

public citizens for children + youth

For Immediate Release

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Public Citizens for Children and Youth's comments on Mayor Kenney's Budget Address

In this year's City budget little compares to the importance of preserving the funds dedicated to make it possible for thousands of young children to attend two years of free, high quality pre-K. The Mayor and Council wisely enacted a dedicated tax on sweetened beverages to boost child outcomes in ways that are proven to reduce the cost of educating students in primary school, boost the chances that children graduate high school, increase lifetime earnings and like no other intervention reduce juvenile and adult incarceration rates. These investments must continue unabated. The naysayers of the tax know that finding an agreed to replacement is far-fetched; and their efforts to repeal the tax fly in the face of sound research on child outcomes and the reasonable expectations that this City will be a place where families can raise their children to reach their full potential.

Fortunately, this budget continues the progress being made at the Philadelphia School District, as well. As we collectively lament the City's stubbornly high poverty rate, without question the best strategy to end the cycle of poverty is to prepare our children with skills that will attract the best employers and help the local economy grow.

We laud the continued investment in the other child-serving institutions including the rebuilding of recreation centers, parks and libraries, as well as improvements in the programming at these public spaces for children and their families. Vibrant cities nurture healthy communities; it's inspiring to see the Mayor continue to move the City in this direction.

While progress has been made, there is much work ahead for the Mayor and Council, especially on behalf of the City's most vulnerable children. We hope that the lessons of Wordsworth and Glen Mills will be reinforced by making sure City funds are paying for trauma-informed services for youth who are in residential facilities and all forms of foster care and juvenile justice programming.



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