

# Winning Beginning NY

*an early care and education coalition*

October 5, 2009

Governor David Paterson  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

RE: Flexible Fund for Family Services

Dear Governor Paterson:

On behalf of *Winning Beginning NY*, the state's early care and learning coalition, we would like to take this opportunity to offer our thoughts on child care funding in relation to the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS). Inclusion of child care funding in the FFFS has historically been an issue around the time of the release of the Executive Budget—we welcome the chance to weigh in prior to its release.

In this difficult fiscal climate, our coalition realizes that counties are burdened by costs and challenged by the need to provide a range of services. Therefore, we understand the state's rationale behind putting child care funding back in the FFFS in the past. At first glance, it appears that including child care in the FFFS allows counties flexibility. However, doing so actually forces counties to choose between funding competing children's issues—all of which are worthy.

Child care is an essential component of a working family's life. Based on our previous experience with the FFFS, placing funding in the FFFS results in an erosion of child care subsidy dollars. Without subsidy assistance, low-income families must make choices about child care services that could put their children at risk. Sometimes they are even forced to forgo employment and seek public assistance. Research documents the benefit to low-income children of high-quality child care programs, which provide a foundation for later success in school and in life. This is the setting in which, starting in infancy, many children spend more than 10 hours a day. In fact, high-quality child care provides the basis for success in pre-kindergarten. The full implementation of universal Pre-K depends on the quality of our child care services.

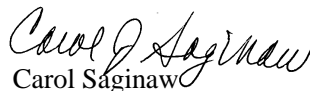
Therefore, *Winning Beginning NY* urges you not to place funding for child care in the FFFS in the 2010-2011 Executive Budget. This way, we can ensure that it is actually used for child care.

We look forward to working with you on child care and other early care and learning issues. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Karen Schimke  
President and CEO  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy



Carol Saginaw  
Executive Director  
Early Care and Learning Council



Kristen Kerr  
Executive Director  
NYS Association for the Education  
of Young Children



Nancy Kolben  
Executive Director  
Child Care, Inc.