

New York CAN 0 to 5



Fact Sheet

This early period is critical to the success of every child in school and in life. Research is unequivocal in identifying that every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences beginning early in the prenatal period and extending throughout the early years.

New York State has a history of services and supports for children and families. New York was the first jurisdiction in the nation to regulate early childhood programs and was one of the earliest states to offer a Head Start-like program to its preschoolers through its Targeted Prekindergarten program. In 1997 legislation created Universal Prekindergarten (Pre-K) programs which have expanded to serve 45% of the state's four-year-olds. Unfortunately, there has been a decrease in funding for child care subsidies since 2004 and only limited investments in program quality, new initiatives for infants and toddlers, and prenatal and postpartum home visiting.

Key Facts*

- Child care subsidies serve only 44% of children in the state who are estimated to be eligible and too few services are available for children under age three.
- In FY08, 93,000 of the state's four-year-olds were served in Pre-K programs. The state projects that 100,000 will be served in FY09. That amounts to 45% of the state's four-year olds.
- Head Start serves approximately 50,000 three- and four-year olds in the state. That is only 42% of eligible children.
- More than 32,000 infants and toddlers received state-funded Early Intervention services in 2004, more than double those served in 1996.

What's Needed:

The Children's Cabinet and its Advisory Board were appointed as the state's Early Learning Commission in 2008. The Cabinet and Advisory Board have the authority to set a vision and guide existing agencies and departments in a coordinated and timely effort. The Commission must now be operationalized. This must be coupled with expanded investments in quality early learning programs, including child care assistance for working families, services for infants and toddlers, early intervention supports, and home visiting. Special attention must be given to compensation and a system of incentives to reduce turnover and increase training for early childhood professionals.

* Data from the Council on Children and Families and from the State Education Department, 2008; and from *Growing Up In New York*, SCAA, 2006.

For more information go to www.newyorkcan.org or contact the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy at 518-463-1896