Final Budget Recommendations 2014

Winning Beginning NY (WBNY) promotes access to high-quality early learning and care, from the prenatal period to school-age, designed to improve outcomes for children and support the needs of working families. We support investments and policies that move the state toward a comprehensive early learning system that promotes children’s healthy social, emotional, cognitive and physical development known to promote success in school and later life. In the final budget, we urge the Governor and Legislature to:

**Universal Prekindergarten**  
Invest at least $225 million for high-quality, full-day Pre-K opportunities as an important step toward providing universal access to all four-year-olds and fully fund the expansion of UPK and afterschool in NYC as currently proposed in the Assembly and Senate budget proposals. We also ask that the final budget require that Pre-K funding be used only for Pre-K and not for other purposes; include the Assembly proposal for a Reserve Fund so that any unused Pre-K funding will be preserved for Pre-K; and require the State to allocate statewide funding to school districts based on a formula that prioritizes funding high-needs districts first, does not rely on competitive grants, and provides additional funds for professional development and quality programming.

**Universal Child Care**  
Invest at least an additional $182 million in child care subsidies to serve more than 25,000 additional children. WBNY thanks the Senate and Assembly for moving New York State closer to that goal by increasing funding for child care subsidies which will help low income workers maintain employment. We appreciate the focus on fair and equitable copayments and reimbursements, and urge that the final budget include funding for significant new slots to pull New York out of its current crisis that is a result of years of inadequate funding.

**Afterschool**  
Invest at least $160 million for access to afterschool across the state. In addition to the Senate and Assembly’s commitment to afterschool programs for New York City. Add language establishing the statewide afterschool programs through collaborations between school districts and community-based organizations and/or youth development programs.

**Early Intervention**  
Ensure Early Intervention (EI) providers are paid in a timely manner. WBNY is pleased that the Assembly and Senate budget proposals require the State or its designated fiscal agent to reimburse EI providers in a timely manner (within 30 or 45 days from submission of claims) and make the State’s fiscal agent responsible for seeking reimbursement from health insurance for EI claims and filing appeals of denials of claims. We urge you to include such language in the final budget.

**Home Visiting**  
Restore $3.5 million for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) and invest $4 million for Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP). WBNY is pleased that the Senate restored $3.5 million for the HFNY home visiting program, and we urge the Assembly to support this addition. WBNY appreciates the proposed funding in the Senate and Assembly budget proposals for NFP. We urge you to invest $4 million in this program.