

# Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Remarks Celebrating Albany Funding Childcare

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**Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright, Strategic Initiatives:** Good morning, everyone. My name is Sheena Wright. I am the deputy mayor for strategic initiatives, and we're so excited and happy to today really be talking about a historic expansion of childcare opportunities. Just a few weeks ago, we were at the Kuei Luck Childcare Center, where we were advocating vigorously for Albany to deliver. We know how important quality, accessible, affordable childcare is. To get our city back, to provide learning opportunities for our children, it is crucial for our economy and our communities. And so we're excited to be back today to talk about the historic legislation that has been passed in the budget by the state. So together, we are going to walk through a little bit of where we are, and lift up progress that has been made. And first, I'm going to turn it over to Mayor Eric Adams to talk about this really important progress that has been made.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you. Thank you so much, deputy mayor, and really want to thank an assemblywoman who we will be hearing from in a moment. Assemblywoman Zinerman, you had the vision. You understood this. You are a staunch advocate in Albany on how important this issue is, childcare. We talked about it over and over again. It is one of the greatest inhibitors to families, particularly women, from getting back into the workforce, and it has been a burden for far too long. And we ended in an ambitious call to actually get the dollars that we need. And today, when is a promise made and a promise kept. And I cannot thank Albany enough. This is a victory for families and children throughout the entire state in general, but specifically here in the City of New York.

**Mayor Adams:** A few weeks ago, I talked to New Yorkers and said that we are going to partner with our electeds in Albany, and move this important agenda forward. And this is what we did. We got it done, and kudos to the Assembly and the Senators who really understood the importance of this and moved this forward. The state has acted, and committed \$4 billion in funding for New York City childcare over the next four years.

That is an amazing lift, and really it just shows that the lawmakers heard us, and they responded accordingly.

**Mayor Adams:** And we have also secured authorization for our tax incentives that will spur the private sector in creating 17,000 new childcare slots. When we look at the vacant retail space and other vacant spaces that could be utilized, this is a real win, a real partnership to look at a need of filling spaces, and the need of childcare, one solution to solve a multitude of problems that New Yorkers are facing.

**Mayor Adams:** And again, I want to thank Governor Hochul, and the leaders in both the Senate and the Assembly, and the members of both the Senate and Assembly for moving this forward. We could not ask for the help greater than what you have given us. Again, especially a shout out also to Assemblyman Hevesi, for helping us get this done. And I want to thank them for expanding the affordability for families, getting relief to families who are struggling to find appropriate childcare, and during this time of COVID-19, these families were hit hard, and working families were hit even harder. They have lost wages, and many of the children and the childcare that comes with it, their children were not able to get the adequate childcare, and the affordability has been a real issue.

**Mayor Adams:** And we're hearing it all over the city and all over the state. Families are balancing between the need of childcare and family members staying home to provide good, adequate childcare, and childcare is more than just sitting in front of a TV, and not having that real beginning phase of learning and developing the mind of children. And that is why this is such an important announcement, because it's part of our theater to give children what they need as they start out with their educational experiences, something that the chancellor talks about all the time.

**Mayor Adams:** Raising a family in New York City should not be hard. And it has continuously, it has been hard for so many people, and we are trying, and we will make things easier for families. Expanding access to high quality childcare is a way to do so. Nothing holds back opportunities more than not having access to good, solid childcare and employment. And I know this story too well, watching my mother having to balance two jobs while raising my five siblings and me, and how difficult it was. So this is something that's generational, was in the making, that needed to be corrected, and that is what we are doing. Mothers and parents are forced to make these unfair choices, and we are making life easier for them. And I cannot thank our partners enough. We're

changing that today by moving in the right direction, ensuring access and affordable childcare for children and families in the city.

**Mayor Adams:** So thanks to the entire team. I'm sure the chancellor's happy that we're getting this done, but I cannot say enough for my partners in Albany that they decided to take this up. People thought it was not possible, but we knew it was possible. So again, thank you so much, and congratulations to all who played a vital role in getting this done. Thank you. Thank you, deputy mayor.

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much, Mayor Adams, and it's so appropriate to be having this conversation on the day when all the children are home, at the beginning of the break. So everyone is really acutely appreciating the need for quality, affordable, accessible childcare. I'm going to turn now to Chancellor Banks to give a few words.

**Chancellor Banks:** Thank you so much. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and Deputy Mayor Wright. I'm happy that I'm also joined this day by Deputy Chancellor Ahmed. Thank you all for being here this morning. This is a great, great day, and I'm thrilled to be a part of this announcement that the mayor's making this morning.

**Chancellor Banks:** You know, when the mayor appointed me chancellor, we vowed to transform the lives of New York City's children, particularly our Black and brown children, who are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. And today we are bridging this gap, and celebrating a truly historic win, \$7 billion in state funding across the state, of which New York City is receiving \$4 billion, for childcare over the next four years.

**Chancellor Banks:** It is critically important that we provide young children with critical literacy and language supports, not just in three-K and pre-K, but beginning at birth. We know that the first three years of a child's life have a profound impact on their future learning, and can change the trajectory of their growth. And so it is our responsibility to provide all children and their families with access to a high-quality early childhood education, and those families are relying on us to provide rich learning and care for their child every single day.

**Chancellor Banks:** So New York stepped up, and is showing up for our families. Education is a lifelong journey, and we are committed to ensuring that children begin this journey with their best foot forward. So this major investment in our children is an

investment in the future of our great city. So thank you to everyone who helped to make this happen. Deputy Mayor Wright?

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much. And I will tell you, as the deputy mayor of strategic initiatives, Mayor Adams on day one charged all of his administration to work collectively and collaboratively to figure out, "How do we dramatically increase opportunity?" So since day one, the DOE, ACS, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Social Services, Department of Buildings, have been working on a big plan, a master plan to really increase these opportunities. And this is fuel in the tank for that plan, so we're very excited about that. And we'd like to introduce Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman, a key champion in making sure that plan can be executed here in New York City.

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much. So much. And next, we are going to hear from the people on the ground who make it happen. Kevin, the owner of Kuei Luck Childcare Center, a historic program that has served families for years and years. We'd love to hear from you about what this means.

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much. And would love to invite mom, Agnes Cha, and her husband, Joseb Gim, to talk a little bit about what this means for parents who are working hard to provide care for their children, as well as contribute to the community.

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you.

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you. I think now we are going to... Are we going to take a few questions.

[Crosstalk]

**Question:** Okay. So my question is, today's tax day. I mean, it's Good Friday too, but are you planning to put out your tax returns this year in a show of openness? And I'm just curious if that's in the works, or if that's something you're thinking of doing. I know this came up on the campaign trail last year.

**Mayor Adams:** I will comply with whatever rules are in place. We do a disclosure, also. I think that's sometime in May. So whatever rules are in place so we show transparency for those who are in public office, I'm going to comply 100 percent.

**Question:** Good morning. I wanted to ask, in the wake of the shooting, you've talked about piloting this new technology. You also doubled the number of police officers at subway stations. Is this going to mean that you'll need to increase the NYPD budget, given these additional investments that you're talking about?

**Mayor Adams:** No. Not at all. And the doubling was on the day of the incident. We held the day tour, which is the early morning tour, and we had the afternoon tour stay with them to complement the day tour. We did that the day of the shooting. Our goal was to make sure we secured the system while the gunman was still at large. We are not increasing the budget based on the technology that we're looking to put in place, and based on how we're going to deploy our officers. I always stated that the goal is to deploy the officers more efficiently. That is what we are committed to doing.

[Crosstalk]

**Question:** My question is about how you're feeling, whether or not you expect to leave isolation or quarantine tomorrow, and if your team has done any contract tracing that's shown that you potentially have that there's any more cases related to how you got COVID within City Hall, or the administration?

**Mayor Adams:** I feel fine. I'm going to adhere strictly to the CDC guidelines and the doctors. They gave me very clear instructions, and I'm going to adhere to that. City Hall, of my understanding, we did not do contact tracing. H&H did. We could reach out to Dr. Katz to find out.

**Question:** Hi. So I had a question about the subway shooting. So Frank James was in public, eating at the Chinatown restaurant Dimes. He was walking around the city. He

was spotted by a 17-year-old who posted a photo on Twitter around 10:30 that morning. So we were curious, were the police getting credible tips about him throughout the day on Tuesday and Wednesday? And what would it have taken to have caught him sooner?

**Mayor Adams:** I think the police did an amazing job in a city of 8.8 million people, with all the square mileage here, and the different locations, and different ways of moving around. You look at some of these investigation of acts of terror like this, it takes days for the person to be apprehended. Even the Boston bomber, I believe it took three days to do so. I take my hat off to the good old fashioned, wearing out shoe leather, putting the pieces together. This was an amazing job by the New York City Police Department, the FBI, ATF, all of our law enforcement on the state, city, and federal level. So to append a person like this and close that net, to get that picture up right away, to give the profile, be able to piece together the pieces, this is commendable.

**Mayor Adams:** And so you want to catch a person before they commit an act, ideally, and you want to catch them while they're committing an act, but the best out of the scenario is to catch them immediately after. And the police department did an excellent job. And someone can always reflect and say, "Should they have caught him on the 29th hour, or the 28th hour, the 27th hour?" That always happens. They did a great job, and I take my hat off to the men and women who conducted a thorough investigation and brought him to justice.

**Question:** So I wanted to ask you about some mental health initiatives in the light of the subway shooting. I spoke to a bunch of health professionals, and they had some questions around what can be done for somebody like Mr. James, who had multiple interactions with mental health professionals over the past couple of decades. It seems like this is somebody who had access to mental health care, but it seemingly didn't help prevent Tuesday's horrific attack. So I was wondering if there's any mental health issues that you're looking at that are more top of mind in terms of responding to this incident, and then also responding to the trauma of New Yorkers who, anecdotally, I'm hearing people are still afraid to take the subway.

**Mayor Adams:** Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom is going to convene a conversation with some of our mental health professionals, and we want to sit down and use this as a case study. What could we be doing differently? How do we continue to do the work that we are doing already? And as you know, Dr. Vasan, who we brought on, he was a part

of an organization called Fountain House. This was why I specifically wanted him to be part of the team, because mental health issues is a real issue that we are facing not only post-COVID-19 outbreak, but pre-COVID-19. We're looking at the attempted suicide rates are increasing. We're looking at people who are stating that they're dealing with mental health issues right now. And so we have to get it right.

**Mayor Adams:** This is generational, in the making, a broken system, but we need help also on the state level and on the federal level. We need more mental health beds, psychiatric beds. I stood with NYSA throughout the campaign, talking about, "How do we get more beds online?" And we have to really have all hands on deck in dealing with mental health issues that people are facing throughout the entire city.

**Mayor Adams:** But there's something else that I talk about that many people, particularly on social media, is refusing to acknowledge. How often are we allowing social media platforms to be used as festering the hot timbers of mental health issues that we are facing in our city? Social media must step up and play a better role in not continuing to allow this to fester, and using it as a platform to continue to fester some of the anger that we witness in this incident of the shooting. And so we are going to be sitting down, speaking with social media industries, and tell them they must play a better role in policing their sites.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I've got two unrelated questions, if you'll indulge me. The first is, Mike asked if you would release your taxes, but I didn't hear a hard yes or no. Mayor de Blasio released his taxes every year. Can we get a firm commitment from you that you'll do the same? And then I have a question on the subways.

**Mayor Adams:** No. You can't. What's your second question?

**Question:** All right. The second question on the subways is, the subway shooter, Frank James, was apparently out and about on the town. He apparently went and got some food at Dimes, and then went to Katz's for lunch, while the entire city was looking for him. I mean, what should we read into that?

**Mayor Adams:** Again, I think I answered that question, and I laid it out as sterile as possible. NYPD did a great job. Sometimes people walk past us in the streets that we don't know that they're wanted for a crime. So I think we put the photo out. When someone identified him, they reached out to us. Listen, I thank you, New York. Those

who identified him, they did the right thing. People walk past us every day, particularly with a face mask on, or particularly at one time, one of the photos, he looked slimmer at the time. I was surprised that he wasn't as slim as the photo indicated. And so NYPD, New Yorkers, they all did the right thing, and bringing a person to justice in 30 hours after they discharged 33 rounds of ammunition, that is commendable for our law enforcement agencies. People who commit crimes are often in plain sight until people identify and make the connection. And that's what New Yorkers did, and I cannot thank New Yorkers enough for how we all rallied together around this.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you. Take care.