

# **Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.**

## **“Winning Beginning” Public Policy Agenda for 2012**

**Adopted by the Board of Directors on 1/23/12 and Amended on 3/26/12**

The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. adopts and promotes policies to increase access to quality early care and education for families living and working throughout Westchester County. On the local level, the Council collaborates with the Westchester Early Childhood Director’s Association, the School Age Network, the Westchester Children’s Association and other community partners in formulating and advancing public policy positions and initiatives. On the state level, the Council is a proud member of the New York State network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, guided by the New York State Early Care and Learning Council and Winning Beginning NY, a statewide coalition working to inform policy makers and the public about the many benefits of early care and learning. Nationally, the Council is a member of Child Care Aware of America, formerly NACCRRRA, which has been working to improve the system of early learning for children across the country since 1987.

### **WESTCHESTER COUNTY**

- **Spend the full appropriation of funding in the 2012 County budget for child care.**
- **Increase child care funding in the 2013 Westchester County budget;**
- **Expand access to safe, high quality child care by increasing: awareness of the risks of illegal child care; utilization of regulated child care options; recognition of the individual and societal benefits of high quality child care;**
- **Build on the recognition of child care and the child care resource and referral system in the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan to increase understanding of and support for a system of quality early care and education by the business community.**

### **NEW YORK STATE**

*From the Winning Beginning NY Executive Agenda 2012:*

- **Invest \$20 million for Year1 implementation of QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY) to provide direct and indirect program improvement supports;**
- **Preserve the \$93 million for subsidies in the 2012 Executive Budget and make an advance on the proposed \$215 million in child care preservation funds for FY 2013-2014;**
- **Direct \$53 million from the competitive grants as proposed in the Executive Budget to Universal Prekindergarten to expand the program to cover thousands more children, prepare qualified teachers and provide the technical support necessary to ensure sustainable quality;**
- **Invest \$30.3 million to sustain evidence-based home visiting programs and for additional home visiting support services for the State’s most vulnerable children and families;**
- **Address certain concerns with the proposals in the 2012 Executive Budget so that access to high-quality EI services are protected and driven by the child’s needs rather than the child’s health insurance coverage;**
- **Restore the Advantage After School Program to the FY 2010-11 funding level of \$22.5 million as well as support the priorities of the New York State Afterschool Network.**

*Winning Beginning NY is co-convened by the Center for Children's Initiatives, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, the Early Care and Learning Council and the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children. For more information, go to [http://winningbeginningny.org/advocacy/documents/wbny\\_exagenda\\_2012.pdf](http://winningbeginningny.org/advocacy/documents/wbny_exagenda_2012.pdf).*

*From the Early Care and Learning Council 2012 Public Policy Agenda:*

- **Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Capacity:**
  - **Build Services**, assuring that all families have access to information to make the best child care choices to meet their family needs;
  - **Incorporate R&R into QUALITYstarsNY**, particularly training and technical assistance, as an integral part of the implementation and delivery of QUALITYstarsNY;
  - **Support Early Childhood Professionals** by aligning professional development services with State initiatives designed to improve knowledge, competencies and dispositions; ensuring professionals have adequate supports including scholarships and wage supplements;
  - **Expand Research and Evaluation** by building the capacity to assess R&R services and how they can adapt and expand;
  - **Increase Public Education** by promoting R&R services to parents and providers and increasing messages about the importance of early childhood.
- **Child Care Subsidy Reform:**
  - **Maintain Funding for Child Care Subsidies** to support working families and ensure that young children have access to quality early care and education programs; reimburse care for children with special needs at a higher level;
  - **Seek Child Care Subsidy Reform** by creating a subsidy system that bases parent co-payments on their ability to pay and ensures equitable eligibility rules across the state; examining the subsidy allocation formula and the legally exempt provider sector of care.
- **Social and Emotional Health:**
  - **Increase funding to Infant and Toddler Resource Centers** to provide social-emotional consultation in early child care settings to identify problems early, improve access to care and provide effective interventions which are central to children's mental health needs.
- **Physical Health and Well-being:**
  - **Support Obesity Prevention in Early Childhood**, establishing a comprehensive, coordinated effort to prevent childhood obesity by improving the quality of early learning environments.

*The Early Care & Learning Council has been working to make quality, affordable child care available to New York's families since 1975. For information, go to <http://www.earlycareandlearning.org/news/documents/2012PublicPolicyAgendaInBrief.pdf>*

## **FEDERAL**

*From the Child Care Aware of America (formerly NACCRRRA )Public Policy Agenda for 2011-2012*

- **Reauthorize and strengthen CCDBG (the Child Care and Development Block Grant)**
  - **Require complete background checks** for all paid providers who regularly care for unrelated children;
  - **Require quarterly unannounced inspections** of licensed providers;
  - **Require all paid providers to complete adequate training** - 40 hours initially and 24 hours every year;
  - **Increase the quality set aside from 4% to 12% and further increase it to 25% over time;**
  - **Require accountability for CCDBG funds** by requiring licensing, inspections, training and screening for all paid providers who regularly care for unrelated children.

- **Ensure affordable child care for families**
  - **Require states to conduct and use current market rate studies;**
  - **Provide resources to strengthen the quality of child care;**
  - **Eliminate disincentives to work by requiring more gradual sliding fee scales to avoid the “cliff effect”.**
- **Limit potentially unsafe licensed-exempt care**
  - **Require child care providers who receive federal subsidies to have a license or be subject to oversight;**
  - **Require background checks for all providers receiving federal funds, including a fingerprint check;**
  - **Require states to disclose publicly their rationale for any category of licensed-exempt care.**
- **Make child care part of disaster planning**
  - **Require states to include child care in disaster planning, response and recovery efforts;**
  - **Designate a lead agency to coordinate federal support to child care;**
  - **Create a federal disaster contingency fund within CCDBG;**
  - **Authorize HHS to expand assistance to families significantly affected by disasters.**

*Child Care Aware of America, formerly known as NACCRRA, promotes national policies and partnerships to advance the development and learning of all children and to provide vision, leadership and support to the network of more than 700 child care resource and referral agencies nationwide. For more information, go to*

***[http://www.naccrra.org/policy/docs/PublicPolicyAgendaInBrief\\_Color\\_022311.pdf](http://www.naccrra.org/policy/docs/PublicPolicyAgendaInBrief_Color_022311.pdf)***