

ACS Lists 15 Day Care Centers to Be Closed

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The NYC Administration for Children's Services has released a list of 15 day care centers to be closed as part of Mayor Bloomberg's Preliminary Financial Plan for FY2011 which begins on July 1st.

The list includes three programs in Queens, two in Manhattan and ten in Brooklyn. The centers are:

- Hammels Arverne Day Care Center (DCC), 216 Beach 87th Street, Queens;
- Originals of Jamaica DCC, 108-10 Sutphin Blvd., Queens;
- Sheldon R. Weaver DCC, 12-79 Redfern Ave., Queens;
- Puerto Rican Council, 180 Suffolk Street, Manhattan;
- Harbor Morningside Children, 311 West 120th Street, Manhattan;
- Court Street Day Care Center, 292 Court Street, Brooklyn;
- Farragut Day Care Center, 104 Gold Street, Brooklyn;
- Bethel Baptist Day Care/Strong Place, 242 Hoyt Street, Brooklyn;
- Salvation Army Fiesta, 80 Lorraine Street, Brooklyn;
- Martha Udell, 505 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn;
- Alonzo Daughtry, 1005-07 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn;
- BBCS Duffield Children's Center, 101 Fleet Place, Brooklyn;
- Bedford Ave. DCC, 40 Brevoort Place, Brooklyn;
- La Puerta Abierta CCC-PAL, 2864 West 21st Street, Brooklyn; and
- Learner's Haven, DCC, 432 Rutland Road, Brooklyn.

The closings are designed to save \$16 million on an annualized basis, with partial savings beginning during FY2011.

The targeted centers, unlike other recent day care center closings by ACS, were not selected due to low enrollments. Instead, the centers were chosen based on a combination of high space costs under leases directly paid by the City relative to the size of the program and the availability of unused day care slots in other near-by programs.

"Every one of the 750 children currently in these programs will be offered a seat in another local center," said Sharman Stein, Director of Communications at ACS. "Our primary goal was to figure out how to cut costs without cutting services."

However, the proposed closings will reduce overall system capacity by an estimated 1,165 seats at a time when there are still tens of thousands of eligible families still waiting to find subsidized child care. "This makes it more difficult for low income families to try and survive when they have to worry about where to send their children during the day when they go to work," said Andrea Anthony, Executive Director of the Day Care Council of New York. "ACS talks about gentrification in those neighborhoods, but we know there are still low-income families living there."

And, say providers, the closings will disrupt both high quality ACS centers and other programs also housed in these facilities.

“Duffield is almost fully utilized at this time,” says Alan D. Goodman, Executive Director of Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service (BBCS). “In addition to the children served by the ACS program we have a Head Start program with 47 children, a school-aged afterschool program with 40 children and an additional 90 preschoolers. The building is a beautiful site that is perfect for the needs of a day care center. You just walk in and you feel the positive energy.”

“We wonder why, in this terrible economic climate, the City cannot renegotiate these leases and get better deals,” said Betty Holcomb, Director of Public Policy for the Center for Childrens Initiatives (CCI). “These facilities are a tremendous public resource that we don’t want to lose. It will be very difficult to replace this space in the future.”