



Testimony
Child Care Crisis Public Hearing
Senate Standing Committee on Children and Families
January 26, 2023
Prevent Child Abuse NY

Members of the Senate Standing Committee on Children and Families—and Senator Brisport in particular—thank you for holding this hearing on such an important issue and for your tireless support for, and recognition of, the child care workforce.

Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) is the only private, nonprofit agency serving the entire state whose single mission is to prevent child abuse in all its forms. All of our work is centered in **prevention and strengthening families**. To us, “strengthening families” means decreasing parental stress, increasing the Protective Factors surrounding children, and increasing familial bonds to build resilience. ***Our work is rooted in a belief in families and the knowledge that, given adequate and appropriate resources, all families can thrive.***

PCANY provides three primary services in Albany and statewide: community awareness efforts (such as the Parent Helpline and Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign), training and technical assistance (we provide community-based strengthening families and child abuse prevention courses and run the New York State Parenting Education Partnership), and policy/advocacy work.

Our **policy and advocacy** work drives initiatives, at both the state and local levels, to improve systems that impact children and families. We advocate for evidence-based policy solutions that strengthen families, such as maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting; early care and education; and family economic stability. Throughout each domain of our work runs a common thread: the importance of strengthening and supporting families. This ranges from training for professionals who touch the lives of children (like teachers and law enforcement), to advocating on the state level for program funding that helps lessen stress for parents and creates positive outcomes for children.

We are members of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC) because our work includes strengthening Protective Factors, those conditions or attributes that, when present, can offset the stress of everyday life and mitigate trauma. Protective Factors serve as a buffer – so bad things don't happen to children.

According to the CDC, child care provides the following that may lessen the likelihood of abuse:

- Caregivers who create safe, positive relationships with children
- Caregivers who practice nurturing parenting skills and provide emotional support
- Caregivers who can meet basic needs of food, shelter, education, and health services

Child care covers all five of the Protective Factors:

1. Social and emotional competence of children: Providers understand and support the mental health of young children (and school-age children in the afterschool realm) and can help regulate emotions and respond appropriately to challenges. (NYS's Pyramid Model Partnership promotes the statewide use of an evidence-based framework to build social-emotional competence in early care and education programs.)
2. Knowledge of parenting and child development: Providers understand and support where children are developmentally and can help parents with what may seem like challenging behaviors.
3. Parental resilience: Programs can encourage parents to tap into their inner resources and coping skills to handle stress. They can also connect families to community resources.
4. Concrete support in times of need: For parents who work, are seeking employment, are going to school, or are in need of coverage while they run errands or take a nap between shifts, high-quality, reliable, affordable care is critically important.
5. Social connections: Not only do children form friendships in care, but their parents meet and interact with others who may have similar interests and/or challenges. Isolation is a breeding ground for abuse; programs can provide valuable relationships for children *and* adults.

You have heard from our partners in the ESCCC. We won't repeat what they've said, but simply support it. PCANY stands behind the ESCCC's three priorities:

1. Invest in the early childhood workforce and providers so they have the resources they need to serve the state's diverse families and communities
2. Help more New Yorkers access child care
3. Break down unnecessary barriers preventing the child care system from working for families and providers

Again, we thank you for your time and attention and look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.