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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION REFORMS TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF PROVIDERS, ENSURE SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

New reforms to reduce costs for parents, increase compensation for City's early care workforce

NEW YORK—The de Blasio Administration today announced a set of reforms in support of *EarlyLearn* programs throughout New York City based on recommendations of the New York City Early Care and Education Task Force. These reforms – which will impact all 362 center-based *EarlyLearn* programs serving over 36,000 children – will improve the financial stability of providers, make services more affordable, better compensate the workforce, and increase funds for repairs and technical assistance in order to ensure safe and healthy learning environments.

The Early Care and Education Task Force was convened by Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli and ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión in October 2014, and includes 44 key early care and education stakeholders, including government agencies, advocates, providers and child care consumers who developed recommendations to enhance the City's Early Care and Education delivery system. Among the eight recommendations are the cultivation and compensation of a high-quality ECE workforce and increasing financial stability of *EarlyLearn* providers, both of which are addressed by the reforms announced today:

- **ACS will offer a more flexible funding structure to better meet actual costs of providing high quality programs.** Providers will be reimbursed on actual expenses, which will recognize certain fixed costs, and ease the financial burden brought on by provider contribution requirement, which had been initiated under the previous Administration.
- **ACS will assist parents with fees to make services more accessible.** ACS will reduce the fee paid by low-income parents whose children receive part-time care in *EarlyLearn* settings. These funds will provide relief to over 5,400 families who pay a part-time fee and make care accessible to additional families.
- **ACS will be able to better compensate the Early Care and Education workforce.** The City's Executive 2016 budget includes a 2.5 percent Cost of Living adjustment and a new \$11.50 minimum wage for the staff of the City's human services providers, including *EarlyLearn* staff.
- **ACS will ensure safe and healthy learning environments.** ACS will spend over \$7.4 million over the next two years to add 63 positions that will bolster its oversight, as well as improve its ability to ensure safe facilities. Over half of the positions will provide support and technical assistance to programs, and the remainder are trade staff who will implement necessary repairs and renovations.

The ACS Division of Early Care and Education at ACS administers one of the largest publicly-funded childcare systems in the country serving almost 100,000 infants, toddlers, pre-school and school-aged children annually.

ACS provides services through contracted care and vouchers to enhance child development and assist low-income working families, public assistance recipients who are employed or engaged in work activities, and families receiving child welfare services.

Read all of the Early Care and Education Task Force Recommendations [here](#):

“We’ve made early education the centerpiece of our vision for a more fair and equal city, and with today’s reforms we’re putting these critical programs on a truly sustainable pathway for the future – ensuring that our providers, child care workers, and parents will have the peace of mind that the children served by these programs will have the right start in education they deserve,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“We are proud to be a part of these very important reforms that offer the necessary financial stability for our providers, affordability for our families, and ensures the essential quality we need throughout our *EarlyLearn* system,” said **ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión**. “Not only are we educating our youngest citizens, but we are providing critical services to families that will support the well-being of all our children, enabling them to realize their full potential in school and beyond.”

“I strongly believe the de Blasio administration is fully committed to the long term stability and success of early childhood education in New York City, and these reforms illustrate that commitment. I applaud the administration’s dedication to ensuring that our children have a safe, affordable, and high-quality educational setting during their most formative years,” said **Council Member Steve Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee**.

“The Administration’s decision to reimburse child care programs based on actual expenses should be applauded. When added to other proposals to improve monitoring and technical assistance, address physical plant needs, reduce parent fees and provide child care workers with a cost of living increase, this reform sets the foundation for a more stable, higher quality child care system,” said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children**.

“By providing more flexible funding to better meet the actual costs of providing high-quality early care and education programs, the Administration has taken a significant step toward stabilizing and strengthening New York City’s early childhood education system. We applaud these reforms, which will immediately begin to benefit the youngest New Yorkers and their families, and look forward to working with the City to effectively implement them,” said the **Campaign for Children**.

Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, said, “These critically important improvements in child care will help stabilize the early childhood provider community and ensure the quality 0-5 system we all desire and need. We applaud the Mayor and his administration for their demonstrable commitment to the human services community, and for assuring that its workers are better compensated through a much needed cost of living adjustment and increased wage floor.”

“The de Blasio administration has taken an important and much needed step to protect the financial stability of the city’s Early Learn programs,” said **Nancy Kolben, Executive Director Center for Children’s Initiatives**. “CCI knows from our work with parents and with early childhood professionals that these programs are an anchor for children and families in communities across the city. They offer children access to quality early learning promoting school readiness. They are a vital resource to families – supporting parents to work and raise a family and to know their children are thriving. The city must continue to recognize and value the work done every day by the early childhood workforce who provide the cornerstone to meeting these important goals.”

“The plans presented by the Mayor reflect the Administration’s strong commitment to the education and development of children between the ages of six weeks to three years,” said **Michael Zisser, CEO of University Settlement**. “We are all looking forward to working with the Administration in strengthening and expanding the Early Care and Education system to meet the needs of all of New York City’s children. This has been a constructive and positive process, uniting the interests of the Administration, the non-profit providers

and advocates for children. The recommendations of the Task Force reaffirm that we have worked closely together to provide a roadmap for on-going planning of the early childhood system.”

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