

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY JOINTLY
WITH THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

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Of the

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COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

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December 16, 2020

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Start: 10:11 a.m.

Recess: 2:40 p.m.

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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 3)

13

B E F O R E: Helen K. Rosenthal,
Chairperson for Committee on Women
and Gender Equity

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Mark Treyger,
Chairperson for Committee on
Education

16

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COUNCIL MEMBERS:

19

Diana Ayala
Laurie A. Cumbo
Ben Kallos
Brad S. Lander
Inez Barron
Alicka Ampry-Samuel

20

21

22

Daniel Dromm
Farah N. Louis
Robert E. Cornegy
Stephen Levin

23

24

Mark Levine
Ydanis Rodriguez

25

Deborah Rose
Barry Grodenchik

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

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Rafael Salamanca

Eric Ulrich

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Joseph Borelli

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Jacqueline Ebanks
Executive Director of the New York City
Commission on Gender Equity

Josh Wallack
Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education
and Student Enrollment at the Department of
Education

Emmy Liss
Chief Operating Officer for the Division of Early
Childhood Education and Department of Education

Susan Haskell
Deputy Commissioner of Youth Services at the New
York City Department of Youth and Community
Development

Lisa Caswell
Day Care Council of New York Senior Policy
Analyst

Randi Levine
Policy Director of Advocates for Children of New
York

Tammie Miller
Chair of the United Federation of Teachers,
Family, Childcare Providers Chapter

Amanda Kogut-Rosenau
Vice President of programs at Nontraditional
Employment for Women or NEW

Gregory Brender
United Neighborhood Houses

Mary Cheng
Chinese American Planning Council

Debra Sue Lorenzen
St. Nicks Alliance

LeeAnn Scaduto
Hudson Guild

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Karenne Berry
Hamilton-Madison House

Leah Van Halsema
Director for the Early care and Education
Institute at the Committee for Hispanic Children
and Families, CHCF

Daryl Hornick-Becker
Policy and Advocacy Associate at Citizens'
Committee for Children of New York

Shana Hewitt
Director of Early Childhood Education at
Sheltering Arms

Lea KixMiller
Program Director at Good Shepherd Services at PS
224 Learning Lab located in Brooklyn

Gladys Jones
Early Childhood Educator in a residential setting
for 17 years

Shanita Bowen
ECE on the Move

Lara Kyriakou
South Bronx Rising Together

Amy Chea
Low-Income Investment Fund

Karen Daughtry
Alonzo A. Daughtry Memorial Day Care Center

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2 SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Computer recording is
3 started.

4 SERGEANT DAUTAJ: Cloud is started.

5 SERGEANT PEREZ: Backup is rolling.

6 SERGEANT DAUTAJ: Sergeant Dane Hope.

7 SERGEANT HOPE: Thank you. Good morning and
8 welcome to the Committee on Women and Gender Equity
9 jointly with the Committee on Education. At this
10 time, would all Council Members and staff please turn
11 on your videos. I repeat, Council Members and staff,
12 please turn on your videos. Thank you.

13 To minimize disruption, please place all
14 electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode. Thank
15 you. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so
16 at testimony@council.nyc.gov. I repeat,
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Chair, we are ready to
18 begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Good morning and thank
20 you for joining today's Virtual Committee on Women
21 and Gender Equity and Committee on Education
22 Oversight Hearing on the Impact of COVID-19 on
23 Childcare in New York City.

24 I am Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the
25 Committee on Women and Gender Equity. My pronouns

1
2 are she, her, hers and I want to start by thanking
3 Chair Treyger of the Committee on Education for Co-
4 Chairing this hearing. His leadership on public
5 education has been extraordinary and I appreciate his
6 time bringing his Committee's attention to this
7 important matter.

8 This is in fact the third hearing on childcare we
9 have had this year. Why would the Council find it
10 necessary to devote so many hearings, so many hours
11 to childcare? It is because childcare is paramount.
12 To the socioeconomic success of New York City. It is
13 because we know that childcare is a gendered issue
14 that disproportionately effects women. We know that
15 single parents, 80 percent of whom are women and
16 mostly women of color bear the brunt of the loss of
17 childcare. It's because we know that when families
18 make difficult decisions during this pandemic, it is
19 disproportionately women who give up their job when a
20 family decides one parent should do so because she is
21 lower paid.

22 Access to affordable quality childcare was
23 limited well before we became the national epicenter
24 of COVID-19 and the scale of our problem has grown
25 exponentially. Kudos to this administration for

1 investing in universal pre-K and 3K programs.

2
3 However, most low and moderate income care givers
4 continue to struggle because the City offers too view
5 seats and no afterschool care.

6 While we appreciate the unprecedented challenges
7 of the moment, there is no excuse for the
8 Administration's failure to meet even the most modest
9 goal of 100,000 seats for 1.1 million public
10 students, public school students.

11 We are eight months into this pandemic and many
12 parents have given up. They bring their child to
13 work with them or if they can't, quit their jobs.
14 The fundamental question for this Committee on Women
15 and Gender Equity is, where is the Administration on
16 prioritizing women? Because women, mostly women of
17 color, are losing the gains made by generations of
18 struggle.

19 It is critical to also note the effect of the
20 pandemic on those working in the childcare industry.
21 93 percent of childcare workers in New York City are
22 women and they are primarily Latinx and Black. 25
23 percent live in poverty, while 53 percent have
24 incomes low enough to qualify for childcare subsidy.

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2 Again, the Committee asks, do we pay childcare
3 workers, most of whom are not represented by a union
4 a living wage?

5 So, there is a lot we have to look forward to
6 covering today. I want to thank the members of the
7 Administration for joining us today from the
8 Department of Education, the Department of Youth and
9 Community Development and the Commission on Gender
10 Equity.

11 And finally, I want to thank the families,
12 advocates and providers who have joined us and who
13 have educated us about what is really happening on
14 the ground. We know how busy you are, so please know
15 that for those who can't join us or if you cannot
16 stay for the whole hearing and you cannot give live
17 testimony today, you may submit your insights in
18 writing to testimony@council.nyc.gov until Saturday
19 at 10 a.m. Your testimony is invaluable as we
20 navigate a path toward the best interests of our
21 children.

22 Before I turn it back to the Moderator, I would
23 like to thank my Chief of Staff Cindy Cardinal, my
24 Legislative Directory Madhuri Shukla, my
25 Communications Director Sarah Korean[SP?] as well as

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1
2 the Committee Staff for their work in preparing for
3 this hearing. Brenda McKinney Counsel, Chloe Rivera
4 Senior Legislative Policy Analyst and today's
5 Moderator, Monica Pepple Financial Analyst and
6 Elizabeth Arts from Community Engagement.

7 And I would now like to acknowledge my colleagues
8 who have joined us today. Who are present and that
9 is just going to take a nanosecond here. I see
10 Council Members Ayala, I see Council Member Borelli,
11 Council Member Brannan, Council Member Dromm, Council
12 Member Grodenchik, Kallos, Lander, Levine, Louis,
13 Rose, Salamanca and Ulrich. And I think I introduced
14 more than just my Committee but now I will turn it
15 over to Committee Member Treyger, Council Member and
16 Chair Treyger, Chair of the Committee on Education
17 for his opening statement. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Chair Rosenthal.
19 Good morning, I am Council Member Mark Treyger. I
20 would like to thank my colleague, the extraordinary
21 Chair Rosenthal for Cohosting and also leading on
22 this very important oversight hearing with me today.

23 Before I begin my remarks, I would like to note
24 the Committee will hear two very important
25 Resolutions, which I am proud to Co-sponsor. We will

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2 be hearing Resolution 1324, sponsored by Council
3 Member Louis, which calls on the New York City
4 Department of Education to partner with nonprofit
5 organizations to provide onsite pro bono legal
6 assistance at schools to help students and their
7 families with housing issues.

8 Additionally, we will be hearing Resolution 1473,
9 also sponsored by Council Member Louis, which calls
10 upon the New York City Department of Education to
11 provide families of children with disabilities the
12 necessary training and equipment to properly enable
13 distance learning. This is the first time the
14 Committee is hearing these two Resolutions, so we
15 will not be voting on them today.

16 This school year, there have been numerous
17 changes in school reopening dates and school building
18 closures made at the 11th hour, leaving little time
19 for families to prepare and find childcare. One can
20 only imagine the stress parents who work out of their
21 homes feel after learning that their child's school
22 building will be closed the following day.

23 Parents already trying to balance their own
24 schedules with the ever changing one of their
25 children. The least this Administration can do is be

1
2 clear, more consistent and less sporadic in their
3 communication with families. Access to stable
4 childcare is not just critical in this moment. It is
5 vital to ensuring a full equitable recovery and to
6 preventing temporary instability in a crisis from
7 becoming generational economic disparities cut along
8 gender lines.

9 According to New York Times, four times as many
10 women as men left the workforce in September. It is
11 well documented that women are financially penalized
12 in the long-term for taking breaks in employment and
13 that caregiver status correlates with higher rates of
14 poverty later in life. Some of the gender
15 disparities and impacts of this crisis are even
16 suggested in the DOE's data on hybrid learning
17 enrollment.

18 Prior to the last cutoff, girls were only 44.7
19 percent of students in grades 9-12 enrolled in hybrid
20 learning. A drop of 3.7 percent from the middle
21 school enrollment rate. If we fail to provide
22 sufficient access to free and accessible childcare,
23 we will continue to see families, in particularly
24 mothers, making impossible calculations between the
25 cost of childcare and their careers.

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2 We are risking deepening existing gender economic
3 disparities in ensuring that the economic impact of
4 this pandemic on caregivers is generational. None of
5 this even begins to speak to the mental health
6 impacts on primary care givers or trying to maintain
7 a precarious balance between work, supervising remote
8 instruction and remote work and care giving.

9 I want to thank my colleagues Council Member's
10 Rose and Rosenthal for their longstanding focus on
11 caregivers in the intersection between childcare and
12 work and for their partnership on this hearing today.

13 Beyond school building closures, this
14 Administration is failing to provide a sufficient
15 number of childcare slots and coverage time to serve
16 the needs of the families throughout the City,
17 especially families who work outside of their homes.

18 In July, Mayor de Blasio announced that the City
19 would provide free childcare options for 100,000
20 children this fall for those in 3K-8th grade.
21 However, as of October 18th, only about 18,500
22 students were being served in more than 300 Learning
23 Bridges locations. Leaving thousands of students un
24 waiting lists.

1
2 At that time, DYCD stated that they would
3 continue adding seats on enrollment basis throughout
4 the fall, eventually reaching 100,000 slots by
5 December. As of this month, DOE reports a capacity
6 of 45,000 slots for 3K-8th grade, of which 39,000
7 slots have been offered to families. However,
8 current enrollment for the program is still unclear.

9 Secondly, 100,000 is nowhere near enough slots
10 for a school system of 1.1 million students. I look
11 forward to hearing from this Administration about
12 where it is with meeting and expanding this goal of
13 100,000 slots. Additionally, I am concerned about
14 the inadequate hours of operation of Learning
15 Bridges. Unlike regional enrichment centers which
16 were open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Learning
17 Bridges programs operate only from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00
18 p.m. with no afterschool coverage.

19 Additionally, while DYCD continues to operate
20 many of their afterschool programs. DYCD indicated
21 in a call with elected officials that those sites
22 cannot accommodate Learning Bridges students as they
23 have room for the students learning in person at
24 school. The lack of extended day coverage leaves
25 many working parents, especially teachers and other

1
2 school staff in a difficult position as their work
3 day begins well before 8:00 a.m. and ends well after
4 3:00.

5 I am looking forward to hearing how DOE intends
6 to address this critical issue. Also, since the
7 Mayor has stated that some schools will now serve
8 students in person five days a week, will the
9 Learning Bridges sites linked to those schools, offer
10 seats to students from other schools or to students
11 in the remote only option or will they close down?

12 Further, DOE states that students with
13 disabilities are among priority groups to receive
14 seats in Learning Bridges programs but I have heard
15 from advocates that there are too few seats to meet
16 the needs of this vulnerable student population for
17 whom remote learning is already significant and
18 challenging.

19 I have also heard that these programs are
20 illegally turning away students with serious
21 challenges such as autism. This is unacceptable. I
22 am looking forward to hearing how this Administration
23 is ensuring that one of our most vulnerable groups of
24 students are properly served. On top of all these
25 challenges, there has also been a reduction in

1
2 available early childhood seats across the City due
3 to COVID-19.

4 At the outset of this pandemic, all preschools
5 were forced to close with some later allowed to
6 reopen but many independent preschools are worried
7 that they will not survive. According to a coalition
8 of nine settlement house providers, DOE's recent
9 birth to 5 Early Head Start RFP with funding set to
10 begin July 1, 2021 will eliminate a large number of
11 childcare slots. Just among this coalition of nine
12 providers, the provisional RFP awards will result in
13 a loss of 39 percent of the 1,352 childcare slots
14 serving low-income working families they collectively
15 had in Fiscal 2020.

16 Worse extended daycare slots for these providers
17 maybe cut dramatically by as much as 72 percent.
18 These cuts would also impact early childcare workers
19 who are primarily women of color whose annual average
20 is \$40,000 and would result in the loss of more than
21 125 jobs among these nine providers alone. However,
22 DOE maintains that these cuts stem from an effort to
23 redirect funding to neighborhoods deemed to have
24 higher needs and will now result in a loss of seats
25 overall.

1
2 I look forward to hearing more about DOE's
3 rational and efforts to redirect funding and how will
4 they meet childcare needs of lower income families in
5 all of our communities.

6 I want to thank everyone who is testifying today.
7 I just want to thank the City Council staff for all
8 of their great work that they put into today's
9 hearing. Malcom Butehorn and Jan Atwell, Kalima
10 Johnson, Chelsea Bayemur and Masis Sarkissian. I also
11 want to thank my Chief of Staff Anna Scaife and my
12 Policy Director Vanessa Ogle and I will now turn it
13 back over to Chair Rosenthal. Oh, I believe she is
14 at the other hearing now, okay. So, very good.
15 Chair, are you there?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Treyger, you can move
17 on to Council Member Louis.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, Council Member Louis
19 who is advancing very important Resolutions and
20 measures. I want to thank her for her leadership and
21 I would like to please welcome her to say a few
22 words. Thank you Council Member. Let's unmute
23 Council Member Louis.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Good morning and thank you
25 Chair Treyger for the opportunity. I want to thank

1
2 both you and Chair Rosenthal for being staunch
3 advocates for Education Childcare as well Gender
4 Equity.

5 During the onset of the pandemic, the transition
6 from classroom instruction to distant learning became
7 a new challenge for educators, administrators,
8 parents and students. We uncovered the gravity of
9 the digital divide that left Black and Brown students
10 disconnected and disengaged. The shortage of digital
11 devices, no access to high speed internet and
12 computer illiteracy became an unforeseeable obstacle
13 that hindered student progress.

14 I represent District 45, a culturally diverse
15 community where the parents of school aged children
16 have limited English proficiency. They are working
17 one or more jobs to make ends meet yet determined
18 that education must remain a priority for their
19 children. Despite repeated attempts by parents to
20 find technical support and guidance on how to
21 navigate the digital platform, they could not reach
22 specialists to troubleshoot tech issues. Parent
23 struggled. They juggled their new roles as guardian,
24 breadwinner, educator and IT Technicians. Aside from
25

1
2 these challenges, families face economic housing and
3 food insecurity.

4 I sponsored two Resolutions that would serve as a
5 lifeline by expanding access for families to much
6 needed resources during a critical time. In an ever
7 changing world, families need stability and a sense
8 of security before they can focus on education of
9 their children. Reso 1324 calls on the New York City
10 Department of Education to partner with nonprofit
11 organizations to provide onsite pro bono legal
12 assistance at schools to help students and their
13 families with housing issues. Reso. 1473 calls on
14 the Department of Education to provide families of
15 children with disabilities the necessary training and
16 equipment to properly enable distance and remote
17 learning.

18 We cannot leave our families and our scholars to
19 fend for themselves. They need a roadmap to success.
20 So, no one is left behind and regardless of their
21 ability. We must ensure that any and all assistance
22 needed to properly execute distance learning is
23 readily available to all of our scholars. Many of us
24 do not know the personal struggles that students and
25 parents are facing but the one constant, is that

1
2 every school community feels like home. These
3 institutions have become a place of learning,
4 education, refuge and unconditional support.

5 I want to thank you Chair Treyger for Co-
6 Sponsoring these bills with me and for the
7 opportunity to discuss these Resolutions and to work
8 collaboratively to create a more equitable future for
9 our next generation. Thank you so much.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you Council Member
11 Louis. I would now like to acknowledge that we have
12 been joined by some additional Council Members. I
13 see Council Member Ampry-Samuel. I think that's it
14 for now. Oh, Council Member Cumbo if I hadn't
15 mentioned her before.

16 Okay, now I would like to turn it over to Senior
17 Policy Analyst Chloe Rivera who will review some
18 procedural items related to today's hearing and call
19 the first panel, thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Rosenthal.
21 My name is Chloe Rivera and I am the Senior Policy
22 Analyst to the Committee on Women and Gender Equity
23 at the New York City Council. I will be Moderating
24 today's hearing and calling panelists to testify.

1
2 Before we begin, please remember that everyone
3 will be on mute until I call on you to testify.
4 After you are called on you will be unmuted by a
5 member of our staff. Note, that there will be a few
6 second delay before you are unmuted and we can hear
7 you. For public testimony, I will call up
8 individuals in panels. Please listen for your name,
9 I will periodically announce the next few panelists.

10 Once I call your name, a member of our staff will
11 unmute you, the Sergeant at Arms will set a clock and
12 give you the go ahead to begin your testimony. All
13 public testimony will be limited to three minutes.
14 After I call your name, please wait for the Sergeant
15 at Arms to announce that you may begin before
16 starting your testimony.

17 Before I start with the protocols, I would like
18 to recognize that Council Member Rodriguez has joined
19 this hearing.

20 The first panel will include representatives from
21 the New York City Commission on Gender Equity and the
22 New York City Department of Education, followed by
23 Council Member questions then public testimony. In
24 order of speaking, we have Jacqueline Ebanks
25 Executive Director of the New York City Commission on

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2 Gender Equity, Josh Wallack Deputy Chancellor for
3 Early Childhood Education and Student Enrollment at
4 the Department of Education and Emmy Liss Chief
5 Operating Officer for the Division of Early Childhood
6 Education and Department of Education. And here for
7 questions and answers, we also have Susan Haskell
8 Deputy Commissioner of Youth Services at the New York
9 City Department of Youth and Community Development.

10 I will now administer the oath of the
11 Administration. When you hear your name, please
12 respond once a member of our staff unmutes you.

13 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth
14 and nothing but the truth before this Committee and
15 to respond honestly to Council Member questions?
16 Executive Director Ebanks?

17 JACQUELINE EBANKS: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Chancellor Wallack?

19 JOSH WALLACK: I do.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Operating Officer Liss?

21 Let's move onto Deputy Commissioner Haskell.

22 EMMY LISS: Sorry, I was not able to unmute.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, I mean, okay thank you
24 and Deputy Commissioner Haskell please. Waiting to
25 unmute Deputy Commissioner Haskell, sorry about that.

1
2 I am not sure, having issues with unmuting Deputy
3 Commissioner Haskell. Alright, we will move on and
4 hopefully address that issues moving forward. We
5 will now hear from Executive Director Ebanks. You
6 may begin your testimony once a member of our staff
7 unmutes you.

8 JACQUELINE EBANKS: Good Morning Chairs Rosenthal
9 and Treyger and members of the Committee on Women and
10 Gender Equity and the Committee on Education. I am
11 Jacqueline Ebanks, Executive Director of New York
12 City's Commission on Gender Equity and I am joined
13 today by my colleagues Josh Wallack, Deputy
14 Chancellor for Early Childhood Education and Student
15 Enrollment at the Department of Education and Susan
16 Haskell Deputy Commissioner of Youth Services at the
17 Department of Youth and Community Development.

18 Before beginning my testimony, I would like to
19 acknowledge the partnership and leadership of Chair
20 Rosenthal and Council Member Diana Ayala both of whom
21 serve on the Commission on Gender Equity. It has
22 been a pleasure and honor to work with you over the
23 past few years.

24 In my role as Executive Director of CGE, I also
25 serve as an advisor to the Mayor and First Lady on

1
2 policies and issues affecting gender equity in New
3 York City for all girls, women, transgender, gender
4 non-binary and gender nonconforming New Yorkers.

5 Throughout the tenure of the de Blasio
6 Administration, we have been steadfast in our
7 commitment to promote equity, excellence and fairness
8 for all New Yorkers. From providing free, full-day
9 Pre-Kindergarten to all four-year-old's and expanding
10 this program to three-year-old's, to enshrining
11 rights for pregnant and parenting New Yorkers, among
12 other important efforts. This Administration strives
13 to ensure that all New Yorkers have opportunities to
14 thrive regardless of gender identity, gender
15 expression or background.

16 It is within this context that CGE works across
17 city agencies, to create deep and lasting
18 institutional commitment to tearing down equity
19 barriers within our City. CGE operates within three
20 focus areas. They are Economic Mobility and
21 Opportunity, Health and Reproductive Justice and
22 Safety. We use a human rights framework and an
23 intersectional gender lens.

24 During my testimony I will discuss the
25 intersection of gender equity and childcare provision

1
2 and will highlight the work of the de Blasio
3 Administration is doing to advance child care access
4 in New York City, particularly during these
5 unprecedented times as the city, nation and globe
6 wrestle with the COVID-19 pandemic.

7 This pandemic reminds us, yet again, that
8 economic inequities have disastrous effects on our
9 health, safety and overall well-being. This is
10 clearly visible when we examine the unique challenges
11 women have faced over the past eight plus months,
12 both at home and at work, which have now become one
13 of the same place because of the pandemic.

14 As is now common knowledge, the industry's most
15 likely to employ women have been the ones most
16 impacted by the pandemic. For example, the retail
17 and hospitality industries, which employ a high
18 percentage of women, have seen a significant numbers
19 of temporary and permanent business closures.

20 Additionally, women who already did most of the work
21 at home are now working from home, taking care of
22 children, overseeing remote learning and continue to
23 carry the majority share of household
24 responsibilities.

1
2 Simultaneously, the businesses, which form the
3 core of essential employers have remained opened
4 during the pandemic and employ a high percentage of
5 women, particularly in the medical fields and at our
6 supermarkets. Taken together, these conditions are
7 unsustainable for women and families across our city.
8 They have caused women to leave the workforce
9 entirely if they are able and they have resulted in
10 what experts are calling a "she-session".

11 Prior to the pandemic, as part of our commitment
12 to putting an end to economic and social inequities,
13 the de Blasio Administration consistently focused on
14 developing high quality and affordable childcare for
15 all New Yorkers, regardless of their background or
16 family income. As a result, in 2014, the
17 Administration launched the nation's most expansive
18 increase of Pre-K enrollment, known as Pre-K for All,
19 which in its first year doubled the number of
20 children previously enrolled.

21 Building upon this success, in 2017 the
22 Administration launched its 3-K for All program.
23 Both these new and expanded childcare programs
24 complemented the City's already existing Early Learn
25 Child Care program, Head Start programs, Child Care

1 voucher programs and CUNY Child Care Centers.

2 Together, this gave us a network of programs that
3 provide childcare and education services to eligible
4 children from ages six weeks to five-years-old in a
5 variety of settings; be they home-based, center-
6 based, or public schools.
7

8 And finally, since 2014, this Administration has
9 advanced a number of policies and legislation that
10 promotes New York City parents ability to adequately
11 care for their child, in spite of life circumstances
12 that may arise. Two such advancements are in 2014,
13 Paid Sick Leave expanded previous legislation to add
14 grandparents, grandchildren and siblings to the
15 definition of family members which workers can
16 legally care for using paid sick time.

17 And then in 2016, we increased Paid Parental
18 Leave by providing six weeks at 100 percent salary
19 for maternity, paternity, adoption or foster care
20 leave. And up to 12 weeks fully paid when combined
21 with existing leave, with an expansion in 2018 that
22 included public school teachers.

23 What we recognize in this Administration is that
24 increasing the availability of high quality childcare
25 and affordable childcare for all New York City's

1
2 children and families is critically important and
3 certainly so now more than ever. CGE focuses on this
4 issues within its economic mobility and opportunity
5 focus area, where we seek to ensure that all New
6 Yorkers can live economically secure lives and have
7 access to opportunities to thrive.

8 Consequently, we deepen our commitment to
9 collaborate with our colleagues at DOE and DYCD and
10 to work with community partners to ensure that we
11 prioritize and meet the needs, the childcare needs of
12 women and families during these pandemic and beyond.

13 Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I look
14 forward to continued conversations on this issue.
15 Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
17 Before we move on to the next witness, I would like
18 to recognize that we have been joined by Council
19 Member's Cornegy and Barron.

20 Now, Deputy Chancellor Wallack, you may begin
21 once a member of our staff unmutes you.

22 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you. Can you hear me now?
23 Great. Thank you Executive Director Ebanks for your
24 testimony. Good morning Chair Rosenthal and Chair
25 Treyger and all the members of the Committees on

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Women and Gender Equity and Education here today. I am Josh Wallack, Deputy Chancellor of the Division of Early Childhood and Student Enrollment at the New York City Department of Education. I just want to thank you for inviting us to testify today about how we are providing childcare in New York City during the pandemic, and for all the support you have provided us over the years for early care and education. Which has been a priority for this Administration.

As we have already heard and just to repeat, Mayor de Blasio has made access to free, full-day, high quality 3-K and Pre-K for All a top priority of this Administration and in partnership with teachers and leaders across the city and with your help and support, we have expanded access to these programs to tens of thousands of children. Helping our youngest learners get a strong start in school and life, and as so many of you have pointed out even already, providing an essential support for working families.

Just as you have indicated, access to early childhood programs is vital, both for the success of children and the ability of mothers and all caregivers to participate in the workforce, continue

1
2 their education and support themselves and their
3 families. And we also recognize that when we
4 continue to make investments in our early childhood
5 workforce as a City, we are also investing in women
6 and their families, as the majority of early
7 childhood program leaders, teachers and staff are
8 women, including many women of color.

9 Following the expansion of Pre-K for All in 2014
10 and 3-K for All in 2017, we reached another milestone
11 in 2019 with the transition of the Early Learn system
12 of contracted early care and education from the
13 Administration for Children's Services to the
14 Department of Education. And now the Department of
15 Education is very proud and honored to support an
16 early childhood system that can serve nearly 100,000
17 children from birth to age five, in settings that
18 span district schools, Department of Education Pre-K
19 Centers, community-based organizations and family
20 child care homes.

21 There is universal access for all four-year-old's
22 in New York City, and three-year-old's in nearly half
23 of our school districts. Across the city, we provide
24 Head Start and other extended day and year programs
25 for families who are eligible based on their income

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2 and needs and we work closely with family child care
3 providers, particularly to meet the needs of infants
4 and toddlers, as well as three-year-old's.

5 We know how important a longer day and year of
6 care are for many families of young children, and
7 while our State and federal resources for these
8 programs are limited, especially in this current
9 fiscal climate, we do hope to expand these
10 opportunities in the future in partnership with you.

11 Since the onset of this pandemic, the City has
12 made it our priority to ensure that families,
13 including our healthcare professionals and other
14 essential workers, could access safe, reliable care
15 and education for their children. Toward this end,
16 the efforts of teachers, leaders and staff at our
17 early childhood programs to support children and
18 families during this time have been nothing short of
19 extraordinary.

20 As you know, the Department of Education's
21 Regional Enrichment Centers or RECs, were a critical
22 support for the City's first responders and essential
23 workers beginning in March when schools closed for
24 in-person learning. As part of this effort, many of
25 our community-based organizations and family

1
2 childcare programs also kept their doors open to
3 provide emergency childcare for children under five.
4 Teachers, leaders and staff in these programs
5 volunteered to take on this heroic task at the height
6 of fear and uncertainty in the City. And they not
7 only ensured the health and safety of children and
8 staff but also created nurturing, welcoming
9 environments for children and families when they
10 needed it most.

11 Simultaneously, the rest of our early childhood
12 system shifted to remote instruction in the spring,
13 helping children learn from home in the most creative
14 ways, hosting virtual lessons, sharing recorded
15 messages from teachers, making regular phone calls to
16 check in with caregivers and offer tips for play-
17 based learning and much more. We know this has been
18 an incredibly challenging time for families and
19 acknowledge all the ways families have been adapting
20 to this new environment and creating as much normalcy
21 and support for their children as possible.

22 I know I speak for everyone when I express my
23 deep gratitude to early childhood programs for their
24 leadership and service to New York City's communities
25 through one of our most difficult moments. I also

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want to recognize the tireless work of my colleagues at the Division of Early Childhood Education. From social workers offering trauma-informed support, to instructional staff who eased the transition to remote learning, to policy support staff who developed and trained programs on new health and safety guidance, to the those who stepped up to take on reassignments at our district schools, and so many more, this dedicated team has been so invested in ensuring the well-being, safety and success of our community-based partners and the children and families they serve and I thank them for this ongoing service to our City.

A critical support we have provided for our contracted early childhood programs throughout the pandemic, is continuing to honor our contracts as programs shifted to offering remote instruction. We also worked with the Child Care Resource and Referral consortium to ensure providers had access to CARES Act funding opportunities. And we have maintained the Administration's commitment to salary parity for teachers in community-based organizations following a significant new agreement with our partners in labor,

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2 District Council 37, as well as the Head Start
3 Sponsoring Board and the Day Care Council.

4 We are currently in the second year of a three
5 year phase in of these salary increases and remain on
6 track to fulfill this commitment. We are continuing
7 to work with our partners in State and federal
8 government to maximize the resources available to our
9 programs. And as we approached the fall, we knew how
10 crucial it was for our students, especially our
11 youngest and most vulnerable students, to be able to
12 attend their schools and early childhood programs in
13 person. For many families, the school or program
14 community is one of the steadiest, most reliable
15 aspects of their lives, with people and resources
16 they can count on.

17 So many aspects of reopening schools and early
18 childhood programs have been unprecedented but the
19 reality has remained the same. Our children need to
20 learn in person with a caring teacher as often as
21 possible. So this fall, we built on the valuable
22 experience of emergency childcare and family
23 childcare providers to inform our broader reopening
24 efforts and the strong support systems we put in
25 place for the school year. Health and safety has

1
2 been our top priority from the outset and we worked
3 hand-in-hand with programs to keep staff, children
4 and families safe as we resumed in-person services
5 that we know are such a vital support to families and
6 communities. We have been encouraged by the very low
7 positivity rate at schools and programs and we
8 appreciate every effort programs have made to
9 maintain the highest standard of safety while
10 providing a caring learning environment for children.

11 We have issued and provided training for programs
12 on comprehensive health and safety guidance, in
13 partnership with the Department of Health and Mental
14 Hygiene and we directly ship 30-day supplies of
15 personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies
16 to all our programs. We continue to support programs
17 through our Situation Room, through which we work
18 with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene or
19 DOHMH, and the New York City Test & Trace Corps to
20 confirm any positive cases and coordinate next steps.

21 We are following the same protocols for close
22 contact quarantine and site closure as we do in our
23 public schools and we are also pleased to offer
24 nursing support to our contracted programs. Nurses
25 are available through our telehealth hotline and

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2 visit programs to help guide their health and safety
3 practices. And staff and children at all Department
4 of Education early childhood programs and affiliated
5 family childcare programs, have priority access for
6 COVID-19 testing at the City's testing locations.

7 As we keep health and safety at the forefront of
8 everything we do, we are also working with programs
9 to ensure that children have an enriching educational
10 experience that we know is key to their development.
11 Our instructional experts have helped guide programs
12 on supporting children's learning in remote and
13 blended learning environments, including the use of
14 technology for early learning, classroom design that
15 maintains social distancing and sharing resources for
16 families to use at home.

17 We have also distributed devices to thousands of
18 early childhood families and launched new family
19 resources like Ready4K, which empowers families by
20 texting them simple ways to incorporate learning into
21 their day in multiple languages. All our guidance
22 for programs has been delivered through frequent,
23 comprehensive communication that is really a
24 cornerstone of our partnership with program leaders.
25 We share updates, resources and other important

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2 information with programs at least weekly through our
3 Early Childhood Bulletin and through webinars, office
4 hours and virtual meetings.

5 Throughout the school reopening process, our
6 youngest learners and their families have been top of
7 mind for in-person learning. During the recent
8 temporary school closure, our community-based early
9 childhood programs and family childcare programs
10 again continued to offer essential in-person services
11 for children and families and we continued to support
12 them in maintaining safe, healthy environments for
13 children and staff.

14 Many of our contracted early childhood programs
15 also act as partners in the City's Learning Bridges
16 initiative, a collaboration between DOE and the
17 Department of Youth and Community Development that
18 provides free childcare opportunities for children in
19 3-K through 8th grade on days when they're scheduled
20 to be remote. There are currently 450 Learning
21 Bridges programs operating for children from 3- K
22 through eighth grade, with the capacity to serve
23 nearly 44,000 students. That number continues to
24 increase as we expand seats across all five boroughs.

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2 As we open new programs, we reach out to any
3 family that has applied and is still looking for a
4 seat in that community and partner with school and
5 program leaders in our community outreach efforts to
6 encourage more families to apply. While we work to
7 expand the program, priority placement has been given
8 to children of essential workers or families
9 previously enrolled in a REC Regional Enrichment
10 Center, priorities to families in temporary housing,
11 children of teachers and school staff, children in
12 foster care and students with disabilities.

13 Learning Bridges programs remained open to serve
14 children and families during the temporary school
15 closure, providing crucial childcare for working
16 families. In order to respond to feedback from
17 families, we have also now added early drop-off hours
18 at approximately 70 of our Learning Bridges and
19 Learning Labs programs. And nearly 130 Learning
20 Bridges sites are co-located with an afterschool
21 program that operates from 3pm to 6pm. DYCD funds
22 nearly 1,100 after school programs across the City as
23 well.

24 We are proud to partner with the early childhood
25 programs that have been such resilient sources of

1
2 support for their community throughout this public
3 health crisis. And looking ahead, we are excited to
4 continue our efforts to strengthen the City's early
5 care and education sector for years to come.

6 This summer, we significantly increased the
7 City's investment in family childcare through our new
8 Family Child Care Network contracts—which include
9 higher rates for providers, greater support for
10 professional learning and family engagement and the
11 opportunity to offer 3-K in family childcare for the
12 first time.

13 Next summer, we will reach another important
14 milestone in our effort to create a stronger, more
15 unified early care and education system when new
16 center-based contracts begin. These contracts will
17 contain pay parity for teachers, an enhanced funding
18 model that accounts for more of programs' fixed costs
19 and greater opportunities for socioeconomic and
20 racial integration in classrooms. We continue to
21 center the voices of providers and the families they
22 serve in all the aspects of our work and recently
23 began piloting a citywide council of community-based
24 program leaders, starting with the leaders in
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2 programs in the communities most impacted by the
3 COVID-19 pandemic.

4 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify
5 today and we look forward to your questions.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
7 Before I turn to Chair Rosenthal, for questions, I
8 would like to remind Council Members to use the raise
9 hand function in Zoom to indicate that they have a
10 question for the Administration. Chair Rosenthal.

11 Let's move to Chair Treyger while we wait for
12 Chair Rosenthal to rejoin the hearing, thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure absolutely and at any
14 time the Chair returns, I will be happy to
15 immediately pass the microphone to her. Thank you so
16 much.

17 Thank you for your testimony. I will begin with
18 a very basic simple question and just would like to
19 kind of hear an answer from the Administration. Do
20 you believe the City of New York is providing
21 accurate coverage, adequate coverage for those who
22 need childcare during the pandemic, why or why not?

23 JOSH WALLACK: I will start. I believe that we
24 are, although we are constantly trying to improve but
25 I believe that we are meeting the need at present and

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2 I will explain why. First of all, we are lucky to
3 partner with so many community-based organizations
4 around the City that are providing right now
5 childcare services to students of all ages. And
6 unlike in the spring, they are continuing to operate
7 as we are navigating this pandemic with our support
8 and we are able to provide health and safety support
9 for them, so that they are able to do so safely. And
10 I sort of indicated, because of that partnership, we
11 have been able to operate those in a healthy and safe
12 way.

13 In addition to that, we have partnered with the
14 Department of Youth and Community Development, again
15 with your guidance and support to stand up the
16 Learning Bridges program, which is a specific program
17 really tailored to provide support to children and
18 families that are engaged in blended learning when
19 children cannot be in school buildings because of
20 social distancing and there, as I said, we have
21 created the capacity to serve tens of thousands of
22 students and so far, we placed 43,600 students on
23 program rosters. That is you know, three times the
24 amount that we ever offered through the REC's and we
25 are serving about, right now, 90 percent of all the

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2 families or we place them on roster, 90 percent of
3 all the priority families that have applied.

4 So, we are keeping up with the demand. We are
5 constantly adding new sites in order to respond to
6 specific locations of the City where we may be a
7 little bit slower than we like but we are keeping up
8 and doing our best in partnership with children and
9 families and organizations to meet this need.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I know that we have
11 been rejoined by Chair Rosenthal. I am just going to
12 have one quick follow up and then I will turn it over
13 to the Chair.

14 Deputy Chancellor, what about the painful stories
15 that we have heard of children with autism being
16 turned away because the City is not able to meet
17 their needs in these programs? And after your
18 answer, I will be happy to pass it over back to Chair
19 Rosenthal.

20 JOSH WALLACK: We are committed to ensuring that
21 students with disabilities get all the support and
22 services to which they are entitled. And again, I
23 think there is a few different answers to this.

24 First, as we have reopened school buildings, we
25 are prioritizing students with disabilities for live

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2 instruction and we are very hopeful that we can
3 continue our progress to serving as many as possible
4 five days a week in our school buildings.

5 In addition to that, we have now 10,000 students
6 with IEP's on the rosters of Learning Bridges
7 programs. Because Learning Bridges is primarily a
8 childcare program, we have not been able to replicate
9 all the services that students receive when they are
10 in DOE buildings. But that is exactly why we are
11 giving priority to students with disabilities as we
12 are bringing back students for live instruction and
13 as more schools move to five days a week, we are
14 learning more about which students will go back to
15 their home schools full-time and will adjust.

16 But we are working on all fronts to meet the
17 needs of these students and we share a goal with you
18 in making sure that that happens in every case.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I mean, I want to be
20 respectful of Chair Rosenthal's time, so I do have
21 follow-up but I am going to turn it over to the
22 Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: No, please, please Chair
24 Treyger, you keep going. You are on a role and I am
25 about to ask the next question you are about to ask,

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2 so could you please continue and I will catch up
3 while you are asking questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I appreciate Chair. So,
5 just very quickly, DYCD has previously told us that
6 students in Learning Bridges are not able to access
7 afterschool programs on their non-school days.

8 Deputy Chancellor, you pointed out that many
9 afterschool programs are collocated with Learning
10 Bridges. Are students in Learning Bridges now able
11 to attend afterschool programs on their non-school
12 days?

13 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, for that, I will – for the
14 structure of afterschool programs, I will turn it
15 over to my colleague from the Department of Youth and
16 Community Development who is with us today.

17 SUSAN HASSELL: Good morning everybody. I would
18 like to respond to your oath earlier and just say I
19 do, now that I am successfully unmuted. And yeah, to
20 continue, I think that may have been a
21 miscommunication on our part. There is not a
22 guarantee for an afterschool seat for a Learning
23 Bridges participant or a Learning Lab participant in
24 an afterschool seat, but absolutely many, if now the
25 majority of Learning Lab students who are currently

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2 attending a lab that's collocated with an afterschool
3 are continuing in the three to six period to get the
4 full day coverage.

5 Absolutely, they are eligible to apply separately
6 to the afterschool program, as many of them are and
7 get a full day access to childcare.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I will pause here but I
9 continue to point out that we still have issues and I
10 don't think that we are meeting the need and I think
11 that kids who really need help in services are the
12 ones who we keep hearing are being turned away
13 because the need cannot be met.

14 But with that, I am going to turn it back over to
15 Chair Rosenthal.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, thank you Chair
17 Treyger. I really, I am going to continue to ask
18 questions but I feel that we have, as I have listened
19 to your questions and the answers, I feel we are
20 getting the vaguest of answers.

21 You know, as we are getting questions from our
22 constituents and hearings stories and learning from
23 advocates that you know children with disabilities
24 are not getting access, cannot access and you know,
25 again, back to the impact on women. I mean, you

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2 know, in the most respectful way, I know your goal is
3 to make sure that people have access to childcare but
4 it is not happening.

5 So, to the extent you could be just super
6 specific about wait lists and numbers and what you
7 are doing to try to know what the wait list is, so
8 you even know how many you know, families need these
9 services. I don't know - it just -

10 JOSH WALLACK: Sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Help convince me that
12 it's not you know third or fourth level run down on
13 the priority pole.

14 JOSH WALLACK: I appreciate the sort of reframing
15 the question and I will do my best because it is
16 absolutely a priority for us and we want to work with
17 you to make sure we are living up to that goal and
18 commitment.

19 So, as I said, I mean, just to be as specific as
20 possible. We invited applications from all over the
21 City. We set an initial goal and we said that we
22 want to make sure that this Administration is
23 standing behind families and children during this
24 pandemic and that in a year where many of our
25 students would be in blended learning, we would

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2 provide a nurturing and safe place for them to be on
3 the days where they could not be in school buildings
4 because of social distancing requirements.

5 And so, we put an initial number out based on our
6 estimate of what we thought demand would be but we
7 also said that we would be careful and thoughtful
8 about standing up the services and supports where we
9 saw demand. Because of course, resources are limited
10 and we have yet to get support from the federal
11 government for any of these efforts.

12 And so, just to say, I mean this is the second
13 big expansion of childcare that I have been a part of
14 and I think we always try to be led by where we are
15 seeing demand. So, what we have seen so far is we
16 have seen roughly 50,000, 50,600 eligible families
17 apply and we now have 43,600 students on program
18 rosters.

19 So, we currently have – we have been able to put
20 80 percent of all applicants on a roster and 90
21 percent of the families that meet one of the priority
22 groups that I mentioned earlier and we are working
23 every day to get those numbers up to a 100 percent
24 and our goal is to make an offer to every family
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2 that's applied to us that's eligible by the end of
3 this calendar year and we are on track to do that.

4 So, I want to reframe a little bit and say that
5 our goal is about meeting the demand and
6 specifically, making sure that we are offering a slot
7 to every family that needs it. That's really the way
8 I would frame the goal and we are on track to meet
9 that.

10 Since we last spoke to this Committee, we have
11 added 4,000 slots, just in the last few weeks and we
12 have made 4,000 more offers. So, the other
13 complexity I think here and then I will stop and just
14 see if this meets the specificity, is this shift that
15 we have been able to make now that we have a better
16 sense of how many students want to come back for live
17 instruction versus remaining remote, the Mayor and
18 Chancellor have put forth the call to offer in-person
19 instruction five days a week for as many students as
20 possible. And primarily of course, prioritizing the
21 same groups that we just mentioned that are priority
22 for Learning Bridges.

23 And so, that has put us in the happy position of
24 shifting again because we may be able to actually put
25 more of our students that are taking advantage of

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2 Learning Bridges into their home school buildings
3 five days a week. Opening up more opportunities for
4 students that might still be in blended or need
5 additional care.

6 So, we are shifting as we go but I think the
7 bottom line is, we have and this sort of goes to the
8 statement I made earlier, we are meeting the demand
9 and we are on track to meet it completely by the end
10 of the calendar year and we are putting a special
11 emphasis on the children and families that need this
12 care the most that are part of the priority groups.
13 And we still have work to do but with your help, we
14 will achieve the goal.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you. You know, it
16 is interesting thinking about from last hearing to
17 this hearing and I appreciate all the work that you
18 have done and the speed and also frankly the
19 challenges right.

20 So one, I am on the Department of Education
21 website, I think, and I think I am looking at the
22 link to sites that are now available and I am
23 noticing a couple of changes. One is that there is
24 not a drop down menu anymore. There is just a Google
25

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2 sheet with every single sight on there. Am I looking
3 at the right thing?

4 JOSH WALLACK: I believe so, yes. We have made
5 the complete list of sites public, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Right, but - and that's
7 great. I mean, a couple of things jump out at me.
8 One is that it looks like every single location has
9 seats available except for five. Like how often is
10 that up to date? I mean, is that true?

11 JOSH WALLACK: We are making offers -

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And what does that mean
13 to you that so many seats are available?

14 JOSH WALLACK: Say that last part, I just - we
15 were both talking at the same time and I couldn't
16 hear.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And I should have let you
18 talk, so you go ahead. I apologize.

19 JOSH WALLACK: No, no, not all, I just couldn't
20 hear the question. I guess I would just say quickly,
21 the sheet is updated weekly. So, there are - the
22 information may be a couple of days out of date but
23 it shouldn't be more than that.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I mean, you know it's
25 funny you know what you know, data. There is all

1
2 those jokes about statisticians and how they never
3 come to the same conclusion. Now I am looking at the
4 data and saying, why are there so many empty seats?
5 Have parents given up and they are not you know,
6 coming back. They don't realize now seats are
7 available.

8 That's sort of one question that doesn't need to
9 be answered. It's just, you know, what do we make
10 sense of this data. The other thing if we could just
11 think about improvements for one nanosecond. I see
12 there is a column for whether or not there is early
13 drop off available. That's great. I think another
14 column should be whether or not they serve kids with
15 disabilities and any sort of specificity there, I
16 think would be helpful because otherwise parents are
17 going to have to call through this list and call
18 everyone.

19 And then, lastly, well, not lastly sorry. I
20 think you have a problem with languages, right in
21 English and I think that is a major glaring problem.
22 And then, honestly I think a lot of people like me
23 think visually, see visually and so I think maps
24 would be helpful. Like somehow if you could put in
25 you know and I don't know, you know, some sort of

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2 map, so you could see, you know, I live here and the
3 closest one is you know, a mile away and this is the
4 name of it.

5 You know, sort of a combination of those things I
6 think would be really helpful and with that, I am
7 going to turn it back to the Moderator. I know
8 people have been waiting to ask questions and really
9 appreciate all my colleagues and everyone here.
10 Thank you very much.

11 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I would like to turn it to
13 Council Member Louis for questions.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Not yet.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, apologies. So, we will
16 turn to Council Member —

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I stopped abruptly, so
18 with apologies, sorry.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we turn to Council Member
20 Kallos please? Oh, I am sorry, please hold.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Let's talk about that
22 transparency. The City Council passes a lot of
23 reporting bills and there is a lot of reports out
24 there and even as a Council Member, I have had
25 difficulty getting my hands on those reports and I

1
2 have found that when things are public, that means
3 that I as an elected official might have access too.
4 And you might be surprised all the nooks and cranny's
5 that reports can be hidden in and so, my feeling is
6 you get what you measure. There is an observer [LOST
7 AUDIO 1:03:58]

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Apologies for that. I will
9 first - if Council Members have questions, please
10 use the raise hand function in Zoom.

11 JOSH WALLACK: I think Council Member Kallos may
12 not know he has been muted. He is still speaking.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Kallos is
14 currently attending another hearing.

15 JOSH WALLACK: Ah, okay, sorry.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I had the same question.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, please remember to keep
19 questions and answers to five minutes. The Sergeant
20 at Arms will maintain a clock and a member of our
21 staff will unmute you. You may begin after I call
22 you and the Sergeant gives you the queue. We will
23 hear questions from Council Member Kallos and Council
24 Member Rose.

1
2 First, we can hear from Council Member Kallos, if
3 he is available or Council Member Rose, I am sorry,
4 my apologies.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting clock.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. It's a very
7 busy day today in terms of hearings. I want to thank
8 both Chairs for even convening this hearing.

9 There has been a lot of issues around enrollment
10 versus actual attendance, so I'd like to know, do you
11 find that enrollment in Learning Bridges and Learning
12 Lab programs often exceeds the number of children or
13 youth who actually attend the programs daily? And if
14 so, do the costs for running these programs remain
15 constant regardless of how many children our youth or
16 youth attend the programs and how are we ensuring
17 that the providers will be compensated the full
18 amount of their FY21 contracts?

19 And will DOE or DYCD compensate Learning Bridges
20 and Learning Lab provider the full amount of their
21 FY21 contracts regardless of daily attendance at
22 these programs? And when should they expect to be
23 compensated and reimbursed?

24 JOSH WALLACK: Thanks, I will start and then turn
25 to my colleagues, if they want to add anything.

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So, no, what we find is actually that families use the service as they need it. And as we saw with the Regional Enrichment Centers over the spring and early summer, that tends to vary you know, as a family needs care throughout the week. And so – but we understand that its critical that our providers have a stable source of funding and understand how they can plan their program regardless of that varying need. We are in a crisis and we have to stand up the service [LOST AUDIO 1:06:55-1:06:58]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And earlier this fall, DOE and DYCD recently informed the providers that they can expand their services that they offer to other schools beyond –

JOSH WALLACK: As they come.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Oh, I am sorry, I thought you had finished.

JOSH WALLACK: Oh, no, I just didn't – no, that's fine. I was just going to note that you are right to say that we did offer the opportunity to expand. I think I froze is what happened. So, sorry, I was going to say that programs are allowed to charge against their total expenses. They do not pay by enrollment or attendance and that was in order to

1
2 provide that stability. Sorry Council Member go
3 ahead.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Oh no, I am sorry.

5 JOSH WALLACK: Tech issues.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I am really sorry; I am
7 having tech issues myself. Earlier this fall, DYCD
8 and DOE informed the providers that they could expand
9 their services beyond the feeder schools. Does this
10 policy complicate keeping everyone under the same
11 protocols if these providers extend you know, the net
12 to keep their enrollment up and does this shift the
13 reliability and burden to the providers to ensure
14 that the protocol is followed and how is DOE
15 supporting these providers and the process? Will
16 there be additional guidance for this support?

17 And just to finish off because my time is almost
18 up, what are the cleaning and disinfecting guidelines
19 for these providers and who assumes the extra cost to
20 keep up the regular deep cleaning?

21 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you for that. I will say a
22 few things in response. So, first of all, we
23 consulted very carefully with the Administrations
24 public health experts before making that shift. We
25 did it in order to meet the needs of families for

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2 care but we would not have done it if we did not – if
3 our experts did not tell us that we could do so
4 safely and in protecting the staff and the children
5 and families in those programs.

6 Those programs are part of the same health and
7 safety operation as our district schools. Any
8 positive cases that come in, go through our situation
9 room. We have seen very low positivity rates in our
10 Learning Bridges programs. Thankfully, they follow
11 the detailed health and safety protocols that our
12 health experts put together. We provided that
13 training and support to all our providers and I can
14 send you a copy of it if you would like to look at it
15 but I think we have been very successful in working
16 with our partners to get that out to providers as
17 they need it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: How are we handling the
19 disparate treatment in terms of districts that find
20 themselves orange, like they become rated orange but
21 the protocols are somewhat different in different
22 districts and they might both be an orange district.

23 JOSH WALLACK: Yes, in all the districts, we are
24 continuing to provide care and education to our
25 students as an essential service. And we, again,

1 consulting with our public health experts have put
2 protocols into place including as you alluded to
3 providing protective equipment, providing health and
4 safety training, providing nursing support, the
5 support of our situation room and training for all
6 the staff in how to maintain healthy and safe
7 socially distant environments.
8

9 And all those protocols together have allowed us
10 to provide care regardless of the zone color. It's
11 the same level of precaution in every area and we
12 know that we can provide with our partners quality
13 care in a safe and healthy way as we navigate through
14 this pandemic.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Who assumes the cost for
16 the additional deep cleaning for programs, for
17 Learning Lab programs? Is the provider responsible
18 for that or is that especially providers that are in
19 schools, or is DOE responsible for that?

20 JOSH WALLACK: We work with our providers on
21 that. We provide the personal protective equipment
22 and we work through – we add to their budget whatever
23 supplies that you know, funding for whatever supplies
24 they need to follow those protocols. So, we are
25 responsible.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. Thank you
3 Chair.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now turn
5 to Council Member Kallos.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. I want to
7 thank the Administration. I want to thank DYCD, DOE
8 for standing up Learning Bridges on a quick timeline.
9 It was something I was advocating for along with
10 Council Member Lander and many others. I know that
11 the initial goal was 100,000 and that I was pushing
12 for 500,000. I think we started at several thousand
13 but how many Learning Bridges seats are we up to
14 right now?

15 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, so right now, we are up to
16 44- we have capacity for 44,000 students across 450
17 sites.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Is that 22,000 slots or -

19 JOSH WALLACK: Yes. We have 44,000, we have
20 capacity for 44,000. We have 43,600 on program
21 rosters and we have seen about 50,600 eligible
22 applications. So, again, as I know you were going
23 back and forth between hearings but I just want to
24 reiterate for others as well, I think that our goal
25 is to of course, is to meet the demand for care.

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2 And so, we set a goal originally but what we have
3 seen is about 51,000 families that need care and we
4 are providing space on the rosters for about 80
5 percent of the total families that applied and 90
6 percent of the priority families and we are adding
7 more seats every week.

8 So, our goal is to make an offer by the end of
9 the year to every family that needs it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Great, on that note, I do
11 want to thank folks for working with us when the
12 school year started. We only had one location
13 serving 60 total children, we now have another
14 location with 200 additional children. I will just
15 share a little bit of frustration, previously when we
16 have worked with DOE to bring PreK seats and find a
17 vendor and they passed all their requirements, we
18 were able to bring them on. And on Roosevelt Island,
19 we were working with one vendor, did not know about a
20 second vender and then the City came with the good
21 news that we are getting 200 slots but then the
22 vendor we had been working with the whole time and
23 even our office and a lot of parents felt like the
24 rug got pulled under them and it is hard to be angry
25 when you got what you asked for but when we are

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2 working with these vendors, it would be helpful if we
3 could be more honest and also even to the extent that
4 they may have different services, even see if we can
5 bring them on along those lines.

6 I have reached out to a lot of providers and what
7 we had when we worked together on PreK was that the
8 City could come in and open spaces for that and when
9 I got to providers, they are just like, how long is
10 this contract. You mean to tell me I am going to
11 sign a lease and open this and it is a seven month or
12 six month contract and I don't know how many folks or
13 things like that. I found buildings who are willing
14 to operate, is there an opportunity for DOE to come
15 in and do at least the learning centers, the spaces
16 with the computers? Particularly in low income
17 communities of color where there is still a digital
18 divide and children still don't have devices.
19 Because it is very hard to make a case for a provider
20 to go through all the process for a six month
21 contract.

22 And I don't know real estate developers and
23 landlords who would like to do the six month
24 contract. They do a six month contract with you but
25

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2 it gets more complicated when you bring in a
3 nonprofit provider.

4 JOSH WALLACK: Yes, thank you for that. We are
5 still, you know, we are still trying to identify
6 additional partners that can work with us and our
7 request for information, which is the way we are
8 gathering information about this is still alive and
9 will be through January.

10 You are pointing out a legitimate challenge,
11 which is trying to find you know, spaces and partners
12 throughout the City and you are right to say like,
13 the additional challenge of trying to mount a sort of
14 crisis response doesn't always match with the needs
15 of landlords for long-term stability.

16 So, we are trying to be creative. We would love
17 to work with you and others and specific providers to
18 try to work something out. I can't say we will be
19 able to do it in every case but we will put our best
20 effort forward to try to make that work.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Deputy Chancellor, I can
22 tell you first hand because this is one of the few
23 days I am in the office, just so that my daughter can
24 have the living room today because I have multiple
25 hearings but like, this pandemic is really hard on

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2 parents and especially where on the East side, one
3 bedroom whole family. She is bouncing off walls. We
4 needed PreK, we go that done. We need 3K from the
5 tip of Manhattan to central Harlem. We don't have
6 it. I think we need it more today than we did before
7 the pandemic. How do we start rolling out these
8 contracts and is there a way for us to say you know
9 what, you can start as Learning Bridges particularly
10 if you are serving lower aged kids and then we will
11 roll you into a PreK contract?

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: PreK is part of equation
14 and Learning Bridges can supplement it but we don't
15 even have it right now.

16 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you for that and I think
17 what I would say is, obviously, this Administration,
18 first of all, appreciate the sense of urgency. We
19 feel it as well and we want to work with you to mount
20 this effort as quickly as we possibly can, as we
21 have.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: My daughter is falling
23 behind socially.

24 JOSH WALLACK: You know, we are with you and so
25 many other families are expressing their concern as

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2 well and we want to partner with them and with
3 community-based organizations to help respond.

4 I think that you are right to say part of the
5 answer here is the City building on the commitment
6 that this Administration has made with your help to
7 creating a comprehensive system of supports for young
8 children and families. LOST AUDIO 1:18:16-1:18:34]

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It appears Deputy
10 Chancellor's screen has frozen. Council Member
11 Kallos, do you mind if we move on?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: When the Deputy
13 Chancellor reconnects, if he could finish the
14 question. It looks like he just reconnected and is
15 waving his hand but I don't have any further
16 questions.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Let's unmute the
18 Deputy Chancellor.

19 JOSH WALLACK: Hi, sorry about that, pandemic
20 times, tech issues. Can you hear me now?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

22 JOSH WALLACK: Great, so as I was saying, I think
23 we feel the same sense of urgency. Want to work to
24 try to respond in any way we can and I think part of
25 this is long-term support from our federal and state

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2 partners to build out this sort of comprehensive and
3 consistent set of systems and supports that we need
4 for our youngest learners and their families and look
5 forward to partnering with you as we have before
6 Council Member Kallos to meet that through.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now move
8 to Chair Rosenthal. I am sorry, Chair Treyger.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much. I
10 just, I want to go back a little bit to earlier
11 questions. Deputy Chancellor, can you repeat again
12 just for the record and just for clarity, the number
13 of children signed up for all the Learning Bridges?
14 Was it 44,000, is that right?

15 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, 44,000 students that have
16 been put on program rosters. So, what that means is,
17 they have been offered a spot and the program and the
18 family are in touch with one another and the family
19 knows they have care available.

20 The actual sort of you know, enrollment and
21 attendance again fluctuates depending on the families
22 need.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And of that number, how
24 many are children with IEP's?

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2 JOSH WALLACK: So, at present, I am just trying
3 to pull up the number now because I am having these
4 tech issues, hold on one second. 10,000 are students
5 with disabilities.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And you mentioned earlier I
7 think to Chair Rosenthal that the education
8 department in the City is you know, trying to shift
9 to five days a week in-person for some of our most
10 vulnerable kids.

11 Can you say with certainty that all District 75
12 sites are offering five days a week in-person right
13 now?

14 JOSH WALLACK: Right now, so, just to be clear, I
15 cannot verify that all of them are. We are working
16 on it now. As of right now, there are about 250
17 schools that are offering five day a week instruction
18 to all the priority students in their buildings.
19 There are 12,500 District 75 students currently in
20 blended learning. 3,250 students are receiving five
21 days of in-person instruction as of today and another
22 6,900 students will be receiving five days of live
23 instruction as of January 4th.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And just for the record,
25 how many children in New York City have an IEP?

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2 JOSH WALLACK: Sorry, Chair Treyger, I am still
3 having tech trouble but I am getting that for you
4 now. Can we move on and I will come back to that in
5 just a moment?

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, I am fairly certain
7 the number is over 200,000. It is somewhere in that
8 range, so I you know, I am not certain that we are
9 meeting the need by the numbers that I am hearing
10 now. And also, you know, there is Deputy Chancellor,
11 that there are children with IEP's who do not go to
12 District 75 but still have high needs, is that
13 correct?

14 JOSH WALLACK: Certainly that's true and that is
15 why we are making it a priority to reopen our school
16 buildings that serve those students and to bring as
17 many of those students back for five day a week
18 instruction as possible.

19 And so, we understand the urgency of that and are
20 working to make that true as quickly as possible.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But currently, it is in
22 fact the case that not all children with IEP's in New
23 York City school system are being offered five days a
24 week in person, is that correct?

25 JOSH WALLACK: At this moment, that is correct.

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2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Is there now a process for
3 families in programs to request and the City to
4 approve accommodations and support needed for certain
5 students with disabilities to participate in Learning
6 Bridges? What is the process and can the DOE post
7 this process online by the end of the week?

8 JOSH WALLACK: I am sorry, can you repeat that
9 question Chair Treyger?

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure. Is there now a
11 process for families and programs to request and the
12 City to approve accommodations and supports needed
13 for certain student with disabilities to participate
14 in Learning Bridges? What is the process if there is
15 one and can the DOE post this process online by the
16 end of the week?

17 JOSH WALLACK: Thanks, I got it now. So, no
18 family should be turned away from a Learning Bridges
19 site first and foremost and we have been working with
20 families and programs to support students needs. So,
21 any family that is having trouble accessing a
22 Learning Bridges program and needs additional support
23 should get in touch with us and we are constantly
24 reaching out to programs as well to make sure they
25 don't need additional support and we will work with

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2 their program to make sure that the student can be
3 supported.

4 Each of our teams, all the agencies that you see
5 here have point people that can respond to any
6 concerns and we have added this to all of our offer
7 letters that when a family gets an offer to Learning
8 Bridges, you know, they hear from us that if the
9 student needs additional support, they can come to us
10 and we will provide it.

11 So, we are trying to be transparent about that
12 and we will continue to put that through all of our
13 channels as well. We appreciate your suggestion.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I would appreciate that
15 because I think there is a lack of clarity on this
16 and there is has just been an uneven application in
17 terms of access and I think that that needs to be
18 revisited.

19 Has the City opened any programs with smaller
20 group sizes?

21 JOSH WALLACK: We are working with our providers
22 in order to accommodate these students but for that
23 specific question, I wonder if I can just turn
24 quickly to Susan, Deputy Commissioner Haskell? Can
25 we unmute her?

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2 SUSAN HASKELL: Hi, yes, yes, I am unmuted. We,
3 right now, all of the Learning Lab programs are
4 funded at the same level for the same level of
5 staffing. The Learning Lab programs we acknowledge
6 don't have the full range of resources that are
7 available through special education supports in the
8 school day. There are some - there are many
9 providers - I mean, as you point out, there are many
10 students in the system who have IEP's. Some subsets
11 of that is enrolled in blended learning and a subset
12 of that has expressed interest in a Learning Lab.
13 Many, many young people with IEP's and students with
14 disabilities are currently being served in our
15 Learning Bridges programs, absolutely.

16 At the same time, there are students who have
17 been brought to our attention who for matters of
18 health and safety have - there have been some
19 barriers to participation in a Learning Lab. We have
20 as the Deputy Chancellor mentioned, we have a contact
21 for families and for providers in those situations
22 and we have taken sort of a case management approach
23 with between DYCD and DOE. We have had some success
24 moving some of those students to five days a week,
25 where we were not able to make accommodation.

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2 The childcare programs have some limitations for
3 example around distribution of medication or other
4 elements that might be required for a young person to
5 attend Learning Bridges and we continue to try to
6 address those needs. We are absolutely going to
7 continue to work and make sure we find a resource for
8 each person.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and just to be clear,
10 the majority of our schools are not offering five
11 days a week because they can't because we still have
12 staffing issues and other issues which quite frankly
13 the Administration has not been transparent about.

14 I have asked repeatedly about staffing at schools
15 and I still have not been given that information.
16 And I also want to note for the record, that there
17 are families in New York City with plenty of money
18 that are paying for five days a week services for
19 their children. But many of our families don't have
20 the means to do that.

21 So, there really is a tail of two school systems
22 really happening literally at the same time and many
23 of our children are falling behind, no fault of their
24 own and that also is disproportionately impacting and
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2 hurting working families and many low-income families
3 in the City of New York.

4 Can anyone tell me, has the City provided any
5 students with a Paraprofessional at a Learning
6 Bridges program?

7 JOSH WALLACK: I will start, can you hear me.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes.

9 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, I will start and then others
10 can jump in. Unfortunately, we are not able to
11 provide just because of the details of agreements
12 with our employees. We are not able to provide
13 Paraprofessional services at Learning Bridges
14 programs and so, again, we are working to bring back
15 students into district schools you know, exactly for
16 this reason.

17 Some programs have been able to work with
18 students using their current staff to give small
19 group and one-on-one support but we have not been
20 able to provide that service.

21 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, this is where again I
22 think the City falls short in terms of the equity
23 test. Because there is a big difference in terms of
24 equality and equity and equity is meeting the needs
25 and if a child has an IEP that requires one-to-one

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2 certain attention and they are not getting that, then
3 that's really not meeting their needs and that is why
4 we continuously hear from many parents, families and
5 advocates to these barriers where actually kids are
6 regressing.

7 I also want to note for the record that you know,
8 we hear if there are schools that are let's say open
9 one or two days a week and if there is multiple cases
10 in a school, the school will be ordered to close, to
11 shut down. And parents still have to feel the brunt
12 of that and children particularly many children who
13 rely on school as a sense of stability, they feel the
14 brunt of that. This has continued disruption and
15 interruption.

16 I am curious to know, has the DOE or DYCD
17 requested funding for the purpose of supporting
18 students with disabilities in Learning Bridges
19 programs from OMB, from City Hall and what has been
20 the response? Because clearly the need is there, the
21 question is, has DOE and DYCD requested funding to
22 OMB to City Hall?

23 JOSH WALLACK: I will start. I will say that OMB
24 and City Hall, I mean, we as a City are unified in
25 our approach here in trying to provide the services

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and supports that children and families need during this time and so, the Mayor, the Chancellor, you know, OMB, all down the line have been very clear that the resources; we will find a way to support children and families and that's why we have been able to stand up these services so quickly and they are working with us to try to ensure that we are meeting the needs with students with disabilities as well.

Deputy Commissioner Haskell, I don't know if you want to add?

SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah, I agree with that statement 100 percent. As I mentioned, you know we have been stuck in a situation taking a case management approach. Part of that has been engaging in some dialogue with our providers to say, you know, what is possible within the limitations of the childcare regulations to do more to what funding would be necessary to add staff. So that if you had a young person who could essentially you know, work independently but needs you know - also needs constant redirection, maybe a one-on-one staff person. Which the typical Learning Lab is really not funded for.

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2 So, we have begun some conversations about that
3 and we are going to continue as I said to look at all
4 options about how we can meet the need for all
5 applicants.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I am sensing that I think
7 there is recognition that there is increased need.
8 What I am not hearing is what has been the response
9 by those with the power to make a decision to apply
10 more resources where clearly there is need.

11 SUSAN HASKELL: I would echo what the Deputy
12 Chancellor said, to say that we are aligned in our
13 interest to meet the students of needs. That the
14 City is fully, you know, all agencies on board
15 looking for the best way to meet the need. It has
16 been a cooperative process.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, respectfully, I feel
18 and I believe you. I think folks at DYCD and there
19 are folks at DOE that believe in this and are
20 aligned. I can't say with certainty that leaders at
21 City Hall are because if they were, we would not be
22 hearing continuously how many kids are still turned
23 away, families still struggling. You have just
24 acknowledged that there are kids not being assigned
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2 Paraprofessionals. You just acknowledged that there
3 are kids not getting five days a week services.

4 So, clearly there is not a form of alignment
5 across City government.

6 JOSH WALLACK: I am sorry, I just wanted to stop
7 to add in.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

9 JOSH WALLACK: I think, I also just want to
10 emphasize that this is, as we said in the last
11 hearing, this is a piece that we are all working
12 actively on right now and trying to make improvements
13 on as we speak.

14 So, we are doing our best and City Hall and OMB
15 are working with us to improve this. And so, we will
16 keep you posted as we continue to hopefully make
17 progress on this point. I just wanted to make that -
18 I wanted to underscore that.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Deputy
20 Chancellor. Deputy Chancellor, of the 44,000 kids
21 enrolled in program, how many are students in
22 temporary housing?

23 JOSH WALLACK: Here we go, sorry, my tech is
24 really challenging me. So, right now, we have 2,000
25 students that are in shelter, temporary housing that

1
2 are on the rosters for Learning Bridges programs.
3 600 students in shelter have actually accepted our
4 offer and are attending at the moment.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And just for the record,
6 how many children in New York City schools are
7 students in temporary housing?

8 JOSH WALLACK: You know, it depends on your
9 definition, whether you are counting students in
10 shelter. There are about 100,000 are in some form of
11 temporary housing.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Over 100,000 students yeah
13 and you said 2,000 students are currently enrolled,
14 is that correct?

15 JOSH WALLACK: That's correct and let me just
16 say, I think we have been doing massive amounts of
17 outreach into shelters, to families through staff and
18 directly to families to let them know about Learning
19 Bridges. I think that what this indicates is that
20 again, we are making it a priority to bring students
21 in temporary housing back into district schools for
22 live instruction and so, I think we believe and have
23 good reason to believe that many of those students
24 are being served in district schools.

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2 We have 24,000 students in temporary housing that
3 are signed up for blended learning, so we know a good
4 number of them are being served that way and then we
5 are reaching out to the others to make sure that they
6 have the coverage they need. And are also reaching
7 into shelters to make sure that students have you
8 know, the devices and support they need to engage in
9 remote learning from those facilities.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, Deputy Chancellor, just
11 again to reemphasize the point, we have how many
12 total school buildings in New York City?

13 JOSH WALLACK: At last count, I believe it is
14 close to 1,000.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We have I think even more
16 than 1,000 school buildings in New York City. How
17 many schools are offering five days a week in person
18 at this time?

19 JOSH WALLACK: At this moment, 200, roughly 250.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, well under just about
21 maybe well under a half, maybe a quarter or so of our
22 schools are offering five days a week in person.
23 Kids need to be somewhere, get services, get help.
24 The numbers we are hearing today I think are very
25 concerning, alarming and chilling. I don't think we

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2 are truly meeting the need. I do believe that there
3 are good folks at DOE and DYCD that care deeply about
4 this work and believe in this work but I don't think
5 that they are given the resources they need to really
6 do this in an equitable and fair way.

7 I also want to just raise something that really,
8 really also disturbs me. I have heard from a number
9 of educators through wellness calls, which they
10 conduct that their children, their students are
11 asking them for hot meals and when I have met with
12 providers about this issue as well, not just at DOE
13 sites but at community-based organization sites, I am
14 being told that there are major challenges in terms
15 of food. In terms of access to hot food, hot meals.
16 Can you tell me how many sites that you know of now
17 offer hot meals to New York City children?

18 JOSH WALLACK: So, I will say that just, we
19 started providing hot meals this week for students
20 that are in person for live instruction when they are
21 in school buildings.

22 So, that is something that we did start this
23 week. There are as you indicated, operational
24 challenges with providing hot meals, such as like the
25 time and temperature, sort of monitoring food safety

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2 to make sure that we are able to provide food in a
3 healthy and safe way.

4 So, our grab and go meals are not able to provide
5 hot food but every meal that we provide at all of our
6 sites meets or exceeds our nutritional standards and
7 we stand behind it.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Are all schools – you just
9 said that schools are starting hot meals this week.
10 This is news to me. I mean, I have asked for a hot
11 meals plan and I was told that one was in the works
12 but we got no update on that. Can you say with
13 certainty that all schools in all zip codes are
14 offering these hot meals?

15 JOSH WALLACK: I want to get back to you on that
16 because I don't have a number in front of me and I
17 don't want to say a number without confirming it.

18 So, I will come back to you with specifics, as it
19 is new this week and there maybe like a phased
20 implementation or a rollout plan. So, we will come
21 back to you on that.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Deputy Chancellor, do
23 you have any reaction to stories we are hearing from
24 our teachers where they felt it was important enough
25 to share with me that a number of their students are

1 asking for a hot meal because they haven't had one in
2 a long time? And they are asking for hot pizza and
3 their school principal wanted to know if they could
4 use school money to order them pizza and they were
5 told they couldn't. And said, they were asking, what
6 can we do as City Policy Makers to just push for kids
7 to have a hot meal? Do you have any reaction to
8 that?
9

10 JOSH WALLACK: And our reaction to it, is that I
11 think that is exactly why we have made this a
12 priority and started to provide hot meals.

13 We, you know again, I think we are all struggling
14 to navigate our way through this pandemic and so many
15 people throughout our system with your support are
16 doing everything they can to make it work. I think
17 that we are trying to respond to that need. I will
18 come back to you shortly with the sort of
19 implementation plan for it but the good news is we
20 were able to make progress and provide hot meals for
21 students that are in for live instruction in our
22 school buildings.

23 And by the way, I stand corrected, we have about
24 1,600 separate buildings for schools and we are
25 trying to get them sort of up and running. As many

1
2 that are open for live instruction, we are trying to
3 get those kitchens up and running and I will come
4 back to you with the sort of phased plan for that.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right and the access to hot
6 meals, is that being also provided to community based
7 organizations, so they can give children in their
8 programs hot meals? I mean, I just want to note for
9 the record.

10 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, no and unfortunately no.
11 So, because they are not at DOE schools and DOE
12 kitchens, again the factor there is being able to
13 deliver temperature controlled meals. So that we can
14 ensure that they are safe and healthy to the 450
15 sites that we're sort of standing up as we go.

16 So, we are not able to provide hot meals to those
17 sites at that time. We provide grab and go meals
18 that are cold, they meet our nutritional standards
19 and we will continue to work on this aspect of our
20 plans as we move through the coming months and I hear
21 that it's a priority for you, as it is for many
22 families in communities. So, we will continue to
23 update you as we go.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, I am very mindful and
25 respectful of temperature controls and rules and I of

1
2 course want to always prioritize safety, but how is
3 it that the City of New York finds a way to do it for
4 seniors with community-based partners for the Meals
5 on Wheels program and others where they do get
6 delivered a warm meal and why is this a challenge for
7 children with providers?

8 JOSH WALLACK: It has been a challenge for us.
9 Essentially, it is part of starting up a new effort
10 and it's the logistics of again, moving meals from
11 the DOE kitchens, which themselves are providing hot
12 meals now this week for the first time. Moving from
13 those food facilities out to Learning Bridges sites
14 and the logistics of standing up that operation.

15 So, I know that that can sound like sort of a
16 bureaucratic operational answer but believe me,
17 behind it is the commitment to make sure that our
18 children have good nutrition as they move through
19 their day. So that they can engage in learning and
20 other activities. We share that sense of urgency; we
21 share the goal and I really am committed to you as
22 long with the rest of the agency and coming back to
23 you and sort of reporting on our progress there.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Just sharing for the record
25 that from feedback I have heard from providers and

1
2 you know, at times kids are just offered a partially
3 frozen sandwich. One provider said that because of
4 delivery issues one day, that they were only able to
5 offer kids a slice of bread. And I do think that
6 this matters and the fact that teachers are hearing
7 about it and sharing it with me, it tells me that
8 this is a bigger issue than folks are letting on.
9 But I am going to turn back to my Chair.

10 JOSH WALLACK: We have not heard those accounts
11 but if you will, if you can share and this is just in
12 the interest of solving those problems.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh, we did.

14 JOSH WALLACK: We want to know about that, so we
15 can fix it for sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We did with your team but
17 we will circle back and that's why we asked for a hot
18 meals plan.

19 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I want to turn it over
21 to my Co-Chair Chair Rosenthal.

22 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much. Thank
24 you Chair Treyger for those insightful questions and
25 helping to move the ball further along as we all try

1
2 to take care of our City's kids. I really appreciate
3 you and I mean, let me just start with the very broad
4 question. Sort of following up on Chair Treyger's
5 questions.

6 And that is, could you – and here, I am going to
7 ask you for specifics and details. Lessons learned
8 about the future of childcare as we plan for a fully
9 restored economy.

10 JOSH WALLACK: Thanks for that. I will just say
11 a few different things about that. As we aim for a
12 fully restored economy, I think that this
13 Administration agrees with the sentiments that you
14 expressed and Chair Treyger expressed at the outset
15 of the hearing that comprehensive supports for
16 children and families including affordable childcare
17 are absolutely critical for restoring the economy and
18 a just economy, an equitable economy and making sure
19 that everyone can participate in it.

20 I think we are quite; I won't go on too long but
21 I will just say I think we are quite encouraged by
22 the incoming federal administration's commitment. I
23 don't know whether that means I should stop.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Sorry, keep going.
25

1
2 JOSH WALLACK: Oh, not at all. The incoming
3 federal administration we are all having you know.
4 The incoming federal administration's commitment to
5 affordable childcare has been you know, heartening
6 and their view that you know comprehensive childcare
7 from birth to age three and beyond should be in the
8 reach of every family and that none of them should
9 pay more than 7 percent of their income through a
10 variety of means, coupled with universal preschool.

11 I think, I will just say, I think we have always
12 said and the Mayor said this from the moment that he
13 launched 3K, we need the support of our other
14 partners in government to make this City's vision for
15 an equitable early care and education system and
16 childcare system in general to be real. And I think
17 we are hopeful now that we see this on the horizon.
18 We all have to work for it together. That's the
19 vision.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you. I think in
21 sum, what you are saying is we don't have the funds
22 for it.

23 JOSH WALLACK: That's the short version, yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: If we had the funds what
25 would be your top priority?

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JOSH WALLACK: I think as the Mayor and Chancellor have pointed out and I will turn it to Deputy Commissioner Haskell in a moment for school aged childcare because I think that that is critically important as well. But from my perspective at the Department of Education, the Mayor and Chancellor have spelled out a vision for free full day high quality pre-kindergarten for all three year old's to come along.

And as Council Member Kallos pointed out, that is a cornerstone also of a fair and comprehensive early childhood system for all New Yorkers is to have 3K for All to compliment PreK for All.

And in addition to that, I think we need to continue to invest in our family childcare homes around the City where we have a set of fantastic educators and entrepreneurs that already are the centerpiece of care for infants and toddlers in New York City and we as an Administration have committed to increasing the rates for those providers and providing them with the professional development and support that they need to expand their services. That is also a critical part of what it means to have

1
2 an equitable and comprehensive early care and
3 education system.

4 It needs to be from birth through age five for
5 early care and education and then beyond that for
6 school age, I will turn it over to Deputy
7 Commissioner Haskell.

8 SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah, I will just add -

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Sorry, can I just jump in
10 for one quick second. You know, Deputy Chancellor,
11 you mentioned a really important point, which is
12 adequate payment and I need to take this moment to
13 point out to you that while the City has said it will
14 cover the cost of the indirect rate, stay with me,
15 its an important overhead component of what childcare
16 providers, part of their work. It's kind of like
17 saying to City government, we are going to pay for
18 all the agencies but there is no Mayor's office.
19 There is no OMB, there is no DOY, there is no Law
20 Department, right.

21 So, right now, the city has capped that indirect
22 rate, not the Department of Education, has capped
23 that indirect rate at 10 percent. And while, despite
24 the fact that they have reneged on their promise,
25

1
2 while the City has said that they will increase the
3 indirect rate for human service sector providers.

4 There are many that are providing services with
5 like a 17 percent indirect rate. Again, simply the
6 cost of the Mayor's office but they are not getting
7 reimbursed for that. So, as you look at full
8 reimbursement, providers are asking me to remind you
9 that the indirect rate is a component part of that.

10 JOSH WALLACK: Thank you for that. This is for –
11 you are talking about for early care and education
12 prior as in general or Learning Bridges specifically?

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Any time there is a
14 contract with a provider.

15 JOSH WALLACK: Got it.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Anytime, not the DOE
17 because when it's for the DOE, the City pays for the
18 Mayor's Office, the City pays for the Chancellor's
19 Office.

20 JOSH WALLACK: I see.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: The City pays for what
22 ever muck of middle there is between the Chancellor
23 and the teacher. It does not do that for our
24 contract providers.

1
2 JOSH WALLACK: So, I will just say I hear you
3 loud and clear and that was a point of discussion
4 with many of our early care and education providers
5 as we are sort of launching our new more integrated
6 system.

7 So, right now, so in our new contracts, programs
8 will be able to budget for their indirect costs up to
9 10 percent if that's required within their budget and
10 program models or higher if it can be verified.

11 So, we have provided that option to go higher,
12 just to your point. And these programs we are trying
13 to fund the expenses. And so, I think we are trying
14 to be sensitive to your point but the devil is in the
15 details. So, we should talk about cases perhaps at
16 another time, yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Great, I am getting texts
18 from providers who are doing this.

19 JOSH WALLACK: Well, this is for the contracts
20 that will be starting in July.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I understand and I am
22 about to come back to questions about those contracts
23 in a minute. Of course, I want to let Deputy
24 Commissioner Haskell finish. I also want to
25

1
2 recognize that Council Member Levin has joined this
3 hearing.

4 SUSAN HASSELL: Well, I will just say briefly, I
5 wanted to build on what was said about PreK and the
6 investments of this Administration in childcare and
7 afterschool in particular. For DYCD, it has been an
8 amazing period of growth. As you know, we have had
9 you know, essential, universal afterschool for middle
10 school under this Administration. Expansion of
11 Beacon Community Centers, expansion of Cornerstone
12 Community Centers in NYCHA developments. As a youth
13 worker, its been really profound to see that.

14 And to get to your question, that infrastructure,
15 that expansion of childcare, is what enabled us to -
16 that capacity is what enabled us to launch Learning
17 Lab - Learning Bridges, Learning Lab programs this
18 fall with the pace that we did because we had
19 capacity. We had providers with programs in center-
20 based programs across the City and we were able to
21 build on them for the 8-3 period.

22 So, you talked about preparing for a vision for
23 good times and I think when good times can create
24 that kind of infrastructure, it allowed us to pivot
25 under these extraordinary circumstances to lift up

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2 Learning Lab programs and you know, we are grateful
3 that investment was already there before the
4 pandemic.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I mean, I am listening to
6 what you are saying but what is screaming in my head
7 is, what about after three o'clock? I mean, there is
8 no working parent who can just come and pick up their
9 kids at three o'clock.

10 So, I mean, if your vision for the future
11 involves up to three o'clock only, there is a real
12 problem there.

13 SUSAN HASSELL: Well, absolutely, I was really
14 referring to the expansion of afterschool 3-6. So,
15 you know, pre-pandemic, the investment of this
16 Administration, so that students enrolled in schools
17 got afterschool services until 6 p.m. and because we
18 had invested so much under this Administration in
19 those afterschool childcare programs from 3-6, we are
20 able to build on that infrastructure to get to the
21 Learning Lab, the earlier part.

22 So, it was because we had the full day childcare
23 afterschool investment.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I understand what you are
25 saying about providers being I don't know, enrolled

1
2 in the passport system, so you can access them. I am
3 just saying that hope your vision includes the full
4 comprehensive need of any child giver in this City
5 who you know, if they have any hope of having and job
6 need adequate childcare. Which runs until at least
7 six o'clock at night.

8 I am going to move on. I am going to come back
9 but move on. I want to talk actually Deputy
10 Commissioner Haskell about DYCD. It's my
11 understanding that the agency has been holding weekly
12 calls with providers and the coalition of providers.
13 I am wondering what are the major issues that have
14 come up on those phone calls that you have heard.

15 SUSAN HASSELL: Yeah, we, I mean, we have
16 definitely been having weekly calls. One thing you
17 know, shifting to remote work that's been a blessing
18 in a way is that we can have hundreds and hundreds of
19 people in one call whereas you know previously, we
20 couldn't get to our whole portfolio of programs in
21 one physical meeting space but that's just part of
22 our communication. Of course, we have regular daily
23 emails, a program manager contact. So, that's just
24 part of our communication.

1
2 Some of the things that have come up; there have
3 been so many moving pieces since the beginning of the
4 pandemic that you know, we have had plenty of
5 material to discuss, including framing the tele-nurse
6 resources that has recently become available.

7 Framing new –

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: On the tele-nurse, when
9 did that become available?

10 SUSAN HASSELL: With the launch of – I will have
11 to look up the exact date but with the launch of back
12 to school, shortly after the launch of school in
13 September that resource was made available.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, got it. Sorry,
15 keep going.

16 SUSAN HASSELL: No problem. We also have been
17 helping them work through their budgets and work
18 scopes. I know Contracts is a very important issue
19 for you, helping to provide support on that.

20 Last week, we had a presentation by Include NYC
21 and one of our stellar providers Morningside, to talk
22 about how to support students with special needs in
23 programs and share some of their best practices for
24 the interactive dialogue with parents and meeting the
25 needs of young people in the programs.

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Prior to that, we had a presentation about –

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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I see, okay, I get

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it. I am sorry, keep going, sorry.

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SUSAN HASKELL: Yeah, so, you know, there have

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been a lot of questions and that's part of the reason

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why we are doing that weekly. In fact, think a

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meeting just wrapped where we had a full gathering

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just for Q&A, you know, not even a presentation, just

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allowing providers to come and bring their questions

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and concerns.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I mean I would be

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particularly mindful of the conversation with Include

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NYC and you know, I think be important a couple weeks

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from now to follow up with all the providers and ask

16

them if that's changed who they let in and how they

17

take care of the kids with needs.

18

SUSAN HASKELL: Thank you, yeah.

19

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. Does a

20

Representative from Department of Education sit in on

21

those calls?

22

SUSAN HASKELL: Very often. We work very often

23

either, we work mostly with the Office of Community

24

Schools historically, of course Chris Caruso's team,

25

Michelle Rosa but more recently, we have been working

1
2 with the Deputy Chancellor's team and we have
3 included them in some of those meetings as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Do you feel, do you get
5 any feedback about communication between providers,
6 parents and the agencies?

7 SUSAN HASKELL: You know, I honestly feel that
8 our communication process has been strong. I would
9 be very interested to hear from anyone who feels they
10 are not getting adequate responses. I welcome you
11 know, our providers to reach out to me directly. If
12 they have tried through their avenues or they are
13 frustrated, they need an immediate response, many of
14 our providers have my cellphone number.

15 Shaskell@dycd.nyc.gov if any one wants to email. I
16 have not heard issues of communication and I would be
17 very interested to hear that feedback because you
18 know if nothing else, we can be responsive and we
19 have been to my knowledge.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, on that point, I
21 mean, I harken back to our hearing in November and
22 think about the parent who signed up to get a spot
23 for her child, got a placement an hour away from her,
24 so she couldn't take the placement and she is now, I

1
2 happen to know, just gave up. And so, is sort of
3 multitasking at home with her child home.

4 I am wondering what kind of communication DOE
5 does with childcare giver you know, parents like that
6 who did not take placements. Are they getting second
7 rounds of letters telling them to come and check it
8 out again. That there might be placements closer to
9 where they are?

10 JOSH WALLACK: So, I will just say first of all,
11 the goal and then the specifics. I mean, we want to
12 make sure that Learning Bridges is accessible to and
13 convenient for all families.

14 So, we heard loud and clear about that case and
15 if families are experiencing a hardship in getting to
16 their program, they can email us and we will work
17 with you know, any family in this situation. And we
18 added recently to our enrollment process, so that
19 they could – they can pick a program that is
20 convenient for them. Whether it is near where they
21 live or where they work or where a relative lives or
22 works.

23 We are continuing to reach out to families to see
24 if we can make an alternative placement and we will
25 continue that outreach over the coming weeks. And if

1
2 there are specific cases that you know of, like that
3 one, we are happy to reach out to them.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Sure, I appreciate that
5 answer but I think it is really actually a yes or no
6 question.

7 So, do you have you know, it's sort of a systems
8 question. Do you have the capacity in the system you
9 have now to identify those people who did not take
10 the placement they were given? And has not been in
11 touch with the DOE to send them a letter or
12 communication, call them to say, let's check in again
13 and see if there is a placement that works for you?
14 It is really just a yes or no and I appreciate all
15 the work you are doing but specifically.

16 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, I am going to - one thing
17 before I answer no. Our goal is to get everyone a
18 seat first.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Of course, no question.

20 JOSH WALLACK: So, we want to make sure that we
21 make that offer. We have not done the outreach yet.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. I mean, I don't
23 challenge the Administration on the goal. It is all
24 of our goal. The question is you know, execution and
25 whether or not there is more you need in terms of

1
2 indirect rate in order to achieve the goals you want
3 to achieve right.

4 JOSH WALLACK: No, as I said, I think we have the
5 resources that we need to stand up this response. We
6 reach out to families through so many channels.
7 Through the providers, through our website, through
8 phone, etc.

9 We believe that we are meeting this need because
10 we are keeping up with demand and I hope you hear,
11 like if there is a family that is having a challenge,
12 like the one that you mentioned, we can provide an
13 alternate placement.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I think you can't
15 say you are meeting up with demand if you haven't
16 reached out to those families who turned down
17 placements that they got in the first place, during
18 the first two months of this program. You just can't
19 say you are meeting demand. It's not, you don't know
20 whether or not you are meeting demand and that's
21 okay, it's okay because this is like, an incredibly
22 challenging thing to take on.

23 But I just want to make sure we are - our
24 language - you know, I don't want to give a false
25 impression, right. If there are parents out there

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2 right now watching this hearing, which I don't know
3 how that would be possible but would be sort of
4 rolling their eyes to hear that everyone who wants
5 something is getting something, if we don't know.
6 You know, again, we all have the same goal.

7 JOSH WALLACK: No, of course and again, I think I
8 would say I hear you and we are always trying to do
9 better and reach more families. But if you are
10 speaking at it from a systems perspective, we have
11 stood up you know, these 450 sites and have been able
12 to make offers to 90 percent of the families on our
13 priority list, 80 percent of families overall and are
14 on track to do all of them by the end of the year.

15 And if there are families, please hear this and I
16 take your larger point but really, if there are
17 families out there who are listening that can't find
18 a site nearby, we can help them find - we have just
19 added 4,000 additional slots since the last hearing.
20 So, there may be new ones online and I hear you
21 saying we should reach out to everybody.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, saying it here, I
23 mean -

24 JOSH WALLACK: I get you.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I mean, 25 people are
3 watching this hearing and 10 more are going to watch
4 it on Seaspn, so I hope this isn't part of the
5 outreach.

6 The other thing I would recommend you do is again
7 on your website, when you are saying, feel free to
8 reach out to us, there is - I don't see any - I am
9 not seeing any phone number or email address that's
10 very clearly front and center, so people know to
11 contact you, how to make contact, DOE. So, I would
12 give that a second look as well.

13 JOSH WALLACK: We absolutely will take a look at
14 that and make sure it is clear but again, for those
15 listening, people can call 311 or
16 learningbridges@schools.nyc.gov. I just want to make
17 sure to put that out there.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. So, I am really
19 worried about DOE's recent birth to five early Head
20 Start. I think it is an RFP with funding set to
21 begin July 1st. Which fundamentally for Manhattan
22 eliminates a large number of childcare slots,
23 especially the extended day slots. I have a
24 coalition of nine providers who shared that the
25 process, the RFP process, resulted in a loss of 40

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2 percent of the 1,352 childcare slots that these
3 providers service. And they focus on low income
4 working families and they collectively serve all
5 those children this year but will lose, 40 percent
6 will go away for next year given the new RFP.

7 JOSH WALLACK: Yeah, let me clear that up because
8 we are so grateful that we worked very closely with
9 the City Council as we ran this comprehensive RFP
10 process. I am going to say a little bit about it and
11 not take too much time but I want to say over a two
12 year period, worked with the Council to make sure
13 that organizations around the City heard about this
14 and that it included really important improvements
15 like pay parity, like making sure that there was a
16 base payment to providers to keep them stable etc.

17 But on this specific point, we actually met with
18 the same coalition of providers that you heard from,
19 the Manhattan providers and we were very careful as
20 we designed this because our goal is to increase
21 opportunities for children and families.

22 So, I want to say, we awarded more preschool
23 seats in Manhattan than there were children enrolled.
24 And so, we increased the opportunities so there were
25

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2 more slots than there are children enrolled in those
3 programs.

4 Now, some of those did not go to the same
5 programs. So, if you pick a small group of
6 providers, it may be that those providers didn't get
7 awarded everything they hoped for and maybe saw some
8 reductions, especially if they had fewer kids
9 enrolled.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Who?

11 JOSH WALLACK: But overall, the Borough of
12 Manhattan and at the zip code level, we awarded more
13 seats than there were kids enrolled. So, we saw an
14 increase. I will just add one more point before you
15 respond. I think to the point about extended day and
16 year seats, that is a place where I think, I know we
17 share the same goals here.

18 Those seats are funded with childcare and Head
19 Start funds, which I won't bore all you know our
20 listeners would like the differences there but to say
21 those are federal dollars and those are very scarce
22 resources. We don't have enough funding to offer
23 extended day and year seats everywhere in the City.
24 We would like to be able to do that but we just
25 don't. We have to make choices and that was

1
2 exacerbated in this process by the fact that the
3 City's Head Start grant was reduced by \$45 million.

4 Now the Office of Head Start awarded seats
5 directly to community-based organizations, so there
6 was no reduction in Head Start services in New York
7 City. They kept their commitment steadfast but we
8 awarded fewer extended day in year seats as a result
9 because we just didn't have the funds.

10 So, that scarce resource we did – it was reduced
11 and we shifted it to neighborhoods with the highest
12 degree of concentrated poverty.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And here is the problem
14 with that, here is the problem. So many of those
15 neighborhoods, the people who live in those
16 neighborhoods but work in Manhattan no longer have a
17 place to bring their children. Because what the do
18 is for example for my local provider whose program
19 got eliminated they have kids in there whose parents
20 live outside of Manhattan but they work near the
21 childcare center.

22 So, the kids themselves are not of the zip code
23 10023 or 24, they have Bronx or Brooklyn or Queens or

24 –

25

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2 JOSH WALLACK: Totally, completely get that which
3 as why -

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I mean, this is why it's
5 a problem -

6 JOSH WALLACK: Just to say, as we planned because
7 we heard this from providers. We didn't just look at
8 the number of students enrolled where they live but
9 we also looked at the demographics of the children
10 who actually attended in the zip code. So, we made
11 sure that there were opportunities not near where
12 families live but where they work just as you said.

13 And again, I think that I respect the providers
14 and met with them myself but overall, when you look
15 at the City, the Borough, the zip code level, we have
16 more opportunities than ever before and more than
17 children actually enrolling. Those specific
18 providers, again, I can't sort of walk through
19 procurement results in a hearing, but some of them
20 may have lost seats.

21 Overall, Manhattan did not.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You know, I have been
23 working on these issues for a really long time and
24 what I have seen because of this type of thinking, is
25 that the upper west side has become more homogeneous.

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We have lost our low income population because there are not services around here for them. And basically what you are doing by having zip code be the guiding philosophy, is segregating the City more and I just think it is short-sided to think that from the top down with your, trust me. I mean I get the numbers and I get procurement and the challenges and federal funding, city funding, state funding, loss, money moving over here or there.

If you would look at it from a residence point of view, from a parents point of you, a childcare givers point of view, the system just isn't working and for next year it's going to increase hardship for those, whatever we are talking about 800 families. And while you maybe making decisions again from the top down that seem to make sense given all the different things you are juggling, it doesn't.

I need you to know that it doesn't. It doesn't work and there are families that are going to have to give up their jobs because of this. There are families that are going to move because of this. Because they know they can't get the programs they need here on the west side.

1
2 Look, it's a complicated issue. I understand you
3 have a whole City to take care of and you have a lot
4 of low-income people to take care of but you know, we
5 are not meeting the needs of a lot of people and we
6 are going to make it harder for those people next
7 year. Don't kid yourself about that.

8 JOSH WALLACK: I'll just, I will respond. I
9 mean, I just want to say, I think again, we share the
10 sense of urgency. Share the goal and I think
11 ultimately want to see you know, a City that's
12 getting the support it needs to provide you know, a
13 full day coverage for every family that needs it and
14 we are not there yet.

15 I also would say, we tried very hard as part of
16 this RFP process to listen to and hear from. We had
17 a lot of providers contribute to how we structured
18 it, so that we could avoid the mistakes of the past.
19 So, that we could look at information that is
20 specific to each neighborhood so that we would make
21 sure to account for mixed income neighborhoods where
22 maybe the overall population is fairly affluent but
23 there are pocket of real concentrated poverty and I
24 think that by and large, we did not take a top down
25 approach but really tried to build bottom up.

1
2 And we tried to create opportunities for racial
3 and economic integration precisely by bringing these
4 funding streams invoices together and I think that
5 what we have done as an Administration by providing
6 PreK for all and 3K for all in many of these
7 districts is provided that foundation and again, I
8 wish we had enough funds to provide extended day and
9 year coverage everywhere. But in a world where we
10 don't, we had to make the decisions and again, from a
11 bottom up looking at the best information we had
12 moved some of those seats to areas where there were
13 higher degrees of concentrated poverty.

14 We had to put them where they were needed most
15 but even in the neighborhoods where some of those
16 shifted, there are still PreK for all seats and 3K
17 for all seats in many districts and there still
18 remain extended day and year seats in these
19 neighborhoods but maybe not with the same providers.

20 And I think it would be good if we could sit down
21 you know, separately looking at the specific
22 geography and we can sort of talk you through where
23 the shifts were but I think we are confident that we
24 will be able to meet the needs of working families in
25 this area and throughout the City because this

1 Administration has done so much to expand
2 opportunities for early care and education all across
3 the City.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I mean the problem
6 goes even farther than people who have sent their
7 kids to a certain program for the last five years,
8 now having nowhere to send their kids. The problem
9 in addition to the fact that they have no idea where
10 to send their kids is the fact that between all these
11 providers 125 people will lose jobs and these are all
12 primarily women, primarily women of color who will
13 now go on unemployment.

14 So, you know again, I don't see it and again, I
15 recognize how challenging it is to figure all this
16 stuff out for sure.

17 JOSH WALLACK: No, that's why we worked so
18 closely with your colleagues over these last two
19 years. We wanted to reshape this system, so that we
20 didn't have two different systems. One, that was
21 primarily geared to income eligible and families and
22 another separate one for every one else. We are able
23 to bring this system together to create a unified
24 one, where we had opportunities for racial and
25 economic integration where we could move toward

1
2 compensation equity. Where we could support
3 community-based organizations you know, giving them a
4 base payment and fixed costs. And as we get closer
5 to July 2021, because as you know, whenever we do a
6 big procurement like this. You are right, there are
7 changes, there are shifts, there are difficulties but
8 we are committed to working hand and hand with all
9 these organizations and the workers to make it work
10 as best as we can. And to the extent – I don't know
11 all the details that you are discussing but to the
12 extent that there are talented early educators and
13 staff in the system, we are continuing to expand and
14 we are committed to helping them find good
15 opportunities if there are changes.

16 And there often are in procurements like this.
17 Though we are happy to report that in this case, 90
18 percent of the awards went to organizations that are
19 currently contracted with us.

20 So, that's a testament to the strength of the
21 system but it also just shows that we were successful
22 because we wanted to honor the work that so many good
23 organizations have been doing and through this
24 procurement, we took that experience into account.
25 And so, that's why relatively speaking, by and large,

1
2 the vast majority of awards that were given were
3 given to our current contractors.

4 So, while we may have some shifts and changes, by
5 and large there is going to be stability and growth
6 in the sector. That was our goal and that's what I
7 think we have accomplished.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: We are going to have to
9 agree to disagree. Lastly, with regards to students
10 with disabilities, you mentioned to Chair Treyger
11 that families experiencing confusion or any issues
12 should get in touch for additional support and
13 information. Can you clarify again the best way for
14 people to get in touch? And can you confirm with me
15 that the information is up on the website?

16 JOSH WALLACK: Sure. For Learning Bridges, they
17 should email learningbridges@schools.nyc.gov and then
18 we can route it to whoever needs to get it or they
19 can call 311.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay and again, just to
21 make it clear, that information is not on the website
22 anywhere. I mean on this page called Learning
23 Bridges.

24 JOSH WALLACK: Okay, thank you for that.
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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: It does say call 311 but I don't know what success parents get with that. I am going to move on. Thank you so much for your time this morning.

JOSH WALLACK: Of course.

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: We spent a lot of time on this. I really appreciate it. I really appreciate Jackie Ebanks Director of the Commission on Gender Equity for her testimony and for staying here. Really appreciate DYCD and DOE and all the hard work that you all are doing. Thank you.

I am going to turn it back to the Moderator.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Rosenthal. We have now concluded the Administration's testimony and we will turn to public testimony.

First, I would like to remind everyone that I will call up individuals in panels. Once your name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you and you may begin your testimony once the Sergeant at Arms sets the clock and gives you the queue. All testimony will be limited to three minutes. Remember that there is a few second delay when you are unmuted before we can hear you.

1
2 Please wait for the Sergeant at Arms to announce
3 that you may begin before starting your testimony.
4 The first panel on public testimony in order of
5 speaking will be Lisa Caswell Day Care Council of New
6 York, Randi Levine Advocates for Children of New
7 York, Tammie Miller United Federation of Teachers and
8 Amanda Kogut-Rosenau. I will now call on Lisa
9 Caswell.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Hang on one second, if I
11 can just jump in. I can see that the Deputy
12 Chancellor is still on the Zoom. I want to let him
13 know how much I appreciate that and I hope you will
14 stay at least for the first panel because we are
15 going to hear some actual stories, real detailed
16 information and I appreciate your staying on to hear
17 that. Thank you.

18 LISA CASWELL: I will go ahead. Good afternoon
19 Chair Rosenthal and Chair Treyger. My name is Lisa
20 Caswell and I am the Day Care Council of New York
21 Senior Policy Analyst.

22 In June of this year, we conducted a research
23 project with 13 emergency childcare programs to see
24 how they were operating during the pandemic.

1
2 We met with nine of our member centers and four
3 family daycare programs. Our key findings led to
4 eight recommendations, all of which are included in
5 our full testimony. Two of these recommendations are
6 reflected in the DECE's core COVID-19 response, which
7 has led to significant stability at a critical time.

8 First, they made sure that centers had no more
9 than one cohort of children onsite each day to
10 minimize the risk of exposure.

11 Second, they made the commitment to fully fund
12 programs at their contracted capacity with the
13 support of the state. The impact of these two
14 dissidents can not be overstated. At this time, we
15 are working with the DECE to increase nursing
16 supports. We also hope to work on scheduling more
17 visits with mental health providers in training new
18 staff in the trauma support model.

19 We have three areas of concern that go beyond the
20 parameters of our study. One, providers continue to
21 face three to four month delays in the DECE's
22 processing of applications. If an exception to the
23 City's current hiring freeze could be made, it would
24 help families who maybe overwhelmed or are trying to
25 return to work.

1
2 Second, providers still face extended delays in
3 DOHMH's processing of staff background clearances.
4 While new hires can start work under the supervision
5 of another qualified staff member, this backlog is an
6 ongoing source of stress to the entire system.

7 Three, we would like to restate the significance
8 of the recent loss in full day, full year capacity
9 within the current DOE birth to five RFP awards
10 particularly for two-year-old's. While we know
11 shifting demographics are a determining factor, we
12 absolutely must have more federal funding, so that we
13 can regain these lawsuits and then add more. If we
14 are going to build back better, New York City must be
15 able to offer real opportunities to all low-income
16 working families. To do this we must maintain our
17 full day full year childcare infrastructure.

18 Particularly for those living in subsidized housing.

19 Finally, with any relief funding, the city must
20 allocate hazard enhanced pay for all family childcare
21 programs that are serving income eligible families
22 and remained open at onset of the pandemic regardless
23 of whether they had to temporarily or intermittently
24 close due to COVID during the pandemic.

1
2 This is in addition to their current pay. These
3 providers opened their homes to our children when we
4 were all at our most vulnerable and they deserve our
5 support.

6 Thank you for your service to this great City and
7 for the opportunity to testify before you. We really
8 appreciate the support of both public and private
9 sector. This has been a difficult time. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
11 Randi Levine, you may begin when the Sergeant gives
12 you the queue.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for the opportunity to
15 speak with you about the impact of COVID-19 on
16 childcare. My name is Randi Levine and I am the
17 Policy Director of Advocates for Children of New
18 York.

19 First, I want to say how much I appreciate the
20 focus on early childhood education from this
21 Administration, as well as the City's very hard work
22 to get Learning Bridges up and running. We join with
23 our colleagues today in expressing concern about the
24 impact of the pandemic on the City's childcare
25 programs with added expenses and reduced enrollment,

1 many programs are struggling to continue operating
2 and need assistance.

3
4 We want to use our limited time today to talk
5 about two issues based on what we are hearing on the
6 ground from families. First, we are hearing from
7 families whose preschoolers with disabilities do not
8 have the preschool special education programs they
9 need and have a legal right to receive.

10 While many young children with disabilities
11 participate in childcare programs, others require
12 preschool special education classes with smaller
13 child to teacher ratios and specialized support.

14 By early March 2020, hundreds of young children
15 were already sitting at home. Not because of the
16 pandemic but because the DOE did not have enough
17 seats in preschool special education classes. The
18 DOE's own projections showed a shortfall of more than
19 1,000 preschool special education class seats for the
20 spring of 2020. Despite the City's efforts to open
21 more classes over the past two years.

22 Contributing to this shortage is the fact that a
23 number of CBO's which run the majority of these
24 classes have closed their preschool special education
25 programs due to insufficient funding. The pandemic

1
2 has exacerbated these financial challenges, leaving
3 programs with increased cost that make it even harder
4 to continue operating. And although there has been a
5 decrease in special education referrals during the
6 pandemic, we have already heard from families this
7 year whose children do not have seats in the
8 preschool special education classes required by their
9 IEP's.

10 And we worry that this problem will grow in the
11 spring. The City must meet its legal obligation to
12 provide a preschool special education class seat to
13 every child whose IEP requires one. Either by
14 opening more DOE run classes or by ensuring CBO's do
15 so. I also want to note that part of the challenge
16 is that the teachers in preschool special education
17 programs at CBO's were left out of the early
18 childhood salary parity agreement, described earlier
19 and that needs to be corrected going forward.

20 Second, we are hearing from families whose
21 children have been turned away illegally from
22 Learning Bridges programs due to their disabilities.
23 Although the City is giving priority status to
24 students with disabilities in selecting students for
25 the program, the program has no resources or process

1
2 for providing accommodations and supports. The
3 students who need more support than the staffing
4 ratio currently funded by the City.

5 I want to thank the Council for the attention
6 they have given to this issue today. Unfortunately,
7 we still have unresolved cases of children who have
8 been turned away because of their disabilities who do
9 not have five day a week in-person instruction.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 RANDI LEVINE: And families are struggling to get
12 by at this point and need more support. Remote
13 learning has been extremely challenging for students
14 with significant disabilities and their families.
15 The Mayor promoted Learning Bridges as a way to help
16 students and families when students cannot be in
17 school and to live up to its promise and to comply
18 with the law.

19 The City must provide the support needed to
20 include students with disabilities in the Learning
21 Bridge program. We are really grateful for the
22 attention you brought to these issues today and look
23 forward to working with you. Thank you and I am
24 happy to answer any questions you may have.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Before we go onto the
3 next panelist, real quick Ms. Levine, can I ask you,
4 have those parents tried 311 or emailed the Learning
5 Bridges program?

6 RANDI LEVINE: We have unresolved cases where
7 Advocates for Children, Special Education Attorneys
8 at Advocates for Children have reached out to central
9 Department of Education staff, central DYCD staff and
10 we do not have answers to those cases. So, you can
11 only imagine how hard it must be for parents who have
12 not found their way to Advocates for Children to get
13 assistance.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
16 Next we will have Tammie Miller.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 TAMMIE MILLER: Good afternoon, my name is Tammie
19 Miller and I serve as the Chair of the United
20 Federation of Teachers, Family, Childcare Providers
21 Chapter.

22 On behalf of the more than 10,000 UFT family
23 childcare providers, I would like to thank
24 Chairperson's Helen Rosenthal and Mark Treyger. The
25 UFT this year created a new provider network

1
2 contracted with the DOE to support childcare
3 providers. We are asking the City Council to help
4 cut through the red tape and bureaucratic
5 inefficiencies we have encountered that have resulted
6 in fewer families receiving the childcare they need.
7 The challenges have been steep.

8 The current regulations are forcing highly
9 trained providers out of this work and thwarting
10 networks abilities to support individual providers
11 who in turn provide childcare services to families in
12 desperate need.

13 First, despite the DOE contract for the network
14 providers starting on July 1, 2020, access to the web
15 enrollment system was not granted until late November
16 2020. Nearly five months after the start of the
17 program.

18 As a result of this delay, children who were
19 preliminary enrolled were not able to complete their
20 enrollment and with loss to other programs or their
21 families simply gave up entirely on the system out of
22 frustration.

23 We recommend that the DOE immediately resolve all
24 technical issues and prioritize family outreach and
25 enrollment. And now, full turnover of provider and

1
2 family information in the system continues to slow
3 the enrollment process, as well as the process to
4 notify families about upcoming recertification, which
5 is again causing families to give up.

6 We recommend the DOE work on ensuring that
7 systems notifications are both accurate and timely.
8 And lastly, I would like to touch on how the DOE's
9 funding and reimbursement model hamstring networks
10 and hurts the ability to provide childcare options to
11 providers and parents.

12 The DOE only reimbursed us for actual expenses
13 and at a percentage of the complete child enrollment
14 each network has in any given month. For example, if
15 in December, a network shows it is at 72 percent
16 child enrollment but in January, due to for an
17 example, a major COVID-19 outbreak, your enrollment
18 drops to 63 percent, then the network can only submit
19 for actual expense reimbursements up to 72 percent
20 for December and 63 percent for January. Clearly,
21 that model is flawed.

22 If a network is required to implore four
23 educational specialists to attend to 60 providers to
24 meet the mandated provider, position to provider
25 ratio, the network must still pay those individuals

1
2 at 100 percent of their salaries. Regardless of the
3 fluctuations -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 TAMMIE MILLER: In enrollment. We recommend that
6 networks hiring budgets be fully funded to ensure
7 continuity of the employment, salary stability and in
8 avoidance of compromising quality or quantity.

9 Finally, we have shared our concerns and our
10 recommendations with the Department of Education, yet
11 they have failed to modify their operations to
12 account for these unprecedented times. We truly hope
13 that City Council can assist us in advocating for the
14 DOE to help us, so we can better help the families
15 and children in need.

16 Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak
17 with you and for this hearing.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
19 Next, we will hear from Amanda Kogut-Rosenau.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 AMANDA KOGUT-ROSENAU: Oh, sorry. Good morning,
22 my name is Amanda Kogut-Rosenau, I am the Vice
23 President of programs at Nontraditional Employment
24 for Women or NEW.
25

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2 We are 42-year-old nonprofit with a record of
3 transforming economic prospects for women through
4 jobs in the skill trades and careers. I would like
5 to thank the City Council and the Women's Committee
6 for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the trades
7 women who are so integral in building the future of
8 New York and the impact that the pandemic and
9 childcare crisis is having on women's participation
10 in the workforce.

11 Childcare has been and continues to be a primary
12 challenge for women entering the workforce and
13 advancing in their careers and new graduates are no
14 exception. Despite the high wages a trades career
15 can offer, cost and access to childcare continues to
16 pose a challenge.

17 New social services incorporates planning for
18 current and future childcare throughout our
19 programming. In 2019, the Comptroller released a
20 report showing the combined New York City center-
21 based and home-based providers had the capacity to
22 provide care for just 22 percent of all the children
23 born in the city between the ages of zero and two.

24 The same reports sites the federal government
25 recommends costs for childcare not exceed 8 percent

1
2 of an individuals income and yet, New York City
3 minimum wage workers can spend almost 68 percent of
4 their income on childcare. And our City's education
5 system has thus become the de facto means of
6 affordable care for school aged education and
7 children.

8 COVID-19 and the related shutdowns have
9 transformed this existing challenge into a crippling
10 barrier and demonstrated our inability to provide the
11 basic services needed for children and families to
12 thrive.

13 Approximately 32 percent of new students are
14 single parents with no where to turn for childcare
15 support, as center based capacity has plummeted and
16 schools vacillate unpredictably between in-person and
17 remote learning.

18 Even those with a partner or a parent at home,
19 often aren't able to pursue full-time work as they
20 manage remote schooling and other household affairs.
21 In the case that childcare is affordable and
22 accessible, many new graduates are concerned that
23 using a childcare service will expose their child,
24 themselves or their families members to COVID-19.
25 According to the center for American progress, in

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2 September alone, four times as many women exited the
3 workforce compared to men. With women of color at
4 most risk for economic instability.

5 NEW estimates that at least 35 percent of our
6 graduates have been unable to pursue a career
7 launching employment opportunity because they have
8 been unable to find or afford childcare for their
9 children. This is not unique to the NEW community.
10 It's a systemic barrier in most imminent and under
11 resourced communities and has the potential to undue
12 the hard one progress towards gender equity in the
13 workforce in US economy.

14 To create an equitable recovery, the City must
15 take bold and permanent steps and offer reasonably
16 priced safe childcare in vacant spaces around the
17 city and thereby address the barrier to New Yorkers.
18 Seeking to earn a living and providing the next
19 generation of New Yorkers with the academic and
20 socioemotional supports needed to grow and thrive.

21 Thank you for your time and attention to this
22 issue both parents and children, particularly New
23 York's most vulnerable.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
25 Before I turn back to the Chairs for questions, I

1
2 would like to remind Council Members to use the raise
3 hand function in Zoom to indicate that you have a
4 question for this panel. Chair Rosenthal.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much.
6 Actually for some specific panelists first, Ms.
7 Miller, can you repeat again what you said about the
8 actual reimbursement rates compared to 100 percent of
9 costs?

10 You said something about 63 and 78, I couldn't
11 quite follow what you were saying. Can you re-read
12 that part of your testimony?

13 TAMMIE MILLER: Yes. Thank you, I will be happy
14 to re-read that. So, where is it. So, the way the
15 system is the DOE only reimburses for actual expenses
16 and at the percentage of complete child enrollment
17 each network has in any given month. For example, if
18 in December, a network shows that it has 72 percent
19 of child enrollment but in January, due to any
20 unforeseen circumstance, that enrollment drops to 63
21 percent, then the network can only submit for actual
22 expense reimbursement which in this example, which
23 would be up to 70 percent for the 72 percent for
24 December and 63 percent for January.

1
2 And so, I don't know if you want to expand a
3 little bit more on that but certainly, as you
4 imagine, it forces the network to make harsh
5 decisions in terms of the staffing that they are
6 imploring simply because they are only being
7 reimbursed at those specific levels that apply
8 specifically to child enrollment.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And I just want to
10 confirm. There is somebody at my door at the office,
11 so I have to jump for a second but I want to confirm
12 that you have submitted your testimony.

13 TAMMIE MILLER: Yes, we have submitted our full
14 testimony and I will make sure if we haven't but I am
15 pretty certain we have. Thank you so much Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you for putting
17 these things on the record. Chair Treyger, may I
18 ask, are you ready to ask a few questions of this
19 panel?

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, thank you. I just,
23 first of all, I want to thank everyone for their work
24 and your testimony and your time here today. I just
25 wanted to just kind of harken back to folks follow

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2 the exchange that we had with the Administration
3 earlier about clearly not meeting the need and we
4 heard a number of stories. You know, obviously the
5 children with special needs being turned away. A
6 number of stories were just inadequate, the amount of
7 services for children in high need communities.

8 One quick question, just trying to figure out if
9 you are hearing it from your end of the spectrum as
10 well, as far as hot meals and food at these locations
11 and settings. Has that something come up to your
12 acknowledge? Can you share any information about
13 that? I would appreciate it.

14 LISA CASWELL: If you are asking us, the Day Care
15 Council has not heard of that issue. We did work
16 with our members early on to try to activate the
17 kitchens in the Day Care programs to serve local
18 residents but we haven't heard about the hot meal
19 issue recently.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah and also, I am very
21 mindful that a number of our sites are not really
22 suited to prepare hot meals. The issue is, is that
23 we find a way to make it work for other populations
24 in New York City and there seems to be no will or
25 interest making it work for children. And also, I am

1
2 pretty sure that there are many food vendors across
3 the City of New York that would love the ability to
4 work with New York to prepare hot meals and we could
5 work to distribute it.

6 In the 21st Century, I think we can get that
7 done. That is not impossible. Many restaurants are
8 hurting, many small businesses are hurting, food
9 vendors are hurting. And also, to point out, we did
10 a little quick research, other school districts in
11 other parts of the country which always look to New
12 York to be the model, they are providing hot meals to
13 their kids. And yeah, they face greater challenges
14 than we do but they are finding a way to make it work
15 and this is one – you know, I know that this might be
16 like a small example in a big hearing like this but
17 it does make a difference. Because it is coming up
18 and that I have heard from providers directly where
19 sometimes they rely on the DOE to deliver whatever
20 grab and go meals and sites and this and sometimes
21 there are delivery issues.

22 So, I just wanted to put that folks radar and I
23 thank you for your testimony. And Chair Rosenthal, I
24 have to turn it back to you. Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Great, thank you so much
3 on following up on the hot meals Chair Treyger,
4 really appreciate that. You know and I hope the DOE
5 and DYCD heard the question loud and clear because
6 the families – you know, when families obviously no
7 one can learn if they are not eating. So, really
8 appreciate you.

9 Ms. Miller, I am sorry I got interrupted, I am
10 technology issues, I am holding down the fort at my
11 office and occasionally constituents need services.
12 So, I apologize for stepping away for a moment.

13 Ms. Miller, you talked about lack of support for
14 providers. Can you give some maybe specific examples
15 of what providers face? Like, what exact supports
16 could DOE or DYCD be providing that would be helpful?

17 TAMMIE MILLER: Sure, first and foremost, I want
18 to say again thank you for even this question. Many
19 of the supports that providers are facing have to do
20 with expenses that they have to incur. Specifically
21 given the very low rates they are paid per child, it
22 creates an inability for them to sustain the business
23 to pay their staff, to pay things such as workers
24 comp, liability insurance.

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2 Also, since I know Chair Treyger was just talking
3 about food, there is a huge food insecurity for the
4 children that attend daycare and many of the
5 providers are finding that they have to struggle just
6 to send food home for these families that are
7 struggling.

8 If you factor that in and then you factor the
9 additional costs, the PPE supplies and all the
10 materials they need to maintain business, they are
11 finding that they are having fewer children show up
12 because of the families preference for a blended
13 learning model, remote learning even. Then they are
14 dealing with the fact that because these are younger
15 children, they don't always have the technical
16 supports at home that the older children would have.

17 So, we are dealing with really a deluges of
18 issues that providers face, all around funding. Many
19 of them have closed their doors because they feel as
20 though there is no financial support. Many have
21 applied for the CARES Act and they haven't been
22 funded. They haven't received that money, so they
23 are forced to make really hard decisions. Laying off
24 staff, they can't keep their employees employed and
25 that's just to name a few.

1
2 I don't want to belabor your time but there are
3 so many issues that they are facing with finances
4 being the most critical thing. Not having that money
5 coming in to support them to maintain and stay in
6 business and keep their staff employed.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much for
8 sharing this information with the public, with us and
9 hopefully the Administration is listening and we will
10 make changes. Really, really appreciate that.

11 Ms. Levine, could you talk a little bit more and
12 boy you obviously are - include NYC is obviously
13 working closely with families in need. You are
14 giving legal support to families that are trying to
15 get the Department of Education to pay attention to
16 their child. To meet the needs of their child. Do
17 you have a story or two you want to tell about how
18 they are excluded from the programs?

19 RANDI LEVINE: Sure, I think we are seeing
20 several different ways in which they are excluded and
21 you know, Advocates for Children is hearing this from
22 a number of families and to answer your earlier
23 question, some of them first tried contacting those
24 general in boxes and then contacted Advocates for
25 Children when they didn't get responses. But to give

1
2 one example, I am going to start with an example that
3 I think is now a success story to also give the City
4 credit where due.

5 There was an example of a case that I actually
6 raised briefly at the Council's hearing on the impact
7 of COVID-19 on students with disabilities which I
8 believe happened in mid to late October and that was
9 an example of a kindergarten student with autism and
10 his parent was very happy that he was matched with a
11 program. Because his school was only giving him one
12 day a week of in-person learning.

13 And it was a real struggle, both for the parent
14 as far as her job and as far as this student who also
15 has siblings on the other days of the week. And so,
16 the parent was very excited when she got an offer for
17 a Learning Lab program but when she contacted the
18 program and described her child's needs, they said,
19 your child can't attend. They gave several reasons
20 including the fact that he has autism and the program
21 is not equipped to serve a student with autism and
22 the fact that he needed help to use the toilet.

23 And so, they said, you can only come if you have
24 a one-to-one Paraprofessional who can help with your
25

1
2 toileting needs, as well as training for the staff on
3 how to work with a student with autism.

4 And so, we raised that – I actually thought that
5 this one might be easy to resolve because the student
6 has a one-to-one Paraprofessional on his IEP. So, he
7 gets this service at school as well and has a right
8 to this service.

9 And so, if the DOE's and the City's solution to
10 you know, not giving a student full-time in-person
11 instruction was to give Learning Bridges, I thought
12 surely they would just send that support who is with
13 him during the day in school to the Learning Bridge
14 program but we quickly discovered that due to union
15 issues, the City said that they were not able to send
16 his one-to-one mandated Paraprofessional to the
17 Learning Lab program. And unfortunately, it took
18 about a month for the City to say that they had
19 worked it out with the school to provide him with
20 five day a week in-person instruction, which was
21 definitely the parents preference.

22 His first day was supposed to be November 30th.
23 November 30th, all school systemwide were shutdown.
24 And so, his first day in-person full-time was last
25 week and he had a very good first week and his parent

1
2 is very pleased that he is able to be in school full-
3 time in person but also concerned because what if
4 school shutdown again, either systemwide or what if
5 his school shuts down again.

6 So, that's a success story. I will be briefer
7 just to tell you a couple of other things that we are
8 hearing.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Well and the success
10 story is very illustrative of how challenging a
11 success story is. And the fact for that one success
12 story, there are I am sure dozens of families,
13 hundreds of families that aren't lucky enough to have
14 that success.

15 RANDI LEVINE: And I can't tell you how much back
16 and forth it took and how many people were involved
17 and again, we appreciate that the DOE was able to get
18 him, the student in-person full-time instruction but
19 it took a lot of effort. There are other students we
20 are hearing from where they are in a District 75, per
21 them usually, so that's what's on their IEP and so
22 they are normally in a class of for some of them six
23 students, for some of them eight students. Their
24 District 75 school currently is not offering full day
25 five day a week in-person learning and so, their

1
2 parent applied to Learning Bridge only to be told
3 that the program can't meet the needs of a student
4 who needs that level of support.

5 There are programs that have said, you know, what
6 we are funded to do is to help the student get from
7 their iPad to their remote learning and if a student
8 needs more support than that, you know, we don't have
9 a way of doing that and we know programs have also
10 been asking the City for this help and have not been
11 able to get it.

12 We also heard from more than one student who
13 enrolled in the program, spent a day or two there and
14 then were told, I am sorry, we can't meet your needs
15 because in order to serve you, we need additional
16 staff or we need some type of support with our
17 current funding and our current contract. We are not
18 able to meet the needs of a student who has this need
19 verse per additional support.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you. Very
21 illustrative. I also want to recognize we have been
22 joined by Council Member Barron; in case she was not
23 recognized previously.

24 Thank you so much. Thank you to everyone on this
25 panel for the work that you are doing day in day out

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2 fighting for our children. I am blown away by — I am
3 so glad you exist. You know our children are really
4 lucky that you are out there fighting for them.
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes the first
7 panel of public testimony. Next, we will hear from
8 Gregory Brender of United Neighborhood Houses, Mary
9 Cheng from Chinese American Planning Council, Debra
10 Sue Lorenzen from St. Nicks Alliance, LeeAnn Scaduto
11 from Hudson Guild and Karenne Berry from Hamilton-
12 Madison House. I will now call on Gregory Brender.
13 You may begin when the Sergeant at Arms gives you the
14 queue.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 GREGORY BENDER: Thank you so much Chair
17 Treyger, Chair Rosenthal, the members of the Council
18 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Gregory
19 Brender and I am here on behalf of United
20 Neighborhood Houses and I am joined on this panel by
21 several of our members.

22 I think everyone on this Zoom from providers to
23 Council Members to folks in government to advocates,
24 has been talking about how childcare is important for
25 a long time. But the pandemic as really I think laid

1
2 that fear for so many more people and one of the
3 things we have really seen during this pandemic is
4 the increased dependence on community-based
5 organizations through a rapid transition to remote
6 programming through the launch of Regional Enrichment
7 Centers and Learning Bridges.

8 And so we put together in our testimony, which
9 you have a full written testimony with all the stuff
10 in detail, several key recommendations to ensure that
11 the City supports CBO's in this.

12 First, we want to urge the City to maintain
13 funding regardless of enrollment. We do believe that
14 enrollment is now artificially low both in early
15 childhood programs and in school aged programs due to
16 issues like obviously the biggest being decreased
17 participation due to COVID but also issues around the
18 procedures for childcare subsidies and the transition
19 of family childcare contracts.

20 We also urge the City to offer incentive pay to
21 CBO providers including family childcare homes who
22 are open during the height of the pandemic. We also
23 want to talk about the need to restore funding for
24 indirect rates. This is something we were glad to
25 hear the Council bring up, something that really

1
2 supports CBO's particularly in a situation like now
3 where there is such need for rapid transition, rapid
4 reprogramming.

5 And finally and what you will hear from all of
6 our colleagues and this is an issue and I want to
7 thank both Council Member Treyger and Council Member
8 Rosenthal for bringing this up. Is to talk about the
9 loss of slots in particularly the income stratified
10 neighborhoods. And you are going to hear from our
11 members. I know we heard that 91 percent of
12 contracts went to existing providers but most of
13 those contracts were as you will hear, actually a lot
14 smaller, in some cases, unsustainable.

15 So, I think I would like to have you hear from
16 all of the providers and their individual issues with
17 this but we have our full testimony that goes into
18 some of the ways to address really issues throughout
19 the sustainable of the childcare programs that I
20 think the City now recognizes are so important to
21 reopening and recovery. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
23 Next, you will hear from Mary Cheng.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
25

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2 MARY CHENG: Hi, thank you Chair Rosenthal, Chair
3 Treyger, the Committee on Gender Equity and Committee
4 on Education and the Members of City Council for the
5 opportunity to testify today. My name is Mary Cheng,
6 I am the Director of CPC's Child Development Services
7 overseeing full Early Childhood and school aged
8 programs and I was a former CPC student and now it is
9 back so I really think that CPC tries to help our
10 constituents as ages also change.

11 To that end, we are grateful to testify about the
12 issues that impact the individuals and families we
13 serve and we are grateful to the Council for their
14 leadership on these issues.

15 Our written testimony will address on the danger
16 of center closures and loss of slots for low-income
17 and working families across New York City and family
18 healthcare. Providers hard hit by the pandemic and
19 need our supports.

20 CPC's Early Childhood programs are truly critical
21 since thousands of working class, AATI's and
22 immigrant families.

23 Under COVID-19, healthcare programs have been
24 extremely stressed and under pressure. As a
25 coalition we found that the recent RFP, [INAUDIBLE

1
2 2:56:44] RFP awards to DOE in our coalition of nine
3 settlement houses losing 39 percent of all slots and
4 72 percent of all extended day slots. We also lost a
5 lot of toddler and 3K slots.

6 We seek restoration of at least \$17 billion to
7 the coalition to help ensure low income immigrant and
8 working families continue to have the care they need
9 for their children.

10 DOE use zip codes to determine where the slots
11 are awarded but these neighborhoods still have NYCHA
12 facilities, pockets of poverty and immigrant
13 [INAUDIBLE 2:57:21]. These site due to their long
14 track of quality serving generations of families and
15 they should not be cut arbitrarily due to the data.

16 These are real families, not statistics. We have
17 lost 72 percent of extended day slots across the
18 coalition, which will lead to families not being able
19 to work and women having to leave the workforce. DOE
20 worked to provide partial awards which were awarded
21 like funding one classroom out of four classrooms.

22 Due to this, more than 40 percent of the survey
23 settlement at each child care centers will be forced
24 to shutdown entirely.

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY JOINTLY
WITH THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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At CPC, we know that we will be forced to shutdown two of our center at the heart of China Town because of this very reason. And it will create new childcare centers in place of that. At CPC, families come to us throughout the five boroughs because they trust us, because we offer culturally and linguistically sensitive programs with wrap around supports to help families achieve better quality of life and we hope that the Council will help us advocate in the upcoming year.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

MARY CHENG: This testimony will be submitted to you. Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony. Next we will hear from Debra Sue Lorenzen.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

DEBRA SUE LORENZEN: Thank you. Good afternoon, my name is Debra Sue Lorenzen and I am the Director of Youth and Education at St. Nicks Alliance in North Brooklyn.

On behalf of the children and families of Small World early childhood centers, St Nicks Alliance is deeply committed to sustaining the generations long

1
2 impact of this center on our communities youngest
3 citizens.

4 It is our great honor to help them develop the
5 critical school readiness skills needed to thrive in
6 kindergarten and beyond. I am testifying today to
7 alert City Council that the elimination or
8 redirection of two year old slots extended day
9 services and year around services from the birth to
10 five award undermine the cultural and economic
11 diversity of students we serve and the financial
12 viability of Small World and other settlement house
13 child operated childcare centers.

14 For more than 45 years, St Nicks has helped
15 transform the lives of low and moderate income
16 families. We are known for our innovative
17 programming with an emphasis on socioemotional
18 academic supports intended to help low-income
19 children succeed in school. St. Nicks serves early
20 childhood, community school, afterschool services for
21 6,000 children and we are critical to our community.

22 It's St. Nicks Small World Daycare Center is the
23 earliest gateway into these services. For low-income
24 families with children as young as two, who benefit
25 from the publicly funded full day and full year

1
2 services long established at this center. St. Nicks
3 typically provides free and low cost services to 108
4 two to four year old's. Through a two year old
5 classroom, three year old classrooms and UPK
6 classrooms. 72 two and three year old's receive
7 subsidized extended day and extended year services
8 and 36 children are funded through UPK.

9 We are very grateful that our birth to five award
10 adds another three year old classroom but the new
11 birth to five award will eliminate every two year old
12 slot in every extended day, extended year slot for
13 three's and four's that we requested. The
14 elimination of these slots will eradicate Small
15 Worlds ability to provide low income families with
16 the same full day full year services as wealthier
17 families in our mixed income community.

18 SNA commissioned a 2018 community assessment data
19 survey which identified a high number of children by
20 income or poverty status who are eligible for early
21 childhood services. And a corresponding significant
22 shortage of quality seats to meet the need.

23 More than 56 percent of residents are non-White,
24 42 percent live in poverty and families in 11211
25 receive public assistance at a much higher rate than

1 families living in other parts of our city. Yet the
2 data also demonstrate that the need for quality
3 childcare is especially prominent among the very own
4 children living in public housing, children with
5 disabilities -

6
7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 DEBRA SUE LORENZEN: And children in foster care.
9 We desperately need for these seats to be preserved
10 and we thank the City Council for their attention
11 today on this matter and for your pursuit of ensuring
12 they are restored. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
14 Next, we will hear from LeeAnn Scaduto.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 LEEANN SCADUTO: Sorry about that. Good
17 afternoon. Hudson Guild thanks the Committee on
18 Education and the Committee on Women and Gender
19 Equity for this opportunity to speak about the future
20 of early childhood education in New York City, which
21 is both an anchor for the start of a child's academic
22 life and a lifeline to employment for thousands of
23 women raising children and working in human services.

24 My name is LeeAnn Scaduto and in my role as
25 Deputy Executive Director at Hudson Guild, I have the

1
2 privilege of overseeing programming for nearly 300
3 two, three and four year old children who begin their
4 learning process in our centers in Chelsea and along
5 the west side of Manhattan. The children in our
6 program are part of families living at the lowest
7 household incomes in the city and their caregivers,
8 predominantly women, require access to quality free
9 or low cost early education that will ensure a strong
10 start for their child and provide safe and productive
11 care while parents work, go to school or look for
12 work.

13 As we have seen during COVID, access to childcare
14 is essential to both educational growth and economic
15 viability. That has always been true for the
16 families to a part of Hudson Guilds programs. For
17 that reason, we are very concerned about the
18 potential impact on children and families in the
19 community that will result from the provisional
20 awards announced in the New York City Department of
21 Education's birth to five procurement slated to take
22 effect in July.

23 Specifically, we are concerned about the
24 unattended impacts on children from low income
25 households in gentrified neighborhoods. Over 90

1
2 percent of children in Hudson Guilds programs are
3 NYCHA residents who have no access to the market rate
4 amenities that exist in our community. For most of
5 our families, loss of services means loss of early
6 childhood education. Further, many of the kids in
7 our program have other critical connections to the
8 Guild whether it be a parent in mental health, a
9 grandmother coming to us for meals or an older
10 sibling in our afterschool program.

11 At the Guild, Early Childhood is part of the
12 network of programming serving the whole family.
13 Head Start is an important part of our network of
14 services. It is not however, an equal substitute for
15 DOE's birth to five programs. They serve different
16 children from different families. The words proposed
17 by the DOE will eliminate options for families who
18 are poor but just above the poverty level. It is one
19 of the most vulnerable populations that need
20 subsidized childcare.

21 This group of low-income families will have no
22 where to obtain quality education in the community
23 now which supports them. For low-income working
24 families who currently offer a full day and full year
25 early childhood education for children who are two,

1
2 three and four years old. It is essential
3 programming that allows families to make progress in
4 their goals. That will be entirely eliminated in our
5 community under the provision of awards.

6 Not only will we no longer be able to serve two
7 and three year old's and lose continuity of care but
8 our families are also losing hours of care and
9 education. We currently provide 2,620 hours of
10 education to every child on a yearly basis.

11 Under the proposed awards, our families would
12 only get 1,116 hours.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 LEEANN SCADUTO: Each child and family is losing
15 57 percent of their early childhood education. They
16 are only getting 43 percent of the services they need
17 and would have to pay for the remaining 57 percent of
18 these services. Our families cannot afford this and
19 therefore will not be able to work.

20 It is our hope that the City Council will work
21 with its partners in government to ensure that \$17
22 million is restored for the spots at our nine
23 settlement houses.

24 A holistic sufficient early childhood education
25 network which serves the needs of all children in the

1
2 City must be funded and implemented. That will
3 require an adequate number of funded seats regardless
4 of the zip code, providing quality, comprehensive
5 full day, full year education for children ages two,
6 three and four. Thank you for this opportunity to
7 speak with you today. We are happy to answer any
8 questions and provide any additional information the
9 Committee may want. Thanks.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
11 Next, we will hear from Karenne Berry.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 KARENNE BERRY: Good afternoon Council Member
14 Treyger and members of the Committee. I am Karenne
15 Berry, Assistant Executive Director for Early
16 Childhood at Madison-House. A community service
17 organization that's been operating on the lower east
18 side of Manhattan all more than a century.

19 For decades, we have operated a very sizable
20 early childhood education program designed to help
21 young children from low-income families develop
22 socially and emotionally while preparing for formal
23 education. Also, extending a broad range of support
24 to parents.

1
2 We are gratified to many thousands of parents
3 have expressed appreciations for these programs that
4 we provide and our performance has constantly been
5 graded by New York City government. As a result of
6 the recent RFP process conducted by the New York City
7 Department of Education, the center-based early
8 childhood education program currently operated by us
9 to more than 200 families will be dramatically
10 reduced as of July 2021.

11 I join with my colleagues on the panel today in
12 facing similar circumstances and expressing alarm
13 about the situation declaring that is very unfair for
14 low-income families to move services because higher-
15 income reside in the neighborhood. And DOE has
16 decided to redirect resources to homogenously low-
17 income neighborhoods. Although we certainly support
18 any programs in those neighborhoods.

19 We are calling for restoration of funds in the
20 amount of \$17 million to maintain services in the
21 neighborhoods represented by our coalition. It is
22 also very important – it is not only the programs
23 funded by New York City DOE that will be lost if this
24 era is not rectified. Hamilton-Madison is in the
25 midst of adding a critical layer to Early Childhood

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2 education programs in the form of a two generation
3 initiative through this undertaken, which is part of
4 a national movement. We go through lengths to engage
5 parents in the education of their children to support
6 their own education and professional development
7 which will put them on a path out of generational
8 poverty.

9 The rationale behind the effort is that better
10 outcomes when children and parents are involved
11 simultaneously and efforts to design, to advance the
12 goals of family members. There is a lot of research
13 to support this evidence. Our offerings and planned
14 efforts include but not limit to English as a second
15 language instruction to support graduate high school,
16 access to college, complete college, gain better
17 access to health care and mental health services,
18 improve family finances. Already dozens of families
19 have benefited from this initiative.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 KARENNE BERRY: I thank the Committee for the
22 opportunity to testify about this critical matter and
23 I join my colleagues in expressing readiness to
24 partner with the City Council over the next few
25 months to restore the \$17 million to our community to

1
2 ensure that community, children and families do not
3 have the services they so need and certainly deserve.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
5 Before I turn back to the Chairs for questions, I
6 would like to remind Council Members to use the raise
7 hand function in Zoom to indicate that you have a
8 question for this panel. Chair Rosenthal.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much. I
10 appreciate that and thank you to this panel for
11 sharing the actual impact that articulating what is
12 actually happening on the ground. So, we really
13 appreciate that. I mean, it's hard to believe the
14 Department of Education when they say that they can
15 eliminate \$17 million from the system and more kids
16 will be given slots. That's a hard pill to swallow.
17 I have some specific questions for Mary Cheng from
18 the Chinese Planning Commission.

19 The DOE claims there will be and this is my
20 question, that there will be more slots in total and
21 I am wondering for your families in particular, how
22 does that square for them? For the programs that
23 were funded for four classrooms, who are now going to
24 be funded for one, what's happening to the kids in
25 the other three classrooms? What is the rational for

1
2 only funding one and what do we say when you are
3 trying to explain this to them?

4 You know, Deputy Chancellor Wallack said that he
5 did meet with coalition members. I am assuming you
6 are one of them, CPC is one of them. Do you have any
7 sense of what the thought process is and what your
8 families are going to do?

9 MARY CHENG: So far us, I think when he mentioned
10 that the slots and how he explained it to us and
11 described it to us, it was no loss in slots overall
12 across the city. But what he didn't do was that it
13 ended up being where people are getting [INAUDIBLE
14 3:12:14] and you are not funding us by program, you
15 are funding us for a certain number of slots and
16 that's where the issue lies. Because our program
17 doesn't run on just 18 slots that you are going to
18 give me, it runs on the total amount to cover all the
19 costs that's involved.

20 So, if you giving me only 18 slots, I really
21 can't survive on that right. So, what's happening
22 now is that now we have to figure out and we haven't
23 shared with our family yet. We have been really
24 understanding work in the middle of a pandemic. How
25 are we supposed to share that come July? What

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2 services you have now, you are not going to receive
3 next year.

4 So, we have two year old's, we have three year
5 old's and we don't know where they are going to go
6 next year.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: But hypothetically, he
8 said there were more slots overall in Manhattan he
9 said. So, are they helping you find where those
10 slots are, so you can connect your kids to those
11 programs.

12 MARY CHENG: They haven't provided us a means
13 list, since everything is in negotiation, so we are
14 not permitted to that information at this time.

15 So, we have been trying to request data from them
16 and we haven't received anything and it is
17 unacceptable because we are looking at six months'
18 time and you know, how are we going to be transparent
19 with our families in this matter, in this issue and
20 it is not fair you know, living where we are coming
21 in day in and day out. We are on that hot seat where
22 we are asking to everything that is coming along but
23 this is something that is planned and I feel like
24 releasing it now in September when we were going
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2 through reopening – when we dealing with all of that
3 and then drop this bomb on us.

4 And we are balancing and everybody is working
5 24/7 trying to figure out this year and at the end of
6 the day, what we are hurting is our families. We
7 consult where are they going to get the support.
8 Where do they turn to?

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, yeah, thank you. I
10 mean, so the Department of Education is confident in
11 saying there are more Manhattan slots then there are
12 currently but they can't tell you where to send your,
13 the kids who currently come to your centers and when
14 they have a contact with you, they are contracting
15 for one room instead of four rooms and so, when you
16 say to the DOE, look, we are just not going to accept
17 that contract because we can't do one room. If we
18 have four classrooms full of kids, what do they say?

19 MARY CHENG: They haven't said anything because
20 we haven't been in negotiations with them. We don't
21 even know when that is going to happen at this time.

22 So, we didn't want to play this waiting game with
23 them. That's why we went back to coalition to and
24 get information from our partners and see where we
25 are at in this because we are not the only one in

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2 this boat and this is where we are coming to
3 everybody. We need to really find this out. This
4 isn't like something we can just say like, oh, come
5 July this is what's going to happen. There has to be
6 a process for us and it's not fair at the end of the
7 day to the family and the community that we are
8 serving.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, thank you. Let's
10 see, to LeeAnn Scaduto, could you answer the same
11 question?

12 LEEANN SCADUTO: Uhm, sure, I think uhm, we don't
13 know where our families will go. We have been trying
14 to figure out on our own. I think part of the issue
15 for us is that we do serve the whole family. So,
16 families come to us for all these different services
17 and now their early childhood is going to be
18 potentially pulled. If there is a slot somewhere
19 else, then they might come back to us for afterschool
20 right.

21 One of the main aspects of the DOE's RFP was
22 continuity of care and they even encouraged us to
23 apply for this equal number of classrooms for two,
24 three and four years old's in the RFP. We were only
25 awarded four year old's. So, there is a huge loss of

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2 continuity of care there. Families having to switch
3 locations and centers and then when you add on it the
4 reduced number of hours that most of us were provided
5 and how parents are going to pay for that difference,
6 it might not be financially viable for people, for
7 our families to be able work. And they will have to
8 make decisions about you know, what they are going to
9 do.

10 I do not understand how this is going to work and
11 we have not been given a lot of information from the
12 Department of Education as Mary said, on the
13 timelines, on negotiations, on what we do with
14 centers that are half or a quarter funded. There are
15 a lot of issues and concerns that we still have and
16 this is going to deeply, deeply, negatively impact
17 our families. Not to mention, a lot of these
18 children are not going to be able to go to early
19 childhood programs and they are not going to be
20 kindergarten ready and it is going to impact the DOE
21 in having to figure out what to do when children come
22 to them in kindergarten and don't have the
23 educational background and content that they need.

24 So, I unfortunately just see a lot of negative
25 impact here and we are hoping that we can do

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2 something now at this point to start to crack some of
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, in other words, and I
5 tried to make this point with the Deputy Chancellor,
6 this is the difference of looking at something from
7 the top down versus from the caregivers point of view
8 up.

9 So, for a parent, a caregiver, they are going to
10 have to drop their two-year-old off at one site,
11 their four-year-old off at another site and maybe
12 pick up their two-year-old to get the at their school
13 or after time for three o'clock care back to the site
14 where the four-year-old is. It is nonsensical.

15 And then, for Gregory Brender, uhm, from UNH, if
16 I could just ask you to speak to what you meant by
17 your statement that enrollment is artificially low
18 right now. Because the Deputy Chancellor did seem to
19 say that was the reason why they could take slots
20 away from current providers.

21 GREGORY BENDER: Yeah, so there is actually a
22 lot of reasons that enrollment is low and it is a
23 problem that we sort of base the future numbers based
24 on current enrollment because of it.

1
2 So, the first is just that there are some
3 families now who are probably doing to transition
4 from being work from home to working in person as
5 more and more businesses open up potentially in the
6 future. So, they may not be enrolled for the remote
7 programming but they are still enrolled for – they
8 would still need childcare and enroll once they
9 return to in person work.

10 But then in the childcare system, in particularly
11 in the early learning extended day, extended year
12 programs, there are significant problems with the
13 enrollment procedures where providers are reporting
14 wait lists of families who have applied.

15 So, a lot of centers actually have and centers
16 and family childcare homes, actually have parents who
17 have applied, who are waiting for determination and
18 we know that that system is currently backed up.

19 That there are a number of reasons for it including
20 the furlough of many DOE staff and the many DOE staff
21 working at home and these systems being replaced.

22 But to us, it is evidence that the current enrollment
23 numbers both at a macro level citywide but also at
24 individual levels of centers and family childcare
25 homes are not accurate.

1
2 And then finally, the Family Childcare Network
3 contracts went into place this July with new networks
4 starting in September, so during the heat of the
5 pandemic but also, there has just been issues with
6 particularly some of the new networks transitioning
7 providers from networks that may have changed their
8 catchment areas or just have not gotten contracts in
9 the last RFP to the new networks.

10 So, therefore the enrollment in family childcare
11 really reflects what's essentially an administrative
12 issue and one that we believe that – and hope that
13 will fixed and therefore shouldn't be used, the
14 current enrollment numbers as reflection of need.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, that's very
16 instructive. I appreciate you. Thank you to all our
17 panelists for the hard work you are doing. I am
18 turning it back to the Moderator. Chair Treyger, did
19 you want to ask questions of this panel?

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I thought you really hit on
21 very many critical points Chair. I will just also
22 note and I think we have heard bits of this. But
23 just to kind of crystalize the point that another
24 flaw in the DOE's approach I think, and method in
25 terms of how they are handling these childcare slots.

1
2 Is that there are times when – and I am sure
3 providers would agree.

4 There are times when a child might live with the
5 family at a certain address but grandma or grandpa or
6 another relative lives at another address or mom or
7 dad might work at another address and this helps with
8 certain flexibility to accommodate the challenges of
9 working families in New York and who their primary
10 caretaker is, as far as to pick them up and so forth.

11 So, providers, that's why you work, as you
12 mentioned Chair, when you work from the bottom up,
13 it's not only the right thing to do, it also, it
14 makes us more informed as far as meeting the needs of
15 where families are at. Families are different, they
16 have unique needs, you know and so, I think it just
17 showed another flaw in the top down approach because
18 it just ignores the realities of what folks are
19 facing on the ground. And I think that providers
20 provide families not just a critical services but
21 also a certain level of flexibility that really goes
22 a long way as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Great, thank you very
24 much and I think we might have a new Moderator.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, Chair Rosenthal.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, thank you. Thank
3 you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Apologies and thank you. We
5 just had a technical difficulty for one moment.
6 Thank you Chairs Treyger and Rosenthal. My name is
7 Brenda McKinney and I am Council to the Committee on
8 Women and Gender Equity and I will just be stepping
9 in for one moment.

10 So, we are going to call the next panel if we are
11 ready Chairs. The next panel will be, I will call
12 all the members as a panel and then individually.
13 Leah Van Halsema; apologies for any pronunciation
14 issues. Daryl Hornick-Becker, Shana Hewitt, Lea
15 KixMiller and Gladys Jones.

16 So, the next panelist and witness will be Leah
17 Van Halsema. You may begin when the Sergeant calls
18 the clock. Thank you.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 LEAH VAN HALSEMA: Good afternoon. Thank you for
21 the opportunity to present testimony today. My name
22 is Leah Van Halsema and I am the Director for the
23 Early care and Education Institute at the Committee
24 for Hispanic Children and Families, better known by
25 its acronym CHCF.

1
2 As one of New York City's for childcare and
3 resource and referral agencies, we provide high
4 quality, culturally responsive support services for
5 the childcare workforce. In CHCF's case specifically
6 an overwhelmingly Spanish speaking home-based
7 childcare providers.

8 We also support families with individualized
9 childcare resource and referral services and as of
10 July 2020, we also hold a DOE ethnicity network
11 contract serving Districts 7-12 in the Bronx.

12 Family childcare programs are small business
13 owned and operated overwhelmingly by women of color,
14 many of whom speak a primary language other than
15 English. This sector has always been essential to
16 the overall financial stability of working families
17 and the city and state economies, 2020 is no
18 exception.

19 During the COVID-19 pandemic, homebased FCC
20 providers have served New York City's essential
21 workers tirelessly even as their center-based
22 counterparts were closed for months and now continue
23 to serve the larger workforce returning to their pre-
24 COVID rhythms. All while enrollment numbers have
25

1
2 dropped precariously and their small businesses hang
3 by a thread.

4 The challenges that family childcare providers
5 are facing were already well entrenched prior to the
6 pandemic, both in state and city childcare systems.
7 The DOE consulted with many FCC experts and providers
8 in the field, CHCF included, as they designed the
9 current FCC network structure. We offered free
10 counsel and named system design flaws that would
11 destabilize the FCC sector and the working families
12 who rely on it.

13 Far from honoring these recommendations, the DOE
14 maintains provider payment rates that are
15 insufficient to maintain their programs. They
16 offered five year fixed contracts with no cost of
17 living adjustments and they refuse to guarantee a
18 percentage contract payout to sustain the cost of
19 running, growing and thriving programs and networks.

20 Given the low rates that they are paid for
21 service, insufficient supplies and supports in
22 response to the pandemic, the lack of guidance on
23 allowable program adjustments to reflect the current
24 reality and on enrollment, DOE network providers and
25 organizations are simply not receiving the necessary

1 secured funds needed to survive the pandemic. This
2 reality is felt for independent unaffiliated
3 providers as well.
4

5 FCC programs were not engaged in city run systems
6 for children of essential workers, cutting them off
7 from funding that could keep their businesses afloat.
8 Very few providers were successfully able to access
9 the SBA loans or other small business relief grants
10 at the state and city levels. And disbursement of
11 federal cares dollars for childcare has been
12 overwhelming delayed thus far.

13 Further, as essential and non-essential workers
14 have begun returning to the workforce, both ACS and
15 HRA processing of applications for subsidy has come
16 to a near standstill. Stagnating not only parent
17 ability to fully return to work but impeding the flow
18 of urgently needed funds and to childcare businesses.

19 We have to collectively recognize that it is not
20 in anyone's best interest that these programs be left
21 to collapse. As we know that childcare will continue
22 to be an essential need for working families and the
23 health of our economy. The collapse of the homebased
24 childcare sector will undoubtedly devastate working
25 families and their ability to fully return to work.

1
2 Overwhelmingly in low-income communities, immigrant
3 communities and communities of color.

4 We ask that the Council please see our full
5 written testimony for recommendations on addressing
6 the needs of this sector. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
8 testimony. The next witness will be Daryl Hornick-
9 Becker. Thank you.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 DARYL HORNICK-BECKER: Good afternoon, my name is
12 Daryl Hornick-Becker and I am a Policy and Advocacy
13 Associate at Citizens' Committee for Children of New
14 York. Thank you Chair Rosenthal, Chair Treyger and
15 all the members of the Women and Gender Equity and
16 Education Committee's for holding today's hearing.

17 For our full set of recommendations I refer you
18 to my written testimony. Today, I will highlight
19 just a few areas where action is sorely needed.

20 First, childcare providers must receive every
21 support necessary to remain open and safely providing
22 care. This includes incentive pay for the early
23 childcare educators who have been and continue to be
24 on the front lines of the pandemic. As well as
25 expedited staff clearances for programs and better

1
2 interagency coordination between the DOE, DYCD and
3 DOHMH to ensure programs have the capacity, staff and
4 support they need to adequately run either their
5 childcare programs or a Learning Bridges site.

6 Additionally, center and home-based childcare
7 settings need help paying for PPE and deep cleaning
8 costs. And early child educators outside schools,
9 deserve the same priority access to testing as those
10 in schools.

11 Second, the City must honor its commitment to
12 salary parity and preserve childcare funding. The
13 hard fought parity agreement reached last year is
14 essential to both the short-term and long-term
15 stability of UPK and to the CBO's responsible, the
16 majority of UPK sites. It is imperative that the
17 salary increases and the sector as a whole are held
18 harmless from austerity measures.

19 Third, new childcare contracts cannot result in a
20 loss of seats or a loss of full day services. As the
21 DOE awards new seats for its entire birth to five
22 childcare system, it must ensure that new awards do
23 not result in any loss of capacity. This means no
24 fewer seats but importantly, it also means no loss of
25 current full day offerings.

1
2 For working families, childcare that ends at 3
3 p.m. is simply not an option. Additionally, we are
4 concerned that new awards may exacerbate issues
5 around the dearth of affordable full day care.
6 Childcare desert certainly exists in New York City
7 but there is real risk that in attempting to address
8 capacity in particular communities, awards could
9 create childcare deserts elsewhere.

10 The procurement process maybe administrative on
11 its surface, with a provider losing a contract with
12 the DOE, we are seeing a reduction, means a real loss
13 of services and opportunities for children and
14 families.

15 Finally, the City must address its infant and
16 toddler care affordability crisis. CCC recently
17 published an analysis that shows even before COVID-
18 19, access to early care for infants and toddlers was
19 unaffordable for most families. Citywide, the annual
20 cost of center-based childcare for infants and
21 toddlers consumes almost a third of median household
22 income for families with young children.

23 In communities where incomes are lower, this cost
24 burden consumes as much as 65 percent of median
25 income. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has

1
2 likely exacerbated this crisis. The City must do
3 everything it can to protect current capacity for
4 infant and toddler care against the dual threat of
5 budget cuts and shifting capacity in new contracts.

6 Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

8 Next, we will hear from Shana Hewitt.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 SHANA HEWITT: Good afternoon. My name is Shana
11 Hewitt and I am the Director of Early Childhood
12 Education at Sheltering Arms.

13 Thank you Chairs Treyger and Rosenthal for the
14 opportunity to testify before you today. Sheltering
15 Arms is one of the city's largest providers of
16 education, youth development and community and family
17 wellbeing programs for the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn
18 and Queens. Our early childhood education program
19 includes nine centers in the South Bronx, Harlem,
20 Queens and Brooklyn, which serve nearly 700 children
21 and their families each year.

22 Throughout the pandemic, we have adjusted
23 programming and learned new ways of connecting with
24 families. Some of which, allow us to provide more
25 flexible and accessible support moving forward. I am

1
2 testifying before you today to highlight some of the
3 challenges that remain. My full testimony will be
4 submitted, so I will focus on key points here.

5 Under enrollment. The impact of COVID-19 on the
6 families we serve cannot be overstated. Children
7 have lost parents, families have lost income, food
8 insecurity has increased dramatically, and like
9 parents across the country, our families have had to
10 figure out how to balance work with their children's
11 education.

12 In April, one of our families suffered the loss
13 of the father due to COVID. The father always worked
14 while mom stayed home. So, this was a devastating,
15 emotional and financial loss for the family. Our
16 early Head Start program provided this family with
17 mental health services and intensive family support
18 to assist her with navigating the medical and benefit
19 systems during her husband's illness and death.

20 After his death, the mother's family came
21 together to help her obtain a small studio apartment
22 in the Bronx for her and her three sons, ages 14, 10
23 and 2. The mother now has to work long hours at a
24 nail salon six days a week and is overwhelmed with
25 not being able to help any of her children with

1
2 remote learning. Instead, the mother relies on the
3 help of their babysitter and grandmother who are both
4 limited in education and the technology skills to
5 watch the children during the day and to help with
6 remote learning as best as possible.

7 We were eventually successful in enrolling the
8 youngest child in our blended learning option and
9 continue to support the babysitter and grandmother as
10 much as possible during the remote learning days.

11 This families experience demonstrates many of the
12 challenges that our families and our centers continue
13 to face. While more than two-thirds of our families
14 have opted for in person or blended learning, many
15 families are still fearful of bringing their children
16 to school onsite and those who are unable to balance
17 remote learning and work, have opted instead to leave
18 their children with sitters or family members who may
19 be unwilling or unable to assist children with remote
20 learning due to language or technology barriers.

21 Across our nine centers, enrollment this year is
22 down 16 percent compared to last year. For some of
23 our centers, this is the first time they have been
24 under enrolled in several years.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 SHANA HEWITT: We join UNH in urging the
3 Department of Education to extend full contract
4 payments to ensure that providers are not financially
5 penalized for under enrollment throughout this
6 crisis.

7 Metal health and wellbeing. Additionally, while
8 our staff have been able to support families in needs
9 throughout the pandemic, the disproportionate impact
10 of COVID-19 physically, emotionally and financially
11 on Black and Latinx communities in New York City has
12 fallen on both the families in our program and our
13 staff members who are 97 percent women and 98 percent
14 people of color.

15 New York City has invested significant resources
16 into mental health support in recent years through
17 programs like Trauma Smart and Connections to Care.
18 But our communities and staff have experienced
19 incredible trauma's this year and need additional
20 support.

21 We urge the City to provide additional resource
22 including onsite mental health counseling in our ECE
23 centers to support the growing mental health needs of
24 staff and families, especially for our BIPOC mothers.
25

1
2 Childcare for essential staff. Finally, we urge
3 the Department of Education to simplify and
4 streamline the application process for Learning
5 Bridges. Our staff have reported waiting up to six
6 weeks from the time they apply to when their children
7 are finally enrolled.

8 During this waiting period, staff often have to
9 use sick or vacation time in order to stay home with
10 their children. We are grateful for this dedicated
11 option to our central staff but a more efficient
12 application process is needed.

13 Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for
14 fighting for our children, families and staff.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
16 Next, we will turn to Lea KixMiller.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 LEA KIXMILLER: Thank you Chair Treyger and
19 Council Members of the Committee on Education for the
20 opportunity to submit testimony on DYCD Learning
21 Labs.

22 MY name is Lea KixMiller and I am a Program
23 Director at Good Shepherd Services at PS 224 Learning
24 Lab located in Brooklyn. Before this role, I served
25 as Program Director of an afterschool program at

1
2 Launch Charter School in Brooklyn for almost four
3 years. Helping the city implement Learnings Labs has
4 been an amazing experience because of our ability to
5 meet the needs of the community and to support
6 families during this difficult time.

7 Families that have enrolled in the PS 224 program
8 do so because they need childcare, access to
9 technology and Wi-Fi for their children, assistance
10 with helping their children navigate remote learning
11 or assistance in navigating language barriers.

12 Good Shepherd Services operates five Learning
13 Labs and annually our education program serve over
14 10,000 students. Thus far, directing a Learning Lab
15 has been challenging because providers receive
16 numerous and conflict in communications, have a
17 limited way to get questions answered and the City is
18 making decisions around enrollment and the model
19 without including the provider or community voice.

20 In order to enroll participants, both families
21 and providers need to jump through numerous hoops and
22 the process can take weeks while families wait for
23 needed services. When providers, families or school
24 administration have questions related to the Learning
25 Labs including enrollment, it is challenging to get a

1
2 clear answer. All the while we are receiving
3 critical information that impacts our programming and
4 the families we support in the Mayor's press
5 conferences.

6 To date, we have enrolled 29 participants and
7 have been averaging 20-25 participants per day.
8 Providers are required to take daily attendance
9 through multiple platforms which include logging
10 attendance on DYCD Connect, a paper version of a new
11 DOH form and on the Learning Labs DOE tracker. DYCD
12 also sends frequent surveys where they ask us
13 specific attendance related questions.

14 Technology continues to be an issues and while
15 Good Shepherd Services has ordered devices to keep up
16 with the need, it has been challenging to get enough
17 devices to support the students.

18 Allow me to share a day in a Learning Lab. Staff
19 assist students in remaining focus signing on,
20 helping the switch between classes, schoolwork,
21 different online platforms, attending speech,
22 occupational therapy, IEP services and other
23 appointments throughout the day.

24 During breaks in between classes, we have
25 projects participants can engage in that try to meet

1 social emotional learning needs and build community.

2 An example is we have an emotions chart in each room

3 where participants get a magnet and get to create a

4 small drawing of themselves on the board. Each day

5 and throughout the day children are encouraged to

6 move their magnet to which ever emotion they are

7 feeling in that moment. This enables participants to

8 express what they are feeling throughout the day.

9
10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 LEA KIXMILLER: And follow up with each

12 participant.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Please feel free to

14 continue.

15 LEA KIXMILLER: Thank you. The health and safety

16 of everyone at the Learning Labs is a main priority.

17 We ensure that everyone is kept safe and everything

18 from our entry procedures to the way classes are set

19 up and for social distancing, mask wearing, limited

20 sharing of common spaces and materials and also, to

21 allow for constant cleaning.

22 Earlier this month, the Mayor announced that they

23 would push schools to five day a week in person

24 instruction when they reopened. The news was

25 concerning since it could jeopardize our jobs and

1 provided no clear avenue to have questions and
2 concerns about this addressed.

3
4 This has led to fear and uncertainty across our
5 Learning Lab programs and among families who do not
6 want Learning Labs to end. In order to support CBO's
7 who play an integral role in ensuring the success of
8 Learning Labs, GSS strongly supports the United
9 Neighborhood Houses, Learning Lab recommendations
10 shared in their testimony.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I want
12 to thank the Committee for pushing the Administration
13 to be partners with the providers and community, so
14 that we can get answers to our questions and continue
15 to support the children and family of New York City
16 that need us most. I am happy to answer questions.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
18 Last on this panel, we have Gladys Jones. You may
19 begin once the Sergeant gives you the queue.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 GLADYS JONES: Good afternoon City Council. My
22 name is Gladys Jones and I am an Early Childhood
23 Educator in a residential setting for 17 years.

24 I am the Founder of ECE on the Move, an
25 organization of 600 family childcare providers in New

1
2 York City. Mostly women of color, immigrants that
3 are living poverty guidelines as they take care of
4 the city's children.

5 We are business women supporting business women.
6 At the onset of pandemic, family childcare providers
7 specifically never close their doors. Caring for the
8 children of the essential workers even through the
9 pandemic's hazardous conditions. Independent
10 providers are not affiliated with the Department of
11 Education. We have tried to survive by applying to
12 PPP or any grant without much success. Many of us
13 have not been able to sustain our businesses or our
14 families. Hence closures of this valuable modality
15 of care that is one of the most used in low-income
16 and communities of color.

17 We ask for hazard pay for those providers who are
18 still here. We also ask that parents subsidies for
19 childcare remain intact during this crucial period.
20 A normal system of dropping cases while parents are
21 not working have no place during abnormal times.
22 Parents have a difficult time reapplying and
23 providers lifesaving waivers are dwindling.

24 Family Childcare Providers have been recruited to
25 join networks contracted with the DOE. In doing so,

1
2 there has come about a division of families, children
3 and providers. If the DOE represents a public yet
4 equitable education with services for all, shouldn't
5 these offerings be for all families with children?

6 Shouldn't it be given through all types of
7 providers of care. We ask that the Council support a
8 united early care indication system that promotes
9 continuum from the beginning, starting with infants
10 and toddlers. Having DOE work with independent
11 providers who have been ostracized. Resources from
12 the DOE should be shared out for all families of any
13 community of New York City and offered to all
14 providers of care regardless of network membership.
15 A final resolution would be to shift public awareness
16 to include all providers of care as a matter of
17 choice for families. We have asked the DOE to post a
18 disclaimer on their website that they are independent
19 providers located in all neighborhoods and to include
20 these providers as part of family choice.

21 This is a matter of survival now and fulfills the
22 waiting lists of parents who need care. We have
23 suffered pre-pandemic and the pandemic era has put
24 the nail in our coffins. Easy on the Move is
25 submitting written testimony to further detail

1
2 everything mentioned today and our contact details
3 for updates and further discussion on these ongoing
4 issues.

5 Thank you for your time. Thank you for the
6 opportunity to speak our truth. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
8 Before I turn back to the Chairs for questions, I
9 would like to remind Council Members to use the raise
10 hand function in Zoom to indicate that you have a
11 question for this panel. Chair Rosenthal.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much. What
13 a perfectly put together panel. Just really hitting
14 as Gladys Jones said, all along the continuum of care
15 and the necessity of thinking from the perspective of
16 the family, which is taking care of young one's to
17 older individuals. And how important our settlement
18 houses are. How important our you know, even the
19 independent providers of childcare. Everyone is
20 playing a role here and I really want to thank you
21 all for your service.

22 If I could just ask, is it Shana Hewitt, Shana?
23 I don't want to get it wrong.

24 SHANA HEWITT: Hi, it's Shana.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Shana. Shana, you are
3 with -

4 SHANA HEWITT: Sheltering Arms.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Sheltering Arms, that's
6 what I thought and I was looking just online now of
7 again, your services which are across the spectrum of
8 family needs and I really appreciate that. Thank you
9 for sharing the specific stories. You know, the
10 student whose father died. Just devastating and the
11 work clearly the way you talk about it, you know, the
12 reality that this family needs all types of help and
13 you were there to provide that for them. And yet,
14 the City might notice that you know, you are under
15 enrolled this year and you might lose some of the
16 classrooms for your contract next year is absurd.

17 So, I really appreciate that. I also really want
18 to appreciate your highlighting that 97 percent - 99
19 percent of your staff are women. 98 percent of the
20 97 percent are women of color and I really appreciate
21 your highlighting that. That was a point we were
22 trying to make to the Deputy Chancellor. Thank you.

23 And then, if I could just ask Gladys Jones from
24 ECE on the Move, you mentioned that independent
25 providers have been ostracized. I thought that was

1
2 fair. Can you just talk – so does that mean there
3 are none of the ECE on the Move providers have City
4 contracts? DOE contracts whether it be for anything?

5 GLADYS JONES: No, that would be untrue. We do
6 have network providers but that doesn't mean they
7 don't have any issues. What is happening is that we
8 have tried to work with the DOE especially during the
9 pandemic to offer our services. And it wasn't
10 readily met but if there is a need for children in
11 New York City, why don't we step up? Why can't we
12 step up? I don't understand.

13 So, even now, the PPE has been given in great
14 abundance to the network providers but not for the
15 independent providers.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Got it. And have you
17 tried, I mean, one of the things the Deputy
18 Chancellor said over and over again is they will work
19 with providers, they will work with parents. Has
20 there been any communication with DOE to try to
21 rectify this situation?

22 GLADYS JONES: They know me well.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. Okay, got it.
24 Thank you all very much, really appreciate the hard
25

1
2 work that you are doing and your testimony. Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Chair, if I may, just a
5 very quick question to I think to Lea from Learning
6 Labs. Something that we have not really heard so far
7 today but I am just curious to hear your opinion and
8 your thoughts, can you speak to the level of
9 coordination or lack thereof and communication with
10 the situation room that the City has put together?
11 Because I have heard some issues there. I would be
12 happy to hear your thoughts. Whether you have had
13 any interactions, what improvements are necessary.
14 Please say a few words.

15 LEA KIXMILLER: Thank you. I have luckily not
16 had any dealings with the situation myself for my
17 program. I you know, thankfully everyone has been
18 safe. So, I can't comment.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, that's a good thing.
20 I am not going to complain. I have heard from other
21 providers where there is a lot of communication gaps
22 and issues but I am happy that unfortunately that
23 there is no issues there. And I thank the entire
24 panel for their work and their powerful testimony
25 today. Thank you so much.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Seeing no Council Members
3 waiting to ask questions, I will now turn to the next
4 panel.

5 For the last panel of public testimony, we will
6 hear in order of speaking will be Shanita Bowen ECE
7 on the Move, Lara Kyriakou South Bronx Rising
8 Together and Amy Chea from the Low-Income Investment
9 Fund. Shanita Bowen, you may begin once the Sergeant
10 gives you the queue.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You time starts now.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, Shanita Bowen, it
13 seems that you have not unmuted yourself.

14 SHANITA BOWEN: Ops.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin when the
16 Sergeant gives you the queue.

17 SHANITA BOWEN: Thank you.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

19 SHANITA BOWEN: Thank you. Good afternoon. My
20 name is Shanita Bowen, I am primarily a Licensed
21 Early Care Educator in a residential setting, also
22 known as Family Childcare Provider for the past 16
23 years. I am also the Communications Director for ECE
24 on the Move.

1
2 We are a grassroots movement of currently 600
3 childcare, family childcare providers dedicated to
4 upholding our stake in the early care and education
5 profession. Thank you for dedicating another hearing
6 toward childcare issues as outlined by the Chair's
7 Rosenthal and Chair Treyger. Family childcare
8 providers are first and foremost business owners who
9 use their homes to provide care.

10 We are a very specific modality offering
11 uniqueness of culture, care and early education but
12 for the sake of being available to the communities
13 children, we avail ourselves in what seems to be the
14 best of opportunities. But we begin to feel herded
15 into initiative after initiative which serves
16 everyone's agenda and not look after the needs of
17 parents or providers.

18 Understandably, our focus begins to wane on the
19 intricacies of providing the best of quality care as
20 our compensation does not match the quality of care
21 we wish to offer. Quality of care cannot happen
22 without quality of pay. We ask the Council for
23 invigorating work on legislation to approach an
24 alternative method for calculating the market rate to
25 account for the true cost of quality care.

1
2 Secondly, on this issue, as providers move
3 forward in applying for new market rates, as they are
4 raised, it is a near difficult navigation to have to
5 prove why even a dollar's raise is needed. To this
6 point, we ask that legislation is also worked on to
7 assist providers in accessing new higher market rates
8 as the rates are raised.

9 We ask that it is an automatic process and
10 without having to justify why are raises needed,
11 especially when compensation was never ideal to begin
12 with. We also ask during this pandemic, that the
13 City finds funding to offer hazard pay, as well as
14 small grants to help providers who remained open with
15 general operating expenses and keeping their doors
16 open.

17 I am not sure that the Deputy Chancellor is still
18 here but I do have a question for him and I can
19 forward it in written testimony. The question is,
20 was the birth to five withdrawn this year and will it
21 be available in 2021 withstanding your commitment to
22 include family childcare providers in network
23 programming? Again, many providers continue to chose
24 to remain independent. They have plenty of space.
25 Independent providers continue to feel as if they do

1
2 not have an equitable or a fair chance at obtaining a
3 contract. Is there a fair percentage of how many
4 independent family childcare providers are awarded
5 contracts?

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 SHANITA BOWEN: Are they hoping on dreams. May
8 I? Or are the hoping on dreams where they can take
9 their businesses to the next level.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Continue.

11 SHANITA BOWEN: As for the DYCD who may also not
12 be here, the RFP, the Learning Bridges was open for
13 providers to apply to participate in caring for the
14 city's school youth. This RFP was not clear that it
15 was not open to all family childcare providers.
16 Independent childcare provider who again, are
17 providers not affiliated with networks did not
18 believe that they were not "lead CBO's". Many of
19 these qualified independent providers eagerly applied
20 and were turned away.

21 The result, independent family childcare
22 providers with many open slots continue to wait to be
23 called to work. There is no support for them on any
24 website pairing them with families who need care.
25 There should never be waiting lists in caring for

1
2 children. What is missing is partnership between any
3 and all of the City's initiatives to wholeheartedly
4 embrace the availability of all family childcare
5 providers. Not just those who have joined the ranks
6 of networks but those who chose to continue to
7 operate their businesses independently.

8 Early education is not one size fits all. [PHONE
9 RINGING] Sorry, elder in the home. Independent
10 providers want the same opportunities and resources
11 that's contractually given to networks.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh my gosh, I feel your
13 pain.

14 SHANITA BOWEN: I have an elder in the home, I am
15 so sorry.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: No worries, I actually, I
17 miss the sound of the old phones because there used
18 to be iPhones ring sounds. I like those phones. I
19 hope all goes well.

20 SHANITA BOWEN: Thank you. Thank you for hearing
21 the issues today.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you and I
23 appreciate your submitting all that testimony as
24 well, including your question. That's great.

25 SHANITA BOWEN: Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
3 Before I move to the next panelist, I would just like
4 to add Karen Daughtry from the Alonzo A. Daughtry
5 Memorial Day Care Center to this panel.

6 Next, we will hear from Lara Kyriakou. You may
7 begin once the Sergeant gives you the queue.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

9 LARA KYRIAKOU: Thank you. Good afternoon, I
10 would like to thank Chairs Mark Treyger and Helen
11 Rosenthal and the members of the Committee's on
12 Education and Women and Gender Equity for the
13 opportunity to submit testimony on the impact of the
14 COVID-19 pandemic on family childcare in New York
15 City.

16 My name is Lara Kyriakou and I am the Early
17 Learning System Manager at South Bronx Rising
18 Together or SBRT. SBRT is a collective impact
19 initiative coordinated by children's aid and composed
20 of more than 150 cross sector partners committed to
21 building pathways to success from cradle through
22 college and career with a focus on Community District
23 three in the South Bronx.

24 Family childcare is an especially vital pillar of
25 support in under resourced communities such as CD3

1
2 and it is a critical component of supporting women
3 with young children in the workforce. As business
4 owners, employers, workers and students.

5 Given the disproportionately high rate of
6 economic and educational disparities in CD3, SBRT is
7 committed to supporting family childcare is a
8 critical conduit to the success of educational and
9 financial outcomes for children, parents and the
10 community.

11 Today, I would like to highlight three areas
12 where critical support is needed to provide quality
13 care for New York City's youngest residents. First,
14 current financial support, which is available on a
15 reimbursement basis, rather than through direct
16 funding. Poses a substantial burden to providers and
17 excludes providers who need financial support the
18 most.

19 Secondly, there have been a considerable drop in
20 the number of families receiving childcare vouchers
21 in the past few months. Even as parents are
22 expressing a need for care as they continue or return
23 to work, leaving both parents and providers who rely
24 on voucher payments at a standstill until that
25 paperwork is processed.

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2 And lastly, family childcare providers have
3 navigated the concerns and risks to their homes and
4 families while caring for children of essential
5 workers, yet these childhood educators have not
6 received any hazard pay for the invaluable service
7 they have provided essential workers and families
8 during this unprecedented time of risk and
9 uncertainty.

10 Additional information data and recommendations
11 on how to best support family childcare are included
12 in my written testimony. The research is clear on
13 the long term pay amounts of childcare investments
14 with the return of \$7.00 on every \$1.00 invested into
15 childcare.

16 At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has
17 exacerbated the dire inequities in low-income
18 communities and communities of color. Supporting
19 family childcare providers is one of the most
20 effective ways to invest in families, small business,
21 owned primarily of women of color and communities.
22 The benefits of which will be felt for generations to
23 come.

24 I thank Chairs Treyger and Rosenthal and the
25 members of the Education and Women and Gender Equity

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY JOINTLY
WITH THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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2 Committees for this opportunity to submit testimony
3 on this very important issue. Please feel free to
4 contact with me with any questions regarding this
5 testimony. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
7 Next, we will hear from Amy Chea.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

9 AMY CHEA: Good afternoon and thank you to the
10 members of the Council for hearing me speak today.
11 My name is Amy Chea and I am a Program Officer at a
12 nonprofit community development financial
13 institution, called the Low-Income Investment Fund or
14 LIF for short and on our early education program here
15 in New York.

16 I am here on behalf of our tireless, undervalued,
17 underappreciated and overworked childcare providers
18 who are the true backbone of our society and of our
19 economy. The ECE landscape has been shaped by
20 centuries of racial and gender discrimination via
21 policy, programs and cultural norms. Caring for and
22 teaching babies, toddlers and preschoolers is work
23 whose legacy is rooted in the labor of slaves and
24 domestic servants and has long been relegated as
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2 women's work. Which is rarely seen as real work,
3 therefore, ECE workers are perpetually undervalued.

4 More than one in six women working in the ECE
5 field live below the poverty line. And these rates
6 are higher for women of color and for mothers. Prior
7 to the pandemic, the ECE sector faced many challenges
8 in equity issues. Such as significant under supply,
9 under funded operations, unaffordability for the
10 average family and an under valued and disrespected
11 workforce. These issues only got worse during the
12 pandemic and our city's home-based family childcare
13 providers experience immense difficulty in accessing
14 relief funds.

15 Together with regional funders and local
16 partners, LIF launched a major fund raising effort to
17 provide emergency relief. Many SCC's in the city,
18 already operating on shoe string budgets lost nearly
19 70 percent of their incoming revenue during the first
20 week of sheltering in place. LIF recognized that
21 these providers were not just at risk of losing
22 their businesses but since they were operating out of
23 their residences, they were also at risk of losing
24 their homes.

1
2 Even with \$1.2 million, all from private
3 philanthropy, dispersed to 182 family childcare
4 providers. It is barely a drop in the bucket for
5 what childcare needs in this City. 67 percent of our
6 grantees and by the way, I want to note 99 percent of
7 whom are women and 98 percent are women of color and
8 two of whom are actually on this call today, so hi.

9 67 percent of our grantees had to temporally
10 close their programs for a range of three weeks to
11 eight months, which meant that there was no money
12 coming in during that time. A grant as small as
13 \$3,000 helped a single Latino mother pay her rent,
14 pay her bills and keep her doors open to her
15 community for at least two more months but we have
16 run out of money and the bills haven't stopped.

17 We will continue to fundraise and to support our
18 programs in technical assistance and training but
19 they need your help. There are over 6,400 registered
20 and licensed FCC's here in this city and they deserve
21 your support. Many of them, as already stated today
22 are independent from the DOE and they rely on private
23 pay families. They are essential workers caring for
24 the children of essential workers. Our city's
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1
2 economic recovery rests on their backs as it has for
3 centuries.

4 What we need from you is your ear, your heart and
5 above all, financial relief. We are at risk of
6 losing these childcare business forever and these
7 providers are at risk of losing their homes and their
8 livelihoods.

9 In a recent survey in New York –

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 AMY CHEA: 40 percent of the FCC – sorry, 40
12 percent of the FCC providers who participated said
13 they will close within three months if enrollment
14 stays where it is and if they don't receive
15 additional public support. They need grants, they
16 need funding.

17 Much of our nations inequities and achievement
18 help and wealth building are born of the
19 opportunities planted in infancy and early childhood.
20 Investments, financial investment in early care and
21 education is foundational to reclaiming this sector
22 to build wealth for entrepreneurs of color and
23 advancing racial and gender equity.

24 I invite you to join me in this investment.

25 Thank you for your time and thank you for all the

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2 incredible advocates on this call. It is an honor to
3 be here with you today. I am definitely amongst my
4 people. I am happy to answer any questions and a
5 more detailed written testimony will be submitted to
6 your office with our fullest of recommendations.

7 Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Amy Chea.

9 AMY CHEA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, before I turn to our
11 last panelist on this panel, I would like to mention
12 that if we have inadvertently missed anyone that
13 would like to testify, please use the raise hand
14 function in Zoom and I will call on you in the order
15 of hands raised after Q&A after this panel. Last on
16 this panel, we have Karen Daughtry. You may begin
17 when the Sergeant gives you the queue.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

19 KAREN DAUGHTY: Good afternoon. I am delighted
20 to have this opportunity to speak to this illustrious
21 panel. To all of those who are in charge and have
22 been speaking. We have been listening very intently.
23 I had to step away to have a staff meeting in the
24 middle, so I may have missed some of the things and I

1
2 do not have a prepared written testimony. I am just
3 speaking from my heart.

4 I am very concerned about the birth to RFP, the
5 birth to five RFP awards that have gone out and I am
6 very thankful for LeeAnn Scaduto and Debra Lorenzen,
7 who spoke so eloquently. Many others have spoken
8 about the situations that community-based
9 organizations are facing at this critical time. We
10 have waited for over a year for the results of the
11 awards to come out and in the middle of a pandemic,
12 COVID-19 in August, we hear that awards are being,
13 provisional awards are being given.

14 We did not get the memo and we discovered that
15 when we did get the survey they gave us two choices.
16 Except what we have given you which is one-third of
17 the program or withdraw your proposal. Nothing
18 related to an appeal or any of that was included in
19 any correspondence that we have gotten.

20 So, on our own, a small center that we are, we
21 have had to go to the union, to our City Council
22 people, some of them who don't even know what is
23 going on. I am very concerned about the top down
24 disaster that I think is happening with these awards.

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2 Our program will be cut 66 percent, which will
3 leave us virtually unable to operate a program. We
4 are in the middle of Gowanus, Wyckoff and Warren
5 Street Housing, a NYCHA project. You can not tell me
6 we are cut – all of our two's have been cut, all of
7 our three's have been cut. We have four year old's
8 which we have been having since 2001 with DOE. Where
9 are my three's and four's going? Where have they
10 been reallocated to?

11 Then we make them come downstairs and come into
12 our building, which is a part of this complex. I am
13 totally confused, totally baffled and it hawks me
14 back to the ill faded RFP process that happened back
15 in 2012 where programs that had been doing early
16 education for years were completely cut. Daycare was
17 privatized. We have been doing this for over 50
18 years.

19 In 2021, when July comes, Alonzo Daughtry Day
20 Care Center, which I happen to be the Executive
21 Director of, will be out of business. This top down
22 and then there is no number you can call, no person
23 you can speak to regarding any of this. It's an
24 email, call 311. July will be here. I am so
25 thankful for those organizations that are operating

1
2 and organizing. What happened to the meetings on
3 First Avenue? With all of this technology, why could
4 not they call all of the CBO's together -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 KAREN DAUGHTRY: At First Avenue, put us on Zoom
7 and let us express what we are feeling. This is a
8 travesty and the City Council - thank God for Stephen
9 Levin. Thank God for Stephen Levin who Alonzo
10 Daughtry was one of the only centers that came back
11 after being closed unfairly in 2012. It's not fair.
12 The City Council needs to be aware. Thank God for
13 Council Member Inez Barron that made me alerted to
14 this forum today. I don't know how many other
15 centers were alerted but I am very thankful for that
16 bit of opportunity to just express my frustration and
17 I am sure you can see it.

18 It is a travesty to the men, the women and the
19 children in this community that are trying their best
20 to pull themselves up and help the economy. The
21 government has made us an essential service. We are
22 open. Hot meals every day, breakfast, lunch and
23 dinner. We have in this full day, extended day, 8-6
24 which is what our families need. I want to know
25 where my two's and three's have been assigned to.

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2 Have they been assigned like our one's in 2012 were
3 assigned to a program lesser than ours?

4 I don't understand. Somebody needs to help me to
5 understand this. I am about to retire but I refuse
6 to leave our program squandering and wondering what's
7 going on. This is just not fair and pardon my furor
8 but I am so angry. Somebody needs to do something.

9 Thank God for Stephen Levin who funded us under
10 discretionary funding when they had closed us down
11 for two years unfairly. That's a whole other story.

12 But I am just, I am just, I am just, I am just, I
13 am just, that's all I got to say, I am just done.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
15 That concludes the last public panel of testimony.

16 Before I turn back to Chairs for questions, I would
17 like to remind Council Members to use the raise hand
18 function in Zoom to indicate that you have a question
19 for this panel. Chair Rosenthal.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I am going to pass until
21 the end. I think its such a powerful statement from
22 Ms. Daughtry that that sort of sums it all up for me.
23 I will wait until the end. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I want to thank Ms.
25 Daughtry and thank everyone for their incredibly

1
2 important work. Your work has always been essential,
3 not just now. Some folks are paying more attention
4 to this line of work that's always been essential.
5 The answers or the lack of answers that we have
6 received from the Education Department are not
7 acceptable.

8 And we made it clear to them even prior to this
9 briefing, to this hearing, on a call recently and
10 more calls and more hearings will be scheduled that
11 we are not going to accept the loss of childcare
12 slots. We are not going to accept. We are going to
13 fight tooth and nail the loss of critical staff. We
14 have a childcare crisis in New York City which
15 disproportionately hurts working class, families
16 particularly women, particularly – the painful
17 stories that I have shared with regards to not just
18 food access and internet. Folks asking to help pay
19 for internet bills. A lot of them are from working
20 single moms that have been messaging me. Including a
21 number of you know, early childhood educators who
22 themselves are parents. Many of them and they have
23 needs and some folks in DOE forget that their own
24 both staff and even contracted staff are themselves
25 working parents.

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This hits – and I don't think you know, we ask the question at the start of the hearing, are we doing enough? And the City was answering that they feel that they are meeting demand. Obviously, the testimony here today has proven that we are falling way short. We have a lot of work to do. Both in terms of getting you answers but also in terms of resources. Because at the end of the day, hearings are important, testimony is important, briefings are important but we have to deliver.

And that's why I asked and I think my Co-Chair also asked, have they made requests of OMB? Have they made requests of the Mayor for more resources? I didn't get a straight answer on that but we are entering critical phases in our year where I am getting word that there is some talk of what federal government is doing now but I am not getting word of state and local aid which if that is true that is shameful and it is unacceptable.

We are getting word now that there is some tension in Albany about a potential tax increase on the wealthy, which I support but I don't know when that takes effect. I don't know if that even happens. But at the end of the day, New York City

1
2 needs to prioritize its resources towards this
3 critical vital issue and we can't wait. We can't
4 punt this down the road. The need is real right now.

5 So, we will continue to do whatever we can from
6 our end to hold our state, federal officials
7 accountable but also, our Mayor accountable. And I
8 just want to just again, thank everyone for really
9 your passionate and powerful work. This is
10 lifesaving work. This is life and death for many
11 families you know and as I have said before with the
12 Deputy Chancellor, many schools are not providing
13 five days a week in person services. But it doesn't
14 mean that the need is not there five days a week and
15 again, many wealthier families, families from
16 wealthier zip codes are paying for five days a week
17 services for their kids.

18 But the districts that we represent don't have
19 the means to do that and that's why nothing about
20 their approach has been equitable and fair. They
21 have not met the needs of families who need it the
22 most.

23 And that's what I believe government is here for.
24 To be there for those who need it the most, that's

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2 our job and we are falling short and we have a lot
3 more work to do.

4 So, with that, I am going to thank my Co-Chair,
5 my colleagues, the outstanding staff and all those
6 who testified here today. We have a lot of work to
7 do. And with that, I will turn it over to Chair
8 Rosenthal.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I think some other
10 Council Members have questions. So, I will turn it
11 back to the Moderator. Thank you Chair Treyger.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Rosenthal. I
13 will now call on Council Members with questions in
14 the order that they have used the raised hand
15 function in Zoom. Council Members, if you would like
16 to have a question and you have not yet used the
17 raised hand function in Zoom, please do so now.

18 Also, please remember to keep questions and
19 answers to five minutes. The Sergeant at Arms will
20 maintain a clock. We will now hear questions from
21 Council Member Barron and then Council Member Levin.
22 Council Member Barron.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so much Chair
25 Treyger and Chair Rosenthal. This is an extremely

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2 important topic that we are having this hearing on
3 today and I have to put in a provision please if you
4 excuse me, I may have to jump off. Zoom has allowed
5 us to do two and three and four things at once and I
6 may have to leave.

7 For full disclosure, I have known Dr. Karen
8 Daughtry four about 50 years. So, we are close
9 personal friends. And the way that I came to know
10 her is through the daycare center that she operates
11 because I was looking for a daycare center, my oldest
12 son was about time to go there and I stumbled upon
13 the Alonzo A. Daughtry Memorial Day Care Center,
14 which was at that time located in the Y on Third
15 Avenue.

16 That's how our friendship and relationship, both
17 spiritually, socially and otherwise has developed.
18 Dr. Daughtry runs an exemplary daycare center. It is
19 nationally recognized. She has all of those
20 credentials. For five decades, she has been
21 providing service. The only hiccup came as she
22 referenced when it was in my opinion, a very poorly
23 thought out, economically motivated, racist system of
24 an RFP which totally disqualified the years of
25

1
2 documented evidence of efficacy and success for Black
3 run daycare centers.

4 And as Dr. Daughtry has pointed out, thanks to
5 Council Member Levin for his support for her to be
6 able to maintain the operation of her center.

7 A part of what her testimony talked about was the
8 lack of communication from the City officials. She
9 talked about the lack of acknowledgement or lack of
10 making sure that important communications were sent
11 with a receipt for acknowledgement, so that if they
12 didn't receive a package in a timely fashion, they
13 could be notified. That did not occur.

14 And also, the lack of an opportunity for input
15 from those who are on the ground operating these
16 programs that are providing these essential services.
17 She also talked about the fact that there is a
18 formula now that's being thrown on these daycare
19 centers that talk about slots and allotment and not
20 acknowledging the programs that are operating.

21 I just want to say Dr. Daughtry, I commend you
22 for the work that you have done. You know, you have
23 helped me for the raising of my son who is almost 50,
24 he will be 50 soon. I am aging myself but that's
25 okay. I want every day that I have lived to be

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2 acknowledged and to ask you if you might not in fact
3 talk about the history and the impact on daycare
4 centers that were Black run when those RFP's in there
5 waiting system and in there measuring system
6 discounted Black centers. I would like you to put
7 that on the record. So, I would like that to be on
8 the record. Thank you.

9 Are you unmuted? You have to unmute. Oh, I am
10 sorry, I should have asked that the Clerk,
11 acknowledged that I would be asking you that
12 question. Thank you.

13 KAREN DAUGHTRY: Thank you for that question.
14 It's a painful one for me to address but back in 2011
15 or whenever the RFP for early learning came out and
16 we responded, by the way, prior to that, we operated
17 a center at 333 Second Street with an RFP that we
18 scored 99 on the RFP.

19 So, they gave us a brand new building and we
20 stayed there from 2001 until 2012. When the RFP for
21 2012 was announced, I got a call the month before
22 from someone in ACS that said, sit down, you are not
23 getting awarded. What do you mean we are not getting
24 awarded?

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2 Someone has said that Alonzo Daughtry is not to
3 receive an award. A month later, we got the official
4 letter May 11th, that said that we would not be
5 awarded. It was a registered letter, there was an
6 appeal process, we appealed it and in the appeal
7 process, which I am very familiar with, the City of
8 New York lawyers all included must give you all the
9 details.

10 We discovered because we were smart enough to
11 file the appeal, that they had our original - well,
12 the letter said, you are not getting awarded because
13 you scored below 75, which was the threshold.

14 When we appealed we discovered that we had scored
15 88 and that there were three people that scored the
16 award, two from the City and one from childcare
17 whatever. These three people were called in and
18 said, come together and determine why - fix this
19 disparity.

20 They fixed the disparity by the person that had
21 scored us 100 bringing their score down to 60-
22 something. The person that scored us 80 brought
23 their score down to below 60.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
25

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2 KAREN DAUGHTRY: And the person that had scored a
3 62, brought theirs up one. When they averaged it
4 out, they gave us 66 2/3, which meant we were below
5 75, which was all illegal.

6 The person that called us, the whistle blower,
7 went to DOI and reported it. I went to DOI and
8 reported it. They took my phone records; they took
9 my Chairperson's phone records and we never heard
10 another word about it. It was put under the rug.

11 Our daycare center on September 12th was
12 completely closed. They would not allow me who had
13 been in that building from the first person ever put
14 foot in the building, they would not allow me to go
15 upstairs and get my belongings on a stairway that I
16 had walked for 11 years.

17 Okay, they put 30 police outside of the building
18 because we refused to leave overnight to come out of
19 the building. So, we were closed from 2012 until
20 Stephen Levin, God Bless him and I see his beautiful
21 baby, God Bless Stephen Levin, found us the building
22 we are presently in, in the middle of Gowanus,
23 Wyckoff and Warner Street project, which is several
24 blocks from my church, which is the House of the Lord
25 Church.

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2 We found the building, we renovated and he opened
3 us with discretionary funding. Two years later, he
4 said, are you applying for Early Learning, I said no,
5 I don't want anything to do with that system. He
6 said, you must because we cannot fund you.

7 So, we wrote the proposal and we came back with
8 UPK slots and we have only 54 slots that we are
9 licensed for in this building. We have put in a
10 \$358,000 kitchen. Talking about hot food. We have
11 hot food here breakfast, lunch and snack. Okay, so
12 that's the history and that's why we are here and
13 that's why - I am about to retire, my Board called me
14 and said, we found a building through Stephen Levin,
15 will you open it? I came back two years ago. I want
16 to retire and go on a trip around the world with my
17 husband but guess what, I refuse for Alonzo Daughtry
18 signature to be taken off the land for foolishness.

19 This is foolishness and it smacks me back to
20 somebody someplace making the decision. They
21 privatized childcare then. Some centers have got 42
22 programs that they could no longer operate. Some of
23 my friends are dealing with family daycare, we are
24 out of business. And then they call later, their
25 providers call back to see if they could swipe them

1
2 off and put them under another network. This has to
3 be rectified.

4 Thank God that the City Council stepped in. I
5 know buildings that in 2012 had put the shovel in the
6 ground. They were gone, completely gone. Somebody
7 needs to pay attention. The children are going to be
8 the beneficiaries of this foolishness that is going
9 on.

10 I would not have known anything about this unless
11 I got a letter in December that went out to others in
12 August, telling me that we are being cut all of two's
13 and three's. We have been 3K for All is wonderful
14 but we have been dealing with three year old children
15 since 1969. 3K for Children is just another letter
16 on to three. We deal with two, three's and four's.
17 All of them are going there except the four's.

18 I can't operate a program with one classroom.
19 All my staff is going to be out of work. This is not
20 helping the economy. Painful sister Inez, I know I
21 took long but that history is very painful.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, but it is important
23 that it be on the record and thank you so much to the
24 Chairs. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
3 Barron. Next, we will have questions from Council
4 Member Levin.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much Chair
7 and I just want to associate my comments with my
8 colleague Council Member Barron. Dr. Daughtry, it's
9 great to see you and for everything that you have
10 been through and I attest that every word that you
11 said and it's shameful how Alonzo Daughtry was robbed
12 of its contract in early learn in a way that was so
13 clearly targeted and biased and so, I have been very
14 proud to be a partner with you in making sure that
15 this wonderful program continues for many years into
16 the future. The fact that now we are once again
17 fighting to make sure that Alonzo Daughtry can
18 provide those essential services is beyond
19 frustrating. But you have my commitment that you
20 know, I am going to stay with you every step of the
21 way.

22 I am only here for another year but I am here
23 with you and to just thank you for the decades of
24 love and support in education that you have given to
25 children in Brooklyn. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
3 Levin. Seeing no other Council Members waiting to
4 ask questions, I will now turn back to the Chairs for
5 additional questions. Chair Rosenthal.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I am actually ready to
7 close. That was – sort of nothing need more be said
8 after hearing Council Member Barron, Dr. Daughtry,
9 Council Member Levin. That really tells the whole
10 story for what is happening to so many families.
11 Sort of you know decisions made from the top down
12 that most likely don't really meet the needs of our
13 families. Obviously a complete disservice to Dr.
14 Daughtry and disservice to all of our families that
15 can't access childcare and the impact of that is on
16 women primarily. You know, something I didn't raise
17 in the hearing but I just want to get on the record
18 is the increase in the amount of domestic violence or
19 inner partner violence that's going on with COVID and
20 the fact that the stresses of COVID is showing up in
21 this horrible way. Not just in a partner but you
22 know, to our children and to our elderly and we would
23 be prioritizing women if we didn't have to have this
24 hearing today.

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2 If the Administration were really taking care of
3 our children, we would prioritize women. And
4 unfortunately, it's not happening.

5 So, I just you know, amen and thank you to all
6 the providers, to this panel but all the providers
7 who are doing God's work in taking care of the City's
8 children.

9 So, I am going to turn it back to you Moderator
10 in case someone else has something to say, then I
11 will call it to a close.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Rosenthal and
13 Treyger. We have now heard from everyone that has
14 signed up to testify. We appreciate your time and
15 presence. If we had inadvertently missed anyone that
16 would like to testify, please use the raise hand
17 function in Zoom now and I will call on you in the
18 order of hands raised.

19 Seeing no one else, I would like to note that
20 written testimony, which will be reviewed in full by
21 Committee Staff may be submitted for the record up to
22 72 hours after the close of this hearing by emailing
23 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

24 Chair Rosenthal and Treyger, we have conclude
25 public testimony for this hearing.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Great, thank you so much.
3 Chair Treyger, always a pleasure working with you.
4 Thank you very, very much for allowing us to have
5 this hearing with you. It was an incredibly
6 important topic and I am just so impressed by the
7 work of everyone on the panel who are fighting every
8 day for our city's kids.

9 Thank you for the work that you do and I hope
10 that you know that the Administration will take some
11 of the suggestions, the excellent suggestions that we
12 heard today and fix some of the egregious errors like
13 cutting any funding from Dr. Daughtry's program. We
14 want to make sure that she can take care of the
15 two's, three's and four's, as she has obviously been
16 doing but really Dr. Daughtry stands for is - we are
17 talking about her program specifically.

18 She obviously has put a passionate name and face
19 to it but really we are talking about all the
20 providers in the City who are getting screwed left
21 and right by this Administration. And again, I want
22 to make the comparison to the Mayor's Office. You
23 know, the Mayor's Office exists, the Department of
24 Education Central Staff, the Chancellor's Office
25 exists and they all exist, why? Because they need to

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2 be there in order to allow teachers and principals to
3 do their jobs. And yet, when it comes to the
4 contracts for childcare providers, they are
5 underpaid, they don't get the overhead they need and
6 the people who suffer are really low-income women and
7 women of color.

8 So, with that, I am going to call the hearing to
9 close. I thank everyone for their testimony and
10 being here today. [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 January 7, 2021