**Legislative Agenda 2015-16**

*Winning Beginning NY* is the State’s early care and learning coalition. We support investments and policies that move New York State toward a comprehensive early learning system. Ideally, that system would promote children’s healthy social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. The current fragmented “system” does not effectively serve all children.

Because the coalition represents the interests of children from the prenatal period through age eight, we have several priority areas. These priorities are interconnected and have one thing in common—a focus on quality. *Winning Beginning NY* believes—and research shows—that in order for an early learning system to garner the results we want—and that children deserve—it must be high-quality.

Our Legislative Agenda outlines our priorities and the continuum of high-quality services essential to young children and their families. While it contains budget requests for specific programs, we again stress that all of these services and supports are integral to the success of what we hope will one day be a universal system of high-quality early care and learning.
Winning Beginning NY’s Budget Requests for 2015-16

➤ Quality
  o Invest at least $3 million (as in Executive Budget) in the continued implementation of QUALITYstarsNY, the State’s early childhood quality rating and improvement system.

➤ Home Visiting
  o Maintain the Executive’s $3 million investment and add an additional $2 million to the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program.
  o Maintain $23.5 million and restore $3.5 million for the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) program.
  o Invest $2 million in evidence-based programs or promising practices.

➤ Early Intervention
  o Begin to restore reimbursement rates by increasing the current rates by at least 4.8%.

➤ Child Care
  o Invest an additional $100 million in child care subsidies to serve at least 13,000 children who are eligible and waiting. Continue to expand that investment to reach $2.2 billion annually by the year 2020 to provide universal access to the estimated 305,000 children of working parents who are currently eligible for and in need of high-quality early learning.

➤ Pre-K
  o Keep the promise for Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten for four-year-olds with an additional investment at least $150 million for rest of state, and at least $70 million to support New York City’s plan to reach universal service in the 2015-16 school year. Ensure all districts awarded full-day Pre-K grants receive the state funding on a predictable payment schedule, in the year services are delivered.
  o Support the Governor’s new Pre-K proposal for high-need three-year-olds in addition to, not as a substitute for, continued expansion of full-day for four-year-olds. The plan should build on the expertise of community-based organizations already serving young children, and support quality standards and practices appropriate for three-year-olds.

➤ Afterschool
  o Work toward at least $178.5 million in new statewide funds annually to allow 110,000 students to begin attending afterschool programs in schools and communities that have already expressed their need for a program. Plan for continued investment to serve the estimated 1.1 million children who need an afterschool program and do not have access.

Winning Beginning NY also supports Paid Family Leave.