



Governor's Budget Hearings November 17, 2007

I am Jacqueline Cady, Chair of the Early Childhood Development Initiative of Rochester and Monroe County, a collaboration of over 20 agencies who have worked for fifteen years to improve and maintain the quality of early care and education.

We applaud the decision of the Governor to dramatically increase funding for PreKindergarten. Rochester has a long history of high quality PreK. Our comprehensive and longitudinal evaluation (called RECAP) shows that our four year olds in the City of Rochester are experiencing the very best PreK classrooms seen anywhere in the world.

But most brain development occurs in the years 0-3. And PreK only serves the 4 year olds. And what allows our at risk four year olds to access PreK? Child care subsidies. We have worked very hard in this community to integrate child care and PreK. Over 55% of our PreK children are in full day child care environments, again, evaluated as the highest quality anywhere. But how do we get them there? Subsidies.

We use used millions of local charitable dollars and won significant Federal grants to provide expert training and coaching and mentoring, developmentally appropriate equipment and materials, support the accreditation of center based and in home child care. In other words, with a base line of subsidies, WE can provide the quality. But without the base line of child care subsidies, we cannot reach our children at risk.

Five years ago, child care subsidies covered 13,500 children in Monroe, up to 200% of poverty, at the NYS promulgated market rate. . Today we offer subsidies to only 8500, a 38% reduction, with eligibility reduced to 165% of poverty. Now that our county has implemented the current market rate, the NYS allocation to Monroe will not even last the year- it will not even cover 5000 fewer children than were served five years ago.

I know that you appreciate the value of early education- that's why you increased support for PreK. But PreK is only reaching 4 year olds. I am asking that the Governor increase the state budget for child care subsidies to support those critical years 0-3, and to ensure that the 4 year olds get to PreK.

I realize that you are hoping to CUT NYS expenses, not INCREASE. Please look at the research from the Perry Hi Scope project the ABCDarian project, the Brookings Institute, Particularly look at Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman. There is no evidence that baseball stadiums and hi tech parks and job development grants pay back anything. There are years and mountains of evidence that high quality early education pays back a minimum of \$7 for \$1 in lower school costs, reduced incarceration, and high employment rates. Please help us to provide high quality early education.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.