



## **New York City's Child Care Deserts: A Plan for Action November, 2021**

New York City is the economic engine of New York State. However, lack of access to quality child care is preventing many families from returning to the workforce. New York State must act to increase access to child care in New York City.

The crisis in child care access is particularly severe for children under three years of age.

- **1.74 million children live in New York City under 18 years of Age<sup>i</sup>**
- **530,000 children under the age of five<sup>ii</sup>**
- **22.2% of NYC Children live in poverty. The pandemic has pushed an additional 325,000 children into poverty<sup>iii</sup>**
- **Over half of NYC neighborhoods are infant care deserts<sup>iv</sup>**

Economic effects of the child care availability crisis reverberate throughout the city's overall economy. Research by New York City Regional Economic Development (REDC) estimates parents shifting from fulltime to part-time roles at work to accommodate child care, could shrink New York City's economy by \$60 billion over the next five years, as well as cost \$2.2 billion in annual tax revenue.<sup>v</sup>

The NYC Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) corresponds to the NYS Office of Children & Family Services region served by the four NYC Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies.

The primary challenge for child care accessibility is the inability of low to moderate income NYC working families to afford the cost of care for children birth-2 years of age. In quarterly follow-up surveys of families who contact NYC's four NYS funded Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies, cost of child care is cited by 85-90% of families as the reason they were unable to find child care, followed by a lack of availability at the time care was sought.

One survey of city households reported that more than 75% of parents worried about living in the city with children, and nearly 50% said they have considered moving in search of more affordable child care.<sup>vi</sup>

Almost 250,000 children live in linguistically isolated households. These are homes in which no one over the age of 13 speaks English "very well."<sup>vii</sup>

The recommendations below come from both New York City's four New York State funded CCR&R agencies and New York City's Regional Economic Development Council.



## Recommendations

- **Prioritize Infant Toddler Care and Nontraditional Hour Care** options for employees working in construction, transit, food service, health care, retail, emergency services, manufacturing and other occupations that require employees to report to work on various shifts that fall outside of a traditional 9-5 work schedule.
- **Expand linguistically and culturally accessible child care options** for infants and toddlers in immigrant communities that typically have difficulty accessing subsidized child care due to self-employment or work in service industries.
- **Realign child care subsidy rates to close the gap between the cost of delivering high-quality infant-toddler child care and current rates.** This is critical, as the Center for American Progress Think Tank estimates operating costs at child care facilities across New York State have jumped 40% since the onset of the pandemic
- **Assess the quality and quantity of existing services**, particularly “child care deserts” for infants and children under two not covered by the 3-K expansion, to gauge the variability of child care across the city.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/98/child-population#98/a/3/148/62/a/a>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://cccnewyork.org/data-publications/keeping-track-of-new-york-citys-children-2020/?gclid=CjwKCAiAnO2MBhApEiwA8q0HYX4QeUunBjUjCo6li8TLy02uygBUZ6A4iybfGG4L3VBHlHqdua0QVhoC95cQAvD\\_BwE](https://cccnewyork.org/data-publications/keeping-track-of-new-york-citys-children-2020/?gclid=CjwKCAiAnO2MBhApEiwA8q0HYX4QeUunBjUjCo6li8TLy02uygBUZ6A4iybfGG4L3VBHlHqdua0QVhoC95cQAvD_BwE)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/10548-new-york-chance-take-crisis-child-poverty#:~:text=In%20New%20York%20City%2C%2022.2,into%20poverty%20or%20near%20poverty.>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/nyc-under-three-a-plan-to-make-child-care-affordable-for-new-york-city-families/>

<sup>v</sup> [https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/NYCREDCProgressReport2021\\_7\\_7\\_2021.pdf](https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/NYCREDCProgressReport2021_7_7_2021.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> [https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/2017ProgressReportNewYorkCity\\_0.pdf](https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/2017ProgressReportNewYorkCity_0.pdf)

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