REBUILDING NYC'S FUTURE

A CHILDCARE SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR EVERY FAMILY

STRINGER

DEMOCRAT FOR MAYOR

A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT

I recently met a mother in Queens who works two jobs just to keep her family afloat. Her biggest challenge isn't the long hours or the grind—it's finding safe, affordable childcare for her son. She's not alone. Across our city, countless parents are forced to make impossible choices every day, sacrificing time, income, and even their own well-being just to take care of their families.

This isn't just an economic issue; it's a moral test for our city. Do we truly value the dreams of all New York City parents? Do we stand behind the potential of every child, no matter their zip code or household income? I believe we must.

New York City has taken bold steps before—like Universal Pre-K, which has transformed opportunities for thousands of families and earned widespread support. Building on that success, my plan introduces two transformative policies: the NYC Tri-Share Childcare Fund and Extended School Hours. Together, these initiatives will reduce childcare costs significantly (by more than 50 percent for many families), expand access to licensed care in underserved neighborhoods, and align school schedules with the realities of today's working families. These are real solutions designed to ensure no child is overlooked due to financial constraints or outdated systems.

I am running for mayor to deliver these changes. For too long, New York City has neglected the needs of families, leaving them to navigate an unforgiving childcare crisis on their own. It's time to rewrite the rules with transformative solutions that make childcare affordable, accessible, and fair for every parent in every neighborhood. ***- Scott Stringer***

Rebuilding NYC's Promise: The Childcare Crisis

For generations, New York City has stood as a beacon of opportunity—a place where families could build better lives under a clear compact: work hard, and the city will have your back. Today, that promise is unraveling. Skyrocketing childcare costs, limited options, and school hours that don't align with modern work schedules are pushing families into impossible situations, forcing many parents—especially mothers—out of the workforce entirely.

The evidence is undeniable. Vast childcare deserts leave entire neighborhoods without options, disproportionately harming low-income families and deepening systemic inequities.[1] National data shows that when childcare is affordable, parents—especially mothers—can remain in the workforce, driving economic growth and securing brighter futures for their children.[2]

Failing to act robs our children of opportunities they deserve and puts our city's economic future at risk. The era of half-measures must end. It's time for bold, comprehensive solutions that restore New York's promise and give every family the support they need to thrive.

The Crisis: Why Childcare is Failing NYC Families

New York City families face one of the most expensive and inaccessible childcare systems in the country, creating urgent challenges that ripple across our economy, education system, and communities.

Financial Burdens and Exclusion

In New York City, center-based childcare for kids under three costs an average of nearly $19,000 per child annually—about double the national average of $10,000—often exceeding housing expenses and placing a crushing financial burden on families. For middle-income households, these costs can consume over 30% of annual income, four times the federal affordability benchmark.[3] This leaves many parents on the brink of financial instability.

Freelancers, gig workers, and part-time employees—who make up at least 34% of NYC's workforce—are excluded from employer-sponsored childcare benefits.[4] This exclusion forces families to rely on unreliable, patchwork solutions that rarely meet their needs, marginalizing already vulnerable workers.[5]

Deepening Inequities

Childcare deserts—neighborhoods with critically low access to licensed childcare—affect around half of NYC communities, leaving thousands of children without adequate care. These shortages disproportionately impact families of color.[6]

In the absence of affordable options, families often turn to informal, unlicensed care arrangements. These makeshift solutions, while filling a desperate need, come with significant risks, including safety concerns for children and legal vulnerabilities for caregivers. Such arrangements are a symptom of systemic failure and highlight the urgent need for reforms like the NYC Tri-Share Fund.[7]

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

This crisis doesn't only affect individual families—it affects all of us. When parents are forced out of the workforce:

- **Businesses lose talent.** Employers face higher turnover rates and lower productivity, particularly in sectors reliant on working parents, such as healthcare, retail, and education.[8] Recruitment and training costs rise as businesses struggle to fill gaps left by parents who must reduce their hours or leave the workforce entirely.
- **Our economy slows.** Reduced maternal workforce participation costs New York City billions. According to the NYC Economic Development Corporation, in 2022 parents leaving or reducing their hours due to childcare challenges result in an estimated $23 billion annual economic output loss, a $5.9 billion drop in disposable income, and $2.2 billion in lost tax revenues.[9]
- **Children lose out.** Limited access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education exacerbates long-term achievement gaps, particularly in literacy and math. Children from low-income families often enter kindergarten behind their peers in foundational skills, deficits that grow over time and limit future academic and career opportunities. Poverty compounds these challenges, affecting cognitive development and widening disparities between lower- and higher-income students.[10]

The childcare crisis is not a private struggle—it's a public one. Without immediate action, New York City's families, economy, and future will continue to suffer.

A PLAN FOR ACTION: AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND ENRICHMENT FOR EVERY FAMILY

Childcare is not a luxury—it is the foundation of a thriving society. Yet, for too many families in New York City, it remains unaffordable, inaccessible, and out of sync with modern work schedules. Scott's childcare plan is built on two transformative pillars that tackle these challenges head-on:

Pillar 1: The NYC Tri-Share Childcare Fund

Time and again, parents and educators have celebrated Universal Pre-K as a game-changer, providing young children with foundational early education and offering working families a crucial lifeline. Yet, the challenges don't end there. When children age out of Pre-K or families require care for younger kids, the gaps in New York City's childcare system become starkly apparent.

The NYC Tri-Share Childcare Fund steps in to address these gaps. By sharing the cost of childcare equally among the city, employers, and families, this innovative initiative ensures that high-quality care is accessible and affordable for all. Building on the success of Universal Pre-K, it expands opportunities for working parents and creates a sustainable framework for equitable childcare in every neighborhood..

HOW IT WORKS

1. **City Contribution (33%):**

   Funded through municipal, state, and federal sources, including the **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** and innovative public-private partnerships.

   Allocates funds specifically to expand childcare access in underserved neighborhoods.

2. **Employer Contribution (33%):**

   Widespread employer participation is incentivized through tax credits and grants, such as $5,000 in startup childcare funding for businesses with fewer than 50 employees. (See section on employer participation.)

   Proven to enhance workforce stability, Michigan's Tri-Share Child Care Program has demonstrated significant success, with some participating employers reporting improvements of up to 80% in employee retention and reduced absenteeism.[11]

3. **Family Contribution (33%):**

   Affordable Costs: Families contribute no more than 7% of household income, meeting federal affordability benchmarks. Sliding-scale adjustments ensure low-income families pay little to nothing, while middle-income families contribute proportionally.

   Proven Savings: Cost-sharing childcare models have demonstrated significant financial relief. Parents in programs like Michigan's report saving thousands annually—up to $5,500—by splitting costs among employers, families, and public funding.[12]

   NYC Impact: With higher childcare costs in New York, the Tri-Share Childcare Fund is estimated to save participating families approximately $12,000 annually, delivering transformative economic benefits while ensuring equitable access to quality care.[13]

States like Kentucky and North Carolina are already adopting this proven model, recognizing its transformative potential. New York cannot afford to fall behind—this is the bold solution we need to support working families, strengthen our economy, and lead the nation in childcare reform.

All Types of Working Parents Are Supported

Parents without traditional employers—such as freelancers, gig workers, and part-time employees—can apply directly through a centralized city portal. This system eliminates barriers, ensuring that **no parent is locked out of support**, a common issue in existing childcare programs, where only 15% of eligible children access subsidies.[14]

Employer Participation: A Win-Win for Business and Families

For the Tri-Share Childcare Fund to succeed, employer participation is essential. This program isn't just about supporting families—it's about delivering tangible benefits to businesses that invest in their employees' well-being.

CLEAR, QUANTIFIABLE BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

1. **Reduction in Voluntary Turnover:** Organizations implementing family-friendly policies experienced **turnover rates up to 15% lower** than those without such policies. This reduction highlights the tangible impact on workforce stability.[15]
2. **Increased Organizational Commitment:** Employees in family-friendly organizations reported a **20% higher likelihood** of remaining with their employer over the long term, citing work-life balance as a key factor.[16]
3. **Improved Recruitment:** Companies with family-friendly policies were rated **25% more attractive** by job seekers, particularly among professionals with caregiving responsibilities.[17]
4. **Enhanced Productivity**: Employees with access to family-friendly benefits demonstrated a 12% increase in performance ratings, driven by reduced stress and better focus on their work.[18]
5. **Tax Incentives and Cost Savings:** Participating businesses gain access to federal and state childcare tax credits, such as the Employer-Provided Child Care Credit, which offsets up to 25% of childcare costs.

Pillar 2: Extended School Hours

For many—if not most—working parents, the school day ends long before their workday does, leaving a critical gap in care and support. This misalignment forces parents to juggle costly aftercare programs, rely on informal arrangements, or even sacrifice work hours. Addressing this disconnect is essential to providing stability for parents and additional opportunities for children.

By extending public school hours to 4:30PM, we can better align school schedules with the realities of working families and ensure children receive academic and social enrichment in a safe environment.

WHAT IT INCLUDES

1. **Expanded Programming:**

   Free or low-cost after-school activities such as academic tutoring, arts, sports, and STEM education, modeled after NYC's successful COMPASS program.

   Collaboration with community nonprofits, such as Manhattan Youth and local YMCAs, ensures high-quality programming tailored to neighborhood needs.

2. **Staffing and Support:**

   Dedicated after-school professionals deliver programming, alleviating pressure on teachers while maintaining educational standards.

   Teachers who opt in receive additional compensation to ensure quality instruction without risking burnout.

3. **Equitable Access:**

   Sliding-scale fees keep programs free for low-income families, while middle-income families pay manageable rates based on income, ensuring that no child is excluded.

WHY IT WORKS

Research shows that extended school hours have a striking impact:

Improvement in literacy and math scores for students in structured after-school programs. [19] Extending school hours has shown significant positive effects on math performance in particular. Studies in Chile and Denmark revealed that increased instructional time led to improved math scores, especially for disadvantaged students. [20]

15% decrease in absenteeism, a critical factor in long-term academic success, as evidenced by San Francisco's extended hours model. [21]

Provides a safe, enriching environment for children, reducing the risk of juvenile delinquency and improving mental health outcomes.[22]

New York Pilot

Brooklyn Charter School, Bedford-Stuyvesant:, Operates a 12-hour school day (7 AM-7 PM) at no cost to families, providing a transformative educational model. The extended hours have led to a significant increase in enrollment, recovering from a 30% decline during the pandemic, and have contributed to enhanced student performance by offering a structured, supportive learning environment.[23]

FUNDING A NEW FUTURE

Investing in childcare and extended school hours is not just about addressing an immediate crisis—it is a strategic investment in the city's long-term prosperity. Here's how this plan will be funded:

1. **Maximizing Federal Support:**

   Federal grants like the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Universal Pre-K funding for younger children and early grades will provide critical baseline funding. For example, CCDBG currently allocates over $8 billion annually nationwide, a resource NYC can tap into.[24]

2. **Public-Private Partnerships:**

   Collaborations with employers, nonprofits, and philanthropists will drive innovation, particularly for solutions tailored to NYC's workforce, such as second-shift childcare for healthcare and hospitality workers. Employers participating in the NYC Tri-Share Fund will benefit from tax credits and matching grants, further incentivizing involvement.

3. **Sustainable Budgeting:**

   NYC Tri-Share Childcare Fund: A $300 million annual budget will support up to 100,000 families in its first phase, expanding as additional partnerships and resources are secured.

   Extended School Hours: Costing approximately $500 million annually, with 60% of funding expected from federal and state grants, this initiative will align school schedules with modern workforce demands, ensuring widespread access and equity.

4. **Projected Economic Returns:**

   Every $1 invested in childcare yields an $8 return through increased workforce productivity, higher tax revenues, and reduced public assistance reliance. For NYC, these programs could generate billions annually in economic activity while fostering equity and innovation.[25]

UNLOCKING NEW YORK'S POTENTIAL: THE IMPACT OF TRI-SHARE CHILDCARE AND EXTENDED SCHOOL HOURS

This plan isn't just a response to immediate challenges—it lays the foundation for a more livable, fair and prosperous New York City. Addressing the childcare crisis is essential for unlocking economic growth, fostering educational equity, and strengthening communities across all boroughs.

1. **Driving Economic Growth**

   Empowering Workforce Participation: Affordable childcare, particularly for mothers, allows more parents to rejoin or remain in the workforce. Programs like the NYC Tri-Share Childcare Fund reduce the financial barriers that disproportionately exclude low-income families and women from economic opportunities.

   Economic Ripple Effect: Every $1 invested in childcare yields an estimated $8 return through increased workforce productivity, higher tax revenues, and reduced reliance on public assistance programs. In New York City alone, eliminating barriers to childcare could generate billions annually in economic activity and strengthen local businesses.[26]

2. **Advancing Educational Equity**

   Bridging Achievement Gaps: Quality after-school programs and extended school hours, such as those included in Scott's plan, have been proven to appreciably improve literacy and math scores. These outcomes are particularly impactful for children in underserved neighborhoods like the South Bronx and East Harlem, where access to structured educational opportunities is limited.

   Early Foundations for Success: Access to licensed, affordable childcare directly influences long-term educational outcomes. Children who participate in high-quality early education programs are more likely to succeed academically, reducing future disparities in achievement and income.

3. **Strengthening Community Resilience**

   Reducing Inequality: Childcare deserts and unaffordable programs perpetuate cycles of poverty, particularly in neighborhoods already facing systemic inequities. By increasing access to affordable care, this plan creates a pathway for families to achieve greater economic stability.

   Safer, More Cohesive Communities: Accessible childcare and after-school programs provide safe, enriching environments for children, reducing risks associated with informal care arrangements and juvenile delinquency.

4. **Fostering Business Innovation**

   Employer Benefits: The Tri-Share model incentivizes businesses to support working parents, leading to reduced employee turnover, improved productivity, and a competitive edge in recruitment.

CONCLUSION: A CALL TO ACTION FOR NEW YORK CITY'S FUTURE

The childcare crisis is not a private struggle—it's a collective challenge that demands a shared solution. Programs like the NYC Tri-Share Fund and extended school hours represent transformative shifts, reframing childcare as a public responsibility and a critical investment in the city's future. By fostering collaboration among the city, families, and businesses, these initiatives address unfairness, support working parents, and strengthen the economic foundation of New York City.

No parent should face the impossible choice between earning a living and ensuring their child's well-being. No child should be denied the care, education, and opportunities they need to succeed. This is our moment to reaffirm New York City's promise as a place of opportunity for all.

Together, we can:

- Ensure every family has access to affordable, high-quality childcare.
- Provide every child with safe, enriching, and supportive programs that prepare them for lifelong success.

Let's lead the nation in childcare equity, innovation, and opportunity. By empowering parents, investing in children, and strengthening our communities, we can build a stronger, more inclusive city. The time to act is now—together, let's create a future we can all be proud of.

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