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Believe in Children Campaign Kick-Off
Advocates Rally Around Funding for Pre-K, Child Care, and Afterschool

ALBANY, NY – Advocates and supporters from the world of early learning, K-12, and afterschool gathered today for a press conference to launch the *Believe in Children Campaign*. Participants said that a comprehensive system is needed to serve all children and tied what are often dueling budget requests into one proposal. The *Campaign* is sponsored by the *Winning Beginning NY* statewide coalition. Coalition members were joined by several legislative champions—Senators Savino and Carlucci, and Assembly Members Luparabo, Mayer, and Fahy.

"I fully support the priorities of the "Believe in Children Campaign" said Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell), Chair of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families. "Their agenda certainly reflects the priorities of many of my colleagues in the Assembly and echoes the sentiments expressed by the Governor in his recent budget address. We will certainly be discussing this in the coming weeks as we arrive at a budget agreement."

Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) said, "As my colleagues and I in the Senate's Independent Democratic Conference understand full well, New York families cannot afford to wait any longer for a restoration to these childcare subsidies. I am proud to stand with *Winning Beginning NY* as we fight to bring qualify, affordable daycare within reach for New York's working families. Restoring these cuts is one of my top priorities for the 2014 budget, because child care subsidies are something we need to keep our economy growing."

And Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn) said, "As a former case worker, I've seen the need for quality and affordable child care up close. In recent years, we have been cutting too many families off from the subsidies they need to afford child care. The parents of these children literally cannot go to work and earn a paycheck without them. That needs to change, which is why I am proud to stand with *Winning Beginning NY* today to demand a restoration of these subsidies."

"Keeping New York affordable so that people can both work and raise a family is fundamental to the vitality of our state," said Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland). "As a new father I know first hand if we're serious about making New York more affordable, we need to focus on the rising costs of day care. I am proud to stand with *Winning Beginning NY* to call for a restoration to child care subsidies."

According to Assembly Member Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers), "Working parents too often struggle to keep their children safe and engaged once the school day ends, especially at a price they can afford. Afterschool programs are a cost-effective solution that gives children the opportunity to learn new skills and become better students, and I strongly support increasing funding for these valuable programs."

The *Campaign* is urging the Legislature to:

- **Universal Child Care**: **Invest $182 million in child care subsidies in 2014-15**, serving more than 25,000 additional children. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach $2.2 billion annually, providing universal access to the estimated 305,000 children of working parents who are currently in need of high-quality early care and learning.

- **Universal Pre-Kindergarten: Invest at least $225 Million from the State, for new high quality, full-day Pre-K opportunities statewide** and fully support any localities' efforts to expand high-quality full-day Pre-K to all children.

- **Universal Afterschool**: **Invest $9 million in quality infrastructure in 2014-15**, in preparation for five years of investment beginning with **$160 million in 2015-16**. Expand that investment in years 2 through 5 to reach $825 million annually, providing access to half of the estimated 1.1 million children in need of programs.

The full proposal is attached to this release.