



A partnership of The Emergency Coalition to Save Child Care and the NYC Youth Alliance.

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Youth to Mayor Bloomberg: Don't Cut After-School Programs for 37,000 Kids

Proposed Cuts Will Yank City Funding from Award-Winning Chess Team at IS 318, Stars of Documentary "Brooklyn Castle"

It's Not Just a Budget Dance – Graph Shows City's 35% Cut to After-School Programs over Last Five Years

New York, NY – Before today's Youth Services hearing, NYC youth threatened by the city's proposed cuts to after-school programs took to the steps of City Hall to urge City leaders to stop the cuts to these essential programs. According to the Mayor's Preliminary Budget, the City will cut after-school slots for 37,000 children this year, in addition to early education slots for 10,000 children.

Among the after-school programs whose City funding would be cut is award-winning chess team at Brooklyn's IS 318, stars of the acclaimed documentary "Brooklyn Castle." One of the film's stars, Pobo Efekoro, will testify at today's hearing.

"Over the past few years, the IS 318 chess program has been hit with successive budget cuts that have scaled back the program," said **Pobo Efekoro**. "Following the debut of 'Brooklyn Castle,' the program has been lucky enough to receive donations from private entities and individuals – but although these donations are wonderful, the chess team may not be able to survive if the City cuts our funding this year. Everyone understands how bad our economy is, but our budget must reflect what we as society value. If these programs go, there is no doubt the future of this great city will be compromised."

The Campaign for Children, a group of more than 150 children’s advocacy and provider organizations, presented a poster-sized chart showing the city’s cuts to Out-of-School Time (OST) after-school programs over the last five years – a 35% decrease in the number of children served since 2008, not including the tens of thousands of slots the city has proposed cutting this year. View the chart [HERE](#).

“This is not a budget dance – this is a real loss of services for children, many of whom are among the city’s poorest and most vulnerable already,” said **Brooke Richie-Babbage, Executive Director of the Resilience Advocacy Project and member of the Campaign for Children**. “After-school programs are critical to the educational and social development of NYC’s children and youth, and a crucial support system for working families. It is unacceptable for our city to balance its budget on the backs of children.”

At the press conference, youth from after-school programs across the City spoke out about what after-school programs mean for them and their families.

“My Beacon after-school program keeps me occupied in a positive way, so I won't be wasting my time outside doing nothing. I am able to learn how to work with other people and build life skills for the future,” said **Ardelia Lovelace from the University Settlement Beacon on the Lower East Side**. “If the city keeps cutting money from our programs, how will we have a positive place to go?”

“My Beacon after-school program is my family, and helps me build leadership skills that will be very beneficial towards my future – I even got to go to Albany to speak to senators about investing in afterschool programs,” said **Julie Florez from the University Settlement Beacon on the Lower East Side**. “Not only does it benefit me in the future, but it also pushes me to keep up with my studies and give back to my community. Mayor Bloomberg, please don’t cut our program!”

“My after-school program gave me the skills and confidence to be a leader in my community,” said **Robert Ortiz from Center for Family Life in Sunset Park**. “The idea that children of this generation could lose out on having a similar influence in their lives seems so unfair. I know from firsthand experience that these programs are a key benefit to the children and the community as a whole.”

The Campaign for Children also announced today the launch of their online advocacy campaign aimed at City leaders in charge of the budget. Last year, the Campaign generated more than 60,000 letters and 4,500 phone calls from parents to city leaders.

Earlier this year, the Campaign for Children kicked off their new phase of 2013 organizing with a series of town hall meetings in each borough during the month of January. The meetings attracted hundreds of parents, providers, and community members who are concerned about the City’s lack of investment in child care and after-

school programs, and who together will call on City leaders and candidates for office to have a long-term plan to stabilize the systems.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

The [Campaign for Children](#) is a coalition of over 150 child care and after-school advocacy and provider organizations, who united in 2012 to fight the proposed budget cuts. Following over 30 rallies and press events, 60,000 letters and 4,500 phone calls to city leaders, the Campaign's efforts resulted in an unprecedented victory – the City Council and Administration restored \$150 million to prevent the elimination of programs for more than 47,000 children.

Despite this victory, the child care and after-school systems in New York City are fundamentally under-funded and unstable. With the belief that every child in NYC deserves access to a safe, high-quality, affordable, and educational child care and after-school program, the Campaign for Children calls for current elected officials, as well as candidates for Citywide office and City Council, to have a plan to make long-term investments in stable, reliable, and sustainable child care and after-school systems for New York's children and families.

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