



New York City Government Services: Child Care Services for Children Under Five

Highlights

- New York City's DOE, ACS, and HRA provided child care and early childhood education programming to nearly 160,000 participants under the age of five in FY 2025, equal to about 35 percent of the City's 2024 under-five population.
- The cost of providing services to children under five in FY 2025 was about \$3.2 billion, or \$19,989 per child, excluding the cost of special education Pre-K services.
- Monthly ACS vouchers in use by children under five increased from an average of 29,615 in FY 2023 to 52,027 in FY 2025. Through the first four months of FY 2026, this figure increased to 64,129 vouchers in use.
- Enrollment in the City's 3-K and Pre-K programs declined in FY 2025, suggesting the programs may be reaching a saturation point or that the programs are competing with vouchers.
- Participation is not uniform across all ages, as program coverage is available to about 86 percent of all three- and four-year-olds, but only 13 percent of children under age three.
- The current fragmentation of programs to provide child care services can lead to inconsistent and out-of-date information on programs and complex enrollment processes.
- The cost of expanding child care will vary widely based on services provided, provider types, hours and days of service and the number of seats provided, among other factors. Based on current costs and utilization rates, expansion could cost between \$2.7 billion to \$8.2 billion, excluding additional costs for services for children with disabilities.

The rising cost of child care is a major affordability issue facing residents of New York State and City. The cost of care for children under the age of five, which is generally higher than for older children, has become especially burdensome. Recent proposals and pilot programs highlight a growing contingent of parents and advocates looking to the City and State to help respond to these concerns. A recently unveiled child care expansion proposal from the Governor, supported by the Mayor, aims to provide services to tens of thousands of additional children statewide in the next two years and to grow over time.

Currently, the City provides free or subsidized care to a meaningful portion of the under-five population for those who qualify, where eligibility is generally based on citizenship and income level. Funding for care is primarily directed through the Administration for Children's Services' (ACS) child care voucher program and the Department of Education's (DOE) Early Childhood Education (ECE) initiatives (Infant and Toddler, 3-K, Pre-K, and Head Start). Vouchers also fund care for children between five and 12.

This analysis offers a snapshot of the City's existing child care and ECE services, the program characteristics unique to each, and an estimate of their total overall cost to the City. The analysis also analyzes demand for these programs, complexities in their administrative processes and current indicators measuring program outcomes. As officials make efforts to expand access to child care, these findings suggest there may be opportunities to use additional data to increase the cost efficiency of existing funding and direct expansion efforts based on the greatest need.

Background

Recently, there have been proposals to expand or provide universal child care for all City children under the age of five. Available child care services vary substantially based on the age of the children, the agency charged with oversight of services and care provider types, the hours in which children are cared for and the types of services that are provided.

The City currently offers several child care and early childhood education programs serving this demographic. These include child care vouchers administered through Human Resources Administration (HRA), with payments directed by ACS, as well as the Infant and Toddler, 3-K, Pre-K, and Head Start programs offered through DOE. In fiscal year (FY) 2025, these programs served 159,348 participants under five at a total estimated cost of \$3.2 billion, with about \$2.1 billion spent on DOE programs for ECE, and about \$1.05 billion on ACS vouchers (see Figure 1). New York City funds only a portion of this amount, with a substantial share paid by the federal and State governments.

There are two caveats to these costs. First, it is notable that vouchers are also provided for eligible children aged five to 12 (and older in some cases); however this report focuses on the

ages under five, which is where the efforts for child care expansion are concentrated. Second, expenditures for special education services provided to Pre-K students totaled nearly \$900 million in FY 2025, and costs are projected to increase to over \$920 million in FY 2026. This funding is not included in DOE's total cost estimates for programs serving children under the age of five and are excluded for the sake of this analysis.

Still, the average cost of available child care varies significantly between programs. As such, the cost of expanding child care could vary substantially depending on which services the City elects to provide. Generally, ECE programs, like those provided by DOE, prioritize the child's intellectual and academic development, specifically for those between the ages of six weeks and five years. More general child care services, like those provided through the voucher program, are typically available to children of all ages and, while they may include some aspects of early childhood education, tend to emphasize child supervision and physical well-being over scholastic development.¹ The hours and days that care is provided and the types of providers who deliver the service also have cost implications.

FIGURE 1
FY 2025 Child Care Costs for Children Aged Five and Younger
Total Expenditures and Enrollment*

| Program | Enrolled | Avg Cost | Total Cost |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| DOE | | | |
| Infant and Toddler Early Head Start | 128 | \$39,344 | \$5,036,032 |
| Infant and Toddler Extended Day/Year | 6,250 | \$23,882 | \$149,262,500 |
| 3-K - School Day | 37,462 | \$19,314 | \$723,541,068 |
| 3-K Extended Day/Year | 5,259 | \$27,473 | \$144,480,507 |
| 3-K Head Start | 2,008 | \$27,402 | \$55,023,216 |
| Pre-K - School Day | 51,996 | \$18,032 | \$937,591,872 |
| Pre-K Extended Day/Year | 2,424 | \$34,458 | \$83,526,192 |
| Pre-K Head Start | 1,764 | \$23,628 | \$41,679,792 |
| ACS/HRA | | | |
| Child Care Services (Est.) | 52,057 | \$20,075 | \$1,045,044,275 |
| Totals | 159,348 | \$19,989 | \$3,185,185,454 |

Sources: NYS Office of Children and Family Services; NYC Office of Management and Budget; OSC analysis

*DOE enrollment based on FY 2025 totals; ACS enrollment based on FY 2025 monthly average

The total cost of the program also varies significantly depending on the number of families that enroll in child care services (see Figure 2). Some households that have elected to leave the City in recent years have cited cost of living as a factor in that decision, and households with children were more likely to respond that they were experiencing financial difficulties (see [the Office of the State Comptroller's \(OSC\) report](#) on the City's shifting population for details). In 2024, the City was home to 454,220 children under the age of five, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.² This is nearly 83,000 fewer children than the population in 2020, a 15.4 percent decline. Population declines have also meant flat or declining enrollment in the City's public school programs, including Pre-K and 3-K.

Though the 3-K enrollment rate has increased steadily since 2020 as more seats have become available, enrollment rates among all three-year-olds have been boosted by a declining three-year-old population, which dropped from 106,656 in 2020 to 85,059 in 2024. In FY 2025, 53 percent of the City's three-year-old children were enrolled in the City's 3-K programs and nearly 8,000 available seats went unfilled. Lower total program utilization generally translates to higher per-participant costs.

Taken together, FY 2025 three- and four-year-old participation in the City's ECE and child care voucher programs was equal to about 72 percent of the City's three- and four-year-old population. Participation for children under three came in at just under 12 percent of the total population, bringing overall program coverage for children under the age of five to about 35 percent.

Factoring in these program and participation variations, OSC estimates that expanding child care options to provide universal coverage for all children under five could result in incremental costs ranging from \$2.7 billion to more than \$8 billion (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 2

FY 2025 Program Participation and Coverage*
Children Under Age Five

| DOE & ACS – Children Under Age 3 | |
|--|---------------|
| DOE – Infant and Toddler Prog. Participants | 6,378 |
| DOE – Infant and Toddler Unfilled Seats | 4,105 |
| ACS – Vouchers for Infants and Toddlers | 26,426 |
| Max Participation – Children Under Age 3 | 36,909 |
| NYC Population – Children Under Age 3 | 279,193 |
| Coverage Available – Children Under Age 3 | 13.22% |
| Total Participation – Children Under Age 3 | 32,804 |
| Coverage Rate – Children Under Age 3 | 11.75% |
| DOE – Children Aged 3 | |
| DOE – 3-K Participants | 44,729 |
| DOE – 3-K Unfilled Seats | 7,988 |
| Maximum 3-K Participation | 52,717 |
| NYC Population – Children Aged 3 | 85,059 |
| Coverage Available – Children Aged 3 | 61.98% |
| Coverage Rate – Children Aged 3 | 52.59% |
| DOE – Children Aged 4 | |
| DOE – Pre-K Participants | 56,184 |
| DOE – Pre-K Unfilled Seats | 15,181 |
| Maximum Pre-K Participation | 72,131 |
| NYC Population – Children Aged 4 | 89,968 |
| Coverage Available – Children Aged 4 | 80.17% |
| Coverage Rate – Children Aged 4 | 63.30% |
| DOE & ACS – Children Ages 3-4 | |
| DOE – Total 3-K & Pre-K Participants | 100,913 |
| DOE – Total 3-K & Pre-K Unfilled Seats | 23,169 |
| ACS – Vouchers for Children Ages 3-4 | 25,611 |
| Maximum Participation – Children Ages 3-4 | 149,693 |
| NYC Population – Children Ages 3-4 | 175,027 |
| Coverage Available – Children Ages 3-4 | 85.53% |
| Total Participation – Children Ages 3-4 | 126,524 |
| Coverage Rate – Children Ages 3-4 | 72.29% |
| DOE & ACS Totals - Children Under Age 5 | |
| Total Participation – All Programs | 159,348 |
| Unfilled Seats – All Program | 27,274 |
| Max Participation – Children Under Age 5 | 187,358 |
| NYC Population – Children Under Age 5 | 454,220 |
| Coverage Available – Children Under Age 5 | 41.25% |
| Coverage Rate – Children Under Age 5 | 35.08% |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 Resident Population Estimates by Single Year of Age and Sex; NYC Office of Management and Budget; NYC Administration for Children's Services; OSC analysis

*Coverage based on FY 2025 participation data and 2024 population data

Program Considerations

The stated goal of the ACS voucher program is to ensure access to safe, early child care and education services in all communities, and, more

FIGURE 3

Universal Child Care Coverage for Children Under Age Five

Added Cost Estimates

| | |
|---|---|
| Lower Enrollment, Low Per-Participant Rate: Assumes coverage rate equal to current 3-K participation (filled seats only), and per-participant costs equal to current Infant and Toddler Extended Day/Year costs. | Lower Enrollment, High Per-Participant Rate: Assumes coverage rate equal to current 3-K participation (filled seats only), and per-participant costs equal to current Infant and Toddler Early Head Start costs. |
| Estimated Added Cost: \$2.7 Billion | Estimated Added Cost: \$4.5 Billion |
| Higher Enrollment, Low Per-Participant Rate: Assumes coverage rate equal to current 3-K and Pre-K program availability (includes filled and unfilled seats), and per-participant costs equal to current Infant and Toddler Extended Day/Year costs. | Higher Enrollment, High Per-Participant Rate: Assumes coverage rate equal to current 3-K and Pre-K program availability (includes filled and unfilled seats), and per-participant costs equal to current Infant and Toddler Early Head Start costs. |
| Estimated Added Cost: \$4.9 Billion | Estimated Added Cost: \$8.2 Billion |

Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

specifically, to provide access to affordable child care. DOE's stated aims are to ensure access to quality Infant and Toddler, 3-K, Pre-K, Extended Day/Year, and Head Start programming in communities of need, and to achieve enrollment in line with the department's maximum capacity.

Programming through DOE generally coincides with the school day and is provided for between six and 10 hours each day. Because vouchers provided through ACS and HRA may be used at any child care provider approved by the City or State, voucher holders are free to choose a provider with hours that best match their family's needs. (See Appendix A for an overview of eligibility requirements and services provided for each program.)

The City does not report regularly on the use of vouchers for non-regular hours. However, because of their added flexibility, vouchers are the primary city-subsidized child care option for individuals working evenings or requiring off-hour care, despite only a small percentage of providers operating during those hours. In addition to the general provision of child care, some providers offer specialized services for children seeking specific programming (i.e., art, music, or dance).

Current programs are fragmented and lack a centralized mechanism to deliver and oversee all available child care programming. The City currently provides demand-based supports, via child care vouchers, and supply-based approaches, including direct and third-party provision of services. Fragmented coverage may also be reducing the accessibility of care, as contradictory eligibility information, outdated forms, and dead links can be found across the ACS, DOE, and HRA webpages. (See Appendix D for a non-exhaustive list of conflicting and outdated program information encountered while researching this report.)

In addition, the fragmentation requires families to enroll through one of three separate platforms, depending on the program: MySchools (for most DOE applicants), MyCity (for some DOE and some ACS voucher applicants), and ACCESS HRA (for HRA voucher applicants). (See Appendix C for more detailed descriptions of the enrollment process for each program.)

Administration for Children's Services

Child Care Vouchers Overview and Eligibility

The child care voucher program subsidizes child care costs for families with children aged six weeks through 12 years, and for children with disabilities, up to age 19. Participating child care organizations are (in most cases) bound by City law to provide care that adheres to regulations around minimum supervision and staff-to-child ratios, nutrition, hygiene, and a host of other markers. Funding for the child care voucher program totaled about \$1.5 billion in FY 2025, more than 95 percent of ACS' \$1.56 billion child care services budget. More than two-thirds of voucher funding is designated for children under the age of five. Funding is provided in part by the City, State, and federal governments.

Vouchers are divided into three categories: mandated, non-mandated, and child welfare vouchers. Mandated vouchers are available to any family receiving cash assistance through HRA (and may be available for an additional year after cash assistance has ended through a separate ACS program). In FY 2025, HRA handled an average of 329,043 cash assistance cases, aiding an average of 585,883 individuals each month. Of those, 216,227 were children and an estimated 62,300 monthly recipients were children under the age of five. All told, an

Child Care Voucher Types

→ [Mandated Vouchers](#)

- For families receiving cash assistance through the HRA

→ [Non-Mandated Vouchers](#)

- For low-income families

→ [Child Welfare Vouchers](#)

- For children involved in an active child welfare case

estimated 22 percent of qualifying children under the age of five received a mandated voucher in FY 2025, about 13,765 monthly participants.³

Before ACS implemented a pause on non-mandated voucher enrollments (discussed below), qualifying low-income households could not earn more than 85 percent of the area median income (AMI) for a household of the same size. In 2025, qualifying income was capped at \$77,226 for two-person households, scaling up to \$197,608 for 20-person households. In 2024, the maximum allowable qualifying income ranged from \$73,870 to \$182,501. That year, conservatively, about 76 percent of households with a child living at home were eligible to apply for a voucher. This was about 471,000 households, of which approximately 184,325 (39 percent) had a child under the age of six.⁴

FIGURE 4
FY 2025 Average Enrollments
By Age Group and Voucher Type

| | Mandatory | Non-Mandatory | Welfare | Total |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|--------|
| Infant | 2,706 | 6,001 | 1,085 | 9,792 |
| Toddler | 4,326 | 10,448 | 1,880 | 16,654 |
| Preschool | 6,733 | 16,208 | 2,670 | 25,611 |
| Total Under Age 5 | 13,765 | 32,657 | 5,635 | 52,057 |
| Total Ages 5+ | 12,167 | 24,274 | 2,729 | 39,170 |
| Grand Total | 25,932 | 56,931 | 8,364 | 91,227 |

Source: NYC Administration for Children's Services

Child welfare vouchers are temporary, and available to families with an open welfare case. In FY 2025, a total of 30,565 children received welfare services at some point during the year, at a monthly average of nearly 16,000. Of those, an average of 8,364 children received a child welfare voucher each month, 5,635 of whom were children under the age of five.

Once issued, the City is required to provide mandated and non-mandated voucher subsidies for 12 months. Mandated voucher recertification is guaranteed for eligible applicants regardless of available funding. Non-mandated voucher recertification is contingent on available funding and federal guidelines. Child welfare vouchers are open-ended and remain in use until the child's welfare case is closed.

Across all voucher types, nearly 110,000 children were enrolled in the program at the close of FY 2025,⁵ and more than 91,000 children had participated each month.⁶ Of those, 57 percent of participants were under the age of five, while the remaining 43 percent would fall outside the parameters of a proposed universal child care program (see Figure 4). Overall under-five enrollment grew from 29,615 in FY 2023 to 52,057 in FY 2025, a 76 percent increase.

These trends continued into FY 2026. From July to October, vouchers in use each month averaged more than 111,000, just under 58 percent (64,129) of which were issued to children under five. Unlike DOE, ACS does not classify programming based on the length of time participants receive child care. This makes it difficult to determine the average daily time of use for each voucher.

Child Care Vouchers – Enrollment and Types of Care

Mandated vouchers are administered by HRA and payments are directed by ACS. Prospective voucher recipients receiving cash assistance use

FIGURE 5

FY 2026 Monthly Non-Mandated Vouchers In Use

| Month | Non-Mand. | Change |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| July | 75,205 | 2,180 |
| August | 74,312 | (893) |
| September | 73,737 | (575) |
| October | 72,132 | (1,605) |
| November | 72,194 | 62 |
| Net Change | | (3,011) |

Source: NYC Administration for Children's Services

their HRA account to apply through the ACCESS HRA portal (see Appendix C).

Non-mandated vouchers, available to low-income households, are issued and renewed directly through ACS either by mail or online through the MyCity platform. Because non-mandatory voucher spending is discretionary by State law, the program provides the City with more spending flexibility than other forms of child care. In May 2025, ACS announced that the issuance of all new, non-mandated vouchers had been paused, with qualifying applicants placed on a waitlist.

In December, ACS reported this waitlist had grown to about 13,000 qualified applicants (of all ages)⁷. Despite the pause, ACS has added a net total of 2,387 additional non-mandated vouchers since May, stating that this was primarily the product of families who were deemed eligible for care through the beginning of May continuing to enroll after the start of the pause.

Current non-mandated participants are eligible to renew their vouchers for an additional 12 months if they are presently a member of a family that is homeless, has a child with special needs, or has an income below 300 percent of the State Income Standard (SIS). For a family of four, the maximum allowable income is approximately \$96,450. The change from an AMI-based income requirement to SIS is meant to make recertification slightly more restrictive, though ACS estimates 95 percent of voucher holders will remain eligible

through one of the three recertification qualifications

Taken together, more restrictive recertification requirements, coupled with the pause on new enrollments would explain why, in FY 2026, ACS added nearly 2,200 non-mandated vouchers in July before total enrollments declined by nearly 3,100 over the next three months. However, this does not explain why non-mandated enrollments began to tick up again in November, with 62 additional vouchers added (see Figure 5).⁸

Further, while the cost of care is fully covered for many families receiving a non-mandated voucher, some are required to contribute a portion of the weekly expense via a co-pay called the “family share.” State regulations cap this payment at 1 percent of the family’s annual income that exceeds the SIS. Including those contributing a family share and those with fully subsidized vouchers, the average family’s contribution to non-mandated voucher coverage is about \$2.75 per week.

Finally, child welfare vouchers, the smallest pool of child care vouchers, are issued to some families in need of child care assistance who are also receiving protective, prevention or foster care services. Though provision of this type of care is not statutorily required, it is indicated in the 2025 Mayor’s Management Report (MMR) that ACS seeks to increase child welfare voucher issuances. Vouchers are arranged through the family’s protective, prevention or foster care services case planner.

For all child care voucher types, ACS and HRA strive to provide a determination of eligibility

within 30 days of an application submittal, a mark the departments achieved a combined 92 percent of the time in FY 2025, below the 96 percent target rate. When a family has been found eligible, they will receive their voucher via email.

Once received, families may choose between several types of child care providers, including center-based, home-based (e.g., family child care), and informal or relative care (see Figure 6). Any of these provider types may be informally referred to as a CBO, a Community-Based Organization. Many providers are licensed by the City or State, and the City’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the State’s Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS)—each provide an interactive map of the child care programs they regulate.⁹ Other providers, including many informal and relative care givers, are legally exempt from formal registration

Center-based programs provide at least five hours of care per week and follow staff-to-child ratios ranging from one teacher for every three children under 6-weeks-old, to one teacher for every eight children between four- and five-years-old.¹⁰ Home-based, family care must be provided for a minimum of three hours per day and employ at least one caregiver for every two children under two years old.¹¹ See OSC’s [Lingering Challenges in the Child Care Sector](#) report for more information about staff-to-child ratios and the implications they have on available coverage.

Legally exempt, informal in-home providers, the least expensive type of care, do not have minimum staff ratio requirements, though all children must live in the home.¹² Voucher use for informal care, while relatively low, has seen an uptick in recent years, increasing from 2,663 in FY 2021 to 4,249 in FY 2025.

Child Care Vouchers – Funding and Utilization

As policy has shifted, the City has seen demand for mandated and non-mandated vouchers head

FIGURE 6
Average Monthly Enrollment by Type of Care

| Type of Care | FY25 | FY26* |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Center-Based Care | 52,730 | 64,213 |
| Family Child Care | 34,248 | 41,936 |
| Legally Exempt/Informal Care | 4,249 | 5,507 |
| Total | 91,227 | 111,656 |

Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

*Through September

in diverging directions. Prior to the start of the pandemic, participation in the City’s cash assistance program was subject to a work requirement of at least 10 hours per week. With parents or guardians at work, there was strong demand for the child care program, particularly as the City is obligated to provide vouchers to cash assistance recipients. As the City entered the pandemic, those work requirements were paused, allowing some recipients to drop out of the work force. Some families, with a parent now at home to provide child care, chose to voluntarily forgo their vouchers.

At the same time, the State received an influx of temporary funding from the federal government. To maximize these funds, the State first allowed, then required, counties to increase child care access, and ACS relaxed income requirements for low-income, non-mandatory voucher applicants. This resulted in a surge in non-mandated voucher demand just as mandatory voucher use began to drop (as noted earlier, the eligibility standards for recertifications have once again been made more stringent). However, cash assistance work requirements were reinstated in FY 2025, likely leading to the 28 percent increase in average monthly-mandated voucher use for families with children under five, compared to FY 2023.

The State, and by extension the City, are no longer receiving additional federal COVID funding and the City has yet to identify and begin

collection of the recurring resources needed to finance the program’s implemented expansions. Entering FY 2026, ACS was expected to receive over \$1.9 billion in total funding for child care services between July 2025 and the end of September 2026 (the close of FFY 2026).

Anticipated revenues included about \$1.1 billion in Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) funding (a combination of federal CCDF funds and State child care allocations), about \$375 million in additional State funding, and about \$423 million in City funding.¹³ The City received about \$830 million of total anticipated revenues at the adoption of the FY 2026 budget, with an additional \$1.07 billion expected through the City and Federal fiscal Years (see Figure 7).

OSC’s [November plan report](#) included an FY 2026 budget shortfall of more than \$261 million for child care services. After this fiscal year, OSC projects federal and state receipts of about \$1.53 billion for child care services from July 2026 through September of 2027 (the end of FFY 2027). Based on current levels of service, this drop in funding would increase the City’s projected budget shortfall for these services to nearly \$640 million.

In January of 2026, the federal administration announced more than \$10 billion in cuts to social services and child care funding for New York and four other Democratic-led states. These cuts have already been challenged in court. However,

FIGURE 7
Allocated vs. Recurring Child Care Services Funding

| | FY/FFY 2026 Allocated | FY/FFY 2027 Expected (Est.) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| City Adopted Budget – City Funding | \$ 423,409,105 | \$ 395,904,517 |
| City Adopted Budget – State Funding | \$ 24,502,984 | \$ 24,502,984 |
| City Adopted Budget – CCBG | \$ 380,898,141 | \$ 380,898,141 |
| City Adopted Budget – Additional Federal Funds | \$ 1,092,364 | \$ 1,092,364 |
| Subtotal | \$ 829,902,246 | \$ 802,397,658 |
| State Budget – Expected Supplemental State Funds | \$ 350,000,000 | \$ - |
| State/Federal – Expected Additional CCBG Funds | \$ 724,319,682 | \$ 724,319,682 |
| Total | \$ 1,904,222,276 | \$ 1,526,717,688 |

Sources: NYC Office of Management and Budget; NYS Office of Children and Family Services; OSC analysis

if implemented, New York State could lose approximately \$640 million in federal CCDF grants.¹⁴ In FY 2025, New York City received about 85 percent (\$544 million) of the State's CCDF allocation. Unreplaced cuts of this magnitude would strain ACS' ability to maintain current levels of service, and program expansion would be made more difficult.

Despite the lack of clarity around future funding that began in January of 2025, the City continues to issue and recertify vouchers and has already committed to an estimated minimum of about \$899 million in voucher spending between November of FY 2026 and October of FY 2027. Approximately \$618 million of this spending is for children under the age of five.

Department of Education

Early Childhood Education Overview

DOE's stated goal is to deliver early childhood education services, and specifically to ensure access to quality programming in communities of need while achieving maximum capacity. In FY 2025, DOE programming served more than 107,000 children under the age of five for a total cost of about \$2.1 billion. Costs per participant vary widely by initiative, from about \$18,000 to more than \$39,000 per enrollee. Across all programs, DOE spent about \$19,950 per under-five participant, slightly less than ACS/HRA spent for the average child care voucher.

DOE's Infant and Toddler programs provide year-round ECE for children between the ages of six weeks and three years and include Extended Day/Year and Early Head Start. The Infant and Toddler initiatives are relatively small, accounting for only about 4 percent of the total participation in the City's under-five programming.

With wider and still-expanding program availability, and fewer logistical steps to enroll, DOE's universal 3-K and Pre-K programs have been comparatively more popular. Pre-K, initiated

in 2014, provides educational programming beginning the year a child turns four. 3-K, implemented shortly after and expanded with one-time federal funding, provides programming for children beginning the year a child turns three.

As they are more akin to traditional education than the City's child care voucher program, 3-K and Pre-K provide between six and a half hours (for School Day programming) and 10 hours (for Extended Day programming) of city-funded supervision to more than 97,000 children each school day. The 3-K and Pre-K Extended Year programs go beyond the traditional school year and provide care for children into the summer months. DOE programming does not offer the same flexibility that a child care voucher may provide. DOE programs take place during the day and are generally not available on nights and weekends.

Finally, while the City offers a small number of Head Start seats through its Infant and Toddler, 3-K, and Pre-K programs, federal funding for these programs has been redirected away from DOE recently, which is discussed in further detail below.

Early Childhood Education – Enrollment

Most families use the DOE MySchools enrollment platform to research and apply for early childhood programming. After creating a MySchools account, and providing some information about the enrolling child, the parent may access the school directory and search for local providers. Head Start, Early Head Start, and the 3-K and Pre-K Extended Day and Year programs operate year-round, and households may submit an enrollment application at any time of year. School Day 3-K and Pre-K programs coincide with the start of the school year in early September.

The Infant and Toddler Extended Day program also operates year-round, and enrollment qualifications are the same as the ACS non-mandated voucher program requirements,

suggesting overlap between non-mandated voucher users and these households, although it is unclear how many of these participants may be double counted. As with ACS, applications are submitted through the MyCity system and households must complete a lengthy personal profile before program eligibility can be determined.

Early Childhood Education – Funding and Utilization

In FY 2025, DOE enrolled 56,184 children in Pre-K, the fewest since FY 2015 (53,120) and more than 13,000 students below the program’s FY 2017 peak (69,510). There were more than 14,000 unfilled Pre-K seats in FY 2024, representing about 23.7 percent of the total seats available. That figure increased to 27 percent, or about 15,200 unfilled seats, in FY 2025 (see Figure 8).

In terms of overall population, the 59,184 children enrolled in FY 2024 represented about 66 percent of the estimated 90,000 four-year-olds living in the City that year, according to the most recent U.S. Census data. While this was a slight improvement on the 64 percent share of children enrolled in FY 2023, this is due in part to the decline in overall population from more than

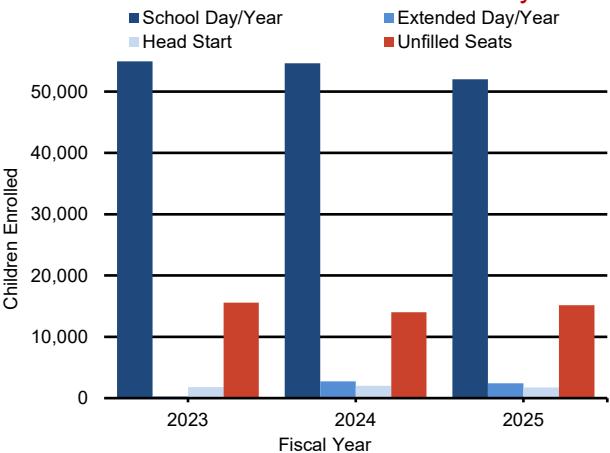
92,500 that year. In fact, the four-year-old population in 2024 represented a decrease of about 17.4 percent from 2020, when there were an estimated 105,600 total four-year-old City residents.

3-K programming, now available in every borough and district, saw steady year-over-year participation. Across all 3-K programs, DOE enrolled 43,957 children in FY 2024 and 44,729 in FY 2025 (see Figure 9). The share of unfilled 3-K seats dropped from 16.1 percent in FY 2024 to 15.2 percent in FY 2025 (see Figure 10).

Total enrollment in FY 2024 represented less than 52 percent of the City’s estimated three-year-old population that year. However, this was a significant increase over FY 2023, when enrollment topped out at just 32,361, or about 36 percent of the total population. For more information about the implementation and historical funding of 3-K, see [OSC's report](#) on the City’s federal pandemic education aid.

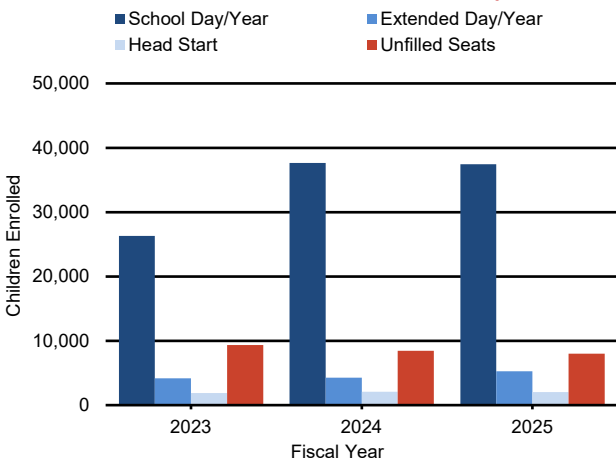
Infant and Toddler enrollment dropped 39 percent from 10,441 in FY 2024 to 6,378 in FY 2025. Unfilled seats, likewise, increased nearly ten-fold, from 438 to 4,105. According to the Mayor’s Management Report, this was due to the loss of a

FIGURE 8
FY 2023-2025 - Total Pre-K Enrollment by Year



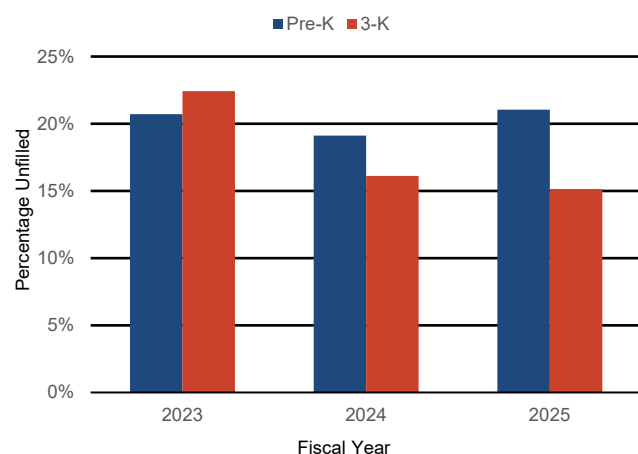
Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

FIGURE 9
FY 2023-2025 - Total 3-K Enrollment by Year



Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

FIGURE 10
FY 2023-2025
Pre-K and 3-K Percentage of Unfilled Seats



Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

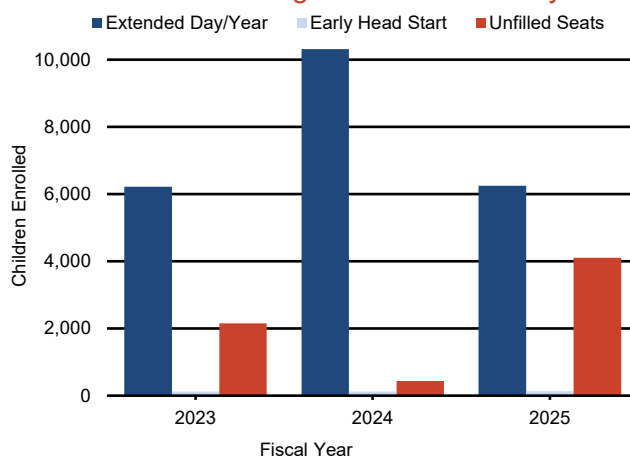
major provider that DOE had partnered with in prior years (see Figure 11).

Even if the City were to return to earlier enrollment levels, only about 5.6 percent of the total two-and-under population was enrolled in Infant and Toddler programming in FY 2024. This figure was about 3.4 percent in FY 2023.

DOE anticipates Pre-K and Early Childhood revenues of about \$2.1 billion per year for FY 2026 through FY 2029. This is in line with DOE's \$2.2 billion in birth-to-five spending in FY 2025 (as of the June budget), roughly 5.4 percent of DOE's \$41.2 billion budget. The City does not report on ECE funding by source, though in FY 2025, about 57 percent of DOE's total funding was provided by the City, 36 percent was provided by the State, and about 6 percent was provided through federal grants.

Through FY 2025, the Infant and Toddler, 3-K, and Pre-K initiatives have all utilized Head Start funding to provide some form of early childhood education. However, beginning in October of 2026 (the start of FFY 2027) DOE no longer expects to receive Head Start funding directly from the federal government, and any Head Start

FIGURE 11
FY 2023-2025
Infant and Toddler Programs-Enrollment by Year



Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

grants received in New York City will likely be paid directly to providers.

This year, DOE's adopted budget included \$70.1 million in annual Head Start funding for FY 2026 through FY 2029. In the November Plan, that funding was reduced to \$26.7 million in FY 2026, and eliminated entirely for FY 2027 through FY 2029. Any comprehensive count of children served in New York City should also account for the children being served by these providers, including the socio-economic characteristics of children served and their provider service areas.

Proposals for Program Expansions

In January of 2026, Governor Hochul, supported by Mayor Mamdani, announced a proposal to add \$1.7 billion in new funding to the budget for State fiscal year (SFY) 2027. Across the State, these funds would bolster or introduce ECE programming and add millions in recurring child care voucher funding. New York City's share of the new ECE funds, a proposed \$75 million in SFY 2027 and \$425 million in SFY 2028, are intended to both enhance 3-K programming and introduce a new initiative, dubbed "2-Care," that would eventually offer child care to all the City's two-year-olds.

Funding would also be used to establish a statewide Office of Child Care and Early Education, which would assist in the initial rollout of proposed program expansions, and to promote ECE studies at CUNY and SUNY schools, to strengthen the State's child care services workforce pipeline.

As per the proposal, the first year of 2-Care programming would be centered in the neighborhoods most in need, before expanding to all neighborhoods by year four. OCFS considers an area with no child care slots, or one in which there are more than three children under five years old for each available child care slot, to be a child care desert.¹⁵ OCFS has found that 52 percent of the [City's census tracts](#) may be considered child care deserts.¹⁶ In addition, there is a wide variation in the population of children under five, and thus in the need for programming, by community district (see Appendix E for a breakdown of neighborhoods by population and age).

Phased implementation has several operational and financial benefits that should improve the efficiency of any expansion of child care services, including training and staffing, physical capacity expansion in deserts, more responsive application and administration processes and a reduced chance of mismatch between demand and supply which could lead to more unfilled seats and higher costs.

Further, as the City's DOHMH regulates center-based child care providers, a phased rollout may reduce the burden placed on that agency's workforce and ultimately save on payroll and other personal services costs. In a similar vein, DOE faced criticism around disability services at the outset of the universal Pre-K and 3-K programs. A phased rollout would allow the City to engage with disability advocates before universal coverage is implemented.

Finally, a phased rollout may provide an opportunity to work with both DOE and partner

CBOs to fully implement retention and pay-parity initiatives that ensure a stable partnership between the City and its child care providers. As noted in a September 2024 report from the New York City Comptroller's Office, "many providers cite low payment rates and low wages as major challenges and reasons for teacher shortages and closure."¹⁷

Conclusion and Recommendations

As the State and City consider the expansion of child care services toward universalization for children under five, there is much more that can be known and potentially improved by looking at the current state of these services. Existing programs for early child care cover a substantial portion of the City's three- and four-year old population and a smaller portion of children younger than that, generally provided based on need.

However, these services remain fragmented, and aspects of their provision suggest greater cost efficiency is possible, a desirable outcome particularly given that these costs have risen in recent years and are expected to continue to do so. Funding for the expansion of both 3-K and child care vouchers was initially backed by one-time federal resources, which the City (and to a lesser extent, the State), has slowly absorbed in recent years. The City will need to identify new resources, or free up existing resources, to pay for further expansion, which will come at a higher cost to care for infants and toddlers.

To this end, officials should also look at streamlining program administration, improving public engagement and outreach and lowering the per-participant cost of services provided across the age spectrum. Success of such an effort would benefit from improved data collection and reporting on those served and the providers of child care services (including DOE providers), simpler application portals and processes, more regular review of public-facing websites and

establishment and measurement of intended outcomes.

Reporting

There are several data and reporting enhancements that ACS, DOE, and HRA can add to better understand and highlight the services provided to both the under and over-five demographics.

For instance, ACS reporting can include more frequent coverage of voucher usage by age, including cost and average length of use by specific age and age group. It would also be helpful to track the average number of hours a voucher is used each day, and the share of total households with cash assistance who also receive a mandated voucher. Data on providers, including type (including direct services by DOE or other organizations), geography, services provided (e.g., language services), hours, utilization (e.g., unfilled seats) and ages of those served would also further outreach and cost efficiency measures. Data on individual providers can be aggregated to help parents and policymakers understand where services are available and can be more efficiently utilized. The addition of non-mandated voucher waitlist data to the monthly ACS flash reports would also provide additional transparency around potential future revenues needed to meet demand.

Outcome measurements that are aligned with services laid out in the MMR, such as the cost borne by families using ACS vouchers and educational quality of services for those served by DOE programs, should also be included to measure program achievements, including the improvement of affordability of care for households.

The City should also make efforts to provide historical data that can provide a continuous view of those served by these programs. For example, DOE cost per seat data and Head Start data prior to 2023 are unavailable in the MMR. Head Start

data in particular, where the federal government has changed its approach to increase funds towards non-profit providers rather than to DOE, will be critical to understanding the full scope of child care coverage in the City.

Finally, a 2022 report from the NYC Economic Development Corporation estimated that the City is home to 320,000 parents who work between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. and who also have a child under the age of five. Despite these figures, they found that only about 5 percent of the City's licensed child care providers operate between those working hours.¹⁸ The City should report regularly on the use of child care services by schedule to better understand service utilization. The City may also conduct a study of existing capacity to provide child care for families working evenings and weekends utilizing spaces already owned or operated by DOE and ACS.

Administration

Assessment of DOE, ACS, and HRA programs for areas of administrative overlap is recommended, and targeted consolidation of administrative processes should be explored. At HRA, the administrative costs associated with mandated voucher application processing and approval are currently inextricable from the department's overall administrative expenditures, making potential cost-savings difficult to estimate. As such, officials should consider internal department reviews aimed at isolating and assessing administrative costs for each child care program. Further, the implementation of a comprehensive child care system may provide an opportunity to untangle administrative costs from distinct agencies' responsibilities outside of child care, providing potential cost-saving opportunities.

The City provides some data on application response times but can also document application approval rates, those approved within 30 days, the number of children waitlisted and the geographic nature of these approvals. Gaps in

the eligibility determination process should be identified and wait-time elimination prioritized.

Agency Websites and Publicly Provided Information

As noted earlier in this report, the programming, eligibility, and enrollment information available to prospective families varies substantially across and within the ACS, DOE, and HRA agency websites. A citywide assessment of each department's public-facing web presence should be conducted so that relevant information can be synchronized (see Appendix D). provides a non-exhaustive slate of conflicting and outdated program information that OSC has encountered while researching this report).

As with program administration, the development of a comprehensive, citywide child care apparatus integrating all the City's child care programming would provide an opportunity to offer a more singular process for outreach, enrollment, and the dissemination of program information to interested families. While the costs of these changes would not fully offset the cost of providing child care to those under five years of age, efforts to streamline applications should make the administration process more cost efficient.

Overall, the City can continue to improve the services it currently provides, the information reported about those served, and the quality of those services and their cost. Doing so would lay the groundwork for expanding child care services in a way that first focuses on support for those who are most in need, while phasing in expansions in an operationally and fiscally sustainable manner.

Appendix A – Services & Eligibility

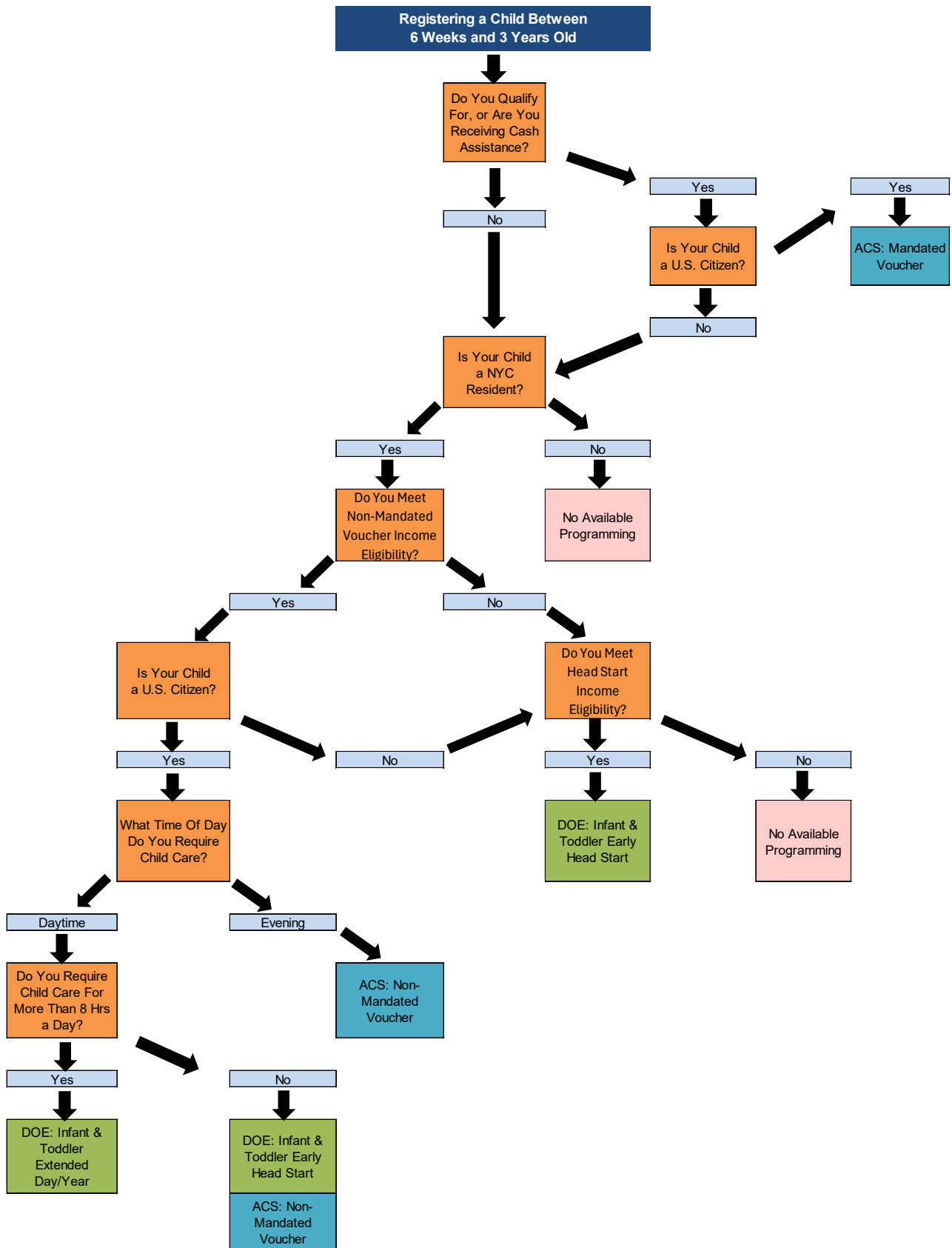
| | Infant and Toddler | | 3-K | Pre-K | 3-K/Pre-K | | Child Care Vouchers | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Early Head Start | Extended Day/Year | School Day | School Day | Head Start | Extended Day/Year | Mandated | Non-Mandated | Welfare |
| Features | | | | | | | | | |
| Age Range | 6 wks-3 yrs | 6 wks-3 yrs | 3 yrs | 4 yrs | 3-4 yrs | 3-4 yrs | 6 wks-5yrs*** | 6 wks-5yrs** | 6 wks-5yrs** |
| FY25 Participation | 128 | 6,250 | 37,462 | 51,996 | 3,772 | 7,683 | 13,737 | 32,689 | 5,600 |
| General Hours | 8am-3pm | 8am-6pm | 8am-3pm | 8am-3pm | 8am-3pm | 8am-6pm | Varies | Varies | Varies |
| Enrollment System | MySchools | MyCity | MySchools | MySchools | MySchools | MySchools | ACCESS HRA | MyCity | N/A |
| Year-Round Options | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Center-Based Options | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Home-Based Options | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Meals Provided | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Not Req. | Not Req. | Not Req. |
| Health Screenings Provided | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Not Req. | Not Req. | Not Req. |
| Limited English Proficiency/Dual Language Learner Services | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Not Req. | Not Req. | Not Req. |
| Transportation Provided | Not Req. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Not Req. | ✓ | Not Req. | Not Req. | Not Req. |
| Statutorily Mandated Service | X | X | X | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | X | X |
| Requirements | | | | | | | | | |
| NYC Residency (Child) | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Proof of US Citizenship (Child) | X | ✓ | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Proof of US Citizenship (Parent) | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Household Qualifies for or is Receiving Cash Assistance* | X | X | X | X | X | X | ✓ | X | X |
| Household Income Below 85% of the State Median Income | X | ✓ | X | X | X | ✓ | X | ✓ | X |
| Qualifying Reasons for Care** | | | | | | | | | |
| Income Falls Within Federal Guidelines | ✓ | X | - | - | ✓ | X | X | X | X |
| Working 10+ Hrs/Week | X | ✓ | - | - | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| In an Educational or Vocational Training Program | X | ✓ | - | - | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Looking for Work | X | ✓ | - | - | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Receiving Services in Response to Domestic Violence | X | ✓ | - | - | X | ✓ | X | ✓ | X |
| Living in Temporary Housing and/or Homeless | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | X |
| Receiving Substance Abuse Treatment | X | X | - | - | X | X | X | ✓ | X |
| Family With a Child in Foster Care | ✓ | X | - | - | ✓ | X | X | X | ✓ |
| Receiving Cash Assistance | ✓ | X | - | - | ✓ | X | - | X | X |
| Receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) | ✓ | X | - | - | ✓ | X | X | X | X |
| Receiving Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) | ✓ | X | - | - | ✓ | X | X | X | X |
| Receiving Prevention and/or Protective Services Through ACS | X | X | - | - | X | X | X | X | ✓ |
| Recertifying Qualifying Reasons for Care | | | | | | | | | |
| Families That are Homeless | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Families Including a Child With Special Needs | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Household Income Below 300% of State Income Standard (SIS) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | ✓ | - |

*In some instances, families opt to receive Child Care In Lieu of Cash Assistance (CILOCA)

**Head Start programs require proof of at least two qualifying reasons for care

***While vouchers are available to children up to 12 years of age, information in this chart covers only participants under age five

Appendix B – Enrollment Process



Appendix C – Enrollment Process Descriptions

Mandated Child Care Vouchers

Once logged in to the ACCESS HRA portal, the cash assistance recipient navigates to their Benefit Dashboard and selects “Request a CA Case Change or Emergency Grant.” From there the user selects “Add or Change Child Care.” Applicants may also use ACCESS HRA to apply for Child Care In Lieu Of Cash Assistance (CILOCA).

The voucher must be filled out by both the family and the child care provider and returned to ACS. If approved, ACS will send a child enrollment notice notifying the family and the provider that enrollment is finalized. Some families have reported receiving their voucher as early as two weeks after submitting an application, others have reported waiting up to six months.

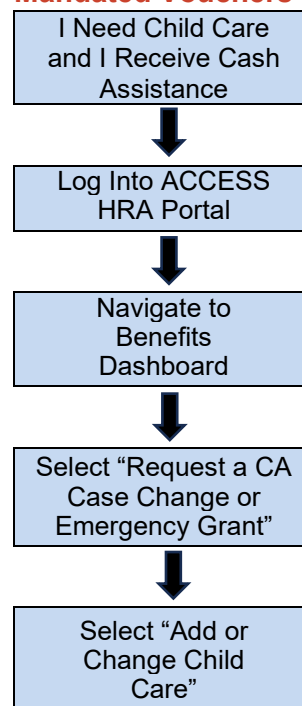
As mentioned, an additional year of subsidized child care services is also available, through the Transitional Child Care (TCC) Benefits program, to families previously receiving cash assistance but who are no longer eligible. Interested families are encouraged to contact the TCC team at ACS directly via email for more details.

Non-Mandated Child Care Vouchers

Non-mandated vouchers, available to low-income households, are issued and renewed directly through ACS using the MyCity platform.

Information that must be provided to ACS includes applicant (parent/guardian) information, details about the children needing care, information about other members of the household, child/family needs, family employment/schedule, income information, child care provider information, documentation regarding child’s residency in the City, and proof of the applicant’s income. Because the child care voucher program utilizes federal CCDF funding, proof of United States citizenship must be

Enrollment Process for Mandated Vouchers



Source: NYC Human Resources Administration

provided for the enrolling child. This requirement does not extend to the family of the child.

Child Welfare Vouchers

Finally, child welfare vouchers, the smallest pool of child care vouchers, are arranged through the child’s case worker. Welfare vouchers are temporary, and are issued to families in need of child care assistance who are also receiving protective, preventative or foster care services. When a parent/guardian is under investigation for allegations of child abuse or maltreatment, ACS visits the home, gathers evidence, and conducts interviews with all children and caregivers in the household. Within 60 days of the investigation, Child Protective Services (CPS) will determine whether the claims may be substantiated.

Appendix C – Enrollment Process

During this process, the household is entitled to help with child care, along with a host of other community-based support services. These include medical, mental health and legal services, parenting support, education and job training, drug and alcohol treatment, family violence interventions and several others. While child welfare vouchers expire once the child's case is closed, many of these services remain available to the parent/guardian as long as they are needed.

Infant and Toddler, Head Start, 3-K, Pre-K

Most parents/guardians use DOE's MySchools enrollment platform to research and apply for programming. After creating a MySchools account and providing some information about the child (name, age, address, current enrollment status, and gender) the guardian may then search the School Directory for programming.

Pre-K and 3-K programs have designated tabs under the "Browse NYC Schools" section of the MySchools website. Programming for children under the age of three can also be found under the 3-K tab. These include infant care (labeled "EarlyLearn – Infant"), toddler care (labeled "EarlyLearn – Toddler"), and Early Head Start (labeled "Early Head Start Transitional"). The Head Start, Early Head Start, and 3-K/Pre-K Extended Day/Year programs operate year-round, and households may submit an enrollment application at any time of year. School Day 3-K and Pre-K programs coincide with the start of the school year in early September.

Each of these programs follow a similar enrollment process. MySchools will pre-populate suggested programming based on the enrolling child's age. The available filters are used to narrow down the type and length of programming the family needs. The user may also enter an address, or use the interactive map, to narrow down available programming by borough or neighborhood.

A list of the schools and/or independent education providers meeting the family's programming and location criteria is generated. Households may include up to 12 providers on a child's application and are asked to rank their selections in order of preference. After an application has been submitted, each provider will review and respond with either an outright acceptance offer, or a waitlist offer. Waitlist offers may be declined, and any waitlist offer accepted will decline any previously accepted offer. If approved, Head Start enrollees must provide documentation verifying at least two qualifying reasons for care (see Appendix A).

The Infant and Toddler Extended Day program also operates year-round, and enrollment qualifications are nearly identical to the ACS non-mandated voucher program requirements. As with ACS, applications are submitted through the MyCity system and households must complete a lengthy personal profile before program eligibility can be determined. A separate Eligibility Screener asks questions pertaining to family income, receipt of cash assistance, child's age, type of care needed, and expected hours of required care.

Appendix D – Conflicting and Outdated Information

As noted, this compilation is not exhaustive. It is recommended that agencies conduct reviews of not only their own webpages, but also those of their child care counterparts to ensure information is consistent.

ACS

ACS' [Apply for Child Care](#) page includes dead links in the “Families Experiencing Homelessness” and “Families Receiving Child Welfare Services” sections. The ACS [Find Child Care](#) page includes dead links in the “How Can I Find Child Care?” section.

The [Apply for Child Care](#) page contains an e-mail address for the Transitional Child Care (TCC) program and instructs individuals requesting information to reach out directly. OSC contacted this address requesting some general information about TCC and received a response that provided no additional insight into the program's operation or how one might apply.

The Mayor's Management Report describes center-based child care regulation divided by age group, with center-based Infant and Toddler and pre-school programming regulated by DOHMH, while school-aged, center-based programming is regulated by OCFS. However, the [ACS website](#) describes regulation broken down by type of care, where center-based child care is regulated by DOHMH and home-based care is regulated by OCFS. It is unclear which is correct.

DOE

DOE's Infant and Toddler [Enrollment Support](#) page includes outdated Income Eligibility figures from 2023. Disparities pertaining to program eligibility appear on the Enroll Grade-By-Grade and Enrollment Support pages for some DOE programs.

HRA

The [HRA Cash Assistance](#) page links to several outdated resources. These include the links to the “Automated Child Care Eligibility System” (ACEE) which appears to be a benefit enrollment platform no longer in use, and to a resource titled “Child Care Provider Search,” which is described as an “easy to use search tool to locate NYC contracted & non-contracted Child Care Providers & short list/filter based on client needs.” This link brings the user to an interactive map titled “Now & Then” which overlays current satellite images of the City with historic areal images dating back to 1924.

Across Departments

The term “Contracted Childcare,” appears to have been used to describe several different programs in recent years. At one time, it described child care vouchers issued to infants and toddlers through ACS as part of the [EarlyLearn NYC](#) program (now renamed Infant and Toddler and operated through DOE). The information on the ACS EarlyLearn page is roughly five years out of date.

Currently, the term Contracted Childcare is used in the context of free and low-cost Extended Day/Year child care provided through DOE, and, in some cases, to describe 3-K and Pre-K special education enrollment. However, the DOE [Enrollment Support](#) page still describes Contracted Childcare as a programming option within the discontinued EarlyLearn NYC initiative.

Removing outdated information found across both the DOE and ACS websites would likely alleviate confusion around who operates the Contracted Childcare program and who the program serves.

Further references to EarlyLearn can also be found when utilizing the MySchools enrollment platform, despite no mention of the term

Appendix D – Conflicting and Outdated Information

EarlyLearn on DOE's Enroll Grade-By-Grade page for Infant and Toddler programming.

If the City intends to end the use of the names EarlyLearn and EarlyLearn NYC, references to these programs should be thoroughly purged from the City's public-facing websites.

Appendix E – Population by Selected Characteristics and Neighborhood

| Neighborhood | Children Under Five | Two-Year-Olds | Two-Year-Olds in Households Earning \$250,000 or less |
|--|---------------------|---------------|---|
| Borough Park & Kensington | 21,977 | 4,355 | 4,175 |
| Williamsburg & Greenpoint | 19,033 | 4,070 | 3,135 |
| Jamaica, St. Albans, & Hollis | 17,372 | 3,340 | 2,908 |
| Astoria & Queensbridge | 13,785 | 1,661 | 1,113 |
| Morrisania, Tremont, Belmont, & West Farms | 11,355 | 2,363 | 2,363 |
| Bedford-Stuyvesant | 10,892 | 1,510 | 1,101 |
| East New York & Cypress Hills | 10,872 | 2,933 | 2,933 |
| Soundview & Parkchester | 10,811 | 2,797 | 2,436 |
| Melrose, Mott Haven, Longwood, & Hunts Point | 10,714 | 2,199 | 2,199 |
| Jackson Heights & East Elmhurst | 10,491 | 2,407 | 2,278 |
| Upper West Side | 10,491 | 1,580 | 117 |
| Fresh Meadows, Hillcrest, & Briarwood | 10,446 | 1,585 | 1,585 |
| Upper East Side & Roosevelt Island | 10,336 | 2,689 | 353 |
| North Shore | 9,615 | 1,444 | 1,041 |
| Co-op City & Throgs Neck | 9,499 | 2,189 | 2,189 |
| Queens Village, Bellerose, & Rosedale | 9,105 | 1,825 | 729 |
| Washington Heights & Inwood | 8,918 | 1,360 | 1,272 |
| Ridgewood, Maspeth, & Middle Village | 8,863 | 1,386 | 1,061 |
| Sheepshead Bay & Gravesend (East) | 8,856 | 2,225 | 2,051 |
| South Shore | 8,848 | 2,715 | 2,715 |
| Downtown Brooklyn & Fort Greene | 8,713 | 1,280 | 901 |
| Pelham Parkway & Morris Park | 8,475 | 3,072 | 3,072 |
| Bensonhurst & Bath Beach | 8,372 | 1,903 | 1,546 |
| Flatbush & Midwood | 8,357 | 629 | 525 |
| Highbridge & Concourse | 8,149 | 767 | 767 |
| Morris Heights & Mount Hope | 8,140 | 1,335 | 1,272 |
| Bay Ridge & Dyker Heights | 8,109 | 2,135 | 1,844 |
| Elmhurst & Corona | 8,028 | 2,278 | 2,044 |
| Wakefield, Williamsbridge, & Eastchester | 7,925 | 834 | 536 |
| Financial District & Greenwich Village | 7,647 | 1,240 | 219 |
| Flushing, Murray Hill, & Whitestone | 7,326 | 105 | 50 |
| Crown Heights (North) | 7,315 | 800 | 499 |
| Park Slope & Carroll Gardens | 7,310 | 1,031 | 288 |
| The Rockaways | 7,281 | 1,662 | 1,350 |
| Morningside Heights & Hamilton Heights | 6,615 | 1,613 | 1,613 |
| Canarsie & Flatlands | 6,521 | 2,178 | 1,517 |
| East Harlem | 6,518 | 420 | 278 |
| Fordham, Bedford Park, & Norwood | 6,366 | 1,263 | 1,193 |
| Kew Gardens, Richmond Hill, & Woodhaven | 6,325 | 1,727 | 1,529 |
| Riverdale, Kingsbridge, & Marble Hill | 6,303 | 1,651 | 1,651 |
| Mid-Island | 6,110 | 1,562 | 1,494 |
| Forest Hills & Rego Park | 6,038 | 1,170 | 972 |
| Long Island City, Sunnyside, & Woodside | 5,665 | 1,528 | 647 |
| South Ozone Park & Howard Beach | 5,654 | 808 | 602 |
| Ocean Hill & Brownsville | 5,584 | 734 | 734 |
| East Flatbush | 5,137 | 1,037 | 1,037 |
| Coney Island & Brighton Beach | 4,967 | 1,205 | 978 |
| Sunset Park & Windsor Terrace | 4,716 | 595 | 391 |
| Crown Heights (South) | 4,425 | 1,107 | 499 |
| Harlem | 4,192 | 980 | 760 |
| Midtown, East Midtown, & Flatiron | 3,946 | 586 | 343 |
| Auburndale, Bayside, & Douglaston | 3,326 | 586 | 543 |
| Bushwick | 3,140 | 334 | 303 |
| Lower East Side & Chinatown | 3,105 | 1,083 | 646 |
| Chelsea & Hell's Kitchen | 1,840 | 822 | 569 |
| NYC Totals | 451,919 | 88,438 | 70,947 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau¹⁹, OSC Analysis

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Collaboration between ACS and DOE provides some ACS/HRA child care voucher holders with the benefits of DOE's education-focused programming
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, Annual County and Puerto Rico Municipio Resident Population Estimates by Single Year of Age and Sex: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2024, June 2025, <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/datasets/2020-2024/counties/asrh/cc-est2024-syasex-36.csv>
This data set is used throughout this report for age-specific population counts
- ³ New York City Human Resources Administration, *HRA Monthly Fact Sheet - July 2025*, September 2025, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/hra_facts/2025/hra_facts_2025_07.pdf
- ⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) - 2024 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 16 October 2025, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/access.html>
Note: The Census categorizes children as either "under 6 years" or "6 to 17 years".
- ⁵ New York City Administration for Children's Services, *Flash Report - July 2025*, September 2025, p.2, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/flashReports/2025/07.pdf>
- ⁶ The City of New York, *Mayor's Management Report*, September 2025, p.62, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/2025_mmr.pdf
- ⁷ New York State Office of Children and Family Services, CCAP Monthly CCBG Status Report Survey Results, 1 December 2025, <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/ccap/CCBG-Status-Survey.xlsx>
Note: Publicly available waitlist figures can be found at this link; OSC has been provided with an updated figure for inclusion in this report.
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Prepared by the Office of the State Deputy Comptroller for the City of New York

Brian Stanley, Senior Municipal Financial Analyst

Office of the New York State Comptroller
110 State Street, Albany, NY 12236
(518) 474-4044 www.osc.ny.gov

