



Statement on Legislative One House Budget Resolutions

March 17, 2022. For nearly a decade child advocates and child welfare providers have pushed to align our state child welfare financing with the goal of strengthening families and reducing the number of children and youth placed in foster care. This year, we are poised to realize significant investments in meeting families' needs outside of the child welfare system with a ground-breaking commitment to universal child care, as well as support to continue reducing the number of children in foster care.

The Senate and Assembly One House Budget bills build on the Executive Budget proposal in several long-overdue and important ways to strengthen families:

- both houses prioritize dramatically increasing access to affordable child care and create a path to universal access;
- both houses also restore funding for child welfare prevention services intended to reduce the number of children who are removed from their families, ensuring counties have increased state support to respond to wide ranging needs;
- the Senate advances a proposal to pull the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) out of the foster care block grant to promote permanency of children and youth placed with kin;
- the Assembly adds \$55.2 million to support increased foster parent rates with more state support, and \$26.9 million to support increasing adoption subsidies; and
- both houses propose enhancing provisions of the budget that increase compensation for the human services workforce to bring needed stability to the sector. The Assembly increases human services workforce support to an 11% increase, and also includes prevention workers that have not previously been included for the human services Cost of Living Adjustment.

As the budget negotiation process proceeds, we look forward to working with elected leaders to ensure funding restorations for prevention services at 65% county reimbursement, that KinGap is funded independently to support more kinship caregivers, funding is added to support increased adoption subsidy and foster parent rates, and that robust investments in the workforce ultimately are in the adopted budget.