

Hochul's family-centered agenda is ambitious, but the devil is in the details ^[1]

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In her speech, Governor Hochul brought up an expanded child tax credit pretty quickly. It would triple the tax credit for babies and toddlers aged 0 to 3, from \$330 dollars to \$1000 per year. That's significant, because before 2023, the child tax credit didn't start until kids were 4.

"I know personally that the earliest years are the most expensive," said Hochul. "Diapers, formula, clothes of the outgrow every three months!"

Hochul's proposals also included a number of 'baby bonus' programs - for instance, \$100 a month checks during pregnancy, a \$1200 payment at birth for New Yorkers on public assistance, and baby supply boxes filled with diapers and natal products.

Sara Allen Taylor works at the Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country, which serves Franklin and Clinton counties. She says these 'early childhood' relief ideas aren't misplaced.

"I think the governor is absolutely right that families are feeling the pinch, and we see that," said Allen Taylor. "Easing some of that financial burden also eases the stress on families as well. And again, that that really does affect today's workforce and it affects the way that their kids are developing."

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In the past few years, the NYS has vastly expanded child care subsidies, and invested \$7 billion dollars into a spate of grant programs.

As part of her 2025 agenda, Hochul unveiled major proposals to build more child care centers, create a 'substitute' pool of child care providers, and build a coalition to plan for universal child care.

Allen Taylor says all the proposals are theoretically exciting, but they also raise some big questions. In terms of building new centers, Allen Taylor wants to know if grants will be upfront or reimbursable, "where the the provider or program is going to need to be able to come up with the the funds to either build a center or do their renovations," she said, and only afterwards "be able to get the grant money and access it."

Most of the state's recent child care grants have required that providers (mostly women in tlower economic brackets, many of color) 'front' the money for expanding child care. Allen Taylor says it's a real barrier to providers and less affluent communities, like those in the North Country, being able to access those funds.

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