



2012-13 Legislative & Budget Priorities

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy's priorities focus on strengthening families and communities by ensuring a strong and healthy start for all, regardless of income, and promoting robust and sustainable public systems to support vulnerable New Yorkers throughout the lifespan.

Maternal, Infant & Early Childhood Home Visiting

Early childhood is a critical time for social, cognitive and behavioral development that will affect a person for the rest of her/his life. Voluntary home visiting is widely recognized as a promising way to engage new and expecting parents and their children with services that support the family and lead to positive health, child welfare, education, and income security outcomes for children and parents in the short, medium and long term. New York should invest in an evidence-based home visiting system to avoid future costs and improve outcomes for the state's most vulnerable children and families and lay the groundwork for the creation of a coordinated statewide home visiting system of care. Specifically,

- Include home visiting services for Medicaid-eligible individuals and families in the Medicaid benefits package.
- Maintain funding for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) at \$23.3 million.
- Restore \$5 million in the NYS Department of Health budget for Nurse-Family Partnership services for low-income, first-time mothers and their families.
- Establish a dedicated line item of \$2 million for evidence-based home visiting programs to begin to fill gaps in services.

Early Care and Learning

Study after study by developmental specialists, neuroscientists, physicians, economists, and social scientists show that early childhood education is one of the most effective investments Americans can make in their children and their economic future. Research shows that high-quality programs benefit all children, but are especially important

for children in low-income families, who experience higher rates of difficulties in their school years. New York should ensure access to and quality improvement in all early care and learning settings, with a particular focus on those in low-income and underserved communities.

- Restore \$37 million for child care subsidies for low-income families and improve access to licensed and regulated early care and learning programs/settings.
- Invest \$20 million for Year 1 implementation of QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY).

Health

The public health system must ensure that the most vulnerable people in our state are protected and that the system is sustainable over the long term so the health care delivery system effectively and efficiently meets the needs of New Yorkers today and in the future. New York must ensure that the state's most vulnerable residents have coverage and access to needed health, mental health and oral care through Medicaid and new systems being developed as New York implements health care reform.

- Ensure coverage and access to needed services, with a special focus on mental and dental care, as New York implements Medicaid Managed Care for children in foster care and other high-need populations.
- Ensure that child, family and consumer-friendly policies are adopted by New York State as it implements key milestones of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), including development of the Exchange.
- Augment the provision of developmental screening for vulnerable children who are Medicaid and CHP beneficiaries by including developmental screening on QARR measures.
- Improve access to oral health care for vulnerable children by including more substantive oral health variables on QARR measures.
- Address the severe shortage in the mental health care workforce and strengthen links between primary care and mental health.

Child Welfare

One of the best ways to prevent the negative outcomes and costs associated with entry into the child welfare system is to invest in programs that strengthen families before a report is needed to the State Central Register. State investments should provide localities with the resources, flexibility and responsibility to address local needs and target those most at-risk as early as possible. New York State must protect and strengthen effective programs that serve at-risk families and prevent entry and re-entry into the child welfare system.

- Ensure that funds for “preventive” services remain available and uncapped.
- Use Child Welfare Financing Reauthorization in 2012 as an opportunity to identify and prioritize programs that should be protected, strengthened, funded, or changed and to ensure accountability.

Juvenile Justice – Raise the Age

New York and North Carolina are the only two states that treat children as young as 16 as adults in the criminal justice system. New York should recognize that children and youth have unique developmental needs and challenges and should be treated as children and youth in the justice system.

- Raise the age of the juvenile courts’ jurisdiction to include youth until their 18th birthday.

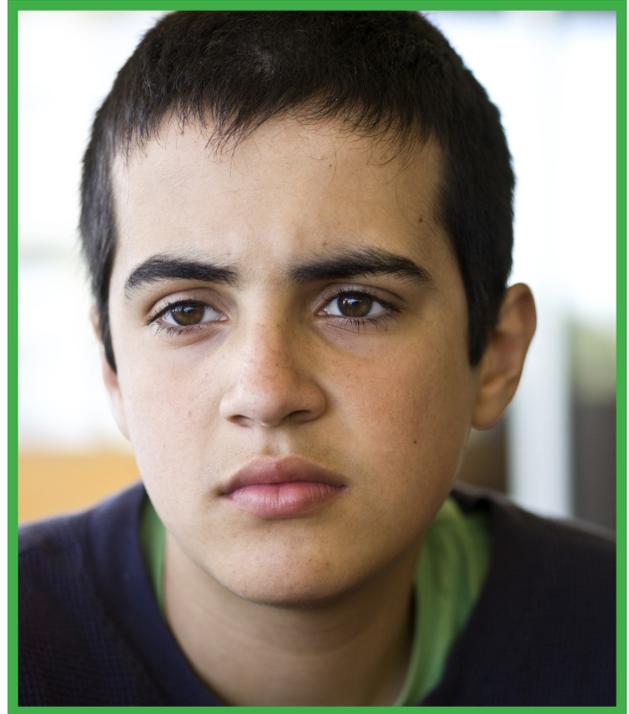
Tuition Assistance for Youth Exiting Foster Care

New York should increase the number of former foster youth who have access to higher education by making the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) accessible to former foster youth.

- Allow former foster youth to use the “dependent” schedule and rescind the requirement to attend full-time.

Income Security – Options for People Without a High School Degree

New York has an extremely low pass rate among people who take the general equivalency diploma (GED) tests. In addition, New York will be implementing a new, more challenging and more costly GED beginning in 2014.



New York needs to implement system wide changes, including:

- Increase the number of persons who pass the general equivalency diploma (GED) tests and move on to postsecondary success.
- Develop a plan that includes financing for the transition to a new GED in 2014 and alternative pathways to achieving high school equivalency.

Income Security – Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance (UI) benefits are funded by a payroll tax on a small portion of wages. UI benefits in New York are at risk because the state’s UI trust fund is insolvent. New York must shore up the unemployment insurance system and ensure that it helps low wage workers.

- Raise the taxable wage base to fortify the UI system.
- Ensure that the amount and duration of benefits paid to low wage workers enable families to meet their basic expenses until they are able to find another job.