



FactSheet

The Early Years

Seventy-five percent of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality, and social skills develop before age five—before a child ever steps foot in Kindergarten. Those first 2,000 days of a child’s life—from birth to Kindergarten entry—are critically important and impact his or her success in school and in life. According to Dr. James Heckman, Nobel Prize winner in economics, “quality economic returns come from quality investments in early childhood development.”

New York State has a history of services and supports for young children and their families, including intensive home visiting, parenting education, child care and Pre-K. However, these critical components are not comprehensive or adequately funded. The State must invest in the development of a high-quality system of early learning programs.

An ambitious federal early care and learning agenda was recently proposed for a comprehensive funding package for child care, Pre-K, home visiting and other services and programs that help children on the path to a winning beginning. The initiative presents an important opportunity for New York with new funding for programs that provide our youngest children with a strong foundation for learning.



Key Facts

- ▶ Universal Pre-K serves less than half of all eligible four-year-olds in New York with 103,347 enrolled statewide in 2012–13.
- ▶ High-quality, developmentally-appropriate and affordable care for infants and toddlers is needed.
- ▶ Child care subsidies assist 234,000 children; many more remain on waiting lists.
- ▶ Thirty-seven percent of children in subsidized care are in legally-exempt (or unlicensed and unregulated) care for which we have no way of measuring and assessing quality.
- ▶ Maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting programs are effective in identifying risks and preventing negative outcomes in families. The average cost per family is \$4,600 to \$5,800 which realizes tremendous cost savings.
- ▶ In the 2010–11 school year, there were 7,000 fewer afterschool slots due to cuts in funding.
- ▶ Nearly 4,300 children in New York State are losing access to early education due to cuts to Head Start and Early Head Start because of sequestration.

Tell Your Elected Officials

- ▶ New York State must build a comprehensive system that invests in children to help close the achievement gap, increase high school graduation rates, decrease child abuse and neglect, and provide financial benefits to society.
- ▶ The State should fund implementation of QUALITYstarsNY, a quality rating and improvement system that affords New York State the opportunity to ensure accountability for public investments.
- ▶ The State should develop a maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting system infrastructure (including research, training, and central administration) and invest in the expansion of programs proven to decrease child maltreatment, increase school readiness, and improve family self-sufficiency.
- ▶ The State should expand funding for Pre-K including full-day programs so that Pre-K can truly be universal. Additional funds for full-day Pre-K should be included in the UPK aid formula.
- ▶ Enact the federal proposal for a comprehensive early care and learning initiative.