urges that the City to simultaneously work to improve its payment for contracted programs to reduce the need for this fund.

Int 0489-2022

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to a child care certification program

This legislation addresses issues with the conversion of space to use for the provision of child care. DCCNY notes that child care facilities are already regulated within the Health Code as well as building and fire codes. DCCNY urges interdepartmental collaboration to ensure that regulations are consistent throughout the City.

Int 0526-2022

A Local Law to amend the New York City charter, in relation to childcare services at public meetings

DCCNY supports the provision of child care at public meetings as it will allow more parents to participate. DCCNY has worked to provide child care at parent meetings we have convened when funding has allowed.

Res 0069-2022

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S. 7595/ A. 8623, S. 6706B/ A. 7582A, and S. 7615/ A. 8625, legislation supporting the provision of financial assistance to families and child care providers in order to make child care more accessible and affordable.

This resolution calls for the passage and enactment of three pieces of state legislation. Our comments on the individual pieces of legislation are below.

S. 7595 / A. 8623 known as the New York State Universal Child Care Act would expand child care towards universal access in five years eliminating work and citizenship requirements through State investment. DCCNY worked closely with State legislative leaders on this legislation and supports it.

S. 6706B/ A. 7582A increases child care eligibility to 85% of State Median Income. New York State's FY 2023 Budget included language that raised eligibility to 300% of Federal Poverty Levels which is inclusive of more families than 85% of SMI. DCCNY recommends revisiting of this legislation if the calculations change of SMI and FPL change so that the 85% of SMI figure becomes inclusive of more families than what the FY 2023 budget language allows.

S. 7615/ A. 8625 utilizes a proposed dedicated payroll tax to support expansion of early childhood education programs with an emphasis on programs for infants and toddlers. DCCNY supports this legislation.

Next Steps

New York City needs its child care system to grow to meet the needs of families and communities throughout the City. To do that successfully, the City must first address the structural issues that have challenged our sector for far too long.

DCCNY urges the City to take the following steps:

Continue the Unfinished Work of Salary Parity

Thanks to the leadership of the City Council and Administration, the FY 2023 budget includes a \$46 million investment in bringing community-based early childhood educators

closer to salary parity with their counterparts in public schools as well as a Cost-of-Living Adjustment for the human services workforce. DCCNY looks forward to working with the City Council and the administration to utilize these and other funds to ensure that the community-based early childhood workforce finally gets the parity that it deserves.

DCCNY urges the City to make the following commitments to the early childhood workforce:

- Implement longevity increases for the community-based early childhood workforce on par with increases for comparable positions in public schools.
- Adjust salaries for directors and support staff to parity with comparable positions in the Department of Education.

Suspend Pay for Enrollment

When the Department of Education released its Birth-to-Five and Head Start/ Early Head Start RFPs, members of the City Council and leaders in the ECE field raised significant concerns and objections to DOE's plan to pay providers based on enrollment.

At the time there were concerns about normal volatility in enrollment impacting providers' budgets and ultimately their ability to remain open for the families who needed them. Those issues have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Enrollment will likely continue to fluctuate as necessary changes are made to the in-person work requirements of different employers.

As workplaces reopen, parents need to be able to quickly obtain safe, affordable child care for their children. To fill this need, providers must be able to maintain their staff and infrastructure to facilitate a more comprehensive reopening as more parents' return to work.

Recently, the Department of Education has taken steps towards "holding providers harmless" for under enrollment in the June Invoice in Fiscal Year 2022. DCCNY is grateful for this reform and for DOE and the City Council's leadership on this issue. It is crucial that the City takes action to stabilize its community-based early childhood education providers beyond this fiscal year. DCCNY urges the City to implement line-item budgeting for contracted early childhood education programs in FY 2023.

DCCNY urges the City to suspend enrollment based payments for community-based early childhood education programs.

Implement Community-based Enrollment

The launch of DOE's Centralized Enrollment System stripped community-based organizations of the power to process their own enrollment. This change required all

families to go through DOE's Centralized Enrollment System.

Under DOE's Centralized Enrollment System, there have been significant wait times for families' applications for child care subsidies to be approved leaving vacant seats in child care centers and family child care homes and putting stressors on parents trying to access affordable child care. Moreover, many families, including many immigrant essential workers, are weary of engaging with government agencies and feel safer with community-based organizations with whom they already have trusting relationships.

Over the summer of 2021, DOE briefly allowed providers to enroll families after the CBO itself had done a complete eligibility check. This empowered CBO's to start serving eligible families immediately and helped them to leverage their community relationships. However, this policy ended with the start of the school year on September 10, 2021 and has not been announced for the summer of 2022.

Local community-based early childhood providers have strong connections to the neighborhoods they serve. The City should leverage these strong relationships to ensure that families are able to quickly access the child care programs in which they want to enroll their children.

DCCNY urges the City to allow community-based enrollment in contracted early childhood education programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions and can be reached at gbrender@dccnyinc.org