

Campaign for Children

Honorable Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We write to you as advocates for early childhood education and as leaders of programs working under contract with the Administration for Children's Services. We were heartened to see that the New York City Early Care and Education Task Force that former Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli convened called for a plan to address compensation across all early childhood settings receiving public funding. We were also encouraged and thank you for your support of the non-profit workforce through important reforms such as the Cost of Living Adjustment, the wage floor, and the signing and retention bonuses for Pre-K teachers in community settings.

However, as a community of providers and advocates, we continue to be deeply concerned about the lack of progress made in addressing compensation for the educators and support staff in EarlyLearn programs. Disparities between similarly qualified teachers and support staff in EarlyLearn and Pre-Kindergarten programs have grown, and left unchecked will continue to exacerbate the inequities and hardships faced by thousands of low-paid early childhood education employees – as evidenced by the steady flow of certified teachers out of EarlyLearn NYC programs.

We urge you to take immediate action to achieve salary parity for the early childhood workforce. As you know, the early childhood educators in community based programs are paid significantly less than their counterparts in the Department of Education. In addition, equally credentialed educators teaching children younger than four years old earn even less than their colleagues in classrooms for four-year-olds. The impact of the salary differentials on staff is staggering, and affects the ability of providers to maintain quality staff and programs for the children and families we serve, who deserve no less than our best.

The inequalities in compensation often mean the difference between living in poverty or not, and many staff in EarlyLearn programs depend on food stamps, Medicaid and other government programs to fill the gaps caused by inadequate wages. Assistant teachers and other support staff currently work for significantly lower wages than the \$15 per hour guidelines established for the fast food industry. We ask that your Administration immediately move forward to ensure adequate and fair compensation comprehensively throughout the early childhood education system, including for those staff serving children younger than four years old.

Your administration made meaningful progress settling the vast majority of the expired labor contracts you inherited on taking office. However, unionized staff in EarlyLearn programs are currently working without a contract and have not had a contract with a pay increase since 2006. We believe that a simple step to address this issue would be to direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Labor Relations (OLR) to immediately proceed with negotiations and to work with both management and labor to adequately fund a contract for EarlyLearn staff.

Community based providers currently operate the majority of the city's programs and want to continue to be part of the city's vision to establish high-quality early childhood education. We stand committed to providing quality programs to ensure that our children have the necessary foundation to become thriving adults. However, salary parity for the early childhood workforce stands in the way of our ability to deliver the services that are critical for New York City's children and families.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this issue and look forward to hearing from you.

Cc:

Anthony Shorris, First Deputy Mayor
Richard Buery, Deputy Mayor
Gladys Carrion, Commissioner, Administration for Children's Services
Lorelei Vargas, Deputy Commissioner, Early Care & Education
Dean Fuleihan, Director, Office of Management & Budget
Robert Linn, Commissioner, Office of Labor Relations

Signed,

1332 Fulton Avenue Day Care Center
Advocates for Children
Alpha Kappa Alpha Day Care Center
Arab-American Family Support Center
Atled, Inc.
Bank Street Head Start/Bank Street College of Education
BDC Early Childhood Services
Bellevue Day Care Center
Bethel Mission Station Church, Inc.
Billy Martin Child Development Center
Blanch Community Progress
Blondell Joyner Early Learn Center
Broadway Housing Communities
Bronxdale Tenants League
BronxWorks
Brooklyn Kindergarten Society
The Campaign for Children
Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens
Children's Aid Society
Children's Defense Fund

Chinese-American Planning Council
Clifford Glover Day Care Center
Citizens Care Day Care Center
Citizens' Committee for Children
Claremont Neighborhood Centers
Coalition of Asian-American Children and Families
Colony South Brooklyn Houses
Cypress Hills Child Care Center
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
Day Care Council of New York
East Calvary Day Care
East Harlem Block Nursery
East Side House Settlement
Escuela Hispana Early Learn Center
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
Flatbush Development Corp
Friends of Crown Heights Education Centers
Goddard Riverside Community Center
Graham Child Care Center
Grand Street Settlement
Greater Ridgewood Youth Council
Hamilton - Madison House
Harlem RBI
Hartley House
Henry Street Settlement
Highbridge Advisory Council Family Services
Hudson Guild
Human Services Council
I Have a Dream Foundation of New York Metro
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House
Labor Bathgate Community Child Care
La Peninsula Community Organization
Labor and Industry for Education (LIFE)
Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center
Lucille Rose Day Care Center
Mabel Barrett Fitzgerald Daycare
Magical Years Early Childhood Center
Marc Academy and Family Center
Martin Luther King Jr. Day Care Center
Neighborhood Family Services Council
New Life Child Development Center
Nicholas Cardell Day Care Center
North Bronx NCNW Child Development Center
Northeast Bronx Day Care Center
Northern Manhattan Improvement
Nuestros Ninos Child Development School
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. Nu Omicron Chapter Early Childhood Education Ctr.
Open Door Child Care Center
Police Athletic League
Prince Hall Day Care
Promesa Head Start

Rena Child Care Center
Rockaway Artists Alliance
Rockaway Child Care Center
SCAN-New York
SCO Family of Services
Seaman's Society for Children's Services
Sharon Baptist Head Start
Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services
Shirley Chisholm Day Care Center
Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers
St. John's Place Family Center Day Care Corporation
St. Nick's Alliance
Strong Place Day Care Center
Sunnyside Community Services
Sunset Bay Community Services
The Child Center of NY
Tolentine Zeiser Early Learn Program
Tremont Crotona Day Care Center
Tremont Monterey Day Care Center
Union Settlement Association
United Federation of Black Community Organizations
United Activities Unlimited
United Community Day Care Center
United Neighborhood Houses
UJA-Federation of New York
University Settlement Society of New York
Urban Strategies
Utopia Children's Center
Washington Heights Child Care Center
Westchester Tremont Day Care Center
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation
Williamsbridge NAACP Early Childhood Education Center
Yeshiva Tifereth Moshe Day Care Center
YMCA of Greater New York
YWCA of the City of New York
Zion Day Care Center