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Teachers, Families, Community-Based Organizations, and Advocates Rally at Tweed Courthouse to Demand Salary Parity in Early Childhood Education

Unified Birth-to-Five education system not feasible without equal pay for equal work

NEW YORK – Hundreds of teachers, children, parents, community leaders, and elected officials gathered on the steps of Tweed Courthouse, the home of the Department of Education (DOE), today to urge Mayor Bill de Blasio and his administration not to adopt a new city budget without funding for salary parity between early childhood education teachers, directors, and staff at community-based schools and their DOE counterparts. The city's underfunding of early childhood education contracts forces community-based organizations (CBOs) to pay their staff far less than they would earn doing the same job at a public school. Currently, the gap in compensation between CBO early educators and DOE early educators [ranges](#) from \$15,000 to \$35,000, and disproportionately impacts women of color.

The early childhood education system in New York City is in the midst of a transition to move all contracts to DOE. DOE's Birth-to-Five and Head Start/Early Head Start requests for proposals (RFPs) for this new system will not work without additional funding for salary parity so that teachers, staff, and directors in community-based programs can receive equal pay for equal work.

In April, 70 nonprofit partners from across the early childhood education system put forward a [letter](#) demanding changes to the RFPs to ensure long-term system stability, quality programs, and salary parity. DOE recently issued an addendum to address four out of the five problem areas identified in the letter: Pay for Enrollment penalties, inefficient program structures, inadequate funding for indirect costs, and a lack of cost escalators in contracts. Salary disparities, the fifth and most severe problem, remains entirely unaddressed.

CBOs have been integral to the success of Mayor de Blasio's signature *Pre-K for All* and *3-K for All* initiatives. In fact, the [majority](#) of *Pre-K for All* seats in New York City are in community-based programs. However, these same providers struggle to recruit and retain staff because their contracts with the city prevent them from matching DOE salaries. CBOs consistently lose early childhood education staff to higher paying positions with DOE, and some providers have been forced to close classrooms or shut down their programs entirely.

Research has shown that a consistent connection between a child and an adult is essential to early childhood development. Salary disparities directly interrupt this relationship as teachers leave their positions, often suddenly.

"A strong early childhood education is paramount to the success of New York City and adequately paying early childhood educators is our top priority," said **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. "We stand with child care workers in their push for pay parity."

"No one who cares for our kids should be allowed to live in poverty. Child care workers perform quiet, but heroic work each day, and the city should be supporting their efforts – not shortchanging them. The status quo is immoral, it's a gross injustice, and it has to change. That's why I'm proud to stand alongside the Campaign for Children to demand pay

equity for our early childhood education providers once and for all. It's time we implement pay parity for these critical workers in the DOE's 2020 budget," said **New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer**.

"The UPK expansion continues to shine an important light on the high pay discrepancy between DOE and non-DOE early childhood educators - a lesson in inequity that we can ill afford to teach our children," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Equal pay for equal work will bring an end to poverty-level wages. Without fair compensation, early childhood educators cannot provide a high-quality education to New York City's youngest learners and that needs to change now."

"Sustainable, high-quality early childhood education is not possible unless the workforce is paid a fair and equitable wage," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**. "If the salary disparities in the early education workforce are not addressed community-based organizations will continue to experience an exodus of teachers and DOE's vision for a more unified birth to five system will remain in jeopardy. Mayor de Blasio and the City Council must ensure that all early educators receive equal pay for equal work in the FY2020 budget."

"Our early childhood educators are so important to our city and they deserve salary parity now," said **Council Member Mark Treyger, Chairman of the Education Committee**. "All of our early childhood educators—whether they work at a community-based organization or with the Department of Education—deserve equal pay for equal work. Pay parity is so important, and I'm proud to do everything I can to make sure all of our early childhood educators receive pay parity and get the support they need. Educators with the same job should have the same pay—it's as simple as that."

"As we fight for salary parity across our society, that same sense of fairness must apply to New York City's early childhood education teachers. Whether they work for the Department of Education or a community-based organization, early childhood teachers are performing the same vital function and are being paid with public dollars. This administration has made a tremendous effort to ensure that every young child has access to quality education precisely because it helps to eliminate social disparities later in life. In that same spirit, we can and should address teacher salary inequities now," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal (Manhattan, District 6)**.

"Early childhood educators at settlement houses and all other community-based organizations deserve equal pay for equal work," said **Susan Stampler, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses**. "Salary parity is absolutely critical to the success of the early education system. The Mayor and his administration must provide funding for salary parity now. They can't afford to get this wrong."

"There is no greater opportunity to ensure that the city's children are prepared for school success than by equitably compensating the workforce that supports and nurtures their growth," said **Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**. "As the city pulls all contracted programs under the authority of the DOE, the time is now to make salary parity a reality for all early childhood educators."

"It is disappointing that this Administration has put forth a request for proposal for a new Early Childhood Education system without the necessary funds to place CBO teachers on the same pay scale as their DOE counterparts," said **Sharon Greenberger, President & CEO of the YMCA of Greater New York**. "Here is an opportunity for the Mayor to have a positive impact and create salary parity among those who are educating our young children. We stand here today to call on the Mayor to fund his Early Childhood system so our CBO teachers can be treated like the professionals that they are."

"UJA-Federation of New York calls upon New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to include full pay parity for all early childhood education staff in the upcoming budget. The current salary inequity between community-based early childhood educators and NYC's Department of Education program staff threatens the future of UPK and the implementation of the 3K For All program. UJA thanks Speaker Johnson and the City Council for their leadership and support in proposing fair funding for all educators," said **Louisa Chafee, Senior Vice President, External Relations and Public Policy, UJA Federation of New York**.

ABOUT 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.

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