



## The Education Trust–New York

### Testimony for the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Workforce Development March 1, 2023

[The Education Trust–New York](#) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to educational equity. We work to attain educational justice through research, policy, and advocacy that results in all students – especially those who are from low-income backgrounds or students of color – achieving at high levels from early childhood through college completion. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for this hearing.

Ed Trust–NY coordinates the [Raising NY](#) coalition, a diverse statewide coalition of parent, early childhood, education, business, and health organizations dedicated to supporting the learning potential of all children, with a focus on improving long-term outcomes for infants and toddlers who are low-income, children of color, and other under-served groups.

As New York families continue to endure the economic burdens of the pandemic, working mothers continue to be disproportionately impacted, particularly women of color, who report higher rates of job loss.<sup>1</sup> The Education Trust–NY, in partnership the Raising NY coalition and Global Strategy Group, conducted a statewide parent [poll](#) in the fall of 2022 and found that a significant proportion of respondents, 41%, reported that issues with child care affected their ability to attend work, school, or other commitments at least two or more times in the past 30 days. These figures were even higher for Black and Latinx respondents. As a critical conduit to economic mobility and success, child care must be accessible and affordable for all families.

Child care programs offer an important level of support for working families, yet providers have been struggling to provide care after decades of underinvestment. The Education Trust–NY recently released a cost of [child care model](#) that indicated that the current minimum average annual salary of \$33,060 for a child care teacher is insufficient to provide a livable wage with benefits that fully covers all the costs of providing care. High staff turnover and program closures will continue until New York State commits to long-term, sustainable investments that provide child care providers with a livable wage.

We respectfully offer the following recommendations in order to provide equitable support to working families and child care businesses, which are essential to the economic recovery and success of New York State.

- **Support working parents by improving parent accessibility to child care programs that fit their needs.** A recent Raising NY poll found that Black parents were more likely to need non-traditional hours of care, and were more likely to report having to travel further from their home to locate such care.<sup>2</sup> Families who are experiencing homelessness, have involvement in the child welfare system, or have a parent or child with a disability also face additional challenges in accessing programs that meet the specific needs of their child and family. Child care programs must be accessible for all and provide targeted support for families who face inequitable barriers to affordable, high-quality child care.

- **Provide sustainable and competitive salaries for the childcare workforce with long-term investments in the child care sector.** The pandemic has eliminated any doubt that child care is vital for the economic recovery and growth of our state. In order to stabilize the child care sector and reduce program closures and staff turnover, long-term financial investments are needed to provide child care programs, often small businesses owned by women of color, the financial stability they need in order to offer consistent, high-quality care.
- **Address the shortage of infant and toddler slots:** On average, 64% of New York State is considered a child care desert, with even higher rates of scarcity for infant and toddler care.<sup>3</sup> Care for infants and toddlers is the most expensive and staff-intensive, and therefore, targeted financial investments are needed in order to fully meet the demand.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, research tells us that the first few years of life are a time of tremendous growth and brain development when high-quality early learning environments are essential to supporting healthy development.<sup>5</sup>

The Education Trust–New York is committed to the success of all families. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and offer strategies to support working families and child care businesses in order to ensure that the economic recovery and success of New York State includes all families, particularly the most vulnerable and under-served.

Please feel free to contact Lara Kyriakou, Associate Director of Early Childhood Advocacy and Policy, at [Lkyriakou@edtrustny.org](mailto:Lkyriakou@edtrustny.org) with any questions regarding this testimony. Thank you.

1 <https://www.abetterbalance.org/press-release-new-report-shows-pandemic-caused-disproportionate-economic-harm-to-low-income-women-in-nyc-workforce/>

2 <https://raisingnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/10/Raising-NY-Child-Care-Poll-October-2022.pdf>

3 <https://childcaresdeserts.org/2018/>

4 <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/2038-122-billion-the-growing-annual-cost-of-the-infant-toddler-child-care-crisis>

5 <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/>