

First Year Priorities for the Next Administration



The Campaign for Children (C4C) was formed in 2011 and represents more than 150 organizations including advocates, early care and education, and after-school and summer camp providers. In April 2021, C4C issued [a policy platform](#) that outlined the actions needed by incoming City leaders to build a holistic system of early childhood education and youth services. This document identifies first year priorities for the next administration.

1. Address Child Care Needs to Lay Foundation for a Universal Birth-to-Five System

New Yorkers cannot return to work without available year-round full-day child care options that help children achieve developmental milestones to become school-ready. The City lacks adequate affordable care options for children under the age of three and extended day, year-round programs for three- and four-year-olds. The incoming administration should direct the Department of Education (DOE) to build on current family and center-based child care contracts and add new infant/toddler seats and convert a significant share of 3-K and Pre-K seats to extended day/extended year. In addition, it is crucial to work with the Administration for Children's Services and the Human Resources Administration to increase access to child care vouchers and address the backlog of families on the voucher waitlist. To assist families and improve efficiency, the DOE should decentralize its approach to enrollment and permit early childhood providers to enroll families into their own programs. To further support young child development and address special needs, the new administration should create a coordinated approach to developmental and behavioral health supports and fund these supports in contracts.

2. Make Building Block Investments to achieve Universal Year-Round Youth Programming

Students need programs to keep them safe, healthy, and engaged during out of school time hours. After school and summer programming must be expanded to make these services accessible for all families who need them. Although Summer Rising marked a major expansion of summer camp, the budget has failed to baseline necessary funding for 34,000 summer camp slots for middle school students. Additionally, after-school programs during the school year do not reach enough elementary students to meet current demand. Expansion now is timely as youth service providers await a new Request for Proposal from the Department of Youth and Community Development for elementary and middle school programs. To build the foundation of a universal year-round youth-serving system, the new administration should immediately baseline funding for summer middle school programs and expand year-round programs for elementary school students.

3. Stabilize the Human Services Workforce

The incoming administration must take immediate action to stabilize the child care and youth services workforce. First, unions representing child care providers must renegotiate their contracts with the City to build on previous commitments to address comprehensive parity that covers starting salaries, benefits, and longevity increases. In addition, parity must be extended to cover staff left out of the original 2019 agreement: Community Based Organization (CBO) preschool special educators, support staff, and community-based directors. Second, afterschool and summer youth programming rates must reflect the true cost of program operations and ensure properly compensated staff. Third, the administration must address the current Department of Health & Mental Hygiene clearance backlog affecting child care and youth service staff by adding targeted resources and staff to expedite the clearance process.

4. Reinstate the Children's Cabinet and Engage CBOs in Cross-sector Planning

The next Mayor should reinstate the Children's Cabinet and empower it with authority to coordinate collaboration and information-sharing across child and youth-serving agencies, inform the development of new policy initiatives, and - should a crisis on the magnitude of COVID-19 arise again - better prepare agencies and CBOs to respond quickly. The Cabinet should meet regularly and include the expertise of early childhood and youth services leaders, CBO providers, and advocates. Lastly, the next mayor should begin the process of integrating data systems that help to analyze and respond to child, youth, and family needs over time, including but not limited to integrating data on young child health, early childhood care and education, K-12 education, afterschool and summer services.