



Campaign for Children Statement on CBOs in the New School Year

NEW YORK – October 7, 2020 – In response to the start of the new school year as well as the news of recent isolated school closures, the Campaign for Children released the following statement: “The Campaign for Children calls on the Mayor and administration to prioritize the city’s youth, their families and the workforce that provide vital public services in the recovery process. Without this prioritization, the youth development sector will become destabilized creating unnecessary setbacks that could last years, if not decades, for the City to fully recover from this pandemic. During the pandemic, community based organizations (CBOs) have more than proven their value and expertise in crisis intervention. These CBOs are trusted, sought out, and valued by the communities they serve. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout the summer, CBOs in the youth development sector quickly pivoted to provide remote and socially-distant services to support children and families. Providers quickly went into action to stabilize the educational continuum that students and families rely on for services such as – school enrichment programs, academic help, arts and crafts, health and mental health services, and food for those suffering from food insecurity. The administration’s lack of planning and preparation has shown itself in the staggered start to the school year, with no apparent contingency planning for a systemwide or isolated school closures process. Furthermore the lack of support and guidance that the youth services sector is still experiencing will be exacerbated by threat of potential additional budget cuts in the fall.

To date, afterschool providers, which served over 220,000 children last school year, are running the majority of the city’s Learning Bridges programs. However, they have received conflicting guidance between city and state agencies and the Mayor’s mandates, and the guidance received lacks standardization, which makes implementation, staffing, and budgeting very challenging. With the recent news of limited school closures, CBOs will again be tasked with caring for children and ensuring families have the wide range of supports they need. The current situation make all the more evident that the Administration repeatedly fails to include CBOs in the planning process – to ensure support for students and families as school reopen, close and as families juggle with ever changing schedules and remote and in person instructional needs.

These providers serve many of the same communities that have been hit hardest by the pandemic, and their programs have always been vital to the academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being of youth. Service providers must be intimately involved in planning for and development and delivery of services during the new school year to ensure the entire educational system and its wraparound programs are safe, effective and supportive. In order to continue providing in-person, blended, and full remote services, the City and State must figure out how to work together and commit to agile funding models to support these providers, who are and who have been the City’s safety net throughout the pandemic.”

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About the Campaign for Children

The Campaign for Children is a coalition of 150 early childhood education and after-school advocacy and provider organizations, including Citizens’ Committee for Children, Children’s Aid, United Neighborhood Houses, Good Shepherd Services, FPWA, the Day Care Council of New York, UJA-Federation of New York, and the YMCA of Greater New York.