

STRINGER

DEMOCRAT FOR MAYOR

RISE

Reform, **I**ntegrate,
Support and **E**mpower

**SCOTT STRINGER'S
PLAN TO SUPPORT
CHILDCARE PROVIDERS**

“Every parent in this city knows the stress of finding childcare. But we rarely stop to think about how hard we make it for the people providing that care. These are overwhelmingly women—immigrants, women of color—running small businesses out of their homes, working long hours, and jumping through endless bureaucratic hoops just to keep their doors open. That’s not just unfair, it’s bad policy. The RISE plan is about changing that. We’re going to cut the red tape, streamline the system, and start treating childcare providers like the essential workers they are—because that’s exactly what they are.”- **Scott Stringer**

OVERVIEW

Childcare providers are essential to New York City’s families, economy, and social fabric—every day taking on the vital responsibility of caring for hundreds of thousands of children while their parents are at work. But despite their indispensable role and the high demand for childcare, childcare providers persistently face a host of obstacles to starting, sustaining, and growing their businesses.

As of 2024, New York City had approximately 8,500 licensed and registered childcare programs for kids under five, including 736 family daycare homes, 5,569 group family daycare homes, and 2,262 daycare centers. Still, there are more than twice as many children under five as there are licensed daycare spots in the city. While the majority of kids under five enrolled in licensed daycare attend center-based programs—which can accommodate significantly more children than home-based programs—home-based child care (family and group family) constitutes the majority of the city’s providers. Home-based childcare providers care for a disproportionate share of infants and toddlers; they’re also more prevalent in “childcare deserts” where center-based care is more scarce, and are generally more affordable and often offer more flexible options (such as nighttime availability) than center-based childcare.

The overwhelming majority of New York City childcare providers and staff are women, most of whom are nonwhite, immigrants and/or multilingual—particularly in home-based childcare, where around 70% of providers are immigrants. While some childcare programs in the city are larger-scale for-profit businesses, including national chains and franchises, or part of bigger nonprofit organizations, the majority (center- and home-based) are small, independent businesses. Home-based providers generally serve at once as the business’s owner and operator and as an educator and caregiver, with one or two assistants for programs with more children.



<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/factsheets/2024-DCCS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<https://fiveboro.nyc/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ChildCarePaperSummary.pdf>

<https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/blog/child-care-services-would-cease-to-happen-without-immigrant-child-care-workers/>

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/6501f825b2dff90bf8f27a36/1694627883527/High+Cal+ling%2C+Low+Wages_Melodia_

<https://fiveboro.nyc/childcare/CNYCA.pdf>

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The Problem

For both new and existing childcare providers, navigating New York City's complex regulations and requirements for opening and maintaining a childcare program is a challenging process with little centralized support.

While ensuring that childcare programs adhere to rigorous health, safety, and staffing standards is of paramount importance, the existing system for issuing licenses and ensuring compliance is rife with bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of coordination, complicated and duplicative paperwork, and poor or confusing communication that frequently delays the opening of new childcare programs or disrupts the operations of existing ones, leading to lost income, burnout, and professional instability for providers and leaving families scrambling for childcare.

The problem is particularly acute for home-based providers, who must manage long hours of caring for children and all administrative duties entirely on their own.

The Solution

RISE – Reform, Integrate, Support and Empower – will support and streamline licensing and compliance processes for childcare providers, breaking down bureaucratic hurdles to opening and sustaining childcare businesses while ensuring oversight. This will be done through training and hiring licensing navigators, creating a centralized online portal to enable cross-agency coordination and provide transparency to childcare providers, introducing portable background checks for childcare staff, and piloting extended and/or expedited licenses for experienced providers with strong compliance history. Additionally, RISE will expand pathways to credentials that help childcare providers advance their careers.

“RISE is part of a bigger promise I’m making to New York families: We’re going to make this city work for you again. That means building real housing families can actually live in through ROOF, creating safe and joyful places for kids to play with PLAY NYC, and finally giving childcare providers the support they need to care for our kids without drowning in bureaucracy. These aren’t pipe dreams. They’re practical fixes rooted in respect—for parents, for providers, and for every child who deserves a shot in this city.”- **Scott Stringer**



1. Childcare Provider Licensing and Compliance “Navigator” and Centralization Initiative

One of the most significant challenges for current and prospective New York City childcare providers—particularly home-based childcare providers—is managing the sheer complexity of the regulations, paperwork, and requirements attendant to obtaining and maintaining a license. **RISE** will establish city staff and resources at the Mayor’s Office Of Child Care And Early Childhood Education specifically dedicated to assisting childcare providers navigate New York City’s licensing and other bureaucratic processes, as well as create a cross-agency system for centralizing these processes.

- Establish a **dedicated team of multilingual licensing specialists to provide hands-on, individualized support to childcare providers in understanding and completing each step of the licensing process.** These “licensing navigators,” embedded within the Mayor’s Office of Child Care would answer questions about and clarify regulatory language and requirements; assist with gathering and submitting documentation, preparing for site inspections, and meeting health and safety standards; and offer guidance on zoning, engagement with landlords and building management, and other facility-related issues.
- **Create a unified online portal to streamline and track all childcare provider licensing, compliance, inspection, payment, and other processes** across OCFS, DOHMH, ACS, DOE, FDNY, DOB, and other relevant agencies. The portal will centralize and integrate information from agencies and childcare providers under a single project number and timeline for each childcare program, enabling cross-agency coordination to reduce bureaucratic delays, duplicative requests, and other issues that negatively affect childcare providers’ ability to open and sustain their businesses as well as provide greater transparency. The portal will also be a resource to navigators in assisting childcare providers and provide status updates and alerts to childcare providers.

2. Support Experienced Childcare Providers and Staff With Licensing and Career Mobility

To reduce administrative burdens and strengthen childcare workforce stability, RISE will work with New York State to implement reforms aimed at retaining and supporting experienced childcare providers and staff and avoiding disruptions to childcare programs:

- **Make childcare staff background checks portable**, allowing childcare workers to change employers or move between programs operated by the same provider without repeating the entire background check process. This would allow workers to avoid the long delays and lost income that often result from the reverification process and keep workers in the childcare sector while maintaining safety standards.
- **Launch a pilot program offering extended and/or expedited licenses and simplified renewal processes for childcare providers with a strong compliance history, low staff turnover, and consistent program quality.** Currently, licenses for existing childcare programs must be renewed every two years, and licenses are tied to sites, not providers—meaning that providers must get a new license if their program changes locations or they wish to open a new one. Eligible providers would need to renew less frequently (for example, every three years) and would benefit from an expedited approval process when opening new childcare programs or changing sites.

3. Establish and Expand Higher Education Pathways for Childcare Provider Credentials

RISE will expand access to the Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate—a nationally recognized credential that is a stepping stone for childcare provider career advancement and business growth. In addition to bolstering childcare provider skills, knowledge, and marketability, the CDA enables New York City home-based providers to enroll three-year-olds under the DOE's 3-K initiative and operate mixed-age (toddler/infant/3-K) programs, and in center-based childcare programs is a requirement to serve as a group teacher for infants and toddlers (along with a study plan to obtain an associate's degree in early childhood education within seven years).

According to a survey by the Center for New York City Affairs, roughly a quarter of home-based childcare providers have a CDA, but over half are interested in obtaining one. Building on the CUNY School of Professional Studies' CDA program—the only existing credit-bearing CDA program in New York City, with credits applicable to an associate's and/or bachelor's degree at seven New York City schools – RISE will:

- Partner with other New York City colleges and universities to establish additional credit-bearing CDA programs, ensuring that all programs are multilingual and provide flexible scheduling and remote options to accommodate the schedules of working childcare providers
- Scale up financial assistance, scholarship, and loan forgiveness programs to make CDA certification very low cost or free for childcare providers
- Invest in multilingual, community-based outreach to increase awareness of the CDA programs and financial assistance and provide application support
- Ensure credits are fully transferable to an expanded list of two- and four-year degree programs

