



Child Care Availability Task Force

Core Principles of a High-Quality Child Care System

The purpose of these principles is to articulate the vision New York State is committing itself to working toward for our children and families – in order to shape the child care system by which we will achieve that vision. Well-established brain research makes it clear: the experiences that children have in the first few years of life can lay the neurological groundwork for cognitive growth and healthy physical, social and emotional lives. A baby forms thousands of new neural connections each second, a process strongly shaped by environment and interactions with parents and other caregivers. Seventy-five percent of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop before age 5. Children who have quality early learning experiences are less likely to drop out of high school, need public assistance, or become a teen parent; they are more likely to go to college and have good health as an adult. No low-income working should be forced to choose between seeking employment to escape poverty and doing what is best for their child, however, the dearth of high-quality child care opportunities frequently force a family to make exactly that choice. New York's early care and learning system is a multi-million dollar sector of our economy, employing thousands of workers and generating hundreds of millions in gross receipts.

For that reason, New York State is committed to:

- **Equitable Access.** A high-quality child care system will be accessible to all children from birth through school age regardless of income, race, ethnicity, immigration status, geographic location, or ability. Every child should be able to reach its full potential for healthy cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.
- **Affordability.** A high-quality child care system will be affordable to all children from birth through school age regardless of income, race, ethnicity, immigration status, geographic location or ability. Affordable could mean no more than 10% of gross income, or no family earning less than 150% of state SMI pays more than 7% of gross income.
- **High-Quality.** A high-quality child care system will support children's learning and development, have an appropriately compensated and skilled workforce, an effective and streamlined professional development infrastructure, and clear, consistent accountability standards and procedures that make the quality of all providers universally clear and transparent to parents and families. The accountability standards must be responsive to the pluralistic needs of this diverse sector of professionals, as well as the modalities and communities that they serve.
- **Coordinated.** A high-quality child care system will be part of a data-driven, coordinated early care & learning system with consistent, responsive standards, requirements, assessments, monitoring, etc.

- **Supportive and Nimble.** A high-quality child care system is innovative, nimble and future-thinking. It is both supported by and supportive of businesses in the community. The system is ingrained in the community and supports the regional workforce as well as child care workers, especially in the face of changing technology and evolving workplace norms. A high quality child care system will increase the labor participation rate of parents with young children, reduce turnover, absenteeism and productivity losses, and boost New York State's economic development.