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January 7, 2009

Honorable David Paterson  
Governor of New York  
Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

Re: 21-day amendments

Dear Governor Paterson:

The New York Children's Action Network (CAN) 0-5 Committee wishes to voice our concern over proposed budget cuts to home visiting and reductions to child care funding.

Your Executive Budget proposes cutting the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) program by 25% and eliminating child welfare preventive dollars that partially fund the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and other home visiting programs. Investments in home visiting programs have proven to reduce incidents of child abuse, as well as costs associated with foster care placements, hospitalizations and emergency room visits, and other costly interventions.

These cuts would mean a loss of services to 1,200 families currently receiving them through NFP. In August, the HFNY program took an 8% hit and 500 families lost services; 25% cut would decimate services across the state. In tough economic times, incidents of child abuse increase, but child abuse is preventable through supports like home visiting. **We urge you to restore child welfare preventive spending for home visiting and funding for HFNY in your budget amendments.**

The Executive Budget also transfers TANF funding for child care (\$356 million) to the Flexible Fund for Family Services. As you know, once in the Flex Fund, money can be used by counties for a range of services. Child care is too critical, both for working families that use subsidies and for all the families that rely on the state to ensure that regulated child care is of good quality, to be placed in competition with mandatory child welfare programs and youth related work initiatives. **We urge you to transfer this funding from the Flexible Fund to the child care block grant to prevent further erosion in child care funding and ensure that low-income working families have access to child care subsidies.**

The Executive Budget's investment in Pre-K lends stability to the program. That same stability must be extended to child care, which the success of Pre-K is greatly dependent on. In tough economic times, working parents need to keep working. High-quality child care not only benefits children; it allows their parents to continue to make a living. However, 46,000 fewer children had access to subsidies this past year than in 2003-04 and we anticipate that number will increase by 10,000 due to a reduction in the federal block grant funding and the impact of market rate increases. **We urge you to restore \$30 million in lost child care subsidies.**

Sincerely,

Christine Deys  
New York CAN 0-5 Committee Co-chair  
Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse NY

Nancy Kolben  
New York CAN 0-5 Committee Co-chair  
Executive Director, Child Care, Inc.

cc: Commissioner Carrion, Dennis Whalen, Kristin Proud