The Trajectory of Early Education & Childcare and Family Homelessness in New York City: 1960s–Today

1965: Head Start launches as a summer program across the United States as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” set of programs. 64 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is signed.

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1969: McNary v. Koch is filed to determine whether homeless families with children have the right to shelter. A preliminary ruling is issued in 1986. 65

1970: Mayor John Lindsay establishes the Agency for Child Development (ACD), responsible for planning and regulating daycare centers and Head Start.

1971–1975: ACD grows to provide funds to over 400 daycare centers throughout New York City, with many having the autonomy to decide whether only to serve low-income families.

1971: Mayor John Lindsay establishes the Agency for Child Development (ACD), responsible for planning and regulating daycare centers and Head Start.

1974–1975: Updates to federal stipulations around childcare funding required that daycare centers only serve low-income families that meet criteria demonstrating need. Fiscal crises in the mid-1970s led the city to shutter many daycare centers.

1975: McNary v. Koch is filed to determine whether homeless families with children have the right to shelter. A preliminary ruling is issued in 1986. 65

1976: Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) is signed. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

1977: New York State introduces its universal pre-K program, with classes beginning in the 1986–1987 school year and phased in over the next four school years.

1978: SuperStart is discontinued. Homebase, the zip-code based homelessness prevention program, opens city-wide.

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1982: President Carter authorizes Head Start. Head Start launches as a summer program across the United States as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” set of programs. 64 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is signed.

1983: President Reagan signs the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, which authorizes funding to Advantage rental subsidies.

1985: Superintendent Rudolph Giuliani, intended as a temporary initiative.

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1987: Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, intended as a temporary initiative.

1990: Project Giant Step is discontinued under Mayor David Dinkins, with certain classrooms integrated into SuperStart.

1992: Mayor Bill de Blasio launches EarlyLearn NYC, operated under the Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS).

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1994: Mayor Bill de Blasio launches SuperStart.

2000: “Cluster site” shelter program begins under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, intended as a temporary initiative. 74

2001: SuperStart is discontinued. Homebase, the zip-code based homelessness prevention program, opens city-wide.

2002: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is signed, replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

2003: Mayor Michael Bloomberg launches EarlyLearn NYC, operated under the Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS).

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2005: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is signed, replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

2006: EarlyLearn NYC, operated under the Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS), launches.

2007: 3-K for All launches as part of de Blasio’s “Equity and Excellence for All” agenda. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) designates specific high-need school districts for guaranteed seats for all eligible three-year-olds. Announcement of EarlyLearn NYC’s move from NYC ACS to NYC DOE.

2008: Mayor Bill de Blasio launches SuperStart.

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2012: Mayor Michael Bloomberg launches EarlyLearn NYC, operated under the Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS).

2013: Mayor Bill de Blasio launches SuperStart.

2014: Mayor Bill de Blasio launches EarlyLearn NYC, operated under the Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS).

2015: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is signed, replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

2016: Mayor Bill de Blasio launches EarlyLearn NYC, operated under the Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS).

2017: 3-K for All launches as part of de Blasio’s “Equity and Excellence for All” agenda. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) designates specific high-need school districts for guaranteed seats for all eligible three-year-olds. Announcement of EarlyLearn NYC’s move from NYC ACS to NYC DOE.

2018: A series of different rental subsidies launched under de Blasio are consolidated into City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CFHEPS).

2019: Mayor de Blasio administration The NYC City Council and Mayor Adams announce initiative for pay parity between certified teachers at NYCDOE and NYC DOE first-year teachers.


2021: Mayor Eric Adams declares a state of emergency in October as the City struggles to find enough shelter space for asylum-seeking newcomers. The administration halts plans to expand 3-K for All.

2022: Mayor Eric Adams declares a state of emergency in October as the City struggles to find enough shelter space for asylum-seeking newcomers. The administration halts plans to expand 3-K for All.

2023: Mayor Eric Adams declares a state of emergency in October as the City struggles to find enough shelter space for asylum-seeking newcomers. The administration halts plans to expand 3-K for All.

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For more on the history of family homelessness in NYC, see ICPH’s report: Family Homelessness in New York City.