

March 22, 2016

Dear Legislator:

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy urges the Legislature to support an anti-poverty initiative that is robustly funded and fairly distributed; includes maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting; and does not impose an onerous matching requirement on the very communities it aims to assist.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (Schuyler Center) is a 144-year-old statewide, nonprofit policy analysis and advocacy organization working to shape policies to strengthen families and improve health, welfare and human services for all New Yorkers.

The Assembly one-house budget bill builds upon the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative proposed by the Governor. The Assembly proposal expands the number of eligible communities, increases the total funding amount and outlines the types of programs and services for which the funding may be used. Significantly, the proposal specifically identifies **maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting** as an eligible intervention.

A quarter of a million babies are born in New York each year; nearly half are born into low-income families and over 100,000 are born to first-time mothers.ⁱ Children in low-income households have been shown to experience worse outcomes than their peers, particularly related to literacy, school readinessⁱⁱ and healthⁱⁱⁱ. Maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting works with low-income families, and often with first-time mothers, and is proven to strengthen parenting skills and generate better outcomes for children and families. Home visiting delivers education, support and connections to other resources to families on their terms, in their own homes.

Strong evidence shows that smart investments in home visiting programs for new and expectant families deliver positive outcomes and measurable savings – improved birth outcomes^{iv}, increased school readiness,^{v, vi} increased parental employment, decreased dependence on welfare,^{vii, viii} decreased in child abuse,^{ix, x} and reduced future mental health and criminal justice costs. Despite this strong evidence, New York State has failed to make a significant investment in home visiting.

For the reasons above, the Schuyler Center supports a robust anti-poverty proposal that:

- **Includes evidence-based and evidence-informed maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting.**
- **Is robustly and fairly funded, based on need, and does not require an onerous match.**

Sincerely,



Kate Breslin,
President and CEO

This memo is supported by the following organizations:

The Children's Agenda, *Monroe County*
Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Developmental Services, *Chemung County*
Early Care & Learning Council
The Institute for Family Health, *New York City & the Hudson Valley*
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers
The Parent Child Home Program
Prevent Child Abuse New York
Public Health Solutions, *New York City*
Westchester Children's Association, *Westchester County*

ⁱ National Center on Children in Poverty. 2013. *Demographics of Young, Poor Children in New York*. http://ncccp.org/profiles/NY_profile_9.html

ⁱⁱ Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. 2003. The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3. *American Educator*, pp.4-9.

<http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Gupta, Rita Paul-Sen, Margaret de Wit, David McKeown. 2007. The impact of poverty on the current and future health status of children. *Paediatrics & Child Health*; 12(8), pp. 667-672. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528796/>

^{iv} Lee et al; Reducing low birth weight through home visitation: a randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*; 36, pp. 154-60.

^v HIPPI USA. Research Summary. Accessed 1/4/16: http://www.hippyusa.org/research_research_summary.php

^{vi} Drotar, D., Robinson, J., Jeavons, I., & Kirchner, H.L. 2009. A randomized controlled evaluation of early intervention: The Born to Learn curriculum. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, 35(5), pp. 643-643.

^{vii} Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Quarterly Report, New York State, prepared by Center for Human Services Research, University at Albany. Data as of March 31, 2010.

^{viii} Nurse-Family Partnership Efforts-to-Outcomes system; data as of 3/31/11 and the NYC Department of Education 2010; [Rough estimate of rate of high school completion among teen mothers]. This is a special data point analysis conducted by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

^{ix} Olds et al; Reanalysis of Kitzman et al; *Journal of the American Medical Association*: 1997 Aug 27; 278(8):637-43.

^x Dumont, et al. 2010. *Final Report: A Randomized Trial of Healthy Families New York: Does Home Visiting Prevent Child Maltreatment*. NIJ Grant 2006-MU-MU_0002.