

### **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS**

*A draft of the New York State Child Care Development Fund State Plan was posted on the OCFS website and e-mailed to many constituency groups and stakeholders. Comments could be made electronically via e-mail or in person at three public hearings.*

***Public Hearing Notices** (see Attachment 2.2a and 2.2b) were published in several newspapers and a private funders' newsletter on Sunday, April 19 and Monday, April 20, 2009 as follows:*

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Albany Times-Union	\$214.20
Amsterdam News	\$1,052.70
Buffalo News	\$3,966.27
El Diario	\$3,180.00
New York Daily News	\$13,204.46
New York Not-for-Profit Press	\$270.00
Rochester Democrat Chronicle	\$ 1,980.90
Syracuse Post Standard	\$194.21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 24,062.74</b>

*Public Hearings were held in locations and at times that would maximize participation of the public; in Rensselaer, at the home office of the Office of Children and Family Services from 10am to 2pm on Tuesday, May 5; in Rochester at the regional child care resource and referral agency from 11am to 3pm on Tuesday, May 12; and in New York City at the Administration for Children and Families' office from 10am to 2pm on Friday, May 15.*

*Dr. Janice Molnar, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Child Care Services, provided an overview of the plan (see Attachment 2.2d) to people in attendance at each of the hearings. The following is a summary of comments received, by topic area:*

#### **Family Share**

*Individuals recommended that parents under the poverty level pay a family share no more than 10 percent of the household income, or pay no family share at all.*

*It was recommended that the Child Care Work Group conduct a county-by-county evaluation of the effect of the family share on families who receive child care subsidies. Based on that evaluation, determine what percentage of income constitutes an affordable family share and adopt that family share as a statewide standard.*

#### **County Plans**

*It was recommended that whenever an amendment is made to a district plan that the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) obtain written assurance that the district is in compliance with all regulations before approving a plan changes the family share.*

### **Children with Special Needs**

*Recommendations included that OCFS require districts to report the number of children who receive care with an enhanced rate due to special needs and provide parents and providers with clearer guidance on the eligibility and procedures for the special needs rate for child care.*

### **Child Support**

*A recommendation was made that OCFS repeal the child support requirement that families actively pursue child support as a condition of eligibility for the child care subsidy program.*

### **Equal access for families with older teens**

*It was recommended that OCFS require that all districts have one uniform budgeting rule that 18-, 19- or 20-year-olds be included in the budget if it is beneficial to the family.*

### **Lead Poisoning**

*It was recommended that OCFS require visual inspections and dust wipe sampling for lead paint hazards in all regulated day care homes or centers and the homes of all informal providers where the facility was built before 1978. This individual also recommended that OCFS partner with lead poisoning prevention advocates and child care resource and referral agencies in specific communities to reach children at risk before they are poisoned. This individual also recommended that OCFS inspectors be required to make appropriate referrals so that dangerous houses get inspected by local health officials.*

### **Market Rates**

*Recommendations included that OCFS require that all counties pay an enhanced market rate for accredited programs and that OCFS allow for more payments to child care providers for some absences, which would allow providers to count on predictable revenue to offer high quality care.*

### **Applicants' eligibility for child care benefits**

*It was recommended that OCFS simplify the application for child care benefits allowing for greater access to the child care subsidy program.*

### **Eligibility**

*It was recommended that OCFS establish a year long eligibility period for child care benefits and that OCFS modify the procedures for income verification to self attestation in order to make child care more accessible to those parents with multiple and/or changing employers.*

*One individual recommended that New York State OCFS include in its State Plan a provision allowing:*

- (1) Income eligibility for families with a child enrolled in a Head Start collaboration program to be continuous as long as the child remains enrolled in the collaboration program for up to two years; and*
- (2) Income eligibility for families with a child dually enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program to remain eligible until the subsequent year.*

### **Quality Earmarks**

*It was recommended that OCFS restore funds to support the Educational Incentive Program.*

*Other recommendations included that New York State define and enforce quality standards for all subsidized providers, consistently reward caregivers of subsidized children providing high quality care, and that OCFS make a greater investment in child care subsidies for early care and education.*