

***Letters to the Editor***

*These templates are offered to make it easier to submit a letter to the editor – to local newspapers, blogs, or other media. Just cut and paste what you find useful.*

*A few guidelines: LTEs should be around 250 words to increase the chances of getting printed. There is room for “localization” in these, but it should only be a sentence or two, unless other paragraphs are eliminated.*

*Also, the opening of each letter was conceived to tie to newspaper coverage – as many communities have NOT had local coverage of our campaigns for pre-K and child care. This makes a more general connection to the larger “education problem” and “school readiness” stories that most papers are covering.*

**Just scroll down for our templates created as a starting point for parents, early childhood educators and public school administrators.**

**#1 PARENT: Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:

As the parent (of a preschooler; of young children), I see many news stories about the challenges facing New York schools. There is more talk about pre-K and child care, but our state officials are still not doing enough to support young children and our families.

Pre-K for four-year-olds expanded last year, but mostly in New York City only. Children here in (county, school district) are still waiting for a seat. Private preschool is expensive. In this economy, it is out of reach for many families, including mine.

 Finding affordable quality child care is also a challenge for most of us. New York is now home to the most expensive child care costs in the nation. In (your community) child care for an infant can cost more than ($17,000 in a center in NYC, more than $13,000 elsewhere). On paper, the state offers help to families up to 200% of poverty. But here in (your county), the county simply runs out of money and simply stops offering subsidies before the end of the year.

 You don’t have to look far to find data that that makes the case for investing in child care and pre-K. The evidence is clear and convincing. The benefits of investing in quality early learning programs are well-documented. Children are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to succeed, parents can be more productive at work and increase their earnings, employers can attract and retain employees, with affordable child care and pre-K the new “must-haves” for middle calls families. Taxpayers see a return of $8 on every dollar, in reduced need for costly remedial education and higher graduation rates.

 Yet right now, our state budget includes NO new funding for quality child care or only a modest increase for pre-K. I hope you will join me in contacting your state legislator and urge them to fight to include these investments in the state’s final 2018-19 budget.

**NAME**

**CHILDREN’S NAMES AND AGES**

**ADDRESS**

**EMAIL and/or PHONE NUMBER**

**#2 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR: Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:

As an early childhood teacher, I have the privilege of helping young children learn every day. They are like little sponges and after X years, they never stop amazing me. That is why I am deeply concerned about the future of Pre-K (and child care) in New York State and want to raise awareness about this underreported problem.

Across the state, I see programs finding it hard to keep their doors open and parents struggling to pay the cost of a quality program. Likewise, many of us in the field also suffer from low compensation and lack of benefits because the services are so under-funded. Many communities have long waiting lists for child care subsidies and pre-k seats, as many parents cannot afford private preschool in this tough economy. Every year, these children are missing an important window for learning. (INSERT ANY LOCAL DATA HERE) Now, with the state’s 2% property tax cap in place, even deeper cuts, or eliminating programs altogether, are coming — especially in less wealthy school districts.

Research now shows 85% of total brain growth occurs *before* age five. And children who attend pre-K are more likely to have better reading skills by third grade, versus those who just attend Kindergarten. Quality pre-K not only helps kids, but actually saves the state money by reducing costs for special education, grade repetition, welfare, incarceration and teen pregnancy.

That is why I am urging everyone — parents, grandparents, educators — to contact your state lawmaker and urge them to make sure the state’s final budget includes additional investment in quality child care and full-day pre-k. (TOWN/COUNTY) – local stats – waiting list, stories.

As a teacher, I see the power of supporting young children’s learning and development every day. It is one of the best investments we can make — not just for our children, but for our communities, our state and our economic future.

**NAME**

**SCHOOL**

**ADDRESS**

**PHONE NUMBER**

**#3 PUBLIC SCHOOL PRE-K ADMINISTRATOR: Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:

With all the attention being paid to problems in New York schools, there’s an important story that isn’t being told: the state has flat-funded the very programs that can power children to success in school and beyond. There is ZERO new investment in child care and scandalously little in full-day pre-K for four-year-olds, even studies show these investments are a game-changer for children and communities. At the same time the need for these services is growing. (EXAMPLES)

With the 2% property tax cap in place, it’s ever more challenging to make sure our community has the resources we need to support young children and their families — unless lawmakers take action in THIS MONTH in this year’s budget.

I have seen — first hand — how these cuts are affecting families in **(CITY/TOWN)** district. **(LOCAL DATA FROM REPORT HERE).**

One of the hardest conversations I have is with a parent who knows that quality pre-K will give a child advantages that last a lifetime, and that New York City now has Pre-K for All, while there is no new funding for pre-K in our district. For most, free pre-K is the only option — most parents I see are already working two or three jobs and can’t afford private preschool.

Yet each year our waiting list grows longer and the threat of more cuts looms larger. We are supposed to be an education leader. Why is New York State failing to keep its promise for pre-K?

Research shows 85% of total brain growth occurs *before* age five. And children who attend pre-K are more likely to have better reading skills by third grade, versus those who just attend Kindergarten. Most importantly, the investment pays off — by reducing costs associated with special education, grade repetition, welfare, incarceration and teen pregnancy.

If you’ve ever had the chance to visit a pre-K classroom, you would see children bursting with potential. It seems almost criminal to take that away — and a lousy strategy if we want New York to remain competitive in the decades to come.

**NAME**

**SCHOOL**

**ADDRESS**

**PHONE NUMBER**