

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE
ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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April 15, 2026

Start: 1:13 p.m.

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing
Room 1

B E F O R E: Jennifer Gutiérrez,
Chairperson for the Subcommittee
on Early Childhood Education

Julie Won,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Workforce Development

Rita C. Joseph,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Higher Education

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola
Gale A. Brewer
Simcha Felder
Tiffany Cabán
Eric Dinowitz

COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONTINUED)

Harvey Epstein
Hanif Shahana
Farah Louis
Virginia Maloney
Lincoln Restler
Kevin C. Riley
Kayla Santosuosso
Phil Wong

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Emmy Liss
Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Child Care
and Early Education

Dona Anderson
Executive Director, CUNY Office of Early
Childhood Initiatives

Ashleigh Thompson
CUNY Dean for Education

Simone Hawkins
Deputy Chancellor

Doug Lipari
ED New York City Talent

Robert Cordero
CEO of Grand Street Settlement

Betty Baez Melo
Attorney and the Director of Early Childhood
Education at Advocates for Children of New York

Olena Olson
Educational Director of a small preschool in Park
Slope

Lauren Melodia
Labor Economist

Anna Rita Pergolizzi-Wentworth
President of NYSMA, which stands for New York
State Montessori Alliance

Lara Kyriakou
Director of Policy at All Our Kin

Adelo Ramirez
Self

Susan Kambrick
Executive Director of Twin Parks Montessori

Tsering Diki
Founder and Executive Director of the Diki
Daycare Group

Anna Succes
Pre-K Teacher

Joyce Mcclammy
Local 205

Angalie Dasai
CEO of Friends of Crown Heights

Gregory J Morris
NYC Employment and Training

Stamo Karalararides Rosenberg
First Vice President of the Council of School
Supervisors and Administrators

Gregory Brender
Day Care Council of New York

Nora Moran
Emmanuel Nory

Jenny Veloz
Citizens Committee for Children of New York

Karen Tingley
Wildlife Conservation Society

Paula Magnus
Northside Center for Child Development in Harlem

Debra Sue Lorenzen
St. Nicks Alliance

Latoya Simon
Sim Friend Academy

Joanne Derwin
One World Project

Gail Buffalo
City College's Worker for Education

Shanita Bowen
ECE on the Move

Tarmo Kirisimae
Consortium for Worker Education, CWE

Lacey Peters
Hunter College

Rebecca Schneider-Kaplan
UPK 4 teacher at Stepping Stones Preschool

Carolyn Cleveland
Kennedy Children's Center

Muqing Hu
Educational Director at Bean and Sprout

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. Welcome to the
New York City Council hearing for the Committee on
Early Childhood Education, joined with the Committee
on Workforce Development and the Committee on Higher
Education.

At this time, please silence all cell phone
electronic devices to minimize interruption. Moving
forward, no one is to approach the dais. Chairs, we
are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [GAVEL] Thank you, thank
you all for your patience. Good afternoon, I'm
Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez, Chair of the New
York City's Subcommittee on Early Childhood
Education. Welcome to our April hearing centering on
the Early Childhood Educator Workforce Development
and Pipeline. I'm excited to be joined by the Chair
of the Committee on Higher Education, Council Member
Rita Joseph, and the Chair of the Committee on
Workforce Development, Council Member Julie Won.

We've taken some big steps towards universal
child care since our last hearing, and this is
exactly the type of progress we've all been pushing
for but we can't stop here.

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Today's hearing will examine a significant problem in our early childhood education system, a growing shortage of the educators that sustain it. As the city moves towards implementing a universal child care system, the workforce will need to double in size in order to accommodate projected future enrollment.

A recent analysis found that based on average turnover rates in early childhood education classrooms, the city needs at least 5,000 new educators every year. Child care programs continue to have some of the highest rates of turnover, with a survey of New York City child care programs finding that 52% of centers report new teachers leaving within 5 years. With a sizable percentage of our ECE teachers having over 20 years of experience and nearing retirement, while our new teachers are simultaneously exiting the field, we're about to be on the brink of a stark staffing shortage independent of the expansion.

If this city is going to achieve a universal child care system, it has to start with a pipeline of teachers that will support it. To do so, the Subcommittee today will also hear Preconsidered

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1 Intro, uh, 1656 sponsored by myself in relation to
2 establishing a child care workforce grant and
3 services program. And while this hearing will not
4 acutely focus on the issue of pay parity and improved
5 benefits, educators— for educators, educational
6 assistants, and staff with or without union
7 affiliations, we do expect the Admin to answer some
8 of those questions today and will dedicate an entire
9 hearing in the future to it.

10 Today we will focus on how to make the pathway to
11 this profession easier, but I know it is equally as
12 important to make sure it is a sustainable one. I
13 look to the success of the New York Teaching Fellows
14 program, of how we've been able to increase our
15 teaching workforce and provide them with unparalleled
16 educational support, and remain committed to
17 providing the same support to our, our ECE workforce.
18 I'll now pass it to Chair Joseph for her opening
19 statement.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair Gutiérrez.
21 As a longtime public school educator, the topic of
developing and recruiting qualified teachers to work
with our youngest children is important to me. As
the Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, I

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1 want to know more about how CUNY plays such a
2 significant role in ensuring that our youngest New
3 Yorkers get a good start on their education path. I
4 also wanna ensure that any New Yorkers who have
5 interests in or experience with early childhood
6 education as a career path are able to get the
7 credentials they need to enter or to advance that
8 workforce. I'm happy to say that CUNY is playing a
9 very active part in preparing these workers.

10 Currently, approximately 3,600 CUNY students are
11 working towards a degree in early childhood
12 education, a great variety of certificates, advanced
13 certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's
14 degrees, master's, and other credentials in early
15 childhood education, including with bilingual and
16 special education focuses, are offered at various
17 CUNY community college and senior college- colleges.

18 In addition, the New York, the New York Early
19 Childhood Professional Development Institution, which
20 is a public-private partnership at CUNY, works to
21 provide comprehensive support for early childhood
professionals at every stage of their career journey.
As CUNY Chancellor Felix, Felix Matos Rodriguez

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recently noticed- noted, this is a moment where we
need to meet the city's demand for their workforce.

I look forward to this discussion. I would like
to thank my staff and the Staff Committee on Higher
Education, Juvanie Piquant, my Chief of Staff, Julia
Goldsmith-Pinkham, the Committee's Senior Legislative
Counsel, Regina Paul, the Committee's Senior
Legislative Policy Analysis, and Allie Stofer, the
Committee's Financial Analysis. Thank you, Chair
Gutiérrez.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Chair Joseph.
Um, I will now pass it to Chair Won for her opening
statement.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Thank you so much, Chair
Gutiérrez and Joseph, for your partnership on this
important hearing. 3 moms here, uh, Chairing this
hearing. So thank you so much for being here.

Um, my name is Julie Won, and I have the
privilege of Chairing today's Council and Committee
of Workforce Development in partnership with Early
Childhood Education and Higher Education.

In today's hearing, we're looking to understand a
chronically understaffed and underpaid profession,
and we're here to discuss what the city's workforce

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1 development infrastructure is doing about it, because
2 every single one of us are living it every single
3 day. If my after care or my child care cannot
4 provide the right amount of teacher-to-student ratio,
5 it's going to be a very hard day at work for me.

6 Early childhood educators are a cornerstone of
7 New York City, and without them, families cannot
8 continue to justify raising their children in the
9 city. We cannot have a conversation about the future
10 of New York without talking about the future of early
11 childhood educators' livelihoods. Before us today,
12 we have New York City's Talent, the city's central
13 body for aligning agencies with educational
14 institutions and private partners around workforce
15 priorities. And this Committee wants to understand
16 whether New York City Talent is treating this crisis
17 with the urgency it deserves as well as the
18 celebration that we've been having, a lot of victory
19 laps.

20 There are over 36,000 early childhood educators
21 in New York City right now, and the city needs at
least 5,000 new ones every single year just to keep
pace. The waitlist for preschool special education
teachers is over 3,400 students. Hundreds of

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1 classrooms are currently empty because there is no
2 one to staff them, and over 40% of the current
3 workforce is nearing retirement age.

4 A recent survey of the city's child care program
5 found that over 50% of centers reported their new
6 teachers leave within 5 years. So even when we do
7 bring people in, we struggle to keep them. Why did
8 they leave? One Committee Report details that it is
9 because of abysmal wages despite high educational and
10 financial barriers to entry. This includes a \$525
11 certificate application with \$250 renewal for a
12 childhood development associate, or \$160 exams,
\$104.50 for fingerprinting, and \$600 for a New York
State teaching certification.

13 This does not include the cost to go to college
14 or training for these positions. So that means that
15 you're paying anywhere from \$75,000 to \$100,000 just
16 for undergrad, then you're paying an additional
17 \$100,000 or more for your higher education for your
18 master's degree, and then on top of that, you're
19 throwing up about over a thou— uh, another \$1,000 for
20 all these certificates and the fingerprinting. Yet
21 despite all those costs, that's already what, over
\$200,000 of debt that you may be in if you can't

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1 afford to pay all that in cash. All of that just for
2 a median wage of \$69,000 a year, which is less than
3 the 2025 median salary in New York City according to
4 the State Department of Labor. It's not lost on me
5 that this policy is deeply gendered. Most people who
6 occupy these roles are women, particularly immigrant
7 women and women of color, who take on this work with
8 pride and joy for our future generations.

9 We're not just talking about wages here. As any
10 parent with a toddler here knows, kids will always
11 get sick, and they also expose our workers to
12 illnesses daily. As I eat my halls, as I live with 2
13 toddlers, it is important for us to provide them with
14 adequate and fair access to health care coverage to
15 boost our retention rates for our teachers. We need
16 to find a way to connect these dots before the spiral
17 goes into full-blown crisis.

18 To give credit where it's due, New York City
19 Talent has made some investments like contributing to
20 CUNY Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship
21 Program. But last December, however, New York City
Talent released its Workforce Innovation and
Opportunity Act, also known as WIOA, local plan for
2025 to 2029 and did not identify early childhood

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1 education as a priority sector. This Committee wants
2 to understand why that was and what New York City
3 Talent plans to do about it. We want to understand
4 how New York City Talent coordinates with CUNY,
5 Department of Education, and the Office of Child Care
6 and Early Childhood Education to build a real
7 pipeline into this field, and whether this
8 Administration is prepared to make early childhood
9 education a genuine workforce development priority
10 through budgetary commitments and meaningful
11 investments in the sector as we come to- we come-
12 we're nearing the end of Fiscal Year '26 and
13 finalizing the negotiations for Fiscal Year '27. I
14 look forward to hearing from the Administration and
15 all of our witnesses today and to a productive
16 discussion about how the Council can support this
17 work.

18 Because we know that the Governor and the Mayor
19 has been making a lot of celebrations for the
20 beginning of 2K- 2K for 2,000 students, as well as,
21 um, 3K fully funding and Pre-K, we want to make sure
that there is truly universal child care, especially
for existing 2K and 3K, because in districts like
mine and in neighboring districts, we're still

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struggling to get kids a seat at the table or at the
school.

Before we begin, I want to thank my Committee
Staff: Senior Counsel Alex Paulenoff, Senior Policy
Analyst William Hongach, my Deputy Chief of Staff,
Neily Vera Martinez, my District Manager Theresa
Cottone, and my Financial Analyst Spencer Kuhn, for
their work in preparing for today's hearing.

I'll now turn it back to Chair Joseph- Oh, just
kidding, she already did her opening remarks. I'm
going to turn it back to Chair Gutiérrez.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: They were good remarks.
We should hear it again, but we, but we won't, but we
won't, but we won't. We started late. Uh, thank you
both.

Today we'll hear from the Mayor's Office of Child
Care, the, uh, CUNY, the City University of New York,
the Office of Talent and Workforce Development, the
Department of Education, as well as other early
childhood educators, providers, and stakeholders.
Additionally, I'd like to remind everyone, uh, that
the Subcommittee has launched a forum for providers.
You can check for it on my website and on socials.

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I want to thank the members of the Early
Childhood Education Subcommittee who have joined us
today: Council Member Rita Joseph, Council Member
Kevin Riley, who was with us, Council Member Felder.
Um, I think those are the folks on the Committee.
And I'd also like to acknowledge, uh, Council Members
Cabán, um, Epstein, Ariola, Louis, Maloney, Dinowitz—
of course, Education Chair Dinowitz, who had to step
out for a second. And is anyone on Zoom? Oh, and,
uh, Council Member Felder. Yes, he's on my
Committee. Thank you. Council Member Simcha Felder.

Additionally, thank you to the staff, uh, our
staff for the Subcommittee: Julia Goldsmith-Pinkham,
Katie Salina, Grace Amato, Andrew Lane Lawless, and
Margaret Barnsley, as well as my own staff, Anya
Lair, Frank Hulka, Ella Lau, for their work on
today's hearing. And finally, thank you to everyone
who has signed up to testify and for being here
instead of an outside on a beautiful day. We look
forward to hearing from all of you.

I wanna remind everyone who wishes to testify in
person today that you must fill out a witness slip,
which you can find on the desk of the
Sergeant-at-Arms near the entrance of this room.

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Please fill out the slip even if you have already
registered in advance that you will be testifying in
person.

If you wish, wish to testify on any of the
legislation, please indicate on the witness slip
whether you are here to testify in favor or in
opposition. I also wanna point out that we will not
be voting on any legislation today. To allow as many
people as possible to testify, we are limiting it to
2 minutes per person. Whether you are in person or
in Zoom and I'm also going to ask my colleagues to
limit their questions and comments to 5 minutes.

Um, I will now turn it over to Early Childhood
Education Subcommittee Counsel to administer the
oath.

SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. In
accordance with the rules of the council, I'll
administer the affirmation to the witnesses. I'll
call on you each individually, uh, for a response.
Please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell
the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth
before these Committees, and to respond honestly to
Council Member questions? Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Oh yeah,
thank you. And as a reminder to all of our
witnesses, please state your name prior to your
testimony for the record. If anyone here today
requires an accessible version of a presentation
given at today's hearing, please email
testimony@council.nyc.gov. I think that's it. We
did it. On with testimony. Thank you guys.

EMMY LISS: Thank you. Um, good afternoon, Chair
Gutiérrez. Oh. Is that better? Okay. Good
afternoon, Chair Gutiérrez, Chair Won, Chair Joseph,
members of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood
Education, the Committee on Workforce Development,
and the Committee on Higher Education, and all other
Council Members.

My name is Emmy Liss, and I'm the Executive
Director of the Mayor's Office of Child Care and
Early Childhood Education. I'm joined today by my
colleagues from New York City Public Schools, New
York City Talent, and CUNY. Thank you for convening
this important hearing and for giving us the
opportunity to testify before you.

I also want to acknowledge and recognize the
Early Childhood Educators who have joined us for this

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1 hearing today, as well as the advocacy groups and
2 organizations who support this critical workforce.
3 We are so grateful for the work you do every day in
4 our city's early childhood programs and appreciate
5 you taking the time to be here to share your stories
6 and experiences.

7 Universal child care is a critical pillar of the
8 Mamdani Administration's agenda because we know how
9 essential child care access is to children, families,
10 and our economy. We also recognize that there is no
11 universal child care without the child care
12 workforce. We must take steps to lift up and
13 recognize the labor of this workforce that has been
14 under-respected for too long.

15 Child care work has been undervalued for
16 generations, dating back to the time during and after
17 slavery when women of color were forced to take care
18 of the children of others without pay. We must
19 reckon with decades of racism and injustice as we
20 seek to do right by the child care workforce. This
21 is why we must focus on delivering equitable wages to
the child care workforce, reflecting the dignity owed
to every educator regardless of the setting they work
in, and invest in the workforce at every step of

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their career development to ensure this is a field
where the workforce can continue to grow and thrive.

Child care work is essential work. It is skilled
work, and it is deeply impactful work. The quality
of a child's early education is directly shaped by
the interactions they have with their adult
caregivers and educators. Early childhood educators
are the workforce behind the workforce. Without
them, parents could not meaningfully participate in
our economy. I say this personally. I would not be
sitting here before you today were it not for the
early childhood caregivers and educators who are
supporting and nurturing my two young children at
this very moment.

The city's child care workforce is made up of
self-employed workers, small business and nonprofit
employees, large corporate employees, and public
sector workers. These include individuals working in
licensed residential-based settings, centers run by
community-based organizations and schools, some of
which are contracted with the city, and others which
are run entirely as private businesses. While any
adult working in a licensed child care setting must
go through a robust vetting process, and a

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government-run background check. Because of the wide
breadth of programs, both city-contracted and
private, the city has limited consolidated data on
employment patterns and vacancies in child care
programs.

Based on data from the New York City Comptroller
and other analyses of census data, we estimate there
are between 33,000 and 40,000 people working in child
care today, and the vast majority of them are women
of color. This is a workforce that is largely
underpaid, with child care workers earning less than
96% of all professions in New York City.

Wages and working conditions vary widely based on
role and the setting that caregivers work in. We
also know our early childhood educators are not just
instructors. They have complex, multidimensional
roles as caregivers and partners to families,
connecting them to resources and services. Some are
small business owners managing budgets, staffing, and
licensing requirements, and running program
operations.

We also recognize there are thousands of informal
child care workers in the city, many of whom have
been doing this work for decades with deep passion

1 and experience, though they are not recognized in
2 formal data on the workforce. There are longstanding
3 economic justice and worker justice challenges facing
4 the child care sector that we must overcome as a
5 city. If we want to expand access to child care in
6 the city, we need to support and sustain our current
7 workforce and meaningfully grow the workforce for the
8 future. Already, the limited child care workforce is
9 a constraint on system capacity. We know that
10 providers across the city struggle to staff up fully,
11 which may prevent them from opening classrooms even
12 where there is family demand.

13 Child care is by definition labor-intensive work,
14 and for good reason. We know that low adult-to-child
15 ratios matter for the safety and supervision and for
16 child development. That is only more critical as we
17 expand access for younger children. Sustaining and
18 growing the child care workforce will require us to
19 address challenges at every step of the pipeline. We
20 must ensure that the child care workforce earns wages
21 that allow them to live and thrive in New York City,
and we must take steps to close inequitable gaps in
compensation and benefits across the child care
system.

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We need to think creatively about how we grow the pipeline and encourage new people to join the child care workforce, whether that's high school graduates or mid-career professionals looking to make a pivot. We need to adapt training and credentialing programs to meet the needs of those already working in child care who want to build their professional skills, and we must find new ways to recognize the years of experience that those already in the field have. And we must invest in career pathways so that those who are committed to early care and education can continue to grow and advance.

To that end, the Mayor's Office of Child Care and Early Childhood Education is working to bring partners within and outside of city government together to build the city's first-ever comprehensive plan for how we will grow, sustain, and support the child care workforce. The plan will include well-defined, achievable career ladders and pathways to credentialing, affordable and accelerated degree programs, mentorship, coaching, and professional development opportunities, identifying business operation supports, and recognition and professionalization of the workforce.

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We have kicked off meetings with our city agency partners in recent months, and will be convening leaders across the CUNY system in coming weeks. Through these discussions, we are working to identify low- and no-cost policy changes we can make that will reduce barriers for the child care workforce, as well as short-, medium-, and long-term investments we can make to build and support the workforce.

We are looking at workforce development programs from other hard-to-hire critical job fields, such as nursing, skilled trades, and human services, to adapt ideas and lessons for the child care workforce. We will be working with business and philanthropy partners as well to test and try new ideas that can then be scaled if proven successful.

Most importantly, we will be reaching out to current educators to hear from them directly about their experiences navigating the training requirements, higher education systems, and credentialing programs so that their lived experiences inform our plan.

Doing this work will call on many city agencies as well as our partners in higher education, labor, and throughout the early childhood sector. I'm proud

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to sit here today with some of these leaders and to
briefly highlight some of the work already underway
in the city.

Our colleagues at the New York City Office of
Talent and Workforce Development work with partners
across the workforce system to ensure the city's
workforce development strategy aligns with job seeker
needs, employer demand, and the changing economy.
Their work includes piloting innovative workforce
solutions that have the potential to be embedded in
agencies to scale across the workforce system based
on program outcomes and labor market demand.

In 2025, New York City Talent awarded a total of
\$2 million to 8 organizations to support planning and
implementation of apprenticeship pathways in
non-traditional sectors to help increase
opportunities for New Yorkers to gain skills and earn
wages simultaneously. These investments included
\$600,000 in awards to support 2 apprenticeship
programs for early childhood education workers.
Research has illustrated that developing a registered
apprenticeship program for new entrants to the child
care sector can help grow the workforce and increase

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quality of care by helping workers build skills,
credentials, and opportunities for wage increases.

New York City Public Schools supports child
development— child— child care workforce development
both through its partnership with thousands of child
care providers in the city and by preparing the
workforce of the future.

New York City Public Schools Division of Early
Childhood Education supports the early childhood
workforce through a range of recruitment, pipeline
development, and professional development initiatives
focused on community-based organizations and family
child care networks across the city. Community-based
organizations are responsible for their own hiring
and primarily recruit through, through existing
networks and processes, with New York City Public
Schools connecting programs that opt in to candidates
identified through its recruitment efforts.

Since November 2024, these New York City Public
School-led recruitment efforts have generated
interest from more than 4,000 job seekers and built a
candidate pool of over 1,000 individuals to support
programs seeking additional hiring pipelines. Within
this candidate pool, approximately 15% of candidates

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1 meet qualifications for lead teacher roles, while the
2 majority are qualified for other essential classroom
3 positions, underscoring ongoing workforce challenges
4 and the need for continued investment in
5 credentialing pathways.

6 To address this, New York City Public Schools
7 supports individuals' qualifications and advancement
8 through workforce development initiatives. Through a
9 partnership with CUNY's Professional Development
10 Institute and School of Professional Studies, New
11 York City Public Schools funds programming focused on
12 growing and diversifying the early childhood
13 workforce. This includes Child Development
14 Associate, or CDA, training in English and Spanish,
15 preparation for the New York State Birth to 2 Teacher
16 Certification, early childhood college coursework,
17 and free transcript evaluation for internationally
18 trained educators.

19 New York City Public Schools also works closely
20 with CUNY, SUNY, and other higher education
21 institutions to promote career pathways and career
develop— a career, a degree attainment, including
tuition-free options such as CUNY and SUNY Reconnect.
The early childhood division's workforce development

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1 team establishes partnerships with high schools,
2 colleges, and workforce programs to build early
3 childhood career pipelines and conducts recruitment
4 initiatives, including information sessions, career
5 fairs, and candidate pools to support staffing needs
6 across contracted programs.

7 New York City Public Schools also provides
8 ongoing professional development and credential
9 pathway support to early childhood staff, reinforcing
10 advancement toward lead teacher roles. In addition,
11 New York City Public Schools provides hiring support,
12 workforce guidance, and technical assistance to
13 contracted programs, contributing to the placement of
14 more than 150 candidates into early childhood roles,
15 including both lead and assistant teacher positions
16 across contracted programs. Together, these efforts
17 are designed to strengthen the early childhood
18 workforce pipeline and support the long-term
19 sustainability of early care and learning programs
20 across New York City.

21 Through the New York City Public Schools Pathways
Office, Future Ready NYC currently serves 34 schools
in education pathways, serving over 2,000 students,
each partnered with a CUNY or SUNY institution to

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provide early college credit, paid work-based learning, career-connected instruction, and advising for high school students. This model has established a strong foundation for preparing students for careers in education, combining academic rigor with real-world experience. With a strong foundation in place, there's an opportunity to build more seamless, structured transitions into post-secondary credentials and careers, particularly in early childhood and K-12 teaching.

New York City Public Schools is exploring ways to build on this foundation by strengthening connections from high school into career pathways in early care and K-12 education. This work aims to better align student preparation with workforce demand, supporting both educator pipeline needs and long-term economic mobility for students.

Um, lastly, just to comment on the bill being introduced today, the Administration supports the intent of the Child Care Workforce Grant and Services Program bill, which seeks to provide free tuition and related supports to individuals pursuing careers in the early childhood workforce. The Office of Child Care shares the goal of expanding the pipeline of

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early childhood — of educators and recognizes that
reducing financial barriers is a key strategy to
attract more individuals to the field.

With that said, we do have some concerns around
implementation and costs and look forward to
discussing the bill with the Chair.

As we work to deliver universal child care to all
New Yorkers, beginning with the first 2,000 2K seats
this fall, we are deeply focused on the workforce
because, again, there is no universal child care
without the child care workforce. We look forward to
your questions today and your partnership in this
work. I'll now pass it to my colleagues at CUNY.

DONA ANDERSON: Thank you. Good afternoon.
Thank you to Chairs Gutiérrez, Joseph, and Won, and
the members of the Subcommittee and Committees for
the opportunity to give testimony today. My name is
Dona Anderson, and I am the Executive Director of the
New York Early Childhood Professional Development
Institute at the City University of New York. Uh, we
are a public-private partnership located at CUNY.

I also lead the CUNY Office of Early Childhood
Initiatives, working closely with CUNY Central
colleagues and our 17 campus child care centers to

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strengthen the early childhood workforce and expand
access to high-quality child care and education for
CUNY student parents. We appreciate the City
Council's focus on early educator workforce
development. It is important to recognize that
well-prepared educators are the key to providing
high-quality, responsive care and education to New
York City's youngest learners.

CUNY has been a strong partner in these efforts,
and we look forward to continuing this work to
realize the bold vision of universal child care in
our city and state. The early childhood care and
education workforce landscape is complex, with
differing licensing and funding requirements
depending on the age of children, the location, and
the program modality.

There are multiple entry points for new early
care and education, or ECE, professionals and many
pathways for those looking to advance within the
field. Our institute exists to address this
complexity. We take a holistic approach to serving
the ECE workforce, recognizing that services and
supports are needed in conjunction with college-level
educator preparation programs.

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The city's ECE workforce is made up primarily of women and primarily women of color. They communicate with families in at least 31 different languages and have education levels that vary from high school diplomas to PhDs. The work of building the brain architecture of our littlest learners is essential to what they do. It is sophisticated, challenging, and inspiring work requiring high levels of skill, competencies, and knowledge to provide the best outcomes for children and families.

CUNY PDI supports the early care and education workforce in many ways. We operate the Aspire Registry, which is the state's most comprehensive source of verified data about the ECE workforce. More than 66% of licensed child care centers, along with 26,000 professionals and almost 2,000 trainers, already participate in the registry. Its data indicates that there are about 3,800 home-based providers in the city who do not have a Child Development Associate credential or higher level of education, and that only about 1 in 4 lead teachers in licensed centers hold teacher certification. The registry also allows professionals to find and access high-quality training opportunities, including

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1 coaching. We are also the implementing agency for
2 Quality Stars New York, the state's quality rating
3 and improvement system, which in the last 4 years has
4 invested \$4.8 million in the city alone to create
5 high-quality learning environments and has also
6 provided training and academic scholarships for
7 nearly 7,000 staff and professionals.

8 I wanna especially highlight today the work that
9 we do through our New York City Career Development
10 Center. We have 10 centers across the state that
11 provide career and academic advising, employment
12 services, and professional learning to over 6,000
13 people every year, almost 3,000 of whom are in New
14 York City.

15 The center provides free, individualized academic
16 planning and career guidance to early childhood
17 professionals, and its employment network offers
18 hiring, job matching, and employment supports to both
19 job seekers and ECE employers.

20 The center's early childhood leadership
21 initiative offers leadership development and
networking opportunities for directors,
administrators, and family child care providers. We
also work with CUNY campuses on ECE academic

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1 programs. We've teamed with the CUNY School of
2 Professional Studies to create a credit-bearing CDA-
3 certificate program in both English and Spanish, and
4 this January launched a new master's degree program
5 in early childhood policy and leadership. These
6 programs are designed to meet the unique needs of New
7 York's diverse early childhood workforce so early
8 childhood professionals can continue to work while
pursuing their education.

9 Our most recent recruitment initiative is the
10 early, Early Childhood Apprenticeship, a pilot
11 program that drew 400 applicants for 30 slots.
12 Participants are employed as assistant teacher
13 apprentices while attending CUNY SPS. By the end of
14 the apprenticeship, they will have earned their CDA
15 credential, 12 college credits, and a wage increase
16 from their employers. This work was funded through a
combination of private philanthropy and the New York
City Office of Talent and Workforce Development.

17 On a final note, a critical factor in our work is
18 that early care and education professionals are among
19 the lowest paid employees in New York City. The goal
20 of universal child care gives New York a unique
21 opportunity to make a fundamental and much-needed

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investment in the early childhood workforce and
ensure that it is a sustainable support for families
and a viable profession for years to come.

Working with ECE stakeholders across the city and
state, CUNY PDI has developed a comprehensive career
ladder and equitable salary scale to address this
challenge and grow the workforce needed for a
universal, high-quality, accessible child care
system.

We commend the City Council's attention to this
workforce and especially your understanding of the
complexity of the issue in bringing together these 3
Committees. We look forward to supporting the city's
work as it continues along the pathway to universal
child care. Thank you.

ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Good afternoon. I would like
to thank Chair Gutiérrez, Chair Joseph, and Chair
Won, as well as members of the Subcommittee on Early
Childhood Education and the Committees on Higher
Education and Workforce Development for the
opportunity to speak to you on the topic of early
childhood education.

My name is Ashleigh Thompson, and I serve CUNY as
University Dean for Education. In this role, I

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1 oversee education programs across the university. I
2 am pleased to tell you about our support of more than
3 15,000 students in this important academic and
4 workforce area, a majority of whom are people of
5 color. For the first time since the pandemic, CUNY
6 fall 2025 enrollment data show increases for students
7 pursuing degrees in education, bolstered by programs
8 like CUNY Reconnect, providing free tuition for
9 eligible associate degree students. About 3,600 of
10 CUNY's education students are in early childhood
11 programs. Of these, 2,000 are enrolled in bachelor's
12 and master's programs that lead to teacher
13 certification. Though we know from State Department
14 of Labor data that our early childhood graduates work
15 in a range of settings, as they do while they are
16 pursuing their degrees. 5 years after graduation,
17 nearly 90% of early childhood bachelor's graduates
18 are working in education in New York City public
19 schools, child daycare services, and other city
20 agencies, education-related organizations, and
21 charter and private schools.

As New York City and state work to expand child
care and implement the class size law, CUNY is
actively building the pipeline of well-prepared

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educators that these commitments require. New grants and partnerships support outreach to alumni, certification exam vouchers, recruitment events for both college enrollment and teacher hiring, creation of new undergraduate programs in bilingual early childhood education, recruiting education students for paid jobs as paraprofessionals, and more. This summer 2026, CUNY is projected to enroll more than 800 New York City Teaching Fellows, an increase of more than 30% from last year. CUNY Reading Fellows provides free evidence-based reading instruction to nearly 2,800 children in grades K-2 in New York City public schools, while providing CUNY tutors with a paid career-aligned job that strengthens their skills in early literacy.

New York City Men Teach at CUNY, a partnership with the city's Young Men's Initiative and New York City public schools, supports 600 teacher candidates a year, including dozens majoring in early childhood. We're engaging education students even before they apply to CUNY. Through New York City Public Schools Future Ready, the education pathway is currently offered at 30 high schools, reaching an estimated 1,500 students who take education courses through

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College Now that can be an on-ramp to a variety of
education paths, including early childhood.

My office works in close collaboration with a
wide range of partners utilizing data sharing
agreements to ensure that we can identify trends and
support students throughout the educator pipeline.
These investments yield returns for our city and
state and for our students too. Wage outcomes for
CUNY's education majors are strong. For bachelor's
and master's graduates at CUNY, education majors
surpass the median wage for other CUNY graduates at
the 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year mark. A renewed
opportunity for our city and its focus on early
childhood is to strengthen sector-specific jobs and
livable wages, building career ladders that enable
these college students to go on to educate our
youngest New Yorkers with quality and passion.
Working collaboratively across our city to ensure
alignment and improve communication will make a
meaningful difference for the early childhood
workforce.

CUNY provides many affordable pathways into an
education career for thousands of candidates from a
wide range of backgrounds and starting points. We

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1 will continue to work and innovate to expand the
2 pipeline for early childhood education programs to
3 help bolster New York's workforce in this critical
4 early childhood sector. Thank you. Thank you. Okay,
5 great. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you all so much for
7 your, um, for your testimony. I want to take some— a
8 moment to just recognize we had been joined— we are
9 joined or were joined by Council Members Wong,
10 Council Member Restler, Council Member Brewer and
Hanif. I think that's everyone. Great.

11 Um, so I just want to set the, the stage. Um, I
12 know that I had mentioned in my testimony about an
13 analysis of, I think, an estimate of about 5,000 new
14 teachers, um, every year that would need to be
15 recruited. But can we all just— can you either
16 confirm or share our— your numbers? How many new
early childhood education teachers would need to be
recruited each year, um, for 2K, 3K, and pre-K?

17 EMMY LISS: Um, thanks so much for the question.
18 As I shared in testimony, um, and as, as we've talked
19 about, uh, with this Committee, our early childhood
20 system is made up, um, both for pre-K and 3K, and as
21 we expand for 2K, of a partnership with our, uh, with

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1 child care providers, um, both center and home-based
2 providers, as well as our school school-based staff.
3 Because, uh, our independent providers who the city
4 works with are themselves businesses that recruit and
5 maintain their own staff, um, we don't necessarily
6 have visibility into their annual vacancy data,
7 though we do, as we, um, as we offer support to them,
8 work with them to fill vacancies and provide support
9 as those come up. Um, so, uh, it's, it's a - as we
10 work with providers, we understand what their needs
11 are, though we don't have a total count necessarily
12 of the needs for Pre-K, 3K, or 2K.

13 I will note that as we plan to launch the first
14 2,000 2K seats this fall, we are predominantly
15 working with, um, providers who are already running
16 and operating, um, toddler programs in the city.
17 They are doing that privately and, and will be coming
18 into the- to partnership with the city. So those are
19 classrooms that are broadly- are programs that are
20 broadly staffed. We know there will be some
21 vacancies and we'll continue to work with providers
to fill them.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Thank you. And so
for the programs that are contract- are DOE

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1 contracts, at least, um, for 3K and pre-K, you don't
2 have a sense of those vacancies and how many we would
3 need to recruit?

4 SIMONE HAWKINS: Simone Hawkins. I am the Deputy
5 Chancellor for—

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Deputy Chief.

7 SIMONE HAWKINS: Yes, yes. The DC for the
8 Division of Early Childhood Education at New York
9 City Public Schools. Um, thank you for having me
10 today. And so, um, as Emmy shared, a lot of the
11 information and data that we collect is, is fully
12 reliant on self-reporting.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm.

14 SIMONE HAWKINS: And so, uh, intermittently
15 throughout the year, we do some, you know, release
16 surveys to our educator community to assess their
17 needs, not just vacancies for teaching roles, may it
18 be, uh, in the classroom, but also education
19 directors, which we know those that have a New York
20 City DOHMH permit, they are required to have an
21 education director on site at all times, but also
other key roles, right? Like, do you need a
custodian and a family worker? And so we do send out
those surveys intermittently, and we definitely do so

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1 before the start of the, the school year. And so we
2 have that data.

3 In addition to that, we also, um, and bless you,
4 uh, we also rely on budget data. The budget
5 information that we collect includes salary
6 information, which must be tied to an individual or a
7 position, including a vacant one. And so the team
8 looks at both data sets and tries to reconcile. As
9 you know, things can change at a point in time, but
10 as of our most recent data collection for January
11 through March, there was a vacancy count of about 70—
12 excuse me, 78 positions, and that's specifically
13 centers.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

15 SIMONE HAWKINS: We know that can change each and
16 every day, but that is our last count for that,— that
17 quarter of the year.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay and is there any
19 thought about how to create a system that's maybe
20 more unified? I see— I know that you get a ton of
21 data from the surveys, but obviously we're constantly
talking about universal child care and expanding
early childhood education. So I think it would be
really helpful to help us kind of keep you all

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1 accountable, keep us accountable, and create a system
2 for where we have very clear, finite numbers. Is
3 there, is there a thought to maybe kind of one
4 unified tool to be able to track that. And I
5 totally— respective of the fact that it's not just
6 educators that there's a shortage, that, you know, we
7 do need to consider the other, um, spots. But I
8 think we have a vested interest in understanding what
9 that looks like because the teacher shortage is
10 across the board. And so it would just help us so
11 that we can make that distinction whether it's early
12 childhood or K-12.

11 EMMY LISS: I think as we continue to grow and
12 expand our programs, we'll continue to look at how we
13 collect data from the providers that the city works
14 with directly, um, and how we can better understand
15 vacancies and how we can offer support to them. Um,
16 so it's something we'll continue to look at. I'm
17 happy to continue discussing with you.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And for, for this— thank
18 you— and for this Fiscal Year, or FY27, um, where I
19 know that there's, um, state funding to be able to
20 kind of stabilize and expand 3K, do you all have a
21 sense, at least for the new year, how many teachers

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you'll need to recruit, or if you, if you need to
recruit more?

EMMY LISS: Um, so for the planned expansion this
fall, um, the 2,000 2K seats that we're launching, as
well as the additional 3K capacity. We are working
with providers who have already licensed classrooms,
um, because of the short timeline to stand up
services for this fall. Um, we are partnering with
existing child care providers, um, who partner with
the city already, who are maybe adding a classroom to
their contract, um, as well as partnering with some
new providers through the request for information
that the city put out earlier this year.

Those are programs that are already operating.
Um, so they may be serving 2-year-olds today who are
paying privately and again will be coming into the
city's program. So we anticipate that many of these
roles are filled, though, as the Deputy Chancellor
noted, you know, especially in the ramp-up to the
start of the school year, we will engage programs
directly to understand, um, if and where they may
have additional vacancies and what kind of roles and
if there's support they need.

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1 SIMONE HAWKINS: If I may, I mean, clearly I
2 heard the gasps in the audience around the 78, right?
3 We want to encourage people to— in our educator
4 community to, for one, respond. But we need to also
5 go out and make sure that we have a physical presence
6 to make sure that they feel supported. We also know
7 that brings some level of anxiety and fear, right?
8 Because we don't want them to feel as if it's an I
9 gotcha moment. We really want to build a partnership
10 with them where they feel and feel trusted, um, that
11 we can be trusted to really offer that support to
12 build their workforce. What I will say to your
13 question as well, and to add to what Emmy shared, we
14 are anticipating specifically for 2K to align with
15 the, you know, respective regulation that guides the
16 setting.

15 So for, uh, family child care, that would be New
16 York State Social Services law, and for our
17 center-based programs, that would be the health code,
18 er, either Article 43 or Article 47.

18 And so, um, on average, it gets a little
19 complicated, as Dona mentioned. It does require
20 about 2 adults and educators in the space. And so
21 although many of our, uh, existing or anticipated

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1 partners will already convert an existing classroom
2 that has educators or bring on new, um, new programs
3 that might be independently run and not funded
4 through New York City Public Schools, we do
5 anticipate that there'll be some vacancies. Again,
6 we'll work with them to get that information and data
7 and provide support but the general estimates that we
8 want to provide or offer the, the Council would be in
9 alignment with what the respective regulations
require.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And do you, do you have a
11 sense of, at least for the 3K expansion, if you'll-
12 what, what that looks like?

13 SIMONE HAWKINS: Yeah, so we're finalizing who
14 will be participating in that, and so same, really
15 trying to align with the health code for those
16 classrooms and where, where relevant home-based
17 regulations. Um, and so, uh, some of our educators
18 actually decided to convert existing pre-K
19 classrooms.

20 Um, there is some oversaturation in some
21 communities, and they wanted to use this opportunity
to, to pivot. Um, and so there are educators in many
instances, and so they would just, you know, age down

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1 into the 3-K classroom. And so once we finalize
2 where these seats are, um, and those seats will also
3 be in district school and pre-K center settings.
4 Then we can work with the relevant and respective
5 program or school leader to determine what the needs
6 are.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do you have a sense of
8 when that will be finalized?

9 SIMONE HAWKINS: Very soon.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, um, okay and then
11 more importantly, how do you estimate what the
12 workforce needs— what the workforce needs will be for
13 the following, um, set: lead teachers for a class for
14 students with disabilities and bilingual teachers?

15 SIMONE HAWKINS: So we, uh, and just to take a
16 step back, we have the the amazing Division of, uh,
17 Inclusive and Accessible Learning led by Deputy
18 Chancellor Foti, who oversees our EMLL work as well
19 as, um, our work around— work with students with
20 disabilities.

21 Um, and so we work with her team, uh, to, to
assess what's needed in the self-contained
classrooms, and what's needed in the SCIDS
classrooms. We also have a contract enhancement with

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1 4410 providers. Um, and then we also know about the
2 centralized capacity, what we— that we need for PRAC
3 teams, CPSE, et cetera, et cetera.

4 And so, um, similar to the, the, the efforts that
5 we launch across my team, they actually support those
6 efforts and, and actually, uh, initiate their own,
7 which we work in partnership with them as well. And
8 so when we are looking at what the needs are, we are
9 looking at where the students are and the types of
10 classrooms and settings in which those, um, educators
11 are needed, or additional staff, support staff where
12 relevant.

13 And so where we know we are anticipating
14 placement of special education seats, we are already
15 working with the school community to assess if they
16 already have educators or would require specific
17 special education teachers for those classrooms, and
18 that will be included in our data.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And is there— and
20 I know this has been true for a while, but is there a
21 shortage of special education bilingual teachers
specifically?

SIMONE HAWKINS: I, I can, uh, I would say yes.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Continue to be.

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1
2 SIMONE HAWKINS: I cannot tell you the count, and
3 so we would have to get back to you view on that, but
4 there is a need for special education teachers,
5 absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And so I think-

7 SIMONE HAWKINS: And to your point, um,
8 multilingual.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Multilingual, excuse me.
10 Yeah and so I just- to make it a point, I think part
11 of today is we want to explore how we can- what we
12 can do to set the stage for recruitment for, for all
13 of it. But what do you think, what is specific to
14 multilingual special education- education or as a
15 career path that we need to be doing, we need to be
16 elevating because there is a severe, a severe
17 shortage compared to the rest of the roles.

18 SIMONE HAWKINS: I don't want to pretend like I'm
19 the expert in that, but I want to acknowledge that we
20 are open to having the conversation and exploring how
21 we can partner to definitely welcome and encourage
folks to enter that pathway.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, thank you. Um, my
next question is what outreach- I don't know if this
is a question for, um, either CUNY or the Office of

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1 Early Childhood Education or, um, what outreach are
2 you doing to high schoolers and college students
3 around recruitment to the early childhood education
4 field? And what opportunities could we explore with
5 DYCD? Uh, Chair Stevens, who Chairs the, the, the
6 Youth Committee, is obviously very passionate about
7 this, just about being able to create better pathways
8 for young people and careers. And so just curious if
9 there's a marriage of the both or if there's
something specific to early childhood education.

10 EMMY LISS: Um, I'll just start by saying this is
11 something we're very interested in exploring further
12 and thinking about how we can help more of our young
13 people see early childhood education as, um, a viable
14 and exciting long-term career pathway. Um, as a
15 reference in testimony, um, the Pathways Office at
16 New York City Public Schools has existing programs in
17 a number of city high schools to help steer students
18 towards early childhood education and gives them the
19 ability to earn dual credits while still enrolled.
20 Um, but this is an area as we work comprehensively
21 over the coming months across agencies to plan for,
um, what a more holistic workforce development
strategy should look like. Um, how we help bring our

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1 young people into child care is one of the things
2 we'll be looking at.

3 DONA ANDERSON: Uh, and I'll just follow up by
4 saying, um, I referenced in my testimony the early
5 childhood apprenticeship project, and that actually
6 grew out of a program that we had specifically
7 focused on recruiting young people into the field of
8 early childhood education.

9 So we have partnerships with some of the, um,
10 local high schools. Um, another thing that we have
11 done in the past, um, we did a pilot project where we
12 actually offered the credit-bearing CDA certificate
13 program at SPS to— starting for high schoolers in
14 their junior year.

15 So they took one college course through College
16 Now. So by the time they finished with their high
17 school diplomas, they also had 12 college credits and
18 the CDA. So that's another opportunity to kind of
19 think about how are we growing that workforce
20 starting even from age 16.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I'm a big fan
of College Now. I was a beneficiary of it. So, um,
a big fan. Can you just talk to me about the, um,

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1 apprenticeship? Um, what is the year-to-year, like,
2 required funding to sustain this apprenticeship?

3 DONA ANDERSON: So, um, so our ask before the
4 Council is \$3 million over 3 years for 200
5 apprentices. Um, and so that really, um, that helps
6 to cover the cost of supporting the apprentices as
7 well as the employer partners within that work. Um,
8 this is a really innovative, uh, structured approach
9 where we utilize the educational incentive program
10 scholarship funding to cover the cost of tuition from
11 the state and then utilize, um, uh, other funds to,
12 to do all the support services and things that we
13 need.

14 The other thing that, that, uh, apprenticeship
15 includes is support for our employer partners. This
16 is really one of the things that the apprenticeship
17 model is great in early childhood, but early
18 childhood is a little bit different than perhaps some
19 of the trades where there is more of a profit margin.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm.

21 DONA ANDERSON: Um, and so there's more— they
have more resources to sort of dedicate to growing
their own. We already know that our, our, um, lead
teachers and our directors are really at the brink,

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1 and so we really built in for them stipends as well,
2 because growing your own and, and this apprenticeship
3 hosting requires more effort from them as well as,
4 you know, supporting that, that apprentice. So, um,
5 we've built that in as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Excellent. Well, I'm
7 happy to uplift, um, that budget ask. Um, I have 2
8 more questions and then we'll pass it to Chair
9 Joseph. I'm curious, and I know that we will
10 dedicate a whole hearing to this, but obviously there
11 is significant turnover. Um, as part of my
12 testimony, we had pulled from a report that, you
13 know, there is a, a population of folks that are set
14 to retire because they've been in the industry for so
15 long, and then any of, uh, the new folks that join
16 are really staying for an average of 5 years. Um,
17 looking into the next 5, 10 years, what is something
18 that you are doing now, um, or thinking about how we
19 can encourage early childhood educators to stay in
20 this profession? What are some of the things-- and
21 I'm not gonna ask for like a full plan fleshed out,
just like, just ideas, like what are we, what are we
talking about?

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1 EMMY LISS: Absolutely. So as we look
2 comprehensively at planning for the workforce, we are
3 looking both at how we bring new people into the
4 field and how we sustain and grow the folks who are
5 in the field. And I think this will have to be a
6 multi-pronged approach.

7 Of course, you referenced in your testimony, as
8 we did as well, the importance of wages and benefits
9 and equitable compensation for the workforce, which
10 we know is an important factor.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It's really the top.
12 It's really the first- the first thing.

13 EMMY LISS: Absolutely.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: We gotta pay these
15 people.

16 EMMY LISS: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It's the only way.

18 EMMY LISS: Um, I think in addition to that, we
19 recognize that, um, working in early childhood
20 classrooms is tough. It's- there's long days. It's
21 emotional. It's very physical. Um, and so wanna
continue working with, um, with our partners, with
educators to explore how we can, um, uh, invest in
sort of workplace quality and making sure that child

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1 care providers are able to take care of themselves,
2 um, and are able to, um, have the time and space they
3 need for professional development, for growth. Um,
4 and so they can, uh, we hope, of course, recognize
5 that wages and benefits is where this conversation
6 starts but also ensuring that providers, uh,
7 educators are supported, that they have what they
8 need, that they are able to sustain themselves in
9 their work, um, and that if they're interested in
10 continuing to grow, to go from an assistant teacher
11 to a lead teacher, to pursue roles in, um, center
12 leadership, um, that they have the opportunity to
13 stay in the profession and grow with the profession
14 as well.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: As part— thank you. As
16 part of the surveys, um, is one of the questions just
17 to assess of the staff that are there, whether
18 they're educational staff or support staff, how many
19 of them are in need of, um, uh, care— sorry, child
20 care for their own children? I know that in my
21 experience in my district, oftentimes, um, their
child might not even qualify to attend the exact
center that they're in. How are you all— I know
we're on a path to universal child care, but in the

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1 meantime until we get there, is that part of the
2 questioning that you're asking? Is that something
3 that you're considering as a means of supporting, um,
4 people? So we really have to think about incentives,
5 like what makes people wanna stay at their jobs? Is
6 that it's meaningful and that they're happy and that
7 they can afford to stay to stay there. Um, is that
8 something that is a part of the surveys? No? Okay.
9 Maybe we should ask, because I do think that it— that
10 is it, like, in any job is a reason why we take a job
11 or we stay at a job is like, is it close to my child
12 care? Can I, can I bring my kid here?

11 SIMONE HAWKINS: Yeah, we do not ask that on our
12 survey. It's really intended to, to, uh, ascertain
13 the number of vacancies. But what I think what
14 you're highlighting is, uh, culture.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: What's another survey?
16 What's another survey?

16 SIMONE HAWKINS: You know, another survey also
17 We— I think we should also assess, because one thing
18 I, I am hypersensitive to, um, wearing the hat of
19 D.C. for the Division of Early Childhood Education,
20 we are not the entire ecosystem of early care and
21 education across the city. And so what I don't want

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1 to do is pres- present challenges that might solve
2 our problems but create a gap in other areas. Um,
3 and so appreciate that, because what's a benefit of
4 Emmy being in her role is really creating something
5 that is coherent and comprehensive of the entire
6 system that is not solely about contracted care or
7 care provided by the district, but those independent
8 providers who wanna thrive too and may, may be
9 running into similar challenges.

10 DONA ANDERSON: Yeah. I could just follow up
11 right there. Um, I wanna emphasize the role of
12 leaders in creating the really- the positive
13 classroom climate that is really, really an important
14 factor in helping people decide whether or not
15 they're going to stay at their jobs.

16 Compensation, 100% first factor, but very close
17 behind that, and research backs this up, that, that
18 classroom and program climate make a huge difference,
19 and leaders are the linchpin in really making sure
20 that that is supported. So, um, supports like what
21 we do in our Early Childhood Leadership Initiative,
as well as Quality Stars New York, the leadership
coaches that the DOE has. Anything that supports
leaders in their role as leaders can really help make

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1 a huge impact in also supporting people to stay, um,
2 in, in these positive environments that feel really
3 good at the end of the day, even though it's really
4 hard, really physically taxing and emotional work.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And is that— tell me, is
6 it just PD? Like, what, what are some of those
7 things that contribute?

8 DONA ANDERSON: Yeah, it's professional
9 development. It's a lot of peer learning. That's a
10 lot of what our model looks at is really peer
11 learning, like bringing folks together. They learn
12 from each other and just the support from each other.
13 Being a leader in a program is a lonely position.
14 You're the only one there in that position
15 oftentimes, even though, er, part of an amazing team.
16 And so giving folks the opportunity, creating the
17 space for them to come together and learn from each
18 other has been, um, really powerful.

19 And then for our team, when they meet with their
20 quality improvement specialist; this is another very
21 trusted person who comes in who is not worried about
compliance. They are really worried and helping them
to achieve quality and improve quality. So that
support there also can be very impactful.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Um, look forward to the continued discussion. I'm gonna hand it off to Chair Joseph.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much. Um, just want to follow up on a couple of quick questions from Council Member Chair Gutiérrez. Um, you will ex— you said you provide, um, training in two languages, English and Spanish. Will you— do you plan to expand the languages that you already have?

DONA ANDERSON: So that specifically refers to the college credit-bearing coursework at the CUNY School of Professional Studies.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mhm.

DONA ANDERSON: Um, right now, uh, that's possible because the CDA itself, the credential, has all the materials also available in Spanish. So, um, we would have to look at what other languages are possible for the CDA itself, um, and then absolutely would consider that.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, thank you. Um, have in all of your conversation among yourselves— and I hope this is going to be an interagency— how teachers work in cohorts. I hope this is a cohort that will continue to work because what you do impacts this

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1 person, that person. So I think you guys should work
2 together. Is, is inviting small businesses to be
3 part of the conversation for early childhood- is part
4 of that conversation? Because they also have a
5 workforce, right? How are you using small businesses
6 to make this work?

7 EMMY LISS: As we think about the expansion of
8 universal child care in the city, we are really
9 looking at the whole city as our partners. Yes, it's
10 all of the folks you see up here from city government
11 and the dozen or more other agencies, but it is- it's
12 philanthropy, it's business, it's business of all
13 sizes. Um, so we are in conversation with business
14 leaders to understand how are child care gaps
15 impacting their workforce? What are the child care,
16 ah, um, models, solutions that would benefit their
17 workforce, whether that's folks who work a 9-to-5 job
18 in an office or folks who are doing the overnight
19 shift at a hospital or the early morning shift at a
20 construction site. Um, so we are talking to business
21 about our overall child care system. Um, certainly
as we think about the question at hand today about
workforce development for child care, um, we, we also
know that there are folks who want to move between

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careers, and there may be people who are— have
started their career elsewhere and, um, are looking
to move into child care. So want to make sure that,
um, our business partners know about those pathways
as well.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Engaging this— the Chambers
of Commerce is also a great place to start as well.

SIMONE HAWKINS: And if I may, uh, Council
Member, we actually— I want to put in a plug for my
workforce development team that lives within my
division. They do a lot of work with Workforce One,
uh, New York State Department of Labor, and other,
uh, city and state partners in addition to CUNY, uh,
colleagues, um, to make sure that we are in their
spaces. If they have career fairs, other
opportunities for us to engage with populations we
wouldn't normally, uh, come in contact with, with, we
are partnering with them too.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, I have another question
for— this is for CUNY. Um, the career pathways, um,
somebody that may, may not wanna have another
master's, right? Are you providing extensions to
these licensing, um, to be able to meet the shortage
needs for bilingual special education? ESL. Are you

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1 working in providing that? Because I didn't see that
2 in your testimony, but that is- that is- that's
3 something you provide?

4 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Yes. So CUNY has extensions
5 and kind of supplemental programs if someone wants to
6 add special ed or bilingual, but we're also trying
7 more and more to build those things in. We don't
8 want people to have to come back to add those
9 credentials. So I mentioned expanding undergraduate
10 programs with early childhood and bilingual together.
11 So we're looking at both the possibility and options,
12 um, the workforce would have to add those, and as
13 well as getting them from that.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Sometimes they have to come
15 back because they're already in the classroom and
16 working. Sometimes they do have to come back to you
17 and say, listen, I would love to have an extension
18 for bilingual education, special education. And
19 that's one way I'm looking at when we talk about
20 shortage areas. Folks can move away- move around the
21 license and assessing who you have in the system to
make sure you're also- hey, we can move this license
around. And, and sometimes you're doing both.

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1 So how many students are currently enrolled in
2 the early childhood education degree programs?

3 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Uh, our 2025, uh, enrollment
4 was 36,13- 3,613.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And we're going to break them
6 down in different categories. So how many candidates
7 you have for bachelor's degrees?

8 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Bachelor's was, um, 862.
9 Master's was 1,143. Associate is the largest, 1,242.
10 And then we have, um, certificates and also advanced
11 certificates. Um, and those were an additional 200
12 students.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many students- um, how
14 many candidates do you have for degrees focusing on
15 teaching students with disabilities?

16 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Um, I could add that for you
17 'cause they're across all different degree levels.
18 I'm happy to follow up and send that to you. And I
19 also wanted to mention my office does have, um, some
20 special grants that specifically fund, uh, teachers
21 who want to add the special education license, to
your previous question.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And how much is CUNY working
with, um, bilingual pupil services to recruit

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1 bilingual education— educators, bilingual special
2 education teachers? How much are you working— speech
3 pathologists is also a shortage area in bilingual.

4 DONA ANDERSON: Um, so, so oftentimes those folks
5 need the, the sort of same preparation. Um, so we
6 refer folks— when folks come to us at the career
7 development centers, we refer them then to the
8 appropriate folks at each of the CUNY campuses. Um,
9 and part of the intake when we're doing an interview
10 with a new client or new student, um, we ask— we talk
11 to them about bilingual— what their bilingual
12 capabilities are, and then what their options might
13 be as well.

14 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: I just wanted to add that
15 this fall through Brooklyn College, we're funding,
16 uh, bilingual extensions for PPS staff.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: See, that's what I was
18 talking about. We need to know about that.

19 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, how many students are
21 enrolled in your Child Development Associate program?

ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: I have 161 at the School of
Professional Studies, um, and then also we have, uh,

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1 additional students who engage with CDA programs, um,
2 through continuing education.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many are enrolled in
4 your Child Development Associate program offered in
5 Spanish?

6 DONA ANDERSON: 54.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uh, are those numbers
8 looking to increase, or is Is, is that the goal, or
9 is it— you wanna expand, right? Okay.

10 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Just wanna make
12 sure. Um, CUNY offers several programs to support
13 students in finishing their degrees. CUNY ASAP, um,
14 ACE, Reconnect. How many students in CUNY ASAP, uh,
15 Reconnect, um, work towards an early childhood
16 education degree?

17 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: I don't know, but we can
18 certainly—

19 DONA ANDERSON: Yeah, we can follow up. There's
20 not a lot in ASAP.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uh, are we doing the
outreach to encourage? That's another—

DONA ANDERSON: So it's a, it's a slightly more
nuanced— we could certainly follow up with you

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1 afterwards. And then, um, Reconnect, there are
2 currently two pro- two associate degree programs at
3 BMCC and at Bronx Community College, um, and they
4 have definitely seen increases in their numbers with
5 the launch of CUNY Reconnect.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay.

7 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: And another thing for this
8 coming academic year, we've advocated that all of our
9 early childhood programs be part of CUNY Reconnect
10 because we want to make sure that the city has the
11 workforce it needs.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Do you have any mentorship
13 program to support students enrolled in early
14 childhood education programs?

15 DONA ANDERSON: The strongest mentorship really
16 comes through the apprenticeship program, but that is
17 also the role of our early childhood career career
18 advisors. Um, so if someone comes to us, um, and
19 they receive a scholarship or other kinds of
20 supports, generally we check in, check in with them 3
21 times a semester. So at the beginning, before the
school starts, the mid-semester, and then end of
semester check-in. So they have ongoing support and

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we're there to help, um, with anything that they
need.

So if they're like, you know, I lost my child
care or I'm having trouble with a professor, or, you
know, um, you know, I've got a family conflict. Um,
so that person is really there. Our career advisors
are there to really support them at the centers, and
then they also have supports at the campus where
they're attending class.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, D.C. Hawkins, do you
provide mentorship once a student comes into your
system as an early childhood educator? Are you
providing mentorship for that educator?

SIMONE HAWKINS: Yes. And so we, we actually
refer to it as coaching.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mhm.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Um, and so we have a solid group
of folks, um, and mostly educators themselves who go
in, um, and provide support to not only just the
leader, but also, uh, the educators, uh, ah,
educating our littles in the classroom. Um, because
one thing I think you all highlighted earlier is not
just making sure we build the pathway for individuals

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1 to become early childhood educators, but also
2 leaders.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That's right.

4 SIMONE HAWKINS: And so we are working with them
5 to really cultivate, you know, for succession
6 planning as folks age out of, of, of the system, yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many years do you coach
8 that teacher once they enter the system?

9 SIMONE HAWKINS: For as long as they are in the
10 system and working with New York City public schools.
11 So every site is assigned a leadership coach and at,
12 at minimum an instructional coordinator. And then
13 in, in addition to that, we also provide a social
14 worker. We also have inclusion, uh, specialists who
15 provide support to programs as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How does CUNY support
17 students with degrees in early childhood education to
18 find a job upon child care— upon graduating?

19 DONA ANDERSON: So that's, um, the work that we
20 do in the employment network. So folks, this is
21 really exists to match job seekers with employer
partners. Um, it really— we, we had always had a job
board, and then during COVID when we we had that
first class who were graduating, and we were really

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1 unsure what was gonna happen with jobs. We really,
2 um, increased our services to be able to take a more
3 active role in, um, in helping identify employers who
4 have vacancies and matching them with, um, ah, er,
5 candidates.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Do you support with, um,
7 certifi- certification?

8 DONA ANDERSON: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You provide tutoring as
10 well?

11 DONA ANDERSON: Uh, so that's some of the work
12 that we do.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Test prep?

14 DONA ANDERSON: In, in cooperation with, um, with
15 our colleagues at DECE, so we do have, um, test prep,
16 um, and supports to help them not only cover the fees
17 but also prepare for the certification exams.

18 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: I wanted to add that we have
19 special grants for certification exam vouchers, and
20 we've also worked at CUNY to make it financial aid
21 eligible, so students who are undergraduates can put
those costs towards their financial aid.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Good to hear, but we need to
know about them. See, no one knows. I knew to ask

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1 that question because it was important. But, uh, the
2 general public needs to know. Are there any targeted
3 scholarships or financial support available to
4 students enrolled in early childhood degrees that is
5 in addition to the scholarships and financial
6 assistance available to CUNY students?

7 DONA ANDERSON: There are a number of early
8 childhood scholarships. Uh, primarily is the
9 Educational Incentive Program that is offered through
10 the state. So this is funding that comes from the
11 Office of Children and Family Services, and is
12 specifically, um- people are eligible for it who are,
13 ah, employed in licensed child care settings. Um,
14 there are income eligibility requirements and a few
15 other requirements, but EIP can be used toward, um,
16 college coursework as well as other kinds of
17 professional development. Um, and then there are a
18 few other small- scholarships that are either
19 campus-based or, um, uh, coming from various funders.
20 Um, but I will say there is one, um, if a program is
21 participating in Quality Stars New York, which is our
state's quality rating and improvement system, they
do have an academic scholarship program that does

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provide, a- specifically college scholarships for
college coursework.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. If someone
chooses to get an associate or a BA in early
childhood education now, what does the process and
timeline look like for them?

ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Timeline looks like to go
through that degree program?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Correct.

ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Um, that varies student to
student. Often students are working, and so it takes
them a little bit longer, but, um, ah, typically our
timeline for an associate degree is 2 to 3 years, and
our timeline for a bachelor's degree is 4 to 6 years.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And students, it's easy to
transfer within the CUNY system from one program to
another, or- degree transfers, that's easy. In your
2K program, um, what's the class- what's the class
size and class ratio of students to teacher?

EMMY LISS: Um, so as Deputy Chancellor Hawkins
said, it will- it varies somewhat based on the
specific setting, um, size of the classroom and other
particulars, but the, um, typical classroom for 2K
will have 12 students and 2 teachers.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And any of them ICT
settings?

SIMONE HAWKINS: So no, um, we, we do have that
for 3K and pre-K, and we are actually working with,
uh, DIAL, and also we are in continued conversation
with Advocates for Children around is that
appropriate to-- is it appropriate to replicate a
similar model for such a young age group? And, and
we believe initially that it's not.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Right?

SIMONE HAWKINS: Um, we plan to work really
closely with the Bureau of Early Intervention at New
York City Department of Health and Mental Health
Hygiene, uh, they are a rockstar partner, um, and
wanting to make sure that families get that early,
uh, identification for earlier intervention. But we
are not right now looking to replicate, uh, the
self-contained and SCIS models for 2K.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Self-contained is 12 kids in
a classroom.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Correct? But that's the, the 12
that, uh, Emmy mentioned is specific to the health
code. That's actually the ratio.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That's the ratio for— but
not, not a self-contained.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Correct?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, wanna make sure that's
clear on the record. Um, Chair Won.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Thank you so much, Chair
Joseph. Okay, I want to go back to the beginning
because I have some follow-up questions from when
Chair Gutiérrez has asked.

So I feel like this question gets asked all the
time from parents as well as at every single early
childhood education hearing. Can you help me
understand how exactly are we calculating for the 3K
capacity across the city for the upcoming school
year?

SIMONE HAWKINS: So we use data, uh, a
combination of data based on, uh, applications that
we get from prior years. And so, um, as folks may
know, we have a centralized admissions process. And
sorry, Chair, I can't see you right now, um, but I'm
looking at you.

We have a centralized admissions process which is
managed by our office, Office of Student Enrollment.
They are actually responsible for doing every single

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1 admissions process, um, for the, uh, for the
2 department and then we also look at enrollment data.
3 What we need to assess is utilization, right? Just
4 because there might be seats, we want to understand
5 if they are filled, because what we have all, uh,
6 experienced is that they're not necessarily
7 optimized, right?

8 We've heard this before— seats in the right
9 place, um, and also working within the parameters of
10 our contracts. And so where we have existing
11 contracts, looking at that, uh, utilization data and
12 admissions data, we reconcile that to determine if
13 there's any unmet need. And as you are aware, the
14 mayor announced the, the priority zip codes that we
15 plan to expand 3K, and that's really leveraging that
16 application and enrollment data. So we want to see
17 where parents want to go. We are looking at the
18 distance and proximity from their home address as
19 kind of the primary point, um, geographic point. And
20 then we're looking at where the seats actually exist.
21 And then what we do is we're reaching out to existing
providers to determine if they would like to expand
or convert.

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And then we also release the request for
information to welcome new providers.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Are you looking at birth data?

SIMONE HAWKINS: So we consider birth data, but
again, we are a part of this— the larger system. And
so yes, we are looking at birth data. We work with
School Construction Authority. We are also
partnering with other external partners to assess
what the kind of denominator is for children. Um,
but we are— I think the most immediate data points
for us is families interested in attending a program
with us.

And so, uh, looking at enrollment data and
application data is a really helpful point.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Because even in Long Island
City, even though we had injected in my Council
District over 135 new seats, we're still getting
cussed at for students who still cannot get a seat in
their neighborhood. They're so incredibly angry.
And we even get parents who are applying to Long
Island City 3K seats because they can't get a 3K seat
in Greenpoint across the neighborhood.

So what are we doing wrong that we still can't
get this right? And why are parents pointing to me

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1 that there are schools that sit empty in nearby
2 neighborhoods? And why is it taking so long for us
3 to make sure that we're optimizing these seats over
4 the last 5 years? And if we have empty seats that
5 continue to go unused, how much of the funding right
6 now that has come from the state is being used to
7 open new school seats? I'm just trying to understand
8 the math here.

9 SIMONE HAWKINS: Yeah, well, what I appreciate is
10 our, our continued conversations around your
11 particular district, um, Chair. And so what, you
12 know, is where we can make shifts within our existing
13 contracts, we have done that, as you are aware. Um,
14 but there are also contracts.

15 And so what we wanna do is operate in respect to
16 these agreements that we have with independent
17 providers who depend on those funds. And so we are
18 not in the business of just pulling seats away from
19 providers. Those are things that we have to do in
20 concert with them because there are larger fiscal
21 impacts to their businesses.

Um, but where we— there is consent, where there
is partnership, and where it is viable to shift
seats, as you know, we are constantly and

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continually, uh, doing that. Um, but what we have is
a renewed energy in looking at the system
holistically, which I'm very excited about. And so
we hope that now moving forward, um, as we work to
build out 2K and as we enter into whatever the next
iteration of early care and education is, that we
think about this a little differently and build a
more flexible system where providers are not wedded
to whatever they agreed to for 5 years ago, but that
they can shift based on the needs of their community.
And that's what we are looking forward to doing.

CHAIRPERSON WON: So how many 3K seat increases
are you projecting in, in certain neighborhoods, in
each neighborhood?

SIMONE HAWKINS: So I believe we communicated
that the goal is at least 1,000 seats to open for the
fall.

EMMY LISS: And if I could just--

CHAIRPERSON WON: For the whole entire city.

EMMY LISS: Um, if I could just jump in. So we,
under this Administration, really recognize the need
to, um, strengthen and expand the 3K system,
recognizing that in the past, um, while all families
may have received a 3K offer last year, families may

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1 have received offers that presented really
2 challenging commutes. And, uh, I, I know the, the
3 challenges of getting a 3-year-old to school, and
4 that is not something you wanna spend more than 15
5 minutes doing.

6 Um, we, as the Deputy Chancellor said, looked
7 across the city at the zip codes where 3K programs
8 have been very highly enrolled, where we've had more
9 family applicants than seats and where families were
10 placed at, um, programs that were an untenable
11 commute. And so those 56 zip codes are where we're
12 looking at adding at least 1,000 seats to meet the
13 unmet demand from families.

14 We're continuing to, to look at the data to make
15 sure that, um, we are in a position to meet demand
16 this fall. Earlier this year, the request for
17 information that New York City Public Schools put out
18 was the first time in 5 years that new providers
19 could to come into the 3K system. So we're really
20 taking a step forward and bringing folks in, and as
21 the Deputy Chancellor said, also working with our
current providers to expand capacity.

Um, so families will continue to receive updates
if they've already applied to 3K through MySchools as

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1 new capacity is added in their neighborhood. And
2 families who may not have applied because they
3 weren't sure there would be a convenient program for
4 them will still be able to add themselves to
5 waitlists, and our goal is to really grow enrollment,
6 um, by the fall and make sure that every family
7 receives an offer that works for them.

8 CHAIRPERSON WON: Right now, parents are pretty
9 angry in my district because the 3K seats that we
10 added, there is not an equivalent to the pre-K seats
11 for those children who now have to move up, are being
12 told to travel over 30 minutes by foot to get to
13 school.

14 So what is the plan here for pre-K for all of
15 these neighborhoods? And what are we doing to make
16 sure that we're forecasting for those 3K seats we
17 added that there's an equivalent number of pre-K
18 seats at minimum, if not more, to account for
19 families that are gonna move into the neighborhoods?

20 SIMONE HAWKINS: So, uh, based on our data, there
21 is available— there are available pre-K seats in your
district.

What we are finding, um, and, and one of the
things we're trying to be intentional about is,

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1 again, centering parent choice. Sometimes parents
2 choose to go to a different program than they
3 previously were for one of the, the— maybe the 3K.
4 Um, or sometimes they wanna stay at the same site.
5 And so we are working to make sure that there are
6 enough seats in communities, again, based on how kind
7 of the, uh, the choice patterns are, um, for prior
8 years. But based on our data, Council Member, there
9 are enough, uh, pre-K seats in your district.

10 CHAIRPERSON WON: Not in Hunters Point and not in
11 Court Square. We've had this conversation multiple
12 times that it's not just by zip code for the
13 neighborhood because there are transportation,
14 especially public transportation barriers, to get to
15 other parts of Long Island City, especially when you
16 have a child and you're gonna have to reverse commute
17 in deeper into Queens, then go to work. So that's
18 where a lot of the anger is coming from. And
19 another, um, pushback that I get a lot from providers
20 is rent. Because Western Queens rent is so extremely
21 high, and currently the contract does not allow
providers to pay for rent, for them to even have
money to do recruitment for their workforce, they're
saying, how am I gonna pay for rent? Because if I

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1 get rid of my 2s and now I only have infants, then
2 how am I gonna subsidize my rent, which is what those
3 private care was providing for our providers before?

4 SIMONE HAWKINS: So the contracts do allow
5 providers to bill us for rental costs. Uh, what it
6 has not done is provide, uh, cost escalators to maybe
7 reflect increases in rent. So I do wanna make that,
8 that differentiation.

9 Again, we are having conversations, and it's not
10 about adding new seats, but about how we can
11 stabilize the existing sector. And so we appreciate
12 that, and we actually realize that it is an area that
13 we need to address.

14 CHAIRPERSON WON: Earlier, we were heard— we
15 heard in your testimony about CUNY Reconnect. CUNY
16 Reconnect was initiated by, initiated by former
17 Speaker Adrienne Adams and helps working-wage New
18 Yorkers return to college. However, it is only
19 funded at \$5.9 million of as of Fiscal Year '25 and
20 \$7.8 million of Fiscal Year '26, plus still lacks the
21 baseline funding despite the Council's push for \$11.8
million to maintain its and expand its services last
year.

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Um, the Executive Budget left it out. Last Fiscal Year and the upcoming Fiscal Year. How is this Administration planning to fund CUNY Reconnect in this year's budget to make sure that it can support the pool of eligible New Yorkers trying to earn a degree for early childhood education, especially since you refer to it and it has not been funded by the Mayoral Administration in the years past?

DONA ANDERSON: So, just a point of clarification. Um, so, there are two parts of CUNY Reconnect. So, there's the part of CUNY Reconnect that has been supported by the City Council in New York City, um, that, uh, was launched, uh, in the wake of the epidemic. The CUNY Reconnect that was referred to in the testimony is a second part of the project that is coming from state funding, and that is free community college for adults aged 25 to 55 in 6 high-need, high, um, high-need industries. Education is one of those industries. So the, the, that part is not funded by the City Council dollars.

CHAIRPERSON WON: So I'm asking you, what is the Mayoral Administration and what is your— what is the city going to fund? That, that was my question.

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EMMY LISS: Um, so as, as we go through the budget process, we'll be looking at this and making sure we have the, the resources we need to support the early childhood, um, educator workforce and its growth.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay, so what I'm also trying to understand is the discrepancy between the Department of Education public school teachers and the EC CBO teachers, and it's only about \$200 to \$300 roughly as an estimate since UFT received, uh, 3, 3 or 3.25, and then 3.5 step increase. And DC 37 only got 3% and 3.25% increase.

As of 2021, CBO teachers and UFT teachers have had about the same salary. We've heard from— we've heard about the city being slow to pay certain things like back pay for CBO teachers, and we hear this from our providers all the time, but their salaries are basically the same.

So can you help me understand the gap, if any, if you're, um, for pay parity for our teachers in private providers as well as public school teachers, because the UFT contracts has more differentials? And I know that, um, negotiation is coming up, but also, can you help me understand the status of the

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1 back pay that a lot of our providers here cannot pay
2 their teachers unless they take out a loan to pay
3 them because the city has not paid them at all?

4 EMMY LISS: Um, so I'll start with the, the
5 broader point around pay parity to acknowledge that
6 there are gaps between our CBO teachers and public
7 school teachers. Um, though great progress was made
8 in, um, collective bargaining agreements,
9 particularly in 2019 with the Council's support to
10 bring starting wages to parity. Um, we know that
11 there are differences that really widen over time
12 based on, um, teacher experience and longevity. Um,
13 and there are gaps when we look at, um, the hours
14 and, and days of year that, that folks work in
15 different settings.

16 So as we continue to expand the system, um, we
17 know this is something we have to look at closely and
18 work with our partners in labor, um, work with the
19 Council and others to address, um, discrepancies in
20 pay.

21 Um, I'll turn it to Deputy Chancellor on your
question about back pay.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Yes. And so, um, as, uh,
referring to those respective— specifically the DC 37

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1 collective bargaining agreements, they were ratified
2 at different points. And so we've been working
3 really closely with DC 37, Day Care Council, and the
4 actual providers to get information and then
5 disperse, uh, the relevant econ items. Most of those
6 economic items, including retro wage increases, have
7 been paid, including ratification bonuses. So I
8 wanna also clarify that folks working at the programs
9 are not our employees. We give the money to the
10 actual organization, and then they in turn provide
11 the payment to their staff. And so those payments
12 have been disbursed for the most part. Where there,
13 there are, um, pending payments, it's because we're
14 working to verify information with the relevant
15 provider organization.

14 CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay, thank you for the
15 clarification. We'll, we'll continue to follow up
16 for CBOs that are still waiting to pay their
17 employees. And overall, if the median wage for
18 teachers of all kinds, especially early childhood
19 education, is \$69,000, which is less than the median
20 salary in New York City, what is the plan for this
21 upcoming fiscal year if there is such a big push to
have universal child care to make sure that it's

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1 included in next year's budget for Fiscal Year '27,
2 which is going to be negotiated with the next 7 weeks
3 or so, 7, 8 weeks? What is the plan here from the
4 Mayoral Admin to make sure that we are paying
5 teachers a living wage and that there— that is going
6 to be how we recruit more teachers? Because the
7 numbers that you shared before is way below what I
8 imagine what your targets are for recruitment for
9 those who are currently in the pipeline for our
certificates and our higher education.

10 So is this part of your plan? If— because that
11 is going to be the number one incentive driver on why
12 somebody chooses to become a teacher in the first
place.

13 EMMY LISS: Um, this Administration is committed
14 to addressing, um, the gaps in educator pay and
15 disparities across settings. We also recognize that
16 this is going to be a complex and involved process
17 that will require, um, partners in labor, require,
18 um, participation from our provider community, um,
19 will, will require us. And, and we look forward to
20 working closely with you all, um, as we, we go
21 through that.

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Um, so we are, we are looking at this now and,
and, um, really invite the further discussion I know
we'll have with you as we, as we look at, um, what
the— where the biggest gaps are, how those, um, line
up for folks in different roles with different
credentials, and, and how we can begin to address
this together.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Are there other benefits that
are being considered for our early childhood
educators, whether they work in public schools or if
they work in a CBO, and also for the CBOs themselves?
Are there discrepancies in the benefits that they
receive? Because I hear mixed things from my
providers and teachers on what benefits they are, ah,
um, allotted if they don't work as part of the
Department of Education system.

EMMY LISS: So there are certainly discrepancies
in benefits, and as we look at wages, that's
something we have to look at as well. Um, across
it's the sort of diverse landscape of child care
providers. Um, we have businesses of all different
shapes and sizes. Some of, um, some of them have
unionized staff, some of them do not. Um, and so,
uh, benefits do differ, um, across settings just as

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they do across all of the city's small businesses.

Um, and there are differences, um, between the DC 37
contract for center-based child care providers and
the UFT contract for early childhood teachers.

So as we talk about wages, we have to look, um,
at not just wages but also benefits and where these
disparities come up and, um, what impact that's
having.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Can you give us some examples
of what benefits have disparities?

EMMY LISS: Um, when we look at health, uh,
health benefits, that varies certainly across
different providers. Again, because we have child
care providers of all different sizes and scales
subject to different, um, city, state, federal
requirements for what they have to provide. Um,
there are disparities in folks' access to retirement
benefits and, and other, um, similar forms of, you
know, non-wage compensation.

CHAIRPERSON WON: I guess we all gotta unionize.
Okay, I'm gonna pass it back to the Chair. I'll come
back for questions in the second round.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank you,
Chair. Um, we're gonna start with member questions,

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1 and we'll, we'll come back because I think as Chairs
2 we also have additional questions. First up is
3 Council Member Brewer, followed by Council Member
4 Wong for questions, and then— yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I
6 guess my question following up on that, it's just the
7 numbers. Like, um, we know how many DOE early
8 childhood, but just in terms of the other sector that
9 is concerned— as you're talking, people behind you
10 are shaking their heads like, you know, we know that
11 this is an issue. Do you have some sense of what
12 that number is of those that aren't up to— it's not
13 the word up to par, but don't have the advantages
14 —um, that the DOE does? Just, I mean, just general
15 numbers.

16 EMMY LISS: Yeah, across the, across the city, we
17 estimate between 35,000 and 40,000 people work, um,
18 in, uh -

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The center-based or
20 whatever, right? The nonprofit or whatever.

21 EMMY LISS: Yeah. And that's just based on, um,
census data. Um, the Comptroller's office has done
some analysis of it. Um, and independent
organizations have looked at it as well. There is no

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1 single authoritative number of every person in the
2 city who works in child care because that, um, again,
3 folks are-- many folks are self-employed, particularly
4 home-based child care providers, um, and so, you
5 know, they show up one way in the data. Um, folks
6 identify as caregivers, child care workers,
7 educators, um, preschool teachers, and so it--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I just worry because
9 those folks obviously want to get to the DOE or to a
10 different paying job, so you could lose a lot of
11 them. That's why I was-- they're all shaking their
12 heads behind.

13 EMMY LISS: Yes, it's, it, it's a, it's a large,
14 diverse, and very fragmented workforce, uh, as the
15 child care sector is. And so we have to be thinking
16 about how we support folks across the entire sector.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. In, ah, just
18 technology. So do you train just general, I'm
19 talking not just DOE so much, but other caregivers,
20 because in the past, this is, I've been doing this
21 for about, you know, 30, 40 years. In the past, the
folks, er, um, home-based particularly never had
either the hardware or the software or anything. To

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1 be able to communicate with technology. It's all
2 changed.

3 So how do you train for technology in child care?
4 People have to communicate with the city, they have
5 to communicate with their parents, they have to
6 communicate, blah, blah, blah. How do you— how does
7 this fit into the discussion and funding?

8 EMMY LISS: Sure, so I'll let my colleagues at
9 CUNY jump in with how this fits into their training
10 programs, but just to acknowledge that as we think
11 about what support do, um, child care providers and
12 educators of all types need across city, and
13 especially our home-based providers who are going to
14 be critical as we expand 2K and are just an important
15 part of our early childhood ecosystem.

16 We are looking at what are all of the different
17 supports, whether it's business support or other
18 sorts of administrative support. These are folks who
19 got into child care because they want to educate and
20 care for children, not because they want to fill out
21 detailed data reports. But, um, such, such is the,
such is the life. And so we are looking at all of
the support supports that folks may need.

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1 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Even just having internet
2 in the home is enough right there. Fast internet is
3 not easy. Alright, so how are we doing? How- is
4 that something that the city picks up cost-wise, or,
5 you know?

6 EMMY LISS: Um, well, I think again, as we talk
7 about the whole sort of ecosystem, there are our sort
8 of independent child care providers, um, who are not
9 operating necessarily with city contract, but who we
10 want to make sure as we expand the system we're
11 supporting. And then there are folks who contract
12 with the city, um, I'll let the Deputy Chancellor
13 speak to -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mean, just an example,
15 I had a lousy internet in my house in the kitchen. I
16 couldn't get a goddamn, uh, cell phone to work. And
17 then I paid \$1,000 for a new internet in my house.
18 That's a lot of money.

19 EMMY LISS: Yes. And I think-

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So I'm just saying that's
21 what it cost. Otherwise I couldn't get any
connection.

EMMY LISS: This is also where, you know, as we
think about the work of expanding access to child

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1 care, it takes truly all of city government. For
2 example, we know that in our NYCHA developments and
3 in our HPD-funded affordable housing developments.
4 We have many, many—

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The walls are too thick.
6 I'm aware of the walls.

7 EMMY LISS: Yeah, we've got home-based providers
8 in, in many of these settings. And so efforts that
9 NYCHA is undertaking to expand broadband access in
10 their properties, um, HPD's work to bring broadband
11 to affordable housing, that benefits home-based child
12 care providers who are operating in those settings.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm aware of Spectrum's
14 deal. That's what it's called, but it's also called
15 Spectrum, both of them.

16 Um, finally, just after school generally, can you
17 help me with where it is or isn't and how is that
18 being funded? In other words, pre-K— where are we
19 with the after-school issues just generally? I mean,
20 some do, some don't, etc.

21 EMMY LISS: Sure. So, um, after-school is, is
primarily under the, you know, the jurisdiction of,
um, DYCD.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I understand that, but
you all work together.

EMMY LISS: We all work together. Um, and I
think that as, as we think about what does truly
universal child care mean, we have to be looking at,
you know, jobs don't stop at 2:30. We're all still
here. Um, parents have to have a safe place for
their kids to go. It's also, you know, as we're
expanding access for our youngest children, we
announced last week that, um, the default model for
2K will be a full working day, a full year, because
we recognize that that's what families need.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And that's included in
the Hochul money.

EMMY LISS: Yes, it is.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Is that it?

COUNCIL MEMBER: That's it.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thanks, Council Member.
Always a pleasure. Okay, um, Council Member Wong
does not have any questions, so I just want to follow
up, and I know the Chairs, um, have some follow-up
questions as well. I just want to make sure that
what I was asking regarding the projected recruitment

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rates is something that we'll have on the record,
that we'll have a sense of, like, what we need.

So we— I highlighted this report, says 5,000 or
so new teachers a year. Does that seem accurate?
Does that seem like enough?

EMMY LISS: I'm gonna admit that—

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Don't overcomplicate it.

EMMY LISS: No, I was gonna say, I know if, if
you're reporting the cited report, if you're citing
the report, I think you are, in a past life I wrote
it. So I do stand by the analysis. Um, I, I would
also say that these first 2,000 2K seats we're
launching this fall will really give us an
opportunity to understand what it looks like to scale
the program, um, as we see, uh, the dynamics, um, for
our individual providers, how many of them do need to
hire new teachers, where we're scaling versus
converting classrooms. And as we then look ahead to
the additional 10,000 seats we'll be launching in the
fall of 2027, we'll be able to apply lessons from
this first year.

So I think in the coming months we'll have much
better insight into this, and we would be happy to

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1 share that with the, the Subcommittee and discuss how
2 we're projecting for year 2 and beyond.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, great. That's
4 excellent. That's, that's helpful. And then of the
5 2,000 seats for 2K, I guess as, as you're— I know
6 you're in the process of selecting the providers and
7 all that. What, what are the conversations that
8 you're having with these providers about, like, I
9 don't know, I think people see the announcements and
10 it's all really great. I think the announcement
11 about extended day is also amazing. Um, and so
12 parents are interested, right? And parents are
13 already hitting up Council Members even if they're
14 not in one of the selected areas. So how are you
15 talking to providers about, you know, if they were—
16 if any of them were under-enrolled, like how they're
17 doing? I guess it just— I guess how are we like
18 bracing ourselves, um, for this? There's obviously
19 keen interest.

20 Um, and how are you having those conversations
21 with providers? You, you know, like how are you
managing expectations?

SIMONE HAWKINS: Yes. Um, I got excited because
I think the approach is, is relatively thoughtful.

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Um, so we did issue a survey so for one, just assess interest.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: See, another survey.

SIMONE HAWKINS: We— lots, lots of surveys. We did one for, um, uh, center-based programs and one for family child care networks to discern if they wanted to modify their slot configuration. Those that replied and said, yes, we absolutely wanna, you know, leverage this opportunity.

We actually— my team is calling every single one of them to have a one-on-one conversation to really understand the impact, saying, do you wanna just add a net new classroom? Do you wanna convert an underutilized classroom?

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Are you asking to convert a classroom we know is highly popular? Um, and then having those conversations and then following up in writing to say, this is what we decided, this is what the funding looks like. We want you to make a sound business decision. Um, and then having them round back. And then once we finalize who is ready to participate, we're going to support them with very clear coaching and readiness trainings. And then the

1 kind of the second pathway of the request for
2 information where we will welcome new networks and
3 new center-based providers, it will run a similar
4 process where we, you know, after we go through
5 their, um, application, evaluate it, and decide if
6 they were selected, then we will have conversations
7 to discuss kind of the scale of seats. Um, and then,
8 then their interest. But we are really trying to
9 have a one-on-one tailored approach.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, I agree, I agree
10 with that. And what, what is the— let's say in the
11 scenarios where maybe, yeah, they do need to recruit
12 another teacher or teaching assistant, and I know
13 it's— it's different, the hiring process, but they
14 will be contracted with the DOE, correct? And what
15 is that average time that it takes for the vetting to
16 get cleared, and do you all anticipate having the
17 capacity in conversation with the city, with DOHMH,
18 as well, to get that done in time for the September
19 launch?

18 EMMY LISS: Um, so the Department of Health has
19 been looking closely at this as we plan for
20 expansion, and, um, uh, I know, I know there's
21

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another hearing on this very topic next week, and
we'll be back -

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: On Wednesday.

EMMY LISS: Yes. Um, and, um, we, we do feel,
um, we are on track to make sure staff are cleared in
time for the first day of school because -

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: What's the average wait
time now?

EMMY LISS: Um, I can get back to you with that.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Is it like- it's
months though, let's be honest.

EMMY LISS: It's not, it's not months. It's,
it's really well within-

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I think it's months Emmy.

EMMY LISS: On, on average it is not, but I know
that and I hear folks, um, folks shouting their
exceptions to that.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: They're gonna come after
us, so that's why we have to-

EMMY LISS: We uh, understood. We will get back
to you with, um, with the average and what that
spread looks like right now.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, okay. Um, and
then- oh, okay, I'm so sorry. Um, Council Member

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1 Felder, you have questions? Okay, 5 minutes,
2 brother. Yeah, go for it. No, no, that's not how it
3 works. Please, please start his time right now.
4 Let's go.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Okay, thank you very
6 much. That doesn't count. Uh, I, no, I'm just
7 curious, the the, the, the information that's been
8 given, you know, I'm delighted that CUNY is here,
9 especially since my mentor who's sitting in the back
10 from my first stint in the City Council, who I don't
11 wanna embarrass by name, but you know who it is, uh,
12 you know, and, and I myself, uh, you know, got my MBA
13 at Baruch and I was- I went wonderful experience.

14 But I'm, I'm wondering about the numbers in
15 general. We've been, you know, you've been talking
16 about it and giving us a lot of information. I
17 understand that the city budget and the state budget
18 is clearly, uh, has a lot to do with, uh, CUNY more
19 so than other, you know, universities, private
20 universities and others. But do you have numbers or
21 information that, that, uh, you know, the general
information other than the numbers that you're giving
me, you know, giving me and my colleagues at CUNY?
And I don't, uh, I'm, I'm not asking for it now

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1 instead of you telling me that you'll get back to to
2 me with it, if you don't mind, uh, sharing it with
3 me, and if my colleagues want it as well.

4 I think, you know, all, all the variety of
5 questions that have been posed that, uh, make sense,
6 if that would be, you know, I think that would be
7 helpful. So, so that, that was a statement, not a
8 question. The, then the, er, earlier, the, somebody
9 brought up the possibility of giving, you know, uh,
10 you know, either free college or, ah, ah, similar
11 things like that. The, the, the, that type of
12 program sounds wonderful. Would there, if, I don't
13 know if it exists or not, but obviously that would
14 come along with some sort of agreement that they
15 commit to, uh, spending X number of years doing it,
16 doing whatever it is that you expect them to do.

15 That's also a statement, unless you- so I'm
16 assuming you agree, unless you- somebody at that
17 table- just remember, I'm the only one left at this
18 table. Yeah, uh, unless somebody there disagrees,
19 I'm assuming that, that, that, that, that that's the
20 way it works, that you give them a free- which is
21 good- and then, uh, you know, they have to agree to

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1 remain in the, you know, in that field for X number
2 of years. Statement.

3 DONA ANDERSON: Just one, one clarification on
4 that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Please.

6 DONA ANDERSON: um, the New York City- or the,
7 the, uh, Excelsior Scholarship, which is free
8 Community- free 4-year tuition for in-state folks.
9 Um, that does have a residency requirement upon
10 completion. We'll have to get back to you about CUNY
11 Reconnect, whether or not there's a residency or a
12 requirement to stay in the state or stay in the
13 profession.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I don't- I'm not talking
15 about staying in the state. I'm, uh, I mean, they
16 can live on the moon. I don't care. What I'm
17 talking about is in the profession that you're,
18 you're, you know, trying to fill. That's-

19 DONA ANDERSON: We'll get back to you on the,
20 that requirement for reconnect.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Uh, thank you. Uh, uh,
and then, uh, the other, the, the, the, uh, had- I,
I'm not sure how things work. Thank God, I, you
know, uh, our kids are out of the house and they have

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1 to deal with their own kids at this, at this point,
2 even though, uh, you know, well, um, I s- we
3 certainly, uh, want them to have an easier time. But
4 the, the- is there a split? So I'm just saying I'm
5 not that f- well-versed as my colleagues, some of my
6 colleagues. And you could tell by the color of my
beard.

7 Uh, uh, hm, the- in terms of the, the day itself,
8 I-I-I, is there such a thing as, like, split shift
9 that there are assistants, uh, that are the- there
10 are assistants that help, you know, either assistants
11 or teachers that's- that are able to be there a
certain amount of time and not the entire day?

12 EMMY LISS: Um, so different child care programs
13 approach their staffing across the day differently.
14 Um, there are certain requirements under the health
15 code depending on the setting, the age of the
16 children in terms of the qualifications of who needs
17 to be in the room at all times. Um, but programs,
18 particularly those that are running a 10-hour day,
19 will have multiple staff people and, and may arrange
the schedules in a variety of ways.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Uh, I just want you to
21 know that they've been running the clock faster for

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me. It's not only here. It's all over the place.

I, I, ah, can I, uh, ask the three Chairs for one
more statement that'll take 30 seconds?

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, I suppose.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you, thank you.

Uh, I, I also would like to just know about the
special ed, uh, I, I, I— this, it's a much longer
conversation, but I'm sure many of you are aware that
there's been, you know, a lot of issues relating to
encouraging private, you know, the, the payments and
other things like that. And it's not something that
just started yesterday, and it's not something that
I, I'm, uh, this is not about blame. It's very
complicated. I would just ask that, uh, I had
volunteered, uh, during the Bloomberg Administration,
during the de Blasio Administration, and on to
volunteer to help, uh, and no one has taken me up on
it, probably for a good reason. But I, I would love—
I would very much like to be involved in trying to
resolve this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Council
Member. I'll pass it to Chair Joseph for additional
questions.

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1 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair. Um, I had
2 a quick question. Earlier you mentioned the 30
3 schools, the high schools you have in partnership.
4 Can you send the Council a list, and can you also
5 tell us which one is focused on education?

6 EMMY LISS: We can absolutely follow up with
7 that.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. So how many, um,
9 new early childhood educators- I know my colleague
10 asked for that- would need to be recruited each to
11 meet the needs of 2K, 3K, and pre-K services? And
12 how did you arrive at that number?

13 EMMY LISS: So I think as we, um, look to launch
14 2K this fall and then expand beyond that, um, it's
15 something we're gonna be studying closely. This is
16 the first time the city is launching a program for
17 2-year-olds at this scale. And so, um, we coming in
18 don't, um, don't have that estimate because we wanna
19 continue in our individual engagement with providers
20 understand what their staffing needs are and then use
21 that to project for future years.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And, and how many seats are
we launching? 2,000, I believe.

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1 EMMY LISS: It's 2,000 this fall and then an
2 additional 10,000 in the fall of '27. So we're
3 serving a total of 12,000 kids in fall.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And how many students you
5 have, D.C. Hawkins, in your early learn division now,
6 which caters to 0 to 2, am I right?

7 SIMONE HAWKINS: So we, we no longer call it, uh,
8 early learn Chair, but yes, we do as part of our
9 infant/toddler portfolio, which is part of the birth
10 to 5, and then some additional— there's about, I
11 believe, 10,000 seats. But I can confirm utilization
12 for you in one second.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So this is to add on to what
14 already exists? Okay, thank you. What is the
15 outreach on the data management program? Uh, what is
16 the data management, and how are you going to look at
17 your data to know where to put seats, and how are you
18 capturing that data? And how are you capturing that
19 data? What, what mechanism are you using to capture
20 that data?

21 EMMY LISS: In terms of where to place 2K seats?
Um, so as, as Deputy Chancellor Hawkins said, you
know, we've, we've looked at the existing data we
have, which is, um, past enrollment patterns and

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1 application patterns in our early childhood programs
2 like 3K and Pre-K. Um, as we continue to think about
3 what this will look like to serve younger children.
4 We are also looking at sort of overall licensed child
5 care capacity in different communities. We will be
6 working across our agency partners to look at factors
7 like birth data, um, and try to better understand
8 what the patterns are.

9 Um, we also don't— no one in government frankly
10 really knows how many families might wanna
11 participate in this program. That's, that's not
12 something we've ever comprehensively looked at
13 before. We actually have a survey that's live right
14 now that we launched in partnership with Robinhood
15 and New America. That'll be the first of its kind
16 and scale survey of families with children under 5 to
17 understand their current child care usage and what
18 their true needs and preferences would be. And
19 that's gonna give us really detailed information for
20 planning purposes about what uptake might look like.
21 And then that'll inform as well how we think about,
um, the number of seats we need in different
communities.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And where's that date—
where's that survey gonna live? How can we get our
hands on that survey, and how is it going to be sent
out to communities? Is this just gonna live in folks
who have access to technology, as Council Member
Brewer, um, brought it about? Are you gonna be in
housing? Are you gonna be in churches, hair salons,
where we know women and families usually frequent, to
capture that data?

EMMY LISS: So the survey is actually live right
now, um, postcards were sent to thousands of
families' homes, um, and they could, based on that
postcard, um—

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How did you identify those
families you sent the postcards to?

EMMY LISS: Um, it was working with research
partners, so we can get back to you on the specific
methodology.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Because I didn't get it. I
didn't get it. I didn't get a postcard, and I have a
child, though he's not early childhood, but I do have
a child. I didn't, I didn't get a postcard.

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EMMY LISS: The postcards were targeted to families with children under 5 based on American Community Survey data and other resources.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You didn't— exactly. That, that's what I'm talking about. He went to get his hair washed and he did not get a survey.

EMMY LISS: So the— and the survey, I should say, is not necessarily meant to go to every single parent in the city. Um, we're working with, uh, research partners who are building a representative sample of New York City parents. So our goal is, is to make sure that we have a diverse sample, that we have folks in, um, for example, in NYCHA developments, we had, um, outreach that went out through NYCHA's tenant listservs, um, NYCHA's new parents listservs, um, and other contact lists to make sure we're building a representative sample. Um, so that survey is live now.

Once, um, it closes, our research partners are gonna do the analysis. The city will not have access to the raw data because we wanna protect the confidentiality of folks who responded to it, but we will have access to all of the analysis. We would be happy to share that with you once we have it.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You know, we went down this road before. That's why I'm asking all those questions. Um, the previous admins, we spent \$750,000 to tell me where seats were. Until today, it's been 4 years. I have no data on where those seats are in order to better place those seats for families to find them.

EMMY LISS: Understood. Yeah, this— and this is, um, this is a different kind of process. Again, we're just trying to understand for really the first time ever. If you look across different demographics, different household structures, different economics, what kind of child care are families using today? Um, are they informal care, or do they have their kids with a relative? Um, what drew them to that kind of care model? How does that differ for their 1-year-old versus their 3-year-old? And then if they had their true preference, if cost were no object, what would be their preference? Um, because what we really wanna understand is, again, as we plan for the scale-up of this universal system, how many parents of 2-year-olds want and need full-time care? How many folks want and need care that's offered, um, in the evenings or on weekends?

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1 That's something we hear a lot, but we haven't been
2 able to quantify it before. Um, so this is not the
3 end-all be-all. Um, we then have to match that up
4 with analysis of where are— where are licensed child
5 care providers in the city in the city, who among
6 them is already working with the city, who is
7 interested in working with the city, where do we need
8 to help incentivize the creation of new child care
9 capacity. We know we have child care deserts, and
10 that's particularly true in our lower-income
11 communities and, um, for infants and toddlers where
12 we don't have enough licensed care.

13 Um, so we wanna, again, look at all of this data
14 together, and then our office is thinking about how
15 can we support aspiring child care providers in
16 communities that don't have enough care to— if
17 they're currently an informal care provider, become a
18 licensed care provider. If they're a small child
19 care provider looking to expand, how can we, um,
20 incentivize the creation of more physical space for
21 care and help matchmake between providers and space?
So this is, you know, within the scope of the Office
of Child Care. We're really thinking about this full
picture. How do we make sure we have enough care in

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1 the city? How do we make sure that all of the city's
2 child care programs, whether or not they partner with
3 the city, have what they need, uh, to maintain a
4 robust workforce?

5 Um, how are we building the systems and
6 infrastructure so that businesses can sustain and
7 scale? Um, so really thinking about all of this, all
8 the data points and inputs from the full sector.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What about providers who had
10 to close a particular program in their building
11 because it no longer exists in the city's ecosystem?
12 Are you looking at those providers to reopen some of
13 those spaces up?

14 EMMY LISS: As we look at where in the city we
15 need more care, we want to talk with, with all
16 different folks. Folks who've been in the sector and
17 left because it was, you know, it was too
18 challenging, the costs weren't working anymore.
19 Folks again who have a small home-based program and
20 are interested in growing that. So we want to really
21 work with and connect with and hear from all
different kinds of folks in the space.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, what ongoing costs do
licensed early childhood education providers have to

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1 cover to keep their license? Are there resources
2 from the be a state to help cover those costs? Um,
3 are you referring to for individual educators?

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yep and providers.

5 EMMY LISS: Um, okay. So both on the business
6 cost side and- mhm. So I will say on the business
7 side, we're currently looking at and working with our
8 partners, um, in, uh, who work with the Small
9 Business Services Administration to understand all of
10 the different, um, you know, fees and applications
11 and processes that providers as small businesses have
12 to go through. So we'd be happy to come back and
share some of those findings with you, but that's
something we're looking at closely.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, we would love that. And
14 early childhood educators' work is predominantly made
15 up of women, yet studies show that young children
16 benefit academically, socially, and emotionally when
17 exposed educators to different genders, background,
18 and life experiences. Does the Institute support any
19 target mentorship scholarship programs that make
20 early childhood a visible and support a pathway for
21 men as well? I know you have the NYC MenTeach

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1 program, but I noticed it's only 600 men, and where
2 are they placed? I know— tell me about that.

3 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Sure, so NYC MenTeach is
4 administered across 16 campuses. So we have all the
5 CUNY colleges that offer education programs offer NYC
6 MenTeach, um, and it's meant to, um, support students
7 in the academic programs they're in. So the students
8 choose, but given the expansion in this sector, it
9 will be new work to look at to really engage them on
10 early childhood. But we do know now that we already
11 have, um, students enrolled in early childhood
12 programs who are in NYC Menteech.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And you're looking to expand
14 from the 600 because on, on your, on your testimony
15 you said about 600 men are in the program right now?

16 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: About 600 men a year.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Men a year?

18 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Mhm.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are you looking to expand?

20 ASHLEIGH THOMPSON: Our budget is flat.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oop. Um—

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Staring at me.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I know. She said budget is
flat, so we need you to add—

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COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: You know why they're not training men?

SIMONE HAWKINS: But if I may, Chair, some of the work that my team is doing on the workforce development side is also about being being intentional about where we go and how we communicate and target our messaging. So there's a lot of stuff we're already doing, right? In addition to NYC MenTeach, which is a phenomenal program. Yes, we are out in community, and there is a way that we can encourage male participation in the workforce, workforce.

One of the things I said the other day when I was at a, um, a fatherhood symposium is that there's this misunderstanding that men can't be nurturing nurturers.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: right?

SIMONE HAWKINS: And that is untrue. And I think we have to mythbust that and remind folks. I'm looking at many male educators.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The men are looking at you now.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Yes. Um, and, and, and, ah, you know, I was making my way over to you. Um, but, uh,

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1 but in a way to do that is by exposing definitely
2 our, our students early on while they are considering
3 potential professional pathways. So going into high
4 schools and letting them know that this is an option
5 for them too.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, that's exactly what I
7 was referencing in the high school programs. How are
8 we doing that to recruit young men at that age as
9 well.

10 DONA ANDERSON: Right. And one of the things
11 that we're also doing is making sure that we, um,
12 have- trying to have a more balanced staff. So
13 having coaches and career advisors who are also men,
14 you know, it's predominantly female. I work with
15 mostly women, but we're really making a targeted
16 effort to bring men on staff as well to support that
17 kind of effort.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I have one
19 question for the Talent Office. Um, does New York
20 City Talent offers any program that support
21 recruitment into early childhood education field?

DOUG LIPARI: Yeah, so -

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Tell me about it. I don't want you to feel like you're sitting there, you know, I mean, ask you no questions. We got you.

DOUG LIPARI: No, thank you. I appreciate the question, Chair. And again, just want to underscore that child care is a workforce development issue, right? We're talking a lot about the challenges of the child care workforce. But for any type of job, it is hard to keep a job if you don't have child care, right? And so we're really excited about this whole-of-government approach that is falling off the table. And many people behind, uh, us and across the city who are partnering with this work and the leadership of, of the Mayor and Executive Director Liss for this work.

Um, specifically what our office is doing, we are funding right now two apprenticeship programs, one is at PDI and one is at the Kennedy Children's Center, which is this nonprofit, uh, ah, childhood education center that specifies, um, teaching individuals with, er, young children with developmental disabilities too. So, the special education, uh, piece is, um, particularly important there.

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1 Apprenticeship is a great model. It's sort of
2 the gold standard, right? You're— it is more
3 accessible and available to, like, low-income New
4 Yorkers because it is paid. Uh, it is on-the-job
5 learning. It is the mentorship that we've talked
6 about today that is incredibly important for keeping
7 people in the job. And apprenticeships are good for
8 the employers as well, right? And so at, uh, KCC,
9 it's a, it's a really interesting model where they
10 are hiring and training and have apprentices for
11 their own staff so that people can grow, uh, into
12 different types of roles and stay in the profession
13 because we know that, um, it's not just about getting
14 people in the door. It's about getting people in the
15 door who want to be doing this incredibly important
16 and incredibly hard work. And so our apprenticeship
17 programs, they're small in scale, but we're— and we
18 just wrapped up the first year of a 2-year program,
19 but they're pilots. And so we're really excited
20 about the lessons learned, bringing that back to the
21 folks at this table and the broader team around the
city working towards this to see how we can make sure
that apprenticeship becomes a model that is helping

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1 solve a lot of the challenges that we've discussed
2 today.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is there someone dedicated
4 on your team just for, um, early childhood education?

5 DOUG LIPARI: So we have an Apprenticeship
6 Accelerator team. It's a team of 3, and, uh, these—
7 we have 2 contracts for, uh, these in the
8 apprenticeship contracts, but we have 8 contracts
9 total that are across a variety of different spaces.
10 Part of our intent around doing this, which contracts
11 that went out last year, is to try to increase
12 apprentices in different types of industries.

13 So, we have that in tech, um, health care, ah,
14 and early child care. Um, CUNY, how much are you
15 doing for marketing to let the general public know
16 that CUNY offers an array of educational programs?

17 DONA ANDERSON: So, we have a comprehensive
18 communications team, both on the CUNY side, but
19 specifically at the institute that really focuses on
20 this work. Um, so, we are on the socials. We send
21 out newsletters. We do career fairs, um, both on,
at, at campuses and in communities. Um, we, uh, um,
that's probably the, the, the main source of things.
I will say even some with something like the

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1 apprenticeships, you know, we've really been able to
2 utilize the network of folks that we just have on our
3 mailing list and word of mouth through all of our
4 different programs, through Aspire, through Quality
5 Stars New York, and the career development centers,
6 which I think has illustrated why we had over 400
7 applicants for 30 slots with this, um, apprenticeship
8 that we're offering now.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uh, what is the status of
10 the Institute for Early Childhood Work Readiness
11 program? Do NYC residents participate, and what's
12 the— what's normally just a range of—

13 DONA ANDERSON: Yeah, so, so that project was a
14 precursor to our apprenticeship project. So that
15 really helped us learn a lot of lessons that help
16 when we, uh, applied for funding from NYC Talent.
17 Um, so that is wrapping up. Um, and we were able to
18 support a number of mostly assistant teachers, um,
19 young, young people up to the age of 24 to, um, get
20 their CDAs and become assistant teachers, and a
21 couple of folks also to become lead teachers. But
that's, as I said, that's wrapping up, um, this June.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. How many, how
many students participate in that program?

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DONA ANDERSON: I have to get back to you with
that.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, wonderful. Um, does
the Division of Early Childhood Education at DOE work
with the Institute? Is there a partnership here?
Because I want to hear partnership.

DONA ANDERSON; There is. Yes, we are very
thrilled to be working closely with Simone and her-
with the Deputy Chancellor and her, um, colleagues
and team. So they are- we have worked with them to
provide the credit-bearing CDA in both English and
Spanish for family child care folks. We previously
worked, um, and provided support for Head Start
parents also to get their CDAs. I will give credit
where credit is due. The reason that CUNY SPS has a
Spanish language CDA program is because of that work.
Because when we started doing that work with them, we
had a lot of Spanish speakers and we couldn't serve
them appropriately. And so that pushed CUNY to
create that program and now we have it up and
running.

Um, they also support us, um, to help folks to
complete their CDA. So we have a lot of folks who
have the CDA coursework, but they haven't gone

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1 through the whole process to actually earn the
2 credential. So we provide those supports for them
3 also to earn teacher certification, just walking them
4 through that teacher certification process, exam
5 preps, et cetera, as you mentioned earlier. Um, and
6 then, um, and then the transcripts. Exactly. So one
7 of the barriers that we have identified, especially
8 recently, is that there— a lot of folks are coming in
9 with foreign transcripts or diplomas, uh, degrees
10 that need to be not only translated but also
11 evaluated, utilizing very specific vendors in order
12 to be able to go on to higher education or even for
13 employment.

14 So working with DECE, we've been able to support
15 folks to be able to, um, cover those fees, because
16 that can be \$500, \$600, which can really be a barrier
17 to someone deciding to move in a direction, even if
18 they want to. So we can cover that cost, and they
19 can make that move forward.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So is that a commitment?
21 Uh, are we also looking— I know back in 2009, I was—
as a young teacher, um, I know we did a lot of
international recruitment. Is that something that if

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1 we— if we fall short, which I know we won't, that— is
2 that a possibility that we're looking at?

3 DONA ANDERSON: We're not currently looking at
4 it, but—

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, there was a— there was
6 a huge influx of international teachers that came in
7 2009.

8 DONA ANDERSON: Mhm. Not anymore. Only K to 12?

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, yeah. Um, earlier
10 when we talked about the early childhood
11 apprenticeship, what additional support would you
12 need to expand that program to have more individual—
13 this is the money part.

14 DONA ANDERSON: Our ask is \$3 million over 3
15 years to support 200 additional apprentices.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, you know, you can't be
17 shy when you come to the Council when it comes to
18 money. I'll pass it along to Council Member Won.
19 Chair Won,

20 CHAIRPERSON WON: Thank you so much, Chair, um,
21 Joseph. You know, she beat me to it. I was gonna
have a conversation with Doug, our dear friend who
has been patiently waiting. So thank you so much for
being here. Does New York City Talent offer any

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1 programs to support the recruitment? Sorry if you
2 already said this.

3 DOUG LIPARI: Yeah, so our apprenticeship, uh,
4 programs, there are two, uh, we have, uh, one at PDI
5 and one at Kennedy Children's Center. And so those
6 programs are funding to support apprentices. They're
7 small in scale, but, um, we're excited about that
8 model to make sure that we can, uh, bring those
9 learnings back to the broader group here.

10 CHAIRPERSON WON: Do you have any private funds
11 dedicated towards early childhood education workforce
12 development that could be, uh, referred to for our
13 small businesses for CBOs?

14 DOUG LIPARI: Right now, the, our contracts are
15 actually federally funded, um, so there's no private
16 funding involved in this.

17 CHAIRPERSON WON: Got it. And I have a few other
18 questions. Can you give me some clarification about
19 how the positions like assistant teachers and whether
20 the admin is committed to pay parity for equivalent
21 of DC 37 and UFT positions beyond teachers?

EMMY LISS: I think this is something we're going
to look at closely, um, look at role— all of the
different roles in early childhood programs and, um,

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the gaps in wages as we look towards more equitable wages for all of our staff.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Then for some of the moms who are currently teachers, already early childhood education teachers who want to get back into CUNY Reconnect, right now they're— they can't be full-time students, which prevents them from taking advantage of this program. Has that been reviewed by CUNY at all on how they can get connected to CUNY Reconnect?

DONA ANDERSON: I, I have some great news. CUNY Reconnect that we launched this fall was specifically designed for people ages 25 to 55, and they go part-time. They're required to take up to 15 courses over the course of the year. So this is specifically designed for working adults.

CHAIRPERSON WON: Great, thank you so much. I'm sure there's many people in the audience who are sending me these questions are very excited to hear that. If community-based organizations, teachers have the same qualifications as a teacher in the, in the Department of Education, why isn't the pay equal and the benefits equal for them outside of the unionization? So that's what people want to know.

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1 EMMY LISS: You know, I think we, we acknowledge
2 that there are these gaps, and it has— it's not
3 something that happened overnight. This is a system
4 that has been built for decades on an inequitable
5 foundation. Um, and so I'm not gonna sit here and
6 try to defend to you why it's the case, because I, I
7 don't think that's— that's not a decision anyone up
8 here made. It's not a decision, obviously, any, any
9 of you made, and it's something that we all have to
10 grapple with together as we build towards a more
11 equitable system. Um, so we're starting from a
12 foundation that does treat people differently based
13 on the setting they work in. Um, and we have to,
14 over time, as we work with you, as we work with
15 labor, as we work with our non-unionized providers,
16 work to address this.

15 CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay. If— I think the A+ for
16 effort in trying to answer the question, but I, I
17 already— I'm already getting so many, um, so many
18 text messages about the, the satisfaction to that
19 answer. I know that it's going to be on another
20 hearing, so tune in for the next with Chair
21 Gutiérrez. And then if we want the CBOs to offer
this care and they're operating off of 2021 budget,

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1 how are they supposed to stay in business if this
2 budget does not increase?

3 EMMY LISS: This is something we're looking at
4 closely right now as well. Um, we recognize that
5 folks have seen rising costs and that, um, the
6 contracts do not have built into them a cost
7 escalator. So we are looking at this and have been
8 in close conversation with many providers to
9 understand how and, and which of their costs have
10 gone up since 2021, what that looks like, and, um,
11 what steps we could potentially take to address it.

12 CHAIRPERSON WON: So going back to— we had many
13 questions about the data. Uh, we as a constituent
14 services team, when we try to get our kids services
15 in our neighborhood for what they need, especially
16 for IEPs, um, what we hear back often from the
17 Department of Education is that therapists simply are
18 not available. So if less kids are getting IEPs as a
19 result, they— then you're going to have— because less
20 of them qualify for an IEP to begin with, you're—
21 we're going to have less staff justified by that
benchmark.

In short, the shortage of special education
teachers, speech and OT therapists, is worse than

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1 what the numbers imply in our data if you only look
2 at the kids on the approved waiting list. There are
3 students who never make it to that starting line to
4 begin with. And New York City Public Schools, uh, we
5 really want you to be more open about what's
6 deterring the students from getting those IEPs um,
7 uh, in between the paperwork. Like, my district has
8 the highest amount of migrant children enrolled in
9 District 30, and when parents who come with second
10 language speakers come and they tell us that they've
11 been given this, this huge packet to say that this is
12 the paperwork that they have to get and to get
13 evaluated, it's a really, really tough thing for us
14 to even talk to the parents about.

15 So to follow up on this current process for early
16 childhood education, how many students are waiting
17 for the SEIT services to begin?

18 SIMONE HAWKINS: We will have to get back to you
19 on that one, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON WON: And how many students in
21 initiated services are waiting for their evaluations?

SIMONE HAWKINS: We'll have to get back to you.
We were not prepared to give you and provide special
education specific data today. Okay, cuz the reason

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1 why we're asking is because again, uh, this has been
2 brought to our attention that we already have a gap
3 to begin with, with therapists, OT providers, and
4 other special education, um, trained teachers
5 available in our school system now, and that the
6 number that we're pegging ourselves to, to say we
7 need X number, that that is actually not the
8 actuality because the number of children who actually
9 need it are not even being counted. So that is the
end of my questions.

10 SIMONE HAWKINS: I actually have a correction, so
11 I do have a number for you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay, great.

13 SIMONE HAWKINS: Um, and so the CPSEs, they've
14 completed, uh, over 13,000 IEPs, uh, for the school
15 year. And at this time, uh, we believe there are
16 3,400 more. Um, but noted about outreach and making
sure that, that whatever outreach we conduct is
culturally responsive.

17 CHAIRPERSON WON: Yeah, that is communities, that
18 it's in language, and it's very onerous for any
19 working parent to have to navigate the system of 175
20 pages when you already have a child who has special
21 needs. And I know that there's many people in this

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1 room and people who are listening who have just been
2 heartbroken by the treatment of these children in our
3 schools, and also just distraught that we just don't
4 have enough teachers in our workforce.

5 So I hope that we can all work together to make
6 sure that we have proper workforce development and
7 special training for the existing teachers, and to
8 make sure that all these teachers are, um, also have
9 the added support of OTs and therapists and speech
10 therapists and so much more to have a well-rounded
comprehensive care for these children.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair Won. And
12 that was one of the biggest, uh, worries for me in
13 this— in this— as we expand, where's the workforce
14 coming from? And we know only 63% of our students
15 are getting their related services, and that's why we
16 have an ongoing crisis in the city. It's not a
problem, it's a crisis.

17 Um, where we're paying out services for almost
18 \$2.2 billion, if I'm correct, and it's growing. So
19 that's where I have an issue. When we decide to
20 expand, are we looking at the system comprehensively?
21 Can we meet the demand? Because when I came into
office in 2022, we had 700 students with special

1 needs who are sitting at home, and that broke my
2 heart. And I got to work really fast. We were able
3 to bring those numbers down. And are we looking at,
4 um, probably building out more AIMS centers into
5 these early childhood centers where, um, maybe D.C.
6 Hawkins can help me? Um, maybe we need to start
7 looking at AIMS as well, where everything is embedded
8 in that building. We were successfully able to open
9 one in my district, the first in Central Brooklyn, to
10 serve Black and brown students who had to travel
11 almost 2 hours. This is a 4-year-old. Imagine that,
12 4-year-old on a bus at 6 AM to go downtown to get the
13 services.

14 Right now in our district, they get the services
15 on the spot. So we need to look at different models.
16 It should not be a cookie-cutter model in education.
17 And that's what I've said with bringing over 22 years
18 of experience. I've seen the system inside out, so
19 nobody can fool me or trick me because I know where
20 they are. And then one model cannot work for all
21 communities.

22 So we have to come in and look at it
23 comprehensively and not create cookie-cutter models
24 for our communities. Chair Gutiérrez.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Chair Joseph.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: As always, thank you so much. Um, I, um, and I just want to echo that. I think the previous Council, and I'm sure this Council as well, um, wants to continue to uplift what Chair Joseph has said for a long time, which is turning up the heat on what we know, which is there are children sitting at home, there are parents who are feeling disenchanted with the public school system overall when they cannot find a seat for their child. And when we talk about enrollment as a whole, I mean, I think we all believe that if we get this right, we are creating— we are, we are going to be able to fill up schools in a way that we just haven't.

And so we, we do have to get it right, and we always have to get every step of it right, which is a lot, is a lot to do. It's parallel campaigns happening all at the same time, and it's all important. It's pay parity, it's special education seating, it's expanding to universal child care. Um, but that is our job. Um, I have a couple more questions and then we're gonna, I think, end the questions. And then, okay, then, then we have one

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1 more question from Council Member Joseph and then
2 we'll pass it to the public. Um, I wanted to ask,
3 uh, CUNY about the apprenticeship program. I don't
4 know if I missed it, but something that we want to be
5 able to achieve through the legislation that we're
6 discussing today, um, and, and future conversations
7 is, is the piece about job placements.

8 Um, something that I think works super well about
9 the, the teaching fellows is that there is guaranteed
10 placement. Can you talk me what, what that looks
11 like?

12 DONA ANDERSON: So, so what we do in the
13 apprenticeship- so there's a pre-apprenticeship
14 component, but what we're also doing during that time
15 is, is matching our apprentices, our, our, um,
16 pre-apprentices to employers. So they are-

17 CHAIRPERSON WON: And is it nonprofit, um, CBOs
18 or-

19 DONA ANDERSON: CBOs. Okay, CBOs are in licensed
20 child care centers.

21 CHAIRPERSON WON: Okay.

DONA ANDERSON: Um, and so what we're doing is
really matching, you know, because it's based on
location. We don't want apprentices that, you know,

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1 have to travel 2 hours to get to their job. So we're
2 looking at those spaces. We're also, you know,
3 wanting to make sure that we're putting folks in
4 where it's a good fit. So, and of- so of course the
5 apprenticeship host, um, is also a very important
6 part of that process and interviews our
7 apprenticeship candidates. And then we do a match
8 day, um, to really match them with their, with their,
9 um, apprenticeship site and then the apprenticeship
begins.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And then can
11 I ask, what is the outreach on the data management
12 program ASPIRE?

13 DONA ANDERSON:A Sure, um, we have, uh, we do a
14 lot of outreach with ASPIRE and really encourage
15 folks to input their information and utilize the,
16 the, um, the ASPIRE registry to not only, um, in a
17 leadership role to manage their staff, to look at
18 the, um, the professional development needs, their,
19 their own opportunities for planning their careers
20 and professional development there. So they can
21 really look and monitor that, um, and help to support
their staff in that. And then also we have a PD
Finder, so where- that they can use to find

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1 professional development offerings online, in person,
2 free, with charge, etc., all the various, um, and
3 those are vetted so that they are quality assured
4 through the Aspire registry. And so we do a lot of
5 outreach with folks, and, and that's one of the, the
6 things that we do in the career development centers.
7 When they come to us and apply and wanna access a
8 scholarship program, um, we work with them to also
9 create their Aspire profile because that's really a
10 professional profile that they can then carry with
11 them through the rest of their time as an early
12 childhood professional.

13 Um, I'll just say another, uh, functionality of
14 the ASPIRE registry is that we also have organization
15 accounts. So, um, programs can actually input in
16 there their classrooms, their teachers. Um, we don't
17 have child-level data in the registry, but we can
18 really see, um, you know, this program has a 4s
19 classroom, a 3s classroom, and a 2s classroom, and
20 they've got 4 teachers attached, which means they
21 have 2 teachers potentially that they are still
hiring for.

So that functionality also exists within the
registry.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, thank you for
that. Um, and then my last question is for DC
Hawkins. Um, I had a question about the \$70 million,
um, allocation specifically for education services.
Can you let me know— I know this funding was
associated with, uh, 350 new positions.

SIMONE HAWKINS: First, we have to thank the
Council for their support in getting us that \$70
million.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: What a good time when we
had money.

SIMONE HAWKINS: Um, and so that \$70 million
really strengthened our preschool special education
process. And so, um, just to be clear, it funded
preschool evaluation teams, um—

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

SIMONE HAWKINS: CPSE Administrators, and a pilot
of Special Education Itinerant Teachers, SEIT? And
so, uh, for PRAC staff, there 20 teams, um, and that
actually provided 80 headcount.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: 80?

SIMONE HAWKINS: Mhm. Okay. Uh, for CPSE, uh,
47 headcount, and that includes admins, directors of
inclusions, community coordinators. Um, related— so

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1 related service providers, um, it supports 249. Um,
2 so 212 SCIS providers and 37 itinerants. Um, and
3 then for that SEIT pilot 10 headcount.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

5 SIMONE HAWKINS: And so we're still moving
6 forward. We're, you know, the team specifically— this
7 is being led by Dow— they're still in the process of
8 implementing, but they are making, and we are making
significant progress. So that's it.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: That's excellent. Thank
10 you. And the goal was originally 350 new positions?

11 SIMONE HAWKINS: I believe so, but I can confirm.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No. Okay. And so is
13 there any— I mean, I think we got— thank you, because
14 you gave it to us by title. Um, are there any, any
15 challenges that you want to highlight? Is there any,
any challenges DOE is facing to, to hire for these
positions?

16 SIMONE HAWKINS: Not that I'm aware of, but I
17 will definitely confirm with my colleagues and round
18 back if there are any that are, you know, notable to
19 share.
20
21

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, I'll do them. I'll
have to do the math. And, um, Chair Joseph, for her
one question—

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: For my one question. What
is New York City's public school plan to ensure that
community-based non-for-profit providers are part of
the city's early childhood program for infants and
toddlers?

Additionally, will any prospective investments or
procurement process be inclusive of providers
supporting children 6 weeks old to 2 years old?

EMMY LISS: So I'll start with the, the overall
commitment of this Administration is to provide
universal child care to every child, um, under 5 in a
range of different settings with culturally
competent, um, care and respected, properly paid
educators. Um, the steps we're taking this fall with
2K and the launch of that program is really the first
step in this overall vision and goal.

Um, and so what we are on a path toward now, um,
with thanks to the governor's commitment of state
funds earlier this year, is, um, the 2,000 2K seats
we're launching this fall, 12,000 2K seats in the
fall of 2027, and access for every 2-year-old in the

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city whose family would like to participate by the
end of the Mayor's first term.

Um, we, we are continuing to build toward that
vision ultimately of care for all children beginning
at 6 weeks. Um, and getting to that goal requires
deep partnership and investment in our
community-based providers. Um, as, as we're looking
to the launch of 2K this fall, that's a program that
really we're building in partnership with, um,
community-based organizations and home-based child
care providers, recognizing where the expertise is in
caring for our toddlers, recognizing the settings
families often choose and prefer, um, for their
youngest children. And will continue to deepen that
partnership as we ultimately look ahead to serving
everyone.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And we leave no one behind.

EMMY LISS: Exactly.

SIMONE HAWKINS: And if I can quickly add, those
10,000 infant/toddler seats that I referred to
earlier, you know, over 4,000 are, um, uh, are in,
uh, for infants, and then also the remainder are
toddlers. But to Emmy's point, the game changer
about 2K is all those seats, for the most part, not

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including those part of the Birth to Two initiative
are means tested. And so that creates a barrier to
access.

And so, um, the, you know, introducing and
launching 2K will absolutely be a game changer, but
centering that all of those infant/toddler seats are
in either a family child care home or a center. And
so they are integral to us being successful in not
only sustaining and improving those seats, but adding
any new ones.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And will there be a series
of conversation roundtable with these providers to
pick their brains and make them your thought partners
since they are in the weed? They're not- you're,
you're sitting- we're, we're in office, we're
bureaucrats, right? They're on the ground serving
those young people, um, the children, the babies.
Are we having conversation in that with them to have-
to make them your thought partners?

EMMY LISS: We absolutely are. We're continuing
to do that. That's been a big focus. I know a big
focus all along for, um, Deputy Chancellor and her
team, um, and there's been many structured
conversations specifically around the launch of 2K.

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1 Um, my team as well is really focused on, um,
2 engaging directly with providers. We've been really
3 focused in particular on home-based providers,
4 recognizing that, um, these are folks who, who
5 haven't felt included in all of our city's past
6 expansions. Um, so I will be this evening on Zoom
7 with a couple hundred home-based educators. Um,
8 that's something we're committed to doing on a really
9 regular basis.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And that was one of the
10 biggest things I complained when I was an educator.
11 They wanna plan for me, but not with me. So I'm
12 happy that you're taking a step to plan with them and
13 not for them so they can have an input and, and help
14 you. They've been doing this work. So thank you
15 all.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: That was 2 questions. I'm-

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Um, DC
17 Hawkins, I just wanted to confirm from the, the
18 numbers that you shared with us, those are positions
19 that are filled in every department?

19 SIMONE HAWKINS: So let me confirm that.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, okay.
21

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SIMONE HAWKINS: For you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No, that's okay, you can let me know. Um, all right, well I wanna thank all the members, all the Chairs. We are gonna shift to public testimony. Get a good-- get a good stretch in, everybody. Um, I'm gonna open the hearing for public testimony. Thank you so much, uh, to CUNY, to D.C. Hawkins, uh, to Emmy. Thank you so much, everyone, for-- for testifying. We hope you can stick around for as long as possible to hear from the public. Um, I remind members of the public that this is a government proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all times.

As such, members of the public shall remain seated silent at all times. The witness table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-Arms for inclusion in the hearing record. If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out, fill out an appearance slip with a Sergeant-at-Arms and wait to be recognized. When

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1 recognized, you will have 2 minutes to speak on
2 today's oversight topic and legislation. If you have
3 a written statement or additional written testimony
4 you wish to submit for the record, please provide a
5 copy to the Sergeant-at-Arms. You can also email
6 written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within
7 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings
8 will not be accepted.

8 I'm going to call the first panel. We have Anna
9 Rita D. Wentworth, Robert Cordero, Lauren Melodia— or
10 Melodia, I'm sorry— Olena Olson, and Betty Baez-Melo.
11 Okay, anybody can start.

11 BETTY BAEZ MELO: Okay, thank you for the chance
12 to discuss the importance of growing the early
13 childhood education workforce to ensure that New York
14 City children have access to high-quality early
15 childhood programs. My name is Betty Baez-Melo. I'm
16 an Attorney and the Director of Early Childhood
17 Education at Advocates for Children of New York.

17 To properly serve all children and families
18 seeking to benefit from the city's expanding early
19 childhood programs, the city must be prepared to
20 recruit, retain, and support staff who dedicate
21 themselves to providing safe and nurturing learning

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environments. We appreciate the Council's efforts to cultivate this vital workforce. It's important to ensure that these efforts include providers that serve young children with disabilities.

We regularly hear from concerned families of children who have been evaluated and found eligible for early intervention or preschool special education services, but who wait for weeks and months for services they are promised to help their children learn. When families ask for help, they are often told that there are not enough special education providers or classrooms to serve all the children who need services.

At a recent hearing before this Council, New York City public school leaders testified that only about 63% of preschoolers with disabilities are receiving all of their related services, and almost a quarter are not receiving any. We also know that about half the children who should be working with a special education teacher are receiving those services, and there are between 100 and 150 children waiting for signif- children with significant disabilities waiting for seats in integrated and special classrooms.

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1 Younger children are not faring much better. The
2 most recent data available shows that last year only
3 55% of infants and toddlers with developmental delays
4 or disabilities received all of their mandated early
5 intervention services on time. As the city looks for
6 solutions to increase early childhood workforce, it
7 must also address the shortage of special education
8 providers that's causing young children with
9 disabilities to go without the services they need and
10 have a legal right to receive. And they're essential
11 for these children to be included and participate in
12 the city's early childhood programs.

13 Expanding early childhood options has the
14 potential to lead to earlier identification of
15 children with disabilities, resulting in positive
16 outcomes for children and families, but only if we
17 have the early intervention and preschool special
18 education providers available to meet their needs.
19 It's crucial for the support— for the supports
20 included in Intro 1656, as well as other early
21 childhood pipeline and workforce development programs
to extend to individuals interested in pursuing
careers serving young children with disabilities.

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be
happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thanks, Betty. Next.

ANNA RITA PERGOLIZZI-WENTWORTH: Hi, my name is
Anna Rita Pergolizzi Wentworth. Um, I'm the
President of NYSMA, which stands for New York State
Montessori Alliance. It's the state's Montessori
advocacy group for educators and schools.

We work closely with the national Montessori
group called MPPI, which stands for Montessori Public
Policy Initiative. Thank you for this opportunity to
speak on behalf of the state's group and to also
speak on behalf of Montessori. Um, I am also out in
the field. I was the head of school at Battery Park
Montessori, a trilingual independent school for 7
years, just down the block on one side. Serves
1-year-olds through 5-year-olds. And now I am the
head of school at its sister school, Pine Street
preschool, also just down the block, serving
1-year-olds all the way through 8th grade, and we are
proudly bilingual, independent Montessori
International Baccalaureate school.

As you address the early childhood workforce
shortage at a time where there is consistent and

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ample research addressing the importance of early
childhood in a human's formation, we urge you to
include Montessori education as part of the solution.
Montessori-trained teachers are highly specialized in
child development differentiated instruction, and
fostering independence—skills that directly support
the goals of universal child care.

To strengthen the educator pipeline we ask for 4
key considerations. First, recognize Montessori
credentials within the career ladder so these
educators are compensated equitably and schools can
access funding. I on behalf of NYSMA along with Dr.
Susan Cambridge who's here with me today— a member of
the group and also head of school at Twin Parks
Montessori, are requesting that you recommend that
the MACTE— education loves its acronyms— Montessori
Accreditation Council for Teacher Education be an
approved pathway to qualification. By recognizing a
MACTE-accredited Montessori credential as a lead
teacher qualifier, you immediately unlock a pipeline
of highly trained educators who are already in our
city, but are currently blocked by the regulations.
My peer Susan will provide an example in a moment.

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For what it's worth, many states, currently over 20,
already include this pathway.

Second, and I know I'm out of time, include
Montessori as an eligible model within universal
child care and access the— for the K-12 continuum,
expanding meaningful choice for families. Ensure
programs regardless of structure. And then finally,
allow flexibility for mixed age classrooms by basing
capacity on square footage rather than the
predominant age, and be mindful how regulations or
changes to those regulations, i.e., with regards to
permits or licenses—impact a school's ability to
operate and adequately compensate its teachers.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank you so
much. Robert.

ROBERT CORDERO: Thank you so much, Chairs Joseph
Gutiérrez and Won, for, uh, doing this hearing. It's
important. Uh, we are in favor of the legislation
of, of the bill. My name is Robert Cordero. I'm
the, the CEO of Grand Street Settlement based in the
Lower East Side, also serving the Bronx and Brooklyn.
We're a 110-year-old community-based organization.
We were an original Head Start federal grantee coming
out of the War on Poverty over 60 years ago, and

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today we are one of the largest providers of
community-based child care in New York City.

I'm also a proud Head Start graduate, a social
worker, and a former 5th grade public school teacher.
I want to start by acknowledging the historic nature
of this moment. The Mayoral Administration's
prioritization and the City Council of building a
truly universal child care system is ambitious but
significant in our history, and the leadership of the
City Council in advance— in, in advancing this vision
has been crucial. This is a once-in-a-lifetime
opportunity to get this right for families today and
for future generations.

I am not here as a policy expert. I am here as a
parent whose children went to universal pre-K, but
I'm also here as an early childhood provider. I want
to be direct. Universal child care will only succeed
if it works for the community-based and nonprofit
providers who make it possible. If we are serious
about universal child care expansion, we need a
workforce pipeline that is real and sustainable.
Right now, we are asking early childhood educators,
many from the very communities we serve, to take on

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student loan debt to enter a low-paying, high-stress,
but mission-focused profession.

At the same time, providers like us are
struggling every single day with recruitment and
retention, competing with higher-paying systems from
the public and private sector, managing burnout, and
trying to hold on to talented and committed educators
who are deeply committed to this work but cannot
afford to stay. This is the wrong starting point.
We need free tuition, not selective scholarships, for
early childhood degrees through the City University
of New York and the State University of New York,
because New Yorkers who want to serve their own
communities as early childhood educators should not
have to go deeply into debt to do it.

If we remove that barrier, we open the door to
the very workforce this system depends on and give
ourselves a real chance to recruit and retain them.
Kudos to the Administration's efforts thus far to
expand care to 2-year-olds but let us recognize that
for children from 6 weeks to age 2, which we have not
really been discussing very much—

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Robert, can you wrap up?
I'm so sorry.

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ROBERT CORDERO: I will. Nonprofit
community-based organizations and family child care
centers are the backbone of that system.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, thank you,
thank you so much. I don't like to interrupt people,
so please wrap up your thoughts, guys. Thank you.

LAUREN MELODIA: Okay. Hi, my name is Lauren
Melodia. Um, I'm a Labor Economist by trade, and I
study the city's labor market broadly and the child
care sector specifically. And I want to urge Council
to think about, you know, with this labor shortage,
yes, it's important to think about new entrants into
the field, but the top priority right now is
retaining and supporting the existing experienced
workforce in this field.

We've already heard about low wages in the field
and pay disparity. I don't need to get into that,
but I'm happy to share all of the analysis we've
done. Um, the policy that's ultimately needed to
incentivize new entrants and retain existing workers
is for the city to commit to a career ladder and
sector-wide salary scale for all occupations in the
field, not just lead teachers, that demonstrates to
people that there's real growth opportunities in the

1 field, including for those who have extensive
2 experience, but haven't seen the value in obtaining
3 more credentials because it currently translates to
4 little or no increase in wages and benefits. But
5 the, the real thing I want to highlight today is the
6 importance of establishing a wage subsidy fund here
7 in New York City today.

8 Um, workers have been demanding this. It has
9 worked in the city's history as well as in other
10 places. When we stabilize the existing workers, we
11 stabilize the field. Um, these subsidies will be
12 most meaningful to the lowest-wage workers in the
13 field who are the family child care providers that in
14 my study, uh, the median family child care provider
15 works— has worked for 10 years in the field and is
16 earning \$6 per hour today.

17 So that's a lot lower than \$69,000 a year. These
18 providers are educators and business owners, and
19 their programs are at risk of closing due to the
20 city's current current plan to administer 2K through
21 contracts with network-affiliated providers. I want
to highlight that during COVID one of the most
disruptive moments in the city's history, the state
had a several stabilization funds. And so during the

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1 course of COVID we actually only lost 100 family
2 child care providers. But prior to COVID, when the
3 city launched Pre-K and 3K, the city lost 1,300
4 family child care programs because there was no
5 stabilization put in place to protect these, uh,
6 programs that didn't have an easy way to get into the
7 DOE contracted system.

8 So I urge the Council to fund a wage subsidy
9 program in this year's budget and to develop a career
10 ladder and sector-wide salary scale that can be
11 incorporated into all city contracts and voucher
12 payments, uh, to centers and family child care.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Lauren.

14 LAUREN MELODIA: Thank you.

15 OLENA OLSON: I'll try my 2 minutes.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do your best.

17 OLENA OLSON: Um, my name is Olena. I'm
18 Educational Director of a small preschool in Park
19 Slope, and I had been vocal about our struggles, and
20 I've been repeating the same things over and over. I
21 really don't want to be thanked for our service and
dedication verbally while being completely dismissed
financially. I don't want to be told that families
of the city need us while completely dismissing us

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1 people who provide education for youngest New
2 Yorkers. Are we not families? I no longer can bear
3 hearing that this meeting is not the venue to be
4 addressing financial concerns. I have no answers to
5 questions about financial structure of 2K rollout.
6 We still do not know what is it gonna- like, how is
7 it gonna look like.

8 I had been waiting to hear in my, uh, it's my
9 personal case, from DECE about being able to add 10
10 more pre-K seats my current chopped 10-seat classroom
11 for next year since November. And last answer was
12 that a few weeks ago, um, the team is reviewing
13 requests from programs citywide, including those from
14 priority 3K zip codes and, uh, 2K districts, and that
15 approvals will be based on the need for services and
16 availability and funding.

17 And then the next thing I know, we're receiving
18 the email from DECE about opening of new centers,
19 adding new seats and, um, uh, an ask to distribute
20 family letters to our families while my family is
21 awaiting to find out if they will stay in my program
for the next year. Please stop calling us in your
current campaign free child care, and please review
the current salaries of CBO teachers to even out

1 disparities. This would be the true and heartfelt
2 thank you to all of us. From the notes, um, of the-
3 all the conversations that happened before me. Um,
4 if you want to attract the workforce, there are 3
5 ways. It has to be the scholarship, or lowering that
6 qualification, or pay what must be paid.

7 Student teaching- if you want to shorten the
8 amount of time that, like, to get, uh, to get people
9 into, um, the, the workforce faster, people who are
10 already teaching, why, why do they need to be student
11 teaching on top of working already in the classroom.
12 Leadership support, I would need more. Who do you go
13 to when you really need support, when you have
14 financial issues, when you have kids with
15 disabilities who are not being, um, like, um,
16 evaluated fast enough? Working with our current
17 providers statement, not really. It's been a lot, a
18 lot of work happened with the families. Um, a few
19 meetings that I had attended, um, that was not it.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Um, Olena, can you please
21 wrap up, Olena?

22 OLENA OLSON: And lastly, please do not bring
23 6-week-old children to daycares. They need their
24 moms. Uh, like, I, that, that would be the last one.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you. Thank
you. Any questions? No questions?

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No, I have a quick question
for Advocates for Children. So, um, you heard me
reference that same number, 63%. So what's happening
to the 24.4% that, um, you mentioned in your
testimony?

LAUREN MELODIA: The 24.4% refers to the number
of preschool students with disabilities who at the
time New York City Public Schools testified were not
receiving any of their mandated services. So that
includes things like speech therapy, occupational
therapy, physical therapy— these services that
children need to learn to communicate, to hold a
pencil, to be able to follow instructions. Those
children are, are not receiving any of those
services. Some of them may be participating in 3K
and pre-K programs, um, some, some may be sitting at
home.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much.
Calling the next panel up: Adelo Ramirez, Anna
Succes— sorry if I mispronounced that— uh, Tsering
Diki, Susan Kambrick, and Laura Kyriakou— Kyriakou,

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I'm sorry if I mispronounced. And anybody can start
as soon as y'all are ready. Yeah, you can start,
whoever wants to start.

ADELO RAMIREZ: Okay. Good afternoon, Chair and
all. I am Adelo Ramirez, and I am here to advocate
for the implementation of financial literacy workbook
across all middle and high schools. This is not just
about teaching numbers, it's about building habits
that will shape the future of our youth.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Adelo, I'm so sorry, is,
is this about the hearing topic today or the
legislation that we're hearing?

ADELO RAMIREZ: Uh, topic today. Child.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Early, early childhood
education.

ADELO RAMIREZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you. My
apologies.

ADELO RAMIREZ: Okay, sorry. Um, it's about
building habits in the future of our youth, our
workforce, and our communities. Right now, many
teens reach adulthood without knowing how to manage
money. There is no salary big enough if young adults
does not know how to manage it. When students leave

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1 high school without these skills, they often fall
2 into financial stress, debt, and long-term government
3 dependency, not because they lack potential, but
4 because no one taught them the basics early enough.
5 This workbook is designed to involve students,
6 parents, teachers together. When families learn the
7 same financial language, everyone benefits. Teachers
8 gain a structured tool that supports real-life
9 learning with their own salaries. Parents gain
10 clarity and confidence, and students begin building
11 the habits that will carry them into adulthood. We
12 often hear proposals for free bus rides and free
13 colleges. These efforts are mean- are meant to help,
14 but they are the equivalent of giving someone a fish.
15 Financial literacy is how we teach the next
16 generation how to fish, how to budget, how to save,
17 how to plan, and how to avoid the traps that lead to
18 lifelong, uh, financial struggles.

16 If we want a stronger workforce, stronger
17 families, and stronger communities, we must start
18 early. Middle and high schools are the years when
19 habits are formed. If we give students the tools
20 now, they will need to rely on government support
21 later.

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Uh, they won't need it. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Did you—

ADELO RAMIREZ: So -

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It's okay, you can submit
your testimony if you have more online.

ADELO RAMIREZ: Okay. No, bottom line is, if we
start early, mhm, from daycare, we could continue
moving forward with, uh, education on finances.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you. Um, Lara, do you want to go next? And
then we'll just go down. Thank you.

LARA KYRIAKOU: Good afternoon, Chairs. Thank
you so much for holding this hearing and your
continued dedication to this issue. Um, I am Lara
Kyriakou. I'm the Director of Policy at All Our Kin.
We are a national organization that provides
educational mentorship, professional development, and
system-building support to family child care
educators.

In New York, we offer bilingual services of
licensing coaching, business series, educational
coaching, leadership coaching to hundreds of family
child care educators at no cost to them, primarily in
the Bronx, although not exclusively. Um, just for a

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1 little bit of very quick baseline setting, um, for
2 those who might not be as familiar with family child
3 care, it's, uh, a licensed program of care in, um, a
4 person's home. And parents also often speak about
5 the long-term bonds that they find and develop with
6 their educators. Um, often there's, uh, families
7 that will provide care over across multiple
8 generations.

8 Um, we are encouraged by recent historic
9 commitments from the, the Mayor and the Governor, and
10 yet we are also anxiously awaiting new increased
11 investments and new policies that support and nurture
12 the child care workforce.

12 In particular, as has been mentioned many times
13 today, I will just briefly echo the need for livable
14 wages and comprehensive benefits. Um, my colleague
15 Lauren Melodia, who just went in the panel before, as
16 she echoed, uh, the \$6 to \$8 an hour is for family
17 child care providers who own their own home— er,
18 sorry, or rent their own business— rent and, um, own
19 their own homes. And so that \$6 to \$8 is after all
20 of the other costs for of the month have been paid.
21 Um, a large majority also do not have, um, health
insurance.

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Many qualify for Medicaid and SNAP and on average work about 70 hours a week. The, the second thing that I just want to briefly highlight that I'm happy to discuss further is, um, encouraging licensing and inspection to be fully inclusive of all modalities of care. This would re- really support the workforce, um, to have ed- inspectors who are well-versed in home-based settings who are culturally responsive and who are developmentally appropriate given the age-appropriate fears of young children and strangers with, um, when they come to visit and inspect homes. Uh, lastly, I'll just also say that encouraging professional development and continuing education is important as long as we continue to increase access, awareness, and, um, financial assistance opportunities. I'll have more in my written testimony. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Please submit. Thank you so much.

ANNA SUCCES: Um, good afternoon, everybody. Um, my name is Anna Succes, and I am a Pre-K Teacher in my 25th year of teaching. I'm a graduate of NYU and Hunter. Um, because of the one simple fact that I work at a non-union center-based school, I am paid

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1 less after 25 years than a first-year DOE teacher. I
2 get healthcare through the marketplace, and I have no
3 pension plan. I am also a mother to two teenage
4 daughters as well as a native New Yorker. My voice
5 today is not my own, but that of every single teacher
6 in this city who is being paid le- far less than what
7 they are worth.

8 We have seen expansions like this in the past.
9 We've attended rallies and hearings in the past. The
10 DOE pours millions into brand new shiny buildings and
11 administrative positions. We, the center-based
12 teachers, showing up every day pouring our hearts and
13 souls into our precious young students, continue to
14 be forgotten.

15 Our school has seen generations within the same
16 family attend in our school's 75-year lifespan in
17 Astoria, by the way. Um, why don't our decades of
18 experience count? Costs have risen drastically and
19 we can't tread water for another 2 years. We have
20 our own families. We wanna provide the very best for
21 our own children. We deserve the same pay, the same
healthcare plans, and the same pension. We are at
the point where we sound like a broken record.

There's only one right way to proceed. Pay CBO

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1 teachers and staff equally and fairly. We are living
2 in the same city, doing the same job with the same
3 New York City children. It is time to act.

4 While I understand my concerns are not the
5 primary focus for today, I implore all elected
6 officials here today to take care of the CBO teachers
7 who are in this profession currently. We are
8 suffering.

9 And lastly, 5 seconds, um, I just wanted to add,
10 um, when I had migrants in my class that did not
11 speak a word of English, um, I spent most of my day
12 on Google Translate. I had no support from the DOE
13 at all, none. And we don't have Spanish-speaking
14 teachers in our school. We only have 5 teachers in
15 our school.

16 Um, and last, my last point, I don't think I
17 don't think that a 12 to 2 ratio for 2-year-olds is
18 safe. I think it's extremely unsafe. I think that
19 we need less students and more teachers, especially
20 with diaper changes.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm.

ANNA SUCCES: Thank you. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Anna.

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TSERING DIKI: Thank you. Uh, honorable Chairs
and members of Committee. Uh, good afternoon. My
name is Tsering Diki, and I am the Founder and
Executive Director of the Diki Daycare Group.

Since 2005, we have been operating, and now we
have 5 early childhood centers across New York City.
I'm here today to speak about urgent challenges
facing the early childhood educator workforce.

First, we must address the pay disparity between
the Department of Education and those working in a
community-based organization. We do the same work,
serve the same children, and meet the same standard,
yet CBO educators are paid significantly less. This
is not sustainable, and it is driving experienced
teachers out of the field and creating constant
staffing instability in the communities that need the
consistency the most.

Second, we need more inclusive and flexible
qualifications education pathways. Current
requirements such as mandatory high school diplomas
for all staff can unintentionally exclude immigrants
and dedicated caregivers with the years of
experience. And these individuals bring culture,
back— cultural understanding, commitment, and

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1 real-world skills that our classrooms depend on. We
2 must create pathways that recognize experience while
3 supporting the professional enrolled.

4 And third, we must invest more in early child
5 special education. Educators are increasingly
6 supporting children with complex developmental and
7 behavioral needs, but without adequate trainings and
8 resources, this leads burnout and higher turnover.
9 Without proper support, we are failing both educators
and the children who rely on them.

10 In closing, I urge Council to take action to
11 ensure pay parity, create inclusive workforce
12 pathways, and invest in training and special
13 education support. Supporting the early childhood
14 workforce is essential to the future of our children,
our communities. And thank you for the opportunity
to testify.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

16 SUSAN KAMBRICK: Thank you so much for hearing me
17 today. Hello, I'm Dr. Susan Kambrick. I'm Executive
18 Director of Twin Parks Montessori, an early childhood
19 program on the Upper West Side. We have 450 children
20 on 3 campuses, which include 2 Pre-K for All programs
and 60— with 66 children. We have 130 teachers and
21

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1 staff, and while we operate as a school, we function
2 for most of our families as a daycare. Families need
3 schools like ours to be able to live and work in our
4 city. The current rules are causing a staffing
5 crisis.

6 New York City Article 47 programs and schools are
7 losing talented, dedicated teachers to other
8 industries because of the New York City Department of
9 Health's rigid requirements. We have many teachers
10 who work at Twin Parks who began as assistant
11 teachers and have bachelor's degrees in other areas
12 like art history, music, phys ed, economics,
13 engineering. Last year we even had a lawyer.

14 To become a Montessori teacher, teachers must
15 successfully complete a comprehensive MACD Montessori
16 teacher education program. Right now in New York
17 City, a person with a bachelor's degree in something,
18 for example, like history, and the added Montessori
19 early childhood credential cannot be a lead teacher
20 for a preschool group in a New York City daycare. We
21 have talented and well-educated candidates who would
be outstanding lead teachers if the pathway were
there.

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1 So Montessori, but also other pathways, I think
2 should be considered. Um, in the fall, I was very
3 excited to learn that the flexibility for group
4 teachers was implemented to make staffing easier.
5 Group teachers with infant or toddler qualifications
6 could lead preschool classes for 2-year-old students.
7 But after issuing that, it was added that if children
8 turned 3 during the school year, they would need to
be taught by preschool-qualified group teachers.

9 So we establish our classrooms in September with
10 teaching teams, and we like to keep our classroom
11 cohort with teachers and, and children together until
12 June. When we enroll 2-year-olds, they definitely
will turn 3 by the end of the year.

13 We respect— we respectfully request that you
14 recommend that new regulations from DOH would allow
15 these children to complete the school year with their
16 teachers. We are governed by the Department of
17 Health, so the focus is on health and safety, not on
18 educational quality. Although we are classified as a
19 daycare, we— we, we are a, we are a daycare, daycare,
20 and we, we run like a school. Having classroom
21 communities stay together throughout the school year

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1 is better for the education of our children. Thank
2 you so much for letting me speak.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, thank you all so
4 much. And if you have, um, written testimony, please
5 feel free to drop it with the Sergeant at Arms.
6 Thank you all so much.

7 Calling the next panel up, we have Joyce
8 McClammy, Angalie Dasai, Greg Morris, Gregory Bender-
9 Brender, and Stamo Karalararides. I'm sorry, that's
10 too much Greg energy right here. Separate it, you
11 guys. And once again, I am sorry for, um,
12 mispronouncing anyone's name, my apologies. Anybody
13 can start.

14 JOYCE MCCLAMMY: Good afternoon. Um, thank you,
15 Chairs, for hosting this hearing. Um, we've been
16 around this several times. Um, pay parity is a must.
17 We have credentials just as DOE has. So why can't we
18 get the pay that we deserve? There are- another
19 issue that I wanted to bring about, too, I know that
20 there are some CBOs that have direct leases. There
21 are buildings I know of 3 that's in the Bronx that
have direct leases. And I inquired about those
buildings, because if, if you're fighting and you're
struggling in your CBO, and these buildings are

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1 sitting unoccupied where you're paying rent and
2 everything trying to, to survive, those buildings
3 should be utilized. You're paying the rent for them.
4 They should be utilized. And that's, uh, a, a must.
5 You're wasting money on that. And if we're trying to
6 make sure that people, our, our workers are taken
7 care of, then if we make sure that they have a place
8 that they can go to to work. Parents can bring their
9 kids to a safe place. Use these buildings where
10 we're not struggling to pay the rent, struggling to
11 pay Con Ed, struggling to pay our staff.

12 It, it doesn't make sense and I just think that
13 it's a, a big waste. And another thing is with the,
14 the background checks, it takes 3 to 6 months to get
15 those, those clearings.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm.

17 JOYCE MCCLAMMY: And then a lot of times the,
18 the, um, the person that has applied for the job,
19 they've gone somewhere else.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm. They give up.

21 JOYCE MCCLAMMY: I mean, you work in a daycare,
if you, uh, once you get your, your certification,
you're going to DOE because they make the more money.

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1 So I think that we— it's something that we need to
2 address and we need to take care of it immediately.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Ms. Joyce.
4 Yes, of course. Gregory?

5 GREGORY MORRIS: Thank you so much, and thank you
6 to this amazing, powerful bunch of Chairs who have
7 always been part of the fight. And I think as so
8 many people have said, and I think it's important to
9 reiterate, um, this is a historic time for early
10 childhood education with crucial expansions, and it
11 is the time to get it right.

12 Um, starting with salary parity. Um, as we
13 talked about, uh, while there has been some progress
14 made over time, particularly with the leadership of
15 the, the City Council, uh, the disparities,
16 particularly for longevity, are really extreme. And
17 that is at the heart of our staffing crisis. And,
18 uh, the staffing crisis in early childhood centers is
19 real, and as well as in family-based programs. And
20 we are seeing— reduced capacity and closed classrooms
21 because of the staffing crisis. Uh, so the first and
most important recommendation is to achieve salary
parity now in this budget and at this time of this
expansion.

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Um, salary parity, we believe, should include establishing a defined career ladder, setting a minimum wage for child care workers, and working to address, uh, the existing disparities. Um, I also have in our testimony um, which will go into more detail, some of the recommendations of other key ways to support building a pipeline, including establishing a wage fund, uh, providing universal healthcare coverage for child care workers, expanding access to pension plans, providing housing support, uh, creating career exposure and dual enrollment training programs, and launching a city-funded apprenticeship program.

Uh, similarly, we urge the city and state to work together to speed up the background check process, which I know you're going to have a hearing on next week, um, building out new credentialing models to diversify the workforce, and finding ways to ensure that you can, uh, actualize substitute teacher pools in New York City.

Uh, finally, in order to support the workforce, we do need to support the organizations that, um, maintain early childhood education. And in order to achieve those recommendations, we I urge the city to

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1 implement cost escalators in child care contracts,
2 ensure on-time payments, and hold providers harmless
3 from enrollment-based penalties while NYCPS controls
4 enrollment. I thank you so much for the opportunity
5 to testify, and we are— look forward to the work
6 together.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It's an extensive
8 testimony. Please make sure we have it digitally
9 when you can. Thank you. Thank you so much for
10 testifying.

11 GREGORY MORRIS: Chairs, thanks so much for
12 making this time. I'm Greg Morris, CEO of the New
13 York City Employment and Training Coalition. Sitting
14 next to a Greg is always a value to me. Um, and it
15 just so happens that today the New York City
16 Employment Training Coalition and the Daycare Council
17 put out a statement, uh, championing this particular
18 hearing because of the value of this particular
19 workforce. To take a quick step back, I simply want
20 to say that the early childhood workforce
21 conversation should really be understood within the
context of our labor market and economic development
strategies in the in this city right now across
sectors. And you could have the same conversation

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1 when we talk about healthcare, infrastructure, public
2 service. Uh, we're seeing consistent patterns—
3 vacancies, fragmented training system, uh, and
4 underutilized talent. Uh, this is why NYCETC has
5 consistently advanced the position that workforce
6 development constitutes core economic infrastructure.
7 Uh, if the— if it is the mechanism— through which
8 public investments translate into employment, wages,
9 mobility outcomes. It's also central to an
affordability agenda.

10 Without access to stable, well-compensated
11 employment, cost-of-living interventions alone are
12 insufficient. The question is whether or not we want
13 to make the commitment as a city right now to this
14 institutional alignment. And at this point, I simply
15 want to say to this Council, because I submitted my
16 testimony separately, you have talked more about
17 workforce development in just since January than I
18 have heard at any point in time in my career in New
19 York City. That is literally thrilling. And that is
20 the beginning step towards ensuring that we are
21 creating pathways for the early childhood education
set, for healthcare workers, for our educators, for

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public service, etc., throughout the course of the
city.

The last note to make is this, and you know this
well, so I'm not telling you anything you don't know.
Unless we modernize administration systems that
ensure that contract payments are made, you are just
continually putting our— the people we represent, the
providers we represent, at a disadvantage.

Last note to make as time goes is that summer
youth employment remains the one investment this city
makes in workforce development consistently, year
after year. There is your pathway to your future
workforce.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Greg. Thank
you.

ANGALIE DASAI: Good afternoon, my name is
Angelie Dasai. I'm the CEO of Friends of Crown
Heights. We currently have both center-based
programs and a family child care network. With
having the visibility of both programs, it shows some
of the disparities that we have within the city, from
family child care providers not being paid adequately
to staffing pattern issues, not only in our CBOs, but
also, um, within the family child care, uh, programs.

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1 With that, uh, CUNY and SUNY are doing phenomenal
2 work on the ground. We need to do better. Looking
3 at when we have student teachers, the student
4 teachers, for them to go into the DOE, all it
5 requires is a fingerprinting process. That is done
6 over a week or two. For our CBO process, it requires
7 individuals have to have an SCR clearance. We have
8 to get the fingerprinting clearance. We have to get
9 the medical clearance. We have to get additional,
10 uh, clearances that take up, as someone mentioned, 3
11 to 6 months.

12 If we're looking to build a pipeline, that
13 pipeline has to be a process where both the DOE and
14 the DOHMH, because we are beholden to both entities,
15 can speak together and decide what is best. Because
16 we have individuals who are expressing interest in
17 wanting to work in CBOs, but CUNY and SUNY are not
18 promoting those CBOs, because when they have the job
19 fairs, guess who's there? The DOE. So individuals
20 that are going into early childhood education are
21 only being tunneled— they're shown this vision of,
uh, the Department of Education as an early childhood
provider to families and forgetting the sector that

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provides 50 to 60% of the 3K and the pre-K classrooms
are in community-based organizations.

Um, with that, we have to figure out a system
that works best because as we're looking to expand
with 2K. We've had the experience of the DOE taking
over, uh, pre-K 15 years ago, 20 years ago. We've
lost students. We've had also the 3K. When the DOE
have the classrooms, they may have one 3-year-old
classroom in a building and two pre-K classrooms.
We're the one that's housing 60 to 70% of the 3K and
pre-K students, and we just have to do better.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Angalie.

STMO KARALARARIDES: Thank you. Good afternoon,
Chair Gutiérrez and members of the Sub- the
Subcommittee. My name is Stamo Kara Lazaridis, and
I'm the First Vice President of the Council of School
Supervisors and Administrators, representing nearly
18,000 in-service and retired school-based leaders
across New York City, including early childhood
directors in both DOE buildings, and CBO-based
centers.

I'm here today on behalf of our President Henry
Rubio and our CSA leadership team. We appreciate the
Council's continued focus on early childhood

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education and on the workforce development. We believe that workforce development in this sector is not just a pipeline issue, it is fundamentally a stability issue.

Right now, the system is working to recruit new educators while struggling to retain the ones it already has. According to the Daycare Council's workforce report produced a few months ago, New York City would need approximately 30,000 additional workers to support a truly universal birth-to-five system. And even today, the system needs about 5,000 new, new educators each year just to replace those who leave.

It is not simply a recruitment challenge. It reflects a system that cannot consistently hold on to its workforce. Families experience this instability directly when a child's teacher leaves midyear, when classrooms are reshuffled, when trusted relationships are disrupted. For young children, those relationships are the foundation of learning, trust, and emotional development.

If we focus only on expanding the pipeline, we risk a cycle where new educators enter a field only to replace those who leave. A workforce pipeline can

1 only function, function effectively if the system it
2 feeds into is stable. From our perspective, that
3 stability is shaped by 3 core conditions:
4 compensation, funding stability, and payment
5 reliability.

6 When there is a lack of pay parity between
7 CBO-based educators and their DOE counterparts— to
8 your point— educators and leaders cannot sustain
9 long-term careers in the field. When funding
10 fluctuates with enrollment, programs are forced to
11 make staffing decisions based on uncertainty rather
12 than need. And when reimbursement processes are
13 delayed, providers face real challenges in meeting
14 payroll and maintaining staffing levels.

15 We also want to emphasize the critical role of
16 program leadership. Early childhood directors are
17 responsible

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Stamo, can you please
19 wrap up?

20 STAMO KARALARARIDES: Not only for operations

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

STAMO KARALARARIDES: But for recruiting,
supporting, and retaining staff. In high turnover

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environment, they are the primary source of stability
for both educators and families.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

STAMO KARALARARIDES: Strengthening leadership
capacity must be part of any serious workforce
strategy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Of course.
Uh, I have some questions and Chair Joseph as well.
So, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Um, I wanted to know what is
driving the the the low wages for our workers, and
when is the next negotiation, and how do we bring
that pay parity up? I know we did that for special
education with the 4410. How do we get the other
workforce to also meet that moment?

GREGORY BRENDER: So there's— there's a number of
factors, and I think, um, one of the key ones is just
the level of disrespect and, uh, not understanding
the value of the early childhood workforce. This is
a workforce that has always been primarily women and
primarily women of color, and there is just a long
history of not valuing and not paying this workforce
fairly. And that has continued to this day.

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1 Um, the current, uh, collective bargaining
2 agreement expires in 2028. However, um, there are--
3 the city can move now to increase salaries. The
4 salaries are determined by, um, what, what amount the
5 city is paying to its contractors. Um, contractors
6 like the folks who've testified here today cannot pay
7 any more than what the city puts into their
8 contracts. And so those contracts can be amended,
9 um, if the city puts more funding in, which is in
10 fact they have done, um, in 2019, uh, when there was
11 not at a period where the contract-- where the
12 collective bargaining had expired. There was just an
13 understanding that with the expansion of 3K, there
14 was a need to increase salaries for the workforce.
15 So it is, uh, it is something that can be achieved,
16 uh, through a city budget process and, and through an
17 investment from the city.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Go ahead, Joyce.

19 JOYCE MCCLAMMY: I, I just like to add that it's
20 been so long since, um, daycare workers have had an
21 increase. I know in 2012, um, we didn't get one
brown penny. Bloomberg took everything that we had
from us and we didn't get a raise. We just got this
rate-- we ratified our contract in 2024, and some of

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1 our, our CBOs are still waiting for their retro
2 money. We have not all gotten our money, so it's
3 been a long time. If, if everything else is going up
4 and our salary is not going up, then how can we
5 survive? One quick thing.

6 When we look at salary between a CBO employee and
7 their counterpart within the DOE, the DOE's floor is
8 our ceiling. So if we just think of it like that,
9 where the DOE's starting for a teacher, that is our--
10 the maximum amount we can offer, whether we're
11 unionized or not, based on the contract. So there is
12 that disparity already there. Primarily, as everyone
13 knows, it's women and women of color, and there's a
14 blatant disrespect. But we have individuals have the
15 same credentialing counterparts within the DOE as
16 many of our CBO counterparts here. We're not-- our
17 salary in our lifetime, we're out millions of
18 dollars.

19 It's doing it because we have that bond with the
20 community. There is that need as parents when you
21 come in and you have your 6-week-old or 6-month-old
6-month-old in a program, that they can stay there
from day 1 until they age out into kindergarten, into
the bigger DOE public school system. That's what

1 you're looking for. That's what families are looking
2 for. But it comes back to a blatant disrespect with
3 or without the same credentials. So the individuals
4 that have the same credentials, we cannot have, um,
5 uh, er, count some of our, uh, teachers. They've
6 been in CBOs for 15, 20 years. A DOE teacher after
7 20 years and you retire, you have a very nice
8 pension.

9 You have a very— you can retire in peace. For a
10 CBO teacher who has worked for 20, 30 years, you're
11 looking, am I gonna qualify for subsidy for
12 healthcare? Am I gonna qualify for, for food stamps,
13 right? Am I gonna qualify for housing assistance?
14 Because this is something they have been working in a
15 system that does not respect them and does not
16 respect the job that they're doing. And many of our
17 CBO teachers are looked at as babysitters. So it's
18 having that where there is a respect, but it also has
19 to be matched with the finances.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What is the CBO starting
21 salary, just for the record?

JOYCE MCCLAMMY: For a group teacher, a master
certified group teacher, mhm, it's \$68,000. After 5

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years, DOE might be up at \$82,000, \$84,000 if anyone
has the exact figures.

ANGELIE DASAI: I had \$76,000 to \$85,000 DOE
after 5 years. And, and, uh, CBO directors who
usually teach approximately 5 years before becoming
directors make that starting salary as a beginner
director starting spring 2026 as New York City
teachers make with 5 years experience.

So to your point, um, a director might look at a
New York City DOE school and prefer to be a teacher
and retire in 25 years with all the benefits, etc.,
and make the same, if not more, especially if they
have master's plus 30, compared to becoming a CBO
director.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And all the experts on the
table, how do we close that gap?

STAMO KARALARARIDES: Salary. Money.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Hey, I, I gotta get— ah—

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You know, find the money.
We gotta find it.

STAMO KARALARARIDES: Yeah, we need, we need more
money. Um, pay parity, yes. And I know for, for my
thing is we go to Albany every year before the budget
is done. Money is put into early childhood, but it

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1 doesn't trickle down to the CBOs. It goes to DOE
2 mainly. It doesn't come to us. So that's why--
3 that's another reason that our salaries are so low,
4 because we don't get the funding like we should.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Greg and Greg, y'all wanna
6 weigh in?

7 GREG MORRIS: I, I would just say, um, the
8 important thing to remember, especially as it relates
9 to community-based organizations and the nonprofit
10 sector and the human services, social services space,
11 is that city government relies on them to serve the
12 community. And I would argue in many cases, the
13 ability to serve on the ground in the field. As
14 someone who started as a practitioner 30 years ago,
15 signing kids up for jobs through the Summer Youth
16 Employment Program, um, reminds me how critical that
17 investment in that connection is.

18 The reality though is if the human services
19 sector decided tomorrow to say, we're not gonna
20 accept any contracts, that are not paying our people
21 what they deserve to be paid, this city would
literally spin off the rails.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mhm.

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1 GREGORY MORRIS: This is— it's the nonprofit
2 human services community-based organizations that
3 are— let's— not just the structural backbone of the
4 city, you could also argue it's the economic backbone
5 of the city. And I think there's— there is a bit of
6 a reckoning coming for the human services, social
7 services, community-based organization space to say,
8 if this Administration wants to achieve its
9 objectives, you have to hold us to the same standard
10 and expectation that you are holding others to. And
11 in doing so, you have to compensate us appropriately.
12 And if not, well, what if then— what if then the
13 sector turns its back? What will that do? And I
14 think that's a consequence that this city does not
15 want. I don't think this Administration wants, and I
16 know you as thoughtful, dynamic leaders do not want
17 that either. The reality is the nonprofit human
18 services folks can't eat either.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Um, Chair,
18 Won has questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON WON: Hi everybody, thank you so much
20 for coming and volunteering your time to be here.
21 Can you help me understand— I know that, um, the team

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1 that was here testifying from the agencies, their-
2 the implication to me of what was implied was, you
3 know, it sounds like the fastest solution is to
4 unionize all the CBOs. So I think it'll be- okay, so
5 I already see you shaking your heads. So can you
6 help me understand, one, like, what has the process
7 been like? Have you been encouraged to have your,
8 have your staff unionized? Like, what does that mean
9 for you as a small business owner? And what does-
10 what is the alternative in that you would propose
11 back to the city? And I know that, um, the director
12 has been kind enough to stay, and I'm pretty sure I
13 saw D.C. Hawkins was here for a while.

14 So, you know, everyone's listening, so I think we
15 need that feedback.

16 ANGALIE DASAI: So funny enough, we are a union
17 job, and it's still this- the salary. And, uh, for
18 our director, CSA, and, uh, Local 205 for our
19 teaching staff, um, it's still the same thing. So
20 union or non-union, individuals who are not unionized
21 they may have it worst off because it would just be
minimum wage if you look at it, right?

Uh, union jobs, we have guidance, we have, uh,
salary that we have to kind of adhere to, pension.

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1 There are certain, uh, additional benefits with
2 medical and, um, staff members that being compensated
3 for as part of your contract. Uh, for individuals
4 that are not unionized, they have it worst off.
5 However, when we're looking at just credentials. If
6 you're going into any other space, you walk in with
7 your resume and you put your credentials down, and
8 the salary should reflect that. But in this
scenario, it does not.

9 STAMO KARALARARIDES: So I represent— we
10 represent CSA principals and directors, assistant
11 principals, EAs, supervisors of, etc., across the
12 city of New York. Just to put it in perspective, um,
13 when I gave you the comparison before because we
14 asked about teacher salaries. I compared a director
15 with 5 years approximately experience compared to a
16 New York City teacher but the director is not a
17 teacher. The director is a principal, basically.
18 That's a principal role. They supervise the
19 building, all the teachers, all the assistants. They
20 make sure that all the children are not only safe,
21 but they're learning. They are, in essence, doing
the work of a principal. And the, the pay parity is

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an issue. The discrepancy is huge, and I'm just going to give you a scenario.

A New York City principal begins at \$174,500 approximately, compared to \$84,500 CBO director. There's a huge disparity, and we, we have new fairly new contracts with our, um, DOE Administrators, and we just ratified this contract, um, last year, approximately a year ago.

Before that, they didn't have a contract for 20 years. They were working under— since 2020, for 5 years, they were working under their old contract. And as stated before, they're all getting their ratification. They got their ratification monies, they got their retroactive pay, they just got their retroactive pay this February, most, most, if not all of our members by now. It is taking long. The pay parity is real. We've, we've taken steps to get there sooner than later, but we're not close enough. And, um, as we see every day, the cost of living is just getting higher and higher in the City of New York.

Um, our mayor sees that. Our mayor wants our families in New York City to have free child care so that they can work, but how about the people who are

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1 working in these centers who are taking care of the
2 families? They need to be able to take care of their
3 families too.

4 So we're all here asking for you to look at them
5 as citizens of New York City too, people who do right
6 by our children and the future of New York City, and
7 let's do right by them.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mhm, absolutely.

9 GREG MORRIS: Sorry, I, I just wanna add one
10 additional point. Yesterday, um, yesterday, same,
11 uh, hallway, uh, hearing room on Civil Service and
12 Labor, uh, Committee had a hearing. At that hearing,
13 the topic of early childhood education programs and
14 services came up, and it was the union folks that
15 were in the room talking about the specific challenge
16 related to reskilling and continuing to offer
17 training, coaching, guiding, and support to folks who
18 have jobs right now.

19 So I'm— I wanna flag that because when I started
20 my testimony, it was about taking a step back to say
21 we are genuinely in a position where there are
persistent vacancies, there's underpayments, there's
a challenge related to the administration of
contracting, there's fragmented training, and there's

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the underutilization of talent— talent that's both
ready to be able to grow, expand, as well as new
talent that wants to join the scene.

So I just want to sort of frame that for this
from the perspective of the union piece is critical,
and, and we need to be in the same room— higher ed,
the union shops, labor, non-labor, philanthropy, as
well as community-based organizations— need to sit
together to strategize on all this. But not one
solution exists to make it clear and obvious. And
that hearing yesterday made it very clear to me that
they're having their own challenges specific to
training their particular talent. And I just want to
highlight that.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you all. Um, I,
um, and we do have to keep going, but I just have one
question for Gregory Brender from Daycare Council.
You mentioned in your testimony, um, data, and I know
that we heard from, uh, the administration that it's
difficult to attain all sorts of data. Can you share
with us what data the Daycare Council has?

GREGORY BENDER: Sure, um, and I'll share some
of the reports, but a few of the pieces, um, in 2023
we conducted a survey, interviewed more than 250

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1 child care centers. 83% of centers reported dealing
2 staff vacancies. Um, our research also demonstrated
3 that 68.3% of centers had one staff member with more
4 than 10 years' experience. Uh, 51.9% of centers
5 reported that on average, newly hired teachers, uh,
6 quit within 5 years.

7 Uh, we also cite some data statewide from the
8 Empire State Campaign for Child Care, um, finding
9 that there were 776 classrooms in community-based
10 organizations closed due to understaffing. Um, some
11 other key pieces of data, um, we can— so are around
12 the differentials, uh, between, um, lifetime earnings
13 in a CBO versus a comparable position in a public
14 school. For, um, a director versus principal, it's a
15 lifetime difference of about \$1.7 million over a
16 25-year career, um, and for a certified teacher in a
17 community-based organization versus a certified
18 teacher in a public school, uh, over a 25-year
19 career, it's over a \$700,000, uh, loss in earnings.
20 Um, a report that, um, as, uh, the director
21 mentioned, in her previous life she authored and led
research on, uh, so we thank her for that great
report as well as many— the great work she's done
had, uh, indicated that we would need at least, uh,

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30,000 new teachers to— sorry, new staff members,
which is a near doubling of the system of about
36,000, um, us current staff members, um, with a rate
of, um, loss of about 5,000 per year.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Wow, thank you, uh, thank
you so much, and thank you all so much for, um, your
testimonies. I'm going to call up the next panel.
I'd like to call up Paula Magnus, Emmanuel Nory, Nora
Moran, Karen Tingley, and Jenny Veloz.

NORA MORAN: Alright. Hi, uh, my name is Nora
Moran. I'm the Director of Policy and Advocacy at
United Neighborhood Houses. We represent New York
City settlement houses who are some of the earliest
early childhood education providers in the city. Um,
my written testimony goes into more detail. I'm
gonna echo a lot of what, uh, the previous panel and
other panels have shared. Um, just around, you know,
if we're really thinking about building a pipeline,
we really can't talk about a workforce pipeline if we
don't address the underlying wage issues across the
board.

Um, you know, that's things like getting back to
the path to parity that was started in 2019, uh, for
center-based workers, things like looking at a pay

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1 scale, um, that Lauren Melodia had referenced and how
2 important that's going to be, um, you know, to really
3 also help people who are in the field now, wanna gain
4 extra credentials and stay in the field. Um, you
5 know, we hear from our network all the time who run,
6 uh, both center-based programs and family child care
7 programs, er, family child care networks, excuse me,
8 about how hard it is to retain workers in this field.
9 Um, we did a survey of our network 2 years ago. Um,
10 almost half of, uh, respondents— 2/3 of respondents
11 said they had vacant positions. Half of those said
12 those positions sit vacant for 6 months or more.
13 These are some of the hardest roles for them to fill.
14 Um, and really addressing the underlying wage issues
15 is, you know, what we feel will be important to both
16 stop the churn of people who are in the field now,
17 going to the DOE because that is their biggest
18 competitor, um, to keep people in the field and then
19 also incentivize new folks to come in.

20 Um, second, it's important to just recognize all
21 this stuff sits within an ecosystem. If we're not
doing clearances quickly, you know, someone is not
gonna wait 2 months to get fingerprinted to be

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1 cleared to work in a program. They're going to go
2 find another job.

3 So that's another important component of this.
4 Um, and the last thing I'll say, someone mentioned
5 DYCD. Um, we have settlement houses who are using
6 private funds to look at some of their DYCD programs
7 like Cornerstones, Beacons, SYP to create tracks in
8 those around, you know, education, child-focused
9 programs, youth development. Um, that's, you know,
10 if the city is really thinking about a pipeline, we
11 encourage them to look at their existing resources to
12 think about how to use those better rather than
13 create something new. People are already doing this
14 work. It just needs to to be coordinated and scaled
15 and things like that. So thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Nora.

15 JENNY VELOZ: Hi and good afternoon. Thank you,
16 Chairs Gutiérrez, Joseph, and Won, and Committee
17 Members for holding today's hearing. My name is
18 Jenny Veloz, and I'm a policy associate at Citizens
19 Committee for Children of New York. And I'm going to
20 echo and reiterate a lot of what everyone else has
21 testified to. One of the greatest threats facing the
sustainability of New York City's ECE system is

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1 longstanding inequities in compensation for the child
2 care workforce. Teachers, staff, directors, and
3 providers in both center and home-based programs are
4 the backbone of the ECE system, majority of whom are
5 women and women of color, and who on average earn
6 about less than other workforces in New York City.
7 And also reiterating what Lauren Melodia says, that
8 family child care providers can earn as less as \$6 to
\$7 an hour after all of their expenses are paid.

9 Now, this results in high turnover, staff and
10 staff shortages, as providers seek higher-paying jobs
11 in the public school system. The inability to retain
12 staff— many providers are forced to close classrooms
and in some instances their businesses.

13 These closures leave families without a vital
14 infrastructure in their communities. Families may
15 have to travel farther and pay more for care rely on
16 families, friends, or other alternative care options,
17 and some may be forced to reduce their work hours or
18 quit their jobs, creating more economic instability
19 for families. We urge city leaders to take a number
20 of actions to address workforce challenges and ensure
the stability of families in the ECE system. First,
21 the city must bring salaries and benefits in

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1 contracted ECE programs to parity with their
2 counterparts in the public school systems, including
3 by instituting longevity differentials for ECE
4 workforce in line with comparable roles in public
5 schools, salaries and benefits must also reflect the
6 true cost of care across the system.

7 This includes salaries and compensation for
8 family care providers who are integral to the 2K
9 expansion. We also urge city leaders to address the
10 particular challenges of providers serving children
11 with disabilities and immigrant communities.

12 Really quick, last sentence. The city must focus
13 not only on adequate compensation for these
14 providers, but on helping student— helping support
15 the push-in of services and resources such as
16 professional development, educational materials, and
17 language access services. We are grateful for your
18 recognition of the urgency of addressing challenges
19 within the ECE workforce and pipeline to help ensure
20 we have a strong ECE system able to serve all
21 children and families in the city. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Jenny.
Emmanuel?

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EMMANUEL NOVY: Thank you for the opportunity to
address this topic and for the advocacy which led to
the creation of this much-needed Subcommittee. My
name is Emmanuel Novy, and I'm the Chief of Strategic
Initiatives at Literacy and Community, often known as
LINC.

In my role, I oversee and coordinate the City
Council's only early literacy initiative, City's
First Readers. At 17 partners strong, each
delivering early literacy programming through a
variety of different ways. We work in public spaces
such as parks, libraries, NYCHA centers. We are in
home clinics, we are in pediatric offices, and we
work directly with families right in their home.
Cities First Readers partners are thrilled that this
Council now has a Subcommittee which can exert
oversight and focus on this important issue: early
childhood education.

We know that a child's brain develops most
rapidly from birth through 5. And we know learning
does not— to read does not begin on the first day of
school. It begins on the very first day they are
born. We also know that the prenatal environment
greatly affects their capacity to learn.

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With the current expansion of child care programs and the consequent expansion of staffing for those programs, it is essential that the care force serving our youngest be trained to implement the strategies that will support children's pathways to school readiness. This training must include not only the pre-reading stimulation that prepares children for formal literacy instruction, but the equally critically nurturing socialization for children, the social-emotional security that allows them to thrive in school.

While this hearing and this momentum of the moment are around child care and the care force, we should not overlook the opportunities to embed knowledge and practices about early literacy in every system, especially our pediatric public health systems. We at Link and our partners at Cities First Readers are excited about the possibilities the Subcommittee presents, and we look forward to supporting your mission and collaborating with you to benefit New York City's youngest readers as they begin their journey on education. Thank you.

KAREN TINGLEY: Good afternoon. My name's Karen Tingley. I'm the Vice President of Education for the

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1 Wildlife Conservation Society. So we oversee, uh,
2 the education and learning that happens in our 5
3 parks, including the Bronx Zoo and the New York
4 Aquarium, where we see about 3.5 million people each
5 year. I'm here to speak about the importance of
6 high-quality science learning in early childhood
7 education and how it connects to this workforce
8 pipeline, uh, that this Committee has been
9 discussing.

9 For the past 3 years, we have led a program
10 called STEM Starters, which is a partnership between
11 New York City Public Schools, community-based, uh,
12 child care center, home-based child care centers, and
13 our zoos to bring science learning into bilingual
14 pre-K classrooms. And what makes this work powerful
15 is not just the experiences for the children, but the
16 sustained investment in teachers and the school
17 community.

16 Through ongoing professional development,
17 co-creation of curriculum, and classroom-ready
18 science kits, we've made measurable impact. Using
19 Teaching Strategies GOLD, our evaluation shows gains
20 in students' use of scientific tools, persistence in
21

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1 problem solving, and additionally, early language and
2 literacy development.

3 These are four- fundamati- sorry, foundational
4 skills that extend far beyond science. And that's
5 the point I'm trying to make. Early exposure to
6 science is not about content alone. It builds
7 identity. When young children see themselves as
8 curious, capable investigators in the world, it
9 shapes their confidence and interests for years to
10 come. And at the same time, WCS is one of the city's
11 largest providers of youth workforce development in
12 science and conservation. And through our long-
13 through the longtime support of New York City Council
14 and the Speaker, WCS has operated the STEM Career
15 Lattice Program, a career pathways program that
16 supports 1,900 young people in internships and career
17 pathways where youth collectively earn about \$5
18 million annually.

19 And what we see is consistent, is that young
20 people are talented and they're motivated. Oh my
21 goodness. Um, but don't- that's right-

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do your best and you can
submit, submit it. But if you can, uh, wrap it up in
-few seconds. Thank you.

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1 KAREN TINGLEY: Basically, cultural institutions,
2 including the SCI Network, where, um, where everyone
3 is kind of supporting both early childhood and, uh,
4 and workforce development programs. I just encourage
5 the City Council to think about the work that goes
6 into, um, this— these efforts at the cultural
7 institutions level. And don't forget about us,
8 because we can provide that needed support for
9 teachers and students.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I love that. Thank you.

10 KAREN TINGLEY: Thank you.

11 PAULA MAGNUS: Good afternoon, Chairperson and
12 the Committee. Um, my name is Paula Magnus. I'm the
13 President of Northside Center for Child Development
14 in Harlem, and I want to thank the city folks for
15 staying because I think it's so important that they
16 stay to hear from the public some of the concerns,
17 because it usually is a little bit opposite of what
18 they sometimes present.

19 So I do want to thank them for staying. And
20 we've already heard how there's underpaid and, and
21 all of that, so I won't go into detail that's
already— What I wanna say is that I think, first of
all, the city staff should have met with every

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1 current provider before moving forward. And I think
2 that's extremely important, and you learn from those
3 that's already been in the field doing the work. You
4 are— then you'll hear about how the cost is a
5 problem. I personally know— don't know how you're
6 going to expand when there's already a financial
7 problem.

8 What you may find happening is those that's in
9 the business of doing this will exit the business of
10 doing this, and what will happen is a decrease in
11 child care services. So I think if you don't address
12 the financial piece of it all, the expansion is like
13 a dream that cannot happen. And to not have met with
14 every current provider before a movement was made is
15 a bad mistake.

16 So I just wanted to stress that the finances—
17 what is— what it's all about. And you cannot expand
18 when you don't have the dollars. And we don't have
19 the dollars to support those that is already doing
20 the work. They will exit the field. That's really
21 my comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank you all
so much for your testimony. We have one last
in-person panel, and then we'll switch over to Zoom.

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Deborah Sue Lorenzen, come on up, Latoya Simon,
Joanne Derwin, and Gail Buffalo. We have one seat
left on this panel if anyone has not testified. No
do-overs, only if you have not testified. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED: They trying to get the whole 2
minutes, right?

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No, you don't get 4
minutes. Thank you so much. Okay, you can get
started whenever. Thank you. Uh, now it's on.

GAIL BUFFALO: Hello. Hi, I'm Gail Buffalo. I'm
an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education
at City College's Worker for Education, just half a
mile down Broadway. Um, I was struck by the numbers
in CUNY, the 3,630 13 undergraduates currently in,
uh, programs leading towards a Bachelor's of Science
in Early Childhood Education. Of the 862 students
represented at senior college level, 323 are in my
program. Half a mile down the street at the Center
for Worker Education, since 2005, we've provided a, a
Bachelor's of Science leading to initial teacher
certification. To working early childhood teachers
across the city. And they've always been with labor.
That's how they got, they got connected to the Center
for Worker Education.

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1 And so, um, what I, what I wanna paint a picture
2 of in, in the next minute is just in listening to you
3 all. I also am a 3K mom. I'm a recipient of a grant
4 from PDI when I was doing my doctoral research at
5 Teachers College. And I was a consultant at PDI when
6 they got so many teachers credentialed who needed the
7 support to pass the certification exams. Um, ah,
8 there are so many things that I want to say, but I
9 wanna say the things that I think would be most
helpful to you now.

10 My vision for early childhood professionalization
11 over, like, the lifespan of my career and the work
12 that I wanna do with teachers is this, this naming
13 that professionalization is associated with the
14 certification, but that is not an indicator of
15 quality. And so when we think about Article 47, we
16 really need to look at how quality is being named in
17 Article 47 to give us some, a runway to, uh, uh,
Council Member Joseph's dream that not anybody is
left behind.

18 So one thought of many, and maybe there'll,
19 there'll be some opportunities for questions later,
20 but, um, one thought is what if every certified
21 teacher and director and CBOs could have the

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1 opportunity to unionize with UFT as a starting point
2 for that representation and the motivation to stay in
3 the CBOs. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

5 LATOYA SIMON: Good afternoon, Chair, and Members
6 of the Subcommittee. My name is Latoya Simon. I am
7 the Director and Founder of Sim Friend Academy, and
8 I'm also a certified teacher from birth to second-
9 sixth grade. Um, I'm here today to urge you to not
10 overlook or devalue the work experience of the CBO
11 staff. And we are also non-unionized. So the
12 salaries that you've been hearing, our staff receive
13 less than that.

14 Um, I'm kind of gonna pivot to a different area.
15 specifically on retention, because I feel as though
16 you're working on creating this pipeline where we can
17 recruit qualified staff, but we have to look at
18 retention, right? We don't want to recruit all of
19 these beautiful staff, qualified, educated staff
20 members, for them to leave us within 5 years. And
21 that is the current situation.

Um, I'm not sure if anyone touched upon this, but
with the pathways that the DOE currently have for
teachers in the Teaching Fellows Program, I feel that

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1 is something that we can tap into to allow CBO staff
2 members to become a part of it. It's something
3 that's already existing. It's something that we can
4 scale on because, believe it or not, the requirements
5 are very similar to what CBOs have to go through,
6 right?

7 The only difference that I see— I actually
8 created a side-by-side chart, and the only difference
9 that I see is that actually CBOs provide longer
10 training to their staff. DOE fast-tracks it. The
11 other difference that I see is that, of course, the
12 benefits are higher for, for DOE staff. Everything
13 else is basically the same. We're going through the
14 same process, our teachers are going on study plans.
15 We have to take different college credits to, you
16 know, be able to obtain our certification. But it's
17 one and the same, minor differences. But if we
18 combine that, we will be less likely to lose our
19 teachers to DOE.

20 And one of the other things that we should do to
21 retain the teachers at the CBOs is to include in
incentives, offer to pay for the tuition as though—
as is being done with DOE, offer various incentives.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

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LATOYA SIMON: That would be all.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. We have your
chart. Thank you so much.

LATOYA SIMON: You're welcome.

JOANNE DERWIN: Hi, my name is Joanne Derwin, and
I'm the Executive Director of One World Project. Um,
One World Project is a pioneering nonprofit community
center based in Brooklyn offering innovative Spanish
immersion educational programs for all ages. OWP
started with 8 children in my living room back in
2012 and now serves over 370 households annually and
employs 44 teachers from 13 countries.

Um, one of One World Project's core programs is
our preschool, which serves 1 to 5-year-olds and
includes UPK. Uh, to help recruit and retrain—train
and retain qualified early childhood educators, we
have developed a comprehensive in-house workforce
development program that provides accessible career
pathways for talented youth, aspiring teachers, and
experienced educators to enhance their skills, gain
experience, and grow within a supportive and
inclusive community.

Um, and we received no funding from anyone to do
this work, but we did it because we needed to. Um,

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1 we think of our workforce development program as a
2 river basin where each program is a tributary flowing
3 towards one shared purpose: nurturing exceptional
4 early childhood educators we need and deserve. We
5 are prepared to expand our workforce development
6 program and recruit, train, and place more teachers,
7 and have applied for a \$120,000 grant in
8 discretionary funding from City Council. We met with
9 the budget office, and we'd love to meet with you.
10 We've reached out lots just to your general emails,
11 um, and I just want to share a little bit. We offer
12 a CIT program for youth between 14 and 17 as an entry
13 point. Uh, we then moved to an assistant trainer
14 program, and then we move on to a lead teacher
15 program. I know I'm out of time, but we put together
16 this- I think it's beautiful, personally, um,
17 information about all the different programs, how
18 they are connected, and we'd really love to talk to
19 you more about the work we're doing. Yeah, we'll
20 make sure- I think if we can just make sure to set up
21 a time. Thank you.

JOANNE DERWIN: Thanks so much.

DEBRA SUE LORENZEN: Good afternoon. My name is
Debra Sue Lorenzen and I'm the Director of Youth and

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1 Education at Saint Nick's Alliance. We operate one
2 early childhood center, um, in addition to programs
3 that-- youth service programs for, um, K-12 that serve
4 some 9,000 kids a year. Um, I would like to testify
5 about, um, thinking holistically about the child care
6 workforce. So if we think about the child care
7 workforce stretching from birth to 13 years old, um,
8 then we know that we have one of the nation's largest
9 publicly funded after-school networks. And there's a
10 real connection there, and I think lost opportunity
11 right now that we can build on. Um, through NYC
12 Compass Elementary alone, um, there are 12,000
13 program staff supervising some 107,000 K-5s, and
14 about half of them are K-2s. They're in their birth
15 to second grade certification, if you will.

16 Um, St. Nick's Alliance alone has more than 350
17 staff serving K-5. Um, about half of these staff,
18 um, or as I said, are working with the K-2s, and if
19 given the means and opportunity, might choose early
20 childhood education. Or youth services as a
21 profession. Um, and notably, COMPASS is also
expanding this year. Um, we'll need more workers, so
it's just a little more competition there, right?

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1 Um, so, and DYCD already has existing workforce
2 programs, workforce development programs that could
3 be leveraged. Um, St. Nick's Alliance operates many
4 of them with the largest, um, SYEP provider in, in
5 Brooklyn. For example, we have AmeriCorps members,
6 we have all of these youth service workers who might
7 want to go into the field. But I have to honestly
8 say, it is difficult for me to advocate for them to
9 pursue a career in early childhood education knowing
10 they're going to make less than, um, less than
11 they're making as a youth worker, part-time youth
12 worker. It just doesn't make sense.

13 Um, so I think we're really- if we could look- if
14 City Council could work with DYCD and DOE and DOH to
15 look at this holistically. I think we might come out
16 with a better product at the end.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much. Thank
18 you all for your testimony. Do you have any
19 questions? No questions? No? Okay, well, I thank
20 you all so much. If you have not submitted
21 testimony, I know you were writing as you went along,
please do submit the testimony says via email so we
review, and we'll see you all very soon. We do have
a hearing next week, um, a joint hearing, um, with,

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uh, the Health Committee, and we're expecting DOHMH
to be there as well. So you can come give us your 2
minutes then too, just in case but we'll be in touch.
Thank you.

Um, okay, we're gonna move on to Zoom. No, don't
leave. We all stay. You stay. No, you can leave.
We're going to start with Rebecca Schneider Kaplan.
Okay, we're gonna start with Rebecca Schneider Kaplan
on Zoom.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

REBECCA SCHNEIDER KAPLAN: Hello, can hear me?

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, we can, Rebecca.
I'm so sorry.

REBECCA SCHNEIDER KAPLAN: Sorry, I apologize.
Thank you so much for allowing me to speak today. My
name is Rebecca Schneider Kaplan, also known as Miss
Becky, and I'm a proud UPK 4 teacher at Stepping
Stones Preschool in Staten Island, New York. I
support the proposed child care workforce grant and
services program. But let me be clear, I cannot
support it without reform of the current system
first. I believe that we should be hired by the DOE
directly and gain union membership in the UFT,

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1 because right now the system is not just strained,
2 it's breaking the people who hold it together.

3 Yes, we need to recruit a new generation into
4 early childhood education, but how can we do that
5 honestly when the current workforce is underpaid,
6 undervalued and undersupported. CBO centers weren't
7 given the opportunity to RFP to show our real costs
8 and what salary should be and include all union costs
9 for the owners and directors. If they're able to
10 show real costs and get paid what is due to them,
11 they will be okay.

12 If my own child came to me and said they wanted
13 to be a teacher in a community-based organization
14 today, I would tell them not to do it with the way
15 things are, not because the work isn't meaningful,
16 but because the conditions are unstable. Many new
17 employees in UPK centers are actually DOE employees
18 and UFT members.

19 So where is the incentive for anyone else to work
20 in a CBO? Our programs also lack crisis teams. That
21 is really essential, um, to have in every pre-K
setting with the increase in a lot of, um, in the,
the need for services. Um, I'm not embarrassed to
say I feel frustrated. I'm already doing this work

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and I do not feel respected or valued for it. I cannot afford my student loans. I paid hundreds of dollars for child care and I'm doing the job of an educator, but I am not treated like a DOE employee. So I ask, how do we justify investing in a future workforce while neglecting the one that exists today? Support this legislation, but pair it with real immediate reform, because without that—

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired—

REBECCA SCHNEIDER KAPLAN: This is not the issue, it's a replacement plan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Rebecca. And please, um, it's good to see you. Please submit your testimony so that we have everything. Thank you. Next, I want to call on Shanita Bowen.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SHANITA BOWEN: Good afternoon Joint Committee Chairs and Members of the City Council. My name is Shanita Bowen. I'm a former family child care educator of 16 years in the Bronx. I'm Chief Operating Officer for ECE on the Move, a grassroots organization representing nearly 800 family child care educators and the parents that they serve. And

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I'm also co-chair of the steering committee for
Empire State Campaign for Child Care.

I wanna be clear, if we're serious about building
a workforce pipeline, we must start with the
workforce we already have. Before you recruit new
educators, you must stabilize, invest in, and
preserve the existing family child care workforce,
especially the owner-operators who are the foundation
of the system.

Right now, the conditions are pushing people out,
not bringing them in. We already know the barriers:
low wages that don't reflect the true cost of care,
burnout from 10 hours a day with no structural
support, lack of benefits, no retirement, no safety
net, competition from better-paying sectors including
the DOE roles, and layered on top of that, a market
rate system that does not work for providers serving
the subsidy families.

These rates stemming from a statewide survey
keeps our rates artificially low by tying them to
what families can pay instead of what care truly
costs. In subsidy-dependent communities, that
guarantees that providers will be underpaid. Also, a
waiting list— thousands of children— creating

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1 instability and fear for providers who rely on the
2 enrollment. And policies that look good on paper but
3 are not accessible in practice, like the 15%
4 differential for extended hours. Where is it at? So
5 let me say this plainly: you cannot build a new
6 workforce on a broken foundation. If educators can't
7 afford to pay themselves, if they can't afford their
8 staff, they can't afford support, to access to
9 support, if they see—

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony.
11 Time has expired.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You, you have, you have
13 10 more seconds.

14 SHANITA BOWEN: Okay, they will leave, and they
15 are leaving, and we need a cost of care model
16 immediately, one that reflects our expenses and
17 eliminate the waiting list, please, so we can fill
18 our slots. Thank you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, thank you. Next,
20 Lacey Peters.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

LACEY PETERS: Hi, and please excuse, um, me
being literally on the ground, but this is— I'm Lacey
Peters and this is Cyrus. Uh, he's my 10-month-old

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1 son. I'm on faculty at Hunter College, part of the
2 City University System, obviously. Um, and I just
3 wanted to, uh, be here today to listen in mostly.
4 Um, I work with graduate and undergraduate students.
5 I was curious to know about the workforce pipeline
6 issues, but one issue I wanted to bring attention to
7 that hasn't been discussed as of yet is related to
8 private equity. Um, what we've noticed at Hunter,
9 especially among our graduate students, is more and
10 more, uh, people are working in Bright Horizons, and
11 the reason they're doing that is because Bright
12 Horizons is offering them tuition, um, reimbursement
13 or paying their tuition to go to school and get the
14 credentials and their licensing. But, um, the issue
15 being it's wonderful that students are getting this
16 kind of support financially speaking, but the
17 problems are that now they're working in these
18 for-profit private equity-backed programs, um,
19 encroaching on early childhood and teacher education.

20 And we know too that private equity has its —uh,
21 tentacles in the curriculum that's being used in the
3K and Pre-K for All programs. And so we just— as we
continue with this expansion, I would just want to be
particularly mindful of how, um, dangerous this can

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1 be, what types of precedent we're setting, uh, when
2 perhaps we're putting profit over, uh, children,
3 perhaps, um, or using children as points of data or
4 dollars.

5 Um, and so mostly that's all I really wanted to
6 say. I'm sorry, a little disoriented. I would also--

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You're doing great.

8 LACEY PETERS: My time is up. Um, there's so
9 much nuance to offer too about what's happening at
10 CUNY related to early childhood programs. So happy
11 to work in collaboration with anyone, and Dr. Buffalo
12 being there too, I know, is, uh, for some also
13 additional insight. But it's really good work that's
14 happening, and there is more being done to help
15 create articulation agreements between the 2-year and
16 4-year institutions. Do things like acknowledge
17 credit for prior learning so that experiential, uh,
18 learning-- like, what is happening when teachers are
19 working day in and day out to do this job, uh, counts
20 for something like a student teaching credit and so
21 on. So we should definitely continue conversations
so that we can create more pathways that lead to the
equity and quality we hope to aspire to as we expand
our universal programs.

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Lacey, and
congrats. You have an amazingly well-behaved child
while you're on Zoom. That's impressive. My kid
would have been crying. And thank you, thank you for
listening in.

Next up, next up, we have Muqing Hu.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MUQING HU: Can, can you— I'm not sure if you
can— can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes.

MUQING HU: Great. Um, hold on. So, hi
everybody, I'm, um, Muqing. Thank you for, um,
holding, you know, like, a webinar like this. Um,
I'm the Education Director at Bean and Sprout. Um,
this is a Montessori school. Bean and Sprout is
Montessori programming Woodside, serving children
from 6 months to, um, 5 years old, so pre-K.

Uh, since opening in 2023 and receiving our
permit in July 2024, we have built stable classroom
routines, strong family partnerships, and a program
that reflects the needs of our community. Our
approach basically combines a consistent Montessori
model with trilingual, um, Spanish, Mandarin, and
English education to support each child's

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development. We focus on key outcomes such as independence, language development, attention span, and self-regulation, skills that are essential for kindergarten readiness.

So despite the strong foundation and growing demand from families, we have not received 3K and UPK seats from the DOE over the past 2 years. We've been trying very hard, and this has limited access for families who are actively seeking high-quality, you know, developmentally appropriate Montessori education. And I believe this probably is the only Montessori, you know, school in this area, and it creates a gap not only in access but also in equity.

Um, the, the lack of 3K and UPK seats also presents, you know, the operation— operational challenges. In Montessori program, it is already difficult to hire teachers who are Montessori trained, and all the, you know, I would say the qualified group teachers tend to work for public schools. They don't want to come to a private school.

Um, this becomes even more challenging when public funding, strong story pathways, making it harder to build and maintain consistent high-quality

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1 teaching teams. Um, again, we understand that, you
2 know, seat allocation is complex. However, we really
3 respectfully ask for consideration of programs like
4 ours, um, basically who has a lot of families who are
5 seeking high-quality education who want to join our,
6 uh, program.

7 So we hope to partner with the DOE to, to
8 increase access and ensure that more children can
9 benefit from a strong early learning foundation.
10 That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much. Next
12 we have Tarmo Kirisimae.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

14 TARMO KIRISIMAE: Very good on the pronunciation.
15 Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Won, Chair
16 Gutiérrez, and Members of the Committee. My name is
17 Tarmo Kirisime, and I'm test- testifying on behalf of
18 the Consortium for Worker Education, CWE, where I
19 serve as the Director of Child Care Initiatives. We
20 serve as the workforce development arm of the New
21 York City Central Labor Council, providing training,
education, and child care services to 33 unions and
their affiliated locals each year.

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CWE supports our child care system in true, in two— excuse me— crucial ways: assisting families in accessing affordable care and training child care workers. Through our facilitated enrollment and scholarship programs, we connect working families to vouchers and subsidized care.

Additionally, we fund training for unionized child care workers and through the We Rise Nanny Training Program, educate at-home providers. We know that building a truly universal child care system will require a major upscaling of the workforce.

A persistent gap we work with to address is care for parents who work non-traditional hours, episodic workers, and families with children who have special needs. The Administration's expansion of 2K hours from 8:00 AM to 6:00 p.m. is a meaningful step, however, New York City is a 24-hour city with a 24-hour workforce. Parents who work in healthcare, transportation, and hospitality can face real challenges outside that window. For the thousands on the voucher waitlist, the options are often informal, informal arrangements, job-threatening compromises, or expenses that stretch family budgets to the breaking point.

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One of the most direct ways to support this population is by investing in training for legally exempt providers and helping them obtain licensure so they can serve more children. These providers typically operate in home-based settings, which are often the best fit for workers with non-traditional schedules or children with special needs.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

TARMO KIRISIMAE: We are encouraged by the legislation that's being introduced to educate child care workers and build capacity. As the, as the, as these initiatives rollout, CWE stands ready to partner with the Council on further training initiatives. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much. The next person we have is Carolyn Cleveland.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CAROLYN CLEVELAND: Um, good afternoon, Chair Gutiérrez, Chair Won, and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Carolyn Cleveland, and I'm Chief Operating Officer at the Kennedy Children's Center. We are a city-contracted 4410 program, and we serve more than 400 preschoolers with special needs in Harlem and the Bronx. You have heard from

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1 many of my CBO peers about the staffing crisis, but
2 I'm here to talk about why our schools are 100% fully
3 staffed. The city has highlighted the need for
4 pathways for non-traditional teacher candidates, but
5 we're already making that vision a reality.

6 Since 2017, we have run a community-based Grow
7 Your Own Pipeline program that recruits, trains, and
8 certifies, uh, diverse adults directly from our local
9 communities. We train about 100 adults annually to
10 become certified teacher assistants, and to date
11 we've trained more than 500 people. Graduates can
12 then enter our registered apprenticeship program and
13 work toward debt-free teacher certification and
14 school administrator certification and they're
15 working full-time in early childhood classrooms.

16 We were able to convert our existing Grow Your
17 Own program into a registered apprenticeship program,
18 thanks in large part to a startup grant from the
19 Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development,
20 for which we're very grateful. Um, and it has
21 underwritten critical program components like
coaching, supervision, and wraparound supports like
child care and tutoring that make it possible for

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non-traditional teacher candidates to actually
balance work, school, and life.

Currently employ more than 30 apprentices, which
as far as I know may make us the largest sponsor of
education apprentices in New York State at this
point. So KCC is a living proof that the Grow Your
Own model works, but it needs ongoing sustainable
funding to reach its full potential, not just
one-time and startup investments. So I wanna urge
the city to invest in scaling models like ours, and
we would love to partner even more closely with you
to do so, so that we can really build a strong,
diverse early childhood workforce. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much. Um,
and before we conclude, I just want to make sure that
we did not accidentally miss any panelists on Zoom.
No hands up. We're good. Alright. I want to thank
my illustrious Co-Chairs, Chair Rita Joseph, Chair
Julie Won, and of course, uh, the staff and all the
people, uh, that came to testify. Thank you all so
much. Good night. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date August 9, 2026