



Testimony of

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Before the

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Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation,
Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services

Regarding the New York City

Preliminary Plan Budget Proposals for FY12

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Good Afternoon. My name is Joan Siegel and I am the Senior Policy Associate for Health and Mental Health at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 67-year old privately supported, independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring New York City's children are healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairman Koppel and members of the Council Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services for holding this hearing on the City's Preliminary Budget for City Fiscal Year 2012.

While we appreciate the negative impact that the State's proposed cost shifts would have on the City's budget, we believe that it is unacceptable for the City's children to continue to bear a disproportionate burden of balancing the budget, particularly in light of the City's improved revenue forecast for CFY12 (an additional \$1.1 billion projected for CFY12).

Before discussing the details of the Preliminary Budget for CFY12, it is important to remember that this Financial Plan represents the 10th round of budget cuts. New York City's children have already lost thousands of slots in child care centers, after school programs, school-based dental clinics, mental health programs, and the Summer Youth Employment Program. In addition, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) has repeatedly been held to a higher budget cutting standard than any of the uniform services, despite being the City's emergency responder for children.

With regard to the specific proposals outlined in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget Plan for FY12 regarding **children's mental health**, CCC urges the City Council and the Mayor to work together to restore and baseline the following critical initiatives and programs that address the mental health needs of New York City's children:

- **Autism Awareness Initiative (\$1.25 million):** The Autism Awareness Initiative provides families with autistic children support and the intangible benefits that come from support services that defray long-term costs. Specifically, this initiative provides autistic children and their families with wraparound services when school is not in session (after school, summer and school closings). In addition, it funds organizations to provide informational forums, parent support groups and training seminars, advising communities of the impacts of autism and how to address them.
- **Mental Health Treatment for Children Under Five (\$1.25 million):** Since 2004, this initiative has enabled eight providers to offer consultation, treatment, training and supervision for the mental health needs of young children. This program is cost effective because mental health needs are addressed very early, preventing more serious and costly interventions later, such as special education and psychiatric hospitalizations. Last year's cut to this initiative has already caused the closure of at least one program for young children. Studies show that the earlier a child's mental health needs are met; the better a child does socially, academically and ultimately, as an adult.
- **Suicide Prevention Hotline (\$247,150).** In 2010, the City Council restored funding to ensure that the City's Suicide Prevention Hotline was not eliminated, but the Mayor's Preliminary Budget fails to maintain this funding. The Samaritans of New York handle over 69,000 calls to their suicide prevention hotline annually. According to the New York City Vital Records, in 2009, suicide was the third leading cause of death for children and youth ages 15-24. (Unfortunately, four children ages 5-14 also committed

suicide)¹. In addition, according to the Epiquery trend report on the City DOHMH web site, suicide attempt rates have risen from 7.5% of youth in 2007 to 9.9% of youth in 2009.

- **Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Retardation/ Developmental Disabilities services (HHC) (\$800,000). Reduction of Intra-city monies for HHC (\$2.7 million).** The Mayor's Preliminary Budget for FY12 fails to maintain the \$800,000 the City Council restored for FY 11 and further reduces funds for mental health, substance abuse and Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities services by \$2.7 million: A portion of these HHC monies fund three developmental evaluation clinics that serve close to 1,000 of New York City's developmentally disabled children and their families. Cutting these funds will leaves HHC with little resources with which to provide mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services that the most vulnerable children and families need. For example, the loss of funding for the Morrisania MR/DD clinic will mean that children in that portion of the Bronx will lose access to diagnostic evaluations and treatment services. The mental health subsidy and supports will impact further upon outpatient mental health care for children and families.
- **Non-HHC Mental Health Contracts (\$450,000) and Mental Hygiene Contracted Services including MR/DD Clinics (\$4.86 million).** The Mayor's FY12 Preliminary Budget also fails to restore the \$450,000 to the City Council restored in FY11 for mental health contracts and cuts them even further, by \$4.86 million. In this economic downturn, mental health providers are running programs on very tight budgets with increasing caseloads due to higher incidences of depression and anxiety created by unemployment and other consequences of the recession. These anxieties can be passed onto children. Community-based providers have also experienced the consequences of funding cuts at other levels of government and an overall reduction in philanthropic revenue. Thus, elimination of funding could be crippling for providers, potentially reducing the number of mental health and developmental disability services for children and families in need. Some of the neediest children, those with developmental disabilities, will be hit hardest by these cuts, which eliminate funding for the three community-based clinics that offer a wide range of clinical and therapeutic services.

Finding the revenue needed to restore these detrimental cuts will require a balanced approach. CCC suggests that all revenue producing options must be on the table, including, but not limited to, sin taxes, income taxes, and pension reform.

We understand that the City deficit is so significant that some budget reductions will be made. As you work with the Mayor and fellow Council members on the budget, we urge you to be strategic and deliberate. Funding for cost-effective programs and services that prevent child abuse, keep children safe, ensure children are housed, fed and clothed, and healthy, and funding that goes directly to classrooms must be preserved. It is critical that the actions the City Council takes with the Mayor protect the city's ability to ensure that our children remain healthy, housed, educated and safe.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

¹ City of New York, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Annual Summary of Vital Statistics* (December 2010).

Attached is a chart detailing the full \$161.5 million cuts to children's services, as well as the elimination of 17,000 child care subsidies and the Advantage Program.



**Fiscal Year 2012 Preliminary Budget for New York City
Proposes \$161.5 Million in Net Reductions to
Human Services for Children and Families and the
Loss of Over 16,000 Child Care Subsidies**

On February 17, 2011 Mayor Bloomberg issued his Preliminary Budget for City Fiscal Year 2012. While CCC was pleased to see that the City's revenue has been increasing and the Mayor was able to offset the anticipated loss of state funds for mandated services, the Preliminary Budget reduces funding for critical services for children by \$161.5 million, including 2,900 preventive service slots, homemaking services, school based mental health centers and after school programs. In addition, the City is planning to eliminate over 16,000 child care subsidies for low-income working families.

Below please find the list of Preliminary Budget Human Services proposals that would impact children:

CHILD CARE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Restoration of 72 child care center classrooms			(\$11.26 million)
Restoration of child care centers slated for closure			(\$6.68 million)
Increase in child care co-payments		(\$13.0 million)	
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$13.0 million)	(\$17.94 million)

*In addition, due to a structural budget deficit, ACS is planning to eliminate 16,462 child care subsidies, which would require \$91 million annually to restore.

CHILD WELFARE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
2900 Preventive Service slots			(\$11.7 million)
202 Child Protective Staff positions			(\$5.9 million)
Child welfare staff			(\$1.9 million)
CONNECT Domestic Violence program			(\$270,000)
Child Advocacy Centers			(\$500,000)
Homemaking services		(\$5.1 million)	
Child and Family Specialists		(\$1.0 million)	
Administrative and support function layoffs (118 staff)		(\$2.8 million)	
Staff reductions in the Division of Child Protection through attrition (80 supervisors and managers)		(\$2.7 million)	
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$11.6 million)	(\$20.27 million)

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Asthma Control Initiative			(\$500,000)
Child Health Clinics			(\$5.0 million)
Family Planning Initiative			(\$325,000)
2 School-Based Health Centers		(\$182,000)	
CEO: Expand Access to Healthy Foods	\$182,000		
HHC Unrestricted City Subsidy		(\$7.14 million)	
Infant Mortality Reduction Program			(\$3.0 million)
Obesity Prevention Programs			(\$1.27 million)
NYU Mobile Dental Vans/Dental Clinic			(\$268,000)
Primary Care Capacity Initiative			(\$669,000)
Sub-Total	\$182,000	(\$7.3 million)	(\$11.03 million)

HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Shared Rooms for Families with Children		(\$1.67 million)	
Reducing Advantage Broker's Fees		(\$1.58 million)	
New Family Intake Center (maintenance and security costs)	\$2.44 million		
Furnish a Future Contract (DHS)			(\$400,000)
Citywide Task Force on Housing Court (HPD)			(\$500,000)
Partial restoration of Community Consultants (HPD)			(\$415,000)
Restore the Housing Preservation Initiative (HPD)			(\$1.5 million)
Partial restoration of Anti-Eviction Legal Services			(\$2.0 million)
Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund			(\$250,000)
Sub-Total	\$2.44 million	(\$3.25 million)	(\$5.07 million)

***In addition, the City is planning to eliminate the Work Advantage Program, which is the only subsidy available to help families transition out of the shelter system.**

LEGAL SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Citywide City Legal Services			(\$1.5 million)
Partial restoration for Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)			(\$485,000)
Legal Services for the Working Poor			(\$1.05 million)
Legal Services NYC- Keeping Families Together			(\$300,000)
MFY Legal Services			(\$100,000)
SSI-UI Legal Advocacy Program			(\$1.3 million)
Legal Services to Prevent Evictions			(\$2.3 million)
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	(\$7.04 million)

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Autism Awareness Initiative			(\$1.25 million)
Mental Health Treatment for Children Under Five			(\$1.25 million)
Mental Hygiene Contracted Services including MR/DD clinics		(\$4.86 million)	
Suicide Prevention Hotline			(\$247,150)
Mental health, substance abuse and mental retardation/developmental disability services (HHC)			(\$800,000)
Mental health contracts (non HHC)			(\$450,000)
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$4.86 million)	(\$3.99 million)

PARKS AND RECREATION

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Playground Associates			(\$1.0 million)
Funding to keep all city pools open for the last 2 weeks of the pool season			(\$891,000)
Close 4 Pools and Shorten Outdoor Pool Season			(\$546,000)
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	(\$2.44 million)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'11	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'11	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Teen Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (Teen RAPP)			(\$2.5 million)
Food Stamps at Farmer's Markets			(\$420,000)
Food Pantries			(\$1.9 million)
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	(\$4.82 million)

YOUTH SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
Out of School Time Reduction- Option I (33 programs)			(\$5.95 million)
OST Option I- Reduction in School Holiday Availability (from 20 to 14)		(\$6.05 million)	
Reduce Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) by 2,140 summer jobs		(\$3.2 million)	
Shelter Beds for At-Risk Homeless Youth			(\$5.99 million)
Runaway Homeless Youth Services		(\$330,000)	

(5 drop in centers and elimination of City funds for street outreach)			
City Council Beacon Restoration			(\$4.1 million)
Reduce Beacon Contracts by 10%		(\$2.63 million)	
New York Junior Tennis League			(\$800,000)
Cultural After School Adventure (CASA)			(\$4.08 million)
City Council Member Discretionary Funds			(\$7.7 million)
Street Outreach/Neighborhood Youth Alliance			(\$1.0 million)
The After-Three Program			(\$3.8 million)
YMCA After School Program			(\$500,000)
Sports and Arts in the School Foundation			(\$1.2 million)
OST Option II			(\$3.05 million)
NYCHA Cornerstone Program Reductions in holidays (20 to 14) and 632 slots		(\$1.1 million)	
Sub-Total	\$0	(\$13.31 million)	(\$38.17 million)

TOTAL

PROGRAM	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'12	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'12	Failure to Fund Council Restoration
ALL HUMAN SERVICES FOR CHILDREN	\$2.62 million	(\$53.32 million)	(\$110.77 million)