



New York City Comptroller
John C. Liu

NEWS RELEASE

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Page(s): 2

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES RFP HAS BEEN A DISASTER

*Comptroller’s office will register more than 200 ACS contract extensions
to ensure existing childcare programs remain in place for over 40,000 children*

NEW YORK, NY – City Comptroller John C. Liu today called on the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) to reassess its EarlyLearn NYC Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The EarlyLearn NYC initiative was designed to, according to the agency, “merge childcare and early education into a single, seamless system.”

In May, following an RFP process, ACS announced new contract awards for the EarlyLearn NYC initiative which was scheduled to begin on September 1, 2012. Following an outcry from numerous well-established childcare vendors who responded to the agency’s RFP process, ACS began submitting requests to the Comptroller’s office to extend the existing childcare contracts scheduled to expire this month. These contracts have now been extended for up to one year.

“While the EarlyLearn NYC initiative may be well intentioned, the RFP process has been, by too many accounts, a disaster. It has also caused a tremendous amount of unnecessary anxiety for parents, children, and service providers,” Comptroller Liu said. “It is unfair to put parents through the stress of not knowing how long the doors of their childcare provider will remain open. ACS should use the twelve months provided under the contract extensions to conduct a comprehensive review of the EarlyLearn NYC RFP.”

“City Hall is taking some of the best programs in the country and throwing them out the window. You have to fear for our kids’ futures if we lose centers like these,” said Public Advocate Bill de Blasio. “If this were really about the merits, the City would have never made these decisions. The Comptroller is absolutely right to extend these contracts given the serious concerns with this RFP process.”

“Several centers in my district will be closed as a result of the EarlyLearn RFP and many others have been significantly downsized as slots have been diverted to lesser known centers in and

around the community,” said City Council Member Letitia James. “The citywide effect is even more detrimental. Mayor Bloomberg's proposed city budget slashes more than 47,000 low-income and working-class children from subsidized daycare, Head Start and afterschool programs. About 6,500 children will be left without a slot come this November as a result of Early Learn. I believe something is extremely wrong with this picture and it is our time now to stand up and say enough is enough.”

To date, the Comptroller’s Office has received 35 contract extensions from ACS and expects to receive nearly 200 more before the looming expiration deadline. In order to ensure stability in childcare for more than 40,000 children throughout the City, Comptroller Liu’s Bureau of Contract Administration will work to swiftly register these extensions.

This blunder echoes a similar incident at ACS in 2010, when the agency rescinded awards worth \$470 million for a group of more than 60 foster care nonprofits because of mistakes made when the contracts were evaluated.

Due to the importance of early childhood education and the serious issues raised regarding the EarlyLearn NYC RFP, Comptroller Liu will be exploring the possibility of auditing whether ACS has abided by all applicable procurement guidelines.

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