



**Priorities for the SFY'22-23 Budget:
Advancing Equity, Justice, and Well-Being for New York's Children and Families**

CCC is a 76- year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization. We do not accept or receive public funding, provide direct services, nor represent a sector or workforce; our primary goal is to improve outcomes for children and families in New York. We document the facts, engage and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

As we begin to recover from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that the State of New York prioritize addressing the critical needs of New York children and families.

Families have experienced immense loss of life, job and income loss, and heightened housing and food insecurity, and children within families have experienced social isolation, disruption in education and developmental supports with too many having missed out on months of learning. The presence of multiple and heightened stressors has led to trauma and resulted in skyrocketing behavioral health needs.

These unprecedented challenges have not only exacerbated existing inequities but have drawn attention to long unaddressed needs and barriers to wellbeing rooted in structural racism and systemic discrimination of all forms, with particularly negative impact wrought on women of color and immigrant households.

State leaders must act with urgency to address the needs of children, families and communities hardest hit by the pandemic to not only promote family and child wellbeing but to avoid repercussions that will be profound, long-lasting, and unacceptably costly in both human and socio-economic terms.

CCC stands ready to partner with State elected leaders and policymakers to prioritize equity, justice, and wellbeing for our state's children, families, and communities. In addition to informing budget, policy, and legislative action, we are ready to work alongside incoming leaders to ensure that decisions made locally and in Washington DC result in the financial partnership required for bold progress.

All Children Healthy

- Make a new commitment to build a behavioral health continuum for children and address the mental health crisis exacerbated by COVID-19, including by:
 - Increasing the state's overall investments in children's behavioral health and committing to invest 50% of any future increases in federal behavioral health funding in services for children and families;
 - Expanding preventive, two-generation models that integrate behavioral health care into pediatric and early care and education settings, such as Healthy Steps and H+H's 3-2-1 IMPACT model;
 - Expanding the reach of evidence-based models to families who need them, including but not limited to Multi-Systemic Therapy, Family Functional Therapy, Brief Strategic Family Therapy, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy;
 - Addressing chronic behavioral health workforce shortages in schools, clinics, and communities by increasing reimbursement rates in Medicaid, commercial insurance, and State contracts so that providers receive adequate compensation to enter and remain in the field.
 - Developing a public facing, regularly updated behavioral health dashboard that provides information on the full continuum of children's services and unmet needs, including a longitudinal comparison of services before and after children's Medicaid redesign.
- Strengthen the Early Intervention system by combatting systemic barriers to access, including by addressing inadequate rates; targeting resources towards underserved communities; ensuring telehealth equity; and requiring insurers to pay their fair share.
- Improve health coverage and quality of health care for children and families by enhancing supports for health navigators and community health workers; expanding health coverage to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status; fully restoring the State's Article 6 General Public Health Work program reimbursement rate for NYC to previous level of 36%; and eliminating the Global Medicaid Cap.

All Children Housed

- Invest in a statewide rent subsidy and implement rate increases in existing state subsidies to prevent a surge in family homelessness when the eviction moratorium is lifted in 2022.
- Commit to proven housing models that are affordable and equipped with necessary supports to maintain housing security including supportive housing options for families with children.

All Children Educated

- Begin to transform New York's child care system into a universal birth-to-five system by increasing affordability and expanding access to high quality infant toddler care, as well as extended day and year-round Pre-K options for three and four-year-olds, and increasing compensation for the early childhood workforce.
- Continue to invest in and expand Universal Pre-K statewide until every four-year-old in the State has access to free, high-quality Pre-K, and embed behavioral health and developmental supports for young children in early care settings.

- Uphold last year's commitment of the multi-year phase in of education funding owed from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.
- Increase investments in wraparound educational supports including community schools, state-funded afterschool programming, and youth employment opportunities, to complement the historic K-12 state investments in education from the past year.

All Children Safe and Economically Secure

- Reauthorize and strengthen the child welfare financing statute by:
 - supporting a full funding and restoration of the state and local (65/35) match for protective and preventive and independent living services;
 - pulling the statutory parameters and funding for the Kinship Guardian Assistance Program out of the Foster Care Block Grant to mirror the adoption subsidy; and
 - raising the value of the child welfare housing subsidy to ensure successful reunification and independent living.
- Leverage proven tax policy tools known to reduce poverty including reforming Empire State Child Credit to include children under four years of age as well as children left out of the federal child tax credit reforms and by expanding eligibility for the State's EITC to include young childless adults.
- Eliminate regulatory barriers in the Excluded Workers Fund that prevent immigrant New Yorkers from receiving critical supports by expanding the list of allowable documentation to prove identity, work, and residency.
- Increase funding for programs and interventions that help educate and connect New Yorkers to a wide range of health and human services, including Community Health Workers and hunger education and assistance programs.
- Prevent and reduce community level violence and youth justice system involvement by reinvesting cost-savings from closed state placement facilities into communities.