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**Committee on Finance**  

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Good afternoon. My name is Daryl Hornick-Becker and I am a Policy and Advocacy Associate at Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, Inc. CCC is a 75-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce. We document the facts, engage and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions.

I would like to thank Chair Dromm, and all the members of the City Council Finance Committee for holding today’s hearing on the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2021.

The city’s Executive Budget was released amid unprecedented challenges facing our city and our state due to COVID-19. We appreciate the actions taken by Mayor de Blasio to prioritize the health, safety, and food access of all New Yorkers during this crisis, all while confronting a $6 billion budget deficit and a projected $7.4 billion loss in tax revenue. However, we fear that the $2 billion in proposed reductions will make the road to recovery harder for New York’s children and their families.

The drastic cuts in education and youth services will be especially harmful as parents seeking to get back to work. Not only will parents need child care options for younger children, but youth will also need access to programming that supports their social and emotional well-being. And children of all ages will need significant support to overcome both learning loss and the exacerbation of educational inequities. Furthermore, as children and families grapple with trauma and loss created by this pandemic, the need to expand access to behavioral health supports will become ever more pressing. Similarly, to avoid a surge in family homelessness, additional investments will be needed in community-based prevention to keep families stably housed and out of the shelter system.

This testimony will focus on the key areas that CCC feels warrant further investments and areas where cuts must be restored or prevented in order to ensure that 1.7 million New York City children and their families have the supports and services needed not just to survive and recover, but to thrive following this pandemic.

**Every Child Healthy**

- **Address the trauma and loss of the pandemic by enhancing school-based behavioral health supports for children**

This pandemic is having a devastating impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children. Extensive research on adverse childhood experiences tells us that the kinds of trauma caused by COVID-19 –
including economic and housing insecurity, heightened risk of child welfare involvement, disruptions in mental health care, and loss of loved ones – have long-lasting repercussions across the health and wellbeing of children as they become adults. A recent study on the impact of COVID-19 on children in China found that about one in five – or 20% – of children reported symptoms of depression and anxiety after their schools had been closed for a month, well above rates experienced before the pandemic.\(^1\) The United Nations has warned that the coronavirus has the seeds of a major mental health crisis, with children among those at particularly high risk.

Even before the pandemic, approximately 50 percent of children and adolescents in New York with a diagnosed treatment need did not receive the mental health services they needed. It is difficult to underestimate the profound impact this crisis will have on the mental health of children, as they grapple with severe disruptions in their lives, anxiety, family illness and loss, and economic devastation. **New York City must not only protect existing investments in children’s behavioral health, but also identify ways to expand them.** Only by doing so can we prevent the long-term negative repercussions of unmet and untreated mental health and substance use disorder needs.

Many behavioral health services are transitioning to teletherapy, but many household lack devices, affordable data plans, or internet. Even when families do have these resources, the lack of privacy and difficulty providing services to young children create barriers to effective care. Despite the many challenges of providing teleservices, they can offer new opportunities to connect some children to services they may have struggled to access previously. **New York should carefully consider how to maximize access to high-quality teletherapy for all children, with attention paid to how to ensure equitable access to services in languages other than English.**

When children return to school, the preparedness of the education and community-based behavioral health system will play a critical role in identifying and providing mental health support and treatment to students. **A key to effective interventions will be strengthening healing-centered and whole-school approaches that help ensure that all children with heightened needs are identified and supported. This should occur in conjunction with an increase of in-school and community based clinical capability, as well as the facilitation and support of collaboration between early education settings, schools, and community-based services.**

For students who have experienced significant mental health needs even before this crisis, an integrated system of intensive supports and services will be particularly important. **CCC joins our city partners in urging the administration to invest and baseline $15 million to launch and sustain a Mental Health Support Continuum to support the significant behavioral health needs of students in designated neighborhoods in high-need schools.**

This proposal is based on the Mayor’s Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline’s 2016 Recommendations.\(^2\) These recommendations included strategies to address in-school environment and student behavior to promote a safe learning setting for everyone, one that ensures students who misbehave or make a mistake are provided the supports to stay engaged in school for their academic and social well-being. These types of supports are essential given that schools too often respond to a child’s need for emotional or behavioral support with suspension, expulsion, or a call to the NYPD or Emergency Medical Services. In fact, the NYPD reported intervening in more than 3,500 incidents involving students in emotional distress in the 2018-2019 school year, with a disproportionate number of the incidents involving Black and Latinx students.
The Continuum would implement strategies including clinician response teams; student assessments to determine appropriate level of care needed; direct, ongoing mental health supports; school partnerships with hospital-based mental health clinics; school-based mental health clinicians; whole-school trainings in Collaborative Problem Solving; and call-in centers to advise school staff about students in crisis in two designated neighborhoods with high-need schools. We appreciate the City Council’s inclusion of the continuum in its response to the Preliminary Budget last year, and strongly urge the City Council and the Administration to invest in a Mental Health Support Continuum and other school-based supports.

- Protect community-based mental health supports

For years, programs in the City Council’s Mental Health Initiatives have used non-traditional, community-based settings to help identify children and families in need and offer developmentally appropriate services and support. These trusted community services are more essential than ever in addressing the trauma children and families are experiencing in the face of COVID-19. The need for these trusted community services has only grown in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, and we urge the City Council to at a minimum maintain support for the following mental health programs:

1) The Mental Health Services for Children under Five Initiative (CU5) allows organizations to work with children to develop psychosocial and educational skills, as well as cope with trauma resulting from witnessing or experiencing domestic violence, sexual abuse, or physical or mental abuse. CU5 has provided screening and psychotherapy to thousands of families, as well as mental health consultation services to numerous pediatricians, preschool teachers, and child welfare workers.

2) The Court-Involved Youth Initiative helps identify youth involved in the justice system who require mental health services, and provides family counseling and respite services to families of court-involved youth.

3) Autism Awareness supports wraparound services for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in after-school and summer programs and during school closings.

4) The Medicaid Redesign Initiative helps community-based organizations that provide mental health services prepare for the state’s redesign of Medicaid behavioral health services. This funding is more important than ever now that the children’s behavioral health system has begun the transition too.

5) LGBTQ Youth Mental Health supports comprehensive mental health services for vulnerable LGBTQ youth, focusing particularly on youth of color, youth in immigrant families, homeless youth, and youth who are court-involved.

6) Developmental, Psychological and Behavioral Health helps individuals with behavioral health needs and developmental disabilities, supporting harm reduction, clubhouses and more.

7) Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations supports community-based behavioral health programs, including medication for individuals in transitional housing and mental health services for families with child welfare involvement.

- Fully mitigate State cuts to New York City’s Article 6 public health program

In both the FY 2020 and FY 2021 Budget, Governor Cuomo made devastating cuts to NYC’s Article 6 public health works program by cutting the State’s reimbursement to New York City from 36% to 20%. Article 6 funding supports health initiatives that are the foundation of New York City’s public
health infrastructure, including Family Health, Communicable Disease Control, Chronic Disease Prevention, Community Health Assessment, Emergency Preparedness, and Environmental Health.

Community based organizations, advocates, the City Council, and the Mayor must all fight to have these funds restored in next year’s State budget. In the meantime, however, vital programs providing critical public health services are in jeopardy if the City Council and Mayor do not step in to cover these cuts. CCC is very appreciative that the Mayor’s Executive Budget restores cuts to programs funded through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. However, these funds do not fully mitigate cuts to community-based organizations who receive Article 6 matching funds through the City Council’s discretionary budget public health programs. Even with the restoration of $59 million, CBOs are on track to lose approximately $6 million for vital public health programs. These cuts will hurt some of the most essential community-based services that are more important than ever in light of the COVID-19 crisis, including:

- Access Health Initiative
- Child Health and Wellness
- Children Under Five
- Dedicated Contraceptive Fund
- Immigrant Health Initiative
- Maternal and Child Health Services
- Reproductive and Sexual Health Services

These cuts put the health and well-being of children and families at risk, at a time when our city and state can least afford to slash public health. We urge the Mayor and the City Council to fully mitigate the impact of Article 6 cuts in this year’s city budget.

- Develop a comprehensive plan to ameliorate the secondary health impacts of COVID-19 on young children

National data shows a precipitous decline in well-child visits and vaccination rates since a state of emergency was declared. The effects of this decline in immunization rates will be borne out in the future transmission of preventable deadly diseases. A decline in well-child visits also means a massive drop in the number of children receive developmental screenings, as well as the number of children who are tested for lead exposure. This is particularly concerning because more young children are spending more time at home where they are at greater risk of unsafe housing conditions. Meanwhile, there is a significant reduction in the ability of landlords and the city to take appropriate measures for mandated inspections and abatements. As a result, an explosion of elevated blood lead levels in children after this crisis is likely. These and other public health threats facing young children underscore the need to protect funding for lead poisoning prevention and Early Intervention, as well as to develop a comprehensive city plan to immediately identify which children are at risk and ramp up efforts to combat the secondary health impacts of the pandemic for young children.

- Enhance efforts to combat food insecurity

Even before this pandemic, 1.2 million NYC residents were estimated to be food insecure; that figure is now estimated to be closer to 2.2 million. CCC lauds the Administration for investing $25 million in Emergency Funding for Food Providers, but we know the need for nutritional supports will only grow. We therefore urge the City to provide additional resources to food banks and pantries to help meet the growing demand. In funding food pantries and food banks, the City must work closely with
trusted community-based organizations who have cultivated strong relationships in their communities, and identify those communities that still lack sufficient access to feeding sites.

As important as emergency food assistance is, it is clear that food banks cannot address this crisis alone; food pantries are being overwhelmed and shutting down at unsustainable rates. It is therefore also essential that the City increase funding for outreach and education programs that maximize uptake of federal nutrition programs including SNAP, WIC, and Pandemic EBT. Too many families remain unaware of what programs are available, or afraid to access them due to immigration status and fears related to the Public Charge. The City must increase outreach and education efforts around federal and state nutrition programs, and in particular target immigrant communities that may be unclear on which programs are safe to access.

Every Child Housed

In many communities, severe rent burden, overcrowded housing and high rates of homelessness were challenges faced prior to the pandemic, and increased risks to housing stability as a result of the economic fallout is now a reality for too many families. Once the moratorium on evictions is lifted, the city will need to respond swiftly to keep children and families stably housed. **Upstream prevention before a housing crisis erupts will be critical for families to recovery.** Undoubtedly, there will be a need for short-term and long-term rent assistance for hardest-hit households coupled with intensive case management that can support families to keep them stably housed to prevent shelter entry and to avoid reentry post shelter through effective aftercare supports.

**CCC and partner organizations in the Family Homelessness Coalition urge the Council to consider short and long-term strategies necessary for recovery and housing security including investing in upstream prevention, improving shelter conditions, expediting exits out of shelter and supporting the nonprofit sector.**

- **Invest in Upstream Prevention**

Housing security for New York families is now at even greater risk due to the economic fallout resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Greater resources are necessary to keep families housed after the eviction moratorium ends given the alarming projections of unemployment and the number of households experiencing severe rent burden.

**Rental Subsidies:** Short- and long-term rent assistance is needed to cover rent arrears and support ongoing rent payments. Addressing housing insecurity farther upstream is less costly to the City at a time of strained resources and less traumatic for families with children at risk of homelessness.

**Prevention Services:** Expanded preventive services are desperately needed to respond to families’ needs before a housing crisis. Preventive services should include case management, eviction prevention and rental assistance counseling, and service referrals for childcare, education, training and workforce development. This will require increased funding for community-based organizations that provide these services as demand will increase in the wake of this pandemic.
Rapid Rehousing: Rapid rehousing, a HUD best practice, should be institutionalized by HPD and HDC. City-funded re-rental units can be used to provide safe, affordable housing for families at risk of homelessness, including those experiencing domestic violence, or already using shelter.

- Improve Family Shelter Conditions

Today, nearly 24,000 children and youth continue to reside in family shelter. To address child and family needs and reduce trauma and poor outcomes experienced due to homelessness, CCC and the Family Homelessness Coalition partners continues to advocate for improvements in shelter conditions to protect and promote the well-being of children and their families.

Access to Education Supports: Children and youth in shelter should be prioritized for any in-person and remote programming offered this summer. Because housing instability presents challenges to distance learning, students in temporary housing should be prioritized in DOE’s Regional Enrichment Centers. Students in temporary housing fare worse than their permanently housed peers when examining attendance, proficiency, and graduation rates; learning loss and poor education outcomes are exacerbated now due to distance learning.

Improve Access to Services for families in Commercial Hotels: Teleservices models should be leveraged to meet the needs of children and families living in hotels. Teleservices can facilitate access to social work services, recreation and tutoring, as well promote connectedness to family members and friends. Nearly 2,800 families reside in commercial hotels with minimal access to basic services and supports such as kitchens and laundry, social work services, or recreational activities for children. The isolation of these families is now exacerbated by social distancing.

- Expedite Exits to Permanent Housing

The process by which families in shelters are placed in permanent housing, either through a government-subsidized unit or by using a rental subsidy voucher, is far too complex and lengthy.

Rental Subsidies: Long- and short-term rental assistance should be leveraged to facilitate more rapid exits from shelter.

Streamline Permanent Housing Process: The process of placing homeless families in permanent housing must be streamlined so that they can move to safe, permanent homes quickly. Recent efforts to streamline voucher protocols and expand accessibility, such as online processing and the use of virtual inspections when appropriate, should be expanded and continued post-PAUSE.

Expand Supply of Housing for Families that are Homeless and Very and Extremely Low Income: The City should prioritize capital funding for development of new permanent affordable housing for homeless families and expand its efforts to facilitate the acquisition of distressed properties by nonprofits. Additionally, an increased number of city-funded and mandatory inclusionary housing units should be made available to homeless families and to very and extremely low-income families and those households should have access to support services to maintain housing stability. The City must continue and expand its commitment to housing the most vulnerable homeless families in supportive and service-enriched housing.
• Support Nonprofits Including Frontline Staff

Nonprofit organizations need additional support to expand their work – including operational support, incentive pay, access to testing, personal protective equipment, access to technology and equipment. Vital to the city’s capacity to respond in this crisis is the continued viability of its social service sector, including critical frontline staff who support families experiencing housing instability.

Every Child Educated

• Fund summer youth programming as a vehicle for recovery

The Executive Budget eliminates all summer programming for youth, including the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), summer camps operated by the city’s Comprehensive Afterschool System & School’s Out NYC (COMPASS & SONYC), and summer programs run through Beacon and Cornerstone programs. In total, this will leave nearly 175,000 children in NYC with no options for summer engagement.

Children and Youth in Summer Programs

COMPASS and SONYC = 70,000

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) = 74,000

Cornerstone and Beacon = 30,000

Unfortunately, some communities will be disproportionately affected by these cuts. In several areas of the Bronx, northern Manhattan and central Brooklyn, there are 20 – 40 program sites that may lose their summer offerings. Many of the same neighborhoods heavily-served by youth programs, are also neighborhoods that have had higher shares of positive COVID-19 tests than other areas of the city. These include East Harlem, East Tremont, Morrisania, Washington Heights, East New York, Brownsville, among others.
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, after school programs have adapted how they engage children and serve their communities. The community-based organizations (CBOs) that run these programs have developed and implemented innovative new ways of providing youth with academic and social-emotional learning, as well as art and recreation programming.

Providers are currently helping families with the transition to remote learning, troubleshooting technology issues, engaging in remote arts instruction, and helping deliver meals to families suddenly food insecure, all through online videoconferences and apps or through phone calls and texts. All of these services must continue for the 178,000 students who will be taking remote classes this summer. The CBOs that serve these communities are intimately aware of the community’s needs, and stand ready to adapt to the new environment in order to provide youth with needed out-of-school engagement, and to prepare for the new school year.

Youth engagement over the summer will be vital to meeting the emerging educational, health and economic needs of children and families as a result of the public health and economic crisis. Summer programming as part of a recovery effort would address the following areas:

1. Education– helping students overcome learning loss from the move to remote-schooling through building and strengthening cognitive skills, project-based learning activities and/or workforce development opportunities.
2. Social Emotional Health – offering youth opportunities to build positive and rewarding relationships with others and strengthen their self-efficacy and resilience. This is even more important now considering the compounded trauma of social isolation, potential loss of a loved one, loss of a family’s income, and housing and food insecurity.
3. Physical Health – providing opportunities for safe and regular physical activity and health and nutrition education, whether activities need to be socially-distanced or not.
4. Family and Home – supporting parents, caregivers, and families to help promote learning and healthy development in safe and stable homes.

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**Top 10 Community Districts with After School Locations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community District</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Harlem (M11)</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower East Side (M03)</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Heights (M12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>East New York (K05)</td>
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<td>Brownsville (K16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedford Stuyvesant (K03)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaica/St. Albans (Q12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concourse/Highbridge (B04)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Greene/Brooklyn Heights (K02)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisania (B03)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMPASS, SONYC, Cornerstone and Beacon Locations by Zip Code**

*Source: CCC Analysis of Department of Youth and Community Development (June 2019) DYCD Program Sites.*
Additionally, SYEP has historically provided much-needed additional income over the summer to youth and their families. Not only do families need income during a time when so many caregivers have lost stable employment, but with the possibility of parents and caregivers falling ill, any income teens might contribute to their family’s household expenses is essential, not supplemental.

We know that following the Great Recession, unemployment for 16 to 19-year-olds increased, but was counterbalanced by increased investment and participation in SYEP.

Even with social-distancing measures in effect, many providers can still offer summer program alternatives that promote recovery. CBOs are ready to take the lead on designing and piloting new approaches to summer programming and services that can be adapted and implemented in response to our new reality.
COMPASS and SONYC programs serving younger youth can engage children in various ways at home, through education, arts, and recreation. If schools remain in session this summer, these programs can continue to deliver a full range of academic enrichment outside of school hours. For SYEP serving older youth, innovative remote assignments can provide employment opportunities that support training, career exploration, credentialing and skills development.

On the other hand, if social distancing measures are lifted this summer and businesses reopen, seasonal staff may be more crucial than ever, and summer programs can connect youth to critical ongoing and recovery-specific citywide initiatives, such as emergency food delivery, the DOE’s Regional Enrichment Centers, census outreach, community resource mapping, and voter registration efforts. CCC and its partners in the Campaign for Children stand ready to work with the Administration and City Council to develop and implement creative solutions for youth programming this summer. The success of our efforts will ensure that children and youth of all ages are prepared for school reentry, and that they and their families benefit from the supports needed to recover from this unprecedented crisis.

- Expedite device delivery and expand REC enrollment

The Dept. of Education has made great progress since the transition to remote learning, distributing over 280,000 devices to students thus far, and opening and staffing Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) for the children of essential workers. However, more can be done to address the challenges of distance learning right now. At the end of last month, an estimated 19,000 students who requested devices were still awaiting them. We also consistently hear of families who are exasperated in their attempts to get devices or technological guidance to help their children succeed. The DOE must expedite device delivery and continue to engage with families who need help as we enter the final month of the school year.

But for some students just having a device is not enough. More than 1 in 10 students in NYC schools lacked permanent housing last year. These students already had significant obstacles to educational success, but the move to remote learning has presented a set of new challenges. Students in temporary housing are more likely to lack the physical space to learn remotely where they live, especially those who might also have siblings who are remote-learning, and they may not have a caregiver present to help them set up their access or guide them through the day. That’s why CCC has joined with other advocates, the Comptroller, and members of the City Council to call on the DOE to allow students in temporary housing access to the city’s Regional Enrichment Centers. These centers, created to serve children of essential workers during the crisis, thus far have been under-enrolled but could provide needy students with better-suited environments to learn remotely.

- Limit cuts to the Fair Student Funding formula

Representing almost a third of the city’s entire budget, the Dept. of Education is always a likely target for savings, even more so during our current budgetary crisis. However, reductions and disinvestments in public education, during a time when so many children will be combatting learning loss and experiencing trauma, will have both short-term and long-term negative impacts on child and family well-being. While many of the proposed cuts to education in the Executive Budget will be detrimental, none might be more harmful than the proposed $100 million reduction to the Fair Student Funding (FSF) formula.
FSF is the source of the majority of funding for individual school budgets. Any reduction in FSF will directly result in reductions in school resources, and will force principals to make brutal choices when it comes to the next school year. Smaller school budgets could result in teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, fewer counselors and social workers, and fewer course options. The Mayor has indicated that schools currently receiving higher allotments of FSF will be prioritized when making cuts, but these schools receive more funding because they need it, and thus the biggest cuts would be at schools with the most vulnerable students.

These cuts will come at a time when students are returning to school after falling behind during remote learning, after losing a loved one to COVID, or after suddenly losing income, housing and food security, or all of the above. These compounded effects will be worsened when these students return to underfunded schools with fewer teachers, larger classes, and less support. CCC urges the City Council to work with the DOE and the Administration to prevent or limit these cuts, and find savings in other budget areas that may be less directly harmful to New York schoolchildren.

- Target resources for the most vulnerable students

Because the budget outlook is bleak does not mean we can turn our backs on the most vulnerable populations of students. Before this crisis, there were profound disparities within educational outcomes among different groups of students. These disparities have only been exacerbated in the transition to remote learning, with students across many communities struggling to adjust. Now more than ever, the Council needs to support programs that will directly address these students; students who already experienced worse educational outcomes before this crisis and whose needs will be even greater following it. We know funding is limited but we urge the Council to support several low-cost initiatives that will target these students.

When school buildings reopen, the DOE must ensure that every student can get there. Federal and state law require the city to provide transportation to students placed in foster care so they can stay in their original school, unless it is in their best interest to transfer schools. Starting in the fall, the DOE may need to figure out how to make transportation work in light of social distancing requirements and the potential of staggered scheduling. Currently, there is also not a single staff member at the DOE focused full time on students in foster care. We ask the City Council to ensure that the final budget includes sufficient funding for the DOE to provide bus service for the relatively small number of students in foster care who need it, as well as funding for at least one DOE senior staff member focused full-time on students in foster care.

Additionally, CCC and its partners in the NY Immigration Coalition’s Education Collaborative urge the City Council to support a 3-year, transfer school pilot for newly arrived, high-school-aged immigrants. While the City works to extend remote learning across the boroughs, we must remember that thousands of immigrant youth were not enrolled in school in the first place because they lacked access to programs that met their unique needs even before the crisis. Older immigrant youth consistently struggle to find adequate school placements, especially if they arrived after the age of 16. While budgetary difficulties will be exacerbated by the COVID 19 crisis, we cannot give up on these thousands of young people who deserve an opportunity to a meaningful education.
Integrate early intervention and behavioral health care into child care settings and prioritize preschool special education

CCC was heartened to see no substantial cuts to early childhood education in the Executive Budget, outside of the delay in 3K expansion. High quality affordable child care is vital to reopening our economy and getting people back to work, but it is also one of the most important investments we can make in improving outcomes for the next generation; a generation that will be defined by this crisis. While families have been sheltering in place due to social distancing requirements, many children have gone without critical Early Intervention or preschool special education services.

Earlier this year the city projected it would need approximately 1,000 to 2,000 additional seats for preschoolers who need a special class setting; classes with smaller sizes led by teachers trained to educate students with disabilities.\textsuperscript{5} When schools reopen in the fall these students still may not have an appropriate class setting. CCC and other advocates are asking that the DOE fulfill its legal obligation and provide a preschool special class seat to every child whose IEP requires one— either by opening more DOE-run classes or by ensuring CBOs do so.

The city must also explore strategies to operationalize the integration of proven best practices at scale in early childhood settings to reach children and families most in need. Following Hurricane Sandy, many providers put in place trauma-informed training and curriculum models to address issues related to loss of life, loss of income, and displacement that many children and families experienced. Lessons learned can be applied to COVID-19 recovery efforts and brought to scale, including funding discussions with philanthropic groups if warranted.

It is estimated that the city may be receiving $80 to $100 million in federal child care resources from the CARES Act. These resources can be leveraged to support the developmental needs of young children with a keen eye toward trauma-informed approaches, as well as targeted investments to support extended day options for children (3 to 6pm), protect infant and toddler capacity, and to continue to serve the essential workforce.

Every Child Safe

Invest in general prevention

The COVID-19 pandemic sheds light on profound inequalities experienced by New Yorkers in accessing basic resources necessary to meet the needs of children. This public health and economic crisis is having a disproportionate impact on communities with high rates of poverty, where many households experience housing instability and overcrowding, food insecurity, poor health as well as lack of access to preventive health care. There is a critical need for investments to support community-based programs that connect children and families with food, clothing, shelter, and other services that ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Over 44,000 children and their families are engaged in child welfare prevention services annually. Moreover, the vast majority of reports of child maltreatment are for neglect, often due to parents or caregiver’s inability to provide basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, or preventive health care. During this time when households already facing economic insecurity before the pandemic experience loss of income, heightened food and housing insecurity, and other stressors, general prevention services are even more critical now to maintain child safety and family stability.
Importantly, the Administration for Children’s Services’ (ACS) new preventive services contracts will go into effect on July 1st and will focus on evidence-based models and to a much lesser extent general prevention, which has historically offered case management and service engagement to connect families to critical supports such as food, housing, employment, child care, and behavioral health care. To recover from the aftermath of COVID-19, the city should explore the timing of new preventive services contracts, protect capacity for greater general prevention, and leverage federal stimulus resources to ensure child safety through family stability.

- **Invest in support services for court-involved youth**

  Additionally, the FY2021 Executive Budget eliminates all funding for summer youth programming. CCC and partners call for further investment for court-involved youth. In addition to restoring SYEP and summer youth funding, we urge the City to invest in remote engagement opportunities for young people, including check-ins, referrals to community-based supports including behavioral health services that meet the needs of court-involved youth and their families. Without question behavioral health needs are heightened during stay at home orders as a result of increased COVID-19 related stressors due to loss of family income, health concerns and the possible loss of loved ones.

We recognize the enormous challenge facing the city in light of the economic downturn, as well as due to inadequate investments from the State and the federal government, and CCC stands ready to support the city in advocating with State and Federal leaders to ensure New York City and our families and communities receive the supports so desperately needed. Those families hardest hit by COVID-19 are the same families that will suffer the most from cuts to city programs. We look forward to working with the City Council to strengthen the educational, youth, housing, health and behavioral health services that will be the foundation for recovery.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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