



# Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

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**Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council  
Committee on General Welfare  
Re: Fiscal Year 2014 Preliminary Budget**

**Advocates for Children of New York  
March 18, 2013**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the implications of the budget on early learning programs. My name is Randi Levine, and I am an attorney and Project Director of the Early Childhood Education Project at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 40 years, Advocates for Children has worked to promote access to the best education New York can provide for all students, especially students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. Advocates for Children is also a proud member of the Campaign for Children, which is working to stop Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to cut more than 47,000 children from child care and after-school programs.

By the time children enter kindergarten, children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds lag significantly behind children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds in academic skills. High-quality early childhood education programs are proven to help fill this gap. Rigorous research found that, compared to children left out of the early childhood program, low-income children who participated in Chicago's Child-Parent Centers were 40 percent less likely to be retained a grade in

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school, 35 percent less likely to need special education services, 29 percent more likely to graduate from high school, 31 percent more likely to hold a semi-skilled or higher level job, and 41 percent less likely to be arrested for a violent crime. Studies of other high-quality early childhood programs have found similar outcomes, resulting in substantial cost savings to schools, cities, and taxpayers.

With these results, we should be discussing how to make sure that the budget includes funding so that every child can participate in a high-quality early childhood program. Instead, the Fiscal Year 2014 Preliminary Budget would result in thousands of children from low-income backgrounds losing out on the opportunity to participate in child care programs, which are often the only opportunity for low-income children to participate in an early childhood education program.

We were grateful that the Mayor and City Council rejected last year's proposal to cut child care programs. However, \$64.6 million of the restored funding was not baselined and was not included in the Mayor's FY 2014 Preliminary Budget. This funding must be restored and baselined. We are also concerned about the PEG regarding transitional child care vouchers, which would result in an additional decrease in the number of children from low-income families who have access to early childhood programs. Furthermore, we continue to be very concerned that the EarlyLearn rate is insufficient to support the high-quality standards that the program



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requires, as well as health insurance plans necessary to attract and retain qualified teachers. To meet the promise of EarlyLearn's vision for comprehensive, high-quality programs, it must receive adequate funding.

We urge the City Council to work with the Mayor to reject the shortsighted, irresponsible proposed cuts to child care programs. We applaud the City Council's work to restore funding for child care programs last year and look forward to working with you as the budget process moves forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.