



Final Adopted FY2022 Budget Restores Support for Local Safety Net for Children and Families

Legislators and the Governor heard the calls from stakeholders across New York for #NoCuts4Kids and restored the Governor's proposed cuts to preventive services, foster care, kinship, and adoption

April 8, 2021. The New York State Child Welfare Coalition, made up of policy advocates working to improve New York's child welfare system for children and families, applauds the Legislature and the Governor for reaching consensus on a final budget that reverses millions of dollars of cuts to programs that promote family stability and child safety.

We are especially thankful to our champions in the Senate and Assembly Committees for Children and Families and the tireless leadership of the Committee Chairs: Senator Brisport and Assembly Member Hevesi.

In the face of widespread economic hardship, and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Latinx communities, the final budget restores cuts proposed for critical child welfare programs. This includes matching 2020-21 levels of support for:

- child welfare preventive services that promote family stability in every county;
- kinship care programs that help family members care for children;
- adoption subsidies that enable more children to leave foster care;
- community-based programs to prevent children from entering the child welfare and juvenile justice systems; and,
- the Foster Care Block Grant.

While the importance of these restorations cannot be overstated, because funding at the pre-pandemic level was the bare minimum, it is essential that New York, in the coming years, commit to making additional State investment in family-strengthening supports.

With recent federal investments in child tax credits, stimulus payments, rent subsidies, and child care funding, New York's families will have more supports – at least for the coming year – to navigate the precarity of our COVID-19 recovery. It is critical that State child welfare investments position New York for federal Family First Prevention Services Act implementation later this year, which aims to expand family stability supports and reduce the need to remove children from their homes.

“The child welfare commitments in the final budget are a win for children and families —especially Black and Latinx communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank the Legislature and the Governor for listening to the voices of constituents across the State and reaching the right result for our communities by restoring these critical supports now.” Julia L. Davis, Director of Youth Justice & Child Welfare, Children’s Defense Fund-New York.

“We applaud New York's leaders for prioritizing restorations in the FY '22 budget to child welfare programs that keep children safe and families together at a time when the need for these supports are critical. These programs have been a lifeline for New York’s children and families throughout the pandemic, responding to heightened economic, food and housing insecurity, barriers to remote learning, as well as increased health and behavioral health needs,” said Raysa S. Rodriguez, Associate Executive Director for Policy and Advocacy at Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York.

“We thank legislative leaders for acknowledging the needs of children and families and restoring funding to crucial child welfare services. Over the past year about 325,000 children have been pushed into poverty, 4,000 have lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19, and children of color have been disproportionately harmed. As the state tries to recover from the horrific impacts of this pandemic and preparing for Family First implementation, more investment in children and families will be key to moving forward without leaving anyone behind,” said Kate Breslin, President and CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.

“We were happy to see the restorations to services that support families, promote child safety and well-being, prevent foster care placement when possible, and support quality foster care services when necessary. Strong communities and strong families go hand-in-hand. New York must especially support the families and communities most impacted by this pandemic. As we recover and rebuild post-COVID, our nonprofits’ essential workers continue to serve on the forefront of New York’s pandemic response. We thank our legislators for recognizing the need to restore funding for child and family supports as part of the state’s planned path forward,” said Kathleen Brady-Stepien, President and CEO of COFCCA.

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