Testimony of

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Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie Gendell and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Advocacy at Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is an over 70 year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

I would first like to thank Chair Dromm and the members of the City Council Finance Committee for holding today’s hearing on the Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget and for the opportunity for public testimony. CCC greatly appreciates our longstanding partnership with the City Council.

CCC appreciates the de Blasio Administration’s efforts to make New York City a more fair and equitable City to all who live in the five boroughs. While the Executive Budget takes some steps toward these ends, we believe that the administration and the City budget must go further to achieve these goals, and should include additional investments in reducing and preventing family homelessness, promoting the well-being of homeless children and their families, creating salary parity for early education teachers, creating universal after-school for elementary school students and ensuring all children participating in after-school programs can participate in summer camp programming.

We are pleased to see the investment of $125 million in fair student funding, $30.55 million to expand early literacy programs, and $1.2 million to evaluate the effectiveness of Thrive mental health initiatives. We also greatly appreciate the City stepping in to fill the budget gap created by the State shirking its previously shared commitment to youth in the juvenile justice system and thank the Mayor for both offsetting the state cut to Close to Home Juvenile Justice placement system and investing funds to implement Raise the Age. That said, we are disappointed that the budget proposes to include funding for Department of Corrections staff to temporarily provide security for the children in secure detention.

While we appreciate the Mayor’s plan to restore $10.3 million for the Bridging the Gap program, which includes 43 social workers in schools with high numbers of homeless students and additional one-year funding for 10 additional social workers in schools, for a total of $11.9 million of one-year funding), the homelessness crisis demands that the City go further. We once again urge the City to invest in 100 social workers in schools and 50 social workers in shelters and to baseline this funding so that it is not subject to the annual budget dance. Similarly, we want the City to ensure safe and supportive care for homeless New Yorkers and while we understand the need for another $158 million shelter re-estimate, we continue to urge the City to do more to prevent family homelessness, expand permanent affordable housing options for these families and do more to promote the well-being of homeless children and their families, particularly those living in commercial hotel rooms.

We are extremely disappointed that this proposed budget not only fails to invest but actually cuts programming- for some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, particularly children. This includes failing to invest $5 million to ensure foster children can be bused to their home schools, cutting $16 million of elementary after-school programming for 9,000 children, and once again cutting $20.35 million of summer camp for 34,000 middle school children.
While the administration may perceive the annual summer camp funding as part of a budget dance with the City Council, leaving this funding uncertain until the budget adoption in June when the program starts in July, is once again leaving low-income working parents uncertain about how their children will be safe this summer. We hope to see this funding not only restored but baselined so that families and providers are not subjected to this anxiety next year.

We are also disappointed that the budget fails to create salary parity between early childhood teachers in community based organizations and DOE schools, who are doing the same job, but for more hours. Teachers in CBOs continue to earn significantly less than their DOE peers and the salary disparity grows over time. We thank the City Council for making salary parity a priority in their Preliminary Budget response and urge the Administration to work with the Council to address this inequity.

Finally, as will be discussed in more detail, the City Council has a long history of investing its limited resources in invaluable City Council initiatives, such as mental health services for children under 5, emergency food programs, machines that allow the use of food stamps/SNAP at farmers’ markets and funding for lawyers for immigrant children (ICARE). We urge the Council to maintain your commitment to these important programs as you negotiate the budget as well as the also critical Fair Fares initiative to offer reduced price MetroCards to low-income New Yorkers.

While we appreciate the need to be fiscally prudent, the ongoing threats from Washington and Albany are exactly why New York City must step in now to better protect and support vulnerable New Yorkers.

CCC is so grateful to the City Council for your steadfast commitment to better supporting children and families and for your advocacy throughout the year and notably throughout the budget process. We do not take this partnership lightly and we thank you in advance for your efforts to ensure the Fiscal Year 2019 adopted budget makes New York City a better place to be a child.

This testimony will focus on the key areas where CCC supports the administration’s proposals and the areas where we are urging the City Council to negotiate an adopted budget that goes further for children and families. Following this testimony is the full list of proposals CCC supports and the full list of City Council initiatives CCC is asking be restored and baselined where appropriate.
Administration for Children’s Services-Child Welfare

CCC is grateful that together with advocates, providers, family members and the support of the City Council, we were able to stave off the horrific state budget proposal to cap and cut state child welfare services reimbursement, which would have amounted to an over $130 million cut.

CCC appreciates the new strides and investments ACS has made over the past year, but hoped to see new investments to strengthen the system. We urge the Mayor to go further as the budget is adopted to address the following three additional child welfare investments:

1) **Add $5 million to ensure all foster children in need of busing to school can have access.**

Two federal laws, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (2008) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), require local school districts and child welfare agencies to collaborate on a plan to provide, arrange, and fund transportation so that students can remain in their school of origin when they enter foster care or change foster homes, if it is in their best interests to do so. For a number of foster children who are not placed near their school of origin, this requires busing.

For some children in foster care, New York City is fulfilling its obligation. Students in foster care who have special transportation recommended on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) typically get door-to-door busing between their foster placement and their school. For other students in foster care, the Department of Education (DOE) will only provide bus service if the student is in kindergarten through sixth grade and can easily be added to an existing bus route. We have been informed that the Office of Pupil Transportation only approves approximately 50% of the requests it receives for foster student transportation.

If no existing bus route is available, transportation is left up to the foster parent or foster care agency. Often, foster parents and foster care case planners are unable to transport children to and from school every day. Without bus service, many young children in foster care are forced to transfer schools even though such a transfer is not in their best interests. When students are removed from their homes and families, school is often the only source of stability in their lives.

We urge the administration to meet the legal requirements and do what is best for these students by adding $5 million to ensure busing is available to every foster child in need of busing to and from school.

2) **Ensure all children and youth have been discharged from foster care through KinGAP (Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program) receive subsidy until age 21 when they meet statutory requirements**

Last year, CCC along with many of our child welfare colleagues, advocated for a state law to strengthen and expand KinGAP. This law passed in June and became effective on March 12, 2018.

KinGAP is a permanency arrangement whereby children and youth in foster care can live permanently with a relative who obtains legal guardianship and still receives a subsidy, like adoptive parents and foster parents do. This is a beneficial arrangement for families where
reunification and adoption are not options. Relatives and youth sometimes prefer guardianship to adoption because it does not require termination of parental rights.

The law passed last year expanded the definition of kin to include close family friends and neighbors—people who are like kin but are not related by blood, marriage or adoption. In addition, the law now enables the subsidy be provided until the child turns 21, regardless of the age at which the guardianship proceeding was concluded. Under the prior law, those whose KinGAP agreement was finalized before age 16 only received the subsidy until age 18.

While the state law only requires the subsidy to continue until age 21 for all youth after the effective date of March 12, 2018, the statue regulations give localities the discretion to amend the agreements to continue the subsidy until age 21 for those who entered an agreement under age 16 before the new law went into effect. **We urge New York City to take this option and provide KinGAP until age 21 for all eligible youth.**

3) **Implement Additional Recommendations of the Foster Care Task Force**

CCC is grateful to the City Council, ACS, and all of the members of the Interagency Foster Care Task Force, especially the youth and parents, who worked collaboratively to develop critical and important recommendations to improve the well-being of children in foster care. CCC stands ready to help at the City level and advocate at the State level to ensure all 16 recommendations are implemented. This will include continuing to advocate for statutory enhancements to the child welfare housing subsidy bill, for ACS and DHS to collaboratively finds ways for foster children to visit their parents living in homeless shelters, and to expand foster youth and former foster youth access to behavioral health services.

**Early Childhood Education (ACS and Department of Education)**

Access to high-quality early childhood education is critical for all parents, and especially for low-income families so that parents can work and young children can receive the developmentally stimulating well-known success that has been a proven return on investment. CCC appreciates the commitment from the de Blasio administration to ensure every four-year old has access to full day Pre-K and to begin to expand this to three-year olds.

In addition to the roll-out of 3K, the early childhood system in New York City is in the process of undergoing a large transition, with the EarlyLearn contracted subsidized child care system, serving approximately 33,000 children ages 0-4 in center-based and family-based care due to transfer from ACS to DOE in February 2019. For this transition to be successful, there are a number of issues the administration must address either in the adopted budget or no later than the FY20 Preliminary Budget.

These include:
- Establish salary parity for the teachers in DOE schools and community-based organizations. This is critical for CBOs to keep their qualified staff and to hire certified teachers.
• Expand capacity to serve infants and toddlers and ensure DOE is prepared to serve children under age 3.
• Ensure children in prek and 3K have access to full day (meaning work day not school day) and summer care.
• Make all homeless children living in shelter categorically eligible for child care. Ensure homeless children are not only enrolled in pre-k, but also child care programs.
• Resolve direct lease site issues by negotiating leases and maintaining capacity in communities.
• Address facility issues, including maintenance and repairs at all EarlyLearn sites, including NYCHA.

**Juvenile Justice and Raise the Age (ACS, Probation, NYPD and Corrections)**

CCC greatly appreciates the Administration’s Executive Budget proposals to invest in the City’s juvenile justice system despite the lack of support and commitment from the State. CCC was deeply disappointed that the state cut all of its support ($30.5 million) for the Close to Home juvenile justice placement program and failed to invest any funding in the City’s efforts to implement raise the age legislation. We will continue to advocate for state support for New York City’s youth.

CCC is therefore pleased that the City is investing significant resources to implement raise the age including $46.38 million for ACS (growing to $81.75 in FY2021), $18.2 million for Probation and $1.67 million for the NYPD. We were extremely pleased to hear that ACS has received needed approval for a new job title series to staff its detention facilities and will begin recruiting for those positions in the coming weeks.

On the other hand, CCC remains deeply disappointed that the Administration is still planning to use staff from the Department of Corrections in ACS’s specialized secure detention facility for two years. The Executive Budget includes $9.85 million in FY19 ($13.14 million in FY2020, $3.29 million in FY2021 and $0 in the outyears) for the Department of Corrections to provide security at the Horizons juvenile detention center for two years.

While CCC appreciates that ACS will have case-planning responsibilities and that ACS and DOC are jointly creating a vision for the operation of the facility with the intent of a youth-centered model, these measures cannot mitigate the risks of using DOC staff to oversee 16 and 17 year olds. CCC is concerned that even if ACS transitions to primary staffing after 24 months, the negative culture that dominates at Rikers will be replicated in the new facilities, a damage that will be extremely difficult to undo and which risks contaminating the culture at ACS and the youth they serve, including the younger children.

The mistreatment of adolescents in DOC facilities is well documented and has not changed. In October 2017, the independent court-appointed monitor for Nunez vs. City of New York documented continued appalling conditions for youth at the hands of DOC staff, including the observation that “serious and problematic issues involving Staff use of force continue in an
unabated fashion.”¹ The monitor report notes that “[t]he cultural dynamic that permeates so many encounters between Staff and inmates in DOC is quite simply a consequence of Staff actions and behaviors that too often engender, nurture, and encourage confrontation.”² Such encounters involved leadership noting a “disturbing” number of captains who were involved “frequently” and “repeatedly” in concerning use of force incidents.³

One of the core purposes of Raise the Age was to give youth the benefit of a juvenile experience instead of the Rikers experience. All of the great work ACS has done in its detention facilities, is exactly why it is so concerning to bring DOC staff to ACS detention facilities. Removing youth from Rikers Island but failing to remove youth from the direct control of Rikers Island staff would be a terrible misstep. In short, we do not want to simply move Rikers to Horizons.

CCC believes that if the City truly wants to ensure that ACS has juvenile justice counselors employed by ACS by the October deadline, hiring this staff is entirely possible if it is a priority. The City was able to find and train staff in an expedited manner for its prekindergarten classes. In this instance, the City could either put out an emergency test and list or contract out the services to a juvenile justice provider with this type of experience.⁴

CCC once again urges the City in the strongest terms to reconsider its decision to have DOC staff in juvenile detention facilities. As the Council negotiates a budget with the Administration, that is due to include funding to Corrections to staff Horizons, we urge you to both resist this plan and ensure that if it goes forward tight hiring, training and reporting demands are met through Terms and Conditions so that the Council can help us to monitor the situation.

Children’s Health and Mental Health (DOHMH)

Mental Health
CCC appreciates the First Lady’s and DOHMH’s ongoing commitment to initiatives to help reduce stigma and assess the mental health needs of New Yorkers. We also laud the Administration’s inclusion in the Executive Budget of $75,000 for a Cure Violence Training Coordinator and $1.2 million to evaluate the effectiveness of Thrive mental health initiatives (in the DSS budget), as well as $1.15 million in the Preliminary Budget for enhanced services for LGBTQ youth through the Unity Project.

We urge the Administration to further enhance coordination among the city’s mental health initiatives, and increase capacity to better meet the mental health needs of New York City’s children and their families.

² Id.
³ Id.
⁴ Westchester County contracts out secure detention to Leake and Watts (and soon Children’s Village.)
Though ThriveNYC plays an important role in destigmatizing mental illness and reshaping the way the city approaches mental health, it cannot replace the critical services currently provided through a number of the City Council’s mental health initiatives. For years, these programs have used non-traditional, community-based settings to help identify children and families in need and offer developmentally appropriate services and supports.

We thank the City Council for your commitment to these initiatives and urge you to not only restore funding for these initiatives this year, but to invest additional funding. Investment in these initiatives is essential for addressing the city’s substantial unmet behavioral health needs, and for intervening early to ensure positive, long-term impacts for some of New York’s most vulnerable children and families.

Specifically, we urge the City Council to:

- Restore $1 million and add $1 million (total of $2 million) for Mental Health Services for Children Under Five Initiative;
- Restore $2.05 million and add $450,000 (total of $2.5 million) for Court-Involved Youth Services Initiative;
- Restore $1.218 million and add $782,000 (total of $2.0 million) for Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations;
- Restore $3.237 million and add $763,000 (total of $4.0 million) for the Autism Awareness initiative; and
- Restore $2.179 million and add $321,000 (total of $2.5 million) for the Developmental, Psychological, and Behavioral Health initiative.

**Infant and Maternal Health**

CCC also appreciates the Administration’s commitment to programs supporting healthy mothers and babies, including home visiting, screening for maternal depression, and Safe Sleep campaigns. We also support the City Council’s request to expand Health Action Centers to three new locations. The city’s historically low infant mortality rate is a testament to the importance of investing in a targeted strategy to improve infant and maternal health outcomes.

That said, racial/ethnic and geographic disparities in early prenatal care, infant mortality, and maternal mortality and morbidity remain stark. The mortality rate for black infants is three times higher than that of white infants, and black women account for over 40% of deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth. The city still has substantial work to do in combatting inequities in the healthcare system and ensuring all moms receive the care they need before, during, and after pregnancy.

Improving maternal and infant health in New York requires greater coordination among providers to ensure that high-risk women receive timely screenings and referrals. CCC therefore urges the City Council to not only restore $1.193 million for the Maternal and Child Health Services initiative but to add $1.5 million, for a total of $2.7 million for the initiative. This additional funding could be used to create a regional maternal child health coordination project. This would enable coordinated outreach, screening, and referrals for pregnant,
parenting, and postpartum women at risk of poor birth and health outcomes. By reducing fragmentation of care and strengthening coordination of services, the city can make significant strides in improving health outcomes for moms and babies.

**Department of Education**

CCC was pleased to see a number of Executive Budget proposals to strengthen education for New York City’s 1.1 million public school students. These include $30.55 million for literacy enhancements (a portion of which is targeted to homeless students), $125.3 million for fair student funding increases, the continued implementation of 3K for All and $4.77 million for anti-bias training.

That said, we are disappointed that the budget did not propose to do more for students in temporary housing, given the magnitude of the homelessness crisis whereby 1 in 10 NYC public school children identify as homeless (including doubled up), 38,000 students spent a portion of the 2016-2017 school year in shelter, and more than half of students in shelter miss at least a month of school each year.

CCC does appreciate that the Executive Budget includes $11.9 million to restore $10.3 million for the Bridging the Gap program and adds $1.6 million in FY19 for 10 additional social workers (for a total of 53 social workers), two additional students in temporary housing experts (for a total of 10) and additional enrollment support. Unfortunately, this funding is for one year only again.

While this is a step in the right direction, CCC urges the Council to negotiate a budget that goes further to better meet the needs of homeless students. Specifically, we urge the administration and the City Council to negotiate a budget that baselines the $11.9 million and adds (and baselines) $19 million for the following:

- Increase the number of Bridging the Gap social workers for students in shelters from 53 to 100 and adds supervisory staff ($7.0 million).
- Establish a Deputy Chancellor for Highlily Mobile Students to provide leadership and accountability to work across agencies to improve educational stability, attendance and outcomes for students in temporary housing and foster care ($1.0 million).
- Hire Field Support Center Directors for Highly Mobile Students ($4.5 million).
- Hire 50 DOE social workers to provide intensive supports at shelters to address education-related issues ($6.5 million).

In addition, CCC believes that the City could save money by providing parents of homeless elementary school students and pre-kindergarten students with monthly MetroCards rather than weekly MetroCards. Currently, while transportation is being arranged for homeless elementary school students to attend their home schools, their parents can receive weekly MetroCards while waiting. Homeless pre-kindergarten students are entitled to transportation by law, which is currently addressed via MetroCard only (no busing). In both instances, parents must go to a DOE office or find a Family Assistant at the shelter or hotel to provide them with a
new MetroCard every week. This task is overwhelming at the DOE offices and often a challenge for parents. In addition, 4 weekly MetroCards is more expensive than 1 monthly. We therefore strongly urge the City to alleviate some of the transportation challenges (while saving money) by providing monthly MetroCards to the parents. This could be addressed as part of the Fair Fares initiative.

**Family Homelessness (DHS and HRA/DSS)**

CCC appreciates the efforts the administration has made to try to prevent homelessness, create rental assistance programs, and increase affordable housing options. CCC also appreciates the administration’s commitment to increasing purpose-built shelters and moving to a borough-based placement system. CCC also pleased that the Mayor signed into law the City Council bill to ensure all low-income New Yorkers have access to counsel in Housing Court.

With all of these efforts, there are nearly 23,000 children in DHS shelters, with an average length of stay of 413 days. Only half of the homeless families with children are in Tier II shelters, with the other half in cluster sites and hotels/motels. We urge the administration and the City Council to negotiate a budget that includes additional supports for homeless children and their families.

Hotel rooms are often far from transportation, far from communities of origin, and lacking in services provided by Tier II shelters. Hotel rooms typically lack kitchens, and some hotels lack cooking facilities completely, meaning only microwavable meals are provided. Hotel sites often lack laundry facilities for family use, play areas for children, and communal space for visitors. Due to the hotels’ attempt to prevent homeless families from claiming tenancy rights, families are forced to move rooms in the hotel every 29 days—removing any potential stability a family in crisis could try to create. Furthermore, hotels have not been designed or funded to have appropriate shelter staff, such as housing specialists, educational specialists, recreational specialists, etc.

The administration has committed to eliminating the cluster sites by 2021 and the hotels by 2023, but these deadlines are years from now. In the meantime, children are growing up in shelters that are not appropriate places for them to live. The trauma and stress of homelessness, coupled with educational instability and/or long commutes to school, has also been proven to negatively impact educational outcomes.

To begin to better address the needs of homeless families CCC makes the following suggestions:

- Prevent homelessness for domestic violence survivors who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by implementing an alternative to shelter model that assists survivors to remain safely in place by providing supports such as financial assistance and safety planning.
- Develop Service-Enriched Affordable Housing Models Targeted to Homeless Families
- Create a 15-year project-based rental voucher for homeless families with children, with the possibility of renewal at the end of the 15 year-term.
• Invest in trauma-informed care and training for all staff at homeless shelters and intake sites.
• Intentionally connect homeless children to Early Intervention, Early Childhood Education, and After-school and summer programs.
• While we seek to reduce the use of hotels, we must address conditions in them to make them more humane while children and families continue to reside there by:
  o Eliminating the practice of requiring families in hotels to move rooms every 29 days.
  o Ensuring families in hotels have access to laundry.
  o Ensuring families in hotels have access to high quality, palatable food that meets the needs of clients with special dietary restrictions. Note that homeless families in hotels do not have kitchens and are unable to store food in their hotel rooms. Creative ways to bring food to families in hotels, such as vans, must be explored.
  o Creating space in the hotels for children to play and for families to have visitors during specified hours.
  o Bringing in cubicle partitions so families have private places to meet with case managers and other service providers.

**Access to Healthy Affordable Food (HRA)**
CCC was extremely disappointed to see that the Executive Budget failed to maintain the $7.23 million added in the FY18 budget for emergency food assistance programs (EFAP), leaving only $8.2 million City funds in the baseline. Like all Council Members who signed the letter to the Mayor (besides the Speaker and Finance Chair who do not sign budget letters) CCC supports the request for $22 million of baselined funds for emergency food (which would require restoring $7.23 million and adding $6.57 million.)

EFAP provides food and technical assistance to approximately 500 food pantries and soup kitchens throughout New York City. An astonishing 16% of NYC residents rely on food pantries or soup kitchens. This number is likely to grow as New Yorkers with immigration fears shun from participating in the SNAP program. In addition, if the Trump administration is successful in any of its efforts to cut or curtail SNAP, emergency food needs will grow even further.

In addition, we urge the City Council and the Administration to adopt a budget that increases health food retail options by adding $15 million for SNAP incentives such as Health Bucks; investing $10 million to launch the Healthy Food Financing Initiative for food establishments; and adding $3 million to support healthy corner store initiatives.

**Youth Services: Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)**
CCC appreciates the City Council’s longstanding commitment to strengthening and expanding services available for youth. On the other hand, we are deeply disappointed that the Executive Budget did not include any additional funding for youth services (beyond one year funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) minimum wage increase, which should actually be baselined.)
CCC strongly urges the Administration and the City Council to negotiate an adopted budget that restores and baselines $20.35 million for summer camp programs for 34,000 middle school students; restores and baselines $16 million for elementary after-school programs for 9,000 children; baselines the $20 million for the SYEP minimum wage increase; and adds $10.2 million to expand runaway and homeless youth programs. It is critical that the administration baseline funding for these youth services programs, as it is not fair for families to annually face stress and anxiety not knowing whether their children will have a safe program to be at while they are at work.

1) Restore and Baseline $20.35 million for Summer Camp Programs for 34,000 Middle School Children

The Mayor’s Budget once again fails to provide funding for summer programs for over 34,000 middle school students. This is extremely disappointing as this once again creates anxiety for parents, particularly low-income parents, who need to work during the summer months. CCC strongly urges the Administration to end the budget dance over summer camp programs once and for all. This includes fully funding and baselining $20.35 million for the 34,000 middle school slots that have been an ongoing budget issue, fully funding and baselining summer programming for the new middle school after-school slots created last year, and funding and baselining additional elementary or middle school slots created without summer camp programming. It is critical that this funding be baselined so that next year parents can be relieved of the anxiety while providers can adequately plan for the summer and screen and hire staff.

Prior to the de Blasio administration’s expansion of after-school programming, all after-school programs included summer programming in addition to school-year and holiday programming, in recognition that these programs were meant to provide structured programming during all out-of-school times. In 2014, Mayor de Blasio expanded access to after-school programming to more than 34,000 additional middle school students, noting that “[l]earning shouldn’t stop when the school bell rings . . . .”5

If summer programming is not restored for these 34,000+ middle school students, families will be left with hard decisions. Parents or guardians will be forced to either take time away from work, pay for costly private child care, or leave children unsupervised. Middle school students who are idle all day long in the summer months are particularly vulnerable to experimenting in negative behavior and losing academic gains. Idle teenagers are also likely to spend more time in front of a tv, computer, or cell phone screen, and research has found links between teen screen time and depression and suicide-related outcomes.6

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2) **Restore and baseline at least $16 million for elementary after-school programs for 9,000 children**

While CCC is grateful for expanding middle school after-school programming to all middle school students, there is still a large need to serve more elementary school children. We urge the Council and the administration to adopt a budget, which at a minimum restores and baselines the $16 million of one-year funding for elementary after-school programs from the FY18 Adopted Budget, and to work towards making elementary after-school programs a universally available program.

CCC deeply appreciates the City Council’s commitment and support for elementary after-school programs. After-school programming enables parents to work while their children are safe and participating in academically and developmentally appropriate activities. This is particularly critical for children in elementary school who are too young to care for themselves. The Council’s leadership led to the inclusion of $16 million in last year’s adopted budget, allowing 9,000 additional elementary school students to participate in COMPASS after-school programming.

We urge the City to not only maintain capacity by restoring and baselining these 9,000 elementary after-school slots but to go further and continue to expand after-school programming to more elementary school age children.

3) **Baseline $20.0 million for the SYEP minimum wage increase.**

CCC appreciates the Executive Budget proposal to add $20 million for the SYEP minimum wage increase, but we do not understand why this funding is not baselined. The minimum wage will not be declining next year and thus this funding should be baselined.

4) **Add $10.2 million for Runaway and Homeless Youth Services**

This past year, the City Council passed an important package of Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) bills, which will increase the age of eligibility for RHY services from 21 to 25 and extend the amount of time youth can remain in RHY shelters. This is momentous and we thank the Council for its tremendous leadership in better meeting the needs of runaway and homeless youth and young adults.

The RHY system provides safe and developmentally appropriate shelter to some of the City’s most vulnerable youth. Serving older youth and young adults, for longer timeframes, will clearly require additional capacity in the RHY system, so as to prevent displacing younger RHY.

CCC urges the Council to negotiate a budget with the Administration that include funding to address this new need in the upcoming Executive Budget. Specifically, we ask the Administration to add $10.2 million of funding to enable DYCD to add 100 beds for 21-24 year olds, add 15 RHY Housing Specialists, create two new drop-in centers, and increase Crisis/TIL contracts by 7%.
**Immigrant Children Advocates’ Relief Efforts (ICARE)**
This past year, the City Council included $2.0 million in the budget to fund five non-profits to represent children and families in immigration court. ICARE currently represents 1,250 children and parents—without this program these children and their parents would be in immigration court without a lawyer. Most would then lose their cases and receive deportation orders.

Unfortunately, Trump policies have increased the need and there are more and more children facing immigration court proceedings. No child should have to face immigration court alone. We urge the City Council to not only restore funding for this initiative but to add $2 million (for a total of $4 million in City Council funding) to protect NYC’s children in deportation proceedings.

**Additional City Council Initiatives that CCC Urges the City Council to Restore**
CCC supports the City Council’s ambitious Fair Fares initiative and agrees that reduced price MetroCards would be a tremendous value for low-income New Yorkers. As the Council negotiates this exciting new initiative, CCC urges you to ensure the following City Council initiatives, which support the most vulnerable New Yorkers, are also restored:

**Criminal Justice Services/Juvenile Justice**
- $1.71 for the Center for Court Innovation
- $1.35 million for the Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault, which includes child advocacy centers
- $600,000 for video visitation for incarcerated persons’ families in public libraries

**Early Childhood Education/Child Care:**
- $9.855 million for Discretionary child care programs
- $4.242 million for the City’s First Readers Initiative (DYCD)

**Education:**
- $500,000 for Child Mind Institute
- $2.25 million for community schools
- $1.585 million for the Dropout Prevention and Intervention Initiative
- $3.89 million for Educational Programs for Students, which includes programs such as Chess in the Schools, Expanded Schools and the Middle School Quality Initiative
- $200,000 for LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum
- $1.925 million for Physical Education and Fitness, which includes C.H.A.M.P.S, New York Junior Tennis League, and Small Schools Athletic League
- $1.3 million for the Restorative Justice Program (the administration also funded this program with an additional $1.1 million in FY18 only for a total of $2.4 million)
- $20.805 million for Support for Educators, which includes Teacher’s Choice school supplies and STEM Teacher’s College
**Food Initiatives**
- $930,000 for Access to Healthy Food and Nutritional Education, which includes restorations for EBTs in Farmers’ Markets
- $725,000 for the Food Access and Benefits Initiative
- $4.0 million for food pantries

**Homeless and Housing Services**
- $1.0 million for Children and Families in the NYC Homeless System Initiative
- $820,000 total for the Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund
- $2.5 million for Stabilizing NYC, a citywide coalition to prevent the loss of affordable housing

**Legal Services**
- $5.0 million for Legal Services for Low-income New Yorkers, which includes citywide civil legal services and the SSI advocacy project
- $485,000 for Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)

**Health Services**
- $1.187 million for Access Health NYC
- $350,000 for Beating Hearts (automated external defibrillators for non-profits serving youth and the elderly)
- $646,000 for Child Health and Wellness, which includes various programs such as obesity prevention, asthma programs and oral health services
- $1.193 million for Maternal and Child Health Services initiative
- $2.0 million for Nurse Family Partnership
- $344,788 for Reproductive and Sexual Health Services

**Mental Health Services**
- $3.237 million for the Autism Awareness Initiative
- $1.0 million for the Mental Health Services for Children Under 5 initiative
- $2.05 million for the Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative
- $2.179 million for Developmental, Psychological and Behavioral Health Services
- $1.2 million for the LGBTQ Youth All-Borough Mental Health Initiative
- $500,000 for Medicaid Redesign Transition
- $1.218 million for Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations, which includes the Samaritans Suicide Prevention hotline

**Young Women’s Initiative (YWI)- $5 million**