



Citizens' Committee
for Children *of* NEW YORK



Securing a Brighter Future for New York's Children & Families

A Transition Plan for City Leaders

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC)

has been an independent voice for children for 80 years advancing child and family well-being through research, advocacy, and civic engagement. With deep expertise in data, policy and child-serving systems, CCC champions proven solutions and mobilizes allies to secure reforms that improve child outcomes and promote equity. CCC drives systems change to ensure every child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

Today, many challenges face New York's children and families. Devastating federal budget cuts are threatening the healthcare and anti-hunger services so many low-income families rely on. Escalating threats against immigrant communities are traumatizing children and tearing families apart. These challenges come amidst a persistent and growing affordability crisis, as New York families increasingly struggle to afford food, housing, child care, and the other necessities critical for children to thrive.

While these challenges are significant, new City leadership offers an opportunity to tackle them head-on. CCC stands ready to work with incoming

city leaders to ensure the needs of children and their families are met.

Below, CCC offers recommendations for ways the next Mayoral Administration can prioritize child and family well-being across the city. While not an exhaustive list, these recommendations uplift key areas that require urgent attention and resources from government leaders.

Every Child Healthy

Prioritize the mental health and social/emotional needs of children, youth, and their families

- Strengthen the continuum of behavioral health supports for children and adolescents by promoting on-site mental health resources and whole-school, healing-centered approaches; providing additional funding to existing school-based mental health clinics to enhance their impact on school communities; and providing adequate and sustainable funding for community-based behavioral health care providers, including through the City Council's Mental Health initiatives.
- Promote young child health and development by supporting the integration of behavioral health and Early Intervention services into Early Care and Education programs across all settings, including family and center-based care.

Enhance access to healthcare, anti-hunger services, and other public benefits for children and families

- Mitigate the impact of harmful federal cuts to food benefits and health coverage by increasing funding to community-based organizations who provide benefits assistance.
- Invest in resources for HRA (hiring additional staff, modernizing/updating systems) to reduce administrative barriers for Medicaid and SNAP applications and recertifications.
- Invest in food assistance programs like Community Food Connections, ensuring food banks and pantries have the resources to assist food insecure households.



Every Child Housed

Prioritize policies that keep families with children stably and safely housed

- Reform the shelter intake application process by reducing housing history requirements for families with children, allowing families to reapply from their current temporary shelter placement, allowing reapplications over the phone, and allowing self-attestation for housing history after one denial.
- Guarantee initial shelter placements within the same community school district or borough of the school of a family's youngest child, and expedite processes to request and receive shelter transfers.
- Reform Homebase to enable it to serve as a community-based resource for families in housing crisis, including by adequately resourcing it, expanding HRA capacity, and distributing responsibility for rental assistance processing and aftercare to a broader set of community-based partners to ensure a strong and effective homelessness prevention ecosystem.



Every Child Educated

Advance a pathway towards a universal birth-to-five child care system.

- Expand extended-day/extended-year options for families and reduce administrative barriers that prevent participation.

- Work with the State to ensure families do not lose access to CCAP child care vouchers as a result of inadequate funding, and restore any Head Start capacity lost as a result of federal funding shifts.
- Address the severe shortage of preschool special education providers and ensure every child with disabilities receives the seats, evaluations, and services they need.
- Expand infant and toddler care, prioritizing communities with the greatest economic need and barriers to free and affordable care.
- Eliminate barriers preventing families from engaging in child care options, including by prioritizing community-based outreach and enrollment, enabling CBOs to directly enroll children onsite, and streamlining application processes.
- Facilitate and fully resource ECE access for immigrant families and families in temporary housing.
- Ensure a living wage and comprehensive pay parity for early childhood workforce that puts them on par with NYCPS counterparts and ensure that family child care providers are included.
- Ensure that provider contracts reflect the full costs of high-quality services and prevent program closures with on-time payments.

Increase access to – and eliminate racial and geographic disparities in engagement with – Early Intervention (EI) services for young children with developmental delays and disabilities.

- Invest and bring to scale community-based interventions aimed at eliminating racial and geographic disparities in EI access, including the EI Ambassador model first developed by United for Brownsville and replicated in Staten Island, the Bronx, and Northern Manhattan.
- Improve integration of developmental supports in ECE settings, including by investing in roles like disability coordinators and inclusion specialists and by facilitating partnerships between ECE providers and EI providers.

Ensure equitable and supportive environments for all NYC students.

- Baseline funding for K-12 programs at risk

- of budget cuts, including Learning to Work, the Mental Health Continuum, Restorative Justice, immigrant family communication and outreach, and student success centers.
- Prioritize protection, engagement, and supportive environments for students from immigrant households and LGBTQ+ students.

Every Child Safe

Ensure that the youth services system – including afterschool and summer programming – is well resourced and is accessible to all New York City youth regardless of disability, citizenship, language ability or zip code.

- Ensure children and youth with disabilities, students in temporary housing, students in foster care, and English Language Learners can fully participate in all afterschool programs, including by enhancing school accessibility, ensuring busing contracts meet all students' needs, and adequately funding paraprofessionals in youth programs.



- Expand access to afterschool and summer programs by increasing the proposed Price Per Participant so providers can offer high-quality programming to more youth.
- Add elementary afterschool seats and continue move towards year-round contracts for afterschool programming so all families are guaranteed the level of afterschool/summer care they need.

- Increase bed rates for Runaway and Homeless Youth Providers to cover full costs and ensure there are safe places for runaway and homeless youth.

Prevent justice involvement and ensure justice-involved children and youth receive the care, programming, and support they need to prevent further harm.

- Invest in alternative to incarceration programs and organizations serving youth 12-25 with mentorship, job training, Cure Violence initiatives, and violence interrupters to reduce crime and provide opportunities for youth.
- Improve conditions in Horizons and Crossroads by reducing overcrowding, ensuring mandated education and enrichment programs.
- Apply for a waiver of hardship to make NYC eligible for Raise the Age funding.

Support families at risk of child welfare involvement by connecting families with primary prevention services and strengthening the legal rights and resources available to child welfare involved youth and families.

- Increase investments in general prevention supports – such as supportive housing, child care, food access, financial supports, and public benefits – which help families achieve stability and prevent ACS involvement.
- Pass the city-level Family Miranda law, mandating that Administration for Children Services workers tell parents their rights at the onset of an investigation.

Support Immigrant Children, Families, and Communities

- Enhance immigrant legal services funding, expand health and human services programs serving immigrant communities, and end city participation in federal detention and deportation efforts.

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