



CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES (CCR&Rs)

The workforce behind the child care workforce

Child care is essential for working parents. Without it, parents are all too often forced to choose between working or staying at home to care for their children. This has a powerful economic impact on both families and businesses, a lesson that was made starkly clear during the pandemic. Federal funds, flowing through NYS OCFS, kept many child care programs open, and it was the CCR&R network that made sure programs accessed funds. CCR&Rs delivered PPE, COVID test kits and other health and safety supplies to programs and parents. CCR&Rs were also the pipeline for critically important information on COVID, regulations and best practices for safe operation of programs. This was in addition to what the CCR&R system has done and continues to do today through 58,000 hours annually of technical assistance to child providers: assisting new child care programs to open, helping programs operate safely, training the child care workforce, meeting the unique mental health care needs of babies and toddlers in child care settings, and more.

For thousands of parents, child care providers and employers throughout New York State, CCR&Rs are a key support in navigating the complex child care delivery system. CCR&Rs, funded through OCFS, served their communities by helping more than 32,000 families find quality, affordable child care. Through the recently launched Stabilization and Deserts grants, CCR&Rs delivered grant administration to 10,604 existing child care providers and 846 prospective providers requiring help to launch their businesses.

At a time when access to affordable, quality child care is profoundly restricted for working families, CCR&Rs are an integral part of how communities support quality child care systems. OCFS contracts that support these services were cut in 2012 and have remained flat ever since—diminishing the breadth and strength of the services delivered by the CCR&Rs to their communities. Funding levels have failed to keep up with the cost of the services CCR&Rs provide, triggering an inability to compete for essential staff, including Parent Counselors, Provider Education Specialists, Infant Toddler Specialists, Mental Health Consultants, Referral Specialists and other skilled professionals needed to effectively support and grow child care programs.

ABOUT US

Early Care & Learning Council (ECLC) is the membership agency for the New York State Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) network. Together, ECLC and CCR&Rs advocate for a quality, affordable, equitable early care and education system, providing a range of services, resources and technical assistance to child care providers statewide. ECLC is the hub for the state CCR&R network, providing resources and strategic thinking, all geared toward building sustainable early care and education systems throughout the state.

To preserve the essential services CCR&Rs offer to working parents, and expand to meet the need of the expanding child care sector, ECLC and the network of CCR&Rs respectfully request the Governor and Legislature support the following increases vital to the economic development of parents, families, providers and employers across NY State:

Increase Child Care Resource & Referral Contracts (including Registration contracts)

\$7.9 million to cover increasing costs to staff the network of 35 CCR&Rs and ECLC who train over 17,000 child care providers serving 400,000 children in NYS. Since 2012, when contracts were last adjusted, inflation has risen at a rate of 29.7%.^[i]
[i] <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>

Mental Health Services: \$4 million annually

ECLC and the network launched an Infant Toddler Mental Health Consultation (ITMHC) project in 2019. 35 ITMHCs served over 2,000 vulnerable children in 2022. ECLC requests funding to increase services to child care providers and children to ensure that our youngest children get off to the start that they deserve with nurturing and responsive child care settings, prompt identification of developmental and behavioral challenges, and timely referrals and receipt of additional services.

- To begin to bring this service to scale, additional Mental Health Consultants need to be hired by the CCR&Rs to across all regions of the state. This increase also includes 12 ITMHCs for NYC. 51% of all children 0-5 in New York State live in NYC.
- To expand to underserved communities impacted by the lingering effects of COVID-19.
- To ensure mental health professionals work in collaboration with educators to ensure that trauma informed practices are being utilized in classrooms and that appropriate social emotional strategies are implemented through a trauma informed and racial equity lenses.

Maintain and Integrate TA positions: \$6.5 million annually

CCR&R staff have served as technical assistance (TA) specialists to ensure that child care providers access and utilize stabilization and desert grants available through federal relief funding. This funding will sunset in the next year. Most child care providers started without the infrastructure to successfully apply for and implement these grants—yet the funding and associated business training has been essential to their survival.

These positions are essential to the on-going survival of child care businesses throughout our state. Without a widespread adoption of stronger business strategies, providers are at risk of financial instability and closing their doors, contributing to an even greater shortage of child care in NY State. 64% of New York State is a child care desert, one of the highest rates in the nation. Without the TA specialists working closely with new and existing child care providers, this situation will only deteriorate, undercutting parents' ability to work and undermining the state's economic future.

Diversity Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) trainers:

\$5.5 million annually to mitigate and address racism and unconscious bias in the early care and learning system. ECLC is looking to expand the training for CCR&Rs and providers to create an equitable child care system. By ensuring that a culturally responsive early care and education is available to all children and families, we can work to reduce the discrimination that is present system-wide.

ECLC proposes to hire and train a DEIB specialist at each of the 35 CCR&Rs. These specialists will work in collaboration with ITMHCs to implement strategies and combat unconscious bias to decrease the number of black and brown boys that are suspended from child care programs. The DEIB specialists will be responsible for the development and implementation of anti-racist curriculum, training for staff, work with providers and OCFS licensors.

