



Assemblyman
Andrew Hevesi
Budget Update – Assembly District 28



Dear Neighbor,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your representative in the New York State Legislature. As the 2021 legislative session comes to an end, I wanted to update you on the progress and victories we made during this year's budget process. In a year that presented all of us with daunting new challenges as the Coronavirus pandemic hit, we New Yorkers proved, as we always do, to be resilient. This budget update reflects the tireless efforts of the staff in my district and Albany offices as they continue to work to assist our neighbors, as well as lead numerous efforts to assist the most vulnerable New Yorkers throughout our state. I am proud to work with them. We look forward to working with you to rebuild our communities, our state and our country together.



Sincerely,

Andrew Hevesi
Member of the Assembly



Assemblyman Hevesi leads budget victories to respond to the impact of the pandemic on New York's children

Since the pandemic began, 325,000 children have fallen near or below the Federal Poverty Level in New York State. More than 4,000 children have lost a parent or caregiver and it is estimated that 23% of these children will wind up in foster care.

In addition, there is mounting evidence that several types of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have increased, including rates of child abuse and domestic violence. Calls to domestic violence hotlines have increased and while there are fewer reports to the State Central Registry for abuse because fewer children are in contact with mandated reporters, effectively taking child abuse and child sexual abuse into the shadows, calls to child abuse hotlines have increased with the stories of abuse reportedly getting more intense.

The pandemic's effects on New York State's child care infrastructure have been severe, with 25% of child care programs and 70% of centers for school-aged children having closed their doors. At the height of the pandemic 724 providers closed permanently within a 28 week span, averaging nearly 26 closures per week. As a result, the child care workforce, predominantly women of color, have suffered huge financial losses.

The enacted FY 2021-2022 New York State Budget takes large steps to address these devastating impacts and lays the groundwork for systemic change, setting New York on a transformational path to dramatically expand access to early education and child care, increase child care subsidies, decrease parent costs for child care, equalize subsidy eligibility requirements throughout the state, and more. The budget accomplishes these goals through the utilization of federal funding from the American Rescue Plan, previous rounds of federal stimulus funding, and a sustained commitment of future state funds.

Child Care

Child care providers have struggled to keep their doors open as the pandemic destabilized enrollment. Now, with more businesses returning to in-person work, parents must be able to immediately secure access to child care. At the same time, with many New York children having experienced significant loss, stress, and trauma over this past year, the need for quality, stable, supportive early childhood care and education has never been greater.

For decades New York State's child care infrastructure has differed from county to county (62 counties), leading to limited eligibility, high costs, an underpaid workforce, an unsustainable system of reimbursement based on absences, varying renewal periods, and child care deserts throughout the state. To address these issues, the 2021-2022 New York State Final Budget:

- Adds an additional and permanent 10,000 child care slots throughout New York State
- Increases eligibility for child care subsidies to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level statewide
- Provides \$1.26 billion in upfront stabilization grants to providers that may be used to cover a range of costs including provider expenses for personnel costs, rent, facility maintenance and improvements, personal protective equipment (PPE), public health emergency related supplies, goods and services necessary to resume providing care, mental health supports for children and early educators, and reimbursement of costs associated with the current public health emergency
- Caps child care co-payments to 10% of a family's income over the Federal Poverty Level
- Reimburses providers for 24 absences per child per year for last year and will continue to cover these costs for three future years
- Ensures 12-month eligibility for families in receipt of subsidies statewide
- Provides an additional \$50 million in funding for existing facilitated enrollment child care providers in six regions of the state over the next two years
- Invests \$100 million to build new child care capacity in areas of the state deemed to be child care deserts as determined by the Office of Children and Family Services
- Provides \$25 million for child care scholarships for essential workers
- Provides \$40 million in grants for supplies and PPE to providers

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

It is absolutely imperative that our post pandemic recovery include an understanding of the trauma inflicted on New York State's children throughout this pandemic. When left unaddressed, ACEs and childhood trauma can lead to a range of problems through adulthood including difficulty in school, alcohol and substance abuse, suicide, homelessness, obesity, asthma, cancer, heart disease, auto immune disease, cardiovascular disease, generational trauma, generational poverty, and incarceration and recidivism. However, when traumatized children receive the proper supports, services, and protective factors, the likelihood of lasting negative impacts into adulthood stemming from childhood trauma decrease significantly. Our children do not need to be doomed or defined by their trauma.

This year's budget includes several new laws to begin to recognize, address, and mitigate the impacts of childhood trauma by:

- Creating a statewide education effort led by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in consultation with other state agencies and experienced non-profits to educate parents, guardians and other authorized individuals about ACEs including the environmental events that may impact or lead to them, the importance of protective factors and the availability of services. These materials will be made available at every pediatric health care provider, child day care provider, school district, non-public, charter, pre-school, non-residential or residential school for students with disabilities, among others.
- Requiring each local social services district to make available to applicants and recipients of public assistance who are a parent, guardian, custodian etc., educational materials to educate them about ACEs, the importance of protective factors, and the availability of services for children at risk for or suffering from adverse childhood experiences. The educational materials may be made available electronically and shall be offered at the time of application and recertification.
- Requiring new trainings for all professions designated as mandated reporters under New York State law to include protocols to recognize ACEs and the five protective factors for children, reduce implicit bias and assist in recognizing signs of abuse or maltreatment while interacting virtually.

Preventative Services for Children

Prevention services are critically important to help vulnerable youth avoid further trauma and mitigate the effects of prior ACEs. The final budget rejected the Governor's 5% cut across the board for human service programs, including child welfare services, foster care, adoption subsidies, adult protective and domestic violence services. The legislature restored \$69.4 million to fund these programs.

The final budget also rejected the proposal to consolidate and cut by 20% both the Community Optional Preventative Services (COPS) program and the Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program (STSJP). COPS is based out of the University of Rochester and is a nationally renowned primary prevention program, which offers assistance to families before there is involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice system. The STSJP program provides services for children that already have a juvenile justice case pending. This budget allows both programs to remain independent and fully restores their funding.

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Additional restorations to preventative services include:

- \$2.5 million for Facilitated Enrollment Programs
- \$2.54 million for Human Services COLA
- \$2.45 million for Settlement Houses
- \$2 million for the Safe Harbor Program
- \$2 million United Way 2-1-1
- \$2 million for YMCA Greater New York
- \$1.9 million for Kinship Care Program
- \$1.5 million for Youth Development Program
- \$1.05 million for Fresh Air Fund
- \$6 million for Various Human Services Initiatives



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