



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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### **TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS SIGNS PACKAGE OF SEVEN CHILD CARE BILLS**

**Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright, Strategic Initiatives:** All right. Good morning everyone. Good morning. It is such an honor and a privilege to be with Union Settlement again, one of the city's greatest partners and providers in so, so many ways and good to be here again. We were here back in June to announce our child care blueprint and we are happy to be back here again with some of our most important constituents. I know they just had lunch and nap time is right ahead of us, so I want to make sure that they are good.

There is an old saying that it does take a village to raise a child, and it really takes the whole city, with new and innovative vision, in order to meet the needs not only of our young people, but parents and families. We know how important child care and quality, early access to early education is to the city overall, not just the families. So we are very, very proud and thrilled that the City Council has worked so hard to produce this set of bills to help continue to move us in the direction that we need to go.

I want to thank the City Council and the bill sponsors, Council Member Hudson, Council Member Menin, who have led this effort, and Council Member Gutiérrez. Three powerful strong women who are putting working families first. I also want to thank Public Advocate Williams for his support of these bills and for being the important ally that he is. I want to introduce and thank our next speaker who put this as a major priority for the Adams administration, Mayor Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thanks so much deputy mayor. I want to thank, again, just want to acknowledge this great institution. Union Settlement has really helped settle the fears of so many people when it comes down to not only child care issues, but how do we continue to uplift working families. As the deputy mayor mentioned, we were here when we launched our child care blueprint and now we are building on the historic promises that were made as we continue to look at how to deal with child care in our city and state. We're really pleased to know that we're going to continue to have a partner in Governor Hochul who assisted us in putting hundreds of millions of dollars into the child care initiative that we brought to Albany during the last legislative cycle. Today I'm signing seven child care bills that provide support for working parents and mothers. That's an interesting little chair there. (Laughter.)

We're looking forward to signing these bills and really want to thank the sponsors, including the powerful women. Councilwoman Menin has just continued to just be forward-thinking on many of these problems that we're facing as a city. Jumaane Williams, I like to say that we are part of the "Men who gets it club." We believe that the issue of child care should be advocated not only by moms, but as dads also. And as you see Jumaane moving throughout the city, the public advocate, he's often with his newborn to show that he's very much involved in the life of his child. No parent leaves home without their phone, their keys, and knowing that their child has a proper place and wellbeing.

COVID-19 really decimated families. Far too many had to make some strong and challenging decisions. 375,000 parents quit or downshifted their jobs because they had no other way to take care of their children. They have lost wages and child care in the process, and we understand that and we are focused on right-sizing to get this right. Struggling to balance child care and the needs of providing for a family is something that no parent should have to go through. It shouldn't be hard to raise a family in our city and we know it holds back opportunities in general for families, but specifically for women. The studies are clear that without adequate child care, far too often women are left home to provide for their families and it impacts their careers, and it impacts their ability to be upwardly mobile as they continue to move throughout their profession.

When I announced our child care blueprint, I said that we are going to tackle our child care issue head-on and we need to do it with partners. And that's what these City Council persons have done to continue to assist us in making it happen. These seven bills will seek to support families and make child care more affordable for all New Yorkers. These bills create a Marshall Plan for families and a child care taskforce to study how we can make child care more affordable and accessible in this city. They enhance the directory of child care programs across New York City and support the work we are doing to create a portal. When we took office, Deputy Mayor Wright and the Department of Education, we looked at the entire process. It was just too cumbersome. You should not have to obtain a PhD just to understand how to get child care for your child. It was too cumbersome. It was unbelievable how technology was left out of the process. And I think parents are going to be really pleased with the product that our chief technology officer is creating to really make it less cumbersome and easy to know what is in your community, what's available, and what is the definition and qualification for all of the programs that you can participate in.

We're going to also establish a three year child care grant pilot program by July 1st, 2023 to strengthen support for providers. We have the backs of our parents. We know how significant it is. And again, we want to thank all of our Council members in general, but specifically those who have continuously been a partner to this administration. Councilwoman Menin, we thank you. So often we have joined each other to roll out better ways of running our city.

The seven bills, Intro. 477, a local law in relation to establishing a child care taskforce. Intro. 485, which is one of Councilwoman Menin's bills, a local law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to electronic child care directory. Intro. 486, another bill by Councilwoman Menin, a local law to amend the New York City Charter in relation to establishing a child care advisory board. Intro. 487, another Menin bill, a local law to amend the

administrative code of the City of New York in relation to establishing a child care subsidy information portal. Intros. 488 and 89, both Menin bills, one of them is a local law to amend the administrative code of the city in relation to establishing a child care program fund and 489, a local law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to a child care certification program. Finally, Intro. 242, Gutiérrez, Council person, a local law in relation to the establishment of a Marshall Plan for moms task force to develop and issue recommendations on how to support working mothers and caregivers, particularly in light of the issues they have become more acute due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A series of bills that are matching the actions from City Hall. This is the type of partnership that makes sure the village that the deputy mayor talks about becomes a reality, and the child care for our children and families is something that we can all be proud of in this city. Thank you very much for all that have been participating. Thank you, Deputy Mayor.

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Next up is Councilwoman Julie Menin, who has been such a leader in this effort and we're so grateful for that leadership.

**Council Member Julie Menin:** Thank you so much. First of all, I really want to thank the mayor for his leadership, for his partnership. He campaigned on this issue of child care and now we are putting this into reality. I also want to thank the deputy mayor. We've known each other a very, very long time. We had conversations about the importance of child care dating back many, many years ago, so I want to thank them both.

This is really a historic moment. We know that parents are spending on average over \$18,000 a year on child care. It's absolutely unaffordable for the vast majority of parents. We know that over 375,000 parents last year had to either leave their job or were downsized from their job because they could not afford child care. That actually costs the city over \$2.2 billion in lost economic revenue and we're really changing that today.

My five bills, as the mayor said, do a number of different things. The first bill creates a permanent advisory board that is charged with implementing universal child care within the next five years. Two other bills of mine provide a database, an electronic database, that lists every single child care provider. Another provides a subsidy portal. Another provides information to build more child care centers based on the state's tax abatement, and the last one provides grants to struggling providers because unfortunately, we have lost over 1,400 providers in recent years.

I also want to congratulate my colleagues who are not here today. Council Member Crystal Hudson, Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez on their respective bills and I also want to thank my friend Jennifer Geiling, who is CEO of Universal Settlement where we're here right now. And you all are doing such great work. It's a historic moment. I'm thrilled to be here and as a working mom of four kids, I can't tell you how much this personally means to me. So thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you Julie. That's a lot of kids. I have four too, so I know. Thank you so much. I also want to acknowledge Commissioner Jess Dannhauser from ACS who is here and really congratulate them for clearing a significant backlog of 35,000 vouchers that had been

there for years. They're cleared and that's been wonderful... Yes. (Applause.) Also, Deputy Chancellor Kara Ahmed for her leadership in the work that she does at the New York City public schools. Next up is the leader of this great institution, Jennifer Geiling.

**Jennifer Geiling, CEO, Union Settlement:** Thank you. Good afternoon. I've only got three kids, but with three, I can definitely appreciate the need for a village and the significance of today. I want to thank you. Thank all of you. I want to welcome everybody here to Union Settlement, to East Harlem. It's our absolute honor to host you, Mayor Adams. Deputy Mayor Wright, Council Member Menin, Commissioner Dannhauser, Deputy Chancellor Ahmed, our other distinguished guests, and our partners here in East Harlem.

Union Settlement was founded in 1895. We have served as an anchor for East Harlem for nearly 130 years. Established by our community, for our community, Union Settlement is an unwavering beacon of hope, a source of strength, and a pathway for greater opportunity, firmly grounded here in East Harlem. We serve more than 10,000 residents each year, through nearly 30 locations, offering dozens of programs from early childhood education, senior centers, after school and summer youth services, to adult education. We have a mental health clinic and we support local economic development.

Core to our programming and to our mission is our expansive early child care program. With six sites across East Harlem, hundreds of children in our classrooms, a multi-generational approach to supporting families, a family child care network, and Manhattan's first family enrichment center, Union Settlement is committed to working with our community and our partners in achieving strong child outcomes, cultivating school readiness and supporting the careers, dreams and success of all our East Harlem families. We applaud you, Mayor Adams, and the City Council for increasing availability and access to child care and education, putting young children and families on the road to greater opportunities and a lifetime of success. It is our distinct and true honor, and great privilege, to host today's bill signing and serve as a partner with the City of New York. Thank you.

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