



# 2022 Public Policy Agenda

## OUR VISION:

Equitable access to affordable, high quality early learning programs so that all children can realize their dreams and potential, all parents can work and advance in their careers, and our community has a skilled and productive workforce.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- Nearly 40% of Westchester families with children under 13, where all available parents are working, will struggle to pay for child care. A family with 2 parents, a baby and a preschooler with gross income of \$58,240, are over-income for the public child care subsidy, and face child care bills equal to half their income.
- Nearly 25% of NY women left the workforce during COVID, exceeding the national rate of 15%.
- The state's child care workforce fell by 42%, vs. 25% nationally.
- 98% of all occupations pay more than child care – 60% of NYS child care workers receive some form of public assistance costing \$200 mil annually.
- About 90% of the NYS child care workforce are women and about 60% are women of color.
- Westchester lost almost 50 child care programs due to COVID.
- Westchester's child care system has unprecedented staff vacancies, limiting enrollment of children.

## WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

- Make child care more affordable for more parents while at the same time, making it possible for child care businesses to hire and retain staff with equitable salaries and benefits.

## WHAT WE ARE CALLING FOR:

### More investment at every level of government so that...

#### Westchester

- Child Care Subsidy Program reimbursement rates for contracted providers match NYS market rates
- Title XX child care slots are greatly expanded for families up to 255% FPL (on average)
- The Westchester Child Care Scholarship Program is reinstated for families up to 350% FPL (or 85% SMI)

#### NYS

- Child care subsidy eligibility rises to 85% SMI, up from 200% FPL currently
- The NYS Market Rate allows for the purchase of 75% of care options, up from 69%
- More parents engaged in job search and secondary education are eligible for the subsidy
- PreK is available throughout NYS and in a range of settings that accommodate working parents' schedules
- Employers utilize the NYS Employer Child Care Tax Credit Program

#### U.S.

- The American Families Plan makes child care free or affordable for millions of families and provides free PreK throughout the nation
- The Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act further expands child care access and achieves wage and benefit parity for the child care workforce with local schools

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

- The Council continues to award child care scholarships annually to working parents
- Innovative business models are developed to expand child care options for parents, lower child care costs and increase program quality

### More coordinated planning and integration of systems, funding streams and regulations so that...

- Regional Economic Development Councils integrate child care planning into economic development planning
- Child care is valued as part of the larger educational system with increased collaboration with school systems

Note: FPL – Federal Poverty Level      SMI – State Median Income