



New York City Comptroller  
John C. Liu

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Stephanie Hoo, (212) 669-3747

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## LIU CALLS FOR UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS

*New Study Points to a \$4 Billion Deficit in Early Childhood Investments*

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NEW YORK, N.Y. – Comptroller John C. Liu today called for universal preschool for three-year-olds and smarter investments in early childhood education, warning that gaping disparities in early care threaten the long-term health and stability of the City’s economy.

“Instead of forcing parents and preschool providers to fight over limited slots, the City must better prioritize early childhood education and make it truly universal,” Comptroller Liu said. “The reality is that significant numbers of three-year-olds already attend preschool, but there are many thousands whose families can’t afford it and have no options, setting up inequities by kindergarten and first grade. All three-year olds should be given the chance to hit the ground running with their education.”

A new study released by the Comptroller’s office today, “The \$4 Billion Deficit: Ratcheting Up Investment in Early Childhood Education,” points to glaring needs in New York City’s early learning programs.

It proposes to reduce the deficit in early childhood education by spending \$1 billion to create universal preschool for three-year-olds. More than 200,000 children, including many from low-income families, are not participating in early-learn programs, the study found. The initial \$1 billion investment would help bridge the gap and ensure that these children get the support they need to succeed in school – while also creating jobs and reducing the likelihood that more costly remedial tutoring would be necessary later.

Other recommendations include fully funding pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds so that every New York City four-year-old can attend; expanding the Nurse-Family Partnership program to all low-income, first-time mothers; and creating an Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning that would improve interagency coordination and better align resources and efforts.

The programs would be paid for by such measures as charging insurance companies the general corporate tax, having private-equity firms pay the unincorporated business tax for carried

interest, and increasing the commercial real-estate tax – as well as other revenue-generating ideas suggested in Comptroller Liu’s “[People’s Budget](#),” which was unveiled earlier this year.

“The \$4 Billion Deficit: Ratcheting Up Investment in Early Childhood Education,” is the fifth comprehensive study in Comptroller Liu’s “Beyond High School NYC” initiative, which seeks to increase the proportion of New Yorkers with higher education to 60 percent by the year 2025 through strategic investments in public education.

“The \$4 Billion Deficit” report is being distributed at statewide forums this month on pre-kindergarten financing reform and discussed with key stakeholders.

The full report can be downloaded at:

<http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2013/NYC-Early-Childhood-Education-Report.pdf>

The executive summary can be downloaded at:

<http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2013/NYC-Early-Childhood-Education-Summary.pdf>

“Our commitment to educating children must begin long before they enter kindergarten. The Comptroller’s recommendations acknowledge early childhood education as a critical component in the effort to help more students succeed in school and in life,” said **Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York**.

“‘The \$4 Billion Deficit: Ratcheting Up Investment In Early Childhood Education’ should eliminate any remaining doubts about why significant funding increases for high quality early education and child care would be one of the most effective strategies, if not the most effective strategy, for increasing educational and social development outcomes for children and youth, and reducing poverty overall in New York City. All New Yorkers – young and old, with and without children, living in every neighborhood, including those in the business, health care, education, and other sectors – would realize long-lasting benefits with these needed investments for high quality early childhood services,” said **Shelby H. Miller, New York City Child Care and Early Education Fund**.

“Comptroller Liu’s recommendation to expand Nurse-Family Partnership will help more NYC families living in poverty give their children a better chance at succeeding in school and a brighter future. Not only is Liu’s recommendation a smart investment to transform the lives of vulnerable children, but it also offers a substantial financial return for New York City taxpayers,” said **Renée Nogales, Nurse-Family Partnership program developer for New York**.

**Background:**

For more information on Comptroller Liu’s “People’s Budget,” go to:  
[http://comptroller.nyc.gov/press/2013\\_releases/pr13-04-052.shtm](http://comptroller.nyc.gov/press/2013_releases/pr13-04-052.shtm)

And for more on the “Beyond High School NYC” initiative go to:  
<http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/beyond-high-school.shtm>

Previous reports from the Comptroller’s education initiative:

“Beyond High School: Higher Education as a Growth and Fiscal Strategy for New York City”:  
<http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2012/Higher-Education-Report-FINAL.pdf>

“The Power of Guidance: Giving High School Students the College Counseling They Need”:  
[http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2012/Power\\_of\\_Guidance\\_Oct\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2012/Power_of_Guidance_Oct_PDF.pdf)

“No More Rubber Stamp: Reforming New York City’s Panel for Educational Policy”:  
[http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2013/NYC\\_NoMoreRubberStamp\\_v24\\_Jan2013.pdf](http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2013/NYC_NoMoreRubberStamp_v24_Jan2013.pdf)

“Bridging the Digital Literacy Divide”:  
<http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2013/Bridging-the-Digital-Literacy-Divide.pdf>

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