



2018 Public Policy Agenda

CURRENT REALITY:

One of the most expensive places for child care in the U.S., Westchester center-based infant care averages over \$20,000 annually. At every income level Westchester parents struggle to pay for care, sometimes sacrificing more stable and educational child care arrangements to lower costs. Both parents and employers acknowledge that common child care issues negatively impact workers' attendance, punctuality and productivity. Child care businesses also struggle with flat reimbursement rates and rising costs; this situation will only worsen with the new minimum wage. State-funded PreK has drawn both 4 year old children and teachers away from Westchester's child care sector.

OUR VISION:

All parents have access to affordable, quality early care and education options that enable them to work and advance in their careers and launch their children for success in school and life, so that Westchester has a skilled and productive workforce today and tomorrow.

WHAT WE SUPPORT:

More investment from every level of government so that:

- No family under 150% of state median income pays more than 7% of their income on child care
- The number of children eligible for subsidy doubles and families pay a fair share on a sliding scale
- Funding is available for high-quality preschool programs for low and moderate income children as well as a higher matching rate for infants and toddlers
- Workforce compensation and training improve so educators achieve parity with elementary school teachers with similar credentials and experience
- The Council's child care subsidy specialist position to help parents successfully apply is funded
- OCFS increases the NYS Market Rates by reinstating the 75% percentile
- All Westchester contracted programs are reimbursed at OCFS Market Rates
- Child care tax credits are expanded to help more moderate income families lower child care costs
- QUALITYstarsNY is fully implemented to help parents find the best child care options for their families
- PreK funding outside NYC is increased

More private investment of funds and talent from individuals, businesses and foundations so that:

- The Council awards at least 50 child care scholarships annually to working parents over-income for the subsidy
- Innovative business models are implemented that enable community-based programs to provide high-quality care to infants and toddlers
- New shared services models are developed that increase options for parents, lower child care costs and increase quality

More coordinated planning and integration of programs, funding streams and regulations so that:

- Increases in one do not negatively impact the other
- Options reflect the real needs of parents including those working full-time and/or non-traditional hours
- All staff are reasonably compensated and have pathways for career growth
- Child care businesses have opportunities to negotiate fair contracts
- Child care programs operate as part of a larger system that includes PreK as well as public, religious and charter schools