



TESTIMONY
2026-2 JOINT LEGISLATIVE
BUDGET HEARING
HUMAN SERVICE
February 5, 2026

Written testimony submitted by [Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance](#) at [Adirondack Community Foundation](#)

INTRODUCTION

The [Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance](#) at [Adirondack Community Foundation](#) appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony to the 2026-7 Joint Budget Hearing on Human Services.

Our written testimony is the collaborative work of our members reflecting the expertise and experience of early childhood educators, family support providers, regional child care resource and referral agencies, health care and early intervention providers and agencies, businesses, municipalities, and families. Founded in 2015, the Alliance connects a network of public and private programs that provide services to young children and their families sources, making it easier for providers and parents to find needed resources. We provide a forum for organizations and individuals committed to this work to share best practices, identify funding opportunities, and discuss and work together to solve common challenges. At the same time, our relationships across the region help us identify gaps, bridge services, and leverage community resources to improve early childhood services in our rural region.

The Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance at Adirondack Community Foundation (Alliance) appreciates the opportunity to share with you our perspective on the 2026-27 Executive budget and recommendations for improving services for children and families in the Adirondacks.

2026-27 Executive Budget

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCAP)

The Executive Budget provides historic increases to the Child Care Assistance Program. An increase of \$1.2 billion will dramatically increase access to child care and help providers realize stability with the reduction or elimination of waiting lists.

The Alliance also appreciates the \$155 million in supplemental funding to support CCAP during the 2025-26 FY. However, we hope that these funds will be provided to counties unhindered so that families can come off the waiting lists as soon as possible.

The Alliance strongly supports the proposal to substantially increase funding in the CCAP program and look forward to working with the Legislature to make sure the supplemental funding for 2025-26 is accessible to counties as we look towards a system of universal child care.

CHILD CARE ZONING

The Alliance supports the Executive budget proposal to include \$1 million to support expenses related to child care zoning initiatives. While additional information is needed about how the program will be implemented, the Alliance appreciates the partnership with our local municipalities, and we hope to be of assistance in convening stakeholders in our region.

CHILD CARE LICENSURE

Proposals in the Executive budget seek to streamline and provide flexibility regarding professional development and training requirements for child care providers by increasing the number of years licensed from 4 years to 6 years. In addition, the Executive Budget would remove strict training requirements for all providers with the goal of allowing the Office of Children and Families Services (OCFS) to establish training requirements better aligned to the needs of providers.

The Alliance supports these proposals and looks forward to working with OCFS on best supporting providers with professional development and training tailored to their needs.

Empire State Campaign for Child Care (ESCCC)

The Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance is a coalition partner with the Empire State Campaign for Child Care. We are active members of the campaign's advocacy agenda and would like to amplify our 2026-27 Budget and Legislative Agenda. (Linked [HERE](#))

INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE

CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTERS (CCRCs)

[Child Care Resource Centers](#) are community based not-for-profit organizations dedicated to the support of child care. Embedded in our communities, CCRCs are uniquely positioned to provide support to new and existing child care providers and assist families in identifying programs. These community-based organizations provide professional development, training, and financial support to help new providers become licensed, and existing providers succeed.

The Alliance supports the proposed increase of \$5 million dollars included in the Executive Budget (total funding of \$30 million).

QUALITYstarsNY

The foundation for a high-quality early childhood education system rests on standards that are based on long-standing and current research that demonstrates how these standards lead to improved outcomes for children. Continuous quality improvement systems, like [QUALITYstarsNY](#), provide the framework of support to programs, staff, and providers to achieve these standards and along the way supports the sustainability of the program. At the same time, they provide families with up-to-date information on the quality of programs in their community, enabling them to choose programs that best meet them and their child's needs.

Alliance strongly encourages the state's ongoing support of QUALITYstarsNY.

SUPPORT CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

[Help Me Grow](#) is a nationally recognized, evidenced-based model that improves outcomes and reduces disparities in early developmental health and family well-being. Help Me Grow currently operates in 17 counties throughout the state and is based in Western New York, Long Island, Monroe County/Finger Lakes, Oswego, and Onondaga County. The Alliance hopes that as Help Me Grow continues to expand across New York State as we work to bring the program to the Adirondacks

Help Me Grow is primary prevention at its finest. The HMG model works across sectors (health care, child care, human services) to promote child development, make developmental and social emotional screening universally available, and provide ongoing support for families to effectively navigate systems to access services. New York remains 49th in conducting routine developmental screening. Children need to be identified early so interventions can begin as soon as possible. Help Me Grow is a proven prevention model that brings communities together to foster strong families and ensure that all children get the start they deserve.

The Alliance supports an increase of \$500,000 (total of \$1.5 million) to support ongoing work of Help Me Grow in the 2026-27 fiscal year and encourage their expansion around the state.

Healthy Families New York is a home visiting program that provides supports to families to improve the health and well-being of infants and children through home-based services. Healthy Families North Country provides these services to Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton and Warren Counties (including the St. Regis Mohawk Nations).

The Alliance supports the proposed \$26 million and encourages the Legislature to make an additional investment to support the growing need for support.

CLOSING

Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance appreciates the opportunity to share with you our communities' recommendations for improving services to children and families in the Adirondacks. We look forward to working with you during this legislative session.

For more information, please contact Kate Ryan, Director at Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance at Adirondack Community Foundation at kate.ryan@adkfoundation.org.