

**BUCKLE UP!**  
**New Jersey's State Budget Process**  
**Will Begin Soon!**

**Cynthia C. Rice, Senior Policy Analyst**  
**Advocates for Children of New Jersey**

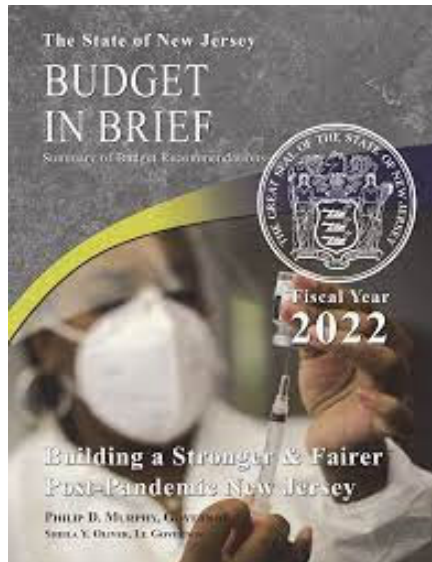
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**December 6, 2023**



# What's So Important About the State Budget?

- Is the single most important policy statement that the Governor makes each year
- It is a reflection of the state's priorities as it is the mechanism that lays out how the state will spend its money for programs and services.



# **The Budget Process: Quick Facts**

- **The state budget cycle is set on a fiscal year basis, from July 1 - June 30**
- **The process begins in August, 11 months before the budget becomes effective**
- **A balanced budget must be signed into law by the Governor by July 1**

# The State Budget & the Christie Photo



# The Budget Timeline

- August-September: Governor: Planning
- September-January: Governor: Working out the details
- January-February: Governor: Finalizing recommendations
- February-June: Legislature takes over!
- June 30: Budget must be signed into law

# Formal Budget Advocacy: TESTIFY!



Living Every Child A Child

To: Members, Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee  
From: Cynthia Rhee, President, B.O.P.P.  
Cynthia Rhee, Senior Policy Analyst  
Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Date: September 18, 2009  
Re: Action Committee on the Proposed FY 2010 State Budget

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments on New Jersey's proposed FY 2010 State Budget. ACNJ acknowledges and supports the many positive steps taken by Governor Murphy to address the challenges caused by E-911 as well as funding the foundation of a pre-kindergarten program for four-year-olds. Much needed additional funding for programs, such as child care and preschool education will support children, working families, and child care programs at this difficult time, while ensuring that children continue to thrive and grow in safe, quality learning environments.

#### Pre-K/Child Expansion

The proposed \$20 million of state funds for pre-kindergarten expansion is a positive step in ensuring that more 3- and 4-year olds in underserviceable communities will benefit from New Jersey's nationally recognized state-funded pre-kindergarten program. Increased pre-kindergarten will provide more young children with the foundation to achieve reading success both in and out of the classroom. Funding for pre-kindergarten expansion continues to be needed and spent for our children's future.

#### Child Care

Governor Murphy's recent announcement of the \$100 million expansion program, which will increase state support of CARES Act approved family resource centers, is critically important for parents and child care programs. This funding will help meet the burden of working families needing care for their school-age children during the critical periods of the school year and meet the early-learning child care program. The program has dramatically demonstrated the importance of child care for children, parents, business and the economy. ACNJ will support additional funding in the budget to be used for child care programs, offset the increase in the minimum wage.

Although this increased funding is coming at a critical time for families and the child care community, it addresses only short-term issues. Many long-term problems that need our state

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# **“Informal” Budget Advocacy**

**The Governor and the Legislature can  
hear from you**

**ANYTIME,**

**not just during the budget process!**

# **Informal Budget Advocacy**

## **The Parent Voice**

- **Don't underestimate your power/influence**
- **You have “on the ground” stories/experiences**
- **It helps them understand the issues better**
- **You are a constituent!**



# **Informal Budget Advocacy Who?**

**For a state budget, it's state elected  
officials:**

**the Governor, the Legislature**



# **Informal Budget Advocacy What?**

**Tell them what you are experiencing  
or the problems you need solved!**



# Informal Budget Advocacy When?

- There is no right or wrong time
- Communications do not have to be “one and done”



# Informal Budget Advocacy How?

- The usual ways....
- The internet and COVID has made communications much easier...for now



# **The Role of Parents: Beyond the Budget**

**Let Your VOICE be Heard!**

- **TALK TO AND ORGANIZE other parents**
- **Contact key policymakers**
- **Testify at hearings-budget or others**
- **Write letters to your local newspapers**
- **Become an “advocacy nudge”**

## One More Thing: Some additional advocacy tips....

- **Be patient**
- **Be persistent**
- **Stay informed**
- **Keep other parents informed**
- **Be open to different ideas**
- **DON'T GIVE UP!**



# When it Comes to Child Care

- **Child care was essential long before the pandemic**
- **Should be considered a “public good”**
- **And treated that way!**
- **The job is NOT DONE!**