The Campaign for Children (C4C), is a citywide coalition of over 150 organizations, parents, and advocates formed in 2011 to support New York City’s early childhood education and youth services ecosystems. For more than a decade, C4C has worked with three different city administrations and the City Council to: prevent budget reductions and secure needed resources; inform universal access to PreK for four year olds and afterschool for middle school students; strengthen early care and education RFPs; secure progress on early care and education salary parity; continuously restore funds for summer programming; and inform the ambitious undertaking of Summer Rising. Our work has also informed efforts to catch up on payments owed to service providers and bring greater stability to both systems, their workforces, and to protect and maximize utilization of service capacity.

C4C has long recognized that children, youth, and families need access to year-round, high-quality, affordable early care and education and youth services in order to thrive in New York City. Families are still rebuilding from a devastating pandemic and economic upheaval that resulted in children and youth experiencing immense loss, disrupted social networks, and elevated stress and harm. Now is the time to demonstrate our collective care for and commitment to the futures of New York’s children and youth. We must protect and invest in them by taking action to improve access to services, ensure the fiscal stability of providers, and invest in the workforce. These essential steps set a solid foundation upon which a true path to universal access can be built.

**Overarching Funding and Budget Concerns**
Across the age continuum, services for children 6 weeks to 13 years-old are limited in supply. Few families can afford to purchase early care and education and afterschool and summer services on their own, and subsidized spots are in high demand

1. The City must protect and invest in early care and education and youth services, avoiding funding reductions that would have a devastating impact on already limited essential service capacity.
2. The City must craft a plan that identifies possible city, state, and federal resources to address funding needs of programs impacted by expiring federal COVID-19 stimulus funding.¹ The plan should be articulated by the release of the Preliminary Budget.

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¹ Programs in the early care and youth services space that are facing funding cliffs include Summer Rising ($80 million), 3-K expansion ($92 million), preschool special education ($96 million). Additional programs that will be impacted can be viewed [here](#).
Early Childhood Education Budget and Policy Priorities
The following action steps are recommended:

1. **Support the Early Childhood Education Workforce**
   - Fund new labor contracts (NOTE: there is more than one union, and thus more than one contract) that advances childhood education parity between center and school-based educators and service staff – ensuring staff left out of the first phase of parity (early childhood directors, support staff in community-based organizations and preschool special education teachers) are included, that longevity is factored into salary increases, and that a minimum wage floor of $25 is established for all support staff.
   - Ensure home-based family child care providers benefit from the increased market rate (reimbursement has increased from 65 percent to 80 percent).

2. **Improve Access for Families**
   - Reform enrollment procedures so that community-based organizations have the option of directly enrolling children whose families apply for 3-K, Pre-K or child care.
   - Support a robust linguistically and culturally appropriate multi-media community engagement and enrollment effort to fill open, budgeted seats.
   - Baseline a minimum of $20 million for Promise NYC to continue serving undocumented families in search of care.
   - Continue to convert school-day, school-year seats to full-day, year-round ECE seats to increase options for families.

3. **Shore up Fiscal and System Stability**
   - Permanently extend service providers’ ability to batch and submit multiple months of invoices at once and maintain DOE’s rapid response teams charged with assisting providers with invoicing.
   - Continue to complete back payments on FY’ 22 and ‘23, commence public reporting on actual payments against planned budget expenditures, and ensure all center-based providers receive no less than 75 percent of their full contract value.
   - Increase FY’24 advance payments to 75 percent of full contract value to address emerging payment delays for the current fiscal year.
Youth Services Priorities
The following action steps are recommended:

1. Workforce
   - Increase the cost-per-participant rates for COMPASS and SONYC to set a wage floor of no less than $22/hour for staff.

2. Access
   - Establish year-round, 12-month youth service contracts moving forward and streamline the procurement process.
   - Shift to a K-8 summer programming model that draws from the best aspects of Summer Rising and the DYCD summer camp models.
   - Ensure that afterschool and summer program enrollment is controlled locally by community-based organizations and not centralized by the DOE and/or DYCD.

3. Fiscal and System Stability
   - Ensure that afterschool and summer programs are paid on time and efforts to catch up on payments owed from previous fiscal years are immediately prioritized.
   - Release a new RFP for the SONYC and COMPASS contracts that include:
     - Indirect rates paid in full, in accordance with the City’s Indirect Cost Rate Initiative.
     - The ability for providers to claim those rates at the outset, and not have a placeholder rate that later gets amended.
     - Cost escalators in contracts, in accordance with inflation.
     - Funding that supports staffing ratios appropriate for School-Age Child Care (SACC) licensing for all 12 months of the year.