

Winning Beginning NY Executive Agenda 2016-17

Early childhood is a critical developmental period and children's experiences from the prenatal period through third grade are strong predictors of future academic and life success. New York State has the opportunity to provide a continuum of high-quality early learning programs that would transform our economy, as well as our educational, human services and criminal justice systems. We cannot wait to implement a strategic, system-building approach that supports positive outcomes for children and parents. The time to make the investment is **NOW**.



As the State's early learning coalition, *Winning Beginning NY* supports investments and policies that move New York State away from the current fragmented "system" and toward a comprehensive early learning system. Ideally, that system will promote children's healthy social, emotional, cognitive and physical development and help ensure New York's success today and into the future.

Our 2016 Executive Agenda urges investments in several interconnected areas, with a focus on the high-quality needed to see a return on these investments.

Winning Beginning NY calls upon Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to invest in a continuum of services and supports for children from the prenatal period through age eight.

Winning Beginning NY is a statewide coalition working to inform policymakers and the public about the many benefits of early care and learning for children from the prenatal period through age eight. Our priorities include high-quality afterschool, child care, early intervention, home visiting, and Pre-K. The coalition aims to build a broad-based constituency to make investment in quality early care and learning a top public priority in New York State.

- I. **Invest an additional \$190 million dollars in child care** to maintain and expand subsidies.
 - **\$90 million** so that no current children lose child care subsidies as NYS implements new federally-mandated health, safety, and quality initiatives, and
 - **\$100 million** so that an additional 13,000 children, who live in income-eligible families and are waiting for subsidies, can be served.

- II. **Invest at least \$150 million to expand Prekindergarten for high need three- and four- year-olds**, building on the State's 2015 program, which includes reimbursement in the year services are delivered.
 - **\$125 million for districts to continue to add seats for three- and four- year-olds in both public schools and community settings at rates appropriate to support quality programs and equity across all settings.**ⁱ
 - **\$25 million to support quality improvement strategies**, such as those promoted in the QUALITYstarsNY framework.

Additionally, we advocate for:

- **Maintaining current Pre-K investments** to maintain current enrollment, and moving toward the integration of all current Pre-K funding.
- **Investing appropriately in K-12 aid**, to ensure Pre-K is followed by a continuum of quality educational services that prepare students for college and career.

- III. **Maintain \$27.3 million and invest an additional \$10.5 million in maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting** to adequately fund a continuum of supports and services for families. The funding would support the following programs:

- **Healthy Families New York (HFNY):**
 - **Maintain \$23.3 million** from the 2015-16 Executive Budget.
 - **Add \$4.5 million in new funding**, including:
 - \$3.5 million to restore 2008 funding levels.
 - \$700,000 to expand services in unserved areas (200 slots); and
 - \$300,000 to support a site not currently funded.
- **Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP):**
 - **Maintain \$3 million** from the 2015-16 Executive Budget for sustainability.
 - **Maintain \$1 million** added by the Legislature in 2015-16.
 - **Add \$1 million in new funding** for expansion in New York City and Upstate, including:
 - \$500,000 in New York City to increase capacity by 75 slots; and
 - \$500,000 Upstate to increase capacity by 100-125 slots.
- **Parents as Teachers (PAT):**
 - **Add \$3 million in new funding** to expand capacity to 1,000 families across the State.
- **Parent-Child Home Program, Inc.**
 - **Add \$2 million in new funding** to expand capacity to 500 additional families across the State.

IV. Restore Early Intervention (EI) reimbursement rates by at least 5% and require health insurance companies to contribute to the cost of EI so that young children can receive high-quality services from qualified professionals.

- Restoring reimbursement rates is necessary to support recruitment and retention of high-quality professionals, to cover the burden of recently increased administrative costs, and to build ongoing quality improvement efforts into the program. One strategy for helping to fund EI is to maximize reimbursement from health insurance.

V. Increase Advantage After School funding by \$49.9 million, which will:

- Restore Advantage After School to the peak number of participants in 2007-08.
- Align per student funding to 21st Century Community Learning Centers levels of \$1,500 per student.
- Provide summer programming for the same number of participants.
- Ensure quality by leveraging statewide knowledge, resources, and supports through technical assistance.
- Allow for data collection and evaluation to make evidence-based improvements and provide state-level data on afterschool and summer programming.

VI. Maintain \$3 million and invest an additional \$20 million in QUALITYstarsNY.

- The current \$3 million investment in QUALITYstarsNY supports 376 programs serving 21,079 children across 10 high needs communities to participate in this very important quality improvement initiative. An additional investment of \$20 million would enable 648 programs, serving approximately an additional 50,000 children to participate in a fully implemented QUALITYstarsNY.

ⁱ State officials have established a rate of \$10,000 per child for four-year-olds in the state's 2014 Full-Day Pre-K program and in the federal Preschool Development grant expansion in five districts. The state should continue to offer at least \$10,000 per child for four-year-olds and establish a rate of at least \$12,000 per child for programs serving three-year-olds given the increased cost of lower class sizes necessary to serve these younger children. These rates should stay in effect until the state establishes a Pre-K aid formula to support a more coherent statewide Pre-K program as a core educational service. That aid formula should be sustainable, equitable, transparent and appropriate to support quality standards, as proposed in the CEE-CCI roadmap, Securing the Future of New York's Children: Taking the Next Steps Toward Truly Universal Prekindergarten, which sets forth a detailed analysis of the financing, as well as the standards and infrastructure and a path to achieve those goals that is in line with state officials' commitment to making Pre-K truly universal.