



Liftoff WNY | E-News | Spring 2024

## Liftoff's Annual Meeting: Celebrating 5 Years of Progress for Young Children in WNY

During April's Annual Meeting, Liftoff celebrated five years of progress, highlighted key Network achievements, and offered a glimpse into our future work. Liftoff's featured keynote this year was [Caitlin Codella Low](#), Vice President of Policy and Programs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (and WNY native!). This was an informative conversation that highlighted that child care is not just a social issue, but an economic one as well.

If you would like to further explore the resources from the [US Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#) that Caitlin mentioned, they are hyperlinked here: "[Untapped Potential](#)", "[ECE Roadmap](#)", and "[CHIPS Act and Child Care](#)".

[View Keynote Conversation](#)

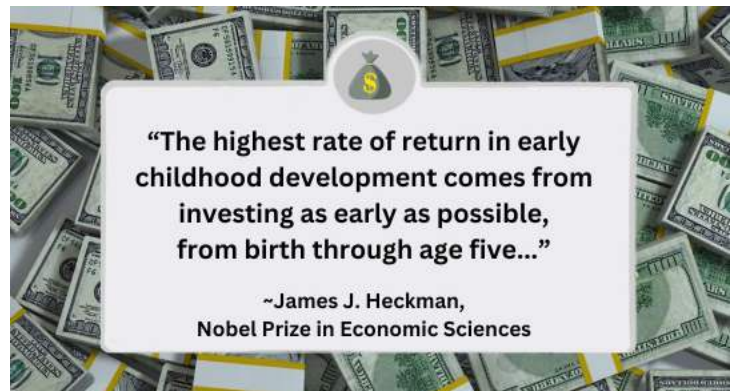
## Live Well Erie Celebrates Week of the Young Child April 20



During the Week of the Young Child, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz and our [Live Well Erie Children's Work Group press conference](#) to celebrate young children and those who care for them. Our partners at [Help Me Grow Western New York](#) share their commitment to ensuring every child in our region receives the early childhood services and supports they need for lifelong success. *"through our Live Well Erie initiative we are building partnerships and fostering relationships that will further this critical mission and our caregivers of young children have the supports and services they need to succeed."*

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrates the Week of the Young Child each year, created to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and how vital these formative years are to future well-being. During the week, NAEYC shared a variety of resources [and other social media platforms](#).

## Aligned Action Report: The NYS Budget




This year, Liftoff's budget advocacy centered on three critical areas: increasing reimbursement rates by 11% for early intervention services, bolstering critical compensation for our child care workforce, and expanding the reach of Help Me Grow NYS.

**Early Intervention:** After years of unchanged reimbursement rates for Early Intervention (EI) services in NYS, we applauded the state for approving a budget that includes a 5% rate increase for in-person EI services. Additionally, starting in April 2025, a 4% rate increase for EI services delivered in rural and underserved areas, aiming to address disparities in access across the state. While this may seem like a step in the right direction, it falls short of solving the crisis caused by rates that are lower now than they were in 1994. [Read the Can't Wait Campaign here.](#)

**Child Care:** This budget reduces investment in the childcare workforce, who earn less than 96% of workers in other occupator existing workforce shortages, affecting program capacity and lengthening waitlists, underscoring the urgent need for fair comp this year's budget is a small but significant subsidy rate increase for providers offering childcare during non-traditional hours at children. This helps families with non-traditional work schedules and children facing homelessness have access to essential chil **statement from the Empire State Campaign for Child Care** [here](#).

**Help Me Grow NYS:** We celebrate the Governor and Legislature's inclusion of a \$1 million allocation for Help Me Grow (HMG) ir is a nationally recognized and evidence-based model that enhances early developmental health and family well-being. Success statewide (including 8 in WNY), HMG collaborates across sectors to promote child development, universalize developmental sci navigate early childhood services.

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C/O NY Funders Alliance 431 E Fayette St. Syracuse, NY, 13202

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