



April 29, 2009

Honorable Christine Quinn
Speaker, New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Quinn:

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The Women's City Club (WCC) is writing to express our deep concern regarding the mayor's decision to remove 3,300 five year olds from under the supervision of ACS in their Community Day Care centers, and transition them to public schools. As you know, the WCC, founded in 1915, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that shapes public policy through education, advocacy and citizen participation. We strongly believe that this decision will have a detrimental impact on the City's neediest children and families, as well as the already overburdened NYC public school system.

The elimination of slots for five year olds in child care centers presents many risks to families. Working parents rely on ACS child care to provide a safe place for their children during the hours of nine to five or later, and this change could seriously impact the ability of mothers to hold down several jobs. If placed in the public schools, these parents must find additional and costly child care services to supplement the additional hours.

Under the new ACS plan, parents will no longer have the option to choose where their child will go, often forcing children to go further from their homes and communities. Also, due to overcrowding, many five year olds are at risk of being placed in schools that bus kindergarteners. Working parents should not be forced to take their children out of community centers in their OWN communities, where they are being provided a creative and supportive leaning experience. Additionally, community centers will be deprived of a needed source of funding, which can only have a negative impact on those children who remain.

While we certainly understand that some very hard choices must be made during difficult economic times, we urge you to encourage ACS to look for an alternative - such as lobbying for a portion of the State's \$97 million in stimulus funding for child care. This could then be used to continue the operation of successful child care centers that provide a warm and conducive learning atmosphere in the child's own community.

The WCC urges you to be that voice for the children and families who need you the most by preventing this move of children to the public school system.

Sincerely,

Ruth E. Acker
President

Elizabeth Lubetkin-Lipton
Chair, Poverty Task Force

Cc: Council Member Bill DeBlasio, General Welfare Committee Chair