



2021 PRIORITY PEDIATRIC POLICY, BUDGET & PRACTICE ISSUES

New York State American Academy of Pediatrics (NYS AAP)
A Coalition of AAP NY Chapters 1, 2 & 3

NEW YORK'S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEED STATE HELP NOW

Increase Taxes on the Wealthiest New Yorkers

As New York faces the challenges of addressing and bouncing back from the COVID19 pandemic and the overarching budget short falls, **we strongly support increased taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers to help fill our state's gapping budget deficit.** Although anticipated help from the federal government will be most welcome and helpful, it is at its best a one-time infusion. Unfortunately, New York's budget problems are multi-year in scope.

We support New York State moving toward a more progressive tax structure now, this year. We need to assure that our New York families and their children have the resources they need to not just survive, but to thrive through this health and economic crisis. Rather than cut the parts of state budget that support families and children by slashing health care supports, housing supports, nutritional supports and educational supports, we urge our state leaders to craft a fair and equitable tax structure that

ensures that those that can, pay their fair share to support all New Yorkers.

Reducing Child Poverty is a priority goal. Our youngest infants and children are our poorest New Yorkers.

Over 2 million New Yorkers, including 712,000 children, lived in poverty in 2019. And with the pandemic, hundreds of thousands of more young children and families have fallen into poverty since February of 2020.

- 325,000 additional children fell into poverty as a result of the pandemic. 4,200 lost a caregiver.
- New York children are more likely to live in poverty than in 32 other states, with 18% (nearly 1 in 5) experiencing poverty in 2019.
- In 2020, a family (2 adults, 2 children) fell below the poverty threshold if their annual income fell below \$26,246 (\$2,187/month).

Twenty percent of our children under 5 live at or near the poverty level. That is one in five children! Each of those children will encounter the deprivations of poverty and its significant stressors at a point in their development when they are most vulnerable to the negative physical, developmental and emotional impacts of poverty. (Stress and hunger can impair brain development, which occurs most rapidly when children are very young, and lead to lifelong deficits.)

Families with young children face poverty at greater rates than other families. **Sadly, in this state at this time, the birth of a child is the leading trigger of "poverty spells" experienced by families.**

Strengthening family economic security benefits is an intergenerational investment. Research has shown that poor children most often become poor adults and the generational stressors continue into each successor generation.

Therefore, we urge our state to invest in children and families now.

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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NYS AAP

Federal Anti Poverty Programs are Only Part of the Solution

The recently passed federal American Rescue Plan, modeled after the American Family Act, would lift 4.5 million children out of poverty, cutting the child poverty rate nearly in half (45%).

In New York, roughly 225,000 children would be lifted out of poverty.

However, the American Rescue Act is only temporary and will expire at the end of the year.

Additionally, there are roughly 107,000 children in immigrant families in New York who are excluded from this benefit because the American Rescue Act excludes filers who use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), rather than a Social Security Number (SSN).

These families have been especially hard hit during the recession and have cruelly been denied federal coronavirus relief. Many of these families also have parents who are “essential workers.”

Solution for New York

By leveraging the Empire State Child Credit (ESCC), New York can support the children who have been excluded from receiving federal aid during this crisis.

We must enact the strategic reforms included in A.3146 (Hevesi) that expands the ESCC to cover currently

excluded children and children living in deep poverty by:

- Increasing the maximum available credit to \$500 for children ages 4 to 16
- Providing an enhanced maximum credit of \$1,000 for children under 4 years old (who experience poverty at higher rates than older children and are more vulnerable to its impacts)

New York must make A.3146 (Hevesi) effective immediately for children excluded from federal aid and phase-in the reform for all eligible children in one year when the American Family Act expires.

To do less would abandon the children and families who most need help and support at this time.

Budget Equity

Pediatricians are clear in our resolve that New York must not and cannot cut child and family support programs this year, or any year. The children and families of New York are depending on all of us to help push our state forward toward a more equitable distribution of vital resources to ensure that every child can be healthy, educated, and safely and securely housed.

Our state budget needs to assure that all children are:

HEALTHY

With:

- Access to quality, culturally competent pediatric primary and pediatric specialty care,

- Full coverage of screening of social determinants of care in the pediatric setting,
- Screening and Payment for Developmental Screening as appropriate,
- Access to high quality and age-appropriate mental health services, and
- A full year of post partum care for all Medicaid enrollees to help ensure healthy Moms and healthy babies.

EDUCATED

- With access to an equitable, safe and nurturing environment.
- Schools and childcare providers must have the resources to equitably meet the needs of the children they serve.
- The learning environments must be safe, healthy and toxin free.
- Our state must get serious about financing educational equity, so that every child care center and every school can offer quality, competent and caring educational opportunities to all of children.
- Schools and childcare centers must be environmentally safe for all children. No lead, no toxins, and lots of fresh and filtered air movement.

WITH STABLE SAFE HOUSING & STABLE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

All children must have a reliable, toxic free home and community.



Without investments in housing and environmental equity we are condemning more than a fifth of our children to enormous challenges of ill health, both physical and mental, as they grow and mature. This is a classic, invest in healthy housing and healthy communities now, or pay enormous amounts in health care, and criminal justice costs going forward into future generations. The choice is ours. A New York State progressive tax structure can make a positive difference in lives of children now and in the lives of the generations to come.

Our state leaders in the Executive and the Legislature branches of government know what needs to be done. We are not at time when restoring cuts to vital programs is a true call to action. A true call to action is implementing a progressive tax structure so children and families and advocates don't have to fight for program restorations every budget cycle.

The children and families of New York deserve better than a Hunger Games budget every year. Let's finally do what a real progressive state can and must do. This year let's design and implement a progressive tax structure so those with the most can share with those with least to assure that all children and families have a level playing field to achieve their full potential.

