



**Testimony of Jenny Veloz, Policy Associate  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to New York City Council Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education Workforce  
Development and Pipeline  
April 15, 2026**

For over 80 years, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) has been an independent voice for children 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.

We would like to thank Chair Gutierrez, Chair Joseph, Chair Won and all the members of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education, Committee on Higher Education, and Committee on Workforce Development for holding today's hearing on Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Development and Pipeline.

One of the greatest threats facing the sustainability of New York City's ECE system is long-standing inequities in compensation for the child care workforce. Teachers, staff, directors, and providers in both center and home-based programs are the backbone of the ECE system. There are approximately 40,000 child care workers in New York City. 96% of them are women, and approximately 82% are women of color.<sup>i</sup>

Child care workers, as well as the 3-K and Pre-K community-based workforce, are some of the lowest paid employees in New York City. The median wage for child care workers in the City is \$38,147, compared to other occupations that earn an average of \$64,747.<sup>ii</sup> They are often paid less than their counterparts in public schools, resulting in high turnover and staff shortages as they seek higher paying jobs in the public school system. Teachers working in community-based organizations are faced with \$1.7 million in wages lost over a 25-year career, with assistant teachers losing over \$235,000 over the same time period.<sup>iii</sup> Unable to retain staff, many center-based providers are forced to close classrooms and, in some instances, their business.

Family Child Care Centers (FCCs) also play an invaluable role in the ECE infrastructure. Families often look to FCCs as an option because many share the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds. FCC providers are small business owners, many of whom have been in business for an average of 10 years and have at least an associate's degree. They are an integral part of communities and can accommodate family schedules with early drop-offs, late pick-ups and weekend hours. However, FCC providers earn less than minimum wage (earning a median of \$7.33/hour), even before considering the additional 21 hours per week the average provider spends cooking, cleaning, preparing lesson plans, and completing paperwork.<sup>iv</sup> Although FCCs

do not have set wages, they often pay themselves whatever is left after paying their business expenses. They also struggle to hire staff because they cannot afford to offer a competitive salary. Because of low pay rates and long hours, many FCCs are unable to support themselves, relying on public assistance or SNAP benefits. Some FCCs have been forced to close their businesses, leaving families without a vital infrastructure in their communities.

The inability to retain staff could force center-based and home-based providers to close, decreasing child care options in some communities. Families would need to find care outside of their neighborhoods, traveling farther and paying more. Some may have to rely on family, friends or other alternative care options. Parents may be forced to reduce their work hours or quit their jobs to care for their children, creating more economic instability for families.

The City must bring salaries and benefits in contracted ECE programs to parity with their counterparts in public schools, including by instituting longevity differentials for the ECE workforce in line with comparable roles in public schools. Salaries and benefits must also reflect the true cost of care across the system. This includes salaries and compensation for Family Child Care providers, who are integral to the city's 2-care expansion. We do not want a repeat of Pre-K expansion when roughly 1,400 FCC providers were forced to leave the field.

City leaders must also ensure that the ECE workforce is equipped to serve children with disabilities. For too long, children with disabilities have been left behind in the city's efforts to expand access to care. At the end of May 2025, more than 7,000 preschoolers with disabilities were waiting for one or more of their services in New York City.<sup>v</sup> We were grateful that the FY27 Preliminary Budget baselined \$70 million for preschool special education services, evaluations and staffing. This will be critical for reducing waitlists for services, which are currently in violation of the legal rights of children with disabilities.

However, the City can take additional steps to ensure the ECE workforce is equipped to meet the needs of children with disabilities, particularly with the launch of 2K and expansion of 3-K. We urge city leaders to advocate that the State increase the enhanced rate for providers serving infants and toddlers with disabilities. Doubling the rate, as well as streamlining the process of accessing it, will help ensure more providers can provide high-quality services to children with disabilities. City leaders must also work with providers to integrate behavioral and developmental services into child care programs, ensuring no gaps in services.

The City should also ensure that programmatic information and outreach is delivered to immigrant communities in their native language. Necessary resources such as professional development, support for staff, educational materials, and language access are important to provide quality care for children with disabilities and immigrant families.

We are grateful for your recognition of the urgency of addressing challenges within the ECE workforce and pipeline to help ensure we have a strong ECE system able to serve all children and families in the city.

---

<sup>i</sup> Day Care Council of New York (2025). Building a Stronger Child Care Workforce for New York City.

<https://www.dccnyinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Workforce-Report-7sm.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Day Care Council of New York (2025). Building a Stronger Child Care Workforce for New York City.

<https://www.dccnyinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Workforce-Report-7sm.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Day Care Council of New York (2025). Building a Stronger Child Care Workforce for New York City.

<https://www.dccnyinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Workforce-Report-7sm.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Center for New York City Affairs (2025). Dignified Pay for Quality Care: What New York’s Family Child Care Providers Need to Thrive.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/69558195819b30409e21b29e/1767211413243/Dignified+Pay+for+Quality+Care-+Summary.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> AMNY (July 2025). “With new funding, advocates and City Council seek greater support for preschoolers with disabilities.” <https://www.amny.com/news/new-funding-advocates-city-council-seek-support-preschoolers-disabilities/>